



# Security Council

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## Letter dated 31 December 2019 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council

In paragraph 7 of its resolution [2488 \(2019\)](#), the Security Council requested that I provide an update (no later than 31 December 2019) on progress achieved by the authorities of the Central African Republic on the key benchmarks established in the statement by the President of the Security Council of 9 April 2019 ([S/PRST/2019/3](#)). The benchmarks had been established to serve as a basis for the Council to assess the contribution and relevance of the arms embargo in supporting the relevant aspects of the security sector reform process, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, and the management of weapons and ammunition. In the same resolution, the Council affirmed its preparedness to review the appropriateness of the sanctions measures contained in the resolution in the light of the evolution of the security situation in the country and of the progress achieved in relation to the above-mentioned processes and the management of weapons and ammunition, including in relation to the updates requested in paragraphs 6 and 7 of that resolution. The information in the present letter covers the period between 30 June and 15 December 2019.

Following the issuance of my letter dated 26 July 2019 ([S/2019/609](#)), the Security Council, by its resolution [2488 \(2019\)](#), decided to adjust the arms embargo measures on the Central African authorities. The Council provided that the arms embargo approval process no longer applied to supplies of weapons to the country's security forces with a calibre of 14.5 mm or less, as well as ammunition and components specially designed for such weapons. Instead, such deliveries need only to be notified in advance to the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) concerning the Central African Republic. The Council also decided that Member States or international, regional or subregional organizations supplying arms and related materiel would be primarily responsible for notifying the Committee. Such notifications must be provided at least 20 days in advance of the deliveries. The Council also stressed the importance of detailed explanations of how the proposed equipment would support security sector reform in the country. The Central African authorities will still be able to obtain weapons and ammunition with a calibre of more than 14.5 mm, subject to approval by the Committee under the relevant provisions of the arms embargo. The Council also decided that the provision of non-lethal military and police equipment intended solely for humanitarian or protective use, as well as related technical assistance or training, would no longer require advance approval by the Committee, only advance notification.

The Central African authorities welcomed the adoption of resolution [2488 \(2019\)](#), while continuing to call for the full lifting of the arms embargo on the

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\* Reissued for technical reasons on 9 January 2020.



Government, including in the context of the seventy-fourth session of the General Assembly.

Since my letter of 26 July, the 2127 Committee has approved three exemption requests. Two requests were submitted by the Government. The first related to the transportation by air of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic from Am Dafok to Bangui, while the second was on the training of rangers for the Chinko project/African Parks network. The third exemption request was submitted by a Member State to transfer 2,800 AK-47-type magazines to the Central African authorities. The Committee also received six notifications from Member States supplying non-lethal equipment to various entities, including the Government.

From 1 to 4 October 2019, the Chair of the 2127 Committee led a delegation comprising members of the Committee to the country. The visit was another opportunity for the Committee and the Government to continue their ongoing dialogue on the arms embargo and other measures of the sanctions regime.

The following section provides the Security Council with an update to my letter of 26 July on progress made against each of the five key benchmarks.

#### **Update on progress achieved on benchmark A**

The implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme is continuing in the Central African Republic. Between 30 June and 15 December 2019, a further 1,094 combatants, including 76 women, from nine armed groups were disarmed and demobilized in the western part of the country by the mobile teams of the Unité d'exécution du programme national de désarmement, démobilisation et réintégration. These numbers include 250 combatants from the Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation armed group; 161 from the Union des forces républicaines fondamentales; 75 from the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain; 280 from the anti-Balaka led by Maxime Mokom; 208 from the anti-Balaka led by Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona; 23 from the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique; 6 from the Front populaire pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique; 69 from Révolution et justice-Belanga Branch and 22 from Révolution et justice-Sayo Branch.

Since the launch of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme on 17 December 2018, 1,321 combatants, including 81 women, have been disarmed and demobilized and 802 weapons of war, 1,239 unexploded ordnances and 67,281 rounds of ammunition collected. This number includes the 633 weapons of war, 1,079 unexploded ordnances and 60,448 rounds of ammunition collected between 30 June and 15 December 2019.

Socioeconomic reinsertion and reintegration activities also continued. In July 2019, the International Organization for Migration (IOM), an implementing partner of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme in the Paoua region, completed social reinsertion training activities (on social cohesion, human rights, civic education and conflict resolution) for 227 ex-combatants, including those waiting to join the Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité in Bouar. Of that number, 176 ex-combatants who chose socioeconomic reintegration at the time of demobilization are engaged in vocational training, which will be completed by the end of December 2019. Upon completion of this training, they will receive socioeconomic reintegration kits and support for launching income-generating activities. The remaining 51 ex-combatants joined the Unités spéciales

mixtes de sécurité training in Bouar in mid-October.<sup>1</sup> In September, 109 of the 133 ex-combatants demobilized in the region of Bouar-Koui participated in reinsertion training courses organized by another implementing partner, ACTED (an international non-governmental organization); the remaining 24 ex-combatants are expected to participate in reinsertion activities soon. In addition, both IOM and ACTED continued to implement community support projects in the above-mentioned areas, where the reintegration of ex-combatants is ongoing, as well as areas where disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation has yet to commence (in Ndélé by IOM and in Bria and Birao by ACTED).

During the period under review, the guarantors of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic of 6 February 2019 (S/2019/145), the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States, along with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and other international partners, made considerable efforts to maintain the commitment of signatory armed groups to the Political Agreement. These political efforts, reinforced by MINUSCA military and police activities, remain important in order to facilitate the continued implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme in 2020 and the establishment of the Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité. MINUSCA, the United States of America and the World Bank continued to support the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. The Consultative Follow-up Committee on Disarmament, Demobilization, Reintegration and Repatriation held meetings on 9 August, 13 September and 6 December 2019, during which officials from the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme presented a country-wide disarmament and demobilization calendar to representatives of the armed groups, in line with the provisions of the Political Agreement.

Notwithstanding these activities, the disarmament and demobilization timelines are not being met, given that some armed groups have not demonstrated their full commitment and willingness to disarm. In the western Central African Republic, for example, continued resistance by Retour, reclamation and réhabilitation to complete disarmament and demobilization operations for all its fighters has caused delays in the implementation of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme. In addition, delays in disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation operations in the west have also had an impact on the commencement of operations in the central and eastern parts of the country. Such delays affect the productivity and efficiency of the disarmament and demobilization mobile teams of the national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation programme and could have budgetary implications. Furthermore, during the most recent round of disarmament and demobilization operations in the west, combatants entering the programme did not submit the expected number of weapons of war (as required under the eligibility criteria of the programme), which could undermine the credibility of the disarmament process.

Community violence reduction activities continued. In August 2019, MINUSCA, in partnership with United Nations Office for Project Services, launched

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<sup>1</sup> The Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité training was officially launched by the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Touadera, on 16 October 2019. A total of 241 former combatants, 196 elements of the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic, 29 police officers and 29 gendarmes are participating in training activities in Bouar. Initiatives are under way to identify deployment sites in the northwest and training sites for the two remaining Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité in the northeast and southeast of the country. Challenges regarding Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité funding are being addressed by the partners to ensure coverage of the necessary logistics and stipends for the training period and for future deployments.

community violence reduction projects in the localities of Bangui, Bria, Bangassou, Bossangoa, Kaga Bandoro and Bouar. These projects are being planned for 3,300 beneficiaries. As at 10 December, 1,984 beneficiaries, including 731 women, had been registered in Bria, Bossangoa, Bangassou, Kaga Bandoro and Bangui. In addition, 33 weapons of war, 601 traditional arms, 3 unexploded ordnances and 778 rounds of ammunition had been collected during the registration phase. In Bambari, with the financial support of the Peacebuilding Fund and MINUSCA, 700 beneficiaries are programmed for community violence reduction activities in 2019/20, adding to the 3,300 beneficiaries planned in the other locations, to achieve the total target of 4,000 beneficiaries in 2019/20.

While no major incidents were reported in the integration process of the 232 vetted ex-combatants into the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic in 2018, a deeper evaluation of the integration phase of the pilot project is needed and will take place in 2020. The Government has yet to allocate 10 per cent of positions in the defence and security forces to armed groups in ongoing and future recruitment campaigns, in line with the commitments of the Government in the framework of the peace process. These quotas were not considered in, for example, the recruitment of the 1,000 internal security forces and the 250 correction officers in 2019. It will be critical that the quota be respected in the Armed Forces recruitment campaign. Since October 2019, 95 eligible ex-combatants, considered for integration into the defence and security forces, have been enrolled in the Unités spéciales mixtes de sécurité in Bouar and are awaiting integration through upcoming recruitment campaigns. In line with the Political Agreement, progress is also needed in the establishment of a mixed committee on rank harmonization to facilitate ex-combatant reintegration and the reinsertion of former Armed Forces personnel having joined armed groups.

#### **Update on progress achieved on benchmark B**

Since my letter of 26 July, MINUSCA, through the Mine Action Service, has built 3 additional storage facilities and rehabilitated 8 others in various parts of the country, reaching a total of 20 constructed and 40 rehabilitated storage facilities. In addition, the Mine Action Service completed the deployment of nine storage kits. MINUSCA provided weapons and ammunition management training to 242 members of the defence and security forces.

The progress made by the Government in achieving this benchmark is constrained by financial, technical and management capacity. For example, the national authorities face challenges in mobilizing sufficient funds for weapons and ammunition management. Improvements are possible in the monitoring and management of ammunition utilization. In other cases, available storage spaces are not fully used and national defence and security forces personnel who have received technical training in weapons and ammunition management could be better deployed to take full advantage of their acquired expertise.

#### **Update on progress achieved on benchmark C**

In the continued absence of a national protocol outlining the process for the delivery and verification of weapons and ammunitions shipments in the country, Central African authorities continued to use interim protocols to manage recent deliveries. A specific technical protocol, for example, was developed for the second delivery of Russian weapons and ammunition that arrived in the country between 14 August and 16 September 2019. Similarly, the Government continued to work towards a national weapons registry under the control of the national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons to register and trace weapons. In the meantime, the directives, policies and procedures for weapons

management and individual accountability (as described in my letter of 26 July) continued to be used by the Central African authorities.

#### **Update on progress achieved on benchmark D**

Following the establishment of the national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons in 2017, the Central African authorities formulated a road map to achieve its operationalization. MINUSCA, through the Mine Action Service and together with other United Nations entities, supported the national authorities in implementing the road map, including a national strategy to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons. In July 2019, the implementation of the road map had been completed for the most part when a national action plan to implement that national strategy was adopted at the plenary assembly of the national commission and subsequently endorsed by the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Touadera. As of September, the national commission had established its headquarters and recruited 20 per cent of its support staff, as foreseen under the national action plan. The Government also disbursed 40 million CFA francs for the implementation of activities in 2019 (approximately \$67,000) to the national commission, which has an annual budget of \$1.7 million to implement the national action plan. The national commission is awaiting finalization of the budget by the Government to confirm its 2020 allocation.

#### **Update on progress achieved on benchmark E**

Under the leadership of the national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons, standard operating procedures for the collection of weapons and ammunition in the Central African Republic, applicable to national defence and security forces, are being finalized with the support of MINUSCA, through the Mine Action Service, and international partners such as the European Union Training Mission. The standard operating procedures, which apply to all defence and security forces in the country, are expected to be adopted by relevant institutions early in 2020.

The United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime is working closely with the national commission to combat the proliferation of small arms and light weapons to strengthen the legislative framework for efforts to combat the illicit trafficking in weapons in the Central African Republic, including preventive and security measures, criminal justice provisions and mechanisms for international cooperation and information-sharing.

At the regional level, efforts to reactivate the bilateral commissions between the Central African Republic and its immediate neighbours (Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, South Sudan and the Sudan) continued. On 5 and 6 August 2019, the joint commission of the Central African Republic and the Congo held its fifth meeting. The fourteenth session of the joint commission of the Central African Republic and Chad was expected to be held from 20 to 22 December in Chad. On 15 October, the President of Rwanda, Paul Kagame, visited the Central African Republic for the first time, in the context of talks on the launch of a joint bilateral commission. A reported number of agreements were signed, including on military cooperation. From 30 November to 1 December, the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Felix Antoine Tshilombo Tshisekedi, visited the Central African Republic and attended the ceremony to mark the country's day of independence.

**Conclusion**

Since my letter of 26 July, the Government of the Central African Republic, with the support of its international partners, continued to make some progress on the arms embargo benchmarks established by the Security Council. Continued support from the Council and international and regional partners will be required.

The recent decision of the Security Council to adjust the arms embargo on the Government was well received and has provided national authorities with encouragement. Careful attention is required to ensure that the arms embargo on the armed groups, which remains in full effect, has the necessary and desired outcomes to benefit the security and political situation in the country.

*(Signed)* António **Guterres**

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