



To all United Nations Security Council Members

06 November 2017

Dear Ambassadors,

Re: Mandate renewal for MINUSCA in Central African Republic

As the Security Council reviews the mandate of the UN peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), we write as a group of 28 local and international conflict prevention, protection of civilians, human rights, and humanitarian organisations concerned about the escalating levels of violence against civilians across the country. Current levels of insecurity exceed those of 2014 when the mission was established, as does the severity of the humanitarian crisis now gripping the country.

Following the publication of the UN Secretary-General’s report on the situation in CAR, and in advance of the expiry of the mandate of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) on 15th November, we respectfully request that the Security Council considers two crucial recommendations from civil society when renewing the mandate.

Firstly, we recommend that you support the Secretary-General’s recommendation to increase MINUSCA’s troop ceiling by an additional 900 military personnel. As the Secretary-General outlined, the Mission must not only hold ground, but also expand its coverage, create conditions to protect civilians, contribute to conditions that allow the safe delivery of humanitarian assistance, and help create conditions that would allow the revitalization of the political process. We agree that to be effective in advancing these goals, these 900 troops must have rapid deployment capability to those parts of the country where civilians are under heightened threat of violence and atrocity crimes, and be ready and willing to protect any civilians facing imminent protection threats.

Secondly, we encourage the Security Council to make the protection of civilians the primary and overarching task of MINUSCA. Violence has reached disturbing levels in many parts of the south-east, but also in central and northwest CAR. Attacks against civilians, exacerbated by the increasing manipulation of ethnic and religious differences, as well as alarming hate speech and incitement of violence, are of profound concern. This is of course in addition to the alarmingly high number of attacks carried out against humanitarian actors preventing them from performing their duties to provide much needed relief to affected populations. With a sharp increase in humanitarian needs, and a level of new displacements that exceeds the situation in 2014, the effective protection of civilians is of utmost importance.

Given the scale and severity of the protection threats facing civilians across the country, we believe it is critical that the Security Council provide MINUSCA with a clear and unambiguous mandate to ensure that the protection of civilians remains its immediate priority, and that other tasks contribute to this overarching imperative. We believe that if the people of CAR can feel safer as a result of MINUSCA's efforts to provide protection, the mission will be better placed to make progress across all other tasks that the Secretary-General has identified in his most recent report.

As the Secretary-General observed, 'time is of the essence' in CAR. Although the mission alone cannot replace the government of CAR nor stabilize the entire country singlehandedly, the heightened risk of atrocity crimes against civilians means the international community has a responsibility to protect civilians in CAR. As local organizations and international partners, we too stand ready to ensure the protection and well-being of the Central African population.

We enclose a short policy brief that we trust will provide further information to support the two recommendations outlined in this letter. We would welcome the opportunity for a small delegation of the signatories to meet with you and your mission ahead of the Council's renewal of MINUSCA's mandate. We look forward to your response in this regard.

Sincerely

1. Aegis Trust
2. Agency for Cooperation and Research in Development (ACORD)
3. Better World Campaign
4. CARE International
5. Center for Civilians in Conflict (CIVIC)
6. Coalition Centrafricaine pour la CPI
7. Collectif des Étudiants Musulmans de Centrafrique (CEMUC)
8. Columbia Law School Human Rights Clinic
9. Cordaid
10. Danish Refugee Council
11. Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect
12. Human Rights Watch
13. International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH)
14. International Medical Corps UK
15. International Rescue Committee (IRC)
16. Invisible Children

17. Jeunesse Unie pour la Protection de l'Environnement et le Développement Communautaire (JUPEDEC)
18. Ligue Centrafricaine de Droits de l'Homme
19. Lutheran Office for World Community
20. Mercy Corps
21. Norwegian Refugee Council
22. Observatoire Centrafricain des Droits de l'Homme (OCDH)
23. Parliamentarians for Human Rights
24. Réseau pour le Leadership de la Femme en Centrafrique (RELEFCA)
25. Tearfund
26. URU/"Take Off" (youth organization, CAR)
27. War Child UK
28. World Vision International

Copy to:

Mr. António Guterres, UN Secretary-General

Mr. Jean-Pierre Lacroix, UN Under-Secretary-General, Department of Peacekeeping Operations

Mr. Atul Khare, UN Under-Secretary-General for Field Support

Mr. Mark Lowcock, UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator

Mr. Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, UN Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA

Ms. Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum, UN Independent Expert on the Situation of Human Rights in CAR

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