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Contents

GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY	vi
ACRONYMS	viii
ABOUT THE AUTHORS AND CONTRIBUTORS	xi
1 INTRODUCTION	1
1.1 Remarks on the methods.....	4
1.2 The Central African Republic and the IECEU project.....	5
1.3 The structure of the deliverable	6
2 CONTEXTUALISING THE CONFLICT IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC	7
2.1 A history of violence.....	7
2.2 Dynamics of the regional conflict	11
2.2.1 Crisis in Darfur.....	12
2.2.2 International response to the regional crisis.....	14
2.2.3 Escalation of violence in the Central African Republic in 2012.....	17
2.2.4 International response to the conflict in the Central African Republic.....	20
2.2.5 Efforts to restore peace	22
2.3 Root causes of the conflict.....	23
2.3.1 Characteristics of the Bozizé regime.....	24
2.3.2 The rise of Séléka and competition for power.....	24
2.3.3 Illicit trade in natural resource curse	27
2.3.4 Frustration with Michel Djotodia	29
2.3.5 Politicisation of ethnicity and religious conflict	31
2.3.6 Poor governance and underdeveloped security institutions	36
2.3.7 Consequences of the conflict	40



2.4 Internal parties to the conflict.....	47
2.5 External actors	53
2.5.1 International organisations	53
2.5.2 Regional organisations.....	54
2.5.3 Neighbouring countries, principally Chad.....	56
2.5.4 France	58
2.5.5 Other countries.....	59
2.6. Conclusion	59
3 THE CSDP MISSION/OPERATION AND THE CONFLICT.....	62
3.1 The EU's approach to responding to the conflict.....	62
3.1.1 The approach of EUFOR Tchad/RCA.....	65
3.1.2 The approach of EUFOR RCA.....	66
3.2 The multilateral approach	68
3.2.1 Co-operation and co-ordination – EUFOR Tchad/RCA	68
3.2.2 Co-operation and co-ordination – EUFOR RCA	70
3.3 Perceptions of EUFOR Tchad/RCA.....	74
3.3.1 The general public.....	74
3.4 Perceptions of EUFOR RCA.....	78
3.4.1 The general public.....	78
3.4.2 The main beneficiaries	80
4 DISCUSSION.....	83
4.1 The general approach to preventing conflict and the lessons identified.....	83
4.2 The EU's military approach.....	86
4.2.1 'Best practices'.....	86



4.2.2 Drawbacks	89
4.3 Concluding remarks	94
BIBLIOGRAPHY	96
OFFICIAL DOCUMENTS	109
INTERVIEWS	111

FIGURES

Figure 1. Map of the Central African Republic	vii
Figure 2. Main Séléka groups.....	122
Figure 3.Key Séléka leaders	123
Figure 4. Anti-Balaka and other key groups	124
Figure 5. Key people, leaders and coordinators.....	124

ANNEXES

Annex 1: Interview guide

Annex 2. Key Historical Events

Annex 3. Conflict parties and their compositions



GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT THE COUNTRY

This section provides general information about the country¹.

Official name: République Centrafricaine (formerly Ubangi-Shari)

Date of formation: 13 August 1960 (marking independence from France)

Capital: Bangui

Population: 5,391,539 (est. from March 2016)

Total area: 622,984 km²

Geography: Central Africa, north of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, 7.00 °N, 21.00 °E

Neighbours: Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Languages: French (official), Sangho (*lingua franca* and national language), tribal languages

Religion: indigenous beliefs 35%, Protestant 25%, Roman Catholic 25%, Muslim 15%

Ethnic mix: More than 80 ethnic groups – Gbaya 33%, Banda 27%, Mandjia 13%, Sara 10%, Mboum 7%, M'Baka 4%, Yakoma 4%, others 2%

Government: republic

Legal system: civil-law system based on the French model

Economy: The CAR is classified as one of the world's least developed countries. Agriculture, forestry, and mining provide a livelihood for 60% of the population. The agricultural sector generates more than half of the GDP. Timber, diamonds, and cotton are the main exports. Important constraints to economic development arise from the CAR's landlocked position, a poor infrastructure, a largely unskilled workforce, and a legacy of misdirected macroeconomic policies. Factional fighting between the government and its opponents continues to take its toll on economic revitalisation.

Distribution of income is unequal. Grants from France and the international community can only partially meet the humanitarian needs.

Annual budget: \$198.5 million (2012 est.)

Debt, external: \$469.5 million (2012 est.)

Currency: CFA (Communauté Financière Africaine) franc

¹ Central Intelligence Agency (CIA), *World Factbook article 'Central African Republic'*, at <https://www.cia.gov/library/publications/the-world-factbook/geos/ct.html>, accessed on 2 January 2016.





Figure 1. Map of the Central African Republic¹



ACRONYMS

AMIS	African Union Mission in Sudan
APRD	Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la République et de la Démocratie
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
CFSP	Common Foreign and Security Policy
CIMIC	Civil–military co-operation
CMC	Crisis Management Concept
CMPD	Crisis Management and Planning Directorate
CONOPS	Concept of Operations
CPJP	The Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace
CPJPF	Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix Fondamentale
CPSK	Convention Patriotique du Salut du Kodro
CSDP	Common Security and Defence Policy
DDR	Disarmament, demobilisation, and re-integration
DEVCO	Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development
ECCAS	The Economic Community of Central African States
ECHO	Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (formerly known as the European Community Humanitarian Aid Office)
EDF	European Development Fund
EEAS	European External Action Service
ESDP	European Security and Defence Policy
EUFOR RCA	European Forces Republic of Central Africa
EUMAM RCA	European military advisory mission in the Central African Republic
EUTM RCA	European military training mission in the Central African Republic
EUMC	European Union Military Committee
EUMS	EU Military Staff



FACA	Central African Armed Forces
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations
FDPC	The Democratic Front of Central African People
FHQ	Force Headquarters
FOC	Full operating capability
FPR	Popular Front for Recovery
FPRC	The Patriotic Front for the Renaissance of Central Africa
GDP	Gross domestic product
HIV	Human immunodeficiency virus
HLP	Housing, land, and property
HR/VP	High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy / Vice-President of the European Commission
HQ	Headquarters
IDMC	The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IDP	Internally displaced person
IOC	Initial operating capability
JEM	Justice and Equality Movement
KNK	The National Convergence 'Kwa Na Kwa' (meaning 'Work, Only Work')
LRA	The Lord's Resistance Army
M2R	Mouvement pour la Renaissance et la Refondation / Mouvement politique alternatif en RCA
MESAN	The Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa
MICOPAX	The Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic
MINURCAT	The United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
MLCJ	The Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice
MISCA/ AFISM-CAR	The African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic
MSO	Military Strategic Options
NGO	Non-governmental organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council



OEC	The Observatory of Economic Complexity
OHQ	Operation Headquarters
OpCdr	Operation Commander
OPLAN	Operations Plan
PFCA	Political Framework for Crisis Approach
PRT	Provincial Reconstruction Team
PSC	Political and Security Committee
RESEGEF	Projet de Réhabilitation des Secteurs de la Justice et de la Police
RFC	The Assembly of the Forces for Change
RJ	Revolution and Justice
SASE	Safe and Secure Environment
SG	Secretary-General
SIAC	Single Intelligence Analysis Capacity
SLA	Sudan Liberation Movement/Army
SOR	Statement of requirements
SSR	Security Sector Reform
TEU	Treaty on European Union
UFCD	Union of the Forces for Change and Democracy
UFDD	Union of the Forces for Democracy and Development
UFDR	Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement
UN	United Nations
UNAMID	African Union – United Nations Mission in Darfur
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNHRC	United Nations Human Rights Council
UNSC	United Nations Security Council
URF	Union of Republican Forces
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organization



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1 INTRODUCTION

The Central African Republic (CAR) has been unstable since it declared its independence from France, in 1960. The country is rich in natural resources, including gold, diamonds, petroleum, and uranium. While the country has an abundance of natural resources, it remains one of the poorest and least developed countries of the world, and its population has suffered from various unstable political situations over the years. Now, over 50 years after it became independent from France, the two countries still have a close relationship with one another, and the CAR's natural resources are in large part in the hands of the former colonial power. Consequently, France has played a central role in intervening in conflicts that have erupted throughout the country's violent history.

The CAR has never had an effective central government, and it has struggled with recurrent insurgencies and military coups throughout its years of independence. The reasons behind the country's instability are similar to the factors affecting the whole region, characterised by post-colonialist-era, ethnic polarisation, poverty, a succession of coups, and decades of misrule and lawlessness. Especially, ethnic and tribal differences have played a part in the conflicts in the CAR. Furthermore, the lack of trust between various sections of the population has led to the development of a repressive and authoritarian political culture in which ethnically homogenous elites exploit the resources of the country for their own benefit. Groups of rebels compete for exclusive control over the state machinery, showing little interest in democratic reform of the authoritarian residential system. Changes in power have merely been followed by violent conflict, leading to a replacement of one ruling elite with another². In this sparsely populated country that is unable to protect its citizens, there is little government accountability, and the weak security sector has been partially the source of the conflict. In addition to the internal conflicts and clearly inadequate security institutions, the political instability and violent conflicts in neighbouring countries – Chad, South Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – and the free movement of rebel groups from one country to another have facilitated the breaking out of conflict.

Despite its long history of violence, this landlocked country has not attracted much international attention. This has left the country dependent on rather short-term stabilisation and development projects attempting only to de-escalate the peaks of the violence. Some third-party actors, such as

² Patrick Berg, *The Dynamics of Conflict in the Tri-Border Region of Sudan, Chad and the Central African Republic* (Berlin: Friedrich Ebert Foundation, 2008), 8–9.



the African Union (AU), the United Nations (UN), and France, have been present in the CAR with several mandates, yet the larger audience has not shown much interest in the country. The CAR was long perceived as a post-conflict country, suffering from poverty and an underdeveloped security system but not from civil war.

The first signs of the potential for escalation of conflict between the ethnic groups date back to 2003, when rebel leader and former army commander François Bozizé seized power. The regional actors, together with France and the UN, increased their presence in the country, monitoring the development of the clashes between government and rebels. Nevertheless, in comparison to that of its neighbouring countries, the situation in the CAR was seen as rather stable, and the world's attention was on the development of the conflict in Darfur, which later also affected the CAR's stability. This perception changed in late 2012, after a bloody conflict started upon Muslim rebels from the Séléka umbrella group seizing power in this majority-Christian country. Consequently, a band of mostly Christian militias, called the Anti-balaka, rose up to counter Séléka. This led to serious ethnic and sectarian violence that forced 414,000 people to flee their homes.³

When the conflict erupted, it took a while for the international community to react to it, even though the situation was alarming. By the end of 2013, news of the conflict in the CAR had become widely known in the Western countries and on 5th December the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) unanimously adopted Resolution 2127, which authorised MISCA and French forces to take 'all necessary measures' to protect civilians and restore security in the CAR. No matter these interventions, the conflict continued intensifying, and in January 2014, the United Nations warned of a high risk of genocide. On 28 January, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2134 and mandated that the European Union deploy EUFOR RCA in the Central African Republic. These interventions, in combination with the efforts of international humanitarian aid agencies, finally prevented the Central African Republic from further descending into anarchy and humanitarian catastrophe.

Today, more than 415,000 people are still internally displaced persons (IDPs) and the Muslim population in Bangui has dramatically decreased. New unrest that broke out on 26 September 2015 resulted in over 20,000 new displacements in Bangui, bringing the total number of internally displaced person (IDP) in the capital above 48,000. The conflict has had a devastating impact on the society. Because of this underdeveloped country's justice system and impunity for those guilty of atrocities, there is widespread distrust in the government and people are still living in insecurity,

³ "Central African Republic," European Commission, accessed on 3 February, 2016, at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/sub-saharan-africa/central-african-republic_en.



affected strongly by violence, exploitation, and abuse. With this issue coupled with a serious food crisis, the need for effective and comprehensive support from the international community is still urgent.⁴

For the last three years, the European Union has officially committed to supporting the country's development and stability by engaging a number of its conflict-prevention instruments in the CAR, ranging from humanitarian aid projects through support for security-sector reform initiatives to military intervention.⁵ The EU applies its comprehensive approach to tackle the complex crisis, and currently there are several EU actors in the country, including the EU Delegation, the European Commission Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection (ECHO) and Commission's Directorate-General for International Cooperation and Development (DG DEVCO) reconstruction programmes, and the military advisory mission European Union Military Advisory Mission to Central African Republic (EUMAM RCA).⁶ Because of the weak security situation, the EU has deployed three military missions and operations under the Common Security and Defence Policy (CSDP) framework to the region to date. Two of these interventions, EUFOR Tchad/RCA (2008–2009) and EUFOR RCA (2014– 2015), were authorised by the UN Security Council, mandated to protect the populations most at risk and create the conditions for provision of humanitarian aid.

The significance of the CSDP operations means that they offer a fruitful base for analysis of the effectiveness of the EU conflict-management capabilities. Both of these interventions were planned as transition operations with short and limited mandates. They were part of the multilateral co-operation aimed at restoring peace in conjunction with efforts of other international actors. Although these operations were limited in their scope and mandate, both operations have, according to several reports, been perceived to have had an important contribution to improving security in the areas where they were deployed.

Nevertheless, both of these operations have also been widely criticised for not really helping to enhance the long-term stability of the region. Much of the criticism has been directed at the EU, with the argument that there is a huge gap between the needs on the ground and the means provided by the EU. Although military interventions were seen as an appropriate instrument for stopping the immediate violence in the case of the CAR, the EU was criticised for not exercising its

⁴ European Commission- Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection, *Central African Republic – ECHO factsheet*, (Brussels: Commission of the European Union, 2015), 1–4.

⁵ "EU relations with the Central African Republic." European External Action Service, at http://eeas.europa.eu/central_african_republic/index_en.htm.

⁶ European External Action Service, *The EU engagement in the Central African Republic*; European Union External Action factsheet, September 17, at http://eeas.europa.eu/statements/docs/2014/140722_01_en.pdf.



Battlegroup option⁷ to respond effectively to the conflict. In addition, both of the operations showed the weakness of the EU's 'common approach' to crisis, as the force generation for neither operation can be deemed a success story and the EU's reputation as a global actor was endangered.

For a better understanding of the appropriateness and effectiveness of these CSDP operations, this study is intended to outline the context of the conflict in the CAR for which the operations were deployed. Because of the limited presence that the first European Union crisis-management operation, EUFOR Tchad/RCA, had in the CAR, the focus of this analysis will be on the circumstances surrounding the deployment of EUFOR RCA. In addition, this study discusses the activities encompassed by the CSDP operations and their role in the reform of the country's security institutions. This is because Security Sector Reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation, and re-integration (DDR) have been identified as crucial element of restoring peace in the country.⁸ Therefore, this study also discusses the impacts of these reform efforts in an effort to identify the extent to which the CSDP operations contributed to reforming the country's security institutions and disarming of the former rebels. To provide a comprehensive understanding of the appropriateness of these reform efforts, viewpoints of the locals such as mission staff and local Non-governmental organisations and of other international actors, are also included in the analysis.

1.1 Remarks on the methods

The analysis in this report and the information contained herein are based on an intensive review of the literature and meetings with regional experts and diplomats during the visits to the East Africa region, Brussels, and Geneva. A series of key-informant interviews based on common criteria set in the **deliverable 1.5, 'IECEU Conceptual Framework,'**⁹ was conducted with representatives of the government actors of various European Union member states; current and former CSDP mission personnel and operation staff; representatives of the European External Action Service (EEAS), the African Union, the United Nations (UN), international development agencies, and humanitarian organisations working in the CAR; and actors in civil society and nationals of the CAR and neighbouring countries. All the discussions were confidential. Hence, the

⁷ EU's Battlegroup concept was adapted in June, 2004. A Battlegroup is the minimum militarily effective a credible and coherent, rapidly deployable force package capable of stand-alone operations or for the initial phase of larger operations. It is based on a combined-arms, battalion-sized force, reinforced with combat-support and combat service-support elements. In their generic composition, but depending on the mission, Battlegroups are about 1 500 personnel strong. Battlegroups are based on the principle of multinationality and could be formed by a framework nation or by a multinational coalition of Member States. So far, EU has never deployed the Battle Group.

⁸ N'Diaye Boubacar, 'Security sector reform in the Central African Republic', in *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments*, (eds) Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel, (Geneva: Geneva Centre for the Democratic Control of Armed Forces (DCAF), 2009), 39–66.

⁹ SaferGlobe, 'D.1.1 review: From short-term stabilisation to long-term peacebuilding'. *IECEU, CSA project 653371* (2016).



report does not cite any individuals by name or provide information allowing statements to be traced to specific individuals. However, to ensure that the contrasting beliefs and perspectives were captured, the responses are categorised in accordance with the perspective of the interviewee in line with the analytical framework of the European Union's ICE (IECEU) project, defined in **deliverable 1.5, 'IECEU Conceptual Framework'**.¹⁰

A case-study design was employed for understanding the effectiveness of the Common Security and Defence Policy operations in the CAR. This entailed analysing the context of the conflict through a brief historical overview of the conflict dynamics from the 1960s until EUFOR RCA was deployed in 2014. Both secondary sources and primary data were used for gaining in-depth understanding of the achievements and potential shortcomings of the EU's conflict-prevention efforts, with a focus on the CSDP interventions. Gap analysis was also used to better understand the shortfalls of the stabilisation efforts performed by the international actors, namely by the EU. Nevertheless, more in depth analysis of the actual achievements in relation to desired end state will be provided in **D 3.5: Study of RD Congo, South Sudan, CAR and Libya.**'

The case study employed qualitative methods to reach the aims for this report. The data were collected through secondary sources – academic papers, operation reports, press releases, operation-related reports, and other publications – as well as through primary sources: **through 28 key-informant interviews** and focus-group discussions, which were conducted in November 2015 – February 2017. The interviews were conducted by four experts, in English and French, using a common thematic interview guide (see Annex 1). The data was analyzed through content driven reasoning and the results were triangulated by comparing the interview material to existing literature ensuring the validity and reliability of the findings.

1.2 The Central African Republic and the IECEU project

The study forms part of Working Package 3, 'Case Study Africa', and is aimed at outlining the current situation in the Central African Republic, thereby enhancing understanding of the role of the EU's crisis-management operations in the stabilisation of the region and, equally, of the achievements and potential shortcomings of the CSDP operations in the CAR. The scope of the report extends only to giving an overview of the EU's interventions in the CAR, and in-depth analysis of the elements contributing to the success of these operations or their shortcomings is addressed in a joint study titled '**D 3.5: Study of RD Congo, South Sudan, CAR and Libya**'. In

¹⁰ SaferGlobe, 'D.1.1 review, 22- 33.



that study the effectiveness of the operation capabilities is assessed in light of the perceptions of both EU actors and non-EU actors. Accordingly, this desk study is aimed at establishing a baseline for further analysis of the effectiveness of the CSDP capabilities in the CAR.

1.3 The structure of the deliverable

For understanding of the EU's military-crisis-management interventions in the Central African Republic, it is first necessary to discuss the context in which the interventions took place. The aim for **Chapter 2** is to map the root causes, dynamics, and consequences of the conflict in the CAR. To reach this aim, the text briefly discusses the violent history of the country, with an emphasis on analysing the characteristics, key events, and parties linked to the latest conflict, which erupted in late 2012. In addition, the chapter offers analysis of the economic, social, and political consequences of that conflict. Finally, it discusses the role of third parties in the CAR and in the conflict.

When conflict turns violent, third-party intervention is often considered. At times, the third-party actors decide to intervene militarily in their efforts to manage the violent events. This was the case for the European Union crisis-management operations in the Central African Republic.¹¹ **Chapter 3** draws an overall picture of the EU crisis-management efforts in the Central African Republic by discussing the two above-mentioned military interventions, which took place in 2008–2009 and 2014–2015. The chapter examines the overall environment surrounding the establishment of the operations, including discussion of the mission objectives, main drivers, and expectations for the operations. In this context, also the contribution of the operations to reforming the country's security institutions is discussed. Furthermore, this chapter considers the connections between the CSDP operations and other third-party actors, to enhance understanding of the effectiveness of the multilateral approach to resolving the conflict. Concluding the report, **Chapter 4** discusses best practices, the main lessons identified, and the shortcomings of the EU engagement in the CAR.

¹¹ SaferGlobe, D.1.1, 22–33.



2 CONTEXTUALISING THE CONFLICT IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The purpose for this chapter is to provide an overview of the background of the conflict in the Central African Republic¹². To this end, it is important to establish the scope and character of the context within which the conflict took place. A conflict is often enacted at a system's weakest point, not necessarily where it is caused. Hence, whenever analysing conflicts, we must consider the system boundaries we have set in our study and reflect on how they are related to the environment the conflict is embedded in, outlining the environmental, economic, social, political, and organisational factors relevant for the context¹³. Such factors might be geographical boundaries, actors and their interrelationships, low security, corruption, and the key events and conflict dynamics, along with the economic, social, and political consequences of the conflict¹⁴.

The conflict studied is the violence that erupted in December 2012 when Séléka seized power in the majority-Christian country and in response to brutality by Séléka forces, 'Anti-balaka' coalitions of Christian fighters formed to carry out violent reprisals against Séléka fighters. Hence, the discussion of the parties, dynamics, and consequences is closely connected with the events that started in late 2012. Understanding the background of the conflict gives a baseline for the assessment of the effectiveness of the EU's crisis-management interventions.

2.1 A history of violence

For us to understand the persistent conflict, we must first to look at the history of the Central African Republic. The country was known mainly for commodity products such as slaves and ivory from the 16th century to the end of the 19th century. In the late 1800s, European powers had started the competition compete for colonies, and Africa became the main focus of this horse race. France annexed the area known as Ubangi-Shari in the 1880s and 1890s; this constituted the area that later became known as the Central African Republic. In 1910, it was integrated into French Equatorial Africa.¹⁵

¹² The key historical events are listed in Annex 3. 'Key Historical Events',

¹³ Simon A. Mason and Sandra Rychard, *Conflict Analysis Tools* (Bern, Switzerland: Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC), 2005), 1–2.

¹⁴ Oliver Wils, Ulrike Hopp, Norbert Ropers, Luxshi Vimalarajah, and Wolfram Zunzer, *The Systemic Approach to Conflict Transformation – Concepts and Fields of Application* (Berlin: Berghof Foundation for Peace Support, 2006).

¹⁵ The Encyclopedia of Earth, 'Central African Republic', article 31 July 2012, at <http://www.eoearth.org/view/article/150993/>; Ralph A. Austen and Rita Headrick, 'Equatorial Africa under colonial rule', in *History of Central Africa, Vol. 2*, ed. David Birmingham and Phyllis



The colonial era was characterised by brutality towards the natives. As Belgians were interested in Congo and its vast natural resources, especially rubber, so were the French in Ubangi-Shari. Later the main interest shifted towards producing cotton. The French resorted to brutal methods such as forced labour to have their way. Some natives resisted, and rioting against the colonial masters was not uncommon, but the riots that broke out weren't very successful.¹⁶

The Second World War changed attitudes toward having colonies and peoples' right to self-rule in the Western world. Old colonial powers Great Britain and France had both suffered during the war, and their economic and military resources had been largely depleted. Pressure also by the United States and the Soviet Union led to decolonisation of Africa. This process took place mainly in the '50s and '60s.

The road to independence started in 1946, when the country was given its own representatives in the French parliament. In the same year, it also received its own assembly. Twelve years later, self-governance was achieved within French Equatorial Africa. The last shackles to France were broken in 1960, when the country finally gained its independence. **David Dacko** was the first elected president of the Central African Republic. The official objectives during his Presidency were to raise the standard of living and end inter-tribal strife.¹⁷

Regrettably, it was not long before Dacko started to concentrate the political power in himself and in the Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa (MESAN). This led to a one-party system in 1962, when MESAN became the only party allowed.¹⁸ An inefficient economy combined with ineffective political rule led to a military coup in 1966. This was headed by **Jean-Bedel Bokassa**. He was President Dacko's cousin and a key member of the Central African Armed Forces. Unlike Dacko, whose relationship with France had deteriorated, Bokassa enjoyed the trust of the formal colonial master.¹⁹

Bokassa upheld military rule and ultimately crowned himself emperor. Even the name of the country was changed, to 'the Central African Empire'. As Dacko had, so Bokassa too failed to

M. Martin (Longman House, 1983), 28–30, 35, 38–41, 46; BBC News, 'Central African Republic profile – timeline', updated 10 February 2016, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13150044>.

¹⁶ Murray Steele, 'Central African Republic: Colonial period: Oubangui-Chari', in *Encyclopedia of African History*, Vol. 1–3, ed. Kevin Shillington (New York; London: Fitzroy Dearborn, 2005), 234–235.

¹⁷ *Ibid.*, 235–236; *The Telegraph*, 'David Dacko', 22 November 2003, at <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/1447375/David-Dacko.html>.

¹⁸ Brian Titley, *Dark Age: The Political Odyssey of Emperor Bokassa* (Montreal; Kingston, Jamaica; London; Ithaca, New York: McGill – Queen's University Press, 1997), 20–21.

¹⁹ *The Guardian* piece 'David Dacko', 22 November 2013, at <http://www.theguardian.com/news/2003/nov/25/guardianobituaries.andrewmeldrum>; Howard W. French, 'Jean-Bedel Bokassa, self-crowned emperor of the Central African Republic, dies at 75', *The New York Times*, 5 November 1996, at <http://www.nytimes.com/1996/11/05/world/jean-bedel-bokassa-self-crowned-emperor-central-african-republic-dies-75.html>.



make structural, political, and economic reforms. His rule lasted until September 1979, when he was cast aside in the French-led Operation Barracuda, sometimes referred to as 'France's last colonial expedition'. After the coup, President Dacko returned to office and was re-elected in 1981. Not long after this, Army Chief of Staff **André Kolingba** mounted a coup against him. Later, Ange-Félix Patassé led a coup attempt against Kolingba, in turn, but this failed and Patassé fled the country.²⁰

Kolingba ruled with the support of the military, and, as his predecessors had, he left political reforms not done and retained the one-party system. During his rule, a new Constitution was approved. The reforms enshrined in it were only superficial and did not have real effects on the political process. When the Cold War came to an end, pro-democratic movements rose around the world. The Central African Republic was not immune to this process. At first, Kolingba tried to stop it, by detaining members of the relevant movements, but he failed. The multi-party system was restored in 1991, and free elections were held in 1992. Because of irregularities, a new election was held, in September 1993. The Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People Party won in the parliamentary election, and **Ange-Félix Patassé** was elected as president. Kolingba finished last but still had considerable influence within the CAR's armed forces.²¹

Patassé was not able to stabilise the CAR. There were three army revolts, in April, May, and November 1996. While he tried to incorporate the opposition into the national government, the effort was not a success. He only managed to keep the presidency with the aid of the French and later pan-African troops. In 1999, Patassé was re-elected and Kolingba came in second. Kolingba's supporters launched a coup attempt against Patassé in 2001. They did not succeed in removing him, but the coup left the president and his supporters in a difficult situation. The president suspected Army Chief of Staff **François Bozizé** of siding with the rebels, so the latter was sacked and forced to leave the country for an indefinite time. This divided the army, with some supporting the president and others Bozizé.²²

²⁰ Royal African Society, 'Central African Republic', at <http://www.royalafricansociety.org/countries/central-african-republic>; Mike Thompson, "'Good old days" under Bokassa?', *BBC News*, 2 January 2009, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/7803421.stm>; Kaye Whiteman, 'Ange-Félix Patassé obituary: The Central African Republic's flamboyant former president', *The Guardian*, 14 June 2011, at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2011/jun/14/ange-felix-patasse-obituary>.

²¹ Royal African Society, 'Central African Republic'; International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Anatomy of a phantom state', *Africa Report* no. 136 (2007); U.S. Department of State, 'Background Note: Central African Republic (01/06/12)', 6 January 2012, at <http://www.state.gov/outofdate/bgn/centralafricanrepublic/194930.htm>.

²² Mollie Zapata, 'Central African Republic: Mutinies, civil wars, and a coup, 1993–2003', *The Enough Project*, 17 April 2012, at <http://www.enoughproject.org/blogs/central-african-republic-mutinies-civil-wars-coup-1993-2003>; Mollie Zapata, 'Central African Republic: 90 years of chaos, 1903–1993', *The Enough Project*, 10 April 2012, <http://www.enoughproject.org/blogs/central-african-republic-90-years-chaos-1903-1993>; U.S. Department of State, 'Background Note', 2012; Fiona McFarlane and Mark Malan, 'Crisis and response in the Central African Republic: A new trend in African peacekeeping?', *African Security Review*, Vol. 7, No. 2 (1998),



Patassé's capacity to rule was severely weakened not only by revolts and coup attempts but also by the CAR's economic conditions. In addition, the army accused him of favouring the Presidential Guard at the expense of the armed forces. In October, Patassé again faced a coup attempt by Bozizé and his supporters. This too failed, but in 2003 Bozizé and his supporters tried again. This time, his forces managed to take the capital, Bangui. Patassé tried to save his government by getting support from France, but this did not work and Bozizé effectively replaced him as the leader of transitional government.²³

In 2004, a new Constitution was accepted, and presidential elections were held in 2005. Bozizé emerged as winner but did not manage to obtain the trust of all political blocs. The political blocks will be discussed further in this chapter. Several armed groups rebelled against Bozizé and the army, but he managed to stay in power. The rebel forces were not unified, and they lacked clear leadership and in many cases adequate weaponry. The fighting was concentrated in the northern parts of the country, which left the capital untouched.²⁴

In June 2008, the Bozizé government and rebel groups (the APRD, FDCP, and UFDR) agreed on a cease-fire and negotiations about municipal, legislative, and presidential elections were held. Regardless of these, the humanitarian situation in the country did not improve significantly and clashes between various groups occurred. Nonetheless, presidential and legislative elections were finally held again, in January 2011, after having been delayed twice. Bozizé was elected for a new term, and the National Convergence 'Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) won 63 out of 106 seats. Several irregularities were noticed, though, and both elections were seen as unfair by the opposition groups.²⁵

In 2012, the major rebel groups joined to form the alliance that became known as Séléka. Members of this alliance were dissatisfied with Bozizé and saw his government at not respecting the peace agreement and the political promises that had been made. The alliance took control of

available via <https://www.issafrica.org/pubs/ASR/7No2/Contents.html>; Human Rights Watch, 'Background: The varied causes of conflict in CAR', published in September 2007, at <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/car0907/4.htm>.

²³ BBC News, 'CAR coup strongly condemned', 17 March 2003, at <http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/hi/africa/2853429.stm>; U.S. Department of State, 'Background Note', 2012.

²⁴ Ibid.; IRIN News, 'Bozize to contest presidency as an independent candidate', 13 December 2004, at <http://www.irinnews.org/report/52396/central-african-republic-bozize-contest-presidency-independent-candidate>; Kelly Campbell, 'Central African Republic, Chad, and Sudan: Triangle of instability?', United States Institute of Peace, 1 December 2006, at <http://www.usip.org/publications/central-african-republic-chad-and-sudan-triangle-of-instability>; IRIN News, 'Who's who with guns', 17 June 2009, at <http://www.irinnews.org/news/2009/06/17/who%E2%80%99s-who-guns>.

²⁵ Uppsala University, *Comprehensive peace agreement*, unofficial English translation, at <http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/peace/CAR%2020080621.pdf>; 'Central African Republic: News bulletin no. 92', ReliefWeb, last modified on 19 January 2009, at <http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-news-bulletin-no-92-12-19-jan-2009>; Steven Spittaels and Filip Hilgert, *Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic* (IPISM, 2009), at <https://www.globalpolicy.org/images/pdfs/0217conflictcar.pdf>; 'Freedom in the World 2013: Central African Republic', Freedom House, 2013, at <https://freedomhouse.org/report/freedom-world/2013/central-african-republic>.



the northern and central parts of the country, and in March 2013 they attacked the capital. President Bozizé fled the country, and Séléka dissolved the parliament. In August, **Michel Djotodia** from 'Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement' (UFDR) was named as president of the transitional government. Séléka did not manage to bring the long-sought-after peace and stability. In the end, Djotodia did not have the financial means to keep the alliance together and decided to disband it. In the absence of sufficient backing from the military, the police, and civic structures, this led to a disaster. Many of the alliance's fighters continued committing crimes and atrocities, such as going on a killing rampage, and there were no means to stop them.²⁶

The situation grew even worse when militias established by Christian communities started becoming radicalised. Many members of these militias were supporters of Bozizé and did not recognise Djotodia's presidency or Séléka's rule. The conflict quickly became seen as an ethnic one in which Muslims and Christians were the opposing sides and religious differences played the key role, even though this is just part of the story.²⁷

The failure to calm the situation led to the resignation of President Djotodia. He was replaced by **Catherine Samba-Panza**, who currently serves as leader of the transitional government and as the president of the country. She will be replaced by **Faustin-Archange Touadéra**, the winner of the presidential election held in February 2016.²⁸

2.2 Dynamics of the regional conflict

As history attests, the Central African Republic has been affected by violence in neighbouring countries. Political instability in Chad, Sudan (South Sudan), both Congos, and Cameroon has had huge negative impacts on the Central African Republic. Hence, analysis of the developments that

²⁶ Human Rights Watch, 'I can still smell the dead': *The forgotten human rights crisis in the Central African Republic*; (United States: September 2013), at https://www.hrw.org/sites/default/files/reports/car0913_ForUploadWInsert_0.pdf; FIDH, *Investigative report Central African Republic: "They must all leave or die,"* (Paris: FIDH, 2014); Scott Sayare, 'Mystery shrouds rise and aims of rebel at helm of Central African Republic', *The New York Times*, 13 April 2013, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2013/04/14/world/africa/michel-djotodia-leader-of-coup-in-central-african-republic-holds-on-to-power.html>; France 24 News, 'Michel Djotodia: Bangui's new strongman', 25 March 2013, at <http://www.france24.com/en/20130325-central-african-republic-michel-djotodia-coup>; BBC News, 'CAR president Djotodia bans former Seleka rebel backers', 13 September 2013, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-24088995>; Hannah McNeish, 'CAR: The broken heart of Africa', *Al Jazeera*, 23 November 2013, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/indepth/features/2013/11/car-broken-heart-africa-20131123101734112996.html>.

²⁷ Emily Mellgard, 'What is the Antibalaka?', Tony Blair Faith Foundation, 29 January 2015, at <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/commentaries/backgrounder/what-antibalaka>; FIDH, 'Investigative report'; David Smith, 'Christian militias take bloody revenge on Muslims in Central African Republic', *The Guardian*, 10 March 2014, at <http://www.theguardian.com/world/2014/mar/10/central-african-republic-christian-militias-revenge>.

²⁸ BBC News, 'CAR's interim president Michel Djotodia resigns', 11 January 2014, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25683279>; BBC News, 'Central African Republic profile – leaders', 3 September 2014, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-13150042>; Makini Brice, 'Central African constitutional court confirms Touadera elected president', Reuters, 1 March 2016, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-election-idUSKCN0W34AF>.



led to the EUFOR Tchad/RCA operation requires returning to 2003, when the Darfur crisis erupted. Nevertheless, the roots of the crisis in the region stretch back much further.

2.2.1 Crisis in Darfur

Indeed, behind the events in Darfur lies a history of political and economic marginalisation by Khartoum; absence of developments efforts in the region; ethnic manipulations; competition between pastoralists and sedentary farmers over scarce natural resources, induced by the environment's deterioration and desertification; and, above all, the chronic problem of bad governance that has plagued Sudan since its independence. Therefore, a strong sense of deprivation has prevailed among Darfurians. The lengthy tradition of Sudanese insurgencies prompted a new surge of violence when, in 2003, two allied rebel groups, the Sudan Liberation Movement/Army (SLA) and the Justice and Equality Movement (JEM) attacked military installations in order to put an end to the region's marginalisation and to protect their communities against a 20-year campaign of looting and attacks by government-backed militias²⁹. As usual, the Sudanese government reacted with a militia-centred counter-insurgency strategy by arming extremely violent and criminal Arab militias known as the Janjaweds. Fighting rebel groups on behalf of Khartoum, they targeted all non-Arab communities from which rebels were drawn or that were suspected of supporting the rebels³⁰. Numerous non-governmental organisations (NGOs) denounced the government of Sudan and its militias for being responsible for ethnic cleansing, war crimes, crimes against humanity, and murdering tens of thousands of people. In 2005, an International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur had already confirmed these accusations by stating that government forces and militias, throughout Darfur and on a widespread and systematic basis, conducted indiscriminate attacks, including killing of civilians, torture, enforced disappearances, destruction of villages, rape and other forms of sexual violence, pillaging and forced displacement³¹.

When war erupted in western Sudan in 2003, President **Idriss Déby** first supported Khartoum in its struggle against Darfurian rebels. However, the fact that many of the Darfurian insurgents belonged to his own tribe, the Zaghawa, forced President Déby to provide them with support in order not to endanger his own regime³². It was only in 2005 that he changed sides and started to

²⁹ International Crisis Group, 'Darfur rising: Sudan's new crisis', Africa Report no. 76 (2004), 1–5.

³⁰ International Crisis Group, 'The chaos in Darfur', *Africa Briefing* no. 110 (2015), 4.; Human Rights Watch, 'Darfur Destroyed: Ethnic Cleansing by Government and Militia Forces in Western Sudan', *Human Rights Watch News*, Vol. 16, No. 6 (2004).

³¹ Human Rights Watch, 'Darfur Destroyed'; United Nations, 'Report of the International Commission of Inquiry on Darfur to the Secretary-General', S/2005/60, 1 February 2005.

³² Frédéric Mérand and Haingo M. Rakotonirina, 'La force européenne au Tchad et en Centrafrique: le baptême du feu', *Politique africaine* 2009 (No. 114), 111; Raphaël Pouyé, 'L'EUFOR Tchad-RCA et la protection des civils. Les leçons militaro-humanitaires



supply the Justice and Equality Movement, one of the leading Darfurian rebel group. N'Djaména not only provided equipment but also authorised rebels to use eastern Chad for rear bases in their struggle against Khartoum, thereby infuriating the Sudanese government³³. But at that time, Chad was also facing rebellions on its own soil. The main rebel groups were the Union of the Forces for Democracy and Development (UFDD), the Assembly of the Forces for Change (RFC), and the Union of the Forces for Change and Democracy (UFCD).

The Chadian rebellion's root causes are many and complex, but a decisive trigger was the decision of President Déby in 2005 to amend the Constitution in order to run for a third term³⁴. A further factor is that Chad was one of the poorest and most corrupt countries in the world, one where the army could loot from its own people³⁵. It had become an apparatus of repression in the hands of President Déby, whose clientelistic regime benefited only its clan, family members, and ethnic group. As the 1990s neared their end, Chadian oil production had raised hopes for change, but very little money was invested in development projects, particularly in the eastern part of the country. Eastern Chad remained a politically and economically marginalised periphery where ethnic manipulation, scarcity of natural resources, and clashes between farmers and livestock-herders contributed to fuelling the various insurgent elements³⁶. Therefore, in response to the Chadian backing of Sudanese rebels, Khartoum decided to support Chadian rebels with the objective of toppling President Déby. In consequence, both governments slid into a proxy war 'that fed on domestic political grievances they sought to exploit'³⁷, as stated in a UN report³⁸.

Because of rebellions in both countries, by the end of 2006, eastern Chad was hosting more than 232,000 refugees from Darfur and 48,000 refugees from the Central African Republic. Furthermore, in excess of 92,000 Chadians were displaced in the east of the country on account of the Chadians' rebellions and Janjaweed attacks on civilians and Chad's national army³⁹. The

d'une mission atypique (mars 2008-mars 2009)', Centre Thucydide (2010), 5; David Lanz, 'EUFOR Chad/CAR: A regional solution for a regional problem', in *EUFOR Tchad/RCA Revisited* (Vienna: Landesverteidigungsakademie, 2011), 35.

³³ Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something: The Drivers behind EU Crisis Management Operations* (Leiden, Belgium: Leiden University, 2012), 176; International Crisis Group, 'Chad: A new conflict resolution framework', *Africa Report* no. 144 (2008), 26; Winrich Kuehne, 'How the EU organizes and conducts peace operations in Africa: EUFOR/MINURCAT', Center for International Peace Operations (2009), 15.

³⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Chad: A new conflict resolution framework', *Africa Report* no. 144 (2008), 17; Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 175.

³⁵ International Crisis Group, 'Chad: A new conflict resolution framework'.

³⁶ International Crisis Group, 'Chad: Powder keg in the east', *Africa Report* no. 149 (2009).

³⁷ Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 176; Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations – the case of EUFOR Tchad/RCA', Institute for European Studies Working Paper no. 5 (2008); International Crisis Group, 'Chad: Powder keg in the east'.

³⁸ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic pursuant to paragraphs 9 (d) and 13 of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006)', S/2006/1019, 22 December 2006;

³⁹ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic', S/2007/97, 23 February 2007, §28; United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic pursuant to paragraphs 9 (d) and 13 of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006)', S/2006/1019, §§ 27, 34, 35.



humanitarian situation was drastic, since growing insecurity prevented aid workers from helping people in need of assistance but also because refugees and IDPs faced a wide range of threats – in particular, the use of refugee camps by rebel groups as rear bases, forces' recruitment including children, attacks on civilian and humanitarian aid personnel, criminal activities such as looting, ethnic conflict, burning of villages, and violent competition for scarce natural resources. Despite cease-fire agreements signed in Syrte on 25 October 2007 between N'Djaména and the main Chadian armed opposition groups, the humanitarian crisis escalated throughout 2007 since continued violence in a lawless zone forced Chadians to flee their homes and seek shelter in or around the camps. In December of that year, 240,000 Darfurian refugees and 180,000 IDPs lived in eastern Chad⁴⁰.

2.2.2 International response to the regional crisis

To intervene in the escalated conflict in Darfur, the African Union launched the first peacekeeping operation in Darfur in 2004, with the African Union Mission in Sudan (AMIS). As a result, under the auspices of the African Union, the Darfur Peace Agreement was signed in May 2006. This process couldn't stop the violence, though: AMIS was under-equipped and under-manned and had an inadequate mandate, and, at the same time, the majority of the rebels were not parties to the agreement⁴¹. Hence, in consideration of AMIS ineffectiveness with regard to the needs in Darfur, in July 2007, after months of difficult negotiations with a reluctant Khartoum, Resolution 1769 transformed AMIS into a 24,000-strong AU–UN hybrid operation (UNAMID) whose mandate included, among other things, contributing to restoration of the security conditions necessary for the safe provision of humanitarian assistance; contributing to the protection of civilian populations; supporting the peace process, and assisting with the implementation of the Darfur Peace Agreement and any subsequent agreements⁴².

However, given the interdependencies among the CAR, Chad, and Sudan, the Security Council decided to complete the Darfurian operation with an international presence in Chad and the CAR⁴³. At the time, the CAR faced a dire situation in the north-east of the country too, especially in the province of Vakaga. Not only was the north-east used by Chadian and Sudanese rebels as a safe

⁴⁰ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic', S/2007/739, 17 December 2007, §11; International Crisis Group, 'Chad: A new conflict resolution framework'. 15

⁴¹ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic', S/2007/739, 17 December 2007, §12 (supress); International Crisis Group, 'Darfur's new security reality', Africa Report no. 134 (2007), 1.

⁴² United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General and the chairperson of the African Union Commission on the hybrid operation in Darfur', S/2007/307, 5 June 2007, §§ 54, 55.

⁴³ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic pursuant to paragraphs 9 (d) and 13 of Security Council resolution 1706 (2006)', S/2006/1019, §53.



haven and a transit route to bypass the Sudan/Chad border, but the CAR also long had to face its own insurgencies, occasionally supported by Sudan and Chad. The region was at the mercy of the CAR, Chadian, and Sudanese militias as much as the rebels, given Central African Armed Forces (FACA) incapacity to impose law and order in the CAR. Furthermore, the CAR's army was guilty of human rights violations itself. Thousands of people were internally displaced in the north and the west of a failing state burdened with a growing humanitarian crisis.

Considering the threat to civilians posed by the various rebel groups and militias but also the dangers to regional security and stability, the United Nations Secretary-General, on Security Council request, dispatched two technical assessment missions – running from 21 November to 3 December 2006 and from 21 January to 6 February 2007 – to Chad and the CAR in order to report on ways to improve the security situation on the Chadian and CAR side of the border with Sudan and to assist in mitigating the spillover of the Darfur conflict. In his report issued on 23 February 2007, the Secretary-General recommended that, should the Security Council decide to establish a multidimensional peace operation in Chad and the CAR, he would recommend a civilian, a police, and a military component tasked with assisting civilians within its areas of deployment and facilitating the provision and free movement of humanitarian aid workers, assisting with the maintenance of law and order in the refugee camps, and deploying at key locations in the border area in order to reduce tension and facilitate confidence-building⁴⁴.

The Chadian government welcomed the idea of a civilian United Nations mission but refused to have any UN military component on its soil – though essential for effective and secure police activities – while President Bozizé accepted all three components in the north-east of the CAR. In June 2007, during a visit in Chad, French Foreign Affairs Minister Bernard Kouchner convinced President Déby to accept a military operation but only on the condition that such a force would be led by the European Union. Chad required two additional adjustments⁴⁵ if it was to give its consent to an operation: firstly, there would be no direct involvement of the international presence in the border area; secondly, therefore, the Chadian police and gendarmerie selected to maintain law and order on the refugee and IDP sites would serve under national authority⁴⁶. Once the Chadian concerns were taken into account, on 25 September 2007, Security Council resolution 1778 approved the establishment of a United Nations mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), mandated mainly to contribute to civilians' protection in the area of operations and to

⁴⁴ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic', S/2007/97, 23 February 2007.

⁴⁵ President Déby's refusal to accept any peacekeeping operation with a political mandate led to numerous compromises that reduced UN opportunities to make meaningful changes.

⁴⁶ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on Chad and the Central African Republic', S/2007/488, 10 August 2007.



select, train, and advise a Chadian police entity dedicated exclusively to maintaining law and order in refugee camps and on sites with high concentrations of IDPs.

In Europe, on 21 May 2007 all European Union member states received a diplomatic cable from Paris about a proposal for military intervention in eastern Chad⁴⁷. The EU capitals initially gave unenthusiastic responses comprising many critical questions. In fact, the German EU Council presidency kept the operation off the official European Security and Defence Policy (ESDP) agenda until Portugal, much more open, took over the presidency, in July, at which point the Council gave planning authority to the Council General Secretariat for an operation⁴⁸. Despite reticence, the governments were under pressure to do something about Darfur. There was an increasing sense of a 'European duty to act', given that a well-organised civil society succeeded in drawing widespread public attention to the Darfur crisis⁴⁹. Furthermore, it seems that frustration over the EU's inability to contribute meaningfully to addressing the conflict in Darfur led them to consider providing help outside Darfur's borders⁵⁰. Therefore, after several months of planning during which Resolution 1778 was passed to authorise a European operation, EUFOR Tchad/RCA (or EUFOR Chad/CAR) reached its initial operating capability (IOC) on 15 March and full operating capability (FOC) on 17 September 2008.

Before EUFOR reached its FOC, the humanitarian and security situation deteriorated markedly in the Chadian field. After, on 12 December 2007, three of the four main rebel groups announced a new alliance, the 'Resistance nationale', the alliance forces launched a large-scale attack and a coup tentative on N'Djaména on 1 February 2008, despite the Syrte peace agreement⁵¹. The rebels groups surrounded the presidential palace and other strategic locations throughout the city. After days of heavy fighting, government troops pushed the rebels back narrowly on 5 February and brought an end to the fighting. In the following months, no progress was achieved in respect of the peace negotiations between Chad's government and Chadian armed opposition groups. On the contrary, after five months of negotiations, all the rebel groups except one established a new coalition, the 'Union des forces de la résistance', in January 2009, which significantly strengthened

⁴⁷ Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 14.

⁴⁸ Ibid.; Patrick Berg, 'The EU serving French interests' in M. Asseburg and R. Kempin, eds, *The EU As a Strategic Actor in the Realm of Security and Defence? A Systematic Assessment of ESDP Missions and Operations* (Germany: German Institute for International and Security Affairs, 2009), 65.

⁴⁹ Johanna Bögel, 'The EU's response to the Darfur crisis: Explaining the emergence of EUFOR Tchad/RCA from a multiple-streams perspective', *IReflect – Student Journal of International Relations*, Vol. 1, No. 1 (2014), 15.

⁵⁰ Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 184.

⁵¹ In that agreement, the government and the armed opposition groups undertook to respect the Constitution, cease fighting, grant amnesty to the rebels, allow rebel groups to participate in the running of state affairs, integrate rebel forces into the Chadian National Army, and hold another meeting in Tripoli – which would include all political parties and relevant civil organisations – to follow up on the implementation of the agreement (S/2008/215, §2).



rebel positions in eastern Chad⁵². Moreover, in December 2008, the United Nations stated that the number of Sudanese refugees in Chad had reached 290,000 in addition to the already 180,000 IDPs and that, at the same time, the security deterioration induced by rebels attacks continued to seriously undermine humanitarian workers' capacity to deliver assistance⁵³.

In the meantime, on 12 September 2008, the UN Secretary-General (UNSG) issued recommendations for a mandatory UN military takeover of EUFOR conceived of as a bridging mission expected to complete its mandate in March 2009. As N'Djaména voiced great resistance to MINURCAT political and military reinforcement⁵⁴, the United Nations had to make several compromises again in order to accommodate Chad and work out a refined concept, which entailed a force of 4,900⁵⁵. After consideration had been given to the concerns expressed by Chad, the United Nations Security Council adopted Resolution 1861 in January 2009, authorising the deployment of a UN military component within MINURCAT to take over EUFOR both in Chad and in the Central African Republic. In accordance with the above-mentioned resolution, EUFOR transferred its military authority to the new military component of MINURCAT on 15 March 2009.

2.2.3 Escalation of violence in the Central African Republic in 2012

The CAR's complex and violent political history, characterised by an era of rule under the French colonial administration and subsequent authoritarian leaders, built the foundation for the country's weak political, security, and economic institutions. **The current CAR civil war is the result of a military coup organised by Séléka**, an alliance of predominantly Muslim rebel groups founded on 12 December 2012 by the 'Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement' (UFDR), led by Michel Djotodia; the 'Convention Patriotique du Salut du Kodro' (CPSK), led by Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane; and the 'Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix Fondamentale' (CPJPF), led by Nouredine Adam. The alliance was later joined by several other rebel groups, including the 'Union des Forces Républicaines' and the 'Alliance pour la Refondation'. All of them came from the north-east of the CAR, a very poor region populated mainly by Muslim citizens and

⁵² United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations mission in the Central African Republic and Chad' (S/2009/199), 14 April 2009.

⁵³ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations mission in the Central African Republic and Chad' (S/2008/760), 4 December 2008.

⁵⁴ See the letter dated 28 October 2008 that was addressed to the President of the Security Council by the Permanent Representative of Chad to the United Nations, S/2008/679, 30 October 2008.

⁵⁵ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations mission in the Central African Republic and Chad' (S/2008/760), §57; Winrich Kuehne, 'How the EU organizes and conducts peace operations', 29.



traditionally neglected and marginalised by the capital. The grievances⁵⁶ expressed by Séléka were the nepotism, cronyism, and bad governance that had characterised the regime of President Bozizé.

When Séléka was established, the rebel groups demanded the enforcement of the previous agreements concluded between the insurgents and the government but also an end to the political and economic marginalisation of the north-east of the country. After numerous instances of combat between the government forces and Séléka, discussions were organised under the auspices of the heads of state and government of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). The ECCAS mediator, President of the Congo Denis Sasso-Nguesso succeeded in bringing Séléka to the table to sign the '**Libreville Agreements**'⁵⁷ on 11 January 2013. However, complaining that the CAR government wasn't respecting the agreement, Séléka resumed hostilities on 22 March 2013 before taking control of Bangui two days later and forcing President Bozizé to flee the country⁵⁸. The police, FACA, and the gendarmerie deserted all their positions as Séléka advanced. Once Bangui was under Séléka control, **Michel Djotodia proclaimed himself president and minister of defence**, and on 13 April the newly established National Transitional Council 'elected' Djotodia, the only candidate, by acclamation as Head of the Transition⁵⁹. In consequence, the African Union condemned the unconstitutional seizure of power by Séléka, increased the size of its Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX)⁶⁰, and established the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) on 19 July.

While Séléka was marching from the north towards Bangui, massive human rights violations were committed by both Séléka and FACA – in particular, summary execution, torture, looting, destruction, and rape. **Then, under Séléka rule, the Central African Republic fell into chaos as national security forces disintegrated**⁶¹. Because of this anarchy, Séléka killed civilians and looted for months, and rape and houses' destruction became widespread in the whole country.

⁵⁶ 'Déclaration du Séléka CPSK-CPJP-UDR', at <http://cpjp.centrafrique.over-blog.org/article-declaration-du-seleka-cpsk-cpjp-ufdr-113497507.html>.

⁵⁷ The Libreville Agreements established that the Constitution would be upheld and that President François Bozizé would remain in power until the end of his term of office, in 2016. The agreements also provided that a prime minister from the opposition, with full executive powers, would be appointed; a Government of National Unity with representatives of all stakeholders involved in the talks would be established; the National Assembly would be dissolved after the adoption of the new Electoral Code and the establishment of the National Authority for Elections; and legislative elections would be organised within 12 months.

⁵⁸ Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme, 'Central African Republic: A country in the hands of Seleka war criminals' (2013), 10.

⁵⁹ Via 'Presidential' decrees, Djotodia suspended the Constitution and dissolved the National Assembly, the Constitutional Court, and the Government of National Unity.; United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic', S/2013/261, 3 May 2013, §12.

⁶⁰ MICOPAX was mandated in 2008 by the ECCAS to contribute to peace-building (DDR and SSR), to contribute to the political process's development (elections' organisation and reconciliation), help the government and NGOs to promote human rights, and coordinate the humanitarian aid.

⁶¹ Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine : le naufrage d'un Etat, l'agonie d'une Nation', *Revue d'étude et de recherche sur le droit et l'administration dans les pays d'Afrique* (2014), 8.



Séléka was also responsible for mass killings, torture, and mutilation in this time⁶². The crimes committed by Séléka were systematically against the non-Muslim population while Muslims, in general, were spared. After Bangui fell, CAR citizens were abused by a Séléka coalition largely unopposed for months, but people gradually organised themselves for their own protection into self-defence militias called the **Anti-balaka**. The Anti-balaka immediately targeted not only Séléka fighters but also the entire Muslim community suspected of supporting Séléka.

For many among the non-Muslim population, Muslims were all associated with Séléka. Anti-balaka fighters quickly adopted the same methods as Séléka and perpetrated numerous massacres of Muslims⁶³. According to several analysts, the first Anti-balaka attacks on Séléka positions took place in the countryside in early September⁶⁴. As Anti-balaka attacks on Séléka forces resulted in significant Séléka losses, the latter responded by carrying out deadly attacks on Christian villages in retaliation. **Under pressure from the international community, President Djotodia dissolved Séléka in September**, but that decision didn't have any impact, given that, for a long time, President Djotodia didn't control its troops anymore.

Even though combat between the Anti-balaka and Séléka had begun months before, the violence took on a large scale only on 5 December 2013 when Anti-balaka fighters launched a massive attack on Séléka forces in Bangui. According to the final report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, in only two days, more than 1,000⁶⁵ people were killed only in and around Bangui⁶⁶. This offensive sparked a cycle of reprisals among civilians and between Anti-balaka and Séléka forces throughout the country and led to the collapse of the already weak administration. In the following months, the large wave of violence by the non-Muslim population against Muslims civilians and *vice versa* triggered massive population displacement, **including 450,000 people fleeing as refugees** to the neighbouring countries, the majority of whom were Muslims⁶⁷. The situation spinning out of control led some people, especially members of the press, to talk about religious conflict and even potential genocide. This finally drew the attention of the international audience.

⁶² United Nations, 'Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013)', S/2014/373, 26 June 2014.

⁶³ Human Rights Watch, *Ils sont venus pour tuer: intensification des atrocités en République centrafricaine* (2013), 17.

⁶⁴ Hence, HRW reported attacks on Zéré, Gbakora, Bandorok, Ouham-Bac, Bodora, and Bossangoa. See Human Rights Watch, *Ils sont venus pour tuer*, 29; Weyns, et. al., *Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic*.

⁶⁵ According to the report of the Secretary-General on children and armed conflict in the Central African Republic, the numbers of deaths reached 2,000.

⁶⁶ United Nations, 'Final report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, submitted pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013)', S/2014/928, 22 December 2014, §213.

⁶⁷ Actually, the majority of the Muslim population fled the country between 2013 and 2014.



2.2.4 International response to the conflict in the Central African Republic

On 5th December 2013, **UNSC resolution 2127** – the result of a French diplomatic offensive – articulated three important decisions. Firstly, it authorised the deployment of **an AU-led International Support Mission in the CAR (MISCA)** for a period of 12 months with the mandate to protect the civilians; to restore security, public order, and state authority over the whole country; and to create conditions conducive to the provision of humanitarian assistance to populations in need. Then, the resolution authorised the French troops as part of **Operation Sangaris** to take all necessary measures to support MISCA in the discharge of its mandate. Lastly, it requested the Secretary-General to undertake preparations and planning for the possible transformation of MISCA into a United Nations peacekeeping operation, should the UNSC decide to establish such an operation. The Sangaris operation began officially during the night of 5–6 December under the command of General Francisco Soriano and deployed 1,600 soldiers⁶⁸ two days later, while, on 13 December, the AU authorised an increase in MISCA strength from 4,500 to 6,000 men. The Mission of ECCAS for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic transferred its authority to MISCA on 19 December.

Although the international troops took action in the CAR, at the end of December there were **640,000 IDPs, of including 214,000 in Bangui**, while **232,000 refugees** lived in neighbouring countries⁶⁹. Despite the international presence, violence and human rights violations persisted to the point that, in his 3 March 2014 report, the UNSG stated that ‘violence in the capital has reached gruesome levels of cruelty: corpses are mutilated in public and dismemberments and beheadings take place with total impunity. Targeted attacks by anti-Balaka groups prevent Muslims from moving out of the few neighbourhoods where they have regrouped. The vast majority of the Muslim population of Bangui has fled and those Muslims who remain live under international protection’⁷⁰.

Given the widespread killings described above, the UNSG recommended, in the same report, the rapid deployment of a 12,000-personnel (military, police, and civilian components) United Nations peacekeeping operation in order to address the violence in the country⁷¹. On 10 April 2014, the Security Council established the **United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization**

⁶⁸ Sangaris increased its strength from 1,600 to 2,000 military personnel in February 2014 and deployed in Bangui and in hot spots in the western and northern parts of the country.

⁶⁹ United Nations, ‘Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic’, S/2013/787, 31 December 2013, 57, 58.

⁷⁰ United Nations, ‘Report on the Central African Republic submitted pursuant to paragraph 48 of Security Council resolution 2127 (2013)’, S/2014/142, 3 March 2014, §7.

⁷¹ Ibid., §§ 52–55.



Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) with a transfer of authority from MISCA to the MINUSCA expected to take place on 15 September 2014. The mandate was designed to protect the civilians; to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance, and to support the implementation of the transition process. In particular, MINUSCA had the objective of helping the Transitional Authorities and the National Electoral Authority, to the end of holding of free, fair, transparent, and inclusive elections no later than February 2015, although the elections were postponed several times, in light of the slow pace of preparations. On 15 June, EUFOR RCA reached its full operational capacity as a 'bridge mission' aimed at giving time enough for first MISCA and eventually the MINUSCA to deploy completely in the CAR.

In the meantime, on 10 January, under international (most notably ECCAS)⁷² and domestic pressure, **Michel Djotodia resigned from his position as Head of State of the Transition**, given his failure to respond to the escalation of violence, and 10 days later the National Transitional Council elected **Catherine Samba-Panza**, then mayor of Bangui, as the new Head of State of the Transition, a transition scheduled to last until new elections take place⁷³. Subsequently, a forum on national reconciliation was held in Brazzaville from 21 to 23 July 2014 at the initiative of ECCAS. The forum ended with an agreement on the cessation of hostilities that, among other things, committed the signatories to refrain from any project aimed at partitioning of the Central African Republic, although that issue constituted a fault line among the former Séléka.

Despite these efforts, on 29 October 2016, the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic stated that it deplored the lack of progress of the transition process, particularly in terms of fighting reconciliation between the ex-Séléka and the Anti-balaka who frequently violated the Brazzaville agreement in the months following its conclusion⁷⁴. In August, the UNSG confirmed an almost total lack of capacity in the areas of police, justice, and corrections in the country⁷⁵. **Tackling the impunity for criminals and reforming the country's justice and security systems were soon identified as the key priorities for reconstruction.**

Admittedly, on 15 September, the official transfer of authority from MISCA to the MINUSCA took place as expected, but neither Sangaris nor EUFOR nor even MINUSCA could prevent a new upsurge of violence in Bangui from 7 to 16 October, which led to 11 civilians' deaths. Given the slow pace of preparation with regard to the legislative and presidential elections, on 24 December

⁷² Michel Luntumbue and Simon Massock, 'Afrique centrale : risques et envers de la pax tchadiana', Note d'Analyse du GRIP (2014), 3.

⁷³ Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine : le naufrage d'un Etat', 3.

⁷⁴ United Nations, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic established pursuant to Security Council resolution 2127 (2013)', S/2014/762, 29 October 2014, §19.; United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic', S/2015/227, 1 April 2015, §19.

⁷⁵ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic', S/2014/562, 1 August 2014, §52.



2014, CAR Prime Minister Mahamat Kamoun announced a revised calendar for the electoral process, which foresaw a Constitutional referendum in May and elections first in July (legislative), then in August (presidential) 2015.

2.2.5 Efforts to restore peace

The first major step in the peace process was, in fact, **the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation**, held on 4 to 11 May⁷⁶, which was initiated within the **Brazzaville agreement framework**. Unlike previous dialogue and reconciliation efforts, this forum relied heavily on grassroots consultations⁷⁷ and the inclusion of citizens' voices. It gathered more than 600 representatives⁷⁸, covering the transitional government, national political parties, the main opposition armed groups (Séléka and the Anti-balaka), the private sector, civil society, traditional chiefs, and religious groups with the purpose of defining their collective vision for the country's future and debating the country's **peace-building agenda**⁷⁹. Four themes were discussed: **peace and security, justice and reconciliation, social and economic development, and governance**.

On the basis of these themes, the forum adopted a republican pact for peace, national reconciliation, and reconstruction that spelt out dozens of recommendations⁸⁰ to put the country on track in order to bring an end to the deadly conflicts in the CAR. Furthermore, during the forum, nine Séléka and Anti-balaka groups signed an agreement on the principles for disarmament, demobilisation, re-integration and repatriation into the uniformed state forces of the Central African Republic and accepted renunciation of armed fighting as a means of making political claims. Upon forum request, ECCAS accepted also extension of the transition period to 31 December 2015 to give time for the Transitional Authority to ensure the organisation of credible elections.

No matter the momentum created by the Bangui Forum, the drafting of a new Constitution, and a new electoral law, a new surge of violence hit Bangui between 26 September and 16 October 2015. Seventy-nine civilians were killed and 512 were injured during the deadliest violence episode since October 2014. According to the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, the armed

⁷⁶ Initially, the Bangui Forum was scheduled to take place in January 2015, but it was postponed several times because of difficulties in organising the preliminary popular consultation.

⁷⁷ The Bangui Forum was preceded by popular consultation throughout the country that lasted several weeks, in order to compile citizens' grievances and expectations.

⁷⁸ Former president Francois Bozizé and Michel Djotodia, representing, respectively, the Front Démocratique du peuple Centrafricain and the Convergence Nationale Kwa Na Kwa did not participate in the forum.

⁷⁹ "Five takeaways from the Bangui Forum for National Reconciliation in the Central African Republic", The Brookings Institution, modified 15 May 2015, at <http://www.brookings.edu/blogs/africa-in-focus/posts/2015/05/15-bangui-forum-central-african-republic-copley-sy>.

⁸⁰ Among other things, the Forum called for the creation of a truth and reconciliation commission, the adoption of a law on the religious freedom, the disarmament and reintegration or reinsertion of armed groups, the reform of the security sector, the creation of a special tribunal to try persons suspected of committing war crimes and crimes against humanity.



groups sparked a new wave of attacks 'aimed at destabilizing the transition and further delaying elections' because polls were considered to be the major threat to the plans of spoilers⁸¹ to seize power either by force or through a new peace settlement outside the framework established by the international community'.⁸²

The rebels' new attacks succeeded only in delaying⁸³ the transition process: on 13 December 2015, a referendum endorsed the new Constitution, and then, on 30 December, the first round of presidential and legislative elections was held in surprising calm, with 30 candidates. The two winners were **Anicet-Georges Dologué** and **Faustin-Archange Touadéra**, each a former prime minister. Subsequently, the Constitutional Court confirmed the presidential elections' results but invalidated the legislative elections on the grounds of irregularities⁸⁴. Eventually, on 14 February, **Faustin-Archange Touadéra won** outright in a second round of presidential elections, with 62.71% of votes. On the same peaceful day, the new legislative elections were held. President Touadéra has taken office on 30 March 2016.

2.3 Root causes of the conflict

According to political theories of civil war, rebellion is a product of political grievances. As William Zartman put it, 'it takes little imagination to see that grievances over deprivation of basic needs have a motor role in conflict. Grievances come from unmet needs, unwarranted deprivation, felt hurts, and resentment against the withholding of just deserts, and thus they relate to other dimensions such as distribution and justice'⁸⁵. Rebellions occur when people's rights are not respected, when their voices are not listened to by the government, when they face deprivation. Political and/or economic oppression and marginalisation drives people to take up arms, especially in an authoritarian system where there is no mechanism for the peaceful resolution of political

⁸¹ Spoilers are leaders and parties who believe the emerging peace threatens their power, world view, and interests. Spoilers emerge because generally negotiated peace process creates winners and losers that often strongly disagree over the terms of an acceptable peace. Spoilers exist only when there is a peace process to undermine, that is, after at least two warring parties have committed themselves publicly to a pact or have signed a comprehensive peace agreement. Stephen John Stedman, 'Spoiler Problems in Peace Processes' in Paul C. Stern and Daniel Druckman *International Conflict Resolution After the Cold War*, (Washington: National Academy Press, 2000), 179, 178.

and who use violence to undermine attempts to achieve it

⁸² United Nations, "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2196 (2015)" S/2015/936, 21 December 2015, § 8, 9, 14.

⁸³ "Central African Republic: Samba-Panza Endorses CAR Electoral Calendar", All Africa, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201511110918.html>.

⁸⁴ Agence d'information d'Afrique Centrale, "Elections en RCA : la Cour constitutionnelle confirme les résultats d'Anicet Dologué et Faustin Touadéra, mais annule les législatives", at <http://adiac-congo.com/content/elections-en-rca-la-cour-constitutionnelle-confirme-les-resultats-danicet-doloquele-et>.

⁸⁵ Cynthia J. Arnson and I. William Zartman, *Rethinking the Economics of War: The Intersection of Need, Creed, and Greed* (Washington, DC: Woodrow Wilson Center Press, 2005), 263.



disputes⁸⁶. Longstanding ethnic and religious hatred too, along with ideological differences, can create grievances and lead to rebellion.

2.3.1 Characteristics of the Bozizé regime

There were many elements characterising President Bozizé's regime that rebels groups had legitimate reason to denounce. Cronyism, nepotism, repression, corruption, and looting of state wealth have always been part of Bozizé rule. In the last CAR parliament, 20 representatives⁸⁷ were members of the Bozizé family, although the 2011 presidential and legislative elections were widely denounced on grounds of irregularities⁸⁸. Bozizé relatives were regularly appointed to positions for which they had no qualifications. They controlled the security and finance ministries, holding key positions⁸⁹. Both the director of the central bank and the minister of finance were the president's proteges. The president favoured not only his own family but also his ethnic group, the Gbaya. In addition, most of the managers and directors in the mines ministry were from his region, Bossango⁹⁰. Furthermore, army personnel were regularly recruited on the basis of ethnic criteria. When Bozizé's presidency ended, his regime had become a family business based on a monopoly on power and wealth. The characteristics of the Bozizé regime partly explain the local population's sense that governmental institutions lack accountability.

2.3.2 The rise of Séléka and competition for power

The current crisis equally reflects longstanding domestic and regional tensions that have given rise to past crises between the Central African government and various rebel factions, mostly from the politically and economically marginalised north-western and north-eastern regions of the country. However, even if CAR citizens had many reasons to denounce the Bozizé regime, numerous signs show that Séléka was 'a heterogeneous consortium of malcontents' much more motivated by greed than by the desire to move the country's politics in favour of its citizens⁹¹.

Firstly, one has to note that **Séléka never had a political programme or a common ideology**. It never explained concretely how it aimed to address the problems of bad governance under President Bozizé and develop the Central African Republic. This lack of political programme seems

⁸⁶ World Bank, *Breaking the Conflict Trap: Civil War and Development Policy* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 53.

⁸⁷ Louisa Lombard and Raphaël Botiveau, 'Rébellion et limites de la consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine', *Politique africaine* 125 (2012), 191.

⁸⁸ Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine', 5.

⁸⁹ Bozizé's sons were the defence minister, the chief of security at Bangui's airport, and head of the Research and Investigation Department.

⁹⁰ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition', 3.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*, 6; Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine', 3.



to be a constant among the CAR rebel groups, given that, already in 2008, Andreas Mehler, from the German Institute of Global and Area Studies, wrote that there has been few clear statements of what the various rebels stand for. The most political of the stated aims of rebel representatives has been 'to sit down and to discuss national problems'⁹². This analysis was confirmed one year later by the International Peace Information Service in a report noting that the Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la République et de la Démocratie (APRD), the most widespread rebel movement at that time, had not developed a real political programme after more than three years of existence⁹³.

The only common objective the Séléka members have ever shared was to topple President Bozizé. The International Crisis Group (ICG) seems right when it says that 'all armed oppositions [*sic*] in CAR has been driven by its desire [...] to advance its personal interests rather than any specific political agenda'⁹⁴. Additional proof of this is that once Bangui came under Séléka rule, tensions emerged quickly between individual factions of the Séléka coalition and the alliance crumbled. Some Séléka elements demonstrated in Bangui to demand the immediate payment of allowances that were promised to them prior to the capture of Bangui, and some even threatened to attack the new regime if they didn't get their rewards. Fighting among Séléka elements over looted or stolen goods was reported also⁹⁵.

The composition of Séléka

For a more comprehensive understanding of Séléka's objectives, one must also look into its composition⁹⁶. Indeed, when Séléka began its offensive in December 2012, the coalition comprised approximately 1,600 fighters⁹⁷. However, Séléka's strength increased quickly during its march on Bangui. The International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH) estimated Séléka numbers at 5,000 fighters when the capital fell, while according to the African Union the coalition already comprised 10,000 to 20,000 men before they arrived in the capital⁹⁸.

Although these organisations differ in their estimations, they all agree that there was a large surge in numbers of fighters before and after Séléka took control of Bangui. According to many analysts,

⁹² Andreas Mehler, 'Reshaping political space? The Impact of the armed insurgency in the Central African Republic on political parties and representation', *German Institute of Global and Area Studies*, Working Paper no. 116 (2009), 21, 22.

⁹³ Steven Spittaels and Filip Hilgert, *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 7, 9.

⁹⁴ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Anatomy of a phantom state', 22.

⁹⁵ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic', S/2013/261, §34; International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Priorities of the transition,' Africa Report no. 203(2013).; United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic', S/2013/470, §18.

⁹⁶ The composition and the key leaders are further discussed in the chapter 2.5.

⁹⁷ United Nations, 'Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry', 42.

⁹⁸ Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme, *Central African Republic*, 3; Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 15.



this increase can be explained mainly by the enrichment promised by Séléka leaders through looting, payments, and new DDR⁹⁹ programmes¹⁰⁰. These promises were made not only to Central Africans, some of whom were offenders, criminals who had escaped from prisons, jobless people, and ‘road cutters’¹⁰¹, but also to foreigners who joined Séléka ‘in the hope of benefiting from the financial gains of the rebellion’¹⁰². These foreign fighters, possibly in the majority according to HRW, were mainly from Janjaweed and Zaghawa militias¹⁰³.

Therefore, it is clear that a large part of Séléka was composed of local and foreign mercenaries who joined the rebellion mainly for pecuniary reasons and not in response to political grievances. This assessment is confirmed by the fact that, on one hand, many of the former ‘liberators’ who brought Bozizé to power in 2003 swelled the ranks of the rebellion, including members of the Presidential Guard who openly declared that they were ‘changing sides’ because they hadn’t been paid when Bozizé took power¹⁰⁴. On the other hand, Séléka commonly enlisted children, some of whom were reported to have been as young as 10 years old. In August 2013, according to Amnesty International research, there were as many as 3,500 people under the age of 18 (some of whom were Sudanese and Chadians) within the ranks of Séléka, and obviously children do not join rebellions because of objective social grievances¹⁰⁵.

INSURGENCY WARFARE

Séléka was an alliance of rebel groups, and part of its military success should be attributed to implementation of **insurgency tactics**. Séléka’s main military opponent was **FACA**, which lacked resources, leadership, and competency. Also, FACA was unable to control the areas where rebel groups originated. Séléka was able to take control of the northern and north-eastern parts of the country quite easily. Religious and ethnic factors in these areas were favourable for the rebel forces, and the population in the northern parts of the country supported them. Though Séléka was supported in northern areas, it did not receive support in southern or western parts of the country. When Séléka forces advanced, they looted villages, killed people, and committed other crimes

⁹⁹ Especially frustrated by the bungled implementation of the DDR programme for former combatants that was established in a 2008 peace deal, some sought to compel the national government to fulfill its commitments under past treaties, but others joined the rebellions only in order to benefit from new programmes.

¹⁰⁰ Fédération internationale des droits de l’homme, *Central African Republic*; Weyns et al. *Mapping Conflict Motives*; International Crisis Group, ‘Central African Republic: Priorities of the transition’.

⁹⁴ Siân Herbert, Nathalia Dukhan, and Marielle Debos, ‘State fragility in the Central African Republic: What prompted the 2013 coup?’, University of Birmingham (2013), 19.

¹⁰² Amnesty International, ‘République centrafricaine: la crise des droits humains devient incontrôlable,’ (2013). 13; International Crisis Group, ‘Central African Republic: Priorities of the transition’, 7.

¹⁰³ Didier Niewiadowski, ‘La République centrafricaine’, 2; Human Rights Watch, ‘I can still smell the dead’ (2013), 34.

¹⁰⁴ International Crisis Group, ‘Central African Republic: Priorities of the transition’, 7.

¹⁰⁵ Amnesty International, ‘République centrafricaine’, 32, 33.



against the civilian population. This eroded the image of Séléka's fighters as liberators and made them look like bandits for the people living outside their support area. Séléka's leaders could have tried to buy the support of this part of the population through the same kind of promises they had given to people living in the northern parts of the country. If the leaders of the alliance had managed to gain tighter control of their fighters, co-ordinated their efforts and goals better, and tried to buy the political support of the people living in southern and western parts of the country, they might have succeeded in preventing the Anti-balaka from rising in the full extent that it did.

What aspects of the Séléka uprising, then, were typical of insurgency warfare? First of all, the basic conditions were fulfilled: standards of living were extremely low, the country was internally divided into fronts, and the CAR was and had been extremely unstable. The alliance had a large part of the CAR's population supporting it. Rebels advanced quickly. The blame or credit falls partly on FACA, which offered little resistance to the rebels. Séléka took several villages, towns, and cities easily. Also, the rebels moved goods such as diamonds and gold, between countries, which helped them fund their activities and gain weapons. What started as fighting between government troops and individual rebel groups grew to become a full-fledged rebellion, which ended up removing President Bozizé and his government from office.

2.3.3 Illicit trade in natural resource curse

According to Collier (2011) there are three channels by which primary commodities might relate to the risk of conflict. First, 'primary commodity exports provide opportunities for rebel predation during conflict and so can finance the escalation and sustainability of rebellion.'¹⁰⁶ The most celebrated cases are the **diamond-financed rebellions** in Sierra Leone and Angola. Second, 'the rebellions may actually be motivated, as opposed to merely being made feasible, by the desire to capture the rents, either during or after conflict'.¹⁰⁷ Even if there is no realistic chance of capturing the state, rebels may want to keep the country or some regions under lawlessness because **loot-seeking** is easier under chaotic conditions. At last, the third channel is 'that the governments of resource-rich countries tend to be less accountable to their citizens. The provocation of rebellion might be one extreme consequence of **a lack of accountability**'.¹⁰⁸ Due to the extensive natural resources state can use repression and patronage to hold onto power. These three channels refers to a phenomena traditionally called in the academic literature as the "**resource curse**". According to this curse, many low-income countries with vast exportable commodities, namely non-

¹⁰⁶ Paul Collier, 'The Political Economy of Natural Resources', Social Research Vol. 77, no 4 (2010), 1111

¹⁰⁷ Paul Collier, 'The Political Economy of Natural Resources', 1111.

¹⁰⁸ Paul Collier, 'The Political Economy of Natural Resources', 1111



renewables such as oil and minerals, tend to have less economic growth, and worse development outcomes than countries with fewer natural resources.¹⁰⁹

Even if resource curse theory provided by Collier is not infallible¹¹⁰, it nevertheless seems to explain the conflict dynamic that took place in the Central African Republic civil war. Indeed, there seems to have a consensus on that fact that **Looting and natural resources' exploitation played an essential role in Séléka's motivations since the group showed nothing more than rent-seeking behaviour.** During their march on Bangui, Séléka systematically took control of the mining towns on its way: Bria, Kabo, Ippy, Ndassima, Dimbi, and Kembe. After the coup, Séléka moved into the western diamond and gold regions quickly and took control of the main towns there. In the view of the International Peace Information Service, establishing control over the mining activities in the west of the country was 'clearly a strategic Seleka objective'¹¹¹.

When Bozizé left power in 2013, real territorial sharing proliferated, in which every mining centre was privatised by 'com-zones', most of them being self-proclaimed colonels¹¹². Séléka members used to proceed in different ways. They operated some mines directly and 'stole' the miners at other times. Sometimes they offered their protection in exchange for diamonds or gold, while on other occasions they set up an illegal 'taxation' or authorisation system.

Natural resources (in particular, diamonds) actually played such a crucial role in the rebellion that a former CAR minister talked about a '**diamond dealer coup**'¹¹³. Natural resources' importance in the CAR conflict dynamics was even confirmed in the UNSG reports: '[T]he role that the exploitation of the natural resources of the Central African Republic plays in fueling the ongoing conflict needs to be addressed as a root cause of the cyclical instability.'¹¹⁴

¹⁰⁹ Paul Collier, 'Laws and Codes for the Resource Curse', *Yale Human Rights and Development Journal* Vol. 11, Issue 1 (2014), 3.

¹¹⁰ Frederik van der Ploeg argues even that 'the best available empirical evidence suggests that countries with a large share of primary exports in Gross National Products (GNP) have bad growth records and high inequality, especially if quality of institutions, rule of law and corruption are bad.' Even if the resource curse is clear for some countries such as Nigeria, the resource curse remain controversial as a general proposition since counterexamples exist such as Botswana. Therefore, the curse seems not to be inevitable since although some rich countries are in terrible state, others benefit from their natural wealth. See, Frederik van der Ploeg, 'Natural resources: Curse or blessing?' *CESifo Working Paper Resources and Environment*, no. 3125, (2010), 1.)

¹¹¹ Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 33; International Crisis Group, 'The Central African crisis: From predation to stabilisation', Africa Report no. 219 (2014), 10.

¹¹² Fédération internationale des droits de l'homme, *Central African Republic*, 16; Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine', 46.

¹¹³ Discontent arose from the 2008 operation Closing Gate, during which Bozizé surrounded several mining towns in order to confiscate large amounts of diamonds and other goods. It was a means to collect money quickly and create a near monopoly for those buying parties, with whom the regime had a profitable relationship. See Emily Mellgard, "What is the Seleka?"

¹¹⁴ United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic', S/2013/261, §29.



However, Séléka fighters and commanders didn't limit their robberies to natural resources; they tried to enrich themselves in every possible way. According to many reports, 'widespread and systematic looting and destruction occurred after Mr. Djotodia and the Séléka forces took over Bangui in March 2013'¹¹⁵. The looted goods¹¹⁶ were systematically transported to market towns across the border, in neighbouring Cameroon and Chad¹¹⁷. Some Séléka elements also resorted to poaching, which fuels a lucrative bush-meat sector but also involves trafficking in ivory, generally traded through Cameroon. According to the ICG, Séléka rebels were quick to extend their zones of influence into nature-protection areas in order to profit from ivory sales¹¹⁸.

Séléka typically smuggled fuel but also established a parallel 'taxation' system for livestock, coffee, and the transport of agricultural goods and general merchandise¹¹⁹. It introduced a parallel customs system that took a different form in each region and set up roadblocks, demanding money and fuel. The rebels even imposed checkpoints at the entrances and exits of some towns in order to get more funds¹²⁰.

2.3.4 Frustration with Michel Djotodia

The actions of Michel Djotodia while he was president undoubtedly demonstrate rent-seeking behaviour. For years, the rebel leader had denounced the Bozizé regime for its bad governance, especially Muslims' marginalisation, yet when Djotodia took power, not a single one of the over 500 decrees he signed was related to substantive socio-economic issues. A large majority of the decrees dealt with nominations to political and military positions, with a clear view to consolidating Djotodia's position, placating adversaries, and rewarding¹²¹ senior Séléka members for 'services rendered'¹²². Even the Séléka leadership recognised a total lack of socio-economic initiatives undertaken during the Djotodia presidency. It soon became clear that he had decided to suspend the Constitution and rule by decree without organising elections for three years. He, his entourage,

¹¹⁵ United Nations, 'Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry', §69; Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*.

¹¹⁶ Curiously, in Michel Djotodia's home village, there were no vehicles before the conflict, whereas after he became president, there were cars, motorbikes, and prospering business (FIDH: 2013), 38.

¹¹⁷ Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 29; Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine', 42.

¹¹⁸ International Crisis Group, 'The Central African crisis: From predation to stabilisation', 13.

¹¹⁹ United Nations, 'Final report of the Panel of Experts', §144.

¹²⁰ International Crisis Group, 'The Central African crisis: From predation to stabilisation', 15.

¹²¹ The most important posts were given to other leaders of the armed groups making up the Séléka (FIDH, 2013, 14).

¹²² Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 27.



and Séléka barons all used their access to power for their own personal enrichment¹²³. As Louisa Lombard put it, he was a classic coup leader seeking power for his personal benefit¹²⁴.

All these pieces of information indicate that Séléka leaders, motivated primarily by greed, resorted, as is usual in such cases, to using 'frustrated and angered rural youth (and foreign mercenaries) to negotiate their access to national politics in Bangui and to rewards'¹²⁵. No doubt, controlling of natural resources has always been a major motivation in coup projects, because the Central African Republic is an annuitant state where natural resources have always been exploited on behalf of the elites and foreigners, to the detriment of the population¹²⁶.

The fall of President Bozizé is part of a cycle of which each circle extending from the President's entourage will, once in power, endeavour to acquire the most profit from state annuities. The faction in power ensures its position via remuneration of its political backers, by vote-catching, through nepotism and larger-scale corruption, and by repressing opponents¹²⁷. In doing this, it invariably provokes the jealousy of left-aside individuals who dream of one day possessing the riches promulgated through governmental functions or presidential favours. In doing so, they will use all means, including the training of a rebel group that will surrender only in exchange for financial compensation¹²⁸.

Acknowledging these internal dynamics makes one wonder whether the elections can help solving the conflict. History has shown that in the case of the CAR, shifts in power seem always to create winners and losers, whether these result from democratic elections or a violent coup. Hence, building sustainable peace by reforming the government and strengthening administration is not necessarily a treatment for this complex crisis, in consideration of the long history of despots. Accordingly, the cessation of violence may be only temporary: a new chief may soon impose himself, eager to profit, in his turn, from the opportunity¹²⁹. In the CAR, inclusive politics with respect to rioters and armed opponents has created a dangerous precedent, legitimating recourse to violence and weapons as a means of negotiation and oppression to the end of obtaining

¹²³ Ibid.; International Crisis Group, 'The Central African crisis: From predation to stabilisation', 4.

¹²⁴ African Arguments, 'Central African Republic: President Michel Djotodia and the good little putschist's tool box', at <http://africanarguments.org/2013/04/02/central-african-republic-president-michel-djotodia-and-the-good-little%20putchist%E2%80%99s-tool-box-by-louisa-lombard>.

¹²⁵ Louisa Lombard and Raphaël Botiveau, 'Rébellion et limites', 201.

¹²⁶ Jesús D. Alcalde, 'Central African Republic: An open conflict, a remote peace' in *Geopolitical Overview of Conflicts*, 2014 (Spain: Spanish Institute of Strategic Studies, 2014), 190; Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine', 52.

¹²⁷ Pierre Buhler, *La puissance au 21ème siècle* (Paris: CNRS éditions, 2014), 194.

¹²⁸ According to Andreas Mehler, the rebels groups 'professed readiness to join a power-sharing government might be seen as nothing more than rent-seeking behavior and not an acknowledgement of the need for more consensual decision-making' (Mehler, 2009, 22). This analysis is confirmed by the research conducted by the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, according to whom fighting between (former) components of Séléka can be explained by competition among political representatives of armed groups for ministerial positions, as well as among military commanders for control of resources.

¹²⁹ Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine', 10.



material compensation, including that handed out by international actors¹³⁰. Hence, previous government are largely responsible for the persistence of rebellions, which also result from a policy that rewards perpetrators of violence to the detriment of traditional parties¹³¹

2.3.5 Politicisation of ethnicity and religious conflict

The Central African conflict has been regularly described in the press as a religious conflict. However, the notion of religious conflict can be interpreted in various ways. Thus, before applying the concept to the conflict in the CAR some of these interpretations will be discussed.

Academic literature on religious conflicts is dense and controversial, but there seems to have a consensus on the fact that 'religion is rarely the only one cause or even the strongest cause of ethnic conflict'.¹³² Jonathan Fox (2004) argues that religion is often used by cynical politicians that don't have religious agenda.¹³³ Seul even goes further by saying that 'religion is not the cause of religious conflict'.¹³⁴ On contrary, religious war stems from different political and economic factors with limited connection to religion, such as inequality, marginalization, unmet basic needs and limited resources. For authors such as David Little, Ted Gurr or Monica Toft, religion has to be first instrumentalized by elites in order to lead to conflicts.¹³⁵ However, even if religion is a pretext hiding political reasons, some authors think that a conflict is nevertheless religious when the fighters are mobilized on the basis of their religious identity. For instance, Frances Stewart argues that 'while all conflicts have several motives with political and/or economic ones generally central, mobilisation frequently occurs on the basis of particular identities, and conflicts can then be classified as 'ethnic' or 'religious', or class or ideological, on the basis of how people are mobilised rather than with respect to the political or economic motives for such mobilisation. Consequently, [...] conflicts will be classified as ethnic or religious according to their main organising identity, irrespective of the 'true' underlying motives and objectives'.¹³⁶

¹³⁰ Andrea C. Mayerni, 'La Centrafrique, de la rébellion Séléka aux groupes Anti-Balaka (2012–2014) : usages de la violence, schème persécutif et traitement médiatique du conflit', *Politique africaine*, Vol. 134 (2014), 185. The ICG underscored already in 2010 that the so-called political struggle for greater government investment in the neglected north-east of the UFDR was actually concealing the desire of its leaders, Djotodia and Abaka Sabone, to obtain lucrative posts in the government in exchange for a ceasefire.

¹³¹ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: The roots of violence', Africa Report no. 230 (2015), 6.

¹³² Jonathan Fox, *Religion, Civilization and Civil War* (Lanham: Lexington Books, 2004), 125.

¹³³ Jonathan Fox, 16.

¹³⁴ Jeffrey R. Seul, "'Our is the way of God": religion, identity, and intergroup conflict', *Journal of Peace Research*, Vol. 36 n° 5, (1999), 564.

¹³⁵ Charles-Philippe David, *La guerre et la paix. Approches et enjeux de la sécurité et de la stratégie* (Paris: Presses de Sciences Po, 2013), 171.

¹³⁶ Frances Stewart, 'Religion versus Ethnicity as a Source of Mobilisation: are there differences?', Centre for Research on Inequality, Human Security and Ethnicity, Crise Working Paper, n° 70 (2009), 5.



Another approach to the notion is based on an idea that in there is a tendency to claim a conflict to be religious although the real motivations would only be framed in religious terms. Indeed, people can be mobilized on the basis of their confessional identity but that doesn't mean that they fight in the name of God. In that context, war can occur between religious communities without those having religious objectives that would be for instance imposing a religious dogma to the enemy. Therefore, a conflict will be classified as religious if people lead what the sociologist Mark Juergensmeyer calls a 'cosmic war' in which 'divine battles between Good and Evil, commonly portrayed in the scriptures of most religions, are believed to be occurring in the here-and-now'.¹³⁷ Hence, in religious wars 'warrior believers' fight for a holy cause and all actions are taken in the name of God and justified in religious terms. They justify violence, even on innocents by 'convincing themselves that the rampant evil in, and injustices of, society far outweigh the amount of harm caused by their actions.'¹³⁸

Bearing this theoretical framework, should one describe the CAR conflict as a religious war? Throughout its history, several leaders of the CAR have instrumentalised regional, ethnic, or religious allegiances to reinforce their position of power. The contemporary struggle between anti-Balaka and Séléka as well as the religious lens has also been to some extent the result of elites manipulations. However, while CAR civil war can be classified as a religious conflict since people have been mobilized and fought at some point on the basis on their religious identity, it can't be described as a religious war from the Juergensmeyer theoretical perspective. Indeed, **Séléka never had a religious agenda** – such as aiming at introducing Sharia¹³⁹ in the country or creating an Islamic regime¹⁴⁰. The government discrimination against the Muslim population was repeatedly cited to justify Séléka actions, 'but it was never framed in religious terms'¹⁴¹. Admittedly, Djotodia declared in his speech before the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) that 'all Christians are liars' and 'with God's help, we will reach Bangui and set up an Islamic state to apply the Sharia'¹⁴². However, he never took action to implement such a programme, thereby indicating that the above statement was probably an attempt to gather support from Islamic states. Furthermore, on one hand, violence was used not only against Christians and animists but also sometimes against

¹³⁷ Gregory F. Treverton, Heather S. Gregg, Daniel Gibran, Charles W. Yost, 'Exploring religious conflict' Rand Corporation, (2005), 3.

¹³⁸ Gregory F. Treverton, Heather S. Gregg, Daniel Gibran, Charles W. Yost, 5.

¹³⁹ Emily Mellgard, 'What is the Seleka?'

¹⁴⁰ Thibaud Lesueur, 'République centrafricaine : autopsie d'une crise méconnue', 169.

¹⁴¹ Tom Jackson, 'Central African Republic: What turns a conflict 'religious'?', at <http://tonyblairfaithfoundation.org/religion-geopolitics/commentaries/opinion/central-african-republic-what-turns-conflict-religious>.

¹⁴² Le Temps, ' Crainte d'une islamisation rampante', modified 16 April 2013, at <http://www.letemps.ch/monde/2013/04/15/crainte-une-islamisation-rampante>.



Muslims, and, on the other hand, Séléka recruited non-Muslims too (including, for example, non-Muslim children)¹⁴³.

With regard to the Anti-balaka too, many indices cast doubt on the religious motivations. Firstly, even if the Anti-balaka were in the beginning self-defence militias, numerous sources – including Sangaris commander Francisco Soriano and French ambassador to Bangui Charles Malinas¹⁴⁴ – agree that the movement was quickly ‘commandeered’ by Bozizé and his supporters, with the objective of toppling President Djotodia. According to IPIS, the Anti-balaka were ‘rapidly joined by low-ranking officers and rank and file from Bozizé’s FACA, Presidential Guard, and Gendarmerie, who started to rally new recruits and to organize the groups to fight against the Seleka’¹⁴⁵. In light of this, on 9 May 2014, the Security Council Committee Concerning Central African Republic imposed sanctions on three individuals, Bozizé among them, for his being implicated in the 5 December attacks on Bangui and his financial and material support to the militias who were working to destabilise the ongoing transition and return him to power. Bozizé called on his militia to perpetrate atrocities against the regime that was in power and the Muslim population¹⁴⁶, but, instead of having a religious agenda, Bozizé and his supporters only wanted to regain their power.

As Séléka did, the Anti-balaka fighters, since the very beginning, behaved as criminals, looting from the whole Muslim community but also Christians, health centres, hospitals, and international NGOs. The Anti-balaka demanded compensation for ‘liberating’ the CAR, but when their demands were not met, they set up roadblocks to extort money. They organised kidnap-for-ransom in which the victims were often Christians. According to numerous analysts, ‘towns, mines, and other resource channels including logging and poaching that had been seized by the Séléka now came under the control of anti-Balaka militias’¹⁴⁷. Anti-balaka factions took control of border crossing into Cameroon to levy ‘taxes’ and plunder vehicles¹⁴⁸. Actually, some Anti-balaka members were even former Séléka who changed side just to be able to loot more¹⁴⁹.

Even some CAR high-ranking religious leaders challenged the idea that religion was at the root of the conflict. According to Imam Oumar Kobine Layama, head of the Central African Islamic community; Monsignor Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui; and Reverend Pastor

¹⁴³ Jackson, ‘Central African Republic: What turns a conflict “Religious”?’; Trinidad Deiros, ‘Central African Republic: The invention of a religious conflict’, Instituto Español de Estudios Estratégicos Opinion Paper 67 (2014), 8.

¹⁴⁴ RFI Afrique, ‘Centrafrique: les anti-Balaka sont-ils manipulés?’ modified 29 March 2014, at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140329-centrafrique-anti-balaka-sont-ils-manipules>.

¹⁴⁵ Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 45.

¹⁴⁶ United Nations News Centre, ‘Security Council committee concerning Central African Republic lists three individuals subject to measures imposed by Resolution 2134 (2014)’ at <http://www.un.org/press/fr/2014/SC11389.doc.htm>.

¹⁴⁷ Emily Mellgard, ‘What is the Antibalaka?’.

¹⁴⁸ Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 57–60.

¹⁴⁹ Thibaud Lesueur, ‘République centrafricaine : autopsie d'une crise méconnue’, 166.



Nicolas-Gbangou, vice-president of the union of Evangelical churches Elim, the CAR crisis isn't about religious war¹⁵⁰. The three of them agree that the two religious communities always had a healthy coexistence until politics instrumentalised religion.

Indeed, it has to be recognised that religion has never provoked major conflicts in the CAR. Quite to the contrary, many observers agree that different religious communities have always coexisted in a relatively pacific manner. Marriages between Christians and Muslims were frequent. Diverse faiths have existed alongside each other in the same villages and neighbourhoods. The CAR's Muslims have been free of contamination by extremism¹⁵¹ and it was not rare to see Christians convert to Islam, even if their prime motivation was economic¹⁵².

However, this rather idyllic vision should not obscure a more complex, conflict-ridden reality, to which the violent attacks of Bangui in 2011¹⁵³ can attest. In truth, non-Muslim populations have long been feeling certain weariness towards the Muslim minority. This tension stems firstly from a collective memory scarred by the recollection of recent slavery-linked razzias led by Arab tribes in the north-east of the CAR territory, from sultanates in bordering countries¹⁵⁴. Furthermore, the favouritism shown for certain Muslim populations by the colonialists added further reason to the collective memory supporting defiance¹⁵⁵.

Secondly, in recent decades, **economic and social tensions have developed into a religious divide** because of the domination imposed, since independence, by the Muslim communities in the realms of trade and the financial network. The economic affluence linked to this stranglehold has provoked certain resentment in the chieftains of the non-Muslim populations, who feel that 'people obedient to Muslim faith control prices, access to capital and have monopolized the country's riches'¹⁵⁶. Moreover, in the course of the last decade, Chadian president Idriss Déby has exerted, in the shadows, substantial control over CAR politics, thanks to which Muslim Chadians could act

¹⁵⁰ "RCA, l'Imam, l'Archeveque, et le Révérend "aidez-vous", Centrafrique-presse.com, modified 15 December 2013, <http://centrafrique-presse.over-blog.com/2013/12/rca-dans-afrique-education-l%E2%80%99imam-l%E2%80%99archeveque-et-le-reverend-pasteur-%C2%AB-aidez-nous-%C2%BB.html>.

¹⁵¹ Patrice Gourdin, 'Centrafrique: la fabrication d'un choc des civilisations', *Études Géostratégiques* (2014).

¹⁵² Thibaud Lesueur, 'République centrafricaine', 169.

¹⁵³ In 2011, Bangui faced violent riots against Christians and Muslims when two children were found in the boot of a car belonging to a Chadian Muslim.

¹⁵⁴ Trinidad Deiros, 'Central African Republic', 4.

¹⁵⁵ Patrice Gourdin, 'Centrafrique: la fabrication d'un choc des civilisations'.

¹⁵⁶ Weyns et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*, 54.



with nearly complete impunity in the CAR. By doing so, certain Chadian Muslims have contributed to feeding anger against 'Muslims in general', via conflation¹⁵⁷.

Given these latent tensions, many declarations made by François Bozizé and the members of his government suggest a desire to polarise and thereby mobilise the CAR population on a religious basis to 'stop the Séléka from moving forward and saving a cornered regime'¹⁵⁸. Faced with the weakness of FACA, the Bozizé clan, aware of the underlying tensions between religious communities, has probably noticed, in the Muslim majority of Séléka, the opportunity of arousing CAR citizens' anger and sparking 'patriotic' feelings meant to oppose the Djotodia designs.

Louisa Lombard is of a similar opinion. According to her analysis, Bozizé politicised the religious phenomenon in a manner reinforcing certain existing defiance toward the Muslim population¹⁵⁹. According to the ICG, President Bozizé and members of his government played on the fear of invaders and Islamist conspiracies¹⁶⁰. For others, the head Séléka leader's denunciation of the menace constituted by radical Islam was performed in the hope that CAR citizens but also the international community would bring support to the CAR government¹⁶¹.

President Bozizé regularly accused Séléka of being 'petrol fueled and overtly attached to religion'¹⁶². He denounced Séléka as a religious movement and suggested that it was led by jihadists. He did not hesitate in using the dangerous mechanism of the self-fulfilling prophecy by mentioning the 'risks of religious quarrels'¹⁶³, thereby also hinting at the existence of an Islamist agenda in the motivations of Séléka. This kind of discourse was also applied by members of the ex-president's entourage such as Josué Binoua, spokesperson for the anti-rebellion front, for whom 'the rebels were armed by the Wahhabis and wanted to transform Central Africa into another Mali'¹⁶⁴. Lévi Yakété spoke up to mention that 'the rebellion was full of foreigners from Sudan and Chad' and that 'Islamism certainly was behind all this'¹⁶⁵. The president even regularly declared to his partisans that every Muslim was 'a potential accomplice of the insurgency'¹⁶⁶. It appears,

¹⁵⁷ The New York Times, 'Religious rhetoric serves as a cover for Central African disputes', p20 April 2014, at <http://www.nytimes.com/roomfordebate/2014/04/20/is-religious-extremism-and-terrorism-spreading-in-central-africa/religious-rhetoric-serves-as-a-cover-for-central-african-disputes>.

¹⁵⁸ Le Courrier International, 'République centrafricaine. Quand Bozizé joue avec le feu', 9 January 2013, at <http://www.courrierinternational.com/article/2013/01/07/quand-bozize-joue-avec-le-feu>.

¹⁵⁹ The New York Times, 'Religious rhetoric'.

¹⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: The roots of violence', Africa Report no. 230 (2015), 19.

¹⁶¹ Andrea C. Mayerni, 'La Centrafrique, de la rébellion Séléka aux groupes Anti-Balaka (2012-2014)', 188.

¹⁶² Le Figaro, 'Bozizé dénonce l'agression d'«étrangers terroristes', 8 January 2013, at <http://www.lefigaro.fr/international/2013/01/08/01003-20130108ARTFIG00683-bozize-denonce-l-agression-d-etrangers-terroristes.php>.

¹⁶³ Le Figaro, 'Bozizé dénonce l'agression'.

¹⁶⁴ *Opinion Internationale*, 'La crise centrafricaine n'est pas une guerre de religion. Et pourtant...', 23 April 2014, at <https://www.opinion-internationale.com/2014/04/23/la-crise-centrafricaine-nest-pas-une-guerre-de-religion-et-pourtant-24693.html>.

¹⁶⁵ Patrice Gourdin, 'Centrafrique: la fabrication d'un choc des civilisations'.

¹⁶⁶ Ibid.



however, that the plan of the regime failed, in that the calls to arms did not engender a general mobilisation of the Christian population against Séléka, at least before the fall of Bangui. But once Djotodia was invested with power, the discourses of Bozizé have certainly been submitted to a new reading in light of the violent behaviours of Séléka, so much that some citizens have probably ended up seeing a *de facto* religious quarrel even though there had not been any 'Islamist intention' at first in the head of the Séléka.

As for what concerns the Anti-balaka, nothing indicates that these people would have fought in line with a religious agenda to defend one belief at the expense of another. It is not the 'Islamic identity' of Séléka and of the Muslims in general and the incompatibility of religious opinions that have caused the Anti-balaka attacks but, really, the protection, vengeance, greed, looting, jealousy, and defiance based on socio-economic inequalities. In March 2014, Navi Pillay, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, described the Anti-balaka as 'nothing more than criminal gangs responsible for most of the killings that not only hunt down Muslims but also prey on Christians and other non-Muslims'¹⁶⁷.

All of this notwithstanding, one cannot neglect the importance of religion in the CAR civil war. Muslims and non-Muslims systematically targeted each other. As the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic put it in June 2014, the majority of the violations committed by the Anti-balaka were carried out in pursuit of a clear objective: to remove the Muslim population from the territory of the Central African Republic¹⁶⁸. Therefore, the country was nearly emptied of its Muslim citizens, leaving only enclaves under international protection surrounded by bloodthirsty Anti-balaka members. However, once again, the two camps didn't fight with the objective of defending or imposing their respective religion but because they wanted to steal from each other and avenge themselves. The war between anti-Balaka and Séléka has never been framed in religious terms in which good had to fight some unspeakable evil. The Anti-balaka and Séléka alike fought not in the name of God but for political and socio-economic reasons. Hence, the conflict targeted not religions but communities¹⁶⁹.

2.3.6 Poor governance and underdeveloped security institutions

¹⁶⁷ *The New York Times*, 'U.N. warns of anti-Muslim violence in Central African Republic', 20 March 2014, at <http://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/21/world/africa/un-central-african-republic.html>.

¹⁶⁸ United Nations, 'Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry', §88.

¹⁶⁹ Thibaud Lesueur, 'République centrafricaine : autopsie d'une crise méconnue', 169.



Predatory state can be defined as ‘the agency of a group or class [whose] function [is] to extract an income from the rest of the constituents in the interest of that group of class’.¹⁷⁰ Predation or extraction can take different forms, but what all the mechanisms have in common is the use of resources to redistribute income and wealth to the elite in power without seeking to develop state institutions, goods or services that are demanded by citizens.

It is argued, that a predatory state is an obstacle to the economic and administration development since growth promoting policies are sometimes in contradiction with political elites and their protégés. For instance, the Rule of Law is a prerequisite to national and foreign investment because economic agents need legal security to protect their investment and avoid arbitrary expropriation. However, Rule of Law is generally not promoted by autocratic elites since such a legal framework can hinder their aptitude to maximize their own welfare. For Robinson, a government may refuse to apply policies that promote economic development because ‘such policies affect the distribution of political power in society [and] change the subsequent political equilibrium in a way which may be disadvantageous so that the elite may benefit more from retaining political power than promoting development’.¹⁷¹

The Central African Republic (CAR) can fairly be described as **a predatory state** since from the independence, all elites in power seem to have been much more motivated by maintaining their power and enrich themselves and their court that developing the country. It has already been noted that CAR is an annuitant state where for a long time elites have exploited (notably) natural resources to their own benefits. As a result of this predatory behaviour, in the Central African Republic, the state as we understand it in the Occident is a fiction or, according to an ICG report: a ‘phantom state’. The majority of the country has always been barely under government control – there was never any means of maintaining order outside the capital.¹⁷² The majority of the CAR’s **population consists of rural farmers**. They live in isolated villages and remote areas and have seldom had any connections to the government or to the state. The state actors do not reach them, on account of a serious lack of infrastructure of all kinds, especially during the rainy season. Most civil servants have always worked in Bangui, with there being a lack of security, services, and equipment outside the capital but also because the latter has always absorbed nearly all the state resources. **Corruption is endemic**; there is systematic embezzlement of public funds. Impunity is the rule for most exactions, on account of a failed judicial system and a weak and predatory

¹⁷⁰ Mats Lundahl, ‘Inside the Preadotry Stat: the Rationale, Methods, and Economic Consequences of Kleptocratic Regimes’, *Nordic Journal of Political Economy*, Vol. 24 (1997), 31.

¹⁷¹ James Robinson, ‘When is a State Predatory?’ CES Working Paper Series, no. 178 (1999), 3.

¹⁷² Arnaud Pont, ‘Conflict in Central African Republic: The case of the Anti Balaka’, August 2015, at <https://arnaudpont.files.wordpress.com/2015/09/understanding-cars-violence-august-2015-a-pont.pdf>.



security apparatus¹⁷³. Therefore, civilians resort to 'mob justice', which eventually led to normalisation of violence. It must also be remembered that literacy in the CAR is low, especially among young women. National radio does not cover the entire country, so rumours that are spread from individual to individual have in some cases spread panic and fear¹⁷⁴.

Definitely, the whole country has for long time been underdeveloped and has suffered from the Bozizé regime's terrible governance, but in 2007 the north-east of the country was described by the International Crisis Group as 'another world', where Sango, the national language, is hardly spoken and that is inaccessible by road for half of the year, during the rainy season, because of a nearly total absence of infrastructure¹⁷⁵. Still today, the administration is only embryonic, and some regions haven't seen civil servants for years¹⁷⁶. **There is no education or health system.** This is a region completely isolated from the rest of the country. Consequently, given the lack of a state presence in much of the country, national sentiments remain weak¹⁷⁷, particularly in the north¹⁷⁸ (that is, Vakaga and Haute Kotto), where people have always had more ties with Chadian and Sudanese border regions than with the capital.

The lack of state control outside Bangui can be explained by the fact that FACA forces are under-resourced, under-armed, and poorly trained and disciplined, with a weak control structure¹⁷⁹. For a long time, the recruitment strategy has favoured ethnic and clan ties instead of merits. The already weakened army was also, however, deliberately weakened by President Bozizé, in fear that FACA would organise a coup against him¹⁸⁰. In consequence, the CAR security apparatus was so weak, on account of lack of resources and investment, that it couldn't protect the citizens from regular attacks perpetrated by rogues and criminal organisations that took advantage of the failed state. But the trust in the state has been weakened too by the FACA personnel themselves having been regularly accused of looting and of killing CAR citizens. Indeed, the army is an institution that has always been feared by the population because it is a tool used by all presidents to defend their privilege and cling to power instead of protecting the citizens, who have been regularly abused and

¹⁷³ Criminals remain unpunished also because they sometimes have connections to the president's court.

¹⁷⁴ NOEPS, 29 January 2016.

¹⁷⁵ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Anatomy of a phantom state', 25.

¹⁷⁶ Louisa Lombard and Raphaël Botiveau, 'Rébellion et limites', 201.

¹⁷⁷ Arnaud Pont, 'Conflict in Central African Republic: The case of the Anti Balaka'.

¹⁷⁸ Michel Luntumbue and Simon Massock, 'Afrique centrale', 4.

¹⁷⁹ Herbert et al., 'State fragility', 5.

¹⁸⁰ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Priorities of the transition', 5.



assaulted by those who were supposed to protect them¹⁸¹. In fact, blind repression has sometimes driven people, particularly in the north, to fear the army more than the rebels¹⁸².

Many DDR and SSR programmes were set up within the last decade in order to address the FACA failures, but these attempts have generally failed themselves, for several reasons¹⁸³. One of the most important is that SSR would have involved a rebalancing of power in favour of the population or rebel groups and, therefore, 'SSR reforms were not in the interest¹⁸⁴ of Bozizé or his regime whose core objective was to stay in power'¹⁸⁵. In addition, sometimes the signatories had little influence over commanders and combatants in the field, and DDR became also an incentive to join rebel groups in order to benefit from the money and training, while self-defence groups gradually started to define themselves as rebel groups when they became aware of the benefits associated with this label. Some have also criticised DDR for being out of touch with local reality¹⁸⁶; for instance, conceptions of power frequently do not include scrutiny or accountability to citizens¹⁸⁷. Furthermore, according to the ICG, there was lack of investment in socio-economic re-integration¹⁸⁸.

Yet, DDR and SSR are two crucial tools required for bringing stability and tackling the root causes of the CAR conflict, which stems partly from weakness of the state security apparatus. Indeed, one has to remember that many rebel groups were first self-defence militias founded in order to protect their communities or their villages from national and foreign criminals such as road-cutters but also from foreign rebels or raiders coming, most notably, from Chad and Sudan. This lack of effective security forces – most of the army being stationed in Bangui – favours bandits' proliferation and violence all over the territory because 'if property rights are not credibly supported by the state and if economic activity is unprofitable, individuals or groups will have greater incentives to engage in appropriation rather than production, and each individual or group will need to spend more resources to privately provide for its security, challenging the authority of the state'¹⁸⁹.

Hence, in a situation of lack of economic opportunities and effective state forces, self-defence militias can turn into criminal gangs motivated by looting and racketeering but also into rebel

¹⁸¹ Herbert et al., 'State fragility', 7; International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Anatomy of a phantom state', 21; Didier Niewiadowski, 'La République centrafricaine', 29.

¹⁸² International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Anatomy of a phantom state', 22–23.

¹⁸³ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: The roots of violence', 24.

¹⁸⁴ Louisa Lombard and Raphaël Botiveau, 'Rébellion et limites', 205.

¹⁸⁵ Herbert et al., 'State fragility', 18.

¹⁸⁶ Ibid., 3.

¹⁸⁷ Ibid., 18.

¹⁸⁸ International Crisis Group, 'Central African Republic: Priorities of the transition', 25.

¹⁸⁹ Michael W. Doyle and Nicholas Sambanis, *Making War and Building Peace: United Nations Peace Operations* (USA: Princeton University Press, 2006), 32.



groups when the movement is 'recovered' by a 'political entrepreneur', thereby weakening the state further. Considering the FACA weakness, rebel groups leaders know they can cause harm enough to pretend an access to the government and its rent. Furthermore, as is described above, **unprotected natural resources are a major motivation for rebel groups** who benefits from police and army decay to loot gold and diamonds, by which means they enrich themselves and finance their struggle against Bangui. On the other hand, the citizens' growing resentment and rejection of a capital incapable of protecting them is reinforced further by the indiscriminate repression that used to characterise FACA and because of which citizens joined rebellions in growing numbers. However, although security reforms are fundamental to bringing stability to the country by fighting impunity, criminality, and rebellions, DDR and SSR are not a panacea. No peace can prevail without economic development, education, and jobs, which are capital to convince people to stop using violence as a way of living.

The future will tell us whether President Touadéra and the new legislature can stabilise the country and end the cycle of constant violence. It will be interesting to see whether he will be able to rectify the lack of trust in parliamentary institutions and to provide a political avenue for armed groups to transform into parliamentary parties and ultimately disarm voluntarily.

2.3.7 CONSEQUENCES OF THE CONFLICT

The Central African Republic's time as an independent country can hardly called a success story. Political coups and counter-coups have managed to wrest away opportunities for credible and stable central governments that would have military and civic capabilities of ruling the country effectively and providing basic services for the country's citizens. The CAR has been plagued by presidents who have tried to gather political power to themselves and their favourites and close associates. This has usually led to total elimination or dismissal of the opposition groups and destruction of the multi-party system in the parliament. The one-party system and lack of opposition have meant exclusion of important groups, which in itself has led to dissatisfaction with the government. A good example is Bozizé's presidency. When he first tried to exclude his political opponents and later marginalise them, he paved the way for Séléka's uprising. Of course, we must not forget the other triggers behind this.

To understand the deep-seatedness of the conflict, we have examined its effects from an economic, political, and social point of view.

THE ECONOMIC ANGLE



While most of the CAR's economic challenges pre-date the 2012 crisis, the conflict has certainly exacerbated pre-existing issues and created new problems for the CAR's economy. In 2011, the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP) was 2,19bn US dollars (USD) and 498, 57 USD per capita, according to statistics provided by World Bank. Within a year GDP dropped to 1,54bn US dollars. According to Trading Economic in 2013 the CAR's GDP per capita was just 233, 30 USD.¹⁹⁰

The Central African Republic's trade balance was also negative (-\$302M) in 2013. Exports were worth \$113M, and the main export products were rough wood, sawn wood, diamonds, and raw cotton. The value of imports was \$415M.¹⁹¹ **Security conditions play a major part in the economic development**, according to African Economic Outlook. The CAR's economic development should start to recover when the overall security in the country gets better.¹⁹² Great challenges mentioned for development are security problems along the main road corridor Bangui to Douala (a coastal city in Cameroon), which carries most of the country's external trade and has a key role for commercial and other transport activities.¹⁹³ Insecurity of the civilian population, worrying social and humanitarian conditions, and the lack of infrastructure are also obstacles to economic development in the country. 'Phantom state', meaning that the country is lacking any meaningful institutional capacity, sums up the future problems well. It is fair to presume that it will take years to develop an effective and corruption-free central government with efficient institutions backing it to develop the country and its economy, even if the stabilisation and democratic process do not get compromised in the future.

Many problems that affect the peace process also affect economic development. An especially clear one is that the rural population (about 60% of the total population) are terrorised by raiders and various armed groups.¹⁹⁴ Looting, raiding, and extracting protection money are just some of the problems. Tensions along ethnic and religious lines have disturbed commerce, and fights over the country's natural resources have fuelled the political conflict. The groups have funded their operations by selling diamonds, gold, timber, and other natural resources.¹⁹⁵ It has been noted also

¹⁹⁰ 'Central African Republic GDP', Trading Economics, at <http://www.tradingeconomics.com/central-african-republic/gdp>.

¹⁹¹ 'GDP at market prices (current US\$)' for the Central African Republic', World Bank, at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/NY.GDP.MKTP.CD/countries/CF?display=graph>; OEC, 'Central African Republic', at <http://atlas.media.mit.edu/en/profile/country/caf/>.

¹⁹² Kalidou Dialla, 'Central African Republic', AEO, modified 28 May 2015, at <http://www.africaneconomicoutlook.org/en/country-notes/central-africa/central-african-republic/>.

¹⁹³ Ibid.

¹⁹⁴ 'Rural population (% of total population)', World Bank, at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/SP.RUR.TOTL.ZS>.

¹⁹⁵ Daniel Flynn, 'Gold, diamonds feed Central African religious violence', *Reuters*, 29 July 2014, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-resources-insight-idUSKBN0FY0MN20140729>; Kasper Agger, 'Warlord business: CAR's violent armed groups and their criminal operations for profit and power', The Enough Project, June (2015), at <http://www.enoughproject.org/files/Warlord%20Business%20061615.pdf>.



that the CAR's neighbouring countries have their own interest in the country's resources.¹⁹⁶ In order for the Central African Republic to develop politically and economically, it is important for the central government to gain some sort of hold on the country's natural resources and the income produced by them. Given the lack of social and political trust and the entrenched private interests, this will continue to cause challenges for the country.

The lack of logistical and communication networks has created economic and social challenges.¹⁹⁷ According to the *Global Logistics Assessment Report Handbook, Vol. 1* (2011), in 2011 there was a total of 23,810 km of roads in the Central African Republic and only 643 km was paved. The most important roads are RN1, RN2, RN3, RN4, RN6, RN8, RN10, and RN11. The roads are poorly maintained, and the rainy season further limits their use.

There are no railroads in the CAR, and, as it is a landlocked country, it has only limited waterways, with the Oubangui River being the most important. There are roughly 50 airports in the Central African Republic. The most important of these is M'Poko, in Bangui, whose operations have been affected by crises.¹⁹⁸

The country's communication network is limited. Fixed telephone lines are rare, and those that exist are in bad shape. According to the World Bank, there were 31 mobile telephones per 100 citizens in the CAR in 2014.¹⁹⁹ In 2015, the number was 31.4, according to the UNDP.²⁰⁰ The main communication channel for reaching the majority of the population is radio. There is also a broadcast television station, but it does not reach the entire population. Also, television sets are expensive, and the majority cannot afford them.²⁰¹

In the future, the Central African Republic's economy will face challenges related to the combatants in various rebel groups. It will be a social and economic challenge to integrate them into society after the fighting has ended. As do many developing countries, the Central African

¹⁹⁶ Kasper Agger, 'Behind the headlines: Drivers of violence in the Central African Republic', The Enough Project, May (2014), at <http://www.enoughproject.org/files/CAR%20Report%20-%20Behind%20the%20Headlines%205.1.14.pdf>; Priyanka Boghani, 'Chad and France are really not helping the Central African Republic right now', *The Global Post*, 21 May (2014), at <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/140514/chad-france-not-helping-central-african-republic>.

¹⁹⁷ WFP, 'Central African Republic – brief', at <http://documents.wfp.org/stellent/groups/public/documents/ep/wfp272236.pdf>.

¹⁹⁸ Logistics Assessment Report Handbook, *Strategic Transportation and Customs Information for Selected Countries, Volume 1*, 120–122 (International Business Publications, 2015); '5 reasons why Central Africans are living at the airport', *The Huffington Post*, modified 24 January 2014, at http://www.huffingtonpost.com/2014/01/10/central-african-republic-airport_n_4577410.html; CIA, 'Central African Republic'.

¹⁹⁹ 'Mobile cellular subscriptions (per 100 people)', World Bank, at <http://data.worldbank.org/indicator/IT.CEL.SETS.P2>.

²⁰⁰ 'Central African Republic', UNDP, at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CAF>.

²⁰¹ NOEPS, 29 January 2016.



Republic will face challenges abolishing corruption from its institutions, which has been a constant problem throughout the country's time of independence.²⁰²

THE POLITICAL ANGLE

Citizens of the Central African Republic voted in the presidential and legislative elections held on 30th December 2015. Because large numbers of complaints were received, the CAR's Constitutional Court decided to cancel the election for the new parliament but allowed the presidential elections to continue to the second round.²⁰³ The candidates who competed in the second round were Anicet Georges Dologuele and Faustin-Archange Touadéra. Dologuele served as prime minister of the CAR from 1999 to 2001, while Touadéra was prime minister from 2008 to 2013. The second round was held on 14 February 2016, and Touadéra won.²⁰⁴ The Central African Republic's Constitutional Court later confirmed his victory.²⁰⁵ High hopes are placed in his leadership, to stabilise the country and unite this nation that has been torn apart by conflict. The CAR also faces the challenge of preserving a multi-party system. The problem is not only that the majority can exclude it but also that the opposition has to accept the parliamentary process and not resort to violent extra-parliamentary methods.

The challenge for Touadéra will be to reverse the harmful process that set religious groups against one another, but he must also address conflicts between different ethnic groups in the country. In his research, Arnaud Pont has considered the anti-Muslim rhetoric that Bozizé's regime tried to use to retain their political power. Muslim minority in the country was portrayed as consisting of 'foreigners' who had come to invade the country and steal its resources from the Central Africans. Muslims were also shown to be richer than the majority.²⁰⁶ Later, when the fighting between groups intensified, all sides committed atrocities, which must have deepened stereotypes that may well have been used to justify violence against others. Religious and ethnic violence provide fertile ground for many religious extremist groups. In April 2014, APJ wrote that radical Islam was finding its way in the Central African Republic.²⁰⁷ We must not forget that the current chaos offers great chances for radical Christianity too, of which the Lord's Resistance Army is one example.

²⁰² Moki Edwin Kindzeka, 'Central African growth hindered by vast corruption', *Voice of America*, modified 2 December 2013, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/central-africa-growth-hindered-by-vast-corruption/1801782.html>.

²⁰³ 'CAR court annuls legislative polls; Presidential runoff vote set', *Voice of America*, modified 26 January 2016, at <http://www.voanews.com/content/car-legislative-polls-annulled-presidential-runoff-vote-set/3162940.html>.

²⁰⁴ Al Jazeera, 'Central African Republic: Touadera wins elections', 21 February 2016, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/02/central-african-republic-touadera-wins-election-160221044730048.html>.

²⁰⁵ Siegfried Modola, 'Central African constitutional court confirms Touadera elected president', *Reuters*, 1 March 2016, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-election-idUSKCN0W34AF>.

²⁰⁶ Arnaud Pont, 'Conflict in Central African Republic: The case of the Anti Balaka'.

²⁰⁷ Stephen Rakowski, 'Radical Islam finding ground in the Central African Republic', *Africa Policy Journal*, April 2014, at <https://apj.fas.harvard.edu/radical-islam-finding-ground-in-the-central-african-republic/>.



The role of neighbouring countries has been, and still is, essential for the peace-building process and its future. Moving between countries has been easy, and several armed groups have used this to their advantage. They have moved black-market goods readily from one country to another, and some of them have used border areas as bases for their operations. Naturally, neighbouring countries share economic interests with one another. Agger (2015) argues that Chad's interests in the CAR are related to oil reserves and making sure that rebel groups influencing Chad's national politics can't use it as a safe haven. He claims also that unified Sudan has been interested in the CAR's natural resources.²⁰⁸ Weynes (2014) mentioned that Sudanese herders have brought their cattle to the CAR side of the border to graze.²⁰⁹ Also, poachers have come from Sudan (now South Sudan) to hunt wildlife such as elephants for ivory, according to the same study. The CAR's various rebel groups, mainly parts of Séléka, were supported by mercenaries and arms from Chad and Sudan. It has even been said that most fighters in Séléka were from Chad and Sudan.²¹⁰ Cameroon has been described as inactive in the conflict and mainly interested in securing the border between itself and the CAR.²¹¹ When Cameroonian officials captured rebel leader Miskine, the country's direct involvement gained news space. Smugglers have most likely used Cameroon as a route to transfer their black-marked goods, such as diamonds and small arms.²¹² It is quite likely that both Congos have also been used as smuggling routes by various groups. A large proportion of the peacekeeping force in the CAR has consisted of Congolese soldiers. As Sudan and Chad have, DRC too has had an impact on the CAR's internal politics in many distinct ways.

Other countries that have had a major role in the CAR are France, South Africa, and China. All three have had their economic interests in the country, and France especially and to some extent South Africa have intervened in the CAR's internal politics. The role of these countries will be discussed further in chapter 2.6.

THE SOCIAL ANGLE

The Central African Republic has long been one of the least developed countries in the world. In 2015, the country was ranked 187th in the world by UNDP Human Development Reports.²¹³ The

²⁰⁸ Kasper Agger, 'Warlord: Business: CAR's violent armed groups and their criminal operations for profit and power.' The Enough project, 2015.

²⁰⁹ Weynes et al., *Mapping Conflict Motives*.

²¹⁰ FIDH, 'Central African Republic: "They must all leave or die"'.
²¹¹ Kiven Jens Kewir, 'The Central African Republic crisis: Neighboring countries and the prospects for peace', Kujenga Amani, 3 September 2014, at <http://forums.ssrc.org/kujenga-amani/2014/09/03/the-central-african-republic-crisis-neighboring-countries-and-the-prospects-for-peace/#.Vt6iqfmLSUm>.

²¹² Louis Charbonneau, 'Cameroon involved in Central Africa "Blood Diamond" trade: U.N. experts', *Reuters*, 1 September 2015, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-sanctions-diamonds-idUSKCN0R14Q920150901>; IRIN News, 'Arms smuggling to Boko Haram threatens Cameroon', 21 February 2014, at <http://www.irinnews.org/news/2014/02/21>; Agger, 'Warlord business'.
²¹³ 'Human Development Report 2015: Work for human development', UNDP, at <http://hdr.undp.org/en/countries/profiles/CAF>.



life expectancy at birth is 50.7 years, and the adult mortality rate is extremely high for both sexes, with the infant mortality rate and under-five mortality rate too being extremely high. Health-care services in the country have been limited, and the latest conflict crippled them even more. In 2013, the CAR's situation was categorised as a 'grade 3'- its highest level- humanitarian emergency by the WHO.²¹⁴ Funding the health services has proved to be demanding and lacking in sufficient funds, so providing health care to the most vulnerable groups, such as women, children, and elderly people, will not be efficient.²¹⁵

These are not the only problems: the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) reports that another is lack of communication between aid groups and those who receive aid. Some locals have criticised aid groups for not listening to their opinions when the aid projects are being designed. Locals do not know when aid is to be expected, what aid they are entitled to receive, and why some receive aid while others do not. These are just a few of the problems – the report identifies many others as well.²¹⁶

The European Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department has identified collapse of the health-care system and protection of civilians as major problems. The other three noted are a food shortage, lack of pure water, and need for housing.²¹⁷ The same paper states that there are over 451,000 IDPs and more than 463,500 people have left the country as refugees. While Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) estimates from August 2015 state that the number had dropped to 369,500, the report's authors stated that this is just estimation.²¹⁸ Violence, armed groups, and clashes between ethnic groups are just some of the obstacles facing the return of IDPs. The NRC identifies other obstacles: damage and destruction caused to housing, land, and property (HLP); hardships and challenges encountered in efforts to regain the lost property; challenges and problems related to possible new inhabitants; lack of proper documents and of documentation related to HLP; and many others.²¹⁹

Housing, land, and property disputes are extremely dangerous to women. The NRC report states that in the CAR a woman's access to HLP is dependent on her relationship to a man. Therefore,

²¹⁴ 'WHO helps Central African Republic assess damage and restore its health system', WHO, September 2014, at <http://www.who.int/features/2014/car-health-system/en/>.

²¹⁵ 'Humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic: Lack of funding threatens the free-access to healthcare', WHO, 27 April 2015, at <http://www.who.int/hac/crises/caf/features/27april2015/en/>.

²¹⁶ NRC, 'Engage to stay and deliver: Humanitarian access in the Central African Republic', 2015, at <http://www.nrc.no/arch/ img/9205491.pdf>.

²¹⁷ European Commission, Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection factsheet 'Central African Republic', February 2016, at http://ec.europa.eu/echo/files/aid/countries/factsheets/car_en.pdf. Note that the numbers in the factsheet come from UNHRC.

²¹⁸ IDMC figure analysis, 'Central African Republic IDP figures analysis', 21 August 2015, at <http://www.internaldisplacement.org/sub-saharan-africa/central-african-republic/figures-analysis>.

²¹⁹ NRC and UNHCR, 'HLP brief: Securing housing, land and property rights In conflict-affected Central African Republic', no publication date available, at <http://www.nrc.no/arch/ img/9195620.pdf>.



discrimination is easy and women suffer on account of, for example, discriminatory inheritance practices.

Property rights are just one of the problems facing women in the CAR. The conflict has left widows, separated families, and escalation in violent acts against women.²²⁰ Gang rapes of women and girls by armed groups are commonplace. Women suffer from unplanned pregnancies and forced marriages. So called 'survival sex' is common and sometimes even required of younger members of families by parents to help family to make its living.²²¹ Sexually transmitted diseases, especially HIV, cause problems.²²² The conflict has worsened inequalities between boys and girls in access to education, and there are significantly more girls than boys dropping out of school.²²³ Women have had a marginal role in the CAR's national politics. Positive steps on this front were taken when Catherine Samba-Panza, was selected as a president in 2014, being the first female to lead the country. Malnutrition and food insecurity were problems in the Central African Republic already before the latest conflict, and the country still needs foreign assistance to combat these problems.²²⁴ Local farmers and herders have been targets of raiders, and collapse of production in the agricultural sector has followed. The situation has been reported as having grown worse.²²⁵ In 2015, it was reported that lack of seeds and tools was a critical problem and that without funding, the agricultural sector could not produce the required amounts of food.²²⁶ The lack of food caused high inflation of food prices in 2014. Prices of staple foods rose 30–70%, effectively eroding the purchasing power of low-income families.²²⁷ The food situation was affected also by the religious side of the conflict. The Muslim population managed most of the commercial activities, and when they left or were forced to leave, especially in Bangui, the markets faced collapse.²²⁸

²²⁰ United Nations News Centre, 'Central African Republic: UN official urges strong action to protect women, girls', 24 June 2014, at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=48125#.VuZQk1-OM8>; Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka, 'Executive Director statement Security Council briefing on CAR', 24 June 2014, at <http://www.unwomen.org/en/news/stories/2014/6/executive-director-statement-security-council-briefing-on-car>.

²²¹ *Mail Online* and AFP, 'Sex in Central Africa – survival for some, shame for UN', 1 March 2016, at <http://www.dailymail.co.uk/wires/afp/article-3471164/Sex-Central-Africa-survival-shame-UN.html>.

²²² European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection factsheet 'Central African Republic'; Ilya Gridneff, 'Central African Republic doctors say war boosting HIV prevalence', *Bloomberg*, 16 March 2015, at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-16/central-african-republic-doctors-say-war-boosting-hiv-prevalence>.

²²³ Ayoo Osen Odicoh, *Gender briefing note on Central African Republic June 2014*, (Gender Standby Capacity Project: 10 June 2014), at <http://norcapweb.no/arch/ img/9180494.pdf>.

²²⁴ WFP (Sayaka Sato), 'Fighting malnutrition in the Central African Republic', 27 April 2015, at <https://www.wfp.org/stories/fighting-malnutrition-central-african-republic>.

²²⁵ Al Jazeera and AFP, 'UN warns of hunger crisis in Central African Republic', 2 March 2016, at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/03/warns-hunger-crisis-central-african-republic-160302085357376.html>.

²²⁶ FAO News, 'Crisis-stricken farmers need urgent help to plant in the Central African Republic', 23 March 2015, at <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/281380/icode/>.

²²⁷ FAO News, 'Central African Republic: Farming and families hit by insecurity', 29 October 2014, at <http://www.fao.org/news/story/en/item/263271/icode/>.

²²⁸ FAO and WFP: Special Report 'FAO/WFP markets and food security assessment mission to the Central African Republic', 7 April 2014, at <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/i3714e.pdf>.



2.4 Internal parties to the conflict

The history described above has shown us that political rulers have changed in the CAR through coups and rarely through elections. Political parties and rebel groups have changed, united, divided, switched sides, been born, and died in rapid cycles, and making a comprehensive list of them and their goals is out of scope of this review²²⁹.

The Central African Armed Forces, Forces Armées Centrafricaines (FACA)

The Central African Armed Forces (FACA) was established in 1960 when the country became independent. It is a small force, of only 5,000 to 7,000, and is badly equipped. The army was no match for Séléka when the latter began its offensive in 2012, and it was quickly overrun.²³⁰

The army almost completely lacks heavy weaponry, such as artillery and armoured forces. People are appointed to key positions not through merit, competence, qualification, or experience but on the basis of ethnic background and personal relations with the ruling group.²³¹

FACA has been a key asset in previous coups and coup attempts, with the most obvious being Bokassa's and Kolingba's coups. The army has also revolted several times. The army's fighting morale and loyalty have been affected also by unpaid salaries and insufficient overall resources. In addition, the force has vied for the favour of the president and the parliament. For example, during Patassé's regime, FACA was said to be contesting resources with the Presidential Guard.²³²

Séléka's main groups and key people²³³

Séléka (the Alliance/Coalition in Sango) was an alliance formed by several groups, some of them political and some purely opportunistic. The alliance's only common goal was ousting President Bozizé. Séléka did not have a clear command structure or leadership. Usually, groups formed around 'strong and charismatic' leaders. Some sources refer to its leaders as men who controlled a large proportion of the CAR's economic resources, especially parts of the diamond

²²⁹ View the key leaders of the groups in the Figure 4. 'Key people, leaders and coordinators', (Annex 4.)

²³⁰ IHS Jane Internet portal, 'Central African Republic', Jane's World Armies, 27 January 2016, at <https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1319200>; All Africa, 'Central African Republic: Armed groups in CAR', 17 September 2014, at <http://allafrica.com/stories/201409171801.html>.

²³¹ IHS Jane Internet portal: World Armies, 'Central African Republic'.

²³² Eric Berman, 'The Central African Republic: A case study of small arms and conflict 11', Small Arms Survey (2005), at <http://www.smallarmssurvey.org/fileadmin/docs/A-Yearbook/2005/en/Small-Arms-Survey-2005-Chapter-11-EN.pdf>.

²³³ See the composition of the key Séléka groups in Figure 1. Main Séléka groups (Annex 4) and key people in Figure 2. Key Séléka leaders (Annex 4)



trade. After the successful coup, the president tried to incorporate militiamen into the national army, but after failing in this he disbanded the alliance. This did not have the desired result. The alliance was about 6,000 fighters strong when it took Bangui, and its fighters were well armed.²³⁴

Michel Djotodia, born in 1949 in the north-east region of the CAR, was the leader of UFDR and the head of Séléka. He had served as a civil servant in the Patassé government in the Ministry of Planning and later served as a consul in the Darfur region. He lived in the Soviet Union for 10 years and studied economics there. Djotodia is fluent in several languages and knew how to use foreign media to UFDR advantage.

He became the president of the CAR after Séléka's coup but was forced to give up the position after failing to control ex-Séléka fighters and losing the capital to Bozizé's supporters.²³⁵

The Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) was founded by Michel Djotodia and **Zakaria Damane**. The group is drawn mainly from the Muslim Gula ethnic group. Members of UFDR took part in the fighting in 2004–2007. While UFDR signed the cease-fire and peace agreements, it was one of the groups in the formation of Séléka and hence one of the actors in the 2013 coup. Later, UFDR leader Michel Djotodia became the president of the country, but he lost his position in 2014.²³⁶

The Movement of Central African Liberators for Justice (MLCJ) is a splinter group of UFDR. It was formed in August 2008 and led by **Abakar Sabone**. The group broke the cease-fire agreement in 2009, and Sabone accused Bozizé of having acted in bad faith and having excluded MLCJ from DDR. In 2010, he rejoined Bozizé, who appointed him commissioner to Mixed and Independent Electoral Commission CEMI. Later, in 2013, he became a member of the Government of National Unity, but after Séléka's successes he switched sides again and ultimately became Djotodia's special adviser.²³⁷

Other important component parties of Séléka were **CPSK**, **CPJP**, and **URF**. **The Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country** was led by **General Mohamed-Moussa Dhaffane**, a

²³⁴ Emily Mellgard, 'What is the Seleka?'; Human Rights Watch, 'I can still smell the dead'; FIDH, 'Central African Republic: "They must all leave or die"'; International Crisis Group, 'The Central African crisis: From predation to stabilisation', Africa Report no. 219, 17 June 2014, at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/~media/Files/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/219-la-crise-centrafricaine-de-la-predation-a-la-stabilisation-english.pdf>.

²³⁵ BBC News, 'Profile: Central African Republic's Michel Djotodia', 11 January 2014, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-21938297>; BBC News, 'CAR interim president Michel Djotodia resigns', 11 January 2014, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-25683279>.

²³⁶ Agger, 'Behind the headlines.'; FIDH, 'Central African Republic: "They must all leave or die"'; Human Rights Watch, *State of anarchy: Rebellion and abuses against civilians*, (Human Rights Watch Report, September 2007), at <https://www.hrw.org/reports/2007/car0907/car0907webwcover.pdf>.

²³⁷ IRIN News, 'Who's who with guns'; FIDH, 'Central African Republic: "They must all leave or die"'.



controversial leader who had been accused of brutality to the civilian population and acquiring funds by illegal methods. He gained considerable publicity when the cease-fire agreement was signed in Brazzaville in 2014. When Séléka existed, he was seen as second-in-command after Djotodia. He also served as water and forests minister in the Djotodia government.²³⁸

The Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), formed in 2008 and officially dissolved in 2013, was the third large actor in the forming of Séléka. Important leaders of this movement have been **Noureddine Adam** and **Abdoulaye Hissene**. Both CPJP and its leaders have been accused of being interested merely in exploitation of the country's rich diamond fields and basing the movement's ideology only on this, rather than an interest in a better life for people in the Central African Republic. The movement and its members have also been accused of taking part in the atrocities that took place during Séléka's offensive and of using forced labour in the diamond fields. The movement split when its leadership signed a peace agreement with Bozizé's government in 2011. The part of CPJP that did not accept the agreement continued under the name '**CPJP-fundamental**'. One of the leading figures of this group was **Hassan Al Habib** (also rendered as 'Hassan Al-Habib'), who was later shot by members of FACA.²³⁹

Highly visible members of the group have been Noureddine Adam, **Éric Nériss-Massi**, and **Charles Massi**. When Séléka signed the peace agreement in 2012, Adam left CPJP. Later, he became known for declaring **the Republic of Logone** an autonomous area within the Central African Republic for the country's Muslim population and for leading the splinter group **the Patriotic Front for the Renaissance of Central Africa (FPRC)**. Logone is planned to become an independent state. Adam had the title Public Security Minister in the Djotodia government. Éric Nériss-Massi (also written 'Eric Neris-Massi(f)') has been described as leader of CPJP's political wing. His father, Colonel Charles Massi, was one of the leaders who had agreed on establishing Séléka. Officially he disappeared in 2010, and his fate is uncertain. It has been claimed that he was captured and killed by supporters of Bozizé.²⁴⁰

The Union of Republican Forces (URF) was a minor group in Séléka. It was created by **Colonel Florian N'djadder** (also referred to as a lieutenant and as Florian Njadder) and has been

²³⁸ Ibid.; Americana's Kevin Clarke, 'In Bangui, an evening with the General', 7 May 2014, at <http://americamagazine.org/content/all-things/bangui-evening-general>.

²³⁹ FIDH, 'Central African Republic: "They must all leave or die".'; FIDH, 'Central African Republic: A country in the hands of Seleka war criminals'.; All Africa, 'Central African Republic: Armed groups in CAR'.

²⁴⁰ Joe Baviers and Sebastian Lamba, 'Rebel declares autonomous state in Central African Republic', *Reuters*, 16 December 2014, at <http://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN0TZ0TW20151216>.; France 24, 'Renewed unrest in CAR after presidential candidates announced', 8 December 2015, at <http://www.france24.com/en/20151208-central-africa-unrest-car-presidential-candidates-announced>.; FIDH, 'Central African Republic: "They must all leave or die".'



described as having had a limited role in Séléka. When the movement split in two, in 2010, the birth of URF-fundamental resulted.²⁴¹

The Alliance for Rebuilding (A2R) (known after 18 March 2013 as '**Mouvement pour la Renaissance et la Refondation, Mouvement politique alternatif en RCA**', or M2R) was a loose underground organisation within FACA. It was formed in October 2012 by former army officers and sought to join forces with Séléka. Salvador Edjezekanne has been called the movement's co-ordinator.²⁴²

The Union for Peace is a group that had its origins in Séléka and that has tried to present itself as a credible political party. Key persons in the movement have been General **Ali Djarass**, **Habib Awal**, and Captain **Ahmad Nedjad**.²⁴³

The Anti-balaka, other main armed groups, and key people in them²⁴⁴

The Anti-balaka is a loose coalition that was formed by local militias / defence groups. The roots of the Anti-balaka can be traced back to the time of the CAR civil war known as the 'Bush war', 2004–2007. Originally, these militia groups were established to fight off and to stop bandits, looters, and raiders in parts of the country where the government could not provide security. Many of these militia groups started clashing with Séléka when the alliance advanced in 2012. The movement soon became politicised, when large numbers of ex-members of FACA joined militia groups. A common Christian identity and ethnic hatred towards Muslims have also been used to advance individuals' political interests.²⁴⁵

Most members of the Anti-balaka are Christians and people with indigenous beliefs. Members have very limited education, and child combatants are described as common in the group. The members are/were extremely vulnerable to propaganda and misinformation. It must also be noted that the Anti-balaka is not a unified group and does not have a clear command structure. Much as in Séléka, the militia groups have their own leaders and own goals. Equipment too varies greatly between the militia groups in the Anti-balaka. Militiamen have been told to carry primitive weapons

²⁴¹ IRIN News, 'Armed groups in CAR', 17 September 2014, at <http://www.irinnews.org/report/100623/armed-groups-car>.

²⁴² The report 'I can still smell the dead'; FIDH, 'Central African Republic: A country in the hands of Seleka war criminals'.

²⁴³ Amnesty International, public statement 'CAR: Urgent action needed to tackle the escalating violence in the central regions', 6 November 2014, at https://www.amnesty.nl/sites/default/files/public/car_escalating_violence_briefing_doc.

²⁴⁴ The key groups are listed in Figure 3. 'Anti-Balaka and other key groups' (Annex 4).

²⁴⁵ IRIN News, 'Who are the Anti-balaka of CAR?', 12 February 2014, at <http://www.irinnews.org/report/99634/briefing-who-are-anti-balaka-car>; Human Rights Watch, 'Central African Republic: Muslims forced to flee: Christian militias unleash waves of targeted violence', 12 February 2014, at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/02/12/central-african-republic-muslims-forced-flee>; Emily Mellgard, 'What is the Antibalaka?'.



such as machetes, homemade bows, and old single-shot hunting rifles, while other militia members have better weapons, such as Kalashnikov-type rifles and RPGs, which have mostly likely been taken from FACA's warehouses.²⁴⁶

Important figures in the movement have been Sebastian Wénézoui, Patrice Edouard Ngaïssona, Joachim Kokate, and Emotion Gomez. In 2014, it was announced that the movement would become a political party (Parti Centrafricain pour l'Unité et le Développement (PCUD)) and lay down its arms. Some groups continue to engage in violence and use the name 'Anti-balaka'.²⁴⁷

Revolution and Justice (RJ), established in 2013 from the remnants of the **Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD)**, was founded by **Jean-Jacques Demafouth** (also written as 'Jean Jacques') in 2006 and disbanded in 2011. It was led by Major **Armel Sayo** and is active mainly in the northern parts of the country, especially in the Ouham and Ouham-Pende prefectures, north and north-west of the capital.²⁴⁸

The group shares close ties to President Patassé. The first goal of RJ was to oust President Djotodia. After he lost the presidency, RJ announced that their goals were to 'ensure the stability of all Central Africans whatever their community' and fight 'against anything that jeopardizes the tranquility of Central Africans'. Basically, this meant fighting against ex-Séléka, Chadian rebel groups, and bandits.²⁴⁹

Armal Sayo served as youth and sports minister in the transitional government. He was kidnapped in January 2015 in connection with the arrest of **Rodrigue Nagibona** (alias **General Adjilo**) by UN troops. The latter's supporters, members of the Anti-balaka, demanded that he be freed for Sayo's freedom.²⁵⁰

The Democratic Front of Central African People (FDPC), founded in 2006 by **Martin Koumtamadj** (also known as **Abdoulaye Miskine**), was a minor actor in the Séléka coalition. It later distanced itself from the alliance, which finally led to clashes between ex-allies in June 2013. The group has been active in western parts of the Central African Republic, especially in Baboua,

²⁴⁶ Ibid.; Henry Kam Kah, 'Anti-Balaka/Séléka, "religionisation" and separatism in the history of Central African Republic', the University of Buea's Journal of Conflict Studies No. 9 (October 2014).; Conflict Armament Research, *Non-state armed groups in Central African Republic*, (Itrace: 2015), at http://www.conflictarm.com/car_publications/NONSTATE_ARMED_GROUPS_IN_CENTRAL_AFRICAN_REPUBLIC.pdf.

²⁴⁷ Daniel Flynn and Crispin Dembassa-Kette, 'Central African militia says to lay down arms, become political party', *Reuters*, 30 November 2014, at <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-militia-idUSKCN0JE0J820141130>.

²⁴⁸ IRIN News, 'Armed groups in CAR'; Amnesty International, 'Central African Republic: Time for accountability,' 10 July 2014.

²⁴⁹ IRIN News, 'Armed groups in CAR'.

²⁵⁰ BBC News, 'CAR minister Armel Sayo kidnapped "for rebel chief"', 26 January 2015, at <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-30984343>; Nigel Wilson, 'Central African Republic crisis: Rebels seize minister in bid to free commander', *International Business Times*, 26 January 2015, at <http://www.ibtimes.co.uk/car-crisis-rebels-seized-minister-bid-free-commander-1485215>.



in the Nana-Mambéré prefecture. It has conducted raids in the CAR and Cameroon, and it has taken hostages for later ransoming.²⁵¹

Koumtamadji was captured in Cameroon but released in 2014 for hostages held by FDPC.^{252 253}

The Popular Front for Recovery (FPR) was created in 2011 by **Baba Laddé**, a former officer of the Chadian gendarmerie. By ethnic background, Laddé belongs to the Peuhls and his FPR's original goal was to defend Peuhl communities. The group fought with FACA and the Chadian army, which caused a heavy drain on its resources. This led to a peace agreement and the movement's withdrawal from the CAR. Nonetheless, this movement's fighters later continued fighting with Séléka's and RJ's fighters, but the movement itself has not continued its operations on the previous scale. Laddé was arrested in late 2014.²⁵⁴

The Lord's Resistance ARMY (LRA) is a rebel/terrorist group that has operated in Uganda, South Sudan, and Congo (DRC). It has been active since 1986, and its active leader is **Joseph Kony**. The group's original objectives were to fight against Uganda's government and to topple President **Yoweri Museveni**. The group withdrew from Uganda in 2005 or 2006 and started operating in the CAR and in South Sudan and DRC.²⁵⁵

This movement's ideology has been influenced by Christianity and indigenous beliefs, combined with a political dimension. The movement itself is small, but the brutal tactics it has used have made it famous and feared. It has operated mainly in extreme south-eastern parts of the CAR.²⁵⁶

Bandit (locally known as **Zaraguina**) and **mercenary** groups are numerous, and they have caused many problems, in various parts of the country. Some of these groups have been organised well and heavily armed. Groups have conducted raids, collected 'taxes', kidnapped and killed people,

²⁵¹ IRIN News, 'Armed groups in CAR'; Amnesty International, 'Central African Republic: Time for accountability'.

²⁵² FIDH, press release 'Central African Republic: Abdoulaye Miskine released in exchange for hostages, accommodation of impunity', 8 December 2014, at <https://www.fidh.org/en/region/Africa/central-african-republic/16738-central-african-republic-abdoulaye-miskine-released-in-exchange-for>.

²⁵³ Peter Bouckaert, 'Dispatches: VIP treatment for warlord sends wrong message in CAR', *Human Rights Watch*, 1 December 2014, at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2014/12/01/dispatches-vip-treatment-warlord-sends-wrong-message-car>.

²⁵⁴ IRIN News, 'UN highlights "security vacuum" as northern clashes continue', 11 January 2012, at <http://www.irinnews.org/news/2012/01/11/un-highlights-security-vacuum-northern-clashes-continue>; IRIN News, 'Armed groups in CAR'; Yahoo News, 'Former Chad rebel leader arrested in C-Africa', 10 December 2014, at <http://news.yahoo.com/former-chad-rebel-leader-arrested-c-africa-213724193.html>.

²⁵⁵ IHS Jane Internet portal, Insurgent Profile 'Joseph Kony, leader of the Lord's Resistance Army', *Jane's Intelligence Weekly*, 23 April 2010, at <https://janes.ihs.com/Janes/Display/1297517>; U.S. Department of State, factsheet 'The Lord's Resistance Army', 23 March 2012, at <http://www.state.gov/r/pa/prs/ps/2012/03/186734.htm>; Human Rights Watch, 'Questions and answers on the LRA commander Dominic Ongwen and the ICC', 9 January 2015, at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/01/09/questions-and-answers-lra-commander-dominic-ongwen-and-icc>.

²⁵⁶ Max Fisher, 'The bizarre and horrifying story of the Lord's Resistance Army', *The Atlantic's* 17 October 2011, at <http://www.theatlantic.com/international/archive/2011/10/the-bizarre-and-horrifying-story-of-the-lords-resistance-army/246836/>; IRIN News, 'Victims cry foul over Uganda's LRA strategy', 30 October 2012, at <http://www.irinnews.org/feature/2012/10/30/victims-cry-foul-over-uganda%E2%80%99s-lra-strategy>.



burned villages, and committed countless other atrocities. These actions have caused restlessness among the civilian population and affected the economy of the country particularly strongly. It has been hard to tell the difference between rebel groups that have a political agenda and the groups that are purely bandits.

2.5 External actors

As has been discussed earlier in this chapter, in addition to the direct interests of the parties to the conflict and the neighbouring states, a whole host of other actors have an influence on the crisis in the region. International and regional actors have played pivotal roles in determining the trajectory of the current conflict. Most of these involve more global strategic interests of regional and international actors, the local impact of which do not always contribute to facilitating a peaceful solution to the conflicts there. In this chapter, we will only scratch the surface by outlining the key regional and international actors and discussing their presence in the Central African Republic. At this point, we must highlight that the roles played by the international actors in the country's social, political, and economic environment are more complex and multifaceted than presented here. Nevertheless, this chapter should provide a good overview of the topic.

2.5.1 International organisations

The international engagement is rooted in revolts in 1996, after which the perception of the country shifted from it being a poor country to it being in a chronic post-conflict situation. This informed the type of international intervention. Following the increased scale and frequency of violence after the revolts, the international community introduced humanitarian operations alongside peacekeeping and peace-building missions to alleviate the people's suffering but also to stabilise the region. Since then, international involvement in the CAR has consisted mainly of brief responses to peaks of crisis, and several international and bi-lateral actors have deployed to the country to treat the emergency, leaving the country once the conflict has de-escalated.²⁵⁷

In consequence, a wide range of international actors have been deployed in the CAR in order to restore regional security and provide relief to urgent humanitarian crisis. Since the revolts, the country has received numerous peacekeeping and peace-building missions, including the

²⁵⁷ Centa Akasaki, Emilie Ballestraz, and Matel Sow, 'What went wrong in the Central African Republic? International engagement and the failure to think conflict prevention', Geneva Peacebuilding Platform (2015), 1–8.



MINUSCA, MINURCA, MINURCAT, BONUCA, BINUCA, MISAB, CEN-SAD, FOMUC, EUFOR, and MICOPAX, which have progressively deployed into the country to relieve the crisis and re-establish regional security.²⁵⁸ **One of the main foci of these efforts has been on conducting DDR programmes for combatants.**

In addition to military interventions, humanitarian aid and development programmes have been implemented by several mandated actors, such as ECHO, MSF, ICRC, UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP. The spectrum of their activities has covered food supply, emergency medical care, assistance for displaced people, and re-integration programmes for child soldiers.²⁵⁹ In addition, international NGOs in large numbers have started several reconstruction programmes.

2.5.2 Regional organisations

African Union (AU) is an organization consisting of 54 African states with secretariat based in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. The impact on the AU is closely linked on the UN, since AU is a regional security arrangement associated with the UN Chapter VII of the UN Charter. The cooperation between the UN and AU has been an important contributor for the stabilization and reconstruction of the Central African Republic. Together with the UN, EU and France, the African Union troops have been deployed to the country in several occasions. The most recent peacekeeping force, MISCA, was established on 5 December 2013 as a consequence of United Nations Security Council resolution 2127. The MISCA was the first peacekeeping mission being deployed to the ground after the latest conflict erupted in 2012.

There are two major regional communities in Central Africa; the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC) and the Economic Community of Central African States. These communities pursue rather similar goals, aiming at strengthening economic co-operation between their member states and promoting economic development in the region. Although all these communities initially had purely economic objectives, the scope of Central African regional co-operation has progressively widened to include peace and security issues. The members of CEMAC and ECCAS have since the late 1990s, to a greater or lesser degree, undertaken joint initiatives for the settlement and prevention of conflicts²⁶⁰.

²⁵⁸ Ibid.

²⁵⁹ Ibid., 7 - 8.

²⁶⁰ Angela Meyer, *Peace and Security Cooperation in Central Africa: Developments, Challenges and Prospects* (Uppsala, Sweden: Nordiska Afrikainstitutet, 2011), 10.



The Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa

CEMAC is a relatively young organisation, which, however, has its roots in the Central African Customs Union (UDEAC), established back in 1966. Formally established as UDEAC's successor by the N'Djaména Treaty, CEMAC is constituted of six member states: Cameroon, Gabon, the CAR, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, and Equatorial Guinea. The main objective of CEMAC is to monitor and promote convergence in national economic policies, co-ordinate sectoral policies, and progressively create a single market²⁶¹.

CEMAC is based on four main institutions:

- (1) **The Monetary Union (UMAC)**, which defines and monitors members' monetary policies
- (2) **The Economic Union (UEAC)**, responsible for developing the process that is expected to lead to the eventual free movement of goods, services, capital, and persons
- (3) **The Parliament**, which was established in 2010
- (4) **The Court of Justice** located in N'Djaména

CEMAC seeks to promote economic co-operation and development among its member states. In response to the growing insecurity and instability in the CAR, the community in 2002 decided to intervene and set up a regional peace force, FOMUC, in December of that year. Later, CEMAC transferred authority for the regional peace operation to ECCAS and since July 2008, CEMAC has again concentrated mainly on trade and economic co-operation²⁶².

The Economic Community of Central African States

ECCAS was established in 1983. Its 10 member states are Cameroon, Gabon, CAR, Chad, the Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Burundi, DRC, Angola, and São Tomé and Príncipe. Memberships overlap with a number of other African regional communities.

ECCAS has played an important role in stabilisation of the region since its establishment. In the case of the CAR, it has served as the first responder to the crisis, a crucial mediator, and a provider of peacekeeping forces. Consequently, given its significant contribution to facilitating political negotiations and providing military support, it has been influential in the process of selection of the CAR's transitional political leaders.

²⁶¹ Ibid., 10–14.

²⁶² Ibid.



A central organ in relation to peace-building efforts is the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX). That is the central body for promotion, maintenance, and consolidation of peace and security. There are three key technical organs of COPAX²⁶³:

- **The Commission for Defence and Security (CDS)** is constituted of the member states' chiefs of staff and commanders-in-chief of police and gendarmerie forces. This organ advises the Conference of Heads of State on security and defence issues and also on the organisation of joint military operations if needed.
- **The Central African Early Warning Mechanism (MARAC)** collects and analyses data for the early detection and prevention of crises.
- **The Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC)** provides Peace Support Operations (PSO) capacity composed of contingents provided by the member states to carry out regional peace operations.

The peace-building efforts in the CAR have been subject to influences from regional actors. Although these regional communities represent a good initiative for a local solution to 'African problems', the communities' peace-building and state-building efforts have been rather limited. A major challenge to regional peace and security seems to exist in relation to the absence of a common vision or 'regional consciousness', which is undermined by individual interests as much as by the lack of political commitment on the part of the leadership of member states.²⁶⁴

2.5.3 Neighbouring countries, principally Chad

While root causes of conflicts and political turmoil in the CAR are to be found in internal problems specific to the country, these problems have been compounded by the destabilising effects of regional politics. Given its history and geographical location, the CAR is particularly vulnerable to fluctuating regional developments, and a regional approach to the crisis is required. Attention needs to be paid both to interstate relations on a regional level and to complex socio-political dynamics at grassroots levels.²⁶⁵

Chad has been a key actor in the CAR for decades, and unresolved crises in Chad and the CAR have allowed armed movements to endure and reorganise on the fringes of the region. The oil reserves along the border between Chad and the CAR have shaped Chad's interests in the country and its history of alliances with CAR leaders.²⁶⁶

²⁶³ According to International Democracy Watch in 2016.

²⁶⁴ Meyer, "Peace and Security Cooperation in Central Africa"

²⁶⁵ Herbert et al., 'State fragility', 8.

²⁶⁶ Stefanie Duckstein, 'Chad's role behind the scenes in the Central African Republic.' *DW*, Published 12 February, 2014, at <http://www.dw.com/en/chads-role-behind-the-scenes-in-the-central-african-republic/a-17426113>.



Chadian President **Idriss Déby** depends heavily on oil revenues, and, consequently, he has looked for a way to secure the oil basins at the southern borders. No oil-sharing agreement has been signed between Chad and the CAR, and the Chadian government closely watches the political and security dynamics in the CAR, along with developments involving the country's oil exploration rights. Any trouble in this border region, whether caused by Chadian rebel groups or other opposition, would also jeopardise oil production in Chad.

Alongside the economic interest, motivation to oversee the CAR's political environment has also originated from need to secure the region. Here there is a high tendency for a spillover of national conflicts to regional ones. Chad has military rule over the region, and it has sent troops to help resolve peaks of violence in the CAR. Furthermore, with uncontrolled borders and unpatrolled rural areas, the CAR has been a safe haven for transnational armed groups and criminal networks, a fact that has led to the deployment of multiple foreign armies throughout the country over the past decade²⁶⁷. Therefore, in the absence of CAR ability to control the area effectively, the Chadian army has, since 2003, retained control of the most sensitive areas in the face of Chadian armed opposition, CAR insurgents, and highway bandits.²⁶⁸

The political relations between the countries' leaders have influenced the governance of the CAR. Chad backed Bozizé's bid for power in 2003, and he was a trusted ally to Chad for a decade. The role of this relationship was central to President Bozizé remaining in power, yet it gradually weakened as he started to favour South Africa and China in trade and military co-operation. Consequently, Chad did not intervene to save the president when Séléka seized power in March 2013. Chad was even accused of supporting overthrowing of the nation's president and then later helped to remove the rebel who ousted him, making way for a new transitional government. This view was popular among locals and supported by the fact that many Séléka rebels were well-trained mercenary fighters from Chad²⁶⁹.

Consequently, the extent to which other leaders in the region, such as Chad's Idriss Déby, are able to enforce their economic and security interests in the CAR is a source of some concern for the Central African leadership. Hence, similarly to previous conflict in Chad and the CAR, the current crisis involves several 'substate, state, regional, and international' actors that play a role in the 'conflict dynamics'.

²⁶⁷ Herbert et al., 'State fragility', 16.

²⁶⁸ Bjoern Seibert, 'Assessing the European Union's military intervention in Chad and the Central African Republic'. MIT Security Studies Program Working Paper, (2007), 11.

²⁶⁹ Agger, 'Behind the headlines'.



2.5.4 France

France, as the former colonial power, has pursued interests in the CAR since its independence. France has maintained a stronghold on developments in the country, influencing the CAR's political affairs in seeking a loyal partner to serve its security and natural-resource interests. For example, Bozizé was supported by France when he staged his successful coup in 2003. Until 2013, French support for President Bozizé was a major factor in his maintenance of power.²⁷⁰ In fact, France has been a joint participant in nearly all of the CAR's political processes and at times, when conflict has escalated, has mobilised the UN Security Council to act.

Despite France's long-term support in the stabilisation of the CAR, it is often criticised for practising **imperialistic foreign policy and for defending its economic interests in its former colony**. It doesn't try to resolve the conflicts at their source but instead confines itself to the election of political elites sympathetic to it and to providing relative stability, so that its economic interests aren't threatened. The French government has made considerable investments through its state-owned companies. According to some critics, the motivation behind its contributions to conflict resolution is linked with the fact that it seeks to ensure protection of the French government's long-term access to CAR natural resources such as oil, uranium, timber, and minerals²⁷¹.

Given France's intervention in conflicts in the CAR, are the interventions also driven largely by humanitarian motives and international pressure to help protect civilians? Since December 2013, France has played an essential role in connection with the conflict. For instance, France created **Operation Sangaris** (with 1,600 soldiers) to resolve the current conflict between Séléka and Anti-balaka groups. Together with the African Union mission MISCA, France provided the first troops on the ground after the escalation of the conflict in December 2013. Furthermore, France is undertaking the disarmament of rebels and attempting to reinstate order in collaboration with soldiers from other African nations within the UN's MISCA mission framework.

Although the EU's CSDP operations on the African continent have often been criticised for the extremely dominant position of France,²⁷² the importance of the country's role in stopping the violence cannot be denied. During both EU military operations in the region, France has played the key role by, firstly, promoting putting the conflicts on the Security Council agenda and thereby also

²⁷⁰ Herbert et al., 'State fragility', 10.

²⁷¹ NOEPS, 29 January 2016.

²⁷² Patrick Berg, 'The EU serving French interests'; Giovanna Bono, 'The EU's military operation in Chad and the Central African Republic: An operation to save lives?', *Journal of Intervention and Statebuilding*, Vol. 5 (2011), No. 1, 23–42.



on the CSDP agenda and, secondly, providing the main contribution to both CSDP operations. This topic will be discussed in more detail in chapters three and four.

2.5.5 Other countries

Alongside France and Chad, there are several other countries that are pursuing interests in the CAR. As one interviewee concluded, countries such as **Cameroon** are benefiting from the CAR's fragility and underdeveloped border control, as it enables them to use the CAR as a free-transit state to neighbouring countries²⁷³. In addition, analysis in the case of the CAR shows that third countries have applied contradicting and even factional strategies to the country. The case of Chad and France and their role during the Bozizé regime exemplified this argument. The relationship between the CAR and, on the other side, Chad and France soured when President Bozizé increasingly began to favour **South Africa** and **China** in natural-resource trade and security arrangements. China made a strong economic and political play in the CAR and steadily increased in visibility and influence in the country, motivated by the CAR's rich natural resources. Under the Bozizé regime, the two countries deepened their relationship. Nevertheless, China's strategy has been very different from that of the Western states. The Chinese have not become involved in the peace-building activities; instead, they focus on the economy while France and the whole of Europe are still finishing the work on the civil war and related politics²⁷⁴. Furthermore, South Africa has increasingly become involved in Francophone Africa, although its presence in the CAR is quite new. South Africa deployed a military contingent to the CAR in 2007, when a bilateral agreement providing training and personal protection to Bozizé was signed²⁷⁵. Alongside engaging in military co-operation, South Africa deepened its economic co-operation with the CAR, and several mining companies were contracted under Bozizé's rule.²⁷⁶

2.6. Conclusion

The historical review – outlining the key events and developments of the conflict in the country – shows us that the Central African Republic is a classic country with a dysfunctional democratic system. Geographic conditions, historical patterns of human settlement, and interactions between

²⁷³ EUFO, 29 March 2016.

²⁷⁴ NEUFO, 20 March 2016.

²⁷⁵ Agger, 'Behind the headlines,' 17-19.

²⁷⁶ Ibid.



Muslim and Christian groups have strongly influenced regional, ethnic, and religious identities, alongside relationships among the diverse groups within the CAR.

Among other factors, conflict in the CAR is rooted in ethnic marginalisation resulting from despotism and a sparse population. The government has often only been able to rule Bangui and areas close to it, leaving the northern regions of the country particularly marginalised from interactions with the state and from access to public services. Furthermore, the president in office has always concentrated political power in himself and his political supporters, which has led to exclusion of opposition and minority groups. In addition, communities in the remote regions have limited engagement with government entities or influence in decision-making processes affecting their localities, so the country suffers from lack of accountability of government institutions and insufficient social cohesion.

Moreover, suffering from a weak security and justice sector, the state has not had tools to defeat rebel attacks or stop people from acting with impunity; hence, the people of the country live in fear, with little trust in governmental security-providers. Institutional weakness and impunity have clearly played a part in the ongoing conflict, but, as has been discussed in this chapter, more causes can be identified. Alongside political and administrative elements, a fractured national identity, poor infrastructure and communication networks, and insufficient aid can be added to the list of conditions that permit conflict to thrive²⁷⁷.

Furthermore, the battle over resources cannot be forgotten. In the CAR's case, this has meant battles over diamond and gold veins between past governments and various armed groups. Groups have financed their activities also by other forms of illegal trade: selling ivory or timber, collecting 'taxes', and so on. Although the country has considerable natural resources, it is one of the poorest in the world. Unequal distribution of resources, previous conflicts, mismanagement, and corruption are the main reasons the economy has not developed and grown or benefited the population at large.

Finally, the conflicts in neighbouring countries have heavily influenced the stability of the Central African Republic. In the absence of proper border control, rebel and bandit groups have travelled across the borders into and out of the country. Many of these have illegally trafficked in goods and used the resulting funds to finance their activities. Large quantities of small arms have been smuggled by rebel groups and sometimes even government actors through neighbouring

²⁷⁷ NOEPS, 29 January 2016.



countries, especially Chad, Sudan, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. These activities have been hard, nigh on impossible, to stop.

In summary, the current conflict cannot just be called a religious conflict. It has been influenced by many factors. The Central African Republic's domestic politics, especially battles for political rule, and lack/weakness of domestic institutions are high on the list. The CAR region's international relations and politics, particularly actions of the CAR's neighbours and the heritage of the colonial past, play a key role too. Economic and ethnic factors must also be spotlighted and borne in mind. Religious differences have had their impact in the latest conflict; this can unquestionably be seen and proved, but to portray it solely as a battle between Christians and Muslims is wholly inaccurate. Religious differences and factors should be seen instead as fuel – they did not start the fire, but when it was ignited, they were ruthlessly used and exploited. The conflict clearly has its own unique characteristics and dimensions, and looking at the surface alone does not do the justice for the Central African Republic's citizens.



3 THE CSDP MISSION/OPERATION AND THE CONFLICT

The European Union has deployed four²⁷⁸ CSDP military operations and missions to the Central African Republic. They have all been short-term interventions with a clear end date and realised in close collaboration with the United Nation peacekeeping engagement. The purpose of this chapter is to draw an overall picture of the EU crisis-management efforts in the Central African Republic by discussing the establishment of EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA, along with how these operations have been implementing a multilateral approach to treat the escalated conflicts. Furthermore, the chapter presents analysis of the general attitudes and perceptions surrounding these operations. In addition, local perspectives with regard to the EU military approach are analysed in the context of EUFOR RCA, enabling drawing a consistent baseline for the latter analysis discussed in the study titled '**D 3.5: Study of RD Congo, South-Sudan, CAR and Libya**'.²⁷⁹

3.1 The EU's approach to responding to the conflict

The European Union approach to the Central African conflict is, above all, based on security, which is obviously a fundamental condition for every peace process. Therefore, when the Anti-balaka launched its massive **attack on Bangui on 5 December 2013**, the European Union's first action was to provide 50 million²⁸⁰ euros in funding for MISCA²⁸¹ through the African Peace Facility (APF)²⁸². Then, the EU contributed to ensuring safety through EUFOR RCA with the purpose of giving enough time for the MINUSCA to deploy its troops. However, Brussels also decided to contribute to the state security apparatus's reconstruction. It should be reiterated that by around December 2013, the already 'ghostly' administration had totally collapsed. Policemen and judges had all fled out of fear of being killed by Séléka, and FACA had totally disintegrated in the face of the advancing coalition. There was general anarchy, given that no-one was able to enforce law. Even the prisons had been devastated and couldn't accommodate any inmates. For these reasons, the European Union identified, early on, impunity as a major threat to the peace process.

²⁷⁸ EUFOR TCHAD/RCA, EUFOR RCA, EUMAM RCA, EUTM RCA

²⁷⁹ All the deliverables will be published at the project's website: <http://www.ieceu-project.com/>.

²⁸⁰ Agreement on a second contribution, of €75 million, was signed in mid-2014, although APF support to the troops ended with the transfer of authority between MISCA and the MINUSCA on 15 September 2014.

²⁸¹ It should be stressed that the APF assistance was essential for the functioning of MISCA.

²⁸² The Cotonou Agreement (Article 11) forms the overall legal framework on which the APF is based. The APF is funded through the European Development Fund (EDF), which is not part of the general EU budget.; This financial support is aimed at covering the costs of allowances, accommodation, and feeding of the troops, along with salaries of civilian MISCA personnel and various operational costs such as those of transport, communication, and medical services.



It was indispensable to reintroduce the minimum rule of law. Consequently, with regard to the police forces, the European Union launched a major state-building project called RESEJEP²⁸³ early on. This involved the rehabilitation of prison facilities and police offices but also the reconstruction of the penal chain, notably through the formation of police and gendarmerie. With regard to the military forces, the member states launched **a military advisory mission (EUMAM RCA)** first, on 15 March 2015, with the purpose of supporting the CAR authorities in preparation of the country's Security Sector Reform, while, on 14 March 2016, the council had adopted a Crisis Management Concept (CMC) **for a military training mission (EUTM CAR)** for an initial duration of two years as a follow-up mission to EUMAM RCA. According to the Council conclusions, 'this CSDP mission will contribute to providing the CAR Government with expert advice, guidance and operational training, in the general context of security sector reform in the CAR, for the purpose of turning the FACA into a professional army, democratically accountable and representative of the entire nation.'²⁸⁴

Any peace-building strategy requires, first of all, **a functioning state capable of delivering at least minimal services to its citizens**. This is why, over the past few years, besides the security sector reconstruction, the European Union has participated in the international community's effort aimed at reviving the Central African administration. Brussels is widely engaged in dozens of projects with the objective of rebuilding the Central African state. It plays an indispensable role in supporting transition authorities through direct funding to the CAR budget but also through the provision of technical assistance to key ministries. **The EU aims also to foster economic recovery by investing in infrastructure and public offices' rehabilitation**. However, since the very beginning, one of the member states' main priorities has been the organisation of a political transition the objective of which was legislative and presidential elections. **The European Union has been indeed the main financial contributor to the electoral process** that is considered a crucial step indispensable for giving state legitimacy for adoption and implementation of the future reforms intended to address CAR conflicts' causes.

It is important to note that, as explained above, CAR's regular rebellions stem from complex causes, including predatory governance, nepotism, corruption, underdevelopment, and weak security apparatus, because of which members of the population resort to violent means to make a living. The country suffers from a 'resource curse', a lack of opportunities, and identity problems. Furthermore, CAR sovereignty is limited – some say it is non-existent – because neighbouring capitals have often decided the country's fate. The CAR conflicts' root causes are hence numerous

²⁸³ In French, 'REGESP' refers to 'Projet de Réhabilitation des Secteurs de la Justice et de la Police'.

²⁸⁴ Council of the EU, 2016.



and complex, requiring, in any case, in-depth long-term strategies, that probably exceed EU power. Consequently, given country's wide scale problems and the limited means available, the European action focused at first mainly on the most urgent needs.

However, from a reconciliation perspective, according to several experts on CAR, it must be stressed that the European Union and international community action has been limited. Interviewees have indeed criticized the reconciliation process for having been led without asking the questions required to frame the terms of a reconciliation. Even if, numerous initiatives were rightly organized at the local level, there was a lack of reconciliation dynamic at the national level since the government of Samba-Panza seems to have been more motivated by its own interests²⁸⁵. On the one hand, it must be stressed that the Samba Panza as well as some of her ministers have been accused of embezzlement, notably as part of a three million dollar gift from Angola. On the other hand, Samba-Panza didn't hesitate to favour her own clan at the government as did all of her predecessors.

The Bangui Forum was supposed to be the most important step in the reconciliation process, nevertheless, it seems that the meetings has been a failure since the consultations organized in the provinces were led in a superficial way : 'In the majority of the prefectures [...] people coming came from Bangui only said that killing each other was not good. While in nearly every prefectures in the west there was no Muslims anymore, people didn't ask to the population why, what happened in their towns and how one has to proceed to make Muslims come back? What is going to happen with houses that belonged to Muslims, or the shops, or the cars that were stolen? The real and obvious questions were never asked nor in the provinces nor in Bangui.'²⁸⁶

Simply put, the Bangui Forum was another meeting were a lot of promises have been done but then forgotten on the next day. The Samba-Panza government lacked of a reconciliation policy. On the contrary, some actions increased tensions since for instance 'the national mourning days only took place to honour the Christians deaths and not the Muslims ones'.²⁸⁷ **There seems to have a consensus on the fact that the international community, including the European Union, didn't want to put pressure on the transition authorities to frame a better reconciliation process because it would have delayed further the organization of elections.** The same reason explains the lack of pressure on the Samba-Panza government in terms of fight against corruption. This rush towards the elections was the result of France insistence that wanted

²⁸⁵ NEUFO, 16 April 2016.

²⁸⁶ Ibid.

²⁸⁷ Ibid.



elections as soon as possible because it was considered as an exit strategy to withdraw its forces. Admittedly, the EU resisted to some extent to this influence since it succeeded in postponing the elections compared with French agenda, however, as the other international actors, Brussels did not put pressure enough on the transition authorities to fight the corruption, promote reconciliation and improve the representativeness of the transition government.²⁸⁸

3.1.1 The approach of EUFOR Tchad/RCA

The EUFOR Tchad/RCA mandate under Chapter VII of the Charter of the United Nations, as formulated in Resolution 1778, was to take 'all necessary measures' in order to fulfil the following functions: to contribute to protecting civilians in danger, particularly refugees and displaced persons; to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid and the free movement of humanitarian personnel by helping to improve security in the area of operations; to contribute to protecting United Nations personnel, facilities, installations, and equipment; and to ensure the security and freedom of movement of its staff and United Nations and associated personnel²⁸⁹. According to the Operational Plan, another EUFOR aim was to contribute to creation of the conditions required for the voluntary return of internally displaced people, especially in the Dar Sila region and, in the CAR, deter the movement of armed groups, specifically those transiting from Sudan to Chad via the CAR²⁹⁰.

EUFOR was authorised to deploy up to 4,700 soldiers for a period of one year from the declaration of Initial Operating Capability, although only 3,300 troops were effectively put on the ground²⁹¹. In **Council Joint Action 2007/677/CFSP**, EUFOR Tchad/RCA was labelled a military bridging operation that the UN would eventually take over with an operation of its own, although it wasn't clear whether such a mission would ever exist, given that no concrete arrangements for one were made in the UN resolution. The UNSC stated only that such a follow-up would be decided upon on the basis of an evaluation of the situation and the needs, to be held six months after EUFOR reached its IOC.

²⁸⁸ NEUFO, 25 March 2016, NEUFO, 16 April 2016.

²⁸⁹ Specifically, EUFOR aimed to protect refugee/IDP camps and MINURCAT from attacks so that the UN could train the Chadian police who were responsible for providing security within the camps. However, EUFOR soldiers were forbidden to either patrol or intervene within the camps except in extreme cases. See Bjoern Seibert, 'Operation EUFOR Tchad/RCA and the European Union's Common Security and Defense Policy', U.S. Army War College Strategic Studies Institute (2010), 14.

²⁹⁰ Ibid., 15.

²⁹¹ Raphaël Pouyé, 'L'EUFOR Tchad-RCA et la protection des civils. Les leçons militaro-humanitaires d'une mission atypique (mars 2008-mars 2009)', Centre Thucydide (2010), 5.



EUFOR's 350,000 km² area of operations was situated in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic^{292 293}. It was divided into three zones, North, Centre, and South, with a Force Headquarters in Abéché and six bases: in Bahia, Iriba, and Guéréda (in the north); Forchana and Goz Beida (in the centre); and Birao, in the south. The central effort was to be centred on Goz Beida, given that it was 'the most attractive passageway for the movement of armed groups'²⁹⁴. The CAR played only a secondary role in the mission, since only 200 soldiers were stationed in Birao, in the north-east of the country²⁹⁵.

It must be stressed that EUFOR had to be neutral and impartial, meaning that EUFOR Tchad/RCA was not mandated to engage a clearly specified adversary²⁹⁶. As EUFOR Force Commander, Jean-Philippe Ganascia put it thus in an interview: '[M]y mandate was very clear. From the moment where someone [rogue soldiers, rebels, or bandits] threatens militar[il]ly the population, attacks NGOs, the MINURCAT, or my men, I have to act. As long as they pass on their way, I am not concerned.'²⁹⁷ Hence, EUFOR actions were based on deterrence and there was no right to tip the balance in favour of one or another belligerent.

3.1.2 The approach of EUFOR RCA

According to **Council Decision 2014/73/CFSP**²⁹⁸ and **Resolution 2134**, EUFOR was mandated to take 'all necessary measures' in order to conduct a military bridging operation and to 'contribute to the provision of a safe and secure environment, with a handover to the African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (AFISM-CAR) within four to six months of Full Operating Capability'. However, given the widespread killings in the country and the French diplomatic offensive in the UN, member states became increasingly convinced during the planning process that the Security Council would authorise a UN peace operation in the CAR. For that reason, the CMC, on 20 January 2014, in the Council conclusions adopted on the Central African Republic, indicated that the member states took full account of the possibility of MISCA being transformed into a UN peacekeeping operation. In other words, when the Security Council confirmed the establishment of a UN peacekeeping operation, on 10 April 2014, EUFOR's actual objective became to give time enough to the MINUSCA to gather its troops and deploy successfully in the CAR.

²⁹² Patrick Berg, 'The EU serving French interests', 64.

²⁹³ The bulk of the camps with refugees were located in the north, while IDPs' camps were situated towards the south.

²⁹⁴ Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 22.

²⁹⁵ Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 175.

²⁹⁶ Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 19.

²⁹⁷ Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, 'Eufor Tchad 6: Gén. Ganascia: « Maintenir la force en état opérationnel », Bruxelles2, 28 April 2008, at <http://www.bruxelles2.eu/2008/04/28/eufortchad6-gen-ganasciamaintenirlaforceenetatoperationnel/>.

²⁹⁸ Council of the European Union, 'Council Decision 2014/73/CFSP of 10 February 2014 on a European Union military operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA)', 10 February 2014.



EUFOR RCA deployed 945²⁹⁹ men, including 750 combat troops³⁰⁰. **Its first objective was to protect the Bangui airport because**, on the one hand, it sheltered thousands of internally displaced persons who needed a safe haven and, on the other hand, it was one of the main points of access to the larger world and had crucial importance from a logistics perspective. International military and civilian personnel, as well as CAR citizens, all depended on the airport for movement of humanitarian aid, military and civilian equipment, supplies, and consumable goods. However, one has to note that EUFOR hadn't the right to patrol within the airport's IDP camp. It could only ensure its protection from the outside, and EUFOR was also mandated to deploy in the Bangui third and fifth districts, adjacent to the airport.

Several factors explain this choice. Considering the limited headcount, instead of disseminating or diluting forces throughout the city, **General Pontières** concluded that it was wiser to 'focus more deeply to get immediate but lasting effects'³⁰¹. Moreover, these two districts were the most violent and dangerous ones in Bangui, accounting for the largest number of destructive acts throughout the city's December violence. Added to this is the fact that these districts are near the airport, enabling some cohesion among the deployment areas. Finally, the choice of districts can be explained by the religious affiliation of their populations. Originally, the third district was mainly Muslim, while the fifth was rather mixed, with both Muslims and Christians. However, in the months after the 5 December attack, many Muslims left the capital in response to systematic attacks on them. On 13 February, after visiting Bangui, General Pontières therefore declared that the Muslim district was emptying out, 'the population trying to get to the North by going through entire Christian-dominated areas, hence under heavy danger, or trying to get to the M'Poko airport'³⁰². As for the mixed district, it had become mainly Christian because of Muslims running away. Accordingly, the presence of an international force was indispensable to protecting those districts in which a Muslim enclave was still present and vulnerable within a Christian-dominated city. Besides, the choice of one Muslim-dominated and one Christian-dominated district was aimed at preventing any accusation of partiality³⁰³.

²⁹⁹ Twenty states contributed to EUFOR CAR with military personnel: France, Luxembourg, Greece, Finland, Portugal, Georgia, Austria, Bulgaria, the Netherlands, Hungary, Lithuania, Belgium, Spain, Germany, Sweden, Cyprus, Italy, Romania, Estonia, Latvia, and Montenegro. See French National Assembly, 'Rapport d'information déposé en application de l'article 145 du Règlement par la commission de la défense nationale et des forces armées en conclusion des travaux d'une mission d'information sur l'évolution du dispositif militaire français en Afrique et sur le suivi des opérations en cours', 9 July 2014, 217.

³⁰⁰ Combat troops deployed in Bangui came from France, Georgia, Spain, Estonia, Latvia, Portugal, Italy, Finland, and Poland. Ibid.

³⁰¹ Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, 'Mobilité, effectivité, transition...les dix messages du général Pontières pour l'opération Eufor-RCA', Bruxelles2, 26 February 2014, at <http://www.bruxelles2.eu/2014/02/26/mobilite-effectivite-transition-les-dix-messages-cles-du-general-pontieres-pour-loperation-eufor-rca/>.

³⁰² According to information presented at the General Pontières press conference held in Brussels on 13 February 2014.

³⁰³ Elvis Humic, *An Assessment of the European Union Peacekeeping Operation in Central African Republic: EUFOR/RCA*, University of Louvain-la-Neuve, 2015.



Another major factor is that the EUFOR deployment was aimed at **taking weight off French forces located in the capital**, so that additional troops could be sent throughout the rest of the country, most notably the east, where a lawless area persisted, even more dangerous for its continuing clashes between ex-Séléka and Anti-balaka – or simply Muslim and non-Muslim – militias.

3.2 The multilateral approach

As mentioned in the previous sections, both of the EU operations were planned to be short bridging operations with the aim of being replaced by the UN peacekeeping force, so, for better understanding the establishment and general perception of these operations, co-ordination with the other international players needs to be analysed. In this section, the co-ordination efforts between the operations staff and main international actors are discussed.

3.2.1 Co-operation and co-ordination – EUFOR Tchad/RCA

The operations' main international partner was the UN multidimensional mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT). This mission was launched in September 2007 to address the security situation and mitigate the looming refugee crisis in the region. The MINURCAT had three planned security components: a civilian police element, intended to help train the Chadian police; a contingent of Chadian police officers, to be trained to take on responsibility for security in the refugee camps; and an EU military operation, which was to provide the military component until it was replaced by a UN force³⁰⁴. After the one-year EUFOR Tchad/RCA mandate expired, the MINURCAT took over the military component.

Co-ordination with the MINURCAT

The co-ordination between EUFOR Tchad/RCA and the MINURCAT can be characterised as, to put it mildly, challenging. The EUFOR was deployed to provide a military component to the UN multidimensional mission for a period of one year, until it would transfer the authority to the UN. Part of the EUFOR mandate was to contribute to the protection of UN personnel while also contributing to a safe and secure environment outside the refugee camps. The MINURCAT, on the other hand, was supposed to deploy police trainers to eastern Chad to train local police, who would then provide basic security within the camps. However, the MINURCAT was so slow in its force generation and the training of local police that during most of the deployment of EUFOR there was

³⁰⁴ See, for example, Hans-Georg Ehrhart, 'Assessing EUFOR Chad/ CAR', *European Security Review* (ISIS Europe), 2008.



no parallel police presence.³⁰⁵ This created a security vacuum within the refugee camps, for which EUFOR had not planned. This lack of police capabilities caused real challenges to EUFOR, as many of the greatest menaces on the ground were criminality, exactions, domestic problems, assassinations, thefts, and common crimes rather than the rebellion-related problems for which the military was more prepared. Banditry and human rights violations continued in the camps, and people expected EUFOR – being the only security actor present – to deal with them.³⁰⁶ Hence, the co-ordination of responsibilities between EUFOR Tchad/RCA and the MINURCAT was challenging, on account of lack of appropriate capabilities in theatre during the deployment of EUFOR. For future reference it was suggested that EU should integrate a police component into military operations, to make both the co-ordination and the response more efficient.³⁰⁷

In addition, to these difficulties related to co-ordination, it was also problematic that the UN did not do its military planning and force generation in time for the handover. It was feared that EUFOR's withdrawal would cause a security vacuum in the region, as the MINURCAT had not reached its full military capability. Therefore, the EU pledged that 2,000 of its troops would remain in the region temporarily to ensure a smooth takeover by the UN force³⁰⁸. The handover itself went relatively well, and on the ground the UN and EUFOR had good working relationships³⁰⁹.

All in all, the idea of EUFOR Tchad/RCA as a bridging operation was promising, having potential to coordinate resources in coherent manner. Nevertheless, the political constraints caused partly by Chad's reluctance to receive UN troops on its soil, along with the difficulties in getting donors involved, hampered the overall co-ordination and effectiveness of the EU intervention. The UN, on the other hand, benefited from the co-operation, instead of having to build an operation from scratch. The MINURCAT took over a well-functioning mission and was operational from day 1. As a result, a lesson can be identified with regard to co-operation: if further bridging operations are conducted, there should be a firm commitment about the military follow-on force.³¹⁰

Co-ordination with the other EU actors

EUFOR Tchad/ RCA was deployed under challenging circumstances, not least due to the financial and political constraints at the Brussels level and the lack of security capabilities on the ground. The EUFOR mission was given a challenging task, being the largest EU operation to be deployed.

³⁰⁵ Hylke Dijkstra, 'The Military Operation of the EU in Chad and the Central African Republic: Good Policy, Bad Politics,' *International Peacekeeping*, Vol 17 (3) 2010, 395 - 407.

³⁰⁶ EUFO, 24 February 2016.

³⁰⁷ Ibid.

³⁰⁸ Dijkstra, 'The Military Operation of the EU, 400–402.

³⁰⁹ EUFO, 24 February 2016.

³¹⁰ Ibid.



The operation received very little help from the other EU actors, such as ECHO and EU Delegation in Chad, and for the first six months there was limited contact between the operation and Brussels³¹¹. Nevertheless, challenges related to co-ordination and co-operation existed also between the EUFOR staff and other EU actors on the ground. Since EUFOR was operating in two countries, it had to deal with several humanitarian actors and with two EU Delegations: one in Chad and one in the CAR³¹². These delegations differed in their approach to the operation, and, according to an EU officer, there were lots of challenges to overcome in co-operating with the EU delegate in Chad. The reluctance to co-operate with a military operation materialised, for example, in connection with attempts to develop a common EU approach to the conflict by enhancing co-operation between the operation and Commission development programmes. In addition, ECHO, which was supposed to be EUFOR's closest co-worker, was reluctant to work with the military, thereby hampering the co-ordination and comprehensiveness of the EU's approach.³¹³

All in all, having EUFOR operating in two countries caused some co-ordination challenges on the ground, yet the major internal co-ordination challenges were political in nature³¹⁴.

3.2.2 Co-operation and co-ordination – EUFOR RCA

When EUFOR RCA was launched, in April 2014, the African Union and French forces, Sangaris, were already on the ground. The operation was initially deployed in support of the AU mission (MISCA) with a short mandate of six months and a clear exit strategy involving a handover of authority to the African Union mission. Practically, the security framework of the International Airport of Bangui was handed over to the UN mission (i.e., the MINUSCA), which was deployed to the CAR on 15 September 2014³¹⁵. According to the EEAS, SANGARIS, EUFOR RCA, and the MINUSCA operated in close co-ordination, succeeding in maintaining security in the Bangui area.³¹⁶

Co-ordination with Operation Sangaris, MISCA, and the MINUSCA

Owing to the nature of both of these operations co-ordination and co-operation played an important role in the overall effectiveness of the operations. According to the informants, both the EU and

³¹¹ EUFO, 24 February 2016.

³¹² Ibid.

³¹³ Ibid.

³¹⁴ NEUPS, 29 November 2015.

³¹⁵ 'Mandated to protect civilians and support transition processes in the Central African Republic', MINUSCA, at <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusca/>.

³¹⁶ 'EUFOR RCA hands over to MINUSCA the security framework of Bangui's M'Poko International Airport', European External Action Service, 2014, at http://www.eeas.europa.eu/archives/csdp/missions-and-operations/eufor-rca/news/archives/20141117_en.htm.



non-EU actors, the co-operation between EUFOR RCA and other military operations was relatively well co-ordinated. Some overlapping was identified, but the co-ordination was efficient in general. An important reason for such efficient co-ordination can be seen in the fact that the international military contribution in the country was very limited, relative to the geographical size of the CAR³¹⁷. According to an EU officer, the objective of all the actors – France and the EU, UN, and AU – was to improve the security situation as much as possible with the limited resources available. Thereby, the military operations' leaders strove systematically to co-ordinate the activities at several levels. An important enabler for this effective co-ordination was that the EU had worked a lot with the AU, the UN, and France before forming and deploying the troops. Because of these planning meetings, the various actors knew each other's strengths and weaknesses and the roles on the ground were assigned accordingly³¹⁸.

The Operation Headquarters (OHQ) of the EU's mission was in Larissa, Greece. Co-ordination between the OHQ and ground was managed by the Operation Commander and Force Commander stationed in Bangui. Practical co-ordination on the ground was performed daily, ensuring that the activities would not overlap³¹⁹. The co-ordination was done mainly through regular meetings between the key actors. It was emphasised in the interviews that a lot of the joint planning was done at the political level before EUFOR RCA was deployed, rendering collaboration on the ground systematic. In addition, the EU delegation had an important role in the field-level co-ordination among the AU, the UN, the EU and France³²⁰. According to a non-EU official, there were also constant consultations between the EU and AU. The various branches of the effort, from military to civilian, worked together, and information was shared between actors³²¹.

An important enabler for the co-ordination stemmed from the fact that the military operations had similar objectives, thereby making the division of tasks easier. The calendars and roadmaps were adjusted such that the activities of EUFOR RCA, the UN, and Sangaris would support rather than conflict with one another. According to an EU officer, this pre-planning was relatively successful. Naturally, much of the planning was left to the last minute, but, all in all, the operations worked together efficiently. One EU officer highlighted the importance of the co-ordination for the effectiveness of the operation, not only for the sake of using limited resources more efficiently but

³¹⁷ EUFO, 22 February 2016

³¹⁸ EUFO, 25 February 2016.

³¹⁹ EUFO, 24 February 2016.

³²⁰ EUPS, 25 January 2016.

³²¹ NEUPS, 29 November 2015.



also for making the local population aware of the roles and activities of the various operations. Efficient collaboration helped the locals to differentiate between operations.³²²

There were also some shortcomings identified in the co-ordination among the military operations.³²³ Deployment of EUFOR RCA was very much initiated by France. Consequently, for the EU, EUFOR RCA was an operation that aimed to ease the French troops' workload. The EU and the French together had to prepare for the arrival of the UN peacekeeping forces, making co-operation clearly necessary. Nevertheless, according to a non-EU official, although the co-operation between the UN and EU was co-ordinated relatively well, there was room for improvement between Sangaris and other operations. According to this interviewee, **Operation Sangaris functioned quite separately from others, having quite different rules of engagement and approaching the population differently than the UN and EU troops did.** At times, the reputation of Sangaris also influenced how EUFOR RCA officers were perceived by the local population, making differentiation between these operations even more important³²⁴. According to an interviewee, the dominance of France (namely, the French embassy) complicated co-ordination among operations at times. For example, he sometimes took decisions, even dangerous ones that were neither well communicated to nor approved by either Sangaris or EUFOR.³²⁵

Another barrier to the co-ordination among the operations was identified as **insufficient sharing of information among the supranational actors.** For example, in the absence of an 'information sharing agreement', the EU and UN are not entitled to share all their information. This led to some delays – in, for example, receiving crucial intelligence information from the ground – that had an impact on the operational planning. In addition, lack of a shared HQ for the international actors was seen as having hampered the overall planning and execution of the operations³²⁶. The good co-ordination efforts aside, the different military operations still had different mandates and so had different priorities and responsibilities, raising the question of why the three military operations could not be combined into one.

Co-ordination with the humanitarian actors

In addition to the international military forces, there were several other NGOs and intergovernmental organisations (IOs) supporting the stabilisation of the country. According to a

³²² EUFO, 24 February 2016.

³²³ NEUFO, 5 March 2016.

³²⁴ EUFO, 22 March 2016.

³²⁵ Ibid.

³²⁶ EUPS, 27 January 2016.



non-EU official, the co-ordination between EUFOR RCA and humanitarian actors on the ground was co-ordinated primarily by the UN OCHA. **The UN OCHA operated as the link between the humanitarian actors and EUFOR RCA.** Upon establishment of the peacekeeping operations in the CAR, weekly meetings were initiated with the key NGOs and IOs to ensure an efficient humanitarian response.³²⁷ The co-operation with the humanitarian actors was essential, as one of the objectives of EUFOR RCA was to ensure security of the humanitarian actors and allow the supply of the aid by the UN³²⁸. Depending on the topic of the meeting, various international and local organisations were present, ranging from diverse UN agencies to Commission programmes, the IOM, and regional actors. Given the existence of refugees and IDPs, the UNHCR was another important co-operation partner for EUFOR.

The UN OCHA also aimed to co-ordinate the information flow between actors, such that EUFOR planners (and the UN and other military forces) would have to inform OCHA of the operations and OCHA would then transfer the information to the other humanitarian actors. This co-ordination was perceived as vital, given that knowing which other actors were in the region would be important for the safety of the humanitarian workers in the event that the military forces opened fire.³²⁹ In addition, information related to the security and humanitarian situation was shared at the cluster meetings³³⁰. According to an EU official, the dialogue was always very open and the various actors were willing to work together to improve the situation on the ground:

‘We were all conscious of the urgency to intervene, and each of us knew one another’s responsibilities and competencies. We had an excellent relationship, which is not always that straightforward’ (EUFO, 25 February 2016).

According to one informant, contact between the key humanitarian actors and EUFOR RCA’s Civil-Military Co-operation (CIMIC) team was frequent. Nevertheless, that interviewee noted that co-operation efforts were challenged by the fact that there were **problems with internal communication** between different nationalities within EUFOR RCA. The information given by the humanitarian actors often did not circulate among the EUFOR staff, and this made the co-operation inefficient at times. Another factor hampering efficient co-operation was one related to the French language. Many of the EUFOR staff did not speak French, and this rendered the CIMIC-related tasks challenging. After all, the purpose of the CIMIC team was to speak with

³²⁷ EUFO, 25 February 2016.

³²⁸ EUFO, 29 March 2016.

³²⁹ NEUFO, 5 March 2016.

³³⁰ EUFO, 25 February 2016.



members of civil society and pass on the information within the military. Information-gathering was often hampered by lack of language skills.³³¹

From the discussion of overlap of activities between EUFOR RCA and humanitarian actors, it seems that co-ordination among the military operations was better than the co-ordination among the various humanitarian actors. The co-ordination between EUFOR RCA and the international humanitarian aid actors was seen as insufficient, although, according to a non-EU official, it was handled better here than in other conflict areas³³². Lack of understanding of each other's roles and working culture was perceived as hampering the co-operation between the civilian and military actors³³³.

In addition, the areas where improvements were especially needed were related **to sharing of information and resources**³³⁴. Sharing the information was highlighted as especially crucial for reaching common goals. In a country where hostilities towards humanitarian workers are common, the military are able to travel to places where it is too dangerous for the other internationals to go. Therefore, it is the military officers who are more likely to come across child soldiers. When this happens, it is important that these officers inform the humanitarian actors³³⁵. This co-operation is an effective way of improving the release of child soldiers and serves as a practical example of how the co-operation can help to improve the overall stability and security of the country.

3.3 Perceptions of EUFOR Tchad/RCA

3.3.1 The general public

From the very beginning, France has been the leading nation advocating European boots on Chadian ground. Its action was decisive not only for bringing the operation onto the European agenda but also for implementing it, as its contributions attest³³⁶. However, when France proposed European military intervention in eastern Chad, many Member States feared being instrumentalised and expressed scepticism and suspicion with regard to a possible French hidden agenda. They suspected that Paris's real objective was to protect an autocratic and unsavoury

³³¹ NEUFO, 20 March 2016.

³³² NEU, 5 March 2016.

³³³ Ibid.

³³⁴ For example EUFO 22 March 2016; EUFO 29 March 2016.

³³⁵ NEUFO, 5 March 2016.

³³⁶ Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 201.; Roland Marchal, 'An assessment of EUFOR Chad/CAR', 22.



French client from rebel groups, both in the CAR and in Chad, and to Europeanise the cost of its military intervention in Africa, rather than to protect civilians³³⁷. After all, Chad and the CAR had signed various military assistance agreements with France. Paris had bases in the two countries and provided equipment, training, and advice to their armies. France had even intervened in support of the Déby regime in 2006 and 2008 and in both cases played a crucial role in repelling the rebels attacks³³⁸. Furthermore, the region was not a strategic one for the majority of the Member States, some of which expressed also a lack of conviction related to the objectives of the operation: they estimated that it would not cure anything. This was a conflict most of the European capitals had little knowledge of and that was perceived by some as a distraction from other theatres, which were considered much more important³³⁹.

However, the Member States did finally decide to move. Motives were, of course, mixed, but it seems that EUFOR Tchad/RCA was seen in particular as an opportunity to be perceived as doing something for Darfur. As Alexandre Mattelaer put it, '[t]he frustration of being powerless led to an attempt to try and do at least something about the regional aspect of the crisis'³⁴⁰. Given that AMIS was failing, that Sudan had rebuffed European capabilities in favour of for UNAMID, and that Kouchner had failed with his intention to establish humanitarian corridors to Darfur, a military operation in Chad and the CAR was interpreted as a way to address the Darfur crisis and hence calm down domestic civil society, which had become angered by the Member States' inaction in the face of this most media-publicised African crisis³⁴¹. Even though the French proposal was eventually accepted, there was a widespread perception that France actually imposed the mission on several of the Member States. Since EUFOR Tchad/RCA was viewed as a mainly French operation, there was a strong expectation that France would bear the bulk of the burden of the force generation process³⁴². However, this painful process, as evidenced by the required six conferences, ended up undermining the credibility of the European Union as a crisis manager but also the credibility of the European engagement for alleviating human suffering in Chad. It is important, therefore, to note that EUFOR Tchad/RCA was never perceived as a resolute collective decision of the EU to intervene in a new crisis in Africa so much as the result of a political offensive

³³⁷ Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 178.; Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 15.; Mérand and Rakotonirina, 'La force européenne au Tchad et en Centrafrique: le baptême du feu', 108.; Roland Marchal, 'An assessment of EUFOR Chad/CAR', 25.

³³⁸ Patrick Berg, 'The EU serving French interests', 62.; Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 9.

³³⁹ Roland Marchal, 'An assessment of EUFOR Chad/CAR', 25, 26.

³⁴⁰ Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 15.; Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 174, 184.

³⁴¹ Ibid., 201.; Roland Marchal, 'An assessment of EUFOR Chad/CAR', 25.; David Lanz, 'EUFOR Chad/CAR: A regional solution for a regional problem', 49.

³⁴² Mérand and Rakotonirina, 'La force européenne au Tchad et en Centrafrique', 108, 115.



led by the newly installed President Sarkozy and his foreign affairs minister, Bernard Kouchner, who succeeded in convincing their reluctant European partners to act³⁴³.

Considering the fears about French instrumentalising of the mission, Member States insisted on the operation's impartiality as a *sine qua non* condition for their participation. This was true in particular of the countries that espouse neutrality³⁴⁴. Even the EU Parliament issued a resolution to insist that EUFOR Tchad/RCA remain neutral particularly in its relationship with the French operation Epervier³⁴⁵. Admittedly, serious efforts have been successfully undertaken during EUFOR Tchad/RCA deployment in order to reduce European suspicions. Therefore, some observers recognised EUFOR as having remained neutral³⁴⁶ and impartial during its mission³⁴⁷. Despite this, Member States' but also some academics' suspicion never dissipated completely³⁴⁸. It has even been argued that France, at least on some occasions, tried to exert leverage on the operation in favour of President Déby³⁴⁹. Furthermore, even if EUFOR, in general, has been perceived as neutral³⁵⁰ on the ground, it has also been frequently described as and even criticised for being, at least indirectly, instrumentalised by President Déby³⁵¹ and France. The ICG stated: 'Thanks to EUFOR, France actively contributed to the reinforcement of Déby's position, without helping the Chadians find a durable solution to their crisis. [...] [T]hrough EUFOR, Déby reinforced its control over the East. Paris was able to get the European Union to share the costs of this operation and indirectly endorse its political goals.'³⁵² This feeling that President Déby used the international presence for the regime's own survival was shared by numerous observers^{353 354}. For Patrick Berg, the 'rebel restraint during EUFOR presence allowed Déby to regroup his army while at the same time the limited mandate of EUFOR and MINURCAT meant he could continue his support for the Darfur rebels undisturbed'³⁵⁵. Mérand and Rakotonirina, for their part, argued that, intentionally or not, the EUFOR presence reinforced the Déby regime anyway³⁵⁶. However, while it is true that the operation served French desire to stabilise Chad, it is difficult to prove that EUFOR

³⁴³ Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 34.

³⁴⁴ Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 15.

³⁴⁵ Winrich Kuehne, 'How the EU organizes and conducts peace operations', 3.

³⁴⁶ For instance, when a new rebel attack was launched on N'Djaména on June 2008, Déby responded furiously to EUFOR Tchad/RCA inaction.

³⁴⁷ Winrich Kuehne, 'How the EU organizes and conducts peace operations', 3, 27.; Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 195.; Roland Marchal, 'An assessment of EUFOR Chad/CAR', 29, 30.

³⁴⁸ Alexandre Mattelaer, 'The strategic planning of EU military operations', 16.

³⁴⁹ Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 195, 196.

³⁵⁰ For Khartoum and Chadian rebels, European troops were perceived as a direct threat and not as an impartial mission aimed at helping the population.

³⁵¹ Operation Commander Jean-Philippe Ganascia argued himself that President Déby perceived EUFOR Tchad/RCA as a shield against the Chadian rebels.

³⁵² International Crisis Group, 'Chad: Powder keg in the east', Africa Report no. 149 (2009), 20.

³⁵³ Winrich Kuehne, 'How the EU organizes and conducts peace operations', 4.

³⁵⁴ David Lanz, 'EUFOR Chad/CAR', 54.

³⁵⁵ Patrick Berg, 'The EU serving French interests', 67.

³⁵⁶ Mérand and Rakotonirina, 'La force européenne au Tchad et en Centrafrique', 108.



was used by France to protect President Déby's regime; that might have been an inevitable consequence of the presence of a European deterrent. In any case, European forces' action would have contributed to stabilising the region and President Déby's rule even if this were not part of the French calculus.

Even where EUFOR Tchad/RCA was praised for its logistical triumphs, its mandate and its success have frequently been described as limited because it only addressed the consequences or the symptoms and not the issues underlying the conflict in Chad, as well as the structural causes of refugees' suffering in Darfur³⁵⁷. There was no political process designed to support the military component, to address the root causes of Chadian uprisings, and to help the local population in a sustainable manner.³⁵⁸ In addition, by the time EUFOR became operational, the situation on the ground had changed greatly. The EUFOR action had been designed to face heavily armed rebels, but the threat against civilians and humanitarian workers once EUFOR forces were in Chad was mainly an upswing in small-scale criminality and banditry, with which EUFOR couldn't cope, on account of its limited mandate, its size, and its equipment³⁵⁹. Chad actually needed policemen much more than soldiers, but the deployment of the Chadian police force that was supposed to work alongside EUFOR was delayed by almost a year, to February 2009³⁶⁰. All of this goes some way to explaining why the operation was 'often qualified in the press as having little effect'³⁶¹ but also criticised for its narrow mandate and limited success. Benjamin Pohl gives a good outline of the criticism levelled against EUFOR Tchad/RCA: 'In sum the outcome was an operation that did not decisively change the situation on the ground in terms of either relative power or humanitarian objectives. Due to the compromise that it represented, its mandate and implementation turned it into a gesture which was better suited to impress European audiences than to impact on relative power or to help refugees beyond the short term'³⁶².

Ultimately, the European operation faced tense relations with humanitarian aid personnel, mainly for three reasons. Firstly, 'the objective wasn't clear to them, whether [EUFOR] came to protect

³⁵⁷ MINURCAT, of course, faced the same criticism.

³⁵⁸ See for example: United Nations, 'Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations mission in the Central African Republic and Chad', S/2008/444, 8 July 2008, §52.; International Crisis Group, 'Chad: A new conflict resolution framework', Africa Report no. 144 (2008), 33.; Bjoern H. Seibert, 'Operation Eufor Tchad/RCA', 40.; Patrick Berg, 'The EU serving French interests', 6.; Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 205.

³⁵⁹ See for example: Raphaël Pouyé, 'L'EUFOR Tchad-RCA', 7.; Winrich Kuehne, 'How the EU organizes and conducts peace operations', 4.; Mérand and Rakotonirina, 'La force européenne au Tchad et en Centrafrique', 114.; Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 193.; Jean-Philippe Ganascia and Raphaël Pouyé, 'EUFOR Tchad-RCA: les principales leçons du terrain', *Revue de la Défense nationale* (2009), 6.

³⁶⁰ International Crisis Group, 'Chad: Powder keg in the east', Africa Report no. 149 (2009), 19.

³⁶¹ It has also been argued that EUFOR Tchad/RCA played a more important role in European experimentation with respect to its own capabilities and the further development of ESDP than in supporting African peace security (Johanna Bögel, 'The EU's response to the Darfur crisis', 15)

³⁶² Benjamin Pohl, *But We Have to Do Something*, 205.



[the] government or the populations³⁶³. Also, NGOs disagreed strongly with EUFOR initiatives aimed at encouraging IDPs' return while the security situation in their home region remained precarious. Finally, EUFOR investment in micro-project development led to strained relations with some NGOs, which perceived this EUFOR action as dangerous because it blurred the lines between military and humanitarian actors and threatened the neutrality that was considered their best security guarantee³⁶⁴.

3.4 Perceptions of EUFOR RCA

3.4.1 The general public

EUFOR RCA, deployed in 2014 didn't cause as much suspicion as the previous operation in Chad and Central African Republic had, mainly because the context was quite different. Indeed, there was widespread consensus that something had to be done in the CAR to address a dramatic humanitarian situation that was spinning out of control³⁶⁵. Specifically, there was much less fear about a French hidden agenda in favour of an autocratic client. When Paris proposed an intervention to its European partners, President Bozizé had fled months before and nothing indicated that it had ever had any desire to support Djotodia. The country had fallen into chaos, and NGOs were reporting an increasing number of massacres on both the Séléka and the Anti-balaka side. Furthermore, there was growing certitude that the Security Council would authorise a UN peacekeeping operation with a political component that would be more than a 'plaster'.

However, even while the Member States did agree out of a sense of responsibility on the necessity of acting, they once again expressed little enthusiasm, as evidenced by the lengthy force generation process. **Six conferences and six months were necessary before EUFOR RCA reached its Full Operational Capability (FOC).** This force generation was regularly described in the press as painful, and, as alluded to above, some high-ranking officials denounced the Member States' lack of support and engagement in response to a serious humanitarian crisis. Therefore, it must be acknowledged that the credibility of the EU as a crisis manager has yet again been damaged, especially since the second main contingent was the Georgian one (with 150 soldiers). French officials, of course, felt great frustration since Paris, as usual, had to fill the gaps to launch

³⁶³ EUPS, 25 February 2016.

³⁶⁴ Ganascia and Pouyé, 'EUFOR Tchad-RCA', 4, 7.; Raphaël Pouyé, 'L'EUFOR Tchad-RCA', 10.; Roland Marchal, 'An assessment of EUFOR Chad/CAR', 31.

³⁶⁵ Niklas I.M. Nováky, 'From EUFOR to EUMAM: The European Union in the Central African Republic', *European Foreign Affairs Review*, Vol. 21 (2016), No. 1, 100.



the mission. The situation was even more embarrassing since, **as France and Georgia provided half of the troops**, the Member States needed a full six conferences to bring only about 500 men. Such lengthy negotiations for such a small operation, especially when people were dying daily in the CAR, gave an image of a reluctant actor without any real determination to act and led to widespread criticism, in the press and by academics but also from the humanitarian personnel in the CAR, for its dithering.

Nonetheless, **EUFOR RCA is generally perceived as a success by the press; academics; and, in particular, the NGOs, alongside the humanitarian workers in the CAR.** It should be stressed that majority of the interviewees consulted in this research agreed that EUFOR 'did a great job' within its area of operations – because the security situation, greatly improved. Naturally, there was also room for improvement in terms of increasing the operation effectiveness of the mission, yet the overall impression of the EUFOR RCA was positive. The NGOs, especially the IOM, all reported excellent collaboration with EUFOR, mainly in terms of information-sharing and coordination. They praised EUFOR for not having tried to continue the development micro-projects that would have blurred the lines and endangered NGOs. All of them described EUFOR RCA as a very reactive and professional operation that contrasted greatly with MINUSCA forces³⁶⁶. Under EUFOR protection, the humanitarian aid workers felt generally safe and could carry on their project without fear of being associated with the European force, given that EUFOR always organised its patrols from the right distance.

The main criticism of the European operation pertained to the narrow nature of its mandate, mainly in terms of troops, duration, and geographical scope. Indeed, EUFOR was seen by numerous observers as insufficiently adapted to the needs of such a large country as the CAR. The humanitarians, in particular, would have liked to see EUFOR deployed outside Bangui alongside Sangaris and the MINUSCA in order to face the massive banditry in the countryside that made it difficult for NGOs to reach some regions. For many, EUFOR's small size attested again to a lack of Member State interest in the CAR's suffering beyond official discourses.

³⁶⁶ Numerous interviewees from NGOs reported that EUFOR was more effective than the MINUSCA on account of the latter's lack of equipment, training, and reactivity. One person interviewed even alleged that some MINUSCA personnel used to sleep during their service and that sometimes they didn't show up in the event of being needed.



3.4.2 The main beneficiaries

The empirical material suggests that EUFOR was well perceived by the local population.³⁶⁷ While the scope of the operation was geographically more limited than the other international forces, it appears that they had found the right balance, from the populations' perspectives, between ensuring their security, being approachable, being helpful and being reactive when needed. That information was systematically confirmed by all the people interviewed in this research, including seven Bangui citizens living in the third and the fifth districts³⁶⁸. The latter indeed described EUFOR RCA as being very reactive to the emergency calls, efficient and close to the people. In-depth analysis on potential reasons for such a popularity will continue **in the field study in D3.5**. However, at this stage it can be stressed that EUFOR succeeded in earning peoples' trust³⁶⁹ due to a number of its routine activities such as, regular night and day (foot) patrols, the impartiality with which it treated the warring parties, and the daily discussions it had with several local actors, namely the Bangui citizens.

The improved security and EUFOR's approach was reassuring to the locals, who perceived that the operation was making a difference to their livelihood. Through several CIMIC initiatives including awareness campaigns, EUFOR "put strategies in place so that people could talk to each other about their mutual recriminations"³⁷⁰ and hence, as a mediator, promoted dialogue and reconciliation. Under EUFOR watch, for example, cash-for-work programmes were carried out which enabled people to start to work again. Consequently, the local interviewees declared, that EUFOR departure was a major loss. Furthermore, the empirical material alludes that **the Bangui citizens feared that termination of EUFOR RCA would create a security vacuum**. Although, MINUSCA took over the responsibilities from the European force, the locals perceived the UN operation much less efficient and reliable than the EUFOR RCA.³⁷¹³⁷²

³⁶⁷ See for example Norwegian refugee council, 2015.

³⁶⁸ NEUPS, 24 September 2017; NEUFO, 17 January 2017 ; NEUFO, 20 January 2017; NEUFO, 24 January 2017; NEUFO, 26 January 2017; NEUFO, 1 February 2017; NEUFO, 6 February 2017.

³⁶⁹ NUEPS, 23 March 2016.

³⁷⁰ NEUFO, 20 January 2017

³⁷¹ NEUFO, 17 January 2017 ; NEUFO, 20 January 2017; NEUFO, 24 January 2017; NEUFO, 26 January 2017; NEUFO, 1 February 2017; NEUFO, 6 February 2017.

³⁷² NEUFO, 17 January 2017 ; NEUFO, 20 January 2017; NEUFO, 24 January 2017; NEUFO, 26 January 2017; NEUFO, 1 February 2017; NEUFO, 6 February 2017.



The results of the survey conducted in CAR by Norwegian Refugee Council³⁷³ and the interview material collected for the purposes of this study, indicate that **EUFOR RCA was appreciated by Bangui citizens, especially when compared to the MISCA, MINUSCA or Sangaris**³⁷⁴. In fact, several sources reported that **Sangaris** was unpopular among the local population. It was regularly attacked by 'extremists', members of different warring parties, who tried to use the French colonial past in the CAR to discredit the whole operation and stir up the population against the French force³⁷⁵. Furthermore, Sangaris but especially MINUSCA were regularly accused for not being efficient and reactive enough in case of emergency³⁷⁶. As highlighted by three Bangui citizens, EUFOR RCA was rather the opposite;

"In the event of a warning, [EUFOR soldiers] were immediately present. As soon as EUFOR was contacted, the soldiers were immediately on the zone unlike the other forces which needed time, sometimes the next day, sometimes even a few days later. It looked like doctors who intervened after the patient death".³⁷⁷

MINUSCA troops were even accused of being passive in front of killings and mainly hiding within their bases. Consequently, MINUSCA alleged inefficiency provoked such a high frustration among the population that in October 2016 a demonstration took place in Bangui during which several civil society organisations asked for MINUSCA withdrawal in order to protest against UN passivity³⁷⁸. In contrast, as Panika and Bar noted in an 'AFP article', the forces with 'EUFOR enjoy[ed] a surprising popularity' and EUFOR '[didn't] crystalize [sic] hostility as the other international forces [did] sometimes'³⁷⁹.

EUFOR popularity can also partly be explained by **the multinational character of the European force**. Indeed, citizens of Bangui had merely not been in contact with soldiers from anywhere other than French and Africa. They were unfamiliar with Polish, Georgian, Spanish, or Italian men, who were regarded with some curiosity³⁸⁰. Consequently, though it had a large French contingent, **EUFOR was perceived as a truly European peacekeeping operation**. EUFOR put a lot of energy into trying to explain to citizens that its mandate was not French but European. Therefore,

³⁷³ In total, 689 key stakeholders and beneficiary in the CAR were interviewed during the research. The survey comprised of the responses from the whole affected population, without discrimination to the ethnicity, profession, gender or age. Norwegian refugee council, 2015.

³⁷⁴ Jean S. Renouf, *When Perceptions Matter*, 30.

³⁷⁵ EUPS, 25 February 2016.

³⁷⁶ NEUFO, 24 September 2016

³⁷⁷ NEUFO, 6 February 2017

³⁷⁸ RFI, "RCA : nouvelles manifestation lors de manifestations pour le retrait de la MINUSCA", 24 October 2016, at : <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20161024-rca-minusca-manifestation-bangui-croix-rouge-violence-retrait-force-onu>.

³⁷⁹ Christian Panika and Hervé Bar 'A Bangui, contre l'insécurité, l'Eufor "fait du bon boulot!"', Agence France-Presse, 8 August (2014).

³⁸⁰ NEUFO, 5 March 2016.



as the European Union could hardly be accused of having a colonialist past, rebel groups and militias couldn't use their traditional tool such as leverage on CAR citizens against EUFOR. Thanks to its numerous nationalities, **the European force was considered much more neutral and impartial than Sangaris, which was French.**³⁸¹

However, even EUFOR RCA was not completely free of criticisms. First, EUFOR was criticised by citizens for having taken too much time to deploy.³⁸² A high-ranking EUFOR officer reported that 'in Bangui, people said [to] me that "you really took time to arrive; people have died during that time"³⁸³. It seems that the delays in deployment detreated EU's creditability and prestige among the local population. **People could not understand why the European Union needed so much time to deploy its force while serious violence was taking place.**

Second, while EUFOR's area of operation was considered as a well-considered strategy, several local interviewees suggested that the operation should have taken responsibility of other districts³⁸⁴. Especially the fourth and the eight ones should be included into the area of operation, since the latter also faced important security concerns. As a whole, the information gathered indicated that **the locals would have wanted EUFOR to operate in a larger area.**

Finally, one journalist reported that since EUFOR was heavily involved in the third district, some people thought that EUFOR was mainly motivated by the Muslim protection.³⁸⁵ However, other sources argued that **the European force was generally considered as impartial** since it protected equally the different communities and supported various projects in both districts.³⁸⁶ Overall, despite the criticisms EUFOR benefited from a wide support from the population, with the exception of the armed groups that the force used to fight.

³⁸¹ After having spent three days with EUFOR in Bangui, Nicolas Gros-Verheyde confirmed that 'without doubt the European flag bring[s] an added value in this country' – that is, 'an impartial peacekeeping that can't be accused of neo-colonialism'. Nicolas Gros-Verheyde, 'Que retenir de Bangui et de l'opération Eufor-RCA', Bruxelles2, 3 November 2014, at <http://www.bruxelles2.eu/2014/11/03/que-retenir-de-bangui-et-de-loperation-eufor-rca-a-bangui/>.

³⁸² NEUFO, 24 January 2017

³⁸³ EUPS, 25 February 2016.

³⁸⁴ NEUFO, 17 January 2017; NEUFO, 20 January 2017 ; NEUFO, 24 January 2017; NEUFO, 6 February 2017.

³⁸⁵ NEUFO, 17 January 2017

³⁸⁶ NEUFO, 20 January 2017; NEUFO, 24 January 2017



4 DISCUSSION

Today, the Central African Republic is a conflict-stricken state that is in deep need of external aid, economic growth and development, governance, and social cohesion. The review of history together and the discussions with the local and international actors together tell us that interrupting the circle of conflicts requires a comprehensive strategy and long-term commitment. This chapter discusses the key lessons identified from the approach that the EU, in the form of the CSDP, has taken to reconsolidate the country and thereby prevent re-escalation of crisis.

4.1 The general approach to preventing conflict and the lessons identified

As discussed in this study, mapping out the root causes and their interconnections is essential for developing appropriate instruments to contribute to sustainability and long-lasting peace. On the basis of this study, the root causes of the crisis and key lessons identified can be summarised under five categories:

(1) A history of coups and counter-coups and of weak security institutions

The history of the CAR since independence can be summarised as a series of coups and counter-coups, wherein greedy men representing various factions, defined more in geographical terms and by ethnicity than by ideology, have plotted against each other and usurped power through violent means, and when in power, they have ruled in their own interest, linked to control over the country's rich mineral deposits, and sought to retain power by favouring their followers.

Consequently, democratic institutions and processes have never taken hold. In times of crisis, the absence or poor capacity of the national army and security services contribute to a sense of insecurity among the population, as the communities are left unprotected and vulnerable. This has made it rather easy for the rebellious groups to take control of the major towns and seize power. For this reason, building credible armed forces that would be visible to the population has been identified as a priority for the security sector and also for the ongoing EU mission on the ground.

(2) A weak state, poor infrastructure, and fractured national identity

The CAR has a mixed population with large numbers of immigrants arriving over a period of time from neighbouring countries. This has contributed to creating segregation among the people. Several interviewees said that the CAR's governance and national identity are so weak that it can



hardly be called a state³⁸⁷. The majority of the population consists of poor rural farmers in isolated villages across this vast territory. They rarely have the opportunity to travel beyond the vicinity of their villages or the nearest market town, and the country's mass-media networks do not have national coverage, leaving the population in rural areas vulnerable to rumours and disinformation, which spread especially readily in times of crisis³⁸⁸. These contribute to creating a sense of disconnection from the Bangui-centric government. Furthermore, if the people in rural areas ever come into contact with representatives and institutions of state power, these would be border guards, gendarmes, or the national army rather than institutions providing basic social services such as health care and education³⁸⁹. For a large part of the population, this situation has contributed to a weak sense of national identity and citizenship.

The infrastructure is very much connected to economic development too, thus underscoring the need for the international community to support economic reform programmes realised in close collaboration with civil society.³⁹⁰ Moreover, peace-building and state-building efforts and benefits must reach beyond Bangui, in order to strengthen national cohesion and the overall security of the region. Decentralising peace-building and state-building interventions while broadening support to state institutions' programmes, beyond the executive ones, would aid in strengthening the government institutions, both security and social services, and thereby also contribute to developing the population's perception of the CAR as a state³⁹¹. Furthermore, the international community should support reforming government institutions to represent the whole population, consider the mixed nature of the population, and address the needs of the people living in rural areas.

(3) Lack of a functioning judicial system

Currently, one of the most challenging aspects of the ongoing conflict is impunity. There is a poorly developed or non-functioning judicial system – it perished almost completely in the crisis after a period of being rebuilt with international support. A significant element of Séléka's revolts was that they frequently freed prisoners, political prisoners and common criminals alike; burnt or destroyed prisons and court buildings, along with documents and files; and disarmed gendarmes and the police, if not killing them³⁹².

³⁸⁷ EUPS, 25 January 2016.

³⁸⁸ NEUPS, 29 January 2016.

³⁸⁹ NEUPS, 20 March 2016.

³⁹⁰ NEUPS, 29 January 2016.

³⁹¹ NEUPS, 15 February 2016.

³⁹² Ibid.



As a result, no judgement is meted out for the killings and other crimes committed, and this feeds the ongoing sectarian aggression between Séléka and the Anti-balaka. Hence, an important part in possible conflict resolution is to be found in addressing the impunity and creating social cohesion between the different sides. Developing the country's justice system is an important part of Security Sector Reform.

(4) Ethnicity and religious affiliation

Throughout the country's history, several leaders of the CAR have instrumentalised regional, ethnic, or religious allegiances to reinforce their positions of power. The conflict between Séléka and the Anti-balaka has often been described as a religious one, but such an interpretation doesn't correspond to reality. Diverse faiths have existed mixed alongside each other in the same villages and neighbourhoods, and religion has not traditionally been the cause of major conflicts. Nonetheless, non-Muslim populations have, in reality, long been feeling a certain weariness with the Muslim minority, and Muslim communities are the most severely affected by the violence perpetrated by the Anti-balaka. However, as discussed in this report, the tension is due to jealousy and rancour towards certain Muslim populations rather than to divergent religious beliefs. The analysis seems to point to ethnicity rather than religion as defining people's identity.

All actors, not only military ones, need to take this into account, because it directly affects people's willingness to return home from refugee camps. The locals know how the various ethnic groups are clustered within the region (namely, around Bangui) and how this affects the dynamics of the region. These dynamics and the internal tensions should be considered in planning of the repatriation strategy for the refugees and organising security for the region, as it is closely connected with the overall stability of the area³⁹³.

(5) Poor economy and dependence on aid

After decades of poor government and mismanagement, the majority of the population live in extreme poverty, which is seemingly at odds with the country's wealth of natural resources, particularly in the mining sector³⁹⁴. These resources have never been exploited for the benefit of the national economy. Furthermore, no matter the favourable climatic conditions for farming,

³⁹³ NOEFO, 20 March 2016.

³⁹⁴ NEUFO, 22 February 2016.



actions have not been taken to boost agricultural production beyond the level of subsistence farming³⁹⁵.

Therefore, the CAR has always been heavily dependent on foreign aid and would not have survived without it. At the same time, the long-term commitments of the international community that are necessary for turning around the failing economy and building institutional capacity have been missing.

Finally, as one of the interviewees pointed out, in order to treat the root causes of the CAR's conflicts, we need to understand the rebels' social reality:

“A person become a bandit out of exigency; he is not paid, a total impunity prevails, he's armed, and with a gun he can steal, because we're not helping the region where he comes from to develop, and because his family is completely cut out of the rest of the society.”³⁹⁶

4.2 The EU's military approach

Identification of the root causes and lessons to be learnt with regard to the areas for improvement has provided us with a good foundation for analysing the effectiveness and appropriateness of the EU's military approach to the CAR. In this section, we describe conclusions on the best practices and shortcomings of these interventions, to contribute to the project for long-term stability of the country.

4.2.1 'Best practices'

Assessing the success of the EU's military operations in the CAR is beyond the scope of this report. Nevertheless, some best practices can be identified with regard to the EU engagement and establishment of the operations, based on the experiences and perceptions of the EU and non-EU actors. Those practices can be grouped under the following themes.

(1) EUFOR as a multinational force

Importantly in terms of best practices, EUFOR's popularity has often been attributed to its multinationalism. According to the interviewees, this brought real added value to the operation. Another important element connected to it is that the EU was able to differentiate its troops from other international forces (namely, the French ones). Several international troops, such as the

³⁹⁵ NOEPS, 29 January 2016.

³⁹⁶ EUFO, 25 February 2016.



French soldiers, and the UN peacekeepers, have been accused of sexual abuse and hostilities towards the local population³⁹⁷. The former colonial power has suffered from an especially bad reputation among the locals, being accused of arrogance, several human rights abuses, and exploitation³⁹⁸.

In general, the EU had a good reputation with the population, because no EU colonial past can be used against its troops but also because most of the Member States have no colonial past, at least in Africa. **A European force is less subject to political manipulation than a French one**³⁹⁹. Therefore, the EU should promote a well-balanced distribution of nationalities and limit France's contribution in African countries with which Paris shares a colonial past. Of course, France will always be an indispensable contributor to European peace operations, because of its military capacities but also its experience on African soil. Furthermore, France traditionally exercises the leadership within the CSDP context.⁴⁰⁰ However, the multinational character of the force can be arranged so as to limit French contingents' contact with the local population as necessary, through deployment of other nationalities instead. **One could object that EUFOR's good reputation stems mainly from its narrow mandate in comparison with French troops**⁴⁰¹. The latter have indeed acted as an interposition force between militias, to stop or limit violence, and France therefore created a feeling of frustration and anger in both Séléka and the Anti-balaka and among citizens in general who wanted to fight at all costs. When EUFOR deployed, later, it was a securitisation force and most of Séléka had already fled to the north. Yet EUFOR too interposed itself between militias, notably to protect remaining Muslim populations living in enclaves. Furthermore, while it is true that perceptions of an operation depend, first of all, on its actions, there is no doubt that a European operation will always be perceived as more neutral and legitimate than a French one as long as its actions don't put this neutrality in danger.⁴⁰²

(2) Visibility of the operation and working with civil society

It came out in the interviews that EUFOR had worked very well with the local actors, be they government actors or members of civil society. The operation was praised for succeeding in developing **a network of contacts to speak with local civil society and officials**, to try to calm people, to direct, to listen, and to pass on messages notably through awareness campaigns. According to one interviewee, EUFOR had done exactly what was needed to reassure the

³⁹⁷ EUFO, 29 March 2016.

³⁹⁸ For example EUFO, 3 April 2016.; EUFO, 22 November 2016.

³⁹⁹ EUFO, 29 April 2016.

⁴⁰⁰ EUPS, 27 January 2016.

⁴⁰¹ NOEPS, 23 March 2016.

⁴⁰² NOEPS, 12 January 2016.



population by patrolling, being visible, and creating contacts with people in order to build a trust relationship. There was, at the same time, proximity through the patrols and the contact with civil society. Local actors such as the governor of the district greatly appreciated that as well as the population as was confirmed by all Bangui citizens interviewees. All in all, these activities were seen as an essential factor in the stabilisation of the region where EUFOR operated.

(3) Co-operation and co-ordination with other international actors

Overall, the co-operation and co-ordination between EUFOR RCA and other international actors – mainly the UN, the AU, and Sangaris – was relatively efficient, helping to avoid overlapping of activities. At this point, though, it must be mentioned that EUFOR’s mandate was limited to the area of Bangui, which did limit the need to co-ordinate activities outside the capital. Nevertheless, some lessons can be identified from these co-ordination activities.

One important element for the co-ordination of EUFOR RCA’s efforts was that **the UN, the AU, and France were consulted before launching of the operation**⁴⁰³. Through this, multilateral co-ordination became integrated into the operation mandate. **The political engagement** was an important enabler for the co-ordination, and the operation was in good contact with the CAR’s political actors. There were regular meetings with the ambassadors, the UN chiefs, the head of the EU delegation, and the president of the RCA, which facilitated efficient information-sharing between the political level and the operation. Thereby, EUFOR RCA had a direct channel to inform the political instances of the ongoing security problems and offer suggestions for helping to move the situation forward⁴⁰⁴. In addition, religious leaders play an important role for the country’s peace process. Hence, in parallel with consulting the political actors, EUFOR met with such other local key actors⁴⁰⁵.

Another important enabler of good co-ordination was **sharing of resources among the military operations**. With limited resources, due to difficulties in generating forces for the operation, pooling and sharing of resources was important. For example, Germany offered strategic airlift capability for EUFOR RCA. On a bi-lateral level, France and Germany agreed to make the strategic airlift operation available also to Operation Sangaris.⁴⁰⁶ For its part, Sangaris offered medical capabilities and a rapid-response force for EUFOR RCA. In general, the tasks were

⁴⁰³ EUFO, 25 February 2016.; NEUPS, 29 November 2016.

⁴⁰⁴ EUFO, 25 February 2016.

⁴⁰⁵ NEUPS, 29 November 2015.

⁴⁰⁶ Federal Foreign Office, ‘Germany willing to provide air transport for the EU military operation in the Central African Republic,’ updated in March 28 2016, at http://www.auswaertiges-amt.de/EN/Infoservice/Presse/Meldungen/2014/140328-EU_Mission_Zentralafrika.html.



divided among the UN, France, and EU, in line with their competencies and capabilities. Clear mandates, joint planning, and active consultation between partners can be identified as good practices for enhanced co-ordination between military actors acting in parallel.

A further 'best practice' that following missions should promote has to do with **relations with the humanitarian actors**. It should be stressed that all of the NGO workers interviewed in the research reported on here confirmed that there was excellent co-operation between the European operation and humanitarian and development organisations. In a contrast to EUFOR Tchad/RCA, no tensions or disputes were mentioned by interviewees with regard to EUFOR RCA, because the latter never tried to implement development projects of any kind. The Force Commander purely provided some logistical support through military genius but only in close co-ordination with NGOs. All actors reported relatively good sharing of information but also excellent co-ordination in relation to security issues, which allowed NGOs to work safely without threatening the image of neutrality.

All in all, it seems that EU institutional learning has taken place since the transition operation EUFOR Tchad/ RCA was deployed: MISCA was on the ground until it was replaced with the UN troops, ensuring that there would be a follow-up force after EUFOR's exit date arrived. In addition, the preliminary planning was done in consultation with the other international actors, and the initial allocation of tasks was based on the competencies of each operation. Furthermore, having a strong CIMIC unit and a focus on liaison work with the humanitarian actors demonstrated how EUFOR sought to implement a comprehensive approach on the ground.

4.2.2 Drawbacks

Alongside so called best practices, several drawbacks to the EU approach can be identified. We have grouped these into the following categories.

(1) Political constraints affecting the Member States

The main drawbacks are largely related to **the force generation process**, which seriously delayed the operation deployment and damaged the credibility of the EU as a crisis manager. Deployment of both EUFOR operations was rocky, and they both suffered from **lack of cohesion** among the Member States with regard to the need to engage in response to the conflict. Not many of the EU member states have an interest in the region, so their willingness to contribute to the operations was reduced. Therefore, force generation for both operations took longer than expected, delaying the deployment of the troops too. Moreover, neither of the operations was able to reach the planned strength, and they were left with a shortage in relation to several capabilities, such as



camp security, drivers, and intelligence⁴⁰⁷. Finally, **the issue of appropriate human resources** arose for the overall establishment and pursuit of the mission objectives, as there was a paucity of French-speaking staff, which created a problem especially for the CIMIC team and their efficiency.⁴⁰⁸

(2) Funding issues

Given that the main reason behind such a long process stems from a lack of political will to support the financial burden of an operation, the European Union should reform the Athena mechanism⁴⁰⁹ further in order to broaden the scope of the common costs. The funding level was identified as a major drawback for the EU operation.

In addition, **without sufficient funding mechanisms for the CSDP operations**, critical capabilities such as logistics, camp security, strategic airlift operations, and medical care depend on the individual Member States' contributions. In the absence of a common funding mechanism, the national platoons are heavily dependent on home support in terms of equipping and maintenance. If the home country does not provide appropriate equipment to execute the tasks required during the operation, a considerable security and efficiency problem results for the whole operation.⁴¹⁰

In addition, especially at the beginning of an operation, a flexible funding mechanism should be in place in order to realise short-term infrastructure and other development projects. Once real shortages are identified, this mechanism would help to achieve quick effects on the ground. Now, overall effectiveness is hampered by issues that could be easily fixed with reasonable funding.⁴¹¹

Hence, as it is indeed difficult for a state to support the financial element of an operation but also the potential human costs on the ground, a common peacekeeping fund shared by all Member States (except the ones benefiting from an output) remains the best mean of apportioning the mission's burden fairly at European level.

⁴⁰⁷ EUFO, 22 March 2016.

⁴⁰⁸ NOEFP, 20 March 2016.

⁴⁰⁹ Athena is a mechanism which handles the financing of common costs relating to EU military operations under the CSDP.

⁴¹⁰ NOEFP, 20 March 2016.

⁴¹¹ EUFO, 24 February 2016.



(3) Issues affecting Security Sector Reform

Funding seems also to lay at the heart of many of the development programmes' issues. For example, **many international organisations seek to implement SSR programmes before the political environment is appropriate for such reforms**⁴¹². It seems that the donors are not completely aware of the local realities and thus, SSR programmes are funded and implemented too early. When reform initiatives are implemented too early and as one-time interventions, there is also a danger of not analysing their likely impact. This can have unintended consequences, such as one ethnic group dominating the defence or juridical sector, and to lack of local ownership of the process, thereby diminishing the effectiveness and sustainability of these interventions.⁴¹³

Desire to find a quick response to reform the country's security institutions has also become evident for the EU. The CAR's interim president, Catherine Samba-Panza, requested the international force to reform and train FACA. The UN is now leading the process and has been supported by EUFOR RCA and now. Reforming FACA has been perceived as an essential tool in stabilising the country, disarmament of ex-combatants, and their re-integration. Nevertheless, there is a challenge in this process related to the fact that strengthening the armed forces is a partly political and partly financial issue.⁴¹⁴

There is a political challenge behind the composition of FACA; there is a perception that the armed forces are dominated by Christian soldiers who are biased against the Muslim population, and some FACA members joined the rebel group opposing Séléka during the recent conflict. To diminish this perception, the military structure needs to be ethnically and religiously balanced, and attempts should be made to integrate moderate factions from both the ex-Séléka and the Anti-balaka. According to an interviewee, the international organisations seem to undermine this important element of the reform process.

In addition, FACA has long been accused of sexual violence, extrajudicial executions, and other human rights abuses against the civilian population. Nevertheless, in the absence of an appropriate juridical system, FACA, among other armed groups, have not been held to account for their crimes. Since FACA is not perceived as legitimate among some locals, there are fears that immediate rearmament could lead to additional abuses and sustained violence. This view has a

⁴¹² NOEPS, 15 February 2016.

⁴¹³ NEUFO, 29 January 2016.; EUPS, 20 January 2016.

⁴¹⁴ EUPS, 20 January 2016.



connection to the success of the disarmament and re-integration of the militia leaders and combatants. If FACA is not perceived as accountable by the locals, the disarmament programmes are unlikely to really succeed. As one of the interviewees explained things, if the people live in fear, they may return small weapons to earn some money, yet with that money they will seek to purchase better ones, which are easily available thanks to the poor border management⁴¹⁵.

Changing this perception should be on the EU's reform agenda, since fostering solid development of the national forces depends on gradual rearmament, with a number of preconditions being met. It should take place within the context of a larger reconciliation process led by civil society, religious leaders, and political actors. In addition, **national and local justice mechanisms should be strengthened alongside the defence reform to bring an end to the environment of impunity in which soldiers and armed groups operate**. Furthermore, the rehabilitation of FACA must be implemented with respect for civilians' protection, human rights, and the principles of international humanitarian law. Finally, for guaranteed sustainability of these efforts, the locals need to be listened to all the way. Although the issue of FACA is still complex, according to the interviewees the locals want to see FACA on the streets⁴¹⁶. This is to show that, despite the conflicts, there are still national forces, which are to protect the population from external threats.

Reforming the forces is an expensive process, because FACA is inappropriately equipped and untrained. Building their capacity is an expensive and rocky path requiring financial contributions by the international community and long-term commitment.

(4) Short-term interventions and a limited mandate

Both of the operations were planned as bridging operations to be deployed for a short term to prevent a security vacuum in the area before the UN troops' arrival. In the case of the CAR, the EU has been criticised for lacking strategic vision. Although EUFOR RCA was seen as an especially good intervention, its main problem, according to the interviewees, was that its mandate was too short. Having **an exit date rather than exit state** set for both of the operations was seen as the wrong strategy, for the situation on the ground would have required a longer-term commitment by the EU forces, which were perceived as bringing stability to the areas under their responsibility. The limited mandates of the operations also affected the composition of the operation, which was inappropriate.⁴¹⁷ Especially in the case of EUFOR Tchad/RCA, security for the IDPs would have

⁴¹⁵ EUFO, 22 March 2016.

⁴¹⁶ EUFO, 24 February 2016; NOEFO, 20 March 2016.

⁴¹⁷ Nora Vanaga, 'Conflict in the Central African Republic', National Defence Academy of Latvia, Center for Security and Strategic Research Strategic Review no. 9 (2014).



necessitated more military police, as most of the security threats were connected with individual criminals rather than rebel groups.

(5) Political agenda rather than development strategy

It seems that **the EUFOR operations are inherently political**. They have symbolic value to demonstrate that the EU is a global actor that seeks to contribute to resolving conflicts and promoting its values in times of crisis. With the example of the establishment of EUFOR Tchad/RCA, the EU's largest military operation showed us that deployment was largely initiated by a single Member State that has strong interests in the region. Once brought to the CSDP agenda, the operations became highly political, demonstrating the EU's ability to act in a united manner, speaking with one voice. These *ad hoc* interventions in the CAR have been rather more symbolic than part of a larger strategic approach to the country. In fact, **a common EU strategy for the CAR does not seem to exist**. Lack of both strategy and political will has hampered the EU's ability to select appropriate instruments to reflect the local realities and the needs of the country, which seem to require long-term support and commitment if an enduring state of development is to be achievable.

(6) Co-ordination and co-operation issues

As is mentioned above, inflexible financial instruments and difficulties in generating forces were perceived as the key drawbacks in the overall co-ordination of the operation. The limited resources resulted in some co-ordination challenges within EUFOR. According to an EU officer, some crucial capacities were lacking in the operation. Among these capabilities, were having the camp's own security unit and having vehicle-drivers mentioned. In consequence, **some tasks that were part of the mission implementation plan were not carried out at all in the end**, because the personnel planned for these were given new tasks. The challenge with these alterations was that the officers did not necessarily have the right background, training, and equipment to perform the new tasks assigned on the ground⁴¹⁸. **It was suggested that in the future there should be more emphasis on the forces rather than the equipment**. After all, all the troops designated by the contributing states bring their own equipment, so the crucial element for effective co-ordination is to have enough forces to complete the planned tasks in the mission.

⁴¹⁸ EUFO, 22 March 2016.



In terms of achieving long-term stability for the country, ensuring local ownership⁴¹⁹ over the reform efforts is important. Part of the mandate was for EUFOR RCA to bring stability to parts of Bangui. According to a non-EU official, the common challenge with the stabilisation process is that **the local actors are rarely involved in the process efficiently**. One interviewee mentioned that it must be remembered that the EU works in the country only because it has been requested by the locals. Accordingly, leaders and their views must be listened to, and their hopes should be taken into account. In terms of co-ordination, to enhance the accountability and resilience aspect of any development programme or reform project, greater effort should be made to include the local stakeholders in the process. This is something that the past CSDP military monitoring mission, EUMAM RCA and ongoing training mission EUTM, aimed at strengthening the security sector in the CAR, should greatly enhance.

Finally, it was highlighted that, for fully utilising the EU's comprehensive approach in the CAR, the inter-organisational co-ordination among the various EU actors must be strengthened. The co-operation between the CSDP operations and other international actors was often easier than collaboration with the Commission programmes and actors.

4.3 Concluding remarks

An overview of the history of the violence and the factors contributing to it has given us a basis for assessing the appropriateness of the conflict-management and conflict-prevention efforts of the international community – particularly by the EU. As discussed in this report, the drivers of the ongoing conflict are intertwined with several internal and external factors, and this makes identification of the root causes and, thereby, (re)construction of the society a challenging task. There have been several attempts to restore peace in the CAR. To find a solution for the seemingly hopeless situation, the international community has enhanced its co-operation, seeking to break the cycle of violence in the CAR. Since the escalation of the crisis in late 2012, the international community has strengthened its presence in the country, and, among other actors, the European Union has tried to contribute to finding a peaceful resolution to the conflict, stopping the killings, protecting civilians, and providing humanitarian relief. The three CSDP military interventions have been symbols of the EU's commitment to the country, and, alongside the

⁴¹⁹ Local ownership implies that the reform of the security and justice policies, institutions, and activities in a given country must be designed, managed, and implemented by local actors rather than external ones. This refers not so much to government ownership as, rather, to a people-centred approach involving all relevant stakeholders – including the beneficiaries of security and justice. See, for example, DCAF and ISSAT, 2012, 7.



humanitarian and development aid, it has provided considerable support to this country, which is dependent on outside help.

Nevertheless, these interventions have been very much political in nature, initiated by the former colonial power. Alongside the external challenges on the ground that result from a complex crisis environment, instability of the surrounding countries, and actions by other international players, the EU has had to deal with a number of internal challenges that hamper the effectiveness of its comprehensive approach. Lacking a long-term strategic vision and facing political constraints in combination with an insufficient funding mechanism, the CSDP operations are realised under challenging circumstances. There is potential for the EU to do more to contribute to preventing further conflicts from escalating in the CAR. **Deliverable 3.5**⁴²⁰ will continue the discussion of the effectiveness of EU conflict-prevention capabilities, with the aim of identifying the ingredients for success in the EU's crisis-management interventions and critically analysing whether the EU has reached its objectives in the Central African Republic, while also evaluating the appropriateness of the means and instruments it has applied to contribute to building sustainable peace.

⁴²⁰ All the deliverables will be published at the project's website: <http://www.ieceu-project.com/>



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INTERVIEWS

Number	Quoted in the text	Date	Organization
EUPS – European Union Politic-Strategic level perspective			
Interview no. 1	EUPS	20 January 2016	EUMS official, Brussels
Interview no. 2	EUPS	25 January 2016	CMPD official, Brussels
Interview no. 3	EUPS	27 January 2016	EUMS official, Brussels
EUFO – European Union Field-Operational level perspective			
Interview no. 4	EUFO	22 November 2015	A representative from EU Delegation, Nairobi
Interview no. 5	EUFO	22 February 2016	EUFOR officer, Helsinki
Interview no. 6	EUFO	24 February 2016	EUFOR official
Interview no. 7	EUFO	25 February 2016	EUFOR officer, Geneva
Interview no. 8	EUFO	22 March 2016	EUFOR officer, email interview
Interview no. 9	EUFO	29 March 2016	EUFOR officer, Skype
Interview no. 10	EUFO	1 April 2016	EUFOR officer, Skype
Interview no. 11	EUFO	3 April 2016	EUFOR officer, Helsinki
NEUPS - Non- European Union Politic-Strategic level perspective			
Interview no. 12	NEUPS	29 November 2015	AU representative, Nairobi
Interview no. 13	NEUPS	12 January 2016	UN representative, Helsinki
Interview no. 14	NEUPS	29 January 2016	NGO representative operating in several regions in the CAR, Helsinki
Interview no. 15	NEUPS	15 February 2016	UN representative, New York
Interview no. 16	NEUPS	23 March 2016	EUFOR officer, email interview
Interview no. 17	NEUPS	24 September 2016	A governmental official, Local, Helsinki
NEUFO – Non- European Union Field-Operational level perspective			
Interview no. 18	NEUFO	5 March 2016	NGO representative, Geneva
Interview no. 19	NEUFO	20 March 2016	NGO representative, Geneva
Interview no. 20	NEUFO	25 March 2016	Local researcher, Bangui
Interview no. 21	NEUFO	16 April 2016	Researcher, Mogadishu
Interview no. 22	NEUFO	18 April 2016	A representative from International NGO



			operating at M'Poko Refugee Camp, Bangui
Interview no. 23	NEUFO	17 January 2017	Journalist, CAR citizen, Bangui
Interview no. 24	NEUFO	20 January 2017	Journalist, CAR citizen, Bangui
Interview no. 25	NEUFO	24 January 2017	NGO representative, CAR citizen, Bangui
Interview no. 26	NEUFO	26 January 2017	Local leader, Chistian, CAR citizen, Bangui
Interview no. 27	NEUFO	1 February 2017	Business person, Muslim, CAR citizen, Bangui
Interview no. 28	NEUFO	6 February 2017	Radio podcaster, Christian, CAR citizen, Bangui



Case study – Central African Republic:

Aim: The study is designed to assess the achievements and potential shortcomings of the past and ongoing crisis management missions in the field of SSR. The study reviews the effectiveness potential of EU capabilities with an aim of identifying lessons and best practices from EU (and other international) engagement in support of providing stability and security for the region.

This is done by analysing

- the appropriateness of the planning and operation capabilities of EU engagement in the CAR.
- the evolution-affected role of the EU in terms of stabilisation and rehabilitation efforts in the CAR.
- co-operation and co-ordination among EU, UN, and AU entities and the integration of efforts involving the various actors and missions.
- the local and international visions of stabilisation, in order to provide deeper insight into which are the appropriate instruments for use in the stabilisation and rehabilitation process aimed at making these long-term visions reality.
- gap analysis regarding the sufficiency of resources and capacity to meet the requirements in the field.
- the concrete obstacles and opportunities affecting the efficiency of implementation of EU operation/mission (EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA) mandates at the operational level.
- the key issues related to successful co-ordination and co-operation among the actors (both between international organisations and between EU and local actors).



Analysis framework:

Level	EU perspective	Non-EU perspective
Politico-strategic	Member States, EEAS, OHQ, Council, etc.	Other international actors HQ
Operational field	EU staff on the ground	Other international actors Local actors on the ground

Effectiveness is when a mission or operation achieves its purpose in an appropriate manner from the standpoint both of the EU and of the conflict(s) it seeks to prevent.

Internal effectiveness refers to the EU perspective, which considers

- Internal goal-attainment: the extent to which the EU achieved what it set out to do
- Internal appropriateness: the extent to which the implementation goes according to EU plans (in terms of timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness)

External effectiveness refers to the conflict perspective, which considers

- External goal-attainment: the extent to which (further) violent conflict is prevented
- External appropriateness: the extent of proportionality in prevention effort and effect

Capability is the capacity to deploy a combination of resources through collective organisational routines to reach goals.

In this project, capabilities are divided into six categories:

- 1) **Planning capacity:** Strategic/operational planning, management, budgetary constraints, consultation on lessons identified from reports, situational awareness
- 2) **Operational capacity:** Leadership, training, mission organisational structures, the mission decision-making process, human resources (deployment and expertise), technologies, mission funding, culture, security, housing, and procurement
- 3) **Interoperability:** Co-operation/collaboration; co-ordination; and civ–mil, civ–civ, and mil–mil synergies
- 4) **Comprehensiveness:** Co-operation and co-ordination, with civilian, military, and other actors alongside NGOs, locals, and the international community
- 5) **Competences and skills** (knowledge and skills): Communication, training, and professional background
- 6) **Technologies:** The technological resources available, pooling and sharing, and EDA priorities



Themed interview on the EU (EU perspective)

- 1) Have you worked in the CAR? What are/were your role and responsibilities related to the CAR?

PART 1: Contextualisation of EU engagement in the CAR

Theme 1: Actors and co-ordination

- 1) Who are currently the key local and international stakeholders/actors in the CAR in terms of conflict prevention and stabilisation? Who is the 'biggest' with regard to power? Why?
- 2) Can you describe the forms of co-operation between the EU and the key international and local actors in the CAR? Is the co-operation sufficient?
- 3) What is the role of the EU Delegation in the overall co-ordination of the EU efforts? Is it sufficient?
- 4) How would you describe the co-ordination and co-operation between individual units/departments in the EUFOR operations? (Good, satisfactory, ...)
- 5) Is the division of tasks and responsibilities among the international actors clear?
- 6) What are the barriers and enablers (if any) to closer connection between EU and UN activities in the CAR?
- 7) How has any overlap in activities between the international actors been rectified?
- 8) Are the long-term visions of the international community (i.e., the UN, the EU, the AU, China, France, the US, etc.) for the development of the CAR contradictory? If so, in what way?
- 9) Have the synergies between the EU and other international actors been fully utilised if one thinks in terms of civil–military, civil–civil, and military–military dimensions?
- 10) What have been the main lessons identified in relation to the co-operation and co-ordination between the international and local actors in the CAR?

Theme 2: International engagement in the CAR and Security Sector Reform (SSR)

- 1) What are the EU member states' interests (together or individually) in the CSDP mission/operation?
- 2) What is the most important strategic objective in terms of SSR in the CAR? For whom, and why?
- 3) What have been the main achievements supported by the international actors in terms of conflict resolution and stabilisation efforts in the CAR?
- 4) What are currently the most important aspects of the SSR process in the CAR?
- 5) What have been the most effective ways of implementing the SSR process or instruments for doing so?
- 6) Have the capabilities and resources sufficed for implementation of the SSR? If not, what capabilities have been lacking?
- 7) How are the achievements of international actors monitored/evaluated? What about the local actors'?
- 8) What have been the main barriers to carrying out the reform process / bringing stability to the CAR?
 - a) Internal barriers (within the EU – e.g., other institutions and barriers related to instruments)
 - b) External barriers (i.e., region-level, national, and international ones)

PART 2: Appropriateness of EU activities in the CAR

Theme 3: EU engagement in the CAR

- 1) What are/should be the EU's role and responsibilities in the CAR?
- 2) Which short-, medium-, and long-term strategic objectives have been realised or foreseen for the CAR?
- 3) Are the EU activities in the CAR sufficient? What could be done differently?



- 4) Can you give some examples of where and how, in your opinion, the EU could improve the effectiveness potential of its capabilities in relation to conflict prevention and stabilisation efforts in the CAR?
- 5) What is the added value that the EU can bring to stabilisation efforts in the CAR?
- 6) How are the EU-set goals expected to affect the balance of power at the local level?
- 7) How did/do various interest groups attempt to influence EU decision-making?

Theme 4: Effectiveness of the EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA actions

- 1) What were the most important objectives of the CSDP operations?
- 2) What are the vision (ideal state after the operation) and mission (what the operation an attempt to achieve)?
- 3) What were the operation goals on the ground? Are they in line with the mandate? How or how not?
- 4) What were the strategic and operational objectives of the EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA operations and desired outcomes as defined by the OPLANs, and have they been met?
- 5) To what extent were the operation mandates sufficient for making a positive/meaningful impact on the conflict?
- 6) What difficulties existed in terms of reaching the operation objectives? How were these overcome?
- 7) How has the CSDP mission/operation (EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA) fit into the overall stabilisation process of the region?
- 8) To what extent were the manning, equipment, and training for the operations appropriate for achieving a positive impact on the conflict and stabilisation?
- 9) Were the available resources appropriately allocated and used in the operations?
- 10) What have been the political and diplomatic consequences of the presence of EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA?
- 11) What other consequences have the operation had for the conflict area (in terms of civil society, local government structures, etc.)?
- 12) How has the impact of the operation on local/regional society changed in the course of the CSDP operations/missions?

PART 3: Effectiveness potential of the capabilities

Theme 5: Capabilities

Planning and situational awareness

- 1) What were the major drivers in establishment of CSDP interventions in 2008, 2014, and 2015 in the CAR?
- 2) Have both military and civilian perspectives been taken into account in the planning of the EU engagement?
- 3) How comprehensive has the planning and execution of the operations been? Were all aspects of society (military, political, social, cultural, economic, etc.) considered in the planning and execution from the beginning? Was/is this a suitable, effective approach? What can be improved, where, and how?
- 4) How much have the local actors been consulted in the operation and EU strategic planning? Which local partners participate in the EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA operations? Who is included, and who is excluded? How are partners selected?
- 5) What concerns/barriers have been evident in the pre-planning, planning, and continuation phases of the mission?
- 6) Does the planning take local capabilities into consideration and does the mission/operation support local capabilities?



- 7) What is your view of the deployment system and timelines related to deployments? Have the timelines been followed? If not, why?
- 8) Have national caveats influenced the planning and execution? How? What has been done to overcome the obstacles?
- 9) How are gender and human rights taken into account in the operation documents (mandate, CONOPS, OPLAN, and MIP) and the functioning of the operation? Could you give a practical example of this?
- 10) What estimate would you give of the state of situational awareness with regard to the CAR?
- 11) Is the field office receiving enough intelligence information for creation of accurate situation analyses in the relevant area of responsibility? If not, what could be done better?
- 12) What are the methods and means of obtaining situational awareness?
- 13) What have been / are the barriers and factors that enhance obtaining situational awareness?

Human-resources aspects (expertise needed and deployment)

- 1) What resources, skills, and knowledge are needed for enhancing joint functioning between the operation and other relevant actors (i.e., the UN, the AU, local authorities, and NGOs)?
- 2) What is the role of the Force Commander / EUMS, EUMC for the overall effectiveness of the operation activities on the ground?
- 3) Is there some kind of expertise that has been lacking at some point in the operation cycle (e.g., in gender and human-rights issues)?
- 4) What kind of background/skills/knowledge is needed for executing the tasks of the peace support operation effectively in the CAR?
 - a) On the part of the local staff
 - b) On the part of the international staff
- 5) What is your view of the deployment and rotation cycle?
- 6) Are there shortcomings related to the deploying of personnel?
- 7) What kinds of modules should be included in the training of international staff who are deployed to the CAR? What about the national staff working in the EU operation?
- 8) Did you receive enough pre-mission training and guidance prior to your deployment? Did it meet the needs?
- 9) Did you receive enough training during the operation? Did it meet your needs?

Local ownership and local staff contribution

- 1) Is the EU intervention (CSDP operation) a preferred and popular policy option from the locals' point of view?
- 2) Was the intention behind the EU response clear for the country in which the conflict was situated?
- 3) What roles do local partners have? How are these roles decided upon? Do local actors adhere to and agree with the roles they have been given? Why or why not?
- 4) Has the stabilisation process received support from the key local actors, and, in general, do the measures taken / activities have local support? Whose support?
- 5) Did/do the operation's capabilities meet the local needs / expectations / operational requirements?
- 6) How do you see the development of local ownership among the counterparts of EUFOR RCA and EUMAM RCA?
- 7) Do some ethnic groups have more ownership than others? If so, in what way?
- 8) Have the expectations at the local level been managed appropriately by the EU?

Information-sharing technologies and capabilities



- 1) What information-sharing technologies are in use in EUFOR RCA?
- 2) How has the information-sharing developed in CSDP operations over the years?
- 3) What are the crucial capabilities related to sharing of information?
- 4) What are the barriers to information-sharing and the factors that enhance it?
- 5) Do the goals for the operation take technological capabilities into consideration?
- 6) Have there been shortcomings in technological capabilities? What is or was missing?

Pooling and sharing of civil–military capabilities

- 1) What kind of pooling and sharing of civilian and/or military capabilities was/is done in the various phases in the operation cycle (the planning phase and operational phase)?
- 2) If certain gaps or needs were identified during the planning or operational phase of EUFOR RCA, were/are these capabilities generated or implemented in the framework of pooling and sharing? For example, if a need for training became evident, was this capability produced via pooling and sharing?
- 3) Could you give some practical examples of pooling and sharing of civilian and/or military capabilities? How could they be utilised in CSDP missions and operations?

Theme 6: Something else that you would like to comment on in relation to EU engagement in the CAR

Themed interview on the EU (non-EU perspective)

- 1) Have you worked in the CAR? What are/were your role and responsibilities related to the CAR?

Part 1: Contextualisation of EU engagement in the CAR

Theme 1: Actors and co-ordination

- 1) Who are the key actors in the CAR in terms of conflict prevention and stabilisation?
- 2) What kind of co-operation/co-ordination did you have in place with EUFOR? Was there a formal procedure for regular meeting between your organisation and EUFOR? What about with other IOs and NGOs? What were the topics of the meetings? Did you share information? What kind of information? Do you think it was sufficient?
- 3) Did EUFOR call upon your organisation for assistance?
- 4) In your opinion, are there contradictions in long-term visions within the international community (e.g., visions of the UN, the EU, the AU, China, France, and the US) for development of the CAR? If so, in what way?
- 5) Have the synergies between the EU and other international actors been fully utilised if one thinks in terms of civil–military, civil–civil, and military–military dimensions?
- 6) What have been the main lessons identified with regard to the co-operation and co-ordination between the international and local actors in the CAR?

Theme 2: International engagement in the CAR and Security Sector Reform (SSR)

- 1) What is the most important strategic objective in terms of SSR in the CAR? For whom, and why?
- 2) What have been the main achievements supported by the international actors in terms of conflict resolution and stabilisation efforts in the CAR?
- 3) How are the achievements of international actors monitored/evaluated? What about the local actors'?
- 4) What have been the main barriers to carrying out the reform process / bringing stability to the CAR?
 - c) Internal barriers (within the EU – e.g., related to other institutions or to instruments)
 - d) External barriers (i.e., barriers at regional, national, or international level)



PART 2: Appropriateness of EU activities in the CAR**Theme 3: EU engagement in the CAR**

- 1) What are / should be the EU's role and responsibilities in the CAR?
- 2) Which short-, medium-, and long-term strategic objectives have been realised or foreseen for the CAR?
- 3) Are the EU activities in the CAR sufficient? What could be done differently?
- 4) Can you give some examples of where and how, in your opinion, the EU could improve the potential effectiveness of its capabilities in relation to conflict prevention and stabilisation efforts in the CAR?
- 5) What added value can the EU bring to stabilisation efforts in the CAR?

Theme 4: Effectiveness of EUFOR Tchad/RCA and EUFOR RCA

- 1) During the EUFOR deployment, to what extent did you observe an improvement in the security situation, in terms of a reduction in violence? What indicators or data are behind this observation? Did you detect a significant difference between the time before the EUFOR deployment (when protection was under Sangaris responsibility) and after?
- 2) Did you notice refugees or IDPs returning to the third and fifth district during the time of EUFOR presence? Is this based on 'gut feel' / estimation or figures?
- 3) Did you observe a deterioration in the security situation in the months prior to the EUFOR deployment – that is, between January and June 2014?
- 4) Did you notice a deterioration in the security situation after EUFOR left the country?
- 5) What would be your main criticism with regard to the EUFOR approach to the conflict, of the EUFOR action in the third and fifth districts? What could have been done better?
- 6) What humanitarian consequences did the EUFOR delay in deployment have (five months, more or less) In terms of violence, murders, attacks, etc.?
- 7) To what extent were the EUFOR operation activities sufficient for making a positive/meaningful impact on the conflict?
- 8) What difficulties have there been in terms of reaching the operation objectives? How were these overcome?
- 9) What consequences has the operation had for the conflict area (civil society, local governmental structures, ...)?
- 10) In your opinion, what was the overall impact of the EUFOR presence?

PART 3: Effectiveness potential of the capabilities**Theme 5: Capabilities****Situational awareness**

- 1) What are the methods and means of obtaining situational awareness?
- 2) What were/are the barriers to gaining situational awareness and the factors that enhance it?

Human-resources aspects (expertise needed and deployment)

- 1) What resources, skills, and knowledge are needed for enhancing interoperability in operations between the military operation and other relevant actors (i.e., the UN, AU, local authorities, and NGOs)?
- 2) What kind of background/ skills/ knowledge is needed to conduct the tasks of the peace support operation effectively in CAR?
 - c) On the part of the local staff



- d) On the part of the international staff
- 3) What kinds of modules should be included in the training of international staff who are deployed to the CAR? What about the national staff working for any peace-support operation?

Local ownership and local staff contribution

- 1) Is the EU intervention (CSDP operation) a preferred and popular policy option from the local standpoint?
- 2) Was the intention behind the EU response clear for the country in which the conflict was situated?
- 3) What was the Bangui citizens' perception of EUFOR – what was the relationship like? Did the citizens welcome the European soldiers? According to my research, EUFOR was perceived as much more neutral than Sangaris or MISCA. Do you agree with this assessment?
- 4) How did the CAR authorities welcome the EUFOR operation?
- 5) Has the stabilisation process received support from the key local actors, and, in general, do the measures taken / activities carried out have local support? Whose support?
- 6) Do some ethnic groups have more ownership than others? If so, why?
- 7) Have the locals' expectations been managed appropriately by the EU?

Information-sharing technologies and capabilities

- 1) What information-sharing technologies are used by your organisation in the CAR?
- 2) What are the barriers to information-sharing and the factors that enhance it?

Pooling and sharing of civil–military capabilities

- 1) Could you give some practical examples of pooling and sharing of civilian and/or military capabilities? How could they be utilised in CSDP missions and operations?

Theme 6: Something that you would like to comment on in relation to EU engagement in the CAR



1960 Country Becomes Independent and David Dacko becomes the president	1962 MESAN becomes the only party allowed	1966 Jean-Bedel Bokassa becomes the leader of CAR by coup	1976 Bokassa crowns himself as an emperor of the Central African Empire.	September 1979 Operation Barracuda. David Dacko becomes president again	1981 Dacko Re-elected. Later cast aside in a coup lead by Army Chief of Staff André Kolingba
1989 Berlin wall comes down and Democratic wave begins	1991 Restoration of multiparty system	1993 Free elections. Ange-Félix Patassé elected as president	1996 Army mutinies April, May and November	2001 Failed coup attempt by Kolingba's supporters	2003 New coup that succeeds. Bozizé becomes the leader of transitional government
2005 Bozizé wins presidential election	2005-2008 Clashes between rebel groups and government's forces	During 2008 Libreville "Comprehensive Peace Agreement" signed by different groups	2011 Bozizé re-elected. Opposition groups do not accept the election results	2012 Séléka is formed. Alliance takes control large parts of the country	March 2013 Séléka takes Bangui and Bozizé flees the country
September 2013 Séléka disbanded	2014 Djotodia Resigns and Samba-Panza becomes the acting president	December 30. 2015 Legislative and presidential elections held.	January 2016 Legislative elections canceled, but presidential election allowed to proceed	February 14. 2016 Touadera wins the elections	March 2016 CAR's Constitutional Court confirms presidential election results



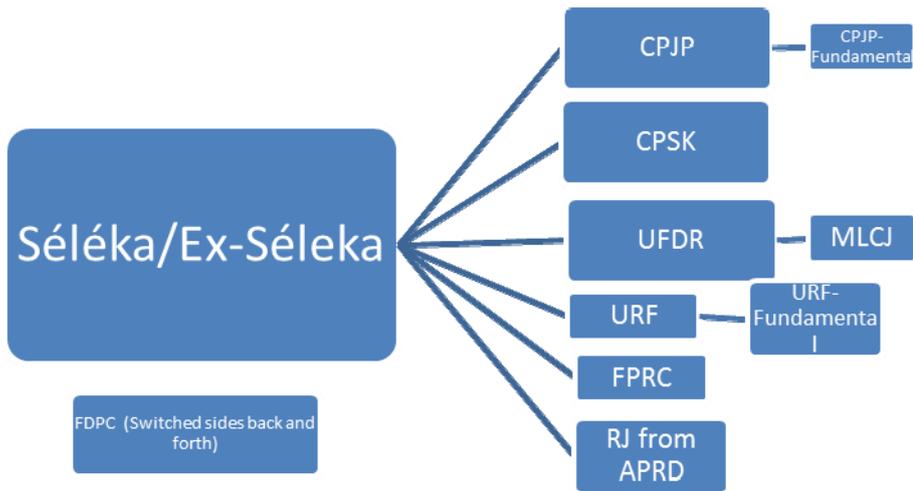


Figure 2. Main Séléka groups





Figure 3. Key Séléka leaders





Figure 4. Anti-Balaka and other key groups



Figure 5. Key people, leaders and coordinators

