

**ISRMUN** 2021



# **UNPBC**

**United Nations  
Peacebuilding Commission**

**Committee:** United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC)

**Topic:** The situation in the Central African Republic

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## I. Committee Background

The United Nations Peacebuilding Commission (UNPBC) is a specialized advisory body that supports peace efforts in countries impacted by conflict. It was established in 2005 at the World Summit in New York City, United States (Mandate, UN, 2021). The UNPBC is composed of 31 member states elected by the General Assembly, the Security Council, and the Economic and Social Council. It also includes representatives from the five top providers of military personnel and civilian police to United Nations peacekeeping missions and the five top providers of voluntary contributions to the United Nations fund. The UNPBC is currently Chaired by Egypt with Canada and Slovakia acting as Vice-Chairs (Membership, UN, 2021). The Commission's main objectives are to coordinate relief efforts and formulate long-term strategies which promote reconstruction, institution-building and sustainable development in post-conflict societies (Mandate, UN, 2021).

## II. Topic Information

### A) History of the Topic

Between 2004 and 2007, the Central African Republic was ravaged by a destructive civil war waged between the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) rebels and the government. This conflict often referred to as the Central African

Republic Bush War, started when François Bozizé seized control of the country's presidency. In 2007, the Libreville Global Peace Accord officially ended the conflict and promised to promote reconciliation, form a unity government, and hold local elections in 2009 with parliamentary and presidential elections in 2010 (Baptiste, *The Nation*, 2014). However, in December 2012, a coalition of mostly Muslim rebel groups known as the Séléka accused Bozizé's government of corruption and human rights abuses. Bozizé fled the country and the Séléka seized control of Bangui, the country's capital. Soon after, the Séléka's leader Michel Djotodia declared himself as president. This seizure of power prompted Christian rebel forces to join together to form the Anti-Balaka militia group. Thus the conflict ceased being about the failure to uphold the Libreville Global Peace Accord and plunged the Central African Republic into a brutal religious conflict. By the end of 2014, the country was essentially partitioned with the Anti-Balaka controlling the south and west and the Séléka controlling the north and east (McCormick, *Foreign Policy*, 2017).

The fighting between the Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups escalated in 2013 and both were accused of pillaging, torture, rape and kidnapping by the United Nations (Giles-Vernick, Hoogstraten and O'Toole, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 2019). Hundreds of thousands of civilians were internally displaced or forced to flee to neighbouring countries such as Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo (UNHCR, 2021). In December 2013, the United Nations Security Council authorized the deployment of an African-led peacekeeping force. Under pressure from the international community, Djotodia resigned and a transitional council composed of representatives from both rebel groups elected Catherine Samba-Panz as the country's new interim president. A cease-fire signed between the warring factions in July 2014 brought relative calm to the country. However, disputed parliamentary

elections in late 2014 caused violence to break out across the nation with the Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups accusing each other of corruption and intimidation. By December 2015, the government based in Bangui had lost control over much of the Central African Republic. This was further complicated by the fact that the new leader of the Séléka, Nourredine Adam, announced the creation of the autonomous Republic of Logone in the northern part of the country (Giles-Vernick, Hoogstraten and O'Toole, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019).

In August 2018, Russia and Sudan organized a tentative agreement between the Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups. African Union-led negotiations led to an accord between the government and rebel groups in February 2019 called the “Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation”. The agreement distributed power evenly between the warring factions and paved the way for African Union orchestrated elections (Giles-Vernick, Hoogstraten and O'Toole, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). However, violence erupted again when a newly formed rebel group called Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R) began to attack Christian villages. At this time, several other new rebel groups began to appear across the Central African Republic. Many were created to defend communities against the Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups, while others were intent on claiming resource-rich areas for their own benefit (CAR, Africa News, 2019). Presidential elections were scheduled to be held in December 2020, however, were delayed when the country's former president, François Bozizé, announced that he would run for office. This resulted in the creation of a rebel alliance called the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC). The group accused the current government of being corrupt and taking bribes to rig the elections in favour of Bozizé (BBC News, 2020). The CPC launched an attack on Bangui but was repelled by a mixture of peacekeepers and government forces (Rolland, Reuters, 2021).

## B) Current Issues

**Chad:** Since the conflict began in 2012, hundreds of thousands of Central African Republic refugees and asylum seekers have fled to Chad. While Chad has opened its borders to those fleeing the violence, the European Union (EU) has accused the country of meddling in the Central African Republic's government and worsening tensions between rebel groups. The EU claims that the Central African Republic's interim President Michel Djotodia resigned due to pressure from Chad and threats on his life. Moreover, Chad has a large military presence in the nation as part of the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA). An investigation by the EU found that Chadian soldiers were training rebel groups for money and arming them with weapons meant to be distributed to MISCA forces. Chad's government has denied the allegations stating that the EU began to make the claims in order to cover up crimes allegedly committed by French soldiers operating in the Central African Republic (Dumont, France24, 2018).

**France:** In late 2013, France's military launched Operation Sangaris in the Central African Republic. Its soldiers were tasked with protecting civilians and leading disarmament efforts. While the mission was initially successful, its efforts were undermined by allegations of sexual abuse of minors by French soldiers. A leaked United Nations report on the extent of the abuse in 2015 caused international outrage. The following year, France announced its withdrawal from the Central African Republic, turning over all peacekeeping responsibilities to the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic. Around 300 French soldiers remain in the

country and operate in a strictly advisory role to the Central African Republic's government (Sangaris, Africa News, 2016).

**Russia:** In August 2018, Russia worked with Sudan to organize a tentative agreement between the Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups. This eventually led to the "Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation" treaty (Giles-Vernick, Hoogstraten and O'Toole, Encyclopedia Britannica, 2019). In December 2020, Russia sent 300 soldiers to the Central African Republic to instruct and advise the nation's military. Russia's Foreign Ministry said it was deeply concerned about the attack on the country's capital by the rebel alliance called the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC). However, Russia threatened to withdraw its support when a spokesperson for the Central African Republic stated that Russia had deployed "several hundred soldiers and heavy weapons" to support the government (Russia, BBC News, 2020).

**South Africa:** South Africa has been committed to peacefully resolving the conflict in the Central African Republic since 2007. The country has contributed peacekeepers to African Union and United Nations-led peacekeeping missions and its special forces have provided security to government officials during ceasefire negotiations (Remarks, UN, 2019). In 2013, South African peacekeepers from the 1 Parachute Battalion suffered heavy losses when thirteen of them were killed in an ambush by Séléka militias. Besides its peacekeeping efforts, South Africa has also provided members of the Central African Republic's military with training and logistical support. It has also contributed funds to help with the refurbishment of the Central African Republic's military facilities in Bangui (PMG, 2013).

## C) UN Action

In December 2013, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) resolution 2127 established the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA). The mission was created to stabilize the country, protect civilians and facilitate the disarmament of rebel groups. The mission was led by France and supported by the African Union (CAR, UN News, 2013). It was initially made up of “10,000 military personnel, including 240 military observers and 200 staff officers and 1,800 police personnel, including 1400 formed police unit personnel and 400 individual police officers, and 20 corrections officers.” However, over the years, the number of personnel has fluctuated depending on the situation in the Central African Republic. Moreover, in 2014, the United Nations proposed a six-point initiative designed to “stop the violence and killings, protect civilians, prevent the de facto partition of the country, facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance and provide the government with some urgently needed support.” While the initiative was supported by UN Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon it never went beyond the planning phase due to attacks on UN personnel and buildings in the Central African Republic (UN Missions, 2021).

### III. Essential Questions

1. What was the Central African Republic Bush War? How did the conflict contribute to the start of the Central African Republic Civil War?
2. How has the conflict impacted civilians in the country?
3. How have religious and ethnic tensions contributed to the violence?

4. What is the United Nations doing to address the issue? Has it been successful? Why or why not?
5. Which other organizations are involved in resolving the conflict?
6. How have external factors impacted the conflict?
7. What is the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA)? Is your country a member of the mission? If so, in which way?

## V. Resources

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