

The Groningen Model United Nations 2017

United Nations Security Council



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The Conflict in the Central African Republic

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Welcome Letter

Distinguished delegates,

Welcome to the Security Council of GrunnMUN 2017!

We will be your chairs for this conference, and would like to impart to you some words of wisdom before you embark on your exploration of the topic at hand.

For some of you, this will be your first time taking part in a Model UN conference. Whether you wanted to try something new, got dragged into it by a friend, or are just looking for an excuse to dress up fancy, we guarantee you that you will find GrunnMUN to be a welcoming, enjoyable and enriching experience. For those of you with a little more experience under your belt, you can expect to take part in a challenging and refined council simulation where you can make full use of your accumulated MUN skills and knowledge.

As the most powerful decision-making body of the UN, the Security Council is small, high-profile and tackles some of the greatest problems the world has to offer. We hope to offer you an atmosphere that reflects this level of professionalism and intensity while still retaining the friendly community vibe that the TEIMUN foundation is so iconic for.

All in all, we want to give you the chance to immerse yourselves in the topic, test your diplomacy skills, collaborate and compete in finding creative solutions, and make some new friends along the way. Take your time reading through this background paper, researching your position and developing a game plan, and we look forward to seeing you all in action at GrunnMUN 2017!

If you have any questions regarding the conference, please do not hesitate to contact us!

Your chairs,

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Introduction

The only abundance in the Central African Republic (CAR) is lawlessness, according to Dutch journalist Meite Vermeulen.¹ Since its independence from France in the 1960s, the state at the heart of Africa has been in almost constant conflict. This has left a profound impact on the people of CAR; illustrated by their Human Development Index (HDI) ranking of 187 out of 188 and an HDI value of 0.35 (compared to a 0.475 average for Sub-Saharan Africa).² Combined with more than 400,000 internally displaced persons (CAR's total population is 4.4 million) and one of the highest poverty ratings in the world, the country is a hotbed for plundering rebel and insurgency groups.³

The United Nations has been closely involved in the conflict, amongst others by establishing a stabilization mission, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Central Africa (MINUSCA). This peacekeeping operation has been mandated by the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) to protect civilians, human rights and to support the rule of law in this conflict-ridden state.⁴ However, violent clashes between rivaling groups still occur regularly and the economic state of the country is as dire as it has ever been.⁵

In order to address this topic and to give an as complete as possible picture of the conflict, this background paper will discuss the historical background of the conflict, as well as the current undertakings by the UN, and will end with several questions that the resolution of the UNSC at GrunnMUN 2017 should answer.

Historical Background

The French colony of Ubangi-Shari gained its independence in 1960 and was to be called the Central African Republic (CAR), or 'Centrafrique' in French, from then on. In 1966, Jean-Bedel Bokassa ousted CAR's first democratically elected president and proclaimed himself as emperor. The following decades were marked

¹ Maite Vermeulen, "Waarom is er oorlog in de Centraal Afrikaanse Republiek (Why is there war in the Central African Republic)," *De Correspondent*, 2014, accessed December 27, 2016, <https://decorrespondent.nl/686/waarom-is-er-oorlog-in-de-centraal-afrikaanse-republiek/29889706-99fea027>

² UNDP, *Human Development Report 2013 Central African Republic* (New York: UNDP, 2013), accessed December 27, 2016, <http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/Country-Profiles/CAF.pdf>.

³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2301 (2016), http://hdr.undp.org/sites/default/files/2015_human_development_report.pdf.

⁴ UNDP, *Human Development Report 2015* (New York: UNDP, 2015), accessed December 27, 2016, [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2301\(2016\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2301(2016))

⁵ IMF, *World Economic Outlook 2016* (Washington D.C.: IMF, 2016), accessed January 29, 2017. <http://www.imf.org/external/pubs/ft/weo/2016/02/index.htm>

by misrule, coup d'états and a "hollowing out of the state" and its institutions.⁶ With the help of the UN, the first multi-party elections were held in 1993 and won by Ange-Félix Patassé, who, ten years later, was overthrown by army general François Bozizé, aided by the neighboring country of Chad. His subsequent rule was characterised by corruption and self-enrichment of himself and his family.⁷

In 2012, five rebel militia groups organised themselves in a rebel coalition known as Séléka ('Séléka' means 'coalition' in the national Sango language). This coalition was not by essence a religious one, but most of their members formed part of CAR's Muslim minority. The mass atrocities committed by the Séléka, such as plundering villages and killing civilians, were reasons for young, Christian men to unite in the anti-Balaka groups (anti-machete in Sango), in order to protect their villages from plundering Séléka rebels. In January 2013, the Séléka signed a series of ceasefire agreements with the government under UN auspices, known as the Libreville agreements.⁸ Despite these agreements, Séléka rebels marched on the capital of Bangui in March 2013 and forced Bozizé to flee the country. Séléka leader Michel Djotodia was installed as president of CAR. The plundering of villages got even worse after Djotodia tried to disband the Séléka and incorporate its members into the CAR army.⁹ As a reaction to this, the anti-Balaka have attacked Muslims throughout the country and forced many of them to flee the capital, because of their supposed alliance with the mostly-Muslim Séléka.¹⁰

Until the establishment of MINUSCA with the UNSC resolution 2149 on April 10, 2014, BINUCA, the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic was active in CAR, with a mandate from the UNSC.¹¹ It was tasked to support the transition of government after Djotodia's claim to power and to support conflict prevention and humanitarian assistance, as well as stabilizing the security situation and the protection of human rights, by providing advice to the government of CAR's. During the BINUCA period, the MISCA mission of the African

⁶ Christopher Day, "To Understand the Crisis in CAR, Beware of the Familiar Narratives," *Aljazeera America*, January 10, 2014, accessed December 27, 2016,

<http://america.aljazeera.com/opinions/2014/1/central-african-republiccrisisisnotallaboutreligion.html>

⁷ John Pike, "Central African Republic – Francois Bozize," *Global Security* (website), Global Security, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.globalsecurity.org/military/world/war/car-3.htm>.

⁸ "Meetings coverage and press releases," *United Nations* (website), accessed January 29, 2017, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2013/sc10879.doc.htm>.

⁹ "CAR's Djotodia dissolves Seleka rebel group," *France24*, September 13, 2013, accessed February 1, 2017, <http://www.france24.com/en/20130913-central-african-republic-djotodia-dissolves-seleka-rebel-group>.

¹⁰ Chris Stein, "For Bangui's last Muslims, to stray outside the safe haven is to court death," *Global Post*, April 26, 2014, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.globalpost.com/dispatch/news/regions/africa/140426/banguis-last-muslims-stray-outside-the-safe-haven-court-death>.

¹¹ "BINUCA," *United Nations* (website), accessed December 27, 2016, <http://binuca.unmissions.org/>.

Union with support from France was installed in December 2013 with a mandate from the UNSC. This office has been integrated in the MINUSCA mission created by the aforementioned UNSC resolution in April of 2014.

Figure 1: Overview of missions in CAR from 2010 to present

Mission name	Mandated started on	Mandate ended on
BINUCA	January 2010 UNSC Resolution 1861 ¹²	April 2014 UNSC Resolution 2149 ¹³
MISCA	December 2013 UNSC Resolution 2127 ¹⁴	September 2014 UNSC Resolution 2149
MINUSCA	April 2014 UNSC Resolution 2149	Ongoing

Djotodia stepped down before MINUSCA was installed and was succeeded by the nonpartisan Catherine Samba-Panza, who was elected by parliament as the interim head of state. After democratic elections in 2015, she was succeeded by Faustin-Archange Touadéra. He has pledged to combat corruption and develop the country's economy, while acknowledging the fragile situation that CAR is still in.¹⁵ His government is still largely dependent on economic and military support from the international community.¹⁶

Current Developments & Challenges

As of the end of 2016, the conflict in CAR is largely still ongoing, with Séléka and Anti-Balaka militias engaging in acts of terror and ethnic violence. The repeated clashes have left thousands dead and injured, as well as almost a million people

¹² United Nations Security Council Resolution 1861 (2010), http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/1861%282009%29.

¹³ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2149 (2014), http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2149%20%282014%29.

¹⁴ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013), [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2127\(2013\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2127(2013)).

¹⁵ "Africa Renewal," *United Nations* (website), accessed January 29, 2017, <http://www.un.org/africarenewal/africaga2016/documents/central-african-republic-he-mr-faustin-archange-touadera-president>.

¹⁶ "Centrafrique: cinq choses à savoir sur Faustin-Archange Touadéra (CAR: five things to know about Faustin-Archange Touadéra)," *Jeune Afrique* (website), accessed January 29, 2017, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/304420/politique/centrafrique-5-choses-a-savoir-sur-faustin-arcange-touadera/>.

displaced.¹⁷ In addition to the ongoing conflict, millions of inhabitants find themselves without food or water, with external aid often being prevented from reaching its destination or even being outright attacked.¹⁸ The civil war has left the Republic de-facto divided roughly along religious lines, with the north under the control of Muslim groups (Séléka) and the south in the hands of the Christian militias (anti-balaka).¹⁹

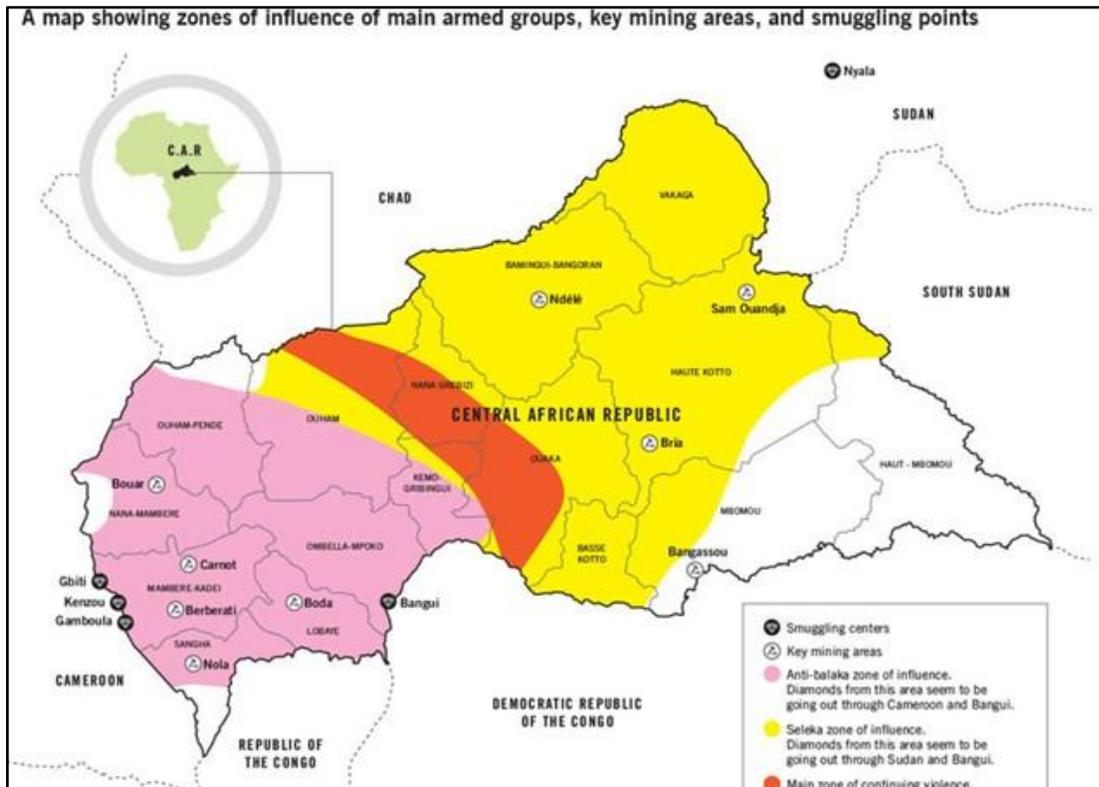


Figure 2: Zones of Influence of Main Armed Groups in CAR, Amnesty USA²⁰

Nevertheless, some progress has been made in terms of reducing the violence and political discord between the major groups. In May 2015, most of the major militia groups agreed to a tentative disarmament deal at the Bangui National Forum, emphasizing not only a reduction of military means but also a mutual

¹⁷ Paula Dear, “Aid convoy in Central African Republic finds chaos, hunger and little hope,” *The Guardian*, July 4, 2016, accessed December 27, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2016/jul/04/aid-convoy-central-african-republic-car-chaos-hunger-little-hope>.

¹⁸ “Central African Republic: UN humanitarian coordinator ‘outraged’ at attacks on aid vehicles,” *UN News Agency*, June 20, 2016, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=54272#.WGKORvkrJnJ>.

¹⁹ “Perspectives of non-state armed groups in the Central African Republic,” *Conciliation Resources*, January, 2017, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.c-r.org/resources/perspectives-non-state-armed-groups-central-african-republic>

²⁰ “Companies Must Not Profit From Blood Diamonds in the Central African Republic,” *Amnesty USA*, September 30, 2015, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.amnestyusa.org/news/press-releases/companies-must-not-profit-from-blood-diamonds-in-the-central-african-republic>

commitment to justice for critical crimes committed during the conflict.²¹ In addition, the recent elections of February 2016 proceeded relatively uncontroversially, with the outcome being grudgingly accepted by both sides of the conflict.²² Despite having served as Prime Minister as a member of the same party as Bozizé, Faustin-Archange Touadéra won the election as an independent candidate, and vowed to restore peace in the state. Notably, neither Seleka nor anti-Balaka militia members made it into his cabinet.²³

While significant progress has been made, the conflict remains active. As of the end of 2016, there remain more than 2.3 million individuals in need of humanitarian aid of one kind or another.²⁴ Despite the formal ongoing peace process, many fighters have remained active in their respective groups, notably due to a sense of necessity resulting from poor security, discrimination, lack of

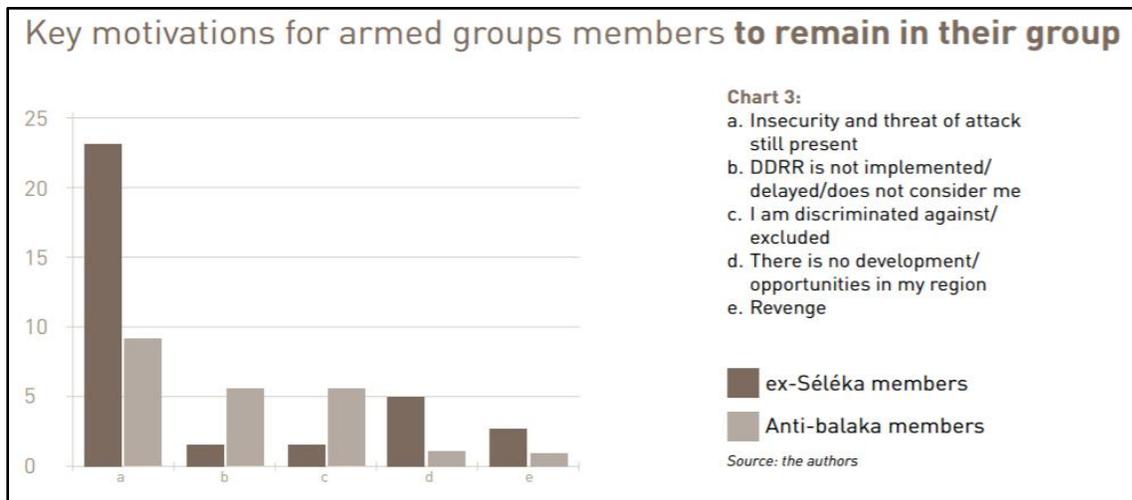


Figure 3: Motivations for Armed Group Members to Remain in their Group, *Conciliation Resources*²⁵

²¹ Sebastien Lamba, "Central African Republic militias agree to disarmament deal," *Reuters*, May 10, 2016, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-politics-idUSKBN0NV0U020150510>.

²² "Central African Republic: Touadera wins election," *Aljazeera*, February 21, 2016, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2016/02/central-african-republic-touadera-wins-election-160221044730048.html>.

²³ Vincent Duhem, "Centrafrique : ce qu'il faut retenir du nouveau gouvernement dévoilé par Touadéra," *Jeune Afrique*, April 13, 2016, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/317433/politique/centrafrique-quil-faut-retenir-nouveau-gouvernement-devoile-touadera/>

²⁴ "Protecting Humanitarian Space in the Central African Republic," *International Rescue Committee*, November 2016, accessed January 27, 2017, <https://www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/document/1229/protectinghumanitarianspaceinthecentralafricanrepublic-ircpolicypaper-nov2016.pdf>

²⁵ "Perspectives of non-state armed groups in the Central African Republic," *Conciliation Resources*, January, 2017, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.c-r.org/resources/perspectives-non-state-armed-groups-central-african-republic>

economic opportunities, and a discontent with government progress in resolving the situation.²⁶ In short, much remains to be done.

The UNSC has played a significant role in the conflict in the last few years. With the establishment of MINUSCA in 2014 as a peacekeeping mission to continue the work started with MISCA,²⁷ the UNSC has dedicated over 12,000 personnel (as of July 2016) to establishing and maintaining peace in the region.²⁸ The mandate of MINUSCA emphasizes the protection of civilians, support for the implementation of peace agreements and transitional measures, unobstructed delivery of humanitarian aid and the promotion of human rights.²⁹ The mission and mandate have recently been extended until November 2017.³⁰ Additionally, the UNSC has established significant international sanctions on trade and supplies to and from CAR, notably military equipment.³¹

While efforts by the UNSC have been significant, there is nevertheless a need for changes and additions to be made to existing measures. For one, as of the end of October 2016 the French peacekeeping mission 'Sangaris' has officially ceased to be active, with roughly 2000 French troops being withdrawn from the region.³² This leaves MINUSCA as the only major international peacekeeping force still present to help maintain stability. Additionally, the UN mission itself has come under fire by international human rights groups due to the revelation of a number of ongoing scandals within the organization. These notably include dozens of cases of abuse and sexual exploitation by UN personnel. These accusations, along with the UN's failure to effectively deal with them, have led to significant international scrutiny of the mission.³³ Thus the UNSC faces both internal and external challenges as it must decide how to proceed in its efforts to maintain stability and bring lasting peace to the CAR.

²⁶“Perspectives of non-state armed groups,” *Conciliation Resources*, January 2017, accessed January 27, 2017, <http://www.c-r.org/resources/perspectives-non-state-armed-groups-central-african-republic>

²⁷ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2149 (2014), [http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2149\(2014\)](http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2149(2014)).

²⁸ “MINUSCA Facts and Figures,” *United Nations*, accessed January 27, 2016, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusca/facts.shtml>.

²⁹ “MINUSCA Mandate,” *United Nations*, accessed January 27, 2016, <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/minusca/mandate.shtml>

³⁰ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2301 (2016), http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2301.pdf.

³¹ United Nations Security Council Resolution 2262 (2016), http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2262.pdf.

³² “France ends Sangaris military operation in CAR,” *BBC*, October 31, 2016, accessed December 27, 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-37823047>.

³³ Sandra Laville, “UN inquiry into CAR abuse claims identifies 41 troops as suspects,” *The Guardian*, December 5, 2016, accessed December 27, 2016, <https://www.theguardian.com/world/2016/dec/05/un-inquiry-into-car-abuse-claims-identifies-41-troops-as-suspects>.

Conclusion

The immensely complex conflict in CAR is an ongoing one and it is the focus of many international institutions and states. Yet despite all the efforts made by the international community, the UN peacekeeping mission faces a large array of difficulties. In order to stabilize this unstable region, comprehensive and holistic measures need to be taken. Amongst others, rivalling groups will need to be united, the staggering, almost non-existent economy desires stimulation, and a minimum level of protection of human rights must be guaranteed. The UNSC is looked towards to bring an end to this long-lasting conflict.

Questions a Resolution Must Answer (QARMAs)

In order to draft a proper resolution on the topic of the conflict in CAR, there are several issues that should be addressed in the final resolution of the UNSC. These are known as QARMAs, or Questions A Resolution Must Answer. The QARMAs for the UNSC at GrunnMUN 2017 are:

1. How can the MINUSCA mission be better equipped to tackle the conflict in CAR? Should its mandate be expanded, modified or replaced entirely?
2. How can the UN guarantee a minimum level of human rights protection in CAR?
3. In which ways can the rivalling groups be brought to an effective ceasefire? How can the agreements made at the Bangui Forum meeting be upheld?
4. How can the UNSC guarantee proper conduct by mission staff in CAR?

Additional Suggested Reading

In this section, several documents or essays are included that provide a good understanding of the topic and the role of the UNSC. Together with this background paper, they can be used to prepare yourself for GrunnMUN 2017.

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