



KINGDOM OF BELGIUM

Speech by H.E. Karen Van Vlierberge,
Deputy Permanent Representative

to the United Nations Security Council

Security Council Meeting on the CAR

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Mr President,

Today, I would like to refer to three points:

1° The political situation and elections

Belgium welcomes the measures taken, which despite the obstacles, have put the country on the road to elections. Despite the delays, the schedule remains under control. We call on all those involved to refrain from any action or statement that could undermine this democratic exercise. Only a peaceful, transparent and inclusive process can guarantee the credibility of the elections. We applaud the almost equal presence of men and women on the lists of registered voters. The European Union has provided substantial financial assistance to support this electoral process.

However, elections are just one step towards the longer-term goal of stabilising the Central African Republic. The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation of February 2019 is the only way to establish lasting peace. The future government will also be responsible for its implementation. Central Africans do not want any more violence. The armed groups are signatories to the Agreement and must honour their commitments. Those responsible for violence must be brought to justice.

Belgium is particularly sensitive to violations concerning children, and it supports the work of Special Representative Gamba and MINUSCA in this area. Armed groups must also cease their predatory activities. Serious violations of the Agreement will have consequences.

There are challenges in implementing the Agreement. However, we welcome the continued meetings of the Agreement's monitoring mechanisms, virtually due to the pandemic. We are also seeing encouraging progress in the redeployment of State authority, as well as in legislative work.

2° The future of the Central African population

Central Africans not only need peace, they also want renewed prosperity and to live with dignity. The figures remain alarming. More than half of the population needs humanitarian aid. Over one million people are displaced in the CAR and neighbouring countries. The pandemic is exacerbating the situation with an increase in the cost of living. With the closure of schools, children are at an even greater risk being recruited by armed groups than usual. It is also unacceptable that humanitarian workers are so often the victims of violence and theft.

Central Africans also have a thirst for justice. In this respect, Belgium supports the work of the Special Criminal Court and is ready to second a Belgian magistrate. We also welcome the signing of decrees to establish the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission.

3° MINUSCA

MINUSCA is also facing significant challenges. The incidents of recent months have shown that its mandate to protect civilians is still relevant. Belgium therefore remains in favour of a strong mandate. MINUSCA also has a crucial role to play in providing assistance and support to the peace process and in supporting the extension of State authority and security sector reform. Good coordination between all CAR partners is a key factor for success. In our view, MINUSCA can contribute to this coherence. However, Belgium regrets the disinformation campaign against MINUSCA that can be seen in the country.

In discussing MINUSCA's mandate, we will ensure that we defend the interests of the people of the Central African Republic. This support from Belgium is also part of broader European and United Nations support, in which Belgium will remain active after the end of its Security Council mandate.

Thank you.