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The Central African Republic crisis

March 2016

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About this report

This report provides a synthesis of some of the most recent, high-quality literature on the security and political processes in Central African Republic produced up to the end of **January 2016**. It was prepared for the European Union's Instrument Contributing to Stability and Peace, © European Union 2016. The views expressed in this report are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GSDRC, its partner agencies or the European Commission.

This is the second review published by GSDRC on the situation in the Central African Republic. The first review of literature was published in June 2013 and provides a country analysis covering the period 2003-2013. It is available at: http://www.gsdrc.org/docs/open/car_gsdrc2013.pdf.

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Source for map of CAR on following page: International Peace Information Service (PIS) www.ipisresearch.be.

Suggested citation

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Central African Republic

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Bamingui

Haute-Kotto

Ngaoundaye

Paoua

Boguila

Batangafo

Nana-Grébizi

Koui Bocaranga

Nana-Bakassa

Bria

Yalinga

Haut-Mbomou

Ouham-Pendé

Ouham

Bouca

Kaga-Bandoro

Mbrès

Ippy

Djéma

Bossangoa

Dekoa

Ouaka

Bozoum

Bouar

Baboua

Bossemptele

Kémo

Bakala

Bambari

Bakouma

Baoro

Yaloké

Grimari

Mbomou

Mboki

Obo

Bambouti

Nana-Mambéré

Abba

Gadzi

Sibut

Bogangolo

Mingala

Rafaï

Zémio

Amada-Gaza

Carnot

Djoukou

Ombella-M'Poko

Damara

Kouango

Bangassou

Gamboula

Mambéré-Kadéï

Boda

Bimbo

Mbaïki

Kémbé

Gambo

Ouango

Berbérati

Lobaye

BANGUI

Mobaye

Dédé Mokouba

Nola

Bambio

Moungoumba

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Sangha Mbaéré

Salo

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Bayanga

	National capital
	Capital of Prefecture
	Town
	International boundary
	Prefecture
	Major road
	Road

0   125   250   500 km

Contents

Chronology of events

2012

10 December 2012: The Seleka, a coalition of rebel groups from the north of the Central African Republic (CAR), launched a major armed offensive from the north-east of the country against the Bozizé regime. Heavily armed mercenaries from Chad and Sudan supported the attack. They took control of several towns and villages in the east and advanced up to Sibut (180 km from the capital, Bangui).

2013

11 January 2013: Following the Seleka offensive**,** President Bozizé and the Seleka coalition signed the Libreville Agreement to establish a Government of National Unity.

24 March 2013: The Seleka rebels carried out a coup, took over the capital, and moved into the western part of the country. Bozizé fled to Cameroon. Michel Djotodia, leader of the Seleka coalition, proclaimed himself president, dissolved the Government of National Unity and the National Assembly, suspended the constitution and announced that he would rule by decree for at least three years. During this period, Seleka fighters committed widespread abuses against the civilian population, including killings, pillage, rape and forced displacement.

13 April 2013: Following pressure from the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the National Transitional Council was established and elected Michel Djotodia, the sole candidate, as Head of the Transition.

13 June 2013: A new Government of National Unity was formed. Michel Djotodia remained Minister of Defence and President of the Transition.

18 August 2013: Michel Djotodia was officially sworn in as Head of State of the Transition and committed to holding national elections within 18 months.

13 September 2013: President Djotodia formally dissolved the Seleka coalition, but this political announcement had no real effect in terms of ending the widespread abuses committed by the Seleka rebels and supporters of former President Bozizé.

5 December 2013: United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2127 authorised the deployment of an African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic, known as MISCA, to stabilise CAR, alongside the French force, Operation Sangaris, composed of 2,000 troops. Abuses perpetrated by the Seleka fighters spurred a vicious backlash from loosely organised self-defence groups that became known as the *anti-balaka*. Opposed to Seleka rule, the *anti-balaka* militias carried out large-scale reprisals against mainly Muslim civilians, giving the conflict a sectarian dimension. The resulting violence killed thousands of civilians and left hundreds of thousands displaced. On 5 December 2013, the *anti-balaka* coordinated a vicious attack against the Muslim population in the capital, where more than 1,000 civilians died.

2014

10 January 2014: Michel Djotodia and his Prime Minister, Nicolas Tiangaye, were forced to resign following an ECCAS meeting in N'Djamena. The Transitional National Council elected a new interim head of state, Catherine Samba-Panza, on 23 January.

January-March 2014: After Michel Djotodia stepped down, cycles of reprisals against the Muslim population intensified in Bangui and in the south-west of the country. Violent attacks by *anti-balaka* militias forced tens of thousands of Muslims to flee to neighbouring countries. In the meantime, Seleka troops retreated to the east and some others returned to Sudan or Chad.

1 April 2014: An EU military operation in CAR was announced, as authorised by the UNSC in Resolution 2134 (2014). EUFOR CAR was composed of 1,000 troops and aimed to provide temporary support towards achieving a safe and secure environment in the Bangui area.

10 April 2014: Because of increasing levels of violence, the UNSC authorised the deployment in September 2014 of a UN peacekeeping mission (the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR, MINUSCA) and urged the country to hold elections as soon as possible and no later than February 2015.

23 July 2014: The CAR parties, under the auspices of President of the Republic of Congo Denis Sassou Nguesso, signed the Brazzaville Agreement on the Cessation of Hostilities.

15 September 2014: MINUSCA officially replaced African-led international support (MISCA), in accordance with UNSC Resolution 2149 (2014).

October 2014: A flare-up of violence in and around Bangui led to talks between the international mediator Denis Sassou Nguesso and CAR parties involved in the fighting. An agreement was reached to hold a Bangui Forum in January 2015 seeking to address the sensitive issue of national reconciliation.

End of 2014: As a result of internal divisions and competition for the control of natural resources over the national territory, the Seleka started to split up into smaller groups and/or political parties.

2015

26 January 2015: Negotiations between certain *anti-balaka* militias represented by Joachim Kokate and an ex-Seleka faction (the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique, FPRC) headed by Nourredine Adam and Michel Djotodia in Nairobi, led to the signing of the Nairobi Agreement. Initially supported by the mediator, Denis Sassou Nguesso, the agreement included provisions on demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR), amnesty for all perpetrators of abuses and the removal of the current transitional authorities. CAR's transitional authorities and the international community dismissed the deal as it excluded them from the negotiations and undermined the existing agreement.

26 March 2015: MINUSCA received authorisation from the UNSC for an additional 750 military personnel, 280 police and 20 corrections officers to support the original 10,000 approved in its initial mandate.

4-11 May 2015: The Bangui Reconciliation Forum was organised and 600 participants agreed on a series of recommendations around four themes: peace and security, justice and reconciliation, governance and economic and social development.

26 September-1 October 2015: An upsurge of sectarian violence in Bangui led to the killings of 79 civilians, with 512 injured. President of the Transition, Catherine Samba-Panza, accused the "Nairobists" of attempting to organise a coup against the government of transition and to undermine the electoral process. Elections initially planned to take place on 13 October were officially delayed.

10-11 October 2015: Dozens of FPRC combatants walked from the north-east of the country to Sibut (about 160 km of Bangui) threatening the transitional authorities in Bangui. International forces stopped their progression towards Bangui.

10 November 2015: Under international pressure, the national authority on elections announced that the referendum on the constitution would take place on 13 December and the presidential and legislative elections on 27 December and 31 January 2016, respectively. ECCAS officially postponed the transition until 31 March 2016.

November 2015: With the upcoming elections, new cycles of violence escalated in Bangui and in other parts of the country.

13 November 2015: Twenty-six representatives of civil society, armed groups and political parties signed a political agreement calling for a third transition led by new authorities of transition. Two armed factions pushed this initiative: the FPRC of Nourredine Adam and the *anti-balaka* led by Mokom and Kokate.

30 December 2015: The first round of legislative and presidential elections was organised. Many irregularities were documented.

4 January 2016: About 20 presidential candidates called for the halting of the electoral process, denouncing it as a "masquerade" involving massive fraud.

25 January 2016: The Constitutional Court announced the cancellation of the first round of the legislative election because of irregularities, but not of the first round of the presidential election. Two former prime ministers were confirmed as candidates for the second round: Georges Dologuélé and Faustin Archange Touadéra.

1.   Overview

Since March 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been in a state of chaos characterised by a violent sectarian conflict. The deteriorating security situation and the collapse of the state have led to fears of the crisis spilling over across borders, threatening regional stability. At the end of 2013, nearly a year after the conflict broke out, the international community mobilised a UN peacekeeping mission. However, at the end of 2015, the situation was still extremely volatile, and questions about the approach to conflict resolution remain.

Decades of successive coups in CAR have been driven by a lack of legitimacy of political elites co-opted by external actors (historically by the French and more recently by regional actors, particularly Chad). Governing elites have systematically used their access to power to enrich themselves. Clientelism based on ethnic criteria has prevailed.

The recent crisis, which imploded after yet another coup, orchestrated by the Seleka, occurred against the backdrop of a phantom state and a collapsed economy. Sectarian tensions quickly rose, fuelled by the interference of foreign mercenaries, leading to ethnic cleansing of the Muslim community.

The dynamics of the conflict have become more complex over time. The conflict initially began between two well-defined rival groups. These groups became increasingly fragmented, with competing agendas and interests. Furthermore, the current transitional government, led by Catherine Samba-Panza since January 2014, lacks the capacity and political will to enforce any real political reforms.

A number of measures and processes have been put in place in an attempt to stop the fighting, reconcile warring parties and stabilise CAR. At the time of writing, the impact of these measures is limited.

This report examines the internal and external conflict and peace dynamics and aims to identify the risks and potential triggers of violence. It also analyses the Brazzaville Agreement (2014), the Nairobi Agreement (2015), the Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation (2015), the electoral process (2015) and the demobilisation, disarmament and reinsertion (DDR) programme and security reform (2015). Key points are as follows:

- **Sectarian tensions** are rife. Despite numerous peace agreements, the *anti-balaka's* main agenda continues to be the exclusion of the Muslim population from CAR. Reconciliation needs to remain a priority.

- High levels of impunity remain a major concern. **Lack of accountability** for the crimes perpetrated continues to fuel mistrust within the population. Limited political will coupled with an inadequate judicial infrastructure has hampered investigations into atrocities.

- The collapse of the state and the economy allowed armed and criminal groups to thrive in a climate of lawlessness. Armed groups gained control over the country's abundant **natural resources** and profited from their exploitation. The revenues generated sustain their activities and represent a strong incentive to perpetuate the conflict rather than negotiate peace.

- Former leaders Djotodia and Bozizé and their deputies have formed **opportunistic alliances and parallel peace processes** in an effort to undermine the stability of the transition.

- **Fragmentation of the armed groups** and leadership rivalries have made it difficult to reach a consensus in political negotiations.

- The **timing of the electoral process** has involved successive delays: the timing has been dictated predominantly by the international community, which underestimated the scale and complexity of the conflict. This reflects the fact that external political agendas not always aligned with local needs have heavily influenced the conflict resolution process.

2. Principal internal actors

Since the coup of March 2013, and despite the various attempts to resolve the conflict and bring about peace, armed groups have continued to control or exert influence over the national territory.

The dynamics of the conflict have changed over time, and two major phenomena have emerged: 1) the two main armed groups have splintered into a multitude of smaller rebel groups, each with its own agenda and opportunistic alliances; and 2) with the rise of sectarian violence, communities with arms are now involved in the conflict, leading to a worsening of the crisis. Given the multitude of armed actors – armed groups, criminal gangs, self-defence militias and members of the former national army known as the FACA – many have difficulties differentiating them.

In this context, the transitional process has been particularly unstable. Over the past three years, the country has experienced a succession of six governments. The transitional authorities have mostly counted on the support and protection of international forces to help them regain control over the territory and re-establish their authority. However, at the end of 2015, the vast majority of the country saw clashes and violence involving a multitude of different actors, with civilians bearing the brunt. Since January 2016, the country has been in a precarious calm.

2.1 Rebel movements

The Seleka movement

Background

The *Seleka* ("alliance" in Sango, the national language) is a coalition of armed groups with a shared sense of political and economic marginalisation. This alliance emerged as a result of a long struggle to overthrow former President Francois Bozizé shortly after he took power, with the support of Chad and France in 2003 (ICG, 2007). Their fight for political power lasted almost eight years[1] until Francois Bozizé lost the support of members of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) (Carayannis & Lombard, 2015) and of the French (see Section 5.1).

The Seleka was formed in 2012 after a few factions allegedly discussed the possibility of an alliance to overthrow President Bozizé.[2] In December 2012, three main factions (the Convention Patriotique du Salut du Kodro, CPSK, led by Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane; the Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP-Fondamentale), led by Nourredine Adam; and the Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR), led by Michel Djotodia) started their offensive from the north-east of the country.[3] Among the Seleka leaders, many were former companions of Bozizé who had helped him take power in 2003 but then felt betrayed by him (ICG, 2015).

During their descent to Bangui and after they took power, Seleka forces committed widespread human rights abuses against the civilian population.[4]

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[1] For more information, see HRW (2007) and FIDH (2008).

[2] In March 2012, a first meeting involved Michel Djotodia (UFDR), Joachim Kokate (CPJP) and Abdoulaye Miskine (FDPC). However, facing internal disagreements and rivalries, the CPJP split into several factions. One faction was formed by the number three of the Seleka, Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, who created the CPSK in June 2012; a second split led to the creation in July 2012 of the CPJP Fondamentale by Nourredine Adam, known as the number two and the brain of the Seleka movement (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).

[3] An additional two factions joined the movement: the Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain (FDPC) of Abdoulaye Miskine and the A2R (Alliance pour la Renaissance et la Refondation). The A2R became on 18 March 2013 the M2R (the Mouvement pour la Renaissance et la Refondation) coordinated by Salvador Edjezekanne.

[4] Amnesty International (2013a) writes that, "Since December 2012, hundreds of civilians have been deliberately killed while thousands have been subjected to torture and other forms of cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment, including rape and other forms of sexual violence. Seleka soldiers have attacked civilians across the country and left families destitute and public institutions desolate. Children, both boys and girls, have continued to be recruited by Seleka and other armed groups. Several hundred thousand civilians have been displaced while more than 60,000 Central Africans have fled to neighboring countries. According to humanitarian sources in the CAR,

Seleka's divided agenda

The Seleka's political agenda changed over time but was not more than a "superficial discourse with no practical measures" (ICG, 2015). Between December 2012 and March 2013, the alliance initially voiced political grievances towards Bozizé's centralised power. They called for political reforms, for the investigation of human rights violations committed by the Bozizé regime, for financial compensation for their combatants and for the immediate and unconditional restitution of diamond, gold and other goods looted in 2008[5] (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). However, of the 500 decrees signed by President Djotodia, not one was on socioeconomic reforms (ibid.).

From December 2013, the persecution and ethnic cleansing of Muslims in the west and centre of the country (Amnesty International, 2015) became a reason to speak out in defence of Muslim communities.[6] However, attempts to articulate a political programme around the sectarian conflict failed (ICG, 2015). The idea of partitioning the country to protect the Muslim population, put forward by prominent Seleka commanders[7] (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014), notably Nourredine Adam, misfired but remained in Nourredine's discourse (see Section 2.2).

The predatory regime of Djotodia (March 2013-January 2014)

On 24 March 2013, Michel Djotodia proclaimed himself president and put in place a predatory regime, using the same governing methods as his predecessor, François Bozizé (ICG, 2014a). The president and his entourage benefited from their access to power by using public funds for their own personal enrichment (ICG, 2014a; Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014; see also Section 4.4). Meanwhile, Djotodia let Seleka commanders – including Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries – pillage the country in reward for their participation in the coup (UN COI, 2014).

In rural areas and even in Bangui, Seleka militias developed a systematic and sophisticated approach to predation. Organised looting was widespread (ICG, 2013). Seleka commanders quickly took control of revenues generated by the exploitation and trade of natural resources – mostly diamonds and gold, ivory and timber (Agger, 2013; Global Witness, 2015). They also established systems of tax at border crossings and at strategic points over the territory (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).

The widespread abuses committed by the Seleka and their predatory behaviour decreased their popularity. After international pressure, Michel Djotodia signed a presidential decree to dissolve the Seleka on 13 September 2013. At that time, there were over 3,500 armed combatants in Bangui operating under the Seleka banner (UN COI, 2014). Despite the decree, the now *ex-Seleka* continued to operate (UN COI, 2014), albeit divided and fractionalised (ICG, 2015).

Ex-Seleka fragmentation (2014-2015)

After Michel Djotodia was forced to resign in January 2014, the *ex-Seleka coalition* split into several rival groups. Most of the rebels left Bangui and the south-west for the provinces in the north and east of the country (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).

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there were more than 30,000 internally displaced persons in Bossangoa as a result of fighting which started in September 2013."

[5] In October 2008, the Minister of Mines, Bozizé's nephew Sylvain Ndoutingaï, launched Operation Closing Gate. Under this, mining officials and soldiers were deployed to the country's mining areas, where they confiscated diamonds and other valuable goods from buying offices and collectors, pretending they were all illegal. The government withdrew eight out of the 11 buying offices and imposed heavy fines on individual entrepreneurs. One of the main objectives of this operation was to establish a monopoly for diamond traders close to the regime.

[6] See Annex 6.5 – the first version of the final recommendations to the international community initially distributed in Ndele by the military leaders of the "new" Seleka in UN PoE (2014).

[7] Abakar Sabone first formulated the idea of partitioning the country at a press conference on 22 December 2013. General Arda Hakoum and more importantly Nourredine Adam then followed him.

This division was mainly caused "by a combination of ethnic divisions, leadership rivalries, financial disputes and disagreements about which strategies to adopt" (ICG, 2015).[8] The UN Panel of Experts (PoE) reported in October 2014 on the existing competition among political representatives of armed groups for ministerial positions as well as military commanders for the control of resources. Clashes between rival ex-Seleka groups in the areas of Bambari and Bria (diamond and gold producing centres) have also been mentioned (ICG, 2015). As of December 2015, the ex-Seleka movement had splintered into four main groups (see Section 2.2), each with a different agenda and interests.

The *anti-balaka* movement

The ***anti-balaka*** movement emerged in the second half of 2013 in reaction to the widespread violence committed against civilians by the Seleka militias. The name "*anti-balaka*" comes from the words "*anti-balles AK-47*" (UN COI, 2014). The *anti-balaka* movement is made up of armed militias who believe the amulets and artefacts they wear will protect them from bullets.

The literature recognises that these militias form part of a long tradition of resistance. They are "less standing forces than networks that can be activated when the need arises" (Carayannis & Lombard, 2015).[9] This tradition of self-defence groups has mainly been developed among the Gbaya, Banda, Mandja and Mboum ethnic groups, which organised insurrections against the colonial power (ICG, 2015; Kisangani, 2015).

The rise of *anti-balaka* militias (2013-2014)

The term "*anti-balaka*" masks a multitude of groups with distinctive profiles and diverse geographical, origins and each with its respective local commanders (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). The groups are composed of village self-defence groups, members of Bozizé's FACA and former presidential guards and gendarmes (ibid.). Additionally, young male and women victims of the Seleka were recruited into the groups, which allowed them to play a significant role in the current conflict (ibid.).

It is difficult to understand the strength of these militias, given their diverse composition and lack of a central command structure. *Anti-balaka* national leaders have declared that the movement numbers between 52,000 and 70,000 fighters (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). However, the UN PoE in 2014 estimated the number to be around 1,500. It is important to note that this figure is not static; these militias can be activated or put on hold as circumstances require, which makes them even more difficult to control.

The first attack of self-defence groups on Seleka militias was in August 2013. By the end of October, attacks against the Seleka by groups calling themselves *anti-balaka* had spread to the north-west and to the south. A major offensive, surprisingly well coordinated and planned,[10] was launched in Bangui on 5 December 2013. The operation led to the killing of about 1,000 people in Bangui (Amnesty International, 2013b).

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[8] On 11 May 2014, military and political leaders of the former Seleka concluded a conclave in Ndele, which led to the formation of a new military structure called the new Seleka. This group was pushing for "a partition of the country" (UN PoE 2014). However, internal disagreements on this issue were already clear. It also claimed former Seleka leaders were trying to take over leadership of the new Seleka movement.

[9] For instance, in 2007, self-defence groups formed to combat road bandits (known as *zaraguinas*), armed pastoralists and rebel groups, particularly in the regions of Bossangoa, Bozoum and Bocaranga. In 2008, the government supported them by providing financial support, weapons and ammunitions (FIDH, 2008; Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). In March 2013, President Bozizé called on young supporters of the ruling party known as Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) to mobilise themselves into self-defence groups to counter the advancing Seleka.

[10] According to FIDH (2014), the 5 December 2013 attack was planned by members of Bozizé's presidential guard and the FACA and some well-known local chiefs, who formed a federation of local groups. About 1,000 *anti-balaka* militias descended on Bangui on foot to fight the Seleka, armed with machetes, rockets and heavy weapons. FIDH qualified this attack as "surprising in its magnitude and strategic significance".

No central coordination and command structure (2014-2015)

Given their sprawling composition, the *anti-balaka* militias have often been presented as a "disorganised group, with no clear military command and a weak political discourse" (ICG, 2015). The link between the rural groups and the self-proclaimed leaders in Bangui has been difficult to establish owing to a lack of control over the groups in rural areas.

Attempts to create national coordination have failed to solve tensions and rivalries among the leaders (such as Patrice Edouard Ngaissona, Sebastien Wenezaoui, Maxime Mokom and Joachim Kokate), who are considered to be pro-Bozizist or anti-Bozizist, each defending different political interests (see Section 2.2). Numbers of supporters per group are difficult to assess, but, according to Carayannis and Lombard (2015), about half support a return of former President Bozizé and receive support from him whereas many others wanted the fall of the the Seleka but do not support Bozizé.

Anti-Muslim agenda

Anti-balaka militias developed strong anti-Seleka views that transformed into a widely shared anti-Muslim sentiment. At first, they systematically attacked all civilians believed to be Seleka or acting in collaboration with the Seleka, including people of Chadian origin, the Fulani, the Gula and the Runga (FIDH, 2014). Soon after, they began to persecute all Muslims (see Section 4.1 on sectarian violence). They consider themselves as fighting for the "true" population of CAR, and perceive the Muslim population as foreigners who have pillaged the country (Carayannis & Lombard, 2015). In December 2014, the International Commission of Enquiry recognised that "the ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population by the anti-balaka constitutes a crime against humanity" (UN COI, 2014). The *anti-balaka* movement has evolved in the course of 2013-2015, both at the local level and at the national level, but the militias' agenda remains the same: "Muslims must all leave the country or die" (FIDH, 2014).

2.2   Rebel groups

Armed groups continue to exert control or influence in different parts of the country, with *anti-balaka* factions dominating in the west and ex-Seleka groups in control of areas in the north and east of the country. Fighting continues between the rival groups, creating a *de facto* partitioned country. (More details about the control of the territory by armed groups are available in Appendix 3).

Ex-Seleka groups

The **FPRC** was created in Birao in July 2014 by Nourredine Adam, and is supported by Michel Djotodia.[11] The group represents the hardliners of the Seleka movement.

The FPRC's main agenda has been to push for the partitioning of the country.[12] The group has been undermining measures of conflict resolution by rejecting both the Brazzaville Agreement (2014) and the DDR agreement (2015). It has also refused to recognise and negotiate with the government of transition

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[11] The FPRC is represented in Bangui by Haroun Gaye, who controls about 60 elements in PK5. Gaye is considered by Nourredine Adam's "chief of staff to be in charge of the FPRC armed elements in Bangui". The local community and civil society consider this group the most extremist. Gaye's militia is funded by US/Chadian national Mahamat Nour Binyamine and indirectly by Djotodia. MINUSCA attempted to arrest Gaye on 2 August 2015 but failed. The militia currently operates freely in the third district of Bangui. See UN PoE (2015).

[12] In July 2014, the ex-Seleka delegation led by Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane made the partition of the country a condition of any truce during the Brazzaville talks. This position was interpreted as being largely influenced by Nourredine Adam and Michel Djotodia (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). On 18 August 2014, the FPRC announced the creation of a new independent state in the north-east of the country, called "Dar el Kouti", with Michel Djotodia as Head of State. The same day, a statement delivered by the FPRC denied this creation (see AllAfrica, 2014). On 3 September 2014, Michel Djotodia declared in a newspaper that there were only two options for ending the conflict in CAR: the return to power of the former Seleka or the partition of the country (UN PoE, 2014).

led by Catherine Samba-Panza. In 2015, the group called for a third transition[13] with new authorities of transition, in which the FPRC leaders intended to play a more central role.[14]

At the end of 2015, the FPRC tried actively to stop the electoral process and played a major role in undermining all efforts to stabilise the political and security situation. On 14 December 2015, Nourredine Adam's chief lieutenant declared autonomous the Republic of Logone, also called the Republic of Dar el Kuti, in the town of Kaga-Bandoro, and said, "What we want first of all is autonomy. Then we'll look at how to move towards independence" (Bavier, 2015). This position was justified by the idea that Muslims and Christians could not coexist anymore in CAR (Ndara, 2015). The communiqué also stated that the new republic would be composed of four prefectures including Nana-Grebizi, Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto and Vakaga (ibid.). All these regions are rich in natural resources (mainly oil, diamonds and gold), which goes a long way to explaining the motives behind this decision.

However, under the pressure of Chadian President Déby and the Organisation of Islamic Cooperation, Nourredine Adam surprisingly declared on 21 December 2015 that his group would not constitute an obstacle to the electoral process and would no longer support the partitioning of the territory (Duhem, 2015a). It remains to be seen whether the number two Seleka warlord will respect this position in the long term or whether he will seek new allies ready to support his agenda.

The Union pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC) is a predominantly Peuhl group based in Bambari, created by Ali Darassa (military coordinator and a former leader of the Chadian Front Populaire pour le Redressement, led by Baba Lade) (RFI, 2014a). Ali was a key figure in the Seleka and he came back to Bambari in 2014 at the request of many Fulani groups that claimed they were being extorted not only by the *anti-balaka* but also by the ex-Seleka (ICG, 2015). He created the UPC in October 2014. The group is mostly considered a moderate armed group even if its militias have allegedly committed atrocities (ICG, 2015; UN PoE, 2015). The group has been acting as protector of the Muslim communities. In January 2016, the UPC and the national coordination of the *anti-balaka* led by Ngaissona signed a non-aggression pact (Alwidha, 2016).

The UPC has declared itself against partition of the country and has participated in the different peace processes led by the government of transition. The group has signed the DDR agreement.

The Rassemblement Patriotique pour le Renouveau de Centrafrique (RPRC) is based in Bria and is mostly composed of members of the Gula ethnic group from the former UFDR. Three ex-Seleka warlords created the group: Herbert Gontran Djono Ahaba (former Minister of Mines under the Djotodia regime), Zacharia Damane and Joseph Zoundeiko. The group is considered a moderate one (Nzilo, 2015) and has taken part in the peace talks with the government of transition. The group does not support the partitioning of the territory and signed the 2015 DDR agreement.

The **Mouvement Patriotique pour la Centrafrique** (MPC) was created in July 2015 by former ex-Seleka from the Kaga-Bandoro region. Former FPRC members Mohamed Bahar and Alkatim Mahamat founded the group as a consequence of disagreements with Nourredine's positions. The government of transition considers the MPC as a moderate armed group that has recognised the various peace agreements and the Bangui Forum's recommendations (Nguerelessio, 2015). The group signed the DDR agreement and claims to be against a partition of the territory.

The **Séléka Rénovée pour la Paix et la Justice** was created by Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, co-founder of the Seleka movement and former second vice-president of the FPRC. Nourredine Adam had suspended

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[13] On 14 November 2015, 26 representatives of various groups signed an agreement calling for a third transition. Abdoulaye Hissene represented the UFDR. See Nzilo (2014a).

[14] On 1 August 2015, Nourredine Adam signed a declaration calling for a third transition – he considers that an extension of three years is necessary to conclude a new political and military agreement. In this letter, Nourredine refuses to recognise the legitimacy of the current government. In Ngamende (2015).

Dhaffane from his functions in the FPRC for "high treason" in August 2014. Dhaffane then created the Reformed Seleka. The ex-Seleka leader is against the partitioning of the country but calls for political inclusion. He does not seem to have any fighters under his command,[15] and the various public positions taken by the Reformed Seleka seem to reflect his own political aspirations.

Anti-balaka groups

The **Coordination Nationale des Libérateurs du Peuple Centrafricain** (CLPC) was formed in 2014 and is led by Patrice Edouard Ngaissona. When it was formed, Bozizé and Ngaissona had close links (ICG, 2015), but Ngaissona has progressively distanced himself from the former president (Pinto, 2015). In 2014, he announced his objective was to transform the *anti-balaka* movement into a political party able to participate in the electoral process in 2015 (Thienot, 2014). He was candidate to the presidential election but the Constitutional Court did not validate his candidacy. He represented the *anti-balaka* at the Bangui Forum in 2015 and signed the DDR agreement representing the *anti-balaka* delegation. However, it is important to note that Ngaissona has very limited authority over the movement and represents mostly his personal political aspirations.

In September 2014, Sebastien Wenezaoui, one of the *anti-balaka* leaders and ex-Assistant to the CLPC coordinator, created the **Mouvance Patriotique pour l'Avenir – I Kwé**, which had the aim of becoming a political party (Nzilo, 2014b). Wenezaoui claimed he was elected by 300 *anti-balaka* leaders as the new national coordinator. He was designated minister of environment in August 2015 by the government of Kamoun and he is against a third transition (Ngalangou, 2015).

In 2015, Maxime Mokom and Joachim Kokate (the ***anti-balaka* "Nairobists"**) claimed Ngaissona did not represent the movement and rejected his capacity to represent the *anti-balaka* at the Bangui Forum. In May 2015, they created what they called a "legitimate coordination" (Zamane, 2015). Mokom and Kokate wanted former President Bozizé to return to power. This coalition is supported by Bozizé and his party, the Kwa Na Kwa (KNK), and has grassroots support from different *anti-balaka* groups, particularly those from the area of Bossangoa.

This coalition signed a deal with the FRPC of Nourredine Adam in January 2015, in Nairobi (see Section 6.4). At the end of 2015, together with the FPRC, it called for a third transition and fuelled instability to stop the electoral process. This coordination is mostly commanded by Mokom, who seeks to integrate *anti-balaka* combatants into the FACA.

There are currently a multitude of ***other anti-balaka groups and rival coordinating bodies*** operating throughout the country, mainly in the south-west, in some neighbourhoods of Bangui and in the centre of the country (see Appendix 3).

Other armed groups

The **Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain** (FDPC) was created in 2004 by Martin Koumtamadji, also known as Adboulaye Miskine, an officer close to former President Patassé. The group briefly joined the Seleka movement until March 2013. FDPC militias have repeatedly perpetrated crimes and banditry in Nana-Mambere (western CAR) and in east Cameroon (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). The group has remained powerful and the many deadly attacks that have occurred on the main supply road to Bangui from Cameroon have been paralysing the national economy (UN PoE, 2015). According to the UN PoE, this group "poses the main security threat" in western CAR (ibid.). Since the end of 2015, the group seems to have been on hold.

The group did not participate in the Bangui Forum and therefore did not sign the DDR agreement. In November 2014, the Cameroonian authorities captured Miskine. He was then released from captivity in

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[15] When the Seleka took power, Dhaffane had mostly foreign mercenaries under his command.

exchange for hostages and he currently "enjoys his freedom in Brazzaville, while his group continues to hold hostage 16 Cameroonian nationals who were captured in March 2015" (UN PoE, 2015). Even if Miskine did not plan to present himself as a candidate for the elections, he announced in an interview that elements of the FDPC would be represented (Afrique New Info, 2015) – a piece of information that has not been confirmed.

Révolution et Justice (RJ) was formed by Armel Sayo at the end of 2013 in the north of the Ouham Pende region (ICG, 2015). Sayo, a former military officer close to former President Patassé, had formed the Comité National pour la Restauration de la Démocratie (CNRD) following the Seleka coup. He then formed alliances with the FDPC of Miskine. The group recruited many former Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la Démocratie (APRD) combatants[16] and villagers near Paoua and Ngaoundaye. In 2014, RJ militias clashed with ex-Seleka combatants several times and also with Fulani pastoralists from CAR and Chad. The group says it re-emerged to defend the local community against incursions from Chad. Armel Sayo joined Mahamat Kamoun's government in August 2014 and became the Central African minister of youth and sports. RJ members confirmed receiving financial support from him (UN PoE, 2015). More recently, RJ and the MPC have reportedly been collaborating in the area of Markounda in order to make money out of cattle-rustling and taxation.

A predominantly Peuhl group based in the west of the country (north of Bouar) has recently emerged and has been led by Colonel Sidiki since January 2016. Sikidi is a former combatant for the Front Populaire pour le Redressement (FPR) led by prominent Chadian rebel Baba Lade. This emerging armed group has been formed to protect cattle and the Fulani community against the *anti-balaka* attacks led by Ibrahim Ndale.

2.3 The transitional authorities

The transitional government

On 23 January 2014, Catherine Samba-Panza was appointed president of the transition. Initially, the newly nominated head of state of the transition declared she would form a government of technocrats (RFI, 2014b). Andre Nzapayeke was appointed prime minister from January to August 2014. He was replaced on August 2014 by Mahamat Kamoun, former Cabinet Chief of Seleka rebel leader Michel Djotodia. With Kamoun as prime minister, it became clear the new strategy was to give priority to a more political government. Mahamat Kamoun became the first Muslim in the country's history to access this position. Over the past 16 months, four ministerial reshuffles have occurred, revealing signs of political instability in the government. In parallel with this, Catherine Samba Panza appointed 24 special advisers to the presidency at the rank of minister, who sometimes act in competition with the government (Xinhua, 2014).

The transitional government had been struggling to respect the transitional roadmap, which has led to criticism of its ability to fulfil its role in stabilising the country and bringing the transition to term.

The **Conseil National de Transition** (CNT) was formed under Djotodia's presidency, following pressures from the ECCAS heads of state, in an attempt to legitimise his position (AFP, 2013). Alexandre Ferdinand Nguendet was nominated president of this transitional legislative body and the 135 members of the CNT elected Catherine Samba-Panza in January 2014. In August 2015, the CNT adopted the final draft of the constitution, which was adopted by referendum in December 2015.

In July 2015, members of the CNT adopted by a vast majority a decision that denied the right of refugees to participate in the presidential election. The Constitutional Court later overturned this decision.

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[16] The APRD appeared in 2005 in the north-west and centre-north. Its leader, Jean-Jacques Démafouth (currently a close adviser of the CAR transitional head of state), announced the dissolution of the organisation on 17 May 2012 and some combatants joined a DDR programme. Other combatants joined *anti-balaka* militias or RJ.

However, this raised concern that the CNT members were predominantly non-Muslims and therefore the transitional authorities were not taking Muslims' interests into consideration. This might be viewed as an attempt to discriminate against the Muslim community at a political level (Lesueur & Vircoulon, 2015).

The transitional authorities (presidency, government, CNT, Constitutional Court)

On conflict resolution, the UN PoE (2015, Chapter 4) notes that "major political choices by the transitional institutions had aggrieved much of the Bangui-based political elite and indirectly contributed to the gradual deterioration of security that had culminated in the outbreak of violence on 26 September."[17] In this context, lack of coordination with the Congolese mediator clearly played against the conflict resolution process.

In the presidential election, most of the key transitional authorities were not authorised to run.[18] As a consequence, certain authorities undermined the transitional process and joined the call for a third transition (UN PoE, 2015). For instance, external observers see President of the CNT Alexandre Ferdinand Nguendet as a spoiler from within. The UN PoE (2015) has expressed doubts as regards "his full adherence to the transitional process and elections".

2.4   Principal national security forces

Prior to the March 2013 coup, the **FACA** was composed of about 5,000-6,000 personnel, with the majority stationed in Bangui (FIDH 2008). "Attempted coups, mutinies, and politically motivated neglect have taken their toll on the FACA", which has received very little support from successive regimes (Berman & Lombard, 2008). In 2016, the FACA accounts for about 7,900 soldiers. A process of registration for each soldier was developed in 2015 with the support of the EU and is under way at the time of writing. The same process has been developed for the police and the gendarmerie.

Since 2013, the FACA has not received any directives, apart from for the police and the gendarmerie and for approximately 1,000 FACA soldiers who have been deployed on specific missions. For instance, since 2016 some FACA soldiers have been deployed in key areas of Bangui. Most gendarmes and police forces are stationed in the capital. Efforts are being made to train and equip additional gendarmerie forces, who will be deployed in rural areas in the course of 2016.

It is critical to note that about 5,000 elements are paid soldiers but officially unarmed. Since the end of 2013, various reports have documented the involvement of some FACA soldiers with armed groups, either within the different *anti-balaka* factions[19] or as part of some ex-Seleka armed groups (see Section 6.4; Barbelet, 2015). These connections with armed groups make the re-establishment of these forces a huge challenge in the restoring of national security and defence.

2.5   Political parties

On 15 July 2015, there were 69 political parties and political associations recognised by the government and 21 political parties awaiting official recognition (Centrafrique Presse, 2015b). Only a few parties dominate the national political landscape. The main ones are as follows.

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[17] These decisions included the isolation of radical elements of armed groups, particularly the Nairobists; preference to particular leaders of armed groups to participate in the political negotiations, which did not necessary reflect the most relevant stakeholders; the appointment of *anti-balaka* leaders as ministers.

[18] This decision was a result of the Libreville Agreement signed in January 2013. The transitional charter adopted by Michel Djotodia in 2013, under pressure from ECCAS member states and the international community, indicated that the head of state of the transition, the prime minister, members of transitional institutions (the government of transition, the CNT, the Information and Communication Council and the Constitutional Court) were not eligible to run for the presidency (Article 106: www.pmcar.org/docs/chartedetransition.pdf). The Constitutional Court confirmed this decision in June 2015. See Centrafrique Presse (2015a).

[19] This alleged involvement may have been in retaliation for targeted attacks against the FACA following the Seleka coup in March 2013. As a result, in February 2014, FACA officers lynched a Muslim they considered part of the Seleka (Barbelet, 2015).

The **Kwa Na Kwa** (KNK) is the former ruling party of ousted President Francois Bozizé. Bertin Bea has been acting as general secretary. The party militates for the return to power of former President Bozizé. In November 2015, the party revealed that Bozizé would be the KNK candidate for the presidential election (RFI, 2015a), but he was not included on the Constitutional Court's list of approved candidates (Gnago, 2013). The party is closely connected to the *anti-balaka* faction led by Mokom. The UN PoE (2015) confirmed that "an operational rapprochement was coordinated in Bangui between KNK and Mokom's faction, following instructions from Bozizé's entourage in Nairobi".

The **Mouvement de Libération du Peuple Centrafricain** (MPLC) is led by Martin Ziguélé, former Prime Minister during the Patasse regime (2001-2003). Since the coup, Ziguele has been in exile in France. He announced his candidature for the presidential election in November 2014.

The **Rassemblement Démocratique Centrafricain** (RDC) was created by former President Kolingba. Since January 2015, the party has been officially led by Désiré Bilala Kolingba Nzanga, who is also a candidate in the presidential election.

As a consequence of the fragmentation of armed groups and with the upcoming electoral process, some militia leaders have created their own political parties. For instance, Patrice Edouard Ngaissona (*anti-balaka* leader) has created the **Parti Centrafricain pour l'Unité et le Développement** (PCUD) and presented himself as a candidate for both the presidential and the legislative elections.[20] However, the Constitutional Court has not confirmed his name on the list of confirmed candidates.[21]

2.6   Religious leaders

In this context of sectarian violence, many initiatives have been developed to promote reconciliation and dialogue between the religious communities and their respective leaders.[22] These initiatives have mostly been encouraged by international organisations but local initiatives also show that some religious leaders have played a vital role in protecting the communities at threat. In November 2015, Pope Francis' visit had a very positive impact at grassroots level. By delivering a message of peace and reconciliation, it sowed real "seeds of hope" (RFI, 2015b) within the two communities.

It is important to note that religious leaders, invited to discuss the root causes of the sectarian violence, have often presented the crisis as a non-religious conflict, stressing its political and military dimensions. Illustrating this, Archbishop Dieudonné Nzapalainga of Bangui declared in August 2015 that "the anti-balaka were not Christian militias but defensive militia who wanted to avenge their brothers. No religious leaders were at their head. The same with Seleka, who were not Muslim rebels but young people who'd been exploited by political groups" (Caritas, 2015).

Finally, it is important to note that the literature has not analysed the impact religious leaders have effectively had in the reconciliation process. It is therefore difficult to make any generalisation in this regard.

2.7   The private sector

There is little analysis of the situation of the private sector or its role in the current conflict. However, the existing literature suggests that, since the conflict broke out, the country has descended into an economy of war characterised by a proliferation of predatory operators. This economic model already existed prior to the recent crisis but the situation has worsened.

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[20] http://anecentrafrique.com/elections-2015-rca/presidentielle-2015-candidats/
[21] The Constitutional Court motivated this rejection because Ngaissona has been under instruction by the Criminal Court since February 2015 and has contracted debts totalling FCFA 536 million (about $900,000) that he has not reimbursed.
[22] For some examples of inter-faith dialogue, see: Peacebuilding in CAR, KAICIID experts, religious leaders discuss engagement (CIID, 2014; Sullivan and Stigant, 2014).

Following the 2013 coup, private foreign operators – dominated by French actors – specialised in the provision of **security services** have been approaching the transitional authorities (ICG, 2014a). In the **extractive sector,** foreign companies have sought to secure licences in the mining and oil sectors (ICG, 2014a; Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). In the diamond sector, buying offices have continued to purchase and export diamonds in violation of the Kimberley Process ban on diamonds exports (UN PoE, 2014, 2015). In the **forest sector**, three foreign logging companies active in the south-west of the country before the crisis have continued to exploit and commercialise CAR timber, feeding the international market. This has been possible as a result of payments to armed groups (Global Witness, 2015; UN PoE, 2014, 2015), corruption at governmental level and widespread illegal practices in forest areas thanks to absence of the state (Global Witness, 2015). In 2014 and 2015, four new permits were allocated to foreign companies. The process has been described as illegal and corrupt (ibid.).

Furthermore, the government of Cameroon has regularly closed its borders with CAR and Cameroonian trucks drivers have organised regular strikes because of the high level of insecurity on roads. This has had heavy consequences for the private sector in CAR. While most of the formal sector has suffered greatly from the instability, **informal activities** have been able to proliferate in a context of absence of rule of law (ICG, 2014a; Section 3.2 on Cameroon).

In September 2015, the International Finance Corporation (IFC) organised a national forum on private sector development in an effort to re-engage with CAR. This focused on forestry, mining and agriculture as key development sectors and introduced a public–private partnership model to infrastructure development (IFC, 2015).

3. Principal external actors

3.1 Regional organisations

From the start of the conflict, the **Economic Community of Central African States** (ECCAS) has shown a strong desire to keep tight control over regional affairs (Welz, 2014). ECCAS has led on the mediation, sent troops and provided financial support (ibid.). This heavy-handed involvement hides a political game driven by member states' political and economic interests, with Chad at the head (Bakari, 2014; Zifcak, 2015). This explains why ECCAS involvement has sometimes been presented as more of a problem than a solution to the CAR crisis (Bakari, 2014).

In addition, the fact that the most recent coups of 2003 and 2013 were similar in their formation and symptoms gives the impression that ECCAS actors considered the recent crisis 'business as usual'. As was the case in 2003, ECCAS' immediate response to the coup was to make it 'acceptable' in the eyes of the international community.

On 10 January 2014, the dismissal of Michel Djotodia and Prime Minister Tiangaye was interpreted as a sanction by ECCAS resulting from its inability to prevent the country's descent into chaos (Vircoulon, 2014). It also revealed the limitations of the regional response. The inability of ECCAS to control the situation and mobilise additional troops (Vircoulon, 2013) led the international community to transform the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the CAR (Micopax)[23] – a peacekeeping mission under ECCAS – into an African Union-led peacekeeping mission (International Support Mission to the Central African Republic, MISCA), which became operational on 1 August 2013 (Barbelet, 2015; Welz, 2014). Chadian President Déby was opposed to this decision because this new arrangement was perceived as a threat to his own influence in the CAR conflict (Zifcak, 2015).

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[23] Since July 2008, Micopax had been under the responsibility of ECCAS. In 2012, ECCAS countries decided on a partial withdrawal of troops owing to limited progress and decreasing financial support from the EU. However, on 21 December 2012, ECCAS leaders agreed to reinforce Micopax by dispatching additional troops. In October 2013, the operation reached almost 2,700 troops and police officers from Cameroon, Chad, Congo (Brazzaville), Equatorial Guinea and Gabon.

Initially, the **African Union (AU)** did not take the lead on the CAR crisis, but did eventually become involved. In March 2013, the AU imposed a travel ban and asset freeze on persons undermining the Libreville Agreement of January 2013. After the *coup d'état*, it suspended the country from the organisation (AU Peace and Security Council, 2013), a position in complete opposition to the ECCAS strategy. This was a partial contributor to rising tensions between the two organisations (Welz, 2014). In December 2013, the AU increased the number of troops on the ground, sending an additional 6,000 soldiers to reinforce the protection of civilians (Zifcak, 2015), with ECCAS states remaining the main troop contributors.

Welz (2014) describes tensions between ECCAS, keen to keep control over the situation in CAR, and the AU, wanting to position itself as a key player in African peacebuilding operations. In the meantime, MISCA quickly proved its limitations (ibid.). On 10 April 2014, UN Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 2149 established a new peacekeeping mission – the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA) – a decision the AU did not welcome (ibid.). Welz concludes that strained relations between ECCAS and the AU, and between the AU and the UN, have delayed responses to the crisis and are understandable only through consideration of the interests of the organisations' member states (also Olin, 2015).

3.2   Main regional actors

Chad

In the current crisis, Chad has been the key player and its stance has been ambiguous. Chad's President Déby was involved in the fall of Bozizé and was also the "kingmaker" in the conflict resolution (Welz, 2014). The literature is unanimous: Chad's involvement in the CAR crisis has been highly problematic (see Sections 4.2 and 5.1).

Republic of Congo

President of the Republic of Congo Denis Sassou Nguesso has been the ECCAS-appointed mediator. The country has also provided troops and funding to CAR peacekeeping operations and to Djotodia's government. Meanwhile, the Congolese mediation has been criticised. Since 2014, relations between Samba-Panza and Sassou Nguesso have been tense.[24] While the transitional authorities' strategy was to isolate radical elements, in January 2015 Sassou Nguesso chose to facilitate the organisation of the Nairobi talks, which led to a deal between the Nairobists (UN PoE, 2015; see Section 6.2). His actions, including the facilitation of travel ban violations, have been perceived as an attempt to destabilise the government of transition and the ongoing conflict resolution process (Jeune Afrique, 2015a; Le Monde, 2015; UN PoE, 2015; see Section 6.2.).

In addition, since September 2014, Sassou Nguesso has been hosting (and therefore protecting) the FDPC's leader, Abdoulaye Miskine. This ambiguous decision was taken after Miskine was released from captivity by Cameroonian authorities and with the facilitation of Karim Meckassoua, Sassou Nguesso's close friend (RFI, 2014c). This position demonstrates Sassou Nguesso's interests in exerting influence or control over this armed group.

According to Marchal (2015), Congo's interest in the CAR crisis has been based mostly on securing the goodwill of the international community. Sassou Nguesso has been seen as "an intermittent mediator with no ambition other than to have his men in charge and please Paris and the international community by proving his effectiveness in solving the CAR crisis". This coincides with a time when the Congolese president was seeking to amend his own country's constitution in order to have a new presidential mandate for 2016 (ibid.).

It is clear that Sassou Nguesso has tried for many years to be recognised as an essential mediator in the region, a man of peace. However, in the CAR crisis, his strategy gives the impression that he has been defending a hidden agenda. The literature has not uncovered the deep interests of the Congolese

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[24] Denis Sassou Nguesso was openly in favour of Karim Meckassoua as prime minister. Instead, Samba-Panza appointed Mahamat Kamoun in August 2014. This has been mentioned as one of the reasons for the tensions between the two heads of state.

mediator in CAR but the literature agrees on the negative impact the mediation has had in the country's conflict resolution process.

Angola

In 2014, Angola got involved in the CAR conflict resolution. In March 2014, the two countries signed an agreement to ensure the functioning of the government and to address issues related to the humanitarian crisis (Government of Angola, 2014). The financial protocol consisted of a donation worth $10 million in cash pledged in March 2014 (Soudan, 2014).

Angola also became involved in the diamond sector in CAR, which had been suspended from the Kimberley Process since May 2013. In 2015, Angola took on the presidency of the Kimberley Process, and under this there have been discussions to agree on a partial resumption of diamond exports from the west and south-west of CAR (Centrafrique Libre, 2015). The resumption is still not effective. Marchal (2015) notes that, according to CAR officials, the sudden role played by Angola was a request from Paris to the Angolan president to support the transitional process in CAR.

Cameroon

At first, the Cameroonian position on the CAR crisis was perceived as ambiguous. While most of the ECCAS heads of state supported Michel Djotodia as new president of the transition, Paul Bia decided to host Francois Bozizé following the Seleka coup for a period of two months.

Following this episode, Cameroon adopted a low profile in the political resolution of the CAR crisis, whereas economic interests have remained. Formal and informal economic activities between Cameroon and CAR have always boosted the Cameroonian economy. Cameroon mostly exports manufactured goods, food and beverages and imports a few agro-pastoral products. Cameroon also represents the main transit for all CAR exports and imports (CAR's economy is dependent on the port of Douala). A report produced by the government of Cameroon in December 2014 indicated that the CAR crisis had a negative impact on a few national economic sectors, such as tourism, transport, trade, agriculture and pastoralism, and had undermined the fiscal potential of the regions (MINEPAT, 2014).

To avoid any additional social tensions in a context of an influx of refugees from CAR and Nigeria, the Cameroonian authorities have alleviated fiscal controls, which has, according to the Cameroonian government, resulted in the proliferation of networks of traffickers (MINEPAT, 2014). Diamonds, gold and ivory are smuggled from CAR to Cameroon (UN PoE, 2014, 2015). Trafficking of stolen cattle from CAR has also been mentioned (ICG, 2014b). Moreover, the UN PoE (2015) notes that "cross-border trafficking from Cameroon in violation of the arms embargo continues to represent one of the main sources of supply of hunting ammunition, which is sold freely on the open market".

3.3 International organisations

The United Nations

The **UN Security Council** (UNSC) has been the key international player in the CAR conflict resolution, with France leading on the issue. Generally speaking, member states have had joint perspectives and calls for action with respect to the conflict (Zifcak, 2015). The UNSC reached a consensus that led to the deployment of MINUSCA in 2014.

Nevertheless, obvious cleavages have remained, notably on the appropriateness of the use of force by peacekeepers and on what action should be taken against political and military leaders,[25] reflecting member states' interests. International attention to the CAR crisis was delayed, which led to an even more complex crisis (Zifcak, 2015).

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[25] In May 2014, the UNSC added to its list of sanction three individuals: former President Francois Bozizé, Levy Yakété (former *anti-balaka* leader) and Nourredine Adam (Seleka warlord). A few days later, the US announced five names would be added to their sanction list: the first three above and interestingly Michel Djotodia and Abdoulaye Miskine. See: http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11627.doc.htm and https://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/OFAC-Enforcement/Pages/car_eo.aspx

The **UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR** (MINUSCA) was established by UNSC Resolution 2149 in April 2014. Its strong mandate[26] included a multifaceted political, security and humanitarian focus on the entire country, not only Bangui, with a maximum of 12,000 personnel.

More than one year after the start of its mandate, MINUSCA has struggled to respond to the challenges of the CAR crisis and to fulfil its aim of protecting civilians. At the end of 2015, with the electoral process pending, the situation continued to be volatile and difficult to control. So far, MINUSCA's role has focused on the protection of UN staff, the facilitation of humanitarian assistance and the protection of civilians (UN PoE, 2015; Zifcak, 2015). The peacekeeping mission has also had to face multiple allegations of sexual abuse committed by its own peacekeepers against civilians, including minors (UN News Centre, 2015). These have significantly harmed its reputation, and led to the dismissal of Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSCA Babacar Gaye (Deschamps, Jallow & Sooka, 2015; Jeune Afrique, 2015b).

In November 2015, Catherine Samba-Panza claimed MINUSCA's efforts were insufficient to ensure security in Bangui and called for further work to reframe the international forces' operation (RFI, 2015c).

The European Union

Following the coup, EU High Representative Catherine Ashton said "violent or unconstitutional changes of government remain unacceptable". She called "all parties to engage in talks and to work within the framework of the Libreville agreement of 11 January 2013 to find a peaceful way forward" (EU, 2013). The EU did not interrupt its cooperation with the new Seleka regime but froze most of its programmes.

After France requested EU support in the CAR crisis, the EU decided to launch a military operation, EUFOR CAR, on 1 April 2014, authorised by UNSC Resolution 2134 in January 2014. EUFOR's main mission was to provide temporary support to other forces for a period of four to six months. EUFOR CAR's main mandate was to help stabilise and provide protection in some districts of Bangui, to allow humanitarian access to the affected population.[27] The operation was later extended to a total of nine months.[28] At the end of March 2015, EUFOR CAR considered its mission completed and withdrew its troops.[29]

The EU is also CAR's largest donor. In July 2014, it launched its first multi-donor trust fund linking relief, rehabilitation and development (EU, 2014), with an initial amount of €64 million. In May 2015, the EU announced an additional €72 million and intentions to go beyond the humanitarian emergency.

The International Contact Group on Central African Republic

The ICG-CAR was formed to coordinate the actions of the international organisations and actors involved in the CAR conflict resolution. The first meeting took place in November 2014 and included eight participants.[30] By July 2015, the ICG-CAR had already met eight times and the list of participants had expanded to 34, showing a growing interest in the CAR crisis by international actors.[31]

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[26] The UNSC set down a mandate for an enlarged peacekeeping mission focusing on the protection of civilians; the protection of UN personnel; support to an interactive political process; the creation of conditions conducive to the delivery of humanitarian assistance; the promotion and protection of human rights; and the disarmament of former armed elements and their reintegration into the national military forces.

[27] See: http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eufor-rca/index_en.htm

[28] The common costs of EUFOR RCA for the period until 15 December 2014 was fixed at €25,9 million. The common costs of EUFOR RCA for the period from 16 December 2014 until 15 March 2015 will be €5,7 million. See http://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=OJ:JOL_2014_325_R_0007&from=EN

[29] See http://www.eeas.europa.eu/csdp/missions-and-operations/eufor-rca/news/archives/20150323_en.htm

[30] The AU, UN, EU, France, US, Republic of Congo, ECCAS and World Bank. See RFI (2014d).

[31] The participants in the eighth meeting of the ICG-CAR included: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, Chad, China, Republic of Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, France, Georgia, Germany, Holy See, Japan, Luxemburg, Nigeria, Russia, South Africa, Sudan, Turkey, UK, US, AU, ECCAS, ICRC, IMF, OCHA, OIC, OIF, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNHCR, UN, USAID and World Bank. See AU (2015).

3.4   International actors

France

At the beginning of the CAR conflict, France refused to respond to President Bozizé's call for assistance (Châtelot, 2015), breaking a long history of French interference in CAR's politics. France initially focused on providing protection at the airport and to its nationals, and let ECCAS lead the conflict resolution.

France's approach shifted after August 2013 following reports of increasing Seleka-led attacks against civilians. In November 2013, **France warned CAR was on the verge of genocide** (Amontchi, 2013). It also progressively realised the complex game being played by regional states (Welz, 2014). In December 2013, France convinced the UNSC to adopt Resolution 2127 authorising France and the AU to deploy troops in CAR (Arieff, 2014). Operation Sangaris, in reference to an African butterfly, was mobilised with about 1,200 troops, bolstering its total military presence to 1,600 troops.

French President Hollande initially **promised a short intervention** that would last no more than six months (Guiberg, 2013). France's strategy was to convince several international actors to get involved in the conflict resolution process so it could withdraw its troops. It called for assistance from the EU and for the shift of MISCA into MINUSCA. France also emphasised that elections should take place as soon as possible, a position shared by most of the international community but also criticised by international experts and nationals because of the high level of insecurity (Lesueur & Vircoulon, 2015).

In January 2014, a French representative stated that, "We knew that there was some inter-sectarian violence but we didn't forecast such deep ingrained hatred" (BBC, 2014a). By **underestimating the complexity and root causes of the conflict** as well as the potential risks of destabilising the whole region, France found itself dragged into the CAR crisis. There have been regular protests accusing France of protecting one community over the other. Since the start of 2015, France has made frequent announcements that it will withdraw its troops (Le Monde, 2014). However, following the cycles of violence that broke out in September 2015, France committed to keeping 900 troops in CAR and to calling in additional troops based in Chad and Gabon when the need arises. In January 2016, France announced that it would withdraw its troops once CAR elects its new president (Reuters, 2016).

South Africa

Relations between CAR and South Africa have been established quite recently. In 2007, the two countries signed a military cooperation agreement, which was renewed for a further five years in December 2012.[32] This "new friendship" was part of Bozize's strategy to gain more autonomy from Chad and from France: his regime concluded agreements with both South Africa and China in the areas of natural resource exploration and defence.

In January, after Bozizé asked for South African support, Jacob Zuma "authorised" the deployment of 400 soldiers between 2 January 2013 and 31 March 2018. On 23 March, 13 South African soldiers were killed by Seleka militias, which led to a public scandal in South Africa, because the agreement was seen as hiding economic interests, particularly in the diamond and oil sectors. For instance, the South African company DIG Oil, led by Andrea Brown, was granted an oil exploration contract for Bloc C in November 2011 (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).[33] At the time of writing, this contract has not been cancelled.

South African troops had to leave CAR after the Seleka took power. Since 2015, diplomatic relations between the two countries have been revived. In June 2015, Catherine Samba-Panza officially reopened a CAR Embassy in Pretoria after the South African counterpart offered a house to host the CAR diplomatic staff (RFI, 2015d).

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[32] The agreement was to provide CAR's army with an array of military training, from infantry, artillery and special forces training to logistics and driving courses, as well as "refurbishment" of military infrastructure in Bouar and Bangui.
[33] http://www.digoil.co.za

4. Principal internal dynamics

4.1 Sectarian violence

The international media often presented the conflict in oversimplified terms, as a fight between the mostly Muslim Seleka forces and the mostly Christian *anti-balaka* militias. Unresolved underlying issues and a delayed international response mean the scale of the sectarian violence has reached unprecedented proportions (ICG, 2015). The roots of this sectarian tension can be traced back to both pre- and post-independence dynamics (see Appendix 3).

Proximate causes of the sectarian crisis and the scale of violence

Foreign mercenaries: Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries made up 80% of the Seleka in March 2013 (FIDH, 2014). The literature has often neglected this dimension of the conflict. It has underestimated the role these regional armed combatants have played in the emergence of anti-foreigner and anti-Muslim speech. It is critical to note that, "without this pool of fighters, the rebel leaders and politicians would find it less easy to mobilise fighting forces" (Debos, 2008). Therefore, the following key elements need to be mentioned in an attempt to understand the link between these forces and the triggering and scale of the recent sectarian violence:

- The presence of thousands of foreign mercenaries at the start of the Seleka offensive[34] gave the feeling of an invasion. These combatants had a particularly violent *modus operandi* and committed widespread abuses in 2013 (FIDH, 2013). Their presence also reflects a revival from the past because many combatants were ex-liberators, mostly of Chadian origin, who had helped Bozizé take power in 2003 (ICG, 2015) and who had committed atrocities between 2002 and 2003 (Debos, 2008).[35]

- According to Kilembe (2015), in past years "Chadian soldiers have developed a reputation for turning quickly to violence and enjoying total impunity for their abuses."[36] In 2011, a violent conflict broke out in Bangui after two non-Muslim children were found dead in a vehicle owned by a Muslim of Chadian origin. As a reprisal, non-Muslim communities specifically led deadly attacks against the Chadian community living in KM5. This incident revealed high tensions between the two communities and deep resentments against the Chadians established in the country.[37]

- The collusion between the Seleka and the Chadian armed forces early in the conflict fuelled an anti-Chadian, anti-Muslim and anti-foreigner sentiment (see Sections 4.2 and 5.1; Kilembe, 2015; Marchal, 2015). Weyns, Hoex, and Spittaels (2014) indicate that "the predominantly Muslim Seleka were likewise perceived as a foreign, Chadian group. Hence, whilst the anti-balaka movement claimed to be fighting the Seleka, both its leaders and its fighters implicitly, and in some cases explicitly, understood this to mean fighting all 'foreigners' and all (civilian) Muslims."

Inter-religious and inter-ethnic tensions: At the start of their offensive, leaders of the Seleka raised the issue of discrimination against ethnic groups from the north-east by the Bozizé regime,[38] but at the time

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[34] For instance, Moussa Assimeh, a former Sudanese colonel in the army, was reportedly among the Seleka when they took power in March 2013. He had under his command approximatively 2,000 men. For a few months, they carried out systematic looting and committed human rights abuses with total impunity. They left only when they considered they had had "fair" payment for their war effort.

[35] Marielle Debos wrote in 2008 that the "involvement of Chadian armed men in CAR is widespread […] First, they ply their trade in the transnational networks of road bandits, the infamous *coupeurs de routes* or *zaraguinas*, which have a long history in the sub-region and have proliferated with the worsening of the conflict and the increase in arms flow. Second, Chadian soldiers participate in the Multinational Force of the Central African Economic and Monetary Community […] Third, since Bozizé's takeover, Chadian soldiers have secured his stay in power: they form a significant part of Bozizé's personal security and Presidential Guard. Fourth, Chadian rebel forces have used northeast CAR as a rear base. Fifth, Chadian regular forces have conducted raids in CAR to fight Chadian armed groups and assist Central African armed forces. Finally, Chadian combatants have joined the loose rebel coalition based in the northeast of CAR: the *Union des forces pour la démocratie et le rassemblement* (UFDR)."

[36] Kilembe notes that "the aggressive intervention of MISAB's Chadian contingent in 1997 led to feelings of rejection toward the Chadian community, and often toward the entire Muslim community by association."

[37] According to Weyns, Hoex, and Spittaels (2014) , this violence was explained by the media as having been driven by frustrations towards foreigners/Muslims who controlled the businesses in the PK5 neighbourhood.

[38] Ethnic groups include Gula, Runga, Youlou, Kara, Banda and others from the north-east. See Centrafrique Presse (2013).

this was not framed in religious terms (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). However, in 2013, the Seleka's attacks targeted civilians on the basis of religion and ethnicity (ibid.; UN HRC, 2013). There are also examples of churches being attacked and destroyed by Seleka troops. In 2013, Seleka soldiers were reportedly involved in the killing of civilians based on the victim's financial situation or political and ethnic affiliation (UN HRC, 2013). As a result, many former FACA, ex-presidential guards and Bozizé supporters joined *anti-balaka* groups to fight against Seleka forces. Even though Muslims were not completely spared by the Seleka (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014),[39] an amalgamation was born among non-Muslim communities, equating all Muslims as Seleka, foreigners and enemies of CAR's people.

Manipulation of religion for power by leaders of armed groups: Ex-Seleka and *anti-balaka* groups saw in this conflict an opportunity to exploit religious differences by presenting themselves as defenders of Muslims or Christian communities and to use their rival's crimes to justify their own existence and own atrocities. In reality, armed groups have morphed into criminal gangs, with predatory behaviours, to gain profit and power (Agger, 2015; UN PoE, 2015). For example, it has been established that Francois Bozizé supported the attacks that occurred in Bangui on 5 December 2013 (ICG, 2015; UN COI, 2014). Bozizé relied on his supporters (former FACA soldiers, gendarmes and presidential guards) to plan his return to power by making alliances with self-defence groups from the west (UN COI, 2014). This is not a new phenomenon: politicians have often preferred to recruit rural self-defence groups to provide additional armed support (FIDH, 2008; ICG, 2015), in opposition to the FACA soldiers, who have often been considered as a threat for the elites in power.

Socioeconomic inequalities fuelled resentments against Muslims. The socioeconomic power of the Muslim community before the crisis fuelled frustrations and resentment among non-Muslim communities. Over the past decades, the Muslim community has dominated the commerce and business sectors (ranging from the diamond, gold and ivory trade to shop-keeping), which led to rising tensions.

Decisions taken by the transitional authorities have sometimes aggravated sectarian cleavages. In July 2015, the CNT adopted a decision to deny the right to vote to refugees, which the Constitutional Court overturned as a result of international pressure. By contesting refugees' right to vote, the CNT questioned the Central African citizenship of Muslim communities forced to flee the violence (Lesueur & Vircoulon, 2015). Such a decision could have severely undermined efforts towards reconciliation and social cohesion initiated during the Bangui Forum in 2015 (see Section 6.3).

The social practice of violence. According to Lombard and Batianga-Kinzi (2014), the scale of the violence in the CAR crisis "must be understood in the context of social practices of violence that long predate the war". They argue the deliquescence of the CAR state over the past several decades has been accompanied by the popularisation of punishment and the entrenchment of vengeance as a tool for the management of threats. This created the conditions that led to widespread violence (ibid.).

Consequences of the sectarian conflict

The vast majority of the country's Muslim population has fled. Since December 2013, an ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population has been carried out in the western and southern regions as well as in Bangui (Amnesty International, 2015a). In the western regions, approximately 36,000 people remain trapped in enclaves in deplorable conditions, only partly protected by international peacekeeping forces (MINUSCA, 2015). According to the UN High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR), at the end of 2015 approximately 460,000 Muslims had fled to neighbouring countries. Most are unable to return for fear of retaliation and because of the volatile security situation.

Ethnic cleansing continues to be on the *anti-balaka* agenda. In the centre of the country, some groups of *anti-balaka* militias continue to take orders from *anti-balaka* leaders (ICG, 2015; UN PoE, 2015) to attack the Muslim population to drive them to the east or outside the country. In the western regions, the few remaining Muslim communities must negotiate the terms of their existence with the *anti-balaka*,

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[39] Seleka troops extorted money to rich Muslim merchants in exchange of protection.

which continue to hold significant power over these regions (Amnesty International, 2015a).[40] In other areas, Muslim communities seem to being progressively reinserted (e.g. in Berberati).

Criminality among armed groups continues to pose a serious threat to peace. With the Seleka having retreated to the east of the country, some groups of *anti-balaka* militias, thriving in a context of impunity and absence of rule of law, have turned into criminals and bandits, looting and plundering as they please. This has led to growing frustrations among the communities they are meant to protect (ICG, 2015).

Some armed groups have established a relationship of interdependence with the local communities. For instance, the UPC led by Ali Darasse has been protecting Muslim communities in the area of Bambari against *anti-balaka* attacks. In exchange, the communities pay the armed militias for their protection. A similar group led by Colonel Sidiki has been mentioned since January 2016.

<u>Efforts undertaken</u>

According to MINUSCA (2015), "efforts were undertaken by the transitional authority and the United Nations to promote reconciliation and reintegration". These include local mediation mechanisms and labour-intensive income-generating projects for young people at risk in communities affected by conflict (ibid.). However, these measures have proven insufficient to stop the escalation of inter-communal violence. In September 2015, a new wave of sectarian violence broke out in Bangui, leaving 79 dead and more than 512 wounded (UN PoE, 2015). Moreover, initiatives have been developed by religious leaders to promote reconciliation and dialogue between the communities but these have had limited impact.

<u>Persistent risks related to the sectarian dimension of the conflict if reconciliation is not made a priority</u>

- **Intensification of sectarian cleavages.** Denying rights to Muslim communities (e.g. citizenship, land rights, right to return) means the risk of a frequent upsurge of sectarian violence will remain. Moreover, about 460,000 CAR refugees have fled to neighbouring countries and about 450,000 people are internally displaced, which represents a serious threat to regional stability. For instance, Tunda (2016) notes that, in the Great Lakes, "there are instances where camps have been used by armed groups as rear bases to recruit combatants to attack national forces or other armed groups in their home countries, as well as in the region" (also Debos, 2008).

- Similarly, the risk of more Muslims **joining the call of Nourredine Adam for the partition of the country** may increase. Even though Nourredine declared in December 2015 that he would not push this agenda anymore, he may not respect this position in the future if he finds new supporters or sponsors. In 2008, Debos wrote that "factions which continue the armed struggle are sometimes so small and weak that almost no-one remembers them. While these groups seem harmless, they can play a renewed role in the factional game when they are able to forge a new alliance and/or to find an external sponsor".

- **The current politics of exclusion continue to be a threat to sustainable peace.** By rushing the electoral process, many Muslims were denied the right to vote, leading to what Kinsangani (2015) described as the "politics of exclusion". If the new government does not make the politics of inclusion a priority, the risk will be that many groups will refuse to recognise the legitimacy of the new government and will continue the rebellion.

- **The existence of self-defence groups is a persistent threat to peace.** The attack organised on 5 December 2013 by the *anti-balaka* militias with the back-up of Bozizé's supporters reveals that these groups can be activated at any time and be surprisingly very organised. Only a DDR specifically tailored for the *anti-balaka* will mitigate the risks of an upsurge of violence.

- **The challenge of foreign mercenaries.** This challenge is huge, given the regional and historical dimension of this pool of fighters.

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[40] In some cases, Muslims have been forced to convert to Christianity, and about 30,000 survive in enclaves threatened by militias (Amnesty International, 2015a).

4.2   The agro-pastoral conflict

Pastoralism is an important economic sector not only for CAR but also for the whole region.[41] Cattle have for a long time been both a source of wealth and a cause of violence. Indeed, decades before the recent CAR conflict, pastoral communities became synonymous with high levels of armed violence and severe underdevelopment (Bevan, 2007; ICG, 2014b). Conflicts have commonly been polarised between pastoralists and farming communities, particularly because of competition for natural resources (land and water). With the state failure, soldiers in the CAR army, "road-cutters" and armed groups have made a great deal of money out of the pastoralists. As a consequence, pastoralists have become even more militarised, and high levels of insecurity have led them to change their routes, which has led to an escalation of conflicts and violence between pastoralists and farmers (ICG, 2014b, 2014c).

In the recent CAR crisis, the agro-pastoral conflict has been exacerbated and is at the centre of the sectarian tensions. Pastoralists in CAR are not a homogenous group. They are mostly CAR and or Chadian, whether sedentary or semi-sedentary, and what they have in common is that they are Muslim. At the start of the Seleka offensive, "impoverished Fulani, often alienated from traditional structures and sometimes with a history as militiamen or 'road-cutters' joined the Seleka" (ICG, 2014b). Particularly for the young pastoralists, "cattle thefts, a deepening desire for vengeance and the enlistment bonus offered by armed groups provided the ingredients for an explosive cocktail" (ibid.). This stirred up confusion among the *anti-balaka* and the communities that stigmatised the entire Fulani community and, by association, Muslims. As a consequence, Fulani groups, well-armed and driven by a desire for vengeance, started to retaliate and committed deadly attacks against the other communities. Additionally, all active armed groups, including ex-Seleka groups, operating throughout the national territory are reportedly making a huge profit out of cattle-rustling and taxes on cattle (UN PoE, 2015; see Appendix 3 and 4).

4.3   Culture of impunity

"The cycles of violence in the CAR's history have been characterized by a climate of impunity for perpetrators of war crimes and crimes against humanity. In the past, the granting of amnesties and pardons had been common" (FIDH 2013).[42] The UN Commission of Inquiry (UN COI) recalled the challenges posed by a culture of impunity and stated in its final 2014 report that "the task of rebuilding and mobilizing a justice system that has almost never been able to hold power offenders to account will be a daunting one".

Rampant impunity in the recent crisis

Three years have passed since the conflict broke out, and impunity remains rampant. In July 2015, the report of the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the CAR indicated that "most of the human rights violations are committed by the armed groups that are operating more or less freely in certain areas of the country or result from shortcomings on the part of the state, which remains incapable of imposing its authority throughout the territory, preventing violations or ensuring the rule of law and the administration of justice" (UN HRC, 2015). There are four types of alleged perpetrators of crimes under national and international law:

- **Unknown armed groups:** A significant proportion of the crimes committed are categorised as common crimes. These are prevalent as a result of the high level of insecurity and the absence of judicial mechanisms and the rule of law.

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[41] Pastoral communities inhabit over 21 countries on the African continent, ranging from the Sahelian West to the rangelands of East Africa and the Horn to the nomadic populations of Southern Africa (Bevan, 2007).

[42] An example of the rampant impunity following the 2003 coup: former President Patassé allegedly recruited mercenaries led by Jean Pierre Bemba and by Abdoulaye Miskine, who committed atrocities (FIDH, 2003). In the meantime, General Bozizé, relied on heavily armed mercenaries from Chad and other 'liberators' (many of them joined the Seleka alliance in 2013 (ICG 2015)) responsible for human rights abuses. FIDH concluded that war crimes and crimes against humanity committed between October 2002 and March 2003 were never followed up by national judicial proceedings or trials. It also deplored the slowness of ICC judicial proceedings (FIDH 2003). Furthermore, the 2004 national dialogue, supported by the international community, led to the amnesty of President Bozizé and his troops, but not for ousted President Patassé (FIDH 2006). This situation allowed the Seleka to repeat history without any fear of being held accountable for the crimes they had planned to commit.

- **Leaders, commanders and members of the *anti-balaka*, Seleka and ex-Seleka** responsible for crimes under international law, including serious human rights violations since December 2012: The UN COI, the UN PoE and many reports published by human rights organisations between 2013 and 2015 have identified authors of crimes who continue to remain at large.
- **Foreign mercenaries:** The mercenaries, including the ex-liberators, and those who recruit them have been able to move from one conflict to another, and have never been held accountable for the crimes perpetrated.
- **International forces:** The National Chadian Army, and some soldiers from the Chadian contingent of MISCA, has allegedly been involved in serious human rights violations (FIDH, 2013; UN, PoE 2015).[43] Also, the outcome of investigations on allegations of sexual abuse committed by UN peacekeepers and French soldiers remains unknown. MINUSCA (2015) has declared it has repatriated the peacekeepers involved in the case, without prejudice to the investigation and prosecution in their home country.

The fight against impunity

The fight against impunity has been identified as a high priority in official reports and political speeches. In 2013, the UNSC called for the transitional authorities to investigate alleged abuses in order to hold perpetrators accountable (Resolution 2127) and gave MINUSCA a mandate to support such efforts (Resolution 2149).[44] At national level, after being appointed head of state of the transition, Catherine Samba-Panza made the fight against impunity one of her main political concerns (see Centrafrique Presse, 2014a; RFI, 2014e). Positive outcomes include the arrest of three important leaders of rebel groups in 2014 and 2015: Baba Ladé was arrested and transferred to Chad in December 2014, Dominic Ongwen was transferred to the International Criminal Court (ICC) in January 2015 and Rodrigue Gaïbona, also known as Andilo, was detained on 17 January 2015 (Amnesty International, 2014c; UN HRC, 2015).

There are currently four main bodies and mechanisms available to fight against impunity:

- At the national level, **the CAR legal system** and the **Special Criminal Court (SCC)** are the main bodies competent to judge penal crimes. On 3 June 2015, Samba-Panza adopted the Act creating the SCC within the national judicial system, which includes national and international magistrates.[45] At the time of writing, investigations have not started yet.
- At the international level, UNSC Resolution 2127 (2013)[46] established the **COI**, **the Sanctions Committee and the PoE** and imposed an arms embargo. Resolution 2134 (2014)[47] expanded the sanctions regime to include targeted sanctions (travel bans and assets freezes) on individuals or entities that hinder the political process and violate international humanitarian law and human rights law or the arms embargo.
- On 30 May 2014, the transitional government referred the situation on the territory of CAR since 1 August 2012 to the prosecutor of the **ICC.** On 24 September 2014, the prosecutor of the Court indicated that there was "a reasonable basis […] to proceed with an investigation" (ICC, 2014).

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[43] "The Panel gathered evidence establishing that individual members of the Chadian security and military forces had committed human rights violations against Central African nationals, including killings of civilians, looting and destruction of civilian property, forced displacement, extortion, illegal detention and violation of the right of return of Central African refugees in Chad. […] since May 2014, attacks in the area (north west) follow the same modus operandi: after shooting in the air to drive people away, armed men in military uniform loot and destroy villages in the early hours of the morning" (UN PoE, 2015).

[44] To "monitor, help investigate and report publicly to the Security Council on violations of international humanitarian law and on abuses and violations of human rights committed throughout the CAR, in particular by different armed groups […] and to contribute to efforts to identify and prosecute perpetrators, and to prevent such violations and abuses, including through the deployment of human rights observers".

[45] The SCC is mandated to investigate serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in the territory of CAR since 1 January 2003, and to hear and rule in such cases, including in respect of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes (UN HRC, 2015).

[46] Full text: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/S_res_2127.pdf

[47] Full text: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_res_2134.pdf

Main causes of ongoing impunity

Lack of capacity of the transitional government: The judicial system in CAR has been affected by decades of conflict.[48] Limited capacity to tackle the scale of crimes and violations has led to a chronic backlog and inability to address high-level cases. Furthermore, judicial institutions in CAR have never been independent bodies and have lacked presence throughout the country and the expertise and means to conduct investigations (FIDH, 2013). With the sectarian conflict, another dimension has emerged: victims of abuses are reluctant to file complaints when the police forces belong to different ethnic or religious groups (UN HRC, 2015).

Judicial personnel feel at risk: Absence of protection for judges, magistrates and lawyers has caused regular suspensions of criminal proceedings (Amnesty International 2014b). The fact that suspected perpetrators remain powerful has led to a climate of fear among judicial personnel.

Repeated prison breaks: The country lacks the capacity to absorb all prisoners in its prisons, and none of them meets international standards for security and conditions of detention. There have been at least seven prison breaks since January 2014 from the Central Prison of Ngaragba in Bangui, the only operational prison in the country, which has a capacity of 500 (Amnesty International, 2014b, 2014c; RFI, 2015e, 2015f). The last prison break took place on 28 September 2015 and resulted in the escape of 677 detainees (UN PoE, 2015). In addition, about 80 detainees in Bouar and Sibut were released during attacks by *anti-balaka* elements and were never recaptured (ibid.). In some cases, there has allegedly been complicity of the national or international forces guarding the prison (Amnesty International 2014b, 2014c; RFI, 2015e, 2015f).

Lack of political will of the transitional government: Transitional authorities fear for the stability of the country and for their own security if investigations take place. This was the case in investigations against rebel leaders such as Patrice Edouard Ngaissona in April 2014, Haroun Gaye (FPRC) in August 2015, Chadian MISCA troops and the Chadian National Army. The transitional government faces a difficult task of balancing justice and reconciliation, with the latter the most frequently chosen option (Amnesty International, 2014b). In some cases, the authorities have had sufficient information to carry out judicial proceedings but have chosen not to move forward (ibid.).

Co-opting rebel leaders represents a dangerous reward for violence: Since 2013, rebel leaders have been nominated to key positions within the different governments of transition in the name of inclusion. This strategy has been a harmful one, "rewarding the perpetrators of violence and those who make a living out of insecurity to the detriment of traditional parties" and creating internal tensions between members of the armed groups, who expect benefits for the group (ICG, 2015). The UN PoE (2015) concluded that "the appointment of armed groups as members of the transitional government both reinforces their sense of impunity and has no significant impact in reducing the level of violence"..

Lack of implementation of UN sanctions: Investigations led by the UN PoE led to a list of sanctions that has been updated three times since 2014.[49] While these sanctions are important in the fight against impunity, there have been limitations to their implementation: 1) some countries have failed to respect the sanctions regime, allowing sanctioned individuals to travel freely (e.g. to Chad, the Republic of Congo, Uganda, Kenya, Sudan and South Africa) (see UN PoE, 2015); 2) despite the sanctions, the individuals and the company on the list have been able to continue to be involved in activities that undermine peace,

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[48] In 2013, the country had only five sitting judges, three investigative judges and a judicial police force comprising 10 investigative officers, with all prosecutors based in Bangui (FIDH, 2013).

[49] The Sanctions Committee made its first sanction designations on 9 May 2014, including Nourredine Adam (Seleka leader), Levy Yakété (*anti-balaka* leader) and Francois Bozizé (former president), for undermining peace, stability and security in CAR. Nourredine was also listed for suspected international human rights law and international humanitarian law violations. See http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11389.doc.htm. The committee added on 20 August 2015 the name of three individuals (Alfred Yekatom, FACA; Habib Soussou, *anti-balaka* coordinator; Oumar Younous, ex-Seleka) and one entity (Bureau d'Achat de Diamant en Centrafrique/Cardiam (BADICA)). See http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12018.doc.htm. On 17 December 2015, the committee added Haroun Gaye (FPRC) and Eugène Barret Ngaïkosset (*anti-balaka* leader) to the list. Both are considered perpetrators of the violence that erupted in Bangui in late September 2015 and were listed for undermining the peace, violations of human rights law and international humanitarian law and targeting peacekeepers. See http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12169.doc.htm

stability and security;[50] 3) the absence of Michel Djotodia from the list of sanctions (RFI, 2015g) is noticeable and reveals divisions among the members of the UNSC; and 4) finally, the UN PoE noted in 2015 that the circulation of arms remains significant, particularly from neighbouring countries and that cross-border trafficking from Cameroon represents one of the main sources of supply of hunting ammunition, which is a violation of the arms embargo.

The slow progress of the ICC: The ICC has been hampered by slow procedures and the very limited types of cases it has investigated so far. For example, following the 2002-2003 crisis, the ICC opened an investigation in 2007, which led to the trial of only one Congolese rebel leader, Jean Pierre Bemba, in November 2010.[51]

Failure to adequately address sexual abuses committed by international peacekeeping forces. A recent report appointed by the Secretary-General to review how the UN handled the sexual abuse reports reveals "systematic failures in UN reporting chains and inadequate responses by some UN officials on the ground to reports of sexual abuse" (Deschamps, Jallow & Sooka, 2015).[52]

4.4   Phantom state, economic predation and the natural resource curse

<u>The "phantom state" syndrome</u>

State fragility in CAR has been mentioned as one of the main causes of instability.[53] In 2007, the International Crisis Group (ICG) used the term "phantom state" to describe CAR as a state that had never really been fully constructed, and that had then "collapsed with the militarisation of its politics and the ethnic exclusiveness of successive governments". As a consequence, poverty has been pervasive and social indicators have always been extremely low (IMF, 2012). In 2015, CAR is ranked **187 out of 188 on the Human Development Index** (UNDP, 2015).

Predatory elites and the institutionalisation of corruption: This state of structural weakness has been described as a vicious cycle: "the nomenklatura in control of CAR's state apparatus is capable of turning the lack of institutional capacity into a lucrative resource for private appropriation […] the system benefits the few in power to the detriment of the overall population" (Smith, 2015). Patronage has become the rule: appointments to decision-making posts have been based on ethnic or family criteria and clientelism[54] (ICG, 2014a). Kisangani (2015) gives the example of the diamond sector, traditionally captured by the president's family and ethnic group (see also ICG, 2010). Therefore, CAR commonly reflects the natural resource curse dilemma but so far solutions on this issue have been discussed but implementation of concrete actions has been slow.

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[50] At the end of 2015, Francois Bozizé and Nourredine Adam, both sanctioned since May 2014, are still involved in the conflict (see Section 6) and BADICA has continued to purchase diamonds, including in areas controlled by armed groups (UN PoE, 2015).
[51] See https://www.icc-cpi.int/en_menus/icc/situations%20and%20cases/situations/situation%20icc%200105/related%20cases/icc%200105%200108/Pages/case%20the%20prosecutor%20v%20jean-pierre%20bemba%20gombo.aspx
[52] See http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2016-01/central_african_republic_14.php?print=true
[53] The degree of "fragility" has been defined according to a few simple criteria (rule of law, control over the country's territory, respect for minorities, delivery of basic services), used exclusively within the national context (Carment et al., 2008).
[54] The literature has often described how the various presidents in CAR have formed their political elites among their family members and ethnic group. However, when it comes to Catherine Samba-Panza, the literature has been silent. However, some elements indicate that the situation has not really changed during the transition: in March 2014, about a month after Samba-Panza was elected president, Angola committed to support the new government of transition with a donation of $10 million. As a result of this transaction, $2.5 million in cash disappeared and Samba-Panza's daughter, Christelle Sappot, was involved. Moreover, Samba-Panza nominated members of her family as part of the Presidential Cabinet, including her daughter Christelle Sappot as special chief of cabinet, her cousin Jean Jacques Demafouth as special adviser on security and defence and her brother Jocelyn Koyt. Most of the ministers attached to the presidency come from her entourage and they have special power often in competition with members of the government. In January 2016, Samba-Panza discreetly nominated her daughter ambassador in Equatorial Guinea.
See: Jeune Afrique. 'Centrafrique: Samba-Panza, dos Santos et les 10 millions de dollars'. 1 October 2014. http://www.jeuneafrique.com/43478/politique/centrafrique-samba-panza-dos-santos-et-les-10-millions-de-dollars/;
Jeune Afrique. 'Centrafrique : quand Catherine Samba-Panza crée un poste d'ambassadrice pour sa fille'. 16 February 2016. http://www.jeuneafrique.com/mag/302163/politique/centrafrique-catherine-samba-panza-cree-poste-dambassadrice-fille/;
Centrafrique Presse. 'Centrafrique : remaniement du cabinet présidentiel, cinq jours après la formation du gouvernement'. 28 August 2014. http://centrafrique-presse.over-blog.com/2014/08/catherine-samba-panza-retouche-son-cabinet.html

Lack of capacity to enforce any settlement of the conflict: The failed state phenomenon constitutes a serious challenge for conflict resolution in CAR. As Zifcak (2015) writes, "part of the problem in CAR is that there is no institutional mechanism for the enforcement of any settlement of the conflict. There have been no arrests of the perpetrators, there is no prison, there is almost a complete absence of state structures, there is no moderate middle class […]. There is a chronic lack of education which means that the people cannot express their concerns in political terms." For the international community, stabilisation in CAR means the response to peacebuilding needs to include short- but also long-term strategies.

Proliferation of armed groups and rebellion in the CAR: a structural phenomenon. There are many reasons for the formation of armed groups. Among the main ones are the following:

- the high level of insecurity and criminality that has prevailed in rural areas since the 1990s (road-cutters, militarisation and criminality among pastoralists, agro-pastoral conflicts, circulation of weapons and ammunitions, etc.)
- the long history of socioeconomic marginalisation of certain regions, particularly in the north and east of the country. Kisangani (2015) argues the Seleka coalition was formed following a long process of "Darfurisation" of the north-east
- absence of the state, including of a strong army to effectively protect the people. In the past, civilians and rebel soldiers have been victims of serious human rights violations by FACA troops (FIDH, 2008). In regions neglected by the central state, the predatory power in Bangui and the systematic politics of exclusion have generated deep frustrations.

As regards the combatants, a distinction needs to be made between the leaders, who are mostly "powerful men", and youth who live in poverty or extreme poverty. In this context of lawlessness and economic hardship, many young people have had little hope other than to join armed militias involved in illicit activities (Debos, 2008; Tomety, 2010). In opposition, the leaders are the one who benefit the most from the insecurity and the state of war. In 2015, the Enough Project stated that, "armed groups in CAR have turned into profit-making entities through illicit sale of natural resources, taxation, extortion and the strategic use of killings and violence. The majority of these illicit funds go directly to boost the personal wealth of the senior commanders and their trade partners, while most lower-level soldiers have one daily meal or receive meagre payments" (Agger, 2015). This is a strong incentive for leaders who have no interests in peace as long as they benefit from the situation of chaos.

Economy of war

An economy of war: Decades of despotic and predatory rule in a chronically unstable country have led to the emergence of a war economy, with thriving illicit networks of trafficking of weapons and natural resources. As such, the latest crisis has had a disastrous impact on the already moribund state and economy.

Control of natural resources by armed groups. Since its independence, rebel groups have plundered CAR's natural resources. Since 2013, both the Seleka and the *anti-balaka* have controlled and profited from revenue generated by the trade of natural resources and by taxation on the cattle trade (UN PoE, 2014, 2015). The profits have allowed armed groups to perpetuate a climate of chaos and instability.

- **Under Seleka rule,** power was used as a licence to loot (ICG, 2014a). Seleka leaders used state resources for personal enrichment, but also sought to systematically control and profit from the trade in natural resources. Many Seleka fighters were formerly involved in the diamond trade,[55] and once in power quickly asserted control over trafficking networks of diamonds, gold and timber (Global Witness, 2015; UN PoE, 2014). The group established its own administrative system to levy parallel taxes, allocated its own mining authorisations and extorted miners for "protection" money (ICG, 2014a; UN PoE, 2014; Weyns, Hoex, & Spittaels, 2014). In December 2015, the UN PoE Experts indicated that, "taxation, security arrangements and parallel administrations are commonplace in former Seleka areas".

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[55] Many were known to be engaged in mining, robbing miners and traders and levying illegal taxes or buying at very low prices in north-east CAR. For more information, see ICG (2014a).

- In the west, **after *anti-balaka* militias expelled the Muslim population** traditionally involved in the mineral trade, seizing control of several gold and diamond mines. In some cases, *anti-balaka* commanders took on the role of diamond collectors (UN PoE, 2014). In 2015, *anti-balaka* members continue to be present in several diamond sites and have also obtained mining licences (UN PoE, 2015).

- **Conflict diamonds reaching international markets.** In May 2013, the Kimberley Process[56] temporary suspended CAR's membership. Nevertheless, the UN PoE reported in 2014 that CAR had lost $24 million-worth of diamonds to smuggling since May 2013 through neighbouring countries. In addition, as the ban does not prevent the diamond trade within the country, a number of buying houses based in CAR continued to purchase and amass stockpiles of diamonds[57] worth several million US dollars, in some cases from areas under the control of armed groups (UN PoE, 2015). At a Kimberley Process meeting in June 2015, following multiple requests from the transitional authorities, a partial lifting of the suspension was discussed but remains subject to conditions, monitoring and reporting requirements (GJEPC, 2013).

- It is widely accepted that the **trade in natural resources by armed groups is a threat to peace and stability in CAR**. In Resolution 2217 renewing MINUSCA's mandate, the UNSC recognises that "illicit trade, exploitation and smuggling of natural resources including gold, diamonds and wildlife poaching and trafficking continues to threaten the peace and stability of the CAR". It also asks MINUSCA to assist the state in extending its authority over the entire territory and its resources. However, at this stage of the transition, efforts to address this problem remain weak (see Appendix 2).

5. Principal external dynamics

5.1 The ambiguous role of Chad

Chad's interests in the CAR

CAR and Chad share a border of 1,200 km. These regions have always been characterised by a significant trade in goods and in population movements. Since 2002-2003, Chad has been playing a central role in CAR's political and security situation. A few elements can explain Chad's interests:

- Most of the opposition **groups that have challenged Chadian President Déby's power** in the past were **formed in northern CAR**, which served as a rear base for them (Bakari, 2015; Welz, 2014).

- Recurrent conflicts in both countries have led to massive flows of refugees in the two countries. **In south Chad, resource scarcity** has become an important issue (UN PoE, 2014).

- **Chad's second source of income** after oil is **pastoralism**, including approximately 20 million head of cattle (ICG, 2014c). Traditionally, transhumance occurred between Chad and CAR, but in recent years desertification has led more and more Chadian pastoralists to migrate their cattle to CAR. As a result, **conflicts have intensified between pastoralists and farmers** owing to competition over access to land and water.

- Finally, **Chad has built its economic and regional power based on oil revenues.** The fact that Chad pumps its oil in the border region and that **oil reservoirs stretch into CAR** is a preoccupation for Déby's regime (Carayannis & Lombard, 2015; Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).

Chad's involvement in the political and security situation

In 2003 Chad's oil revenue had just started to flow, and this coincided with the start of Déby's interference in CAR politics. In the same year, **Déby supported Bozizé to overthrow Patassé's government** (Debos, 2008). This debt meant allegiance of CAR's elite to Déby. In March 2003, Déby

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[56] The Kimberley Process is an initiative created to stem the flow of conflict diamonds. See http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/central-african-republic

[57] "In the last half of 2014 and the first half of 2015, BADICA purchased 1,779 carats from Bria, while Sud Azur purchased 534 carats" (UN PoE, 2015). Also, the local mining service registered 1,338 carats purchased by the Société Centrafricaine du Diamant (SODIAM), which also purchased 233 carats from a licensed collector based in Nzako (ibid.).

provided about 70 elite Chadian soldiers deployed under the Chadian flag as personal guards to Bozizé (Carayannis, & Lombard 2015; Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). Disagreements between the two men led to the withdrawal of Déby's support in 2012 (Carayannis, & Lombard 2015), including the Chadian Presidential Guard.

In the current crisis Chad has been a key player but with an ambiguous stance: the Chadian president was considered the "predominant power broker", even if he denied it (Journal du Tchad, 2014), and also led the conflict resolution process (Welz, 2014). There is consensus in the literature that Chadian involvement in CAR crisis has been more harmful than beneficial (Carayannis, & Lombard 2015; Welz, 2014; Zifcak, 2015).

- In order to control the conflict resolution process, **Déby strategically positioned ECCAS as the main organisation responsible for tackling the CAR crisis**. He also secured the loyalty of France (Marchal, 2015) by assisting the country's military not only in CAR but also in Mali (Welz, 2014).

- Many reports documented **collusion between Seleka fighters and Chadian peacekeepers** between 2013 and 2014 (Micopax and then MISCA).[58] Similarly, the International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have documented **human right violations and abuses committed by Chadian peacekeepers** against the civilian population in CAR (Amnesty International, 2013a,b; FIDH, 2013; HRW, 2013). As a consequence of the pro-Seleka bias of the Chadian peacekeepers (Aljazeera, 2013), clashes erupted involving *anti-balaka* fighters against Chadian soldiers and Chadian citizens in CAR. On 3 April 2014, facing growing accusations, including from the UN, the Chadian government announced the withdrawal of its 850 MISCA soldiers from CAR (RFI, 2014f), and one month later announced the closing of its borders (Jeune Afrique, 2014). In 2015, the UN PoE mentioned continuous human rights abuses in CAR perpetrated by members of the Chadian security and military forces.

5.2   Regional armed combatants

The **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)** first emerged in CAR in February 2008 (Cakaj, 2015) in Haut-Mbomou prefecture (south-east CAR). Geography, location and inability to deal with violent groups rendered CAR an attractive territory for the LRA. The group has been reportedly committing widespread abuses, including banditry and attacks against civilians and humanitarian workers.[59] In August 2014, the number of armed LRA fighters in CAR was estimated at about 200 (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).[60]

In 2015, LRA remained "one of the main threats in the east and south east of the CAR" (UN PoE, 2015). Its *modus operandi* consists of generating revenue from the exploitation and trade of natural resources, particularly ivory and gold. Its members avoid confrontation with other armed groups or international forces in order to preserve their ammunitions for hunting (UN PoE, 2015).

"While the LRA has been mobile, inventive and adaptable, international responses have been slow, predictable and hampered by regional politics" (Cakaj, 2015). Since 2013, ex-Seleka groups and the LRA have operated in the same geographical area and seem to have regular contact, even though clashes between them have also been reported (UN PoE, 2015; Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).

The LRA issue reflects "the inability of weak states and international institutions to cope with versatile border crossing armed groups, of which the LRA is one of many" (Cakaj, 2015) and is a real threat to the many attempts to end violence.

Armed combatants and mercenaries from the region (for more information see Sections 2.1, 4.1 and 4.2).

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[58] In some cases, Chadian peacekeeping troops facilitated the movement of armed Seleka leaders, with both committing human rights violations on civilians (FIDH, 2014). Also, the Chadian national army deployed in CAR set fire on a crowd on 4 April 2014 (AFP, 2014).
[59] Between June 2009 and May 2014, there were 341 reported LRA attacks resulting in 414 civilian fatalities and 1,721 abductions of civilians in CAR. By the end of March 2014, LRA violence in CAR had internally displaced 21,000 people (Carayannis & Lombard, 2015).
[60] By end 2009, more than 800 LRA members had made it to CAR, with an estimated 300 staying in DRC (Carayannis & Lombard, 2015).

6. National dialogues and peace agreements (2014-2015)

The Libreville Agreement was signed in January 2013 between the Seleka, Francois Bozizé and opposition parties, inactive rebel groups and civil society organisations. More information is available in the GSDRC's 2013 rapid review of literature (Herbert, Dukhan & Debos, 2013).

6.1 The Brazzaville Agreement on Cessation of Hostilities, July 2014

The 2014 Brazzaville negotiations brought together representatives of the ex-Seleka and *anti-balaka* armed groups, as well as representatives of the CNT, political parties, civil society and religious communities. Denis Sassou Nguesso, President of Congo, mediated. The Brazzaville Agreement was signed after three days of negotiations.

The agreement includes the cessation of hostilities by armed groups in the entire territory of CAR; waiving any proposed partition of the country; repatriation of all mercenaries to their respective country of origin with the support of international forces; and the promotion of the reconciliation process (see Centrafrique Press, 2014b).

The Brazzaville Agreement can be considered as a failure as it did not address the root causes of the conflict. In October 2014, the UN PoE wrote that, "the Brazzaville agreement adds a new layer to an increasing number of agreements, declarations and unwritten decisions that have been signed in response to successive crises in the Central African Republic". The ongoing fragmentation of armed groups and rivalries between the leaders led to lack of implementation of the agreement (see Section 1). The factions supporting Michel Djotodia and Francois Bozizé rejected the agreement, leading to Djotodia and Bozizé forming an opportunistic alliance with the aim of ensuring their access to power and destabilising the transition.

6.2 The Nairobi deal, January 2015

On **28 January 2015, a deal was concluded** between two warring factions known as the "Nairobists": the FPRC led by Nourredine Adam and a pro-Bozizé *anti-balaka* faction led by Maxime Mokom. Held in Nairobi, the meeting led to the signing of an agreement that included a ceasefire, a cessation of hostilities, a DDR agreement, amnesty for all perpetrators of violence, the removal of current members of the transitional government[61] and a new transition (RFI, 2015h).

Sponsored by the mediator, Sassou Nguesso, **this deal undermined the transition process** and conflict resolution efforts. According to CAR analyst Thierry Vircoulon, the mediator attempted to address the failures of the Brazzaville Agreement and worked to secretly organise negotiations between the two most powerful warring factions (Starr, 2015), who were absent during the Brazzaville negotiations. Excluded from this initiative, the international community and the transitional government refused to support the deal, particularly because it was promoting impunity and undermining the transitional process.

Sassou Nguesso was criticised by the international community for promoting a parallel deal. He subsequently sponsored additional talks, held in Nairobi in April 2015, where a **second cessation of hostilities agreement was signed** on 8 April 2015, by the *anti-balaka* and ex-Seleka delegates.[62] This included an amnesty clause for all combatants (Article 20) and called for a new transition with a revised national transition charter (Article 3) (Duhem, 2015b). Finally, **the two former presidents**, Francois Bozizé and Michel Djotodia, **signed a political deal** but the content of this was not made public.

On 13 November 2015, the **Nairobists concluded two other significant deals**. A temporary 'non-aggression pact' was signed between them, with the mediation of the Vatican Gendarmerie and the Community of Sant'Egidio. According to the Vatican Insider, the agreement carries the signatures of Abdoulaye Hissen, representing the ex-Seleka, and Maxime Mokom, representing the *anti-balaka*

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[61] See http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/publication-type/crisiswatch/crisiswatch-database.aspx?CountryIDs=%7B09F69924-3E63-461D-96FE-A0B25D54EFEB%7D
[62] Signatories of the agreement were Noureddine Adam, Mustapha Sabone, Batoul Achta for the FPRC (ex-Seleka), Joachim Kokaté, Maxime Mocome et Côme Azounou for the *anti-balaka* and representatives of the civil society.

(Tornielli, 2015). A political agreement calling for a third transition was also signed by 26 representatives, and was sponsored by both Abdoulaye Hissen and Mokom (Nzilo, 2015).

6.3   The Bangui Forum on National Reconciliation, May 2015

The **Bangui Forum gathered about 600 participants** from 4 to 11 May 2015. The aim was to define a collective vision for the country's future. For the first time, national authorities were mandated to organise consultations across the national territory to collect people's grievances and concerns. In Bangui, meetings were organised to discuss themes of peace and security, justice and reconciliation, social and economic development and governance. Participants came from diverse groups including the transitional government, national political parties, the main armed groups, the private sector, civil society, traditional chiefs and religious groups.

Participants adopted several recommendations, and nine factions signed a new DDR agreement, which called for (Copley & Sy, 2015):

- all combatants to give up their weapons by the time of the national elections
- the release of child soldiers
- a timeline for elections and the extension of the current government's mandate
- national and local mechanisms for justice and reconciliation
- social and economic development priorities.

The Bangui Forum allowed a dialogue to occur at the local and national level. However, it failed to provide concrete steps towards peace and the end of sectarian violence. Some of the main concerns are as follows:

- Recommendations were ambitious but unrealistic considering the context and national capacity to effectively implement them
- There was failure to provide roadmaps and action plans
- The donor community was not involved in the process, leads to scepticism about the future of these recommendations
- Members of the commissions in charge of the follow-up were elected, but at the time of writing no significant progress appears to have been made.

The **Forum excluded Djotodia and Bozizé's parties,** as the two leaders were in exile and under international sanctions. On 11 May 2015, ex-Seleka and *anti-balaka* militias, supporters of the former presidents, protested in the capital (RFI, 2015i). Leaders of armed groups expected an amnesty for their combatants and were opposed to the extension of the transition.

6.4   The electoral process

Shortly after Samba-Panza was appointed, discussions about elections began. The transitional road map was agreed in 2014[63] with a sequencing that included a peace agreement, a DDR programme and elections, but most of these steps have not been implemented (Lesueur & Vircoulon, 2015). Initially planned for February 2015, **the electoral process has been postponed at least eight times**. Despite a fresh wave of sectarian violence at the end of 2015, Chad and France agreed elections should take place by the end of 2015. Déby and Hollande's position was that it was "better to have flawed elections instead of a precarious transition" (RFI, 2015j).

Talks about **the elections have led to the fragmentation and politicisation of the main rebel groups and of political parties**. In the course of 2014 and 2015, ex-Seleka and *anti-balaka* groups became increasingly divided on which political discourse to adopt. Some created their own rebel groups and others transformed into political parties (see Section 2). Many concluded opportunistic alliances. As a consequence, it became increasingly difficult to negotiate with the fragmented groups.

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[63] See http://anecentrafrique.com/feuille-de-route-rca/

Despite fresh violence in November 2015, the government of transition had no other option than to announce that the **elections would be organised by the end of 2015,** with a vote on the constitution to take place on 13 December and legislative and presidential elections on 27 December (a second round was planned for 31 January 2016). By mid-December 2015, armed groups agreed to support the electoral process and they did not pose a significant threat during the process.

By rushing the elections, there have been clear limits to the process:

- Observers agree the organisation of the electoral process was chaotic (Bensimon, 2016). The timeline was tight and unrolled in a context of weak capacities.

- There were some allegations of frauds. On 4 January 2016, only one week after the first round, about 20 candidates demanded the counting of ballots halt, denouncing massive frauds in the process (Aljazeera, 2016). Interestingly, the Constitutional Court chose to certify presidential election results but separately scrapped results from the legislative election. Considering that both elections happened the same day and in the same conditions, this decision seems to have been a political choice.

- Efforts to register all voters, including Central African refugees, have been only partially successful,[64] which leads to questions about levels of inclusivity, a key aspect of the reconciliation process.

- Lack of information voters was an additional concern. On 13 December 2015, voters were asked to adopt a constitution few had seen or heard about. The situation was similar for the presidential elections. The Constitutional Court published the list of eligible presidential candidates on 8 December, leaving little time for voters to find out about them.

There are key concerns that merit some attention for the stabilisation of the country:

- Armed groups "have lost none of their ability to cause harm" (Lesueur, cited in Clowes, 2015), which means the threat they represent for a sustainable peace continues to be worrying.

- It remains to be seen whether armed groups will support the new government, or whether new waves of violence will break out. This is a heavy burden for the new government to face.

- Among the 1,600 candidates in the legislative election there were some members of armed militias who committed abuses in the recent conflict. For instance, Alfred Yekatom, alias "Ramboht", is on the sanctions list of the UNSC for having commanded and controlled *anti-balaka* armed militias.[65] He was elected in the first round of the vote and will represent Mbaiki 2, Pissa and Lesse. This reward for violence reinforces suspicions of impunity.

6.5   DDR and security sector reform

Information about the history of DDR and security sector reform processes in CAR prior to 2014 is available in the GSDRC's 2013 rapid review of literature (Herbert, Dukhan & Debos, 2013). In April 2014, the UNSC adopted Resolution 2149 establishing MINUSCA's mandate, extending it by Resolution 2217 in 2015. These resolutions give MINUSCA the mandate to support the transitional government in **developing and implementing a revised strategy for DDR,** providing support for the repatriation of foreign elements and **supporting security sector reform.**

The DDR agreement

Main developments

While the Brazzaville Agreement 20 2014 failed to address DDR, the **Bangui Forum in May 2015 led to a DDR agreement** between the transitional government and nine armed groups. Key aspects included a decision by all combatants to give up weapons by the next elections, the release of all child soldiers, the

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[64] DRC refused to allow the registration of the CAR refugees it is hosting. The governments of Chad, Cameroon and Congo (Brazzaville) have granted access but not all refugees have been registered. For instance, in Cameroon, it is estimated that about 30% of the nearly 115,000 voting-age adults have been added to the electoral roll (Clowes, 2015).
[65] See http://www.un.org/press/en/2015/sc12018.doc.htm

integration of former combatants not charged with war crimes either into state security institutions (army, police or the national forestry and water commission) or into income-generating community development projects and the repatriation of foreign mercenaries not charged with war crimes (Copley & Sy, 2015).

As a result, MINUSCA, with the collaboration of the transitional government and the World Bank, mobilised $28.5 million for the integration of an estimated 7,000 combatants from various armed groups and $20 million for the community violence reduction programme targeting around 70,000 people (MINUSCA, 2015).

Main challenges

Previous **attempts to conclude and implement a DDR programme failed for various reasons**, including elites using their power to implement systematic policies of exclusion, ethnicity and tribalism; extreme poverty and the lack of economic opportunities; abundance of weapons and active regional militia (such as the LRA and Chadian rebel groups); a prevailing climate of impunity and insecurity; persistence of international trafficking networks; and absence of a national army stronger than the rebel groups. Rebel leaders profit into the millions of dollars by perpetuating a climate of insecurity (Agger, 2015), and armed groups "use DDR for political blackmail and for accumulating personal wealth" (ICG, 2015).

The new DDR agreement is facing significant challenges:

- It relies on the international community's willingness to mobilise funding to implement the two complementary programmes.
- Two significant armed groups are not part of the programme: the RPRC, led by Nourredine Adam, rejected the agreement a few days after signing it, and the FDPC, led by Abdoulaye Miskine, has not signed the agreement. The risk is high that other groups will refuse to disarm for security reasons (ICG, 2015).
- The limited capacity of armed groups' leaders to control their members is a risk for effective implementation (ICG, 2015).
- A risk also exists that the DDR programme will lead to a *de facto* amnesty of various militias. This would be a dangerous contradiction with the discourse of the international community and the transitional government and could lead to frustration among those who expressed strong expectations for accountability at the Bangui Forum. As long as the issue of impunity is not tackled and sanctions are not imposed (ICG, 2015), the DDR programme has little chance of being effective.
- The lack of effective measures for combating crimes and the trafficking of natural resources incentivises armed groups towards criminality.

Security sector reform

Historically, the national army (FACA) was commonly used to gain or remain in power (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014). Since the 1980s, the army has been plagued by politics of ethnicity and tribalism, which led to mutinies in 1996-1997 (Kisangani, 2015). More recently, Presidents Patassé and Bozizé refused to build a strong national army because they considered it would be a threat to their power. As a consequence, the two presidents relied mostly on mercenaries and on a Presidential Guard staffed with members of their ethnic group to protect their power and fight rebel groups. As a result, the FACA has been under-armed, under-resourced and poorly trained and has had a weak command and control structure for decades.

Main developments

FACA soldiers are a heterogeneous group, with different levels of responsibilities and involvement in the current conflict. Three elements describe the difficulties that exist when talking about the FACA:

- Some former FACA and presidential guards loyal to Bozizé have joined anti-balaka groups, particularly in the December 2013 offensive (Weyns, Hoex & Spittaels, 2014).

- On 5 February 2014, while Catherine Samba-Panza was congratulating FACA troops for reconstituting a national army at a military ceremony, a man in the crowd was suddenly accused of having belonged to the Seleka, and FACA soldiers attacked and brutally killed him (BBC, 2014b).
- When Michel Djotodia took power, many Seleka militias were expecting to be integrated into the national army. With the official dismantling of the Seleka in September 2013, Michel Djotodia subsequently integrated 3,437 soldiers into the FACA (UN PoE, 2014), most of whom moved north and joined ranks with ex-Seleka groups but still received their salaries.

The transitional government led by Catherine Samba-Panza has been trying to re-establish a national army and has called **for a lift of the arms embargo to re-arm the FACA** (RFI, 2015k). The UNSC has excluded **rearming the FACA** but has **encouraged a comprehensive reform of CAR's armed forces and internal security** (police and gendarmerie) to put in place "professional, ethnically representative and regionally balanced national defence and internal security forces" (Resolution 2217(2015)). There is a clear lack of willingness in the transitional government to tackle this sensitive question, particularly while some FACA are still involved in armed groups, and it has not been a priority for MINUSCA.

7. Capacities for peace

There is limited literature that directly identifies capacities for peace. Therefore, the following section does not provide a comprehensive view but aims to highlight processes or institutions that could positively impact the peacebuilding process. The table in Section 8 outlines a wider range of recommendations from international agencies on possible routes to stabilisation.

7.1 Former conflict resolution mechanisms: the case of agro-pastoralism

The current crisis in CAR has led to a violent war between pastoralists and farming communities, compounded by the sectarian violence. Pastoralists are mostly Muslims whereas farmers are mostly Christians or animists. Tensions already existed between these two groups, and the growing number of Chadian pastoralists seeking water and land in the CAR has exacerbated them.

Historically, interdependence between the two communities allowed the establishment of traditional committees to mediate between pastoralists and farmers, but these committees were dissolved *de facto* by the crisis (ICG, 2014c). Reviving these committees could defuse tensions between farmers and pastoralists and encourage reconciliation.

7.2 Religious leaders in the reconciliation process

CAR's religious leaders can play a crucial role in stabilisation and reconciliation if they are well supported. They are respected by most of the population. Their role is particularly important at the grassroots level, but also at the national level. However, evidence on their impact is lacking. Assessing this impact would be important to better understand their role and to provide adequate support. (See also Section 2.6.)

7.3   Decentralised governance

Armed groups have been able to proliferate in the country as a result of a chronic absence of state governance and institutions and a lack of territorial management policies for social and economic development outside of Bangui (Tomety, 2010). CAR administration and law enforcement institutions have always been centralised, and economic activity has been concentrated in Bangui. Therefore, armed groups have always targeted Bangui as the main centre of political and economic power.

Promoting local democracy in the existing 174 communes and seven regions as well as in Bangui has been discussed but has never turned into concrete policy. Recognising this need, the **European Programme Development Pole** was supposed to be implemented from 2013. The programme's main objectives were to establish the state's authority in regional axes and around provincial towns, promote economic and social development by focusing donor funding in these areas, build a network of roads to connect the different axes and boost trade between regions and with neighbouring countries. This programme has been suspended since the start of the recent crisis. Reviving these initiatives would be interesting but they will be preconditioned by the willingness of the government to break with the past and develop a more decentralised approach of governance.

7.4   Economic opportunities

Promoting initiatives that bring the youth back to work while contributing to economic and social development would deter many from joining armed groups and contribute to stabilisation and recovery. Moreover, the fact that CAR's population is young represents a real economic advantage.

CAR has 15 million hectares of fertile agricultural land, and 70% of the rural population is involved in agricultural activities, but despite this potential the country has not developed an agricultural policy. Less than 4.7% of these lands are exploited, and more than 70% of the population lives below the poverty line (Tomety, 2010). Developing this key sector could improve livelihoods in rural areas and reduce food insecurity. A study in 2010 showed that the vast majority of ex-combatants were willing to resume agricultural activities (Tomety 2010), so if preferences have not changed, this represents a strong capacity for peaceful reintegration that could be explored.

Capacities for peaceful employment exist in other sectors as well. Improving labour conditions for artisanal miners (Amnesty International 2015b), large-scale job-creation projects in agriculture and infrastructure (ICG 2014a), and reviewing arrangements for natural resource extraction to follow best practices (ICG 2013) offer significant opportunities for economic development that may help contribute to stabilisation and recovery.

In addition, the Muslim community is extremely important for local and national economic development because they have traditionally been a motor for economic activities. Amnesty International (2015a) has recommended action to promote the safe return and resettlement of Muslim refugees, including initiatives to resolve property ownership and occupation issues and the rehabilitation of damaged and destroyed property. ICG (2014c, 2015) suggest that more inclusive political processes which specifically address exclusion of Muslim minorities could also contribute to stabilisation and recovery.

7.5   Strengthening the judiciary and support transitional justice

Dismantling the culture of impunity that currently exists and pursuing an effective programme of transitional justice could potentially make a strong contribution to recovery and peace. Many observers have called for international support to help strengthen the national justice system, to develop the capacity to effectively investigate and prosecute human rights violations. (UN PoE 2015; Amnesty International 2014b, 2015a)

7.6   Disarmament and demobilisation

The continued presence of armed groups and availability of weapons is a destabilising force. Opening participation in DDR programmes to a wider range of combatant groups and strengthening the capacity of national security forces, with international support, to deal with tensions peacefully and to improve the effectiveness of disarmament programmes may contribute to stabilisation. (ICG 2015; UN PoE 2015)

8. Synthesis of recommendations (2014-2015)

RECONCILIATION	Recommendations	Addressed to	Source
Promoting the return of Muslim refugees	**Improve security across the country** to create the necessary conditions for the voluntary, safe and sustainable return of Muslim refugees and those internally displaced.	Transitional authorities in collaboration with MINUSCA	Amnesty International (2015a)
	Assist in funding the reconstruction of damaged and destroyed mosques and rebuild houses to provide shelter for displaced people and returning refugees.		
	Resolve the property ownership and occupation questions that obstruct Muslims' safe return.		
Reducing divisions	Address the representation gap of Muslim minorities by diversifying recruitment within the public administration on a geographical and community basis, but reject religious quota policy.	Transitional authorities	ICG (2015)
	Re-establish dialogue with the population of the north-east of the country through more visits by government officials to this region.		
	Promote inclusive elections by ensuring CAR's Muslims are registered to vote.	UNHCR	
	Finalise the electoral budget, clearly formulate the eligibility criteria and appeals process for candidates in legislative and presidential elections, publicly uphold the right to vote for the Muslim population and delay the electoral process.	-	
Reducing agro-pastoralist violence	Revive traditional agro-pastoralist mediation mechanisms through the organisation of informal meetings between representatives of the different communities.		ICG (2014c)
	Include in livelihood activity programmes led by international NGOs the pastoralists without livestock who took refuge in Chad and Cameroon and those still living in CAR.		
ENDING IMPUNITY			
Promoting effective and independent justice	Initiate investigations into alleged crimes under international law committed in CAR and provide reparation to victims of such crimes.	Transitional government with support of international community	Amnesty International (2015a)
	Build a justice system and an administrative infrastructure able to investigate and prosecute human rights violations, including ensuring judicial officials are provided with the necessary resources and security to conduct their work effectively and without fear of retaliation.		
	Refrain from providing *de facto* or *de jure* amnesties for individuals or groups found responsible for serious human rights violations and abuses.	Transitional authorities	Amnesty International (2014b)
	Ensure decisions to appoint individuals to public functions do not mean that people suspected of crimes under internal law may use government roles to enjoy impunity.		

	Ensure Ngaragba Prison in Bangui is effectively protected, any breach of security measures that led to repeated "prison breaks" are investigated and the results of the investigation are made public.		Amnesty International (2014b)
	Ensure the security of judicial actors, especially those working on cases involving armed groups' leaders.	MINUSCA	
	The ICC should start investigations *in situ* as soon as possible and must ensure the protection of the victims, witnesses and other individuals.	ICC	
	Reiterate the need for the transitional authorities, with the support of MINUSCA, police, justice and correction personnel, to strengthen the capacity of the judicial authorities, in particular for the arrest and prosecution of perpetrators, as well as to reinforce the corrections and penitentiary system to ensure prisoners are held in the appropriate security conditions and serve their sentences.	UNSC, MINUSCA, transitional authorities	UN PoE (2015)
	Urge the transitional authorities to freeze the assets of individuals and entities sanctioned by the Committee.	UNSC, transitional authorities	
	Reiterate the call on the transitional authorities to ensure perpetrators of violations and abuses of applicable international law, in particular those committed against children and women, are excluded from the Central African security and armed forces.		
	Urge the transitional authorities to transmit to the Committee and the Panel the names of individuals and entities that, in the view of the transitional authorities, are engaged in or provide support for acts undermining the peace, stability or security of CAR.		
DISARMAMENT			
Promoting disarmament at community level	Deploy gendarmerie and professional police units representative of different communities in areas where inter-communal tensions remain high; increase the crowd management capacity of MINUSCA in the cities where inter-communal tensions are high to prevent popular protests from escalating.	UN, donors and transitional authorities	ICG (2015)
	Ensure the selection and training of future security forces reflects community diversity.		
Promoting a disarmament policy for armed groups	Financing and extending labour-intensive public works projects and supplementing these projects with vocational training programmes.		
	Linking DDR programmes and community violence reduction programmes to reconstruction and developments projects of the World Bank and the EU.	-	
	Supporting job creation.		
	Opening up DDR to the combatants of non-signatory armed groups by establishing strict policies regarding the surrender of functioning war weapons as a condition to access the programme, and organising short cantonment phases without cash distribution during the demobilisation.		

Making DDR credible	Arrest militia leaders who refuse to disarm and try leaders of the *anti-balaka* and ex-Seleka suspected of involvement in the recent upsurge in violence.	France, MINUSCA	ICG (2015)
	Review the departure date of the French Operation Sangaris in order to maintain the capacity for military pressure to induce armed groups to disarm.		
	Encourage MINUSCA and the EU Military Advisory Mission in CAR, in cooperation with national authorities, to provide stockpile management training to the national security and armed forces and ensure capacity-building for the identification, registry and tracing of arms and ammunition and for the destruction of surplus and obsolete weapons.	MINUSCA, EU, government	UN PoE (2015)
ARMED GROUPS' FINANCING			
Regain control of the main gold and diamond production sites by deploying international forces and CAR civil servants.		France, MINUSCA	ICG (2015)
Revive the Kimberley Process certification scheme for diamonds originating from these controlled areas.			
An investigating unit addressing diamond, gold and ivory trafficking, as well as militarised poaching, should also be integrated into MINUSCA.			
Include the fight against cattle theft and trafficking into the mandate of a MINUSCA cell against diamond, gold and ivory trafficking.			ICG (2014c)
Expand targeted sanctions on the networks of actors that trade with and provide finance for armed groups in CAR.		UN	Enough Project (Agger, 2015)
Increase support for the new SCC in CAR. The SCC's investigators and prosecutors should have a dedicated strategy for investigating and prosecuting the pillage of natural resources, especially diamonds, alongside investigations of atrocity crimes.		Transitional authorities, UN	
Counter parallel taxation and highway extortion by armed groups.		MINUSCA, transitional authorities	
The Committee should reiterate its call on the transitional authorities of CAR to suspend buying houses that purchase diamonds from areas under the direct or indirect control of armed groups.		UNSC, transitional authorities	UN PoE (2015)
The Committee should urge the transitional authorities of CAR to freeze the assets of individuals and entities sanctioned by the Committee.		UNSC	
ECONOMIC RECOVERY			
Promoting artisanal mining	Put in place mechanisms to support safe artisanal diamond mining.	-	Amnesty International (2015b)
	Put in place a system to prevent exploitation of artisanal miners by traders.		
	Address child labour in the sector consistent with the best interests of the child.		
Creating jobs	Launch labour-intensive projects to boost the agriculture sector and rehabilitate infrastructure.	Transitional authorities, private sector, donors	ICG (2014a)
Auditing the natural resource contracts	Assess the mining and oil contracts signed by the former regimes to determine if these contracts are in accordance with the sector's standard.	African Development Bank, transitional authorities	ICG (2013)

REGIONAL		
The UNSC should, in its next resolution on the sanctions regime on CAR, request countries in the region cooperate with the Panel in implementing the travel ban and asset freeze with regard to sanctioned individuals.	UNSC, ECCAS states	UN PoE (2015)
The Committee should request neighbouring countries and those in the region, as well as regional organisations such as the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, to coordinate their political initiatives with those of the CAR-based transitional institutions and the Group of Eight.		
The Committee should urge the governments of CAR, Chad and the Sudan to implement the tripartite agreement signed on 23 May 2011 in Khartoum to enhance security in their common border areas through joint patrols, in cooperation with MINUSCA.		

Appendix 1: CAR armed groups – situation as of January 2016

Ex-Seleka

FPRC – The Popular Front for the Rebirth of the CAR
Hardliners of the ex. Seleka # Led by Nourredine Adam, supported by Michel Djotodia # Created in January 2014 # Rejected all peace agreements including the DDR # Rejected all peace agreements including the DDR # Called for a 3rd transition and cancellation of the electoral process # Push for the partitioning of the country and declared autonomous Republic of Logone in December 2015

RPRC – The Patriotic Rally for the Renewal of the CAR
Led by Herbert Gontran Djono Ahaba, Zacharia Damane and Joseph Zoundeko # Created in November 2014 in Bria # The group signed the various peace agreements and the DDR.

MPC – The Patriotic Movement for the CAR
Led by Mohamed Bahar and Alkatim Mahamat # Created in July in the Kaga-Bandoro region # The group signed the various peace agreements and the DDR.

The Reformed Seleka for Peace and Justice
Led by Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, No 3 founder of the Seleka **movement** # It is more a political group reflecting the political aspirations of its President, Dhaffane than an armed group # Dhaffane signed the various peace agreements and the DDR.

The Nairobists

Anti-balaka

The National Coordination of the Liberators of the Central African Republic (CNLPC)
Led by Patrice Edouard Ngaissona (PEN) # PEN represented the anti-balaka at the Forum of Bangui # He signed the DDR agreement # He does not have effective authority over the movement # He mostly defends his personal political interests # He was a candidate in the presidential and legislative elections.

The "Legitimate Coordination" of the anti-balaka
Hardliners of the AB # Led by Maxime Mokom # Created in May 2015 # Coalition with former President Bozize's party, the KNK.

Other local Coordinations of anti-balaka
There is a multitude of other anti-balaka groups and rival coordinating bodies operating throughout the country, mainly in the south-west, in some neighbourhoods of Bangui and in the centre of the country.

Other Armed groups

FDPC – The Front of the Central African Republic People
Led by Miskine # Created in 2004 # The Armed group operates in western CAR and Miskine found refuge in Brazzaville.

RJ – The Revolution and Justice
Led by Armel Sayo # Created end of 2013 # The group operates in western CAR.

Appendix 2: Deployment of armed groups within CAR and their main sources of revenue

Factions' origins	Armed groups or combatants	Sources of revenues	Additional information
AREA OF BANGUI			
Ex-Seleka	FPRC – about 60 members led by Haroun Gaye in the area of PK5	Funded by US-Chadian national Mahamat Nour Binyamine, and indirectly by Djotodia.	Gaye is a founding member of FPRC and officially appointed by Nourredine Adam as rapporteur of the FPRC coordination structure. He is considered by Adam's chief of staff to be in charge of FPRC armed elements in Bangui.
Ex-Seleka	Other armed groups active in the neighbourhood of KM5	-	Some reinforced Gaye's militia.
Anti-balaka	Led by Maxime Mokom	Financial support of Nadia Béa, Bertin's wife and manager of an import company called Agence de Communication Routière et de Transit, was also mentioned in those reports.	An operational rapprochement was coordinated in Bangui between KNK and Mokom's faction.
CENTRAL REGION AND BORDER WITH THE DRC			
Ex-Seleka	UPC	UPC controls some of the main crossing points with DRC. Smuggling activities between CAR and DRC, including natural resources (diamond and gold) and weapons and ammunitions.	-
Ex-Seleka	FPRC	Levy tax at Bema: $1.30 per passenger to cross the river and between $2 and $4 for commercial goods. Smuggling activities between CAR and DRC, including weapons and ammunitions.	-
Anti-balaka	Anti-balaka groups	Controls most of the Central African bank of the Oubangui River and most islands: levy tax, hijacking, ransoms, loot cattle and goods and smuggle ammunitions from Congo.	-
LRA	LRA	Looting mine sites (e.g. Nzako).	From Bangassou to border with South Sudan mostly under influence of LRA groups active in northern DRC.
AREA OF BAMBARI, GRIMARI, KOUANGO			
Ex-Seleka	UPC	Control and levy tax: sugar, coffee production, trade and export to Sudan. Gold: control gold mining site of Ndassima. Extort money from artisanal miners and coffee traders in diamond mining areas. Levy tax on coffee trucks coffee (equivalent $800 per truck).	A pact of non-aggression was signed between the *anti-balaka* led by Ngaissona and UPC.
Ex-Seleka	RPRC	Tax at checkpoints with Sudan; armed escort provided by RPRC members to Sudanese trucks travelling to Bria and beyond.	Residual role in the area compared with the others.

Anti-balaka	PCUD of Ngaissona	Compete with *anti-balaka*/UPC for control of Ouaka prefecture owing to its strategic position and economic interests.	Composed of about 20 individuals under the PCUD banner.
Anti-balaka	*Anti-balaka* groups	Compete with *anti-balaka*/UPC for control of Ouaka prefecture owing to its strategic position and economic interests.	Led by Gaetan Bouade and then Giscard Raskia Ndarata, two rival factions.
AREA OF BOSSANGOA, BOUCA, BATANGAFO			
Anti-balaka	Mokom's faction	Established checkpoints. Looting of goods transported by humanitarian convoys.	Main stronghold.
EASTERN REGION AND BORDER WITH SUDAN AND SOUTH SUDAN			
Ex-Seleka	Former Seleka groups, including FPRC, UPC and RPRC elements	Established checkpoints on all the main routes: levy taxes on road movements. Parallel administrations in the main towns. Provision of armed escorts and static security. Racketeering on local businesses, including those involved in the exploitation of natural resources.	Competition between ex-Seleka factions is high.
LRA	LRA	Elephant poaching, gold.	Active cooperation between former Séléka factions and LRA groups in Haute-Kotto prefecture. Avoid armed confrontations to preserve their ammunitions for hunting.
Sudanese poachers	Sudanese poachers	Elephant poaching for ivory and other wild animals (cheetahs, lions, giraffes, buffalo, antelope).	In some cases, have attacked LRA militias.
South Sudan cattle-rustlers	Cattle-rustlers from South Sudan	Cattle-rustlers.	Attacks of Fulani.
AREA OF BRIA			
Ex-Seleka	3 ex-Seleka factions share control of towns around Bria: FPRC, UPC and RPRC.	Established checkpoints. Control of diamond mines and trade.	Initially a stronghold of RPRC, now under control of 3 factions. An agreement was struck to share resources but clashes are frequent.
LRA	LRA	Recruitment campaign, abduction, looting of villages.	Group might be disconnected from the central leadership.
NORTHERN REGION AND BORDER WITH CHAD			
RJ	RJ – north-west	Financial support from Armel Sayo, Minister of Environment Levy tax on cattle's movements	-
Ex-Seleka	MPC, FPRC – north-east	Groups share control of the main towns and villages. Developed parallel administration. Established checkpoints. Levy tax on trucks transporting cattle. Around Ndele, FPRC established a parallel mining administration, issuing annual licences to collectors ($500) and certificates to artisanal miners ($60).	In Kaga Bandoro, Kabo and Mbres, a resource-sharing agreement was negotiated between MPC and FPRC. Taxation of livestock could generate for FPRC and MPC about $1.2 million per year.
Chadian armed combatants	Chadian security and military force members	Looted villages, established mobile checkpoints. Received humanitarian aid through Chadian govt agency.	Chadian government has denied these findings.

Sudanese or Chadian poachers	Sudanese and Chadian poachers	Poaching around Ndele. Looting of trucks transporting goods.	-
Anti-balaka	*Anti-balaka* affiliated with Mokom's faction	Control gold mines.	Presence in Nana-Grebizi: Kaga-Bandoro and Mbres.
WESTERN REGION AND BORDER WITH CAMEROON			
Ex-Seleka	FDPC of Miskine	Looting of trucks. Multiple hostage-takings.	FDPC poses main security threat in western CAR. The group is composed of about 70 heavily armed combatants.
Armed Fulani	Armed Fulani		Attacked villages in retaliation to Anti-balaka's attacks.
Anti-balaka	*Anti-balaka*	Looting of vehicles. Involved in diamond and gold activities. Smuggle hunting ammunitions. Security at plantations. Security payment by logging companies.	-

Source: UN PoE (2015).

Appendix 3: Historical origins of the sectarian violence

Recent literature argues that, in past centuries, the territory now known as CAR was subject to two **competing processes of centralisation**, one trans-Saharan and Muslim, characterised by centuries of slave raids in the north-east (a territory called at that time the Dar El Kuti); and the other French-led, Christian and characterised by large concessions that decimated half the population of CAR in the last 20 years of colonisation (Lavergne, 2014). In this conquest, the French "won" and as a result everything related to the state in CAR is coded Christian-French, with Muslims considered foreigners (Carayannis & Lombard, 2015).

Gourdin (2014) highlights that, until the end of 2012, Christian and Muslim communities mostly coexisted peacefully. However, **distrust and conflict has always existed, given the structure of the economy,** which is characterised by sedentary farmers, nomadic herders, traders and merchants. Ethnic and religious affiliation has been linked with particular activities and social conditions. These factors have been a source of complementarity but also conflicts between the communities.

The ICG (2015) explains that the *anti-balaka* **forms part of a long tradition of resistance** by the Gbaya, Banda, Mandja and Mboum ethnic groups, which formed alliances during anticolonial insurrections and slave raids organised by Muslims. This tradition has continued until the present day in the form of village self-defence militias.
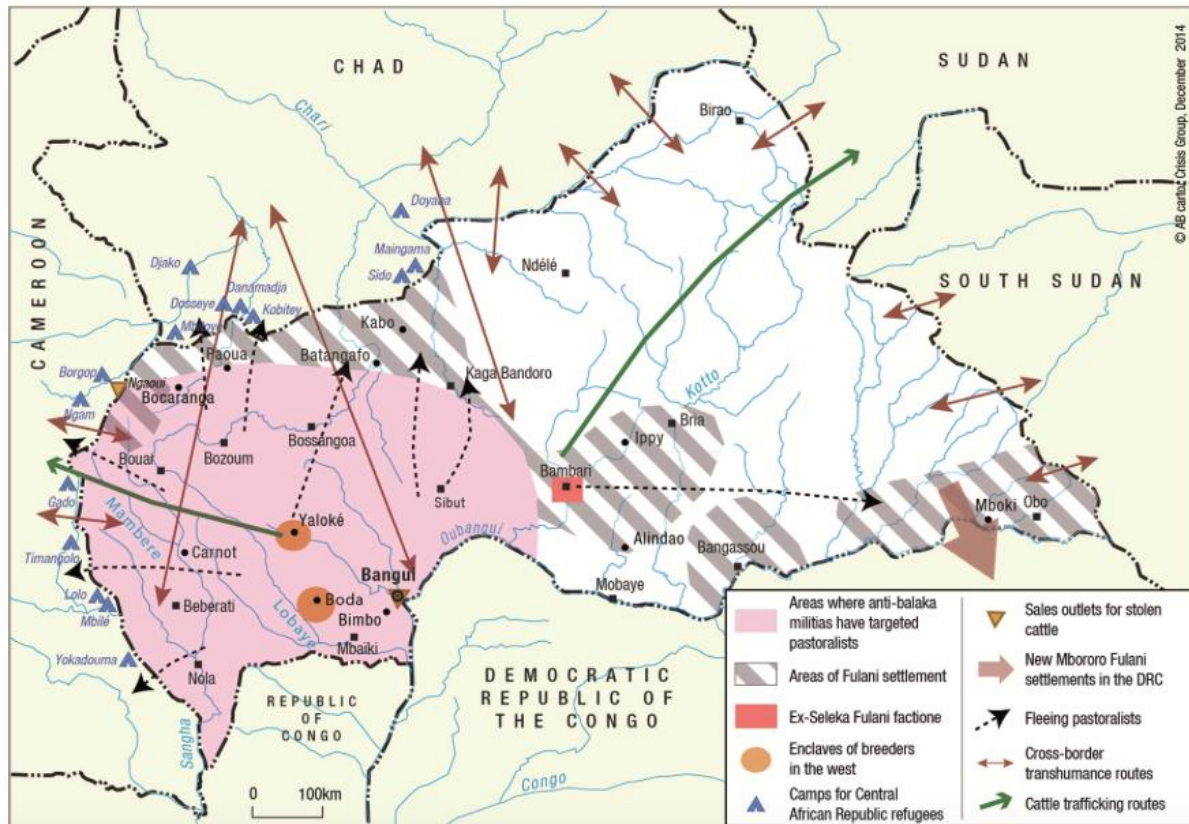
Kisangani (2015) argues that social cleavages and politics of exclusion in CAR have contributed to fuel instability since the colonial period. Indeed, the **Seleka coalition was formed following a long process of "Darfurisation"** of the north-east. The regions of Vagaka have more cultural, ethnic and economic connections with Sudan and Chad than they do with the rest of CAR. Absence of the state[66] means these regions have for decades hosted many armed groups. Civilians and rebel soldiers have also been victims of serious human rights violations committed by FACA troops (FIDH, 2008). In these regions, the culture of violence, resentment against the predatory power in Bangui and systematic politics of exclusion has generated deep frustrations.

Kisangani (2015) explains that, as a result, excluded elites from the poor north-east region have attempted to reinsert themselves in the political process dominated by elites from well-endowed southern regions by forming rebel groups, but with no intention of effecting political or economic change.

The ICG (2015) argues that, in CAR's post-independence history, **successive regimes have often manipulated religion**. CAR leaders have always mixed politics and religion, and Islam is treated differently depending on the president's political and economic interests.

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[66] Vakaga prefecture has remained an isolated world, composed mostly of Muslim communities. Abeche (Chad) and Nyala (Sudan) are the two spiritual centres and seats of power to which local chiefs have traditionally given their allegiance. Bangui is about 1,000 km away from the prefecture and is inaccessible by road for half the year. Vakaga is deprived of health and education. By December 2013, civil servants in Vakaga had not been paid for more than a decade (Kisangani, 2015).

Appendix 4: Impact of the CAR crisis on pastoralists in the region

Source: ICG (2014b).

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