Perspectives of non-state armed groups in the Central African Republic

CONCILIATION RESOURCES
working together for peace

Background

Since the current crisis erupted in 2013, the Central African Republic (CAR) has received a level of international attention unprecedented in its recent turbulent history. Huge efforts have been made by national government, the United Nations (UN) and external donors, as well as communities and civil society actors to pull the country back from armed conflict.

The Brazzaville Accords, the Bangui Forum and most recently the Brussels donor conference, which attracted €2.2 billion in pledged contributions for CAR's recovery and transition over the next few years, have been significant steps on this path. The mandate of the 13,000-strong UN mission, MINUSCA, which was extended in July 2016 to run until November 2017, has also been expanded to support reconciliation and stabilisation processes, in addition to its initial aims of protecting civilians and enabling humanitarian assistance.

Such efforts have contributed to greater calm in many areas of the country, particularly following the election of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra in February 2016. However, the armed violence in Bangui and in other areas of the country flared again in mid-2016. Around 2.3 million people are in need of humanitarian assistance,[1] and significant economic and political governance challenges remain, particularly in the northeast of the country. While national and international efforts have succeeded in supporting a return to pre-2013 positions, the task of addressing the underlying drivers and root causes of conflict remains, not least the pervasive sense of insecurity and mistrust.

Since the dissolution in September 2013 of Séléka, a coalition of militia groups that came together to overthrow the government of Francois Bozizé, and the end of Michel Djotodia's brief presidency in January 2014, the country has fragmented into areas of influence of different armed groups. Ex-Séléka militia groups have retreated from Bangui and consolidated their control over large areas of the north and east of the country, often in competition with one another. Other ex-Séléka fighters have been unable to leave Bangui and remain confined in segregated neighbourhoods or camps within the capital.

Anti-balaka groups, local protection militias which sprung up across southern CAR in 2013 in response to wide-scale looting and pillaging by Séléka elements, remain active and mobilised, particularly in urban areas where tensions and suspicions between communities remain high. In predominantly Muslim neighbourhoods, self-defence groups have been established in response to reprisals by Anti-balaka members, who perceive local Muslims to have been complicit in violence and looting carried out by Séléka fighters.

The groups are split along different, but fluid lines – tribal, local power structures, and over the control of economic resources. The Government has been unable to extend the presence of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) across the country and its authority outside Bangui remains weak.

A listening exercise

CAR is in desperate need of effective initiatives, ones that establish and rebuild sufficient trust to enable broader development, security and governance interventions and reforms to stand a chance of success. Insights into the factors that influence individuals to join and stay with armed groups in CAR, as well as the factors which prevent them from leaving, are valuable in understanding ways to approach and design such initiatives.

For a number of years Conciliation Resources has been a proponent of engagement with armed groups to further a peace process. Our Accord publication (2005)[2] showed that engagement can encourage the transition of armed groups away from violence by exposing them to alternative viewpoints, giving them space to question and review their objectives and strategies, and by helping them to prepare for constructive negotiation. Engagement is also known to strengthen moderate elements within a group. Understanding the perspectives and motivations of those engaged in violence does not condone violence itself; rather it is an essential practical approach to violence prevention.

More recently, Conciliation Resources has documented the strategies that communities and civil society actors deploy to engage armed groups far ahead of any formal peace negotiations. Accord Insight (2015)[3] shows how these 'pioneers of peace talks' are often the first to sit down with armed groups – be it to negotiate hostage release, encourage return or negotiate a local ceasefire.

With support from the Government of Finland, Conciliation Resources worked with a research team, including members of Local Peace Cells

---

1 *Protecting Humanitarian Space in the Central African Republic.* International Rescue Committee policy paper, November 2016: www.rescue-uk.org/sites/default/files/document/1229/protectinghumanitarianspaceinthecentralafricanrepublic-ircpolicypaper-nov2016.pdf

2 Accord 16. *Choosing to engage: Armed groups and peace processes.* Conciliation Resources, 2005: www.c-r.org/accord/engaging-armed-groups

3 Accord Insight 2, *Local engagement with armed groups: in the midst of violence.* Conciliation Resources, 2015: www.c-r.org/accord/engaging-armed-groups-insight

© United Nations, Geospatial Information Section

(LPCs), between August and December 2016 to gather the perspectives of 70 commanders and rank and file representatives of ex-Séléka, Anti-balaka and self-defence groups in eight localities across the country. A methodology section outlines the approach taken.

Conciliation Resources has worked in the Central African Republic since 2010 and supports 12 LPCs established in 2014 and 2015. Run by volunteers from within the community, LPCs identify conflict issues in their neighbourhoods, and engage conflict parties and other local stakeholders to find peaceful solutions. Through this work they have built the trust and knowledge needed to conduct this listening exercise with members of armed groups in their localities.

The report provides an insight into the factors that currently motivate individuals to remain in an armed group or prevent them from leaving. We understand that these factors will change over time. The exercise was designed to help further immediate local and informal peace, mediation efforts, as well as offer insights to national reconciliation efforts. By sharing the observations and findings with local communities and members of armed groups interviewed, we hope too that it will provide them

with new perspectives and ideas as to how they can support efforts to advance security and increase levels of trust.

Methodology

An initial workshop in Bangui in mid-October 2016 brought together 35 LPC members from across the country, the coordinator of a national civil society organisation in Bangui's 3rd arrondissement, commonly known as 'Kilometre 5' (KM5: a predominantly Muslim neighbourhood where there are persistent incidences of violence), and an independent translator from Carnot. The group mapped the current status and areas of operation of armed groups in CAR, developed a risk assessment and agreed parameters and approach for the interviews. During the meeting a smaller research team was identified, comprising 6 LPC members and the coordinator and translator who would act as researchers. Workshop participants agreed that each member of the research team should aim to interview a minimum of 10 armed groups members with the intention of ensuring a range of rank, age and gender, and to include at least 2 local commanders.

Between late October and mid-November, the research team conducted interviews with 70 individuals. The majority of these were conducted on a one-on-one basis; in one case this was supplemented by a group conversation convened by a researcher.

The interviews were conducted in eight localities: Carnot, Bria, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, Damara, Bogangolo (100km north of Damara, towards Bouca), Bimbo and Bangui (3rd arrondissement, 'Kilometre 5', and 4th arrondissement). The interviews explored the following four points:

○ The motivations that convince individuals to remain part of a non-state armed group

○ The motivations that could influence individuals to leave the group and abandon violence

○ The role of the Government and the international community in resolving the conflict

○ Personal reflections on the situation in CAR and what would be needed to resolve the conflict

Interviews were entirely voluntary and the interviewee could choose to discontinue the interview at any time. Interviewers were asked to be mindful of seeking safe ways to access the perspectives of youth and women. Interviewees were informed how their views would be documented and reported, and to whom. This briefing paper will be disseminated via LPCs to those interviewed in 2017.

Profile of the members of armed groups as consulted

Affiliation: To ensure a balanced consultation, an equal number of respondents were selected from both Anti-balaka and ex-Séléka groups drawn from across different regions of CAR. Several respondents from self-defence groups in KM5 featured among ex-Séléka respondents, although they were not members of the Séléka group prior to or during the 2013 coup d'état. These groups formed to defend against retaliatory attacks by Anti-balaka on largely Muslim communities. Consideration of their motivations and fears are relevant to disarmament and demobilisation strategies and efforts to re-build confidence and security.

Rank: Interviewers found it difficult to classify respondents by rank, as structures of command are often unclear and informal, particularly among Anti-balaka groups. Recognising this, interviewers agreed to divide respondents into 'leaders' (those with responsibility for 20 or more other members) and 'rank and file' (those with little or no responsibility for other members). Using this categorisation, 59 per cent of respondents were identified as 'rank and file' and 41 per cent as leaders. The generous proportion of 'leaders' can be explained in part due to the fact that this group reflects a broad interpretation of what constitutes a leader. It also indicates reluctance among rank and file members to speak to interviewers without the consent of their leaders, or their preference to pass on requests to superiors.

Age: Respondents were almost entirely aged between 19 and 50 years. Of the 70 respondents, 33 identified themselves as between 19 and 30 years, and 32 identified themselves as between 31 and 50 years. Three respondents identified their age as between 11 and 18 years; only one respondent identified themselves as aged between 51 and 65. One respondent declined to give their age.

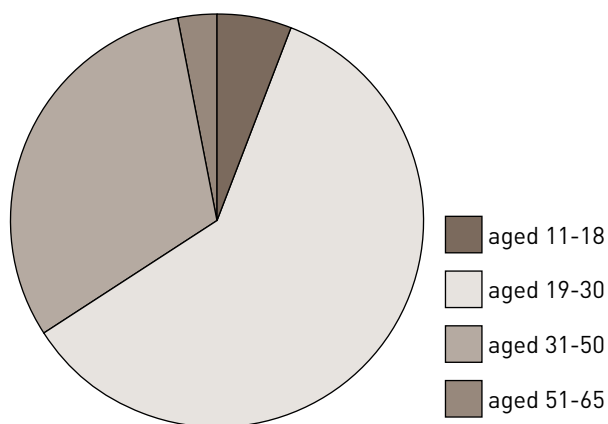## Age profile of armed group members consulted

aged 11-18
aged 19-30
aged 31-50
aged 51-65

Chart 1: Age profile of ex-Seleka members consulted
Source: the authors

aged 11-18
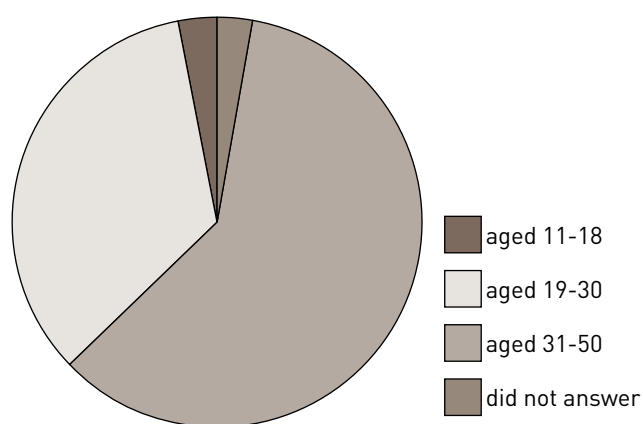aged 19-30
aged 31-50
did not answer

Chart 2: Age profile of Anti-balaka members consulted
Source: the authors

On the whole, Anti-balaka respondents were older; 60 per cent were over the age of 30 compared to only 34 per cent of ex-Séléka respondents. Interviewers felt that the younger demographic of ex-Séléka members could be attributed to the acute lack of opportunities for youth in the areas from which the ex-Séléka coalition factions had originated. This had provided them with a strong incentive to join the coalition in its march southwards during 2012–13. Indeed, many ex-Séléka respondents were interviewed far from their original communities, unable to find the necessary means or conditions to return home.

Most respondents referred to having many dependents, although many did not elaborate beyond stating that they had a 'large family', thereby making it difficult to assess the scale of dependency, and whether or not dependents were directly reliant on the respondent's income and care. The only three respondents who claimed that they had no dependents were ex-Séléka aged between 19 and 30 years.

Gender: Of the 70 respondents, only 4 were women. Interviewers explained that they had found it difficult to locate female members, as their requests for interview had been channelled to the leadership level (as described above), which is almost exclusively male. In addition, some women had been unwilling to discuss their participation in the groups.

The research team explained that strong gendered expectations about the role of women as family carers or keepers of the household have been challenged by women's direct and indirect participation in the violent struggle, which has led to acute social stigmatisation. While some women are combatants, the large proportion plays less visible support roles in the groups, as cooks, porters and messengers. Many do so whilst caring for children, often fathered by members of the armed group, and levels of sexual violence or coercion against women in the groups are high.

The four women whom interviewers were able to access, and who were willing to speak, did not place a particular accent on the situation of women. One respondent requested greater support for the widows and orphans of conflict, and income-generation support tailored particularly to women. Yet in the main, their needs tallied closely with those of their male counterparts – job opportunities, particular emphasis of support on youth, integration into the army and the implementation of the disarmament, demobilisation, reinsertion and repatriation (DDRR) process.

We recognise that women's perspectives represent a gap in the research. A more focused study of their roles, motivations, how they have been affected by the conflict, and their potential roles in recovery and reconciliation efforts is needed.

Main findings

1. A mutual need for security and fear of attack are the primary factors keeping individuals within Anti-balaka and ex-Séléka and self-defence groups.

"*I am safe if I stay in the group. What security exists outside, if my group decides to leave?*" *Ex-Séléka member, Kaga Bandoro, 31–50 years old, male*

"*The Anti-balakas are ready to put down their arms but the Muslims are not because Séléka continue to kill our brothers and sisters in the north and this worries us.*" *Anti-balaka member, Carnot, 31–50 years old, male*

The need for security and the fear of attack are the primary, twin motivations for members of both Anti-balaka and ex-Séléka to continue to bear arms and remain within their groups. The overriding majority of respondents are reluctant to disarm while insecurity or the threat of attack remains present; this was cited as the most prominent motivating factor to remain within their groups. [*See Chart 3*]

Conversely, the primary factor that would motivate respondents to leave their group was the assurance of their community or group's security from attack; with Anti-balaka members listing this as their third highest incentive to leave, and anti-Séléka members citing this as their joint fourth highest incentive to leave.

Few members are therefore willing to disarm or disband until the threat of attack is replaced by the assurance of security. The responses convey a stalemate in the absence of a process to assure mutual security, which commands sufficient authority, legitimacy and trust from all sides. Many

respondents deferred to the pending disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation (DDRR) process, but perceive it as something which will assure their own safety and needs whilst neutralising the other side's capacity to threaten.

> "As long as the Balaka don't put down their weapons I will keep mine by my side." *Self-defence group member (Muslim community protection), KM5 neighbourhood, Bangui, 31–50 years old, male*

Beyond the fear of attack, fear of stigmatisation or reprisals also featured in the personal calculation of whether to leave or remain in the group. Several Anti-balaka respondents feared that they would no longer be welcomed back to their home communities following their participation in the violence. Among ex-Séléka respondents, several claimed that the fear of reprisals from their peers for having deserted the cause would keep them in the group; although this represented a minority of ex-Séléka respondents who had been active in pre-Séléka coalition groups that have clearer political ambitions and more coherent command structures.

Understanding the fear of stigmatisation among group members offers opportunities for community-level interventions to address local fears and attitudes to those who engaged in violence.

> "If I quit the group, it poses a risk to my life. I'll be an enemy of the group and an enemy of the population who fear armed groups. I'm also scared that I will be arrested or have to face justice." *Ex-Séléka member, Bria, 19–30 years old, male*

> "I was in high school in Sibut when [Séléka] fighters were mobilising in 2013. I thought it would be a good way to get into the national army." [..] "I'm not worried about intimidation for leaving the group, it's more the stigmatisation that I'll face when I return to my village." *Ex-Séléka member, Bangui, 19–30 years old, male*

2. **For many, personal and pragmatic interests – including the personal desire for revenge – are stronger incentives to remain in a group than the ideology or collective ambition of the group.**

Interview responses suggest that, for the majority, pragmatic or personal motivations override feelings of loyalty to or knowledge of the group's political ambitions or ideology. Seven ex-Séléka respondents admitted that they could walk away voluntarily at any moment, and many more from both ex-Séléka and Anti-balaka groups suggested that, should the right conditions and incentives arise, they would also leave their group.

> "At the moment some of my friends and I are doing brickwork and hauling coal whilst we wait for DDRR. When I quit [the group] I think they'll follow me and we will continue our small enterprise." *Anti-balaka member, Damara, 31–50 years old, male*

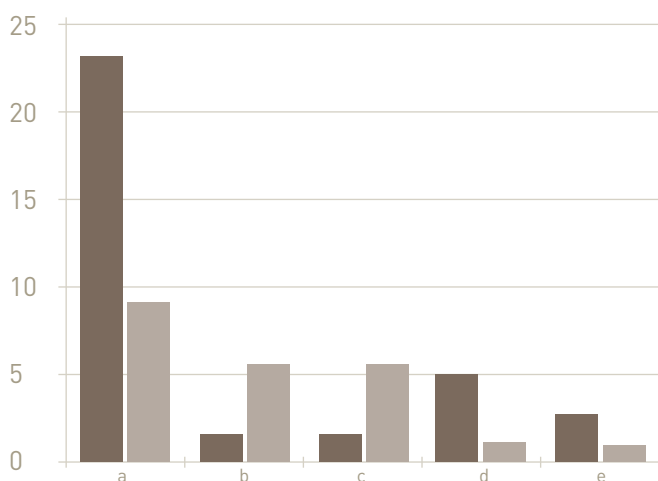## Key motivations for armed groups members **to remain in their group**

Chart 3:
a. Insecurity and threat of attack still present
b. DDRR is not implemented/ delayed/does not consider me
c. I am discriminated against/ excluded
d. There is no development/ opportunities in my region
e. Revenge

■ ex-Séléka members
■ Anti-balaka members

Source: the authors

Of the total interviewed, few respondents were long-term members of their groups, having joined largely to be part of, or to protect themselves from, the rapid rise and successes of the Séléka coalition in early 2013. Only 35 per cent of ex-Séléka respondents were active members of opposition militia groups prior to 2013, and only one Anti-balaka respondent had been an active member before this date. This suggests that participation in groups may have been driven by a combination of personal opportunism and necessity, rather than identification with and attraction to political aims and ambitions.

Most respondents felt driven to stay by personal needs and interests, rather than the needs and interests of the group, and suggest a negative rather than a positive choice to remain.

Ex-Séléka who had joined groups prior to 2013 were only marginally more likely to express a collective grievance as a motivation to remain within a group. These grievances included a sense of exclusion and discrimination by the state (six mentions) and the underdevelopment of their region (five mentions). Yet, in relation to all responses by ex-Séléka respondents, these factors to stay were marginal in comparison to those that would convince them to leave.

A small minority of ex-Séléka and Anti-balaka members stated that they are motivated to remain in their group by the need for vengeance and justice for acts of extreme violence committed against those close to them. Several related harrowing accounts of brutality committed by members of different armed groups at the height of the conflict. Some express doubts that the Government will bring those responsible to justice, and therefore see membership of the group as the means by which they can gain some satisfaction for their sense of anger and loss.

> **"***I joined the Anti-balaka in 2013 in Damara in order to avenge the death of my wife, who was raped and tortured by the Séléka and then burnt alive.***"**
> Anti-balaka member, 4th arrondissement, Bangui, 31–50 years old, male

> **"***My problem is those who killed my parents, my brothers and sisters, my wife and two children – all in one day. They need to arrest them and bring them to trial – otherwis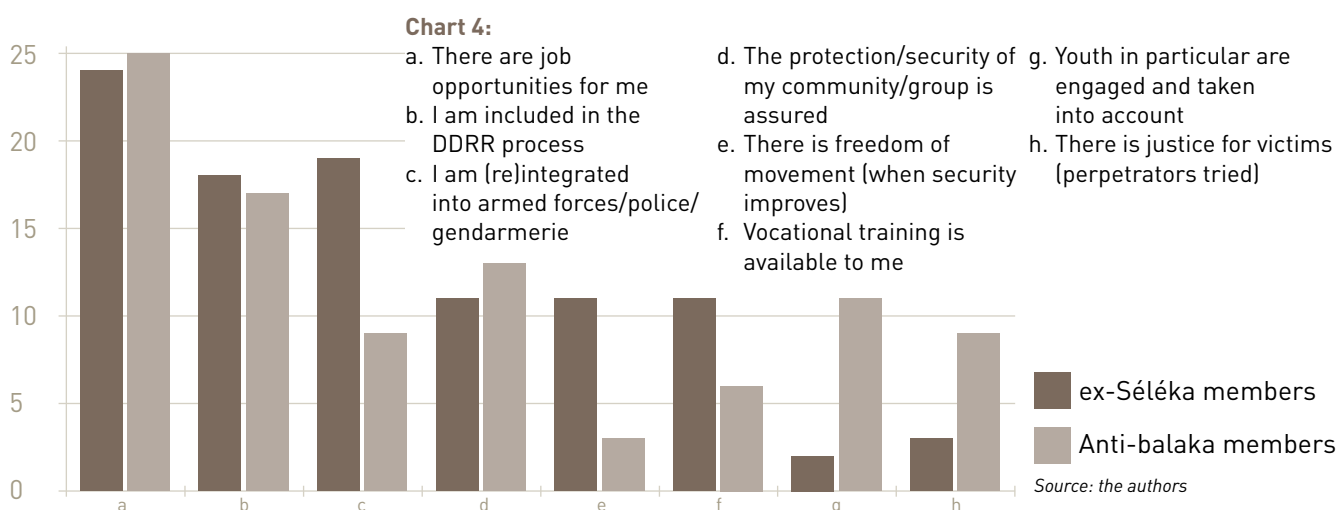e I'll get them and the day that I do I will quit the group.***"** Self-defence group member (Muslim community protection), 3rd arrondissement, Bangui, no age given, male

> **"***In June 2013, I married a Muslim man in Damara who, after joining the Séléka, killed my brother and my father. It was at that moment that I joined the Anti-balaka. And with God's grace I killed him myself in Boyrabe in January 2014.***"** Anti-balaka member, Damara, 31–50 years old, female

A lack of job opportunities and economic prospects across the country offer little incentive to pursue life outside of the group. Indeed, job opportunities were cited as by far the most important potential factor for both Anti-balaka and ex-Séléka respondents in persuading them to leave their armed group [see

Key motivations for armed group members **to leave their group**

Chart 4:
a. There are job opportunities for me
b. I am included in the DDRR process
c. I am (re)integrated into armed forces/police/gendarmerie
d. The protection/security of my community/group is assured
e. There is freedom of movement (when security improves)
f. Vocational training is available to me
g. Youth in particular are engaged and taken into account
h. There is justice for victims (perpetrators tried)

ex-Séléka members
Anti-balaka members

Source: the authors

A woman speaks during a meeting between Christian and Muslim community members in the Central African Republic.
© ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP/Getty Images

Chart 4]. Small subsistence payments from group leaders or money extorted from traders and artisanal miners, meanwhile, made life inside the group marginally more manageable than life outside it.

> **"***I am only in the group to protect my livestock and my parents. If peace returns and we are able to move about freely, there is no point in staying in this shit." [..] "Help us to rid ourselves of this piece of metal [gun] that weighs more than 10kgs. I've carried it for four years now, I just want to live like a normal man, that's all.***"** *Ex-Séléka member, Bambari. 19–30 years old, male*

Many Anti-balaka appear to make the distinction between Muslims they see as having come from outside the country and Central African Muslims. Mercenary fighters from Sudan and Chad, invited to join the Séléka on the march to Bangui, are known by communities to have instigated the worst violence

and looting to serve their own ends. They continue to control several ex-Séléka factions, such as the Union for Peace in Central Africa (UPC), situated in Bria. Many Anti-balaka respondents appeared to acknowledge that all Central Africans, regardless of religious affiliation, need to be included in a peaceful settlement to the conflict.

An interview with one commander notably revealed that he and his group had defended Muslims in their community from potential reprisals. Indeed, many Anti-balaka respondents referred to 'foreign ex-Séléka fighters' or 'foreign aggressors' and called for them to return home.

While perceptions of the 'other' among members of armed groups vary and are rather confused, the sense that many of those leading armed groups come from outside CAR, despite the fragmentation and violence, offer perhaps some basis on which to rekindle a sense of national identity.

Likewise, the currently weak sense of individual identification with a group's ambition, and the largely individual and pragmatic motivations to remain, offer hope for demobilisation and reinsertion programmes proposing alternatives to life within armed groups.

3. DDRR and reconciliation efforts led by the Government and the international community are cited by many as the route by which they will leave armed groups, but expectations of the processes vary and trust in them is low.

"*The Government has the ability to stop this violence, so we wait for it to act accordingly.*"

Anti-balaka member, Bimbo, 19–30 years old, male

The majority of those consulted expressed a strong desire to see an effective and timely implementation of the DDRR process. Anti-balaka members listed this as their second strongest incentive to leave, and ex-Séléka members as their third strongest incentive. Responses indicated a range of understandings and expectations of the DDRR process, including a lack of acknowledgement that the process would involve mutual security guarantees for the other group. Many appeared to be in a state of limbo pending its rollout.

Several respondents favour DDRR in the hope that it can benefit them financially, or that they can leverage it to attain a position in a national uniformed force (whether army, gendarmerie or police). Indeed, integration into a national uniformed force was the second strongest incentive for ex-Séléka to leave the group (19 mentions), and featured moderately strongly as an incentive for Anti-balaka members (9 mentions).

Many respondents, Anti-balaka in particular, are *ad hoc* members of informal armed groups and continue to carry out their day jobs as mototaxi drivers or traders whilst keeping a watch over their communities. Yet, there is also awareness, among both Anti-balaka and ex-Séléka, that registration in the DDRR process could act as a potential stepping stone to better employment and financial reward, potentially creating an incentive in itself to remain in the group.

When asked what message they had for the national Government, those consulted appealed for it to, among other things: conduct and support the DDRR process; reunite the country; enable reconciliation; protect communities from attack; bring economic growth and opportunities; and, develop infrastructure. Yet, few consulted believe that the Government is capable of delivering its ambitious agenda, and several respondents expressed deep frustration with the Government for having abandoned and discriminated against them, or failed to deliver any improvements in their living standards.

Responses indicated that Central Africans have developed a level of dependency on state-centric responses to the challenges facing the country, despite disillusionment in what it has been able to deliver to date. New perspectives are needed, particularly on the roles that can be played and what can be achieved locally by people and informal institutions that retain a degree of legitimacy in the eyes of local communities.

Conciliation Resources has worked in the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2010 and supports 12 Local Peace Cells (LPCs) established in 2014 and 2015. Eight LPCs are located in the capital Bangui (2nd to 7th arrondissements; Bimbo and Begoua localities), with another four LPCs outside Bangui – one each in Carnot (western CAR) and N'Délé (northern CAR), and two in Bria (central CAR). There are plans to establish two more LPCs in 2017 in localities where there is a persistent level of violence and the need for local conflict resolution is high: Kaga-Bandoro (Nana-Grebizi Province) and Bossangoa (Ouham Province).

"*No-one can force us to build peace. Although the international community is here to help us, it's up to us to prove we're able to bring the country back to a sustainable peace.*" *Ex-Séléka member, Bambari, 19–30 years old, male*

Conclusions

The scale and intensity of the violence during and after the 2013 crisis has created an environment where incentives to join a group to ensure personal and group security, as well as livelihood options, are aggravated by mutual mistrust and a lack of security guarantees. No group feels sufficiently secure to disarm and demobilise.

The listening exercise undertaken between October and December 2016 suggests that there is need and scope for important confidence-building measures to be carried out at the local level between parties to the conflict. However, these can only succeed if they are supported by security provision and the reestablishment of law and order across all areas of the country, not only around Bangui; a process that gain the confidence and trust of armed groups. This will go far in helping the current DDRR process to be more effective than those in the past.

Furthermore, the continued incidence of attacks in areas where both MINUSCA is present and armed groups control territory risks alienating communities who are essential to creating an atmosphere and environment conducive for return. More consistent communication and consultation by MINUSCA with community leaders and structures can help to mitigate this risk.

The findings reveal a huge variety in the nature of the groups and motivations and experiences in their members, which will require a differentiated approach to DDRR, justice and reconciliation efforts across the country. While the needs are great across the country, certain areas are prone to persistent surges in violence, such as KM5, Kaga Bandoro, Bambari and Bria and a priority should be to identify and understand the triggers of such violence.

> **"We feel abandoned by the government. It must consider us."**
> *Anti-balaka, Carnot, 31–50 years, male*

> **"We took up arms only to defend our parents – inequality and injustice is at the heart of this Government."**
> *Ex-Séléka, Bria, 31–50 years, male*

The findings of this listening exercise suggest the following areas merit further exploration or action:

1. Local capacities for reconciliation and dialogue: There is scope and need for local people and informal institutions, such as LPCs, who enjoy a level of trust within communities, to act as convenors of dialogue and reconciliation to prepare and accompany DDRR processes. They may benefit from support in thinking through and developing ways to address trauma and anger among members of armed groups and to broker intra- and inter-community dialogue.

2. Designing and communicating DDRR processes: There is a need to consider how DDRR is communicated to groups across the country, including what it can and cannot achieve, in order to manage expectations and to encourage people to engage with local dialogue and reconciliation mechanisms. DDRR processes that cater to the wide differentiation in motives to join and remain in a group, and readiness to leave, would be valuable.

3. Addressing stigmatisation: To address fears of stigmatisation from the group or the community, LPCs and other local community groups have a valuable role to play in preparing communities for reinsertion of fighters. Experiences from local reintegration programmes elsewhere, such as in areas of the country affected by the Lord's Resistance Army conflict, could provide helpful lessons. There should be specific assessment of and provision for female combatants and the particular challenges they may face in reintegration.

Further information:

Contact:

Nyeko Caesar Poblicks, Projects Manager, East and Central Africa, Conciliation Resources.
Email: cpoblicks@c-r.org

Kennedy Tumutegyereize, Programme Director, East and Central Africa, Conciliation Resources.
Email: ktumutegyereize@c-r.org

Conciliation Resources is an independent international organisation working with people in conflict to prevent violence, resolve conflicts and promote peaceful societies. We believe that building sustainable peace takes time. We provide practical support to help people affected by violent conflict achieve lasting peace. We draw on our shared experiences to improve peacebuilding policies and practice worldwide.

Conciliation Resources

Burghley Yard, 106 Burghley Road
London NW5 1AL
United Kingdom

Telephone +44 (0)20 7359 7728 Fax +44 (0)20 7259 4081
Email cr@c-r.org Website www.c-r.org

Facebook.com/ConciliationResources
Twitter.com/CRbuildpeace

*Cover photo: Members of armed group in northern Central African Republic.
© ISSOUF SANOGO/AFP/Getty Images*