



# Security Council

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## Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas

### I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request contained in the statement of the President of the Security Council dated 12 May 2014 ([S/PRST/2014/8](#)), in which the Council requested me to keep it informed on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and on progress made in the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) (see [S/2012/481](#), annex). The report provides an assessment of the major political and security trends in the Central African subregion since my report dated 6 May 2014 ([S/2014/319](#)), an update on progress achieved in the implementation of the UNOCA mandate and information on efforts made to implement the LRA strategy.

### II. Major developments in the Central Africa subregion

2. On 30 April, I announced my decision to appoint Abdoulaye Bathily (Senegal) as my new Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA to replace Abou Moussa (Chad), whose mandate ended on 30 May. My new Special Representative arrived in Libreville on 1 June and has since then met with leaders of the region.

3. Since my previous report, the crisis in the Central African Republic and its multidimensional regional impact have continued to dominate the attention of leaders of the subregion. Meanwhile, in the lead-up to the numerous elections expected in 2015 and 2016, many Central African countries have taken measures to address possible political tensions and increase political dialogue. The increased challenges posed by Boko Haram's activities in the region of the Lake Chad basin, the persistence of maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, the continued activities of armed groups, including LRA, the illicit cross-border movement and the illegal trade in wildlife remained security concerns that threaten the stability of countries of the subregion. The efforts of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) to promote regional integration and facilitate free movement have been severely



hampered as a result of security-related concerns and amplified with the recent outbreak of Ebola virus disease.

## **A. Political, peace and security developments and trends**

### **Crisis in the Central African Republic**

4. During the reporting period, Central African States and subregional organizations, particularly ECCAS, remained actively engaged in diplomatic efforts to restore peace and State authority in the Central African Republic. The meeting of ECCAS Heads of State on the situation in that country held in Malabo in June on the margins of the twenty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union and the fifth meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, which took place in Addis Ababa on 7 July, provided new momentum to the political dialogue in the Central African Republic. As a result, an international mediation initiative led by the President of the Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, was established. On 23 July, a cessation-of-hostilities agreement was signed at a forum on national reconciliation held in Brazzaville. The African Union and the United Nations were called upon to support the international mediation initiative and the implementation of the Brazzaville agreement. I subsequently appointed my Special Representative for Central Africa as the United Nations representative in that initiative. On 15 September, the transfer of authority between the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA) and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) took place.

5. The long-awaited government reshuffle in the Central African Republic and the appointment by the Head of State of the Transition, Catherine Samba-Panza, of a new prime minister were criticized by many national stakeholders, who claimed that Ms. Samba-Panza had not undertaken sufficient consultations and needed to demonstrate her commitment to an inclusive political process. Many individuals, including anti-balaka and ex-Séléka representatives, also called for the Head of State of the Transition to resign. My Special Representative for Central Africa and my Special Representative for the Central African Republic are continuously engaging with the Central African transitional authorities and regional stakeholders, urging them to take all steps necessary to ensure the implementation of the Brazzaville agreement as a matter of priority, with the support of partners.

6. The persistent instability in the Central African Republic, the absence of State authority and regular incursions of armed groups into neighbouring countries, including Cameroon and Chad, has become a source of concern that has prompted those countries to temporarily close all or parts of their borders with the Central African Republic. In Cameroon, at least nine civilians were abducted on 20 September by rebels of the Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain to obtain the release of their leader, General Abdoulaye Miskine, arrested in Yaoundé in September 2013. That attack was followed by reports of violent fighting on 23 September between the Cameroonian army and unidentified armed elements who were attempting to free some of their companions detained at the police station at Ngaoui, near the border with the Central African Republic. Cameroon then closed its border with the Central African Republic from 5 to 10 October. Since 12 May, Chad has kept its borders with the Central African Republic closed owing to

security concerns but has agreed to open them temporarily for humanitarian purposes.

7. The sixth meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic was held in Bangui on 11 November. Discussions focused on the country's security and humanitarian situation, the need to accelerate the political process and preparations for elections, as well as the economic situation of the country and the need for sustained international support in that regard.

### **Boko Haram**

8. In my previous report, I informed the Security Council of the expansion of Boko Haram's activities beyond north-eastern Nigeria into the Lake Chad basin region, in particular into Cameroon. During the reporting period, this new disturbing trend continued, with Boko Haram perpetrating an increasing number of attacks along the Nigeria-Cameroon border and in the northern provinces of Cameroon, leading to the killing of dozens of Cameroonian civilians, police officers and soldiers. Hundreds of Boko Haram elements were reportedly killed by Cameroonian forces during these raids. The number of abductions of civilians, including senior officials and their families, increased dramatically in Cameroon during the reporting period. Ten Chinese workers, the two sons of an influential Muslim spiritual leader in Cameroon and the wife of the Vice-Prime Minister were among the people abducted in a series of kidnappings that took place from 16 May to 10 August. On 11 October, the President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, announced the release of 27 hostages, including the wife of the Vice-Prime Minister and the 10 Chinese workers. In Chad, a convoy of buses carrying 85 Nigerian nationals who had been abducted by Boko Haram in the village of Doron Baga, Nigeria, and ferried across Lake Chad into Chadian territory, was intercepted by Chadian troops on 17 August.

9. The growing regional impact of Boko Haram's activities and the rising threat posed by terrorism and illicit activities in Central Africa have sparked a renewed interest in strengthening bilateral, subregional and international cooperation to address the security threats posed by terrorism and transborder illicit activities. On 7 October in Niamey, in a follow-up meeting to the Paris, London and Abuja summits, the Presidents of Benin, Chad, the Niger and Nigeria, as well as the Minister for Defence of Cameroon, announced plans to address the Boko Haram threat through the deployment of a multinational joint task force on 1 November; the force's headquarters would become operational by 20 November. Furthermore, in September and October the Government of Chad facilitated talks in N'Djamena between the Government of Nigeria and representatives of Boko Haram, with the aim of reaching a ceasefire.

### **Piracy and armed robbery at sea**

10. Piracy, armed robbery at sea, organized crime and illegal, unreported and unregulated fishing in the Gulf of Guinea still constitute a threat to the peace, security and socioeconomic development of both coastal and landlocked States in the Central and West African subregions. The Gulf of Guinea has become the region of Africa most affected by piracy and armed robbery at sea. Since the beginning of the year, 33 incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea have been reported by the Global Integrated Shipping Information System of the International Maritime Organization. During the reporting period, progress was

achieved in the implementation of the decisions taken at the Summit of Heads of State and Government on Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, held in Yaoundé in June 2013, with the inauguration of the Interregional Coordination Centre on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea in Yaoundé on 11 September.

### **Poaching**

11. Poaching remained a major concern for several Governments in Central Africa because of its links to the financing of armed groups. During the reporting period, Cameroonian authorities seized 187 elephant tusks hidden in a military car in Nsimalen, a suburb of Yaoundé, which implies the slaughter of approximately 100 elephants. On 26 September, a high-level meeting on poaching and wildlife trafficking co-organized by Gabon and Germany was held on the margins of the thirty-ninth session of the General Assembly.

### **Elections and national dialogues**

12. During the reporting period, local and parliamentary elections took place in two countries in the subregion. In addition, steps were taken to establish or strengthen national dialogue in four other countries.

13. In Chad, the Coalition des partis politiques pour la défense de la constitution, the main Chadian opposition coalition, agreed in May to end its boycott of the Cadre national pour le dialogue politique and to join this permanent framework aimed at promoting dialogue between all Chadian stakeholders, ahead of upcoming elections in the country. That decision came as a result of several meetings between the Coalition and the Prime Minister of Chad, Kalzeube Payimi Deubet.

14. In Burundi, a legal and political framework for the elections was established, a code of conduct for political parties, actors and independent candidates was adopted by consensus in June and a new electoral code was promulgated in July. Despite making remarkable progress in consolidating peace and stability over the years, Burundi continues to experience considerable political tension, a worrisome shrinking in the political space and an erosion of the spirit of consensus that animated the peace consolidation process after the Arusha Accords.

15. In Gabon, 14 opposition political leaders held a rally in Libreville on 19 July, at which they announced the creation of a new coalition of the opposition, the Front de l'opposition pour l'alternance, in a bid to position themselves against the ruling party in the legislative and presidential elections to be held in 2015 and 2016 respectively.

16. On 30 August, the President of Equatorial Guinea, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, called upon all political groups, including the opposition in exile, to participate in a national dialogue in November in order to promote social cohesion and inclusive governance. In addition, on 21 October, the President signed a general amnesty decree pardoning all citizens who had either been convicted of political offences or who were involved in a judicial process for such offences.

17. In the Congo, municipal and departmental elections took place on 28 September, resulting in a landslide win for the ruling Parti congolais du travail, which now holds 820 of the 860 local representatives' seats. Those early elections took place following a decision taken by the Congolese National Assembly on 27 August to amend the country's electoral law. The Union panafricaine pour la

démocratie sociale vigorously contested that amendment to the law and boycotted the National Assembly's session on the grounds that the proposed law would not guarantee the independence of the national electoral commission and that it would favour the majority in power. Newly elected local representatives took part in the partial elections of the Senate on 12 October, which saw the Parti congolais du travail keep control of 68 of the 72 seats in that chamber.

18. In Sao Tome and Principe, the parliamentary elections that took place on 12 October resulted in an outright majority for Independent Democratic Action, the opposition party led by ex-Prime Minister Patrice Trovoada, who won 33 of 55 seats. The rival Movement for the Liberation of Sao Tome and Principe came in second, with 16 seats, while the Social Democratic Party took 5 seats and the Union of Democrats for Citizenship and Development won 1 seat.

### **Regional integration**

19. Efforts towards regional integration and the free movement of persons were hampered owing to mounting security concerns and following the recent Ebola outbreak in West Africa, which led to border closures and the suspension of flights to and from West African capitals to prevent the spread of the virus. On 17 September, CEMAC experts met in Brazzaville to adopt an emergency plan to address the epidemic. The plan consists of measures to monitor the epidemic, coordinate cross-border activities and provide care for infected persons.

20. On 25 September, in Kinshasa, following a meeting held on 19 September between the President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Joseph Kabila, and the President of the Congo, Mr. Nguesso, a joint commission decided to cancel the mutual requirement for nationals of the two countries to obtain entry visas. The entry visa requirement had been introduced in the aftermath of the expulsion of nationals of the Democratic Republic of the Congo from Brazzaville earlier in 2014.

21. In other developments, the fifteenth meeting of the Commission for Defence and Security of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa (COPAX) was held on 1 and 2 July in Pointe-Noire, the Congo. The Commission adopted a number of recommendations, including on the establishment of mechanisms for bilateral and multilateral cooperation between States, on the establishment of a common structure comprising all the security services and on the firm commitment of ECCAS to play a strong role in the prevention and resolution of crises throughout the subregion, particularly in the area of preventive diplomacy and early warning. The findings of the Commission were validated during the sixth extraordinary session of the COPAX Council of Ministers, held in Pointe-Noire on 4 July.

## **B. Humanitarian and human rights developments**

22. During the period under review, the humanitarian and human rights situation in the subregion remained of concern, owing in large part to sectarian violence, the continued absence of State authority in the Central African Republic and the resulting impact on the region.

23. The crisis in the Central African Republic has emerged as one of the central humanitarian and human rights concerns in the subregion. As at 12 October, more than 425,000 Central Africans remained displaced in neighbouring countries.

Cameroon is currently sheltering approximately 242,000 refugees from the Central African Republic, while Chad is hosting 96,000 refugees. The Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Congo are sheltering 67,000 and 20,000 refugees respectively. United Nations agencies and neighbouring countries continue to face difficulties in providing the humanitarian assistance necessary to respond to the needs of the displaced populations and overstretched host communities.

24. The activities of Boko Haram too continued to have adverse humanitarian implications for Central Africa, with particularly serious consequences for northern Cameroon. Boko Haram's attacks in north-eastern Nigeria have forced an estimated 80,000 Nigerians to flee their homes into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and the Niger. Cameroon currently shelters 43,700 Nigerian refugees, 27,200 of whom have been registered by the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. On 16 September, Cameroon indicated that its capacities had been exceeded and requested support from international aid agencies to provide refugees with the required humanitarian assistance. Increased Boko Haram activities in northern Cameroon are also creating difficult conditions for the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

25. Human trafficking continued to be a source of concern for several countries in Central Africa. Legislative gaps regarding the ratification of international conventions against organized crime and, in particular, the Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, still persist in Central African States. These challenges are compounded by a lack of capacity to implement preventive measures to combat trafficking.

26. During the period under review, several positive steps were taken in support of respect for human rights in the subregion. In response to recommendations made under the universal periodic review of the Human Rights Council, Cameroon and Chad extended a standing invitation to special procedures mandate holders. Gabon ratified the Optional Protocol to the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. Angola acceded to the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities and its Optional Protocol, including articles 6 and 7, which are on the procedure for conducting an inquiry into alleged violations of the rights set forth in the Convention. Chad abolished the death penalty in its new Penal Code and Equatorial Guinea suspended the death penalty upon joining the Community of Portuguese-speaking Countries.

### **C. Socioeconomic trends**

27. During the reporting period, the subregion experienced economic growth, projected to reach 6.2 per cent by the end of 2014, that was essentially fuelled by an expansion of the oil sector. Unemployment, especially among youth, and inequality remain high in most countries, however, with a divide between rural and urban areas, which hampers poverty reduction. This trend may be exacerbated by a number of risks, notably those stemming primarily from a deterioration in the security situation in the region and the expansion of the Ebola outbreak, which are slowing trade and negatively affecting economic and social indicators.

### **III. Activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa**

#### **A. Supporting Member States and subregional organizations to address cross-border and cross-cutting threats to peace and security**

28. During the period under review, UNOCA remained engaged with key stakeholders to help prevent violent conflicts and promote regional peace and security. Upon assuming duty, my Special Representative for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA began his visits in the subregion. On 10 June, in Libreville, he met with the Secretary-General of ECCAS. On 19 June, in N'Djamena, he met with the President of Chad, Idriss Déby Itno, in his capacity as the current Chair of ECCAS. While in Chad, my Special Representative also visited a camp for displaced persons on the outskirts of N'Djamena housing several thousand repatriated Chadians from the Central African Republic who had been evacuated from Bangui in January 2014.

29. My Special Representative attended the twenty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Malabo on 26 and 27 June, where he engaged representatives of ECCAS member States and key partners in addressing peace and security issues in Central Africa. He emphasized to his interlocutors the importance of continued collaboration to enhance subregional integration and to address security challenges.

#### **Mediation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding**

30. In line with its mandate, UNOCA continued to implement activities in the areas of mediation, conflict prevention and peacebuilding. Encouraging increased cross-border cooperation between ECCAS member States, UNOCA actively engaged in a workshop organized by ECCAS on the identification, demarcation and delimitation of borders in the ECCAS zone, held from 17 to 19 June in Libreville. On 8 and 9 July, in Douala, Cameroon, UNOCA also participated in a workshop organized by the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa on human rights capacity-building for penitentiary and law enforcement personnel in the subregion. The recommendations of the workshop were presented at the thirty-eighth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa. UNOCA organized several activities for youth on the occasion of the International Day of Peace (20 September), during which my Special Representative called for reconciliation and the restoration of peace in countries in crisis and the promotion of the values of dialogue, tolerance and brotherhood. UNOCA also organized a training session, held in Libreville from 5 to 7 November, to enhance basic knowledge and skills in the area of mediation for ECCAS experts with the support of mediation experts deployed by the Department of Political Affairs of the United Nations Secretariat. The objectives of the training were to strengthen the mediation capacity of staff and to reinforce institutional collaboration between UNOCA and ECCAS. The training focused on mediation principles and skills, process design, national dialogues, international mediation and electoral mediation, in view of the numerous elections that will take place in the subregion in 2015 and 2016.

**Boko Haram**

31. UNOCA, in close cooperation with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the relevant United Nations country teams, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and ECCAS, conducted a joint mission to Cameroon and Chad from 19 to 31 October. The purpose of the mission was to assess the impact of Boko Haram on Central Africa and to explore ways in which the United Nations can support Governments and the relevant subregional organizations in addressing the threat posed by the group. The assessment mission travelled to regions directly affected by Boko Haram activity, namely north-eastern Cameroon and south-western Chad. The mission concluded that there was an urgent need to strengthen international cooperation and coordination to counter the threat posed by Boko Haram in the Central African region.

**Gender aspects and elections**

32. UNOCA and ECCAS organized, in cooperation with the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa and the International Organization of la Francophonie, a regional workshop on the promotion of women's political participation and its implications for advancing the conduct of peaceful elections in the subregion, held in Douala, Cameroon, from 21 to 23 October. Deputies and civil society representatives from Central African States participated in the workshop, which served to enhance subregional capacity on the inclusion of women in political life in advance of the numerous elections scheduled to be held in Central Africa in 2015 and 2016. The workshop also served to advance a number of important recommendations arising from Security Council resolutions 1325 (2000), 1889 (2009) and 2122 (2013) on women and peace and security. More specifically, as a result of the workshop, a platform of Central African women for the promotion of political participation was established and a set of 20 recommendations were adopted.

**Piracy in the Gulf of Guinea**

33. My Special Representative, in cooperation with UNOWA, continued to consult with and mobilize relevant stakeholders in order to promote good maritime governance mechanisms, including by holding meetings of the interregional working group on maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea. On 15 May in Yaoundé, the interregional working group finalized technical documents related to the establishment of an interregional coordination centre. On 11 September, my Special Representative attended the inauguration ceremony, in Yaoundé, of the Interregional Coordination Centre for Maritime Safety and Security in the Gulf of Guinea, which marked an important step in the implementation of decisions taken by Heads of State and Government at a summit held in the Cameroonian capital on 25 June 2013.

**Poaching**

34. During the reporting period, my Special Representative continued to follow the challenges posed by poaching and wildlife trafficking. On the margins of the sixty-ninth session of the General Assembly, he participated in a high-level working luncheon co-hosted by Gabon and Germany, during which he encouraged the

relevant stakeholders to work towards an integrated regional approach and enhanced cooperation among States of Central Africa, notably through the advancement of an anti-poaching strategy for the ECCAS region.

#### **United Nations cooperation**

35. My Special Representative worked with resident coordinators in Central Africa to support their efforts, particularly in the light of the regional impact of the crisis in the Central African Republic and Boko Haram's activities in the Lake Chad basin region. During the reporting period, he also engaged with resident coordinators to initiate preparations for their next meeting. He travelled to Dakar in September to exchange views and strengthen cooperation with UNOWA on issues of common interest, including maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea and Boko Haram.

## **B. Good offices, preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding**

#### **International mediation initiative for the Central African Republic led by the Economic Community of Central African States**

36. On the margins of the twenty-third ordinary session of the Assembly of the African Union, held in Malabo in June, ECCAS Heads of States resolved to expand the international mediation initiative on the crisis in the Central African Republic and invited my Special Representative for Central Africa to participate in the meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic held in Addis Ababa on 7 July. I subsequently designated my Special Representative to collaborate with the ECCAS-appointed mediator, Mr. Sassou Nguesso, and the African Union Special Envoy for the Central African Republic, Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga, to support the ECCAS-led international mediation initiative for the Central African Republic.

37. My Special Representative for Central Africa facilitated the signature, on 23 July in Brazzaville, of the cessation-of-hostilities agreement, working closely with my Special Representative in the Central African Republic, the African Union Special Envoy for the Central African Republic, the ECCAS Secretary-General and others in the region. To that end, he engaged with leaders of the subregion and participated in several high-level preparatory meetings in Brazzaville initiated by Mr. Sassou Nguesso. In addition, together with the other participants in the international mediation initiative, he conducted numerous visits to the Central African Republic, where he met with authorities of the transition and representatives of political parties, the anti-balaka, the ex-Séléka and civil society.

38. As a participant in the international mediation initiative, my Special Representative has continued to engage with and support Central African stakeholders towards the implementation of the Brazzaville agreement by facilitating coordination and providing advice to the parties. In that regard, following the appointment of Mahamat Kamoun as Prime Minister of the Central African Republic on 10 August, my Special Representative encouraged a more inclusive, transparent and concerted approach to decision-making by the transitional authorities, including through the organization of a national reconciliation and reconstruction forum in Bangui. He has continued to maintain contact with all signatories to the agreement, including leaders of the ex-Séléka and the anti-balaka.

39. Following the violence that erupted in Bangui in mid-October, my Special Representative travelled to Brazzaville and Bangui to confer with the President of the Congo and other Central African stakeholders. In Bangui, my Special Representative underlined the necessity for all parties to stand against violence, work together constructively in the context of the transition and prepare for the timely holding of elections. During that visit to Bangui, he reinforced the aforementioned messages to the parties in the Central African Republic as participant in the international mediation initiative. The mission contributed to a decrease in tensions in Bangui and in a renewed commitment by all parties to the Brazzaville process. It also helped secure commitments regarding the timely holding of elections.

#### **United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa**

40. UNOCA, in its capacity as the secretariat of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, supported the organization of that entity's thirty-eighth ministerial meeting, held from 29 July to 4 August in Malabo. The Committee issued the Malabo Appeal on the Brazzaville forum for national reconciliation and political dialogue in the Central African Republic, in which Central African stakeholders were urged to respect their commitments on the cessation of hostilities and violence (see [A/69/361](#), annex II). The experts at the meeting reviewed the overall geopolitical and security situation in Central Africa and took stock of ongoing initiatives to address existing threats and challenges. Given the upcoming elections in the subregion, a specific thematic focus was the strengthening of election-related national capacities for the conduct of credible and peaceful electoral processes. States members of the Committee welcomed the initiative of Burundi to host the thirty-ninth ministerial meeting, which is scheduled to be held in Bujumbura from 1 to 5 December.

## **IV. Lord's Resistance Army**

### **A. Current situation**

41. Although collective efforts have succeeded in weakening LRA, the group continues to pose a threat to civilians in areas of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. LRA is currently thought to be composed of approximately 150-200 armed elements, split into several highly mobile units. According to defectors, LRA leader Joseph Kony continues to exert effective command and control over most of the group's elements.

42. During the period under review, the bulk of LRA moved from the Central African Republic to the north-east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where it continues to loot the population, poach elephants in Garamba National Park for the purposes of trafficking ivory, abduct civilians and ambush vehicles for the purpose of transporting looted items. In both the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the areas where LRA operates lack infrastructure and a strong State presence and are sparsely inhabited; the few people who live in those areas are in scattered rural settlements, which provide an easy

target for armed groups. These factors pose serious challenges to civilian and military efforts to track the group and to protect the civilian population.

43. The picture is further complicated by the fact that LRA also appears to have reached non-aggression agreements or established alliances of convenience with other armed groups that operate in the same areas, including with the ex-Séléka in the Central African Republic. In addition, reports of continuing LRA poaching activities in Garamba National Park are of serious concern, given that ivory trafficking is suspected to provide LRA with the means to resupply and acquire weapons. According to testimony from recent LRA returnees, Joseph Kony ordered an LRA group in mid-2014 to go to Garamba National Park to poach elephants and collect ivory. Additionally, reports from park rangers indicate that elephant poaching has recently surged and that they believe that responsibility lies with LRA.

44. While international attention has focused largely on the violence that has engulfed large parts of the Central African Republic, especially the north-western and central regions, LRA has continued to carry out attacks against communities in the east. The presence of the African Union Regional Task Force in the Province of Haut-Mbomou has, however, prevented ex-Séléka elements from entering that part of the country, thereby insulating it from the sectarian violence that has affected the rest of the Central African Republic. In my previous report, I noted that the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs had reported that the number of persons displaced in LRA-affected areas of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan had decreased from 326,448 persons as at 31 December 2013 to 159,927 persons as at 31 March 2014. The latest figures available from the Office show that the number of displaced persons in LRA-affected areas in Orientale Province, Democratic Republic of the Congo, now stands at approximately 113,000. In the Central African Republic, the number of displaced persons in LRA-affected areas stands at approximately 21,000.

45. LRA members are believed to be engaged in forms of opportunistic cooperation with some ex-Séléka combatants and officers operating in the east of the Central African Republic, particularly in areas around Nzako, Yalinga and Sam Ouandja. This has been made possible by the continuing gravity of the national crisis and the presence of elements of the ex-Séléka who continue to reorganize and to rearm in areas outside the control of the Government or the international forces. Such cooperation has reportedly taken different forms, including the holding of regular meetings between LRA and ex-Séléka elements and the trade in minerals in exchange for ammunition, food and other items used for military purposes. Disturbing reports also indicate that LRA captives are forced to extract diamonds that the group uses as a source of income.

46. No LRA incident was reported during the period under review in South Sudan, although according to some State officials LRA elements purportedly intend to cross over into South Sudanese territory at Ezo, near the border with the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

47. The presence of some senior LRA leaders in the disputed Kafia Kingi enclave, on the border between the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Sudan, continues to be reported. However, the Government of the Sudan has denied this: on 14 May, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Sudan issued a press release in which it denied the allegations contained in my report of 6 May, condemned LRA

atrocities and invited the African Union Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council to verify the allegations.

48. Cooperation between the countries that participate in the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army has continued with military support from the United States of America and financial support from the European Union. Through military pressure, the Initiative has significantly weakened LRA, which has released a substantial number of long-term abductees over the past few months. At the same time, important challenges continue to hinder the effectiveness of the African Union Regional Task Force, including the ongoing crises in the Central African Republic and South Sudan and the absence of political authorization by all countries participating in the Regional Cooperation Initiative for cross-border military operations, particularly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

## **B. Coordination and resource mobilization**

49. My Special Representative dispatched a UNOCA team to conduct assessment missions to LRA-affected areas in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The missions, which took place in August and September, contributed to gathering first-hand information about current LRA activity, affected populations and the gaps and challenges related to the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy.

50. My Special Representative and the newly appointed African Union Special Envoy on the Lord's Resistance Army, Jackson Kiprono Tuwei, co-chaired the biannual meeting of LRA focal points held on 15 and 16 September in Entebbe, Uganda. For the first time, civil society representatives from LRA-affected areas took part in the meeting, which was also attended by focal points from United Nations entities, the African Union, bilateral government partners and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). Participants discussed collective efforts in the context of the United Nations regional strategy and the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, which have resulted in a progressive weakening of LRA. A number of entities have become actively engaged in a campaign designed to persuade LRA members to defect and to encourage local communities to accept defectors and in initiatives aimed at enhancing child protection, peacebuilding and the protection of civilians in LRA-affected areas. On the military front, participants in the meeting highlighted the significant contributions of the African Union Regional Task Force, which has continued to exert pressure on LRA.

51. During the meeting, UNOCA facilitated the development of recommendations in key areas to ensure and guide continued progress against the threat posed by LRA. There was consensus among participants on the need for renewed momentum for collective efforts, civilian and military, against LRA. On the civilian side, participants emphasized the need for programmes to assist former LRA members in reintegrating into civilian life. They also noted the need for humanitarian and long-term development assistance given the continuing threat posed to the civilian population as well as the economic, governance and infrastructure deficits that exist in areas where it is easy, because they are isolated, for LRA to operate. The African Union also expressed its intention to convene a meeting of national focal points on

the rehabilitation needs of LRA-affected areas. The meeting, scheduled to take place in Kinshasa, will bring together the authorities of the three affected countries, along with the World Bank and other partners, to explore options to promote the recovery and development of areas currently affected by LRA. There was also agreement to consider convening the next meeting of the International Working Group on the Lord's Resistance Army.

52. My Special Representative and the African Union Special Envoy on the Lord's Resistance Army met in Arusha, United Republic of Tanzania, in October, during the African Union retreat of special envoys and mediators, in order to discuss preparations for their first joint diplomatic mission to engage the Governments of countries participating in the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army in 2015.

## **C. Implementation of the United Nations regional strategy**

### **1. Operationalization and full implementation of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army**

53. The military operations of the African Union Regional Task Force have continued to result in steady progress in the fight against LRA, although some challenges are hampering its full operationalization. Currently, the Regional Task Force comprises 2,284 soldiers, 1,437 of whom are from Uganda, 447 from South Sudan and 400 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The current configuration does not match the configuration that was originally envisioned. Not only were 5,030 troops originally pledged, but not all of the soldiers currently on the ground are operational or possess sufficient strength and capability to conduct effective military operations against LRA. The redeployment of a substantial number of South Sudanese and Ugandan troops due to the crisis in South Sudan partially explains the decrease in military strength.

54. The United Nations Office to the African Union, based in Addis Ababa, has continued to assist the African Union in its efforts to develop the Regional Task Force. After consultations with the Force Commander and partners, the African Union decided to restructure the headquarters of the Regional Task Force in Yambio, South Sudan. Pursuant to that decision, the African Union deployed 12 military officers and 1 civilian staff to Yambio on 4 August. The United Nations also supported the African Union in its efforts to secure additional funding for the Regional Task Force. In June, the European Union extended the period during which its contribution of 1,974,808 euros could be implemented to the end of 2014. Those funds will mainly contribute to the restructuring of the headquarters of the Regional Task Force and to the operational costs of the secretariat of the Joint Coordination Mechanism of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army. In addition, from 15 to 19 May, the United Nations Office to the African Union supported the African Union in a technical assessment mission to the Central African Republic to develop a coordination mechanism between MISCA and the Regional Task Force. During the mission, it was decided that both forces would exchange liaison officers. That decision has been assimilated by the new United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, MINUSCA, and forms the basis of ongoing efforts to

coordinate and exchange information concerning LRA in the Central African Republic.

## **2. Enhancement of efforts to promote the protection of civilians**

55. United Nations entities, bilateral donors and NGOs continued to implement a variety of programmes in LRA-affected areas to support the protection of civilians. The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) is overseeing a number of projects in LRA-affected areas on child protection and the reintegration of women and children, to include continuing training on child protection for troops of the African Union Regional Task Force. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, UNICEF works with implementing partners to ensure psychosocial, temporary host family and other forms of support for children who had left LRA.

56. Also in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, NGOs supported community resilience by furthering the expansion of an early warning network based on the use of high-frequency radios and other means that facilitate communication between communities regarding LRA attacks and other forms of insecurity.

57. The United Nations Multidimensional Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO) continued to be engaged in efforts to reassure and protect the local population. MONUSCO actions in LRA-affected areas included the regular deployment of joint patrols with the Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo and the rehabilitation of roads. The Dungu-Faradje axis, the main supply road for businessmen, humanitarian actors and MONUSCO staff, was completed with the construction of two bailey bridges — the bridge in Nangume (67 km from Dungu) and the Dungu Moke Bridge (133 km from Dungu). In addition, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to facilitate strategic and operational coordination in the area in order to promote protection, monitoring and reporting. The negative security and psychological impacts of the LRA threat on local populations continued to be of significant concern. Local civil society organizations continued to provide key support to boost community resilience, including in the areas of gender empowerment, psychosocial support for returnees and intercommunal reconciliation.

## **3. Expansion of current disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration activities to cover all areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army**

58. Military and civilian partners continued to implement programmes designed to encourage defections from LRA. It has been reported that, since May, 81 individuals who were LRA members for a long time have defected or been released, including five Ugandan adult combatants.

59. MONUSCO has expanded its disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration operations in LRA-affected areas. Five different sites in the area, including Dungu, have a permanent or rotating presence of staff dedicated to related activities, which include FM radio broadcasts managed by MONUSCO with messages that encourage defection. MONUSCO also manages a transit camp in Dungu which provides care to minors who are released or have

escaped from LRA. The children are handed over to UNICEF and its partners for family tracing and reunification.

60. In the Central African Republic, United States military advisers airdropped leaflets and broadcast defection messages through loudspeakers mounted on helicopters. In addition, NGOs provided capacity-building support for the broadcasting of those defection messages, which often featured the testimonies of former LRA members, by community radio stations.

61. United Nations entities, NGOs and civil society organizations worked in partnership to encourage members of local communities to accept LRA returnees peacefully and to refrain from engaging in acts of revenge or violence against them. While those efforts were met with considerable success, a noticeable gap remained in programming and strategies to address the broader economic, psychosocial and educational needs of returnees. In that context, the Government of Norway and UNICEF funded a research project on the broad set of challenges related to the reintegration of LRA returnees.

#### **4. Promotion of a coordinated humanitarian and child protection response in all areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army**

62. Humanitarian organizations operating in LRA-affected areas have done commendable work to assist the affected populations during the worst years of the crisis and continue to operate in the health, education, protection, water, hygiene and sanitation, non-food items, and food security sectors in LRA-affected areas. Yet, insecurity, remoteness and minimal road infrastructure continue to hinder humanitarian access.

63. Moreover, owing to the decrease in humanitarian needs in LRA-affected areas compared to previous years and ongoing crises elsewhere in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, humanitarian funding in LRA-affected areas of that country has diminished and, consequently, a large number of humanitarian NGOs have recently withdrawn from Dungu and Ango, the hubs for most of the efforts against LRA in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The withdrawal of some humanitarian actors without the parallel arrival of development organizations to implement early recovery and long-term development activities has contributed to a feeling of abandonment, which members of the local population have expressed and which reinforce a perception that the threat posed by LRA is becoming a forgotten issue.

64. In south-eastern Central African Republic, a number of humanitarian organizations have made significant efforts to continue to serve the affected populations, despite many logistical and security challenges, although their presence and programmes do not reach the totality of the population in need. Renewed efforts are urgently needed to provide those affected populations, particularly the most vulnerable members of the community, with the required humanitarian assistance.

#### **5. Provision of support to Governments affected by the Lord's Resistance Army in the fields of peacebuilding, human rights, the rule of law and development to enable them to establish State authority throughout their territory**

65. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, United Nations agencies are currently transitioning from purely humanitarian activities to activities aimed at

improving living conditions, strengthening resilience and advancing development in parts of Orientale Province, including LRA-affected areas.

66. Also in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, MONUSCO has been supporting a range of activities to facilitate the establishment of State authority in LRA-affected areas, including by supporting the reopening and refurbishment of State institutions such as police stations and tribunals. On 10 October, a tribunal in Tumbu built with funding for MONUSCO quick-impact projects was inaugurated by my Special Representative for the Democratic Republic of the Congo and handed over to the administrator of Dungu territory. MONUSCO is also engaged in capacity-building programmes for agents of the Congolese justice system, the police forces and other local authorities.

67. In the Central African Republic, MINUSCA will endeavour, as part of its mandate, to support the transitional Government to establish local government offices, including in LRA-affected parts of the country.

68. Despite these initiatives, there is an overall lack of development-oriented programmes in LRA-affected areas. In this respect, during the fourth ministerial meeting of the Joint Coordination Mechanism of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army, which took place on 25 March, it was decided that the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan should appoint focal points to participate in an upcoming joint meeting, to be held by the African Union, to develop post-conflict reconstruction in LRA-affected areas. That decision was made pursuant to an African Union-commissioned World Bank preliminary assessment on the long-term stabilization needs of LRA-affected areas of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan.

## **V. Observations and recommendations**

69. The situation in the Central African Republic remains a matter of deep concern, both because of its impact on the people of the country and because of its implications for the entire region. Central African States and institutions play an essential role in addressing the crisis, in collaboration with the United Nations and the African Union. ECCAS and CEMAC have shown commitment to finding a solution to the crisis in the interest of fostering peace and greater stability in the subregion. I would like to acknowledge the role of the President of the Congo, Mr. Sassou Nguesso, as ECCAS mediator, as well as of the African Union Special Envoy for the Central African Republic, Mr. Boubèye Maïga, in the international mediation effort and welcome their fruitful collaboration with my Special Representative for Central Africa, Mr. Bathily, and my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, Babacar Gaye, both of whom will continue to support international mediation. In this context, I call upon all stakeholders in the Central African Republic to respect the Brazzaville agreement, work constructively in the context of the transition and actively prepare for the timely holding of elections.

70. I commend the efforts of the Governments of the subregion, United Nations entities, national and international NGOs and other partners in addressing the consequences of the crisis in the Central African Republic for neighbouring countries. I reiterate my call for the international community to urgently provide the financial support to the inter-agency Central African Republic regional response

plan required to assist the Governments concerned in addressing their growing humanitarian needs.

71. I am deeply concerned about the ongoing activities of Boko Haram and their increasing impact on the Central African region, in particular in northern Cameroon. I welcome the ongoing mediation role played by the Government of Chad to facilitate dialogue between the Government of Nigeria and representatives of Boko Haram and to find a political solution. I urge the countries of the Lake Chad basin to continue to work together to collectively address this scourge in a manner consistent with international human rights standards and to bring an end to the violence perpetrated by Boko Haram.

72. I also welcome the commitment of Governments in the subregion to advance the road map for the development of an integrated strategy for Central Africa on countering terrorism and controlling the flow of small arms and light weapons. I strongly encourage those countries of the subregion that have not yet done so to ratify the Central African Convention for the Control of Small Arms and Light Weapons, Their Ammunition and All Parts and Components That Can Be Used for Their Manufacture, Repair and Assembly. UNOCA will continue to support these efforts in collaboration with the relevant United Nations entities.

73. Maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea continues to affect States of Central and West Africa. I commend the initiatives undertaken in support of regional anti-piracy efforts and welcome the inauguration, in Yaoundé, of the Interregional Coordination Centre on Maritime Security in the Gulf of Guinea. In that regard, I strongly encourage the establishment of the two planned maritime operational centres, one in West Africa and one in Central Africa, to complete the regional information-sharing architecture. I call upon States and subregional organizations of the Gulf of Guinea to redouble their efforts in implementing the decisions taken at the summit held in Yaoundé on 25 June 2013. UNOCA, in collaboration with UNOWA, will continue to provide assistance in the region and mobilize support in order to achieve those objectives.

74. I am concerned by continuing reports of poaching and wildlife trafficking in Central Africa and of links between that illicit trade and armed groups in the subregion, including LRA. I strongly encourage Central African Governments and ECCAS to put in place a subregional strategy to address this disturbing phenomenon. UNOCA will continue to support the subregion to develop a coherent and concerted approach to address this issue.

75. I welcome the continued progress made in addressing the threat posed by LRA and acknowledge the fruitful cooperation between UNOCA and the African Union in that regard. I also welcome the recent appointment of Mr. Kiprono Tuwei as the new African Union Special Envoy on the Lord's Resistance Army and I pay tribute to the work done by his predecessor, Francisco Madeira. I also commend the contributions made by LRA-affected countries, the United Nations system, NGOs and partners in our collective endeavour to address the LRA issue. I recognize, in particular, the critical support provided by the United States and the European Union. I am especially grateful for the efforts of the African Union Regional Task Force.

76. I am concerned about reports that the bulk of LRA has moved into the Democratic Republic of the Congo. I call upon the affected States to enhance

cooperation to deny the group safe haven in their countries. I welcome the invitation extended to the African Union by the Government of the Sudan to verify reports of LRA presence in Kafia Kingi and encourage the African Union Commission and the African Union Peace and Security Council to verify the allegations. Despite the continuing decline in the group's activity overall, LRA remains a serious threat and its senior leadership is intact and has the potential to destabilize the subregion. Furthermore, instability in the Central African Republic and South Sudan is seriously undermining the progress achieved thus far. I call upon the countries participating in the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the Lord's Resistance Army to renew their political commitment to tackling the LRA issue and fulfil their troop pledges to the African Union Regional Task Force. I reiterate that the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the LRA provides a comprehensive approach to addressing a range of pressing needs in LRA-affected areas. I call upon the international community to provide financial support for the activities detailed in the implementation plan adopted by the Security Council in December 2012. Given the declining presence of humanitarian actors in many LRA-affected areas, I draw particular attention to the need for donors to support early-recovery activities in order to restore basic livelihoods and essential services for affected communities in those areas.

77. I would like, once again, to express my appreciation to the Governments of Central African countries, ECCAS, CEMAC, the African Union, the Commission of the Gulf of Guinea, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and other subregional and regional institutions for their continued collaboration with UNOCA. I thank the various entities of the United Nations system working in Central Africa, including the heads of United Nations peace operations, regional offices, country teams and other relevant entities, for their support and cooperation with UNOCA.

78. I pay tribute to my former Special Representative, Mr. Moussa, for his leadership and efforts in the establishment of UNOCA and the implementation of its mandate. I would also like to thank my new Special Representative, Mr. Bathily, and the staff of UNOCA for their continuing efforts to advance the cause of peace and security in Central Africa.

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