



# Security Council

Seventy-fifth year

**8712**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Friday, 31 January 2020, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Dang . . . . . (Viet Nam)

*Members:*

Belgium . . . . .	Mrs. Van Vlierberge
China . . . . .	Mr. Wu Haitao
Dominican Republic . . . . .	Ms. Hidalgo
Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Auväärt
France . . . . .	Mrs. Gueguen
Germany . . . . .	Mr. Schulz
Indonesia . . . . .	Mr. Djani
Niger . . . . .	Mr. A Barry
Russian Federation . . . . .	Mr. Polyanskiy
Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. King
South Africa . . . . .	Ms. Mogashoa
Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Baati
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Clay
United States of America . . . . .	Ms. Norman-Chalet

## Agenda

### The situation in the Central African Republic

Letter dated 6 December 2019 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2454 (2019) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/930)

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*The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.*

### Adoption of the agenda

*The agenda was adopted.*

### The situation in the Central African Republic

#### **Letter dated 6 December 2019 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2454 (2019) addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/2019/930)**

**The President:** In accordance with rule 37 of the Council's provisional rules of procedure, I invite the representative of the Central African Republic to participate in this meeting.

The Security Council will now begin its consideration of the item on its agenda.

Members of the Council have before them document S/2020/79, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

I wish to draw the attention of Council members to document S/2019/930, which contains the text of a letter dated 6 December 2019 from the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to resolution 2454 (2019) addressed to the President of the Security Council.

It is my understanding that the Council is ready to proceed to the vote on the draft resolution before it. I shall put the draft resolution to the vote now.

*A vote was taken by show of hands.*

*In favour:*

Belgium, Dominican Republic, Estonia, France, Germany, Indonesia, Niger, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, South Africa, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

*Against:*

None

*Abstaining:*

China, Russian Federation

**The President:** The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2507 (2020).

I shall now give the floor to those members of the Council who wish to make statements.

**Mrs. Gueguen** (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020), renewing the sanctions regime concerning the Central African Republic. As penholder, we are of the view that the text is a good compromise that we managed to reach following negotiations throughout which the delegation of France strived throughout to play the role of constructive facilitator. As such, I would like to thank the members of the Council for their flexibility, but I deeply regret that we did not adopt the text unanimously.

The Security Council is always ready to listen to the legitimate concerns of the Central African authorities about the security of their country. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, a major commitment of the United Nations, ensures the security of the population throughout the country and supports the gradual redeployment of the Central African armed forces. Moreover, in order to help equip and strengthen the mobility and security of the Central African forces, from September to date the Security Council has twice authorized a significant easing of the arms embargo. Finally, I recall that the Central African authorities can take advantage of the exemption procedures stipulated by the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic.

We believe that, in a security context that remains unstable, it is important to maintain a responsible approach and to ensure support for the Central African authorities in their efforts to advance security sector reform; to disarm, demobilize and reintegrate former members of armed groups; and to manage weapons and ammunition. This is a key element for achieving lasting peace and security in the Central African Republic. France will therefore continue to fully support the Central African authorities in that endeavour.

**Mr. Abarry** (Niger) (*spoke in French*): On behalf of South Africa, Tunisia and the Niger, I welcome the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020), renewing the sanctions regime imposed on the Central African Republic. We take this opportunity to thank all members of the Security Council for the text, which is the product of constructive negotiations and the assiduous work of the penholder. We also commend and support the efforts

of the Government of the Central African Republic to implement all the measures taken to restore peace and stability in the country. We would like to highlight two points with respect to the resolution.

First, we stress that the sanctions regime must represent not an objective in itself, but rather our commitment to the country's transition towards peace and stability and peace.

Secondly, the adoption of the resolution is thus a response to the legitimate request of the authorities of the Central African Republic to pursue the definitive lifting of the arms embargo on the basis of progress made in the area of storing and preventing the diversion of weapons.

The resolution that we have just adopted will pave the way for the re-equipping of the entire defence and security apparatus so that the authorities of the Central African Republic can regain control of the entire country and confront the armed groups that continue to pose a threat to peace and stability.

Finally, the three African members of the Security Council stress the need to support the Central African Republic, in coordination with all regional partners, in its efforts to stabilize the country and promote its socioeconomic recovery, and encourage it to further increase cooperation with its partners.

**Ms. King** (Saint Vincent and the Grenadines): Saint Vincent and the Grenadines welcomes the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020). Sanctions are indeed an imperfect tool, but among the basket of corrective options currently available, such measures are likely to yield some intended results, with minimal collateral effects. To be clear, our desire is not to punish the Central African Republic, but to support the State as it restores its own authority and fulfils its responsibility of protecting civilians. We consider the resolution to be robust enough to help combat the proliferation of illicit small arms and light weapons while providing some flexibility to the legitimate authorities of the country, which have faced operational and logistical difficulties.

Our delegation has taken note of the Central African Republic's repeated calls for a complete lifting of the arms component of the sanctions measures. While we do agree that there is some merit to that request, primarily as it relates to enabling the security forces to reclaim territory from armed groups, we do not believe that the time is ripe for a complete lifting of arms

measures, as there still remain some shortcomings with weapons and ammunition management in the country. To that end, we emphasize that there is a great need for capacity-building and call on all of our friends in the international community to provide technical and development assistance in that regard.

At this juncture, we wish to recognize that the Government of the Central African Republic, despite its many challenges, has committed to and made progress towards achieving the key benchmarks that guide our sanctions review process. We also offer our highest assurances that once those efforts continue, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will advocate for further easing of the arms embargo with a view to gradually and progressively lifting those restrictions. We therefore encourage the Central African Republic authorities to continue reforming its security sector and to maintain its efforts to disarm, demobilize, reintegrate and repatriate ex-combatants. Those structural reforms would help to build trust and ensure much-needed reconciliation among the people of the Central African Republic. After all, it is they who must lead their political process.

The resolution embodies the spirit of compromise. Saint Vincent and the Grenadines would like to thank France, the penholder, and all members of the Security Council for their constructive efforts to reach a working consensus. As individual Member States, we may often have divergent views, but as a Council we must always remain objective and pragmatic. We should never allow narrow self-interest, ideological positions or strategic agendas to overshadow the needs of the Central African Republic.

Finally, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines will always stand in solidarity with our African brothers and sisters. When Africa speaks, we will listen.

**Mr. Schulz** (Germany): We welcome today's adoption of resolution 2507 (2020) to renew the sanctions regime in the Central African Republic and we thank the penholder for its perseverance in trying to consolidate and bridge the views shared by the Council members. We engaged in these negotiations with the aim of sending a signal of unity to the Central African Republic and its people. That is particularly important because this year, with the upcoming elections, will be crucial to the stability and future of the country. It is regrettable that this unity could not be fully reached in the end.

We commend the Government of the Central African Republic for the hard work, commitment and results achieved over the past year. The Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and the ongoing implementation efforts, as well as the overall political process, are encouraging and positive signs. We also welcome the country's continuing work with regard to security sector reform, the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process and the management of weapons and ammunition. We would like to assure the Government of the Central African Republic of Germany's support, which we extend through the European Union and its Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic, but also as one of the biggest bilateral donors of humanitarian assistance in support of the people of the Central African Republic.

Yet, we also see that there is still a lot of work to be done. We remain deeply concerned about the situation in the Central African Republic given the instability, violence and continuing attacks on civilians — as we sadly witnessed again just a few days ago in Bria. We remain convinced that the sanctions regime, including the arms embargo, is an important element to accompany the Government of the Central African Republic on its way towards stability, peace and development. Guided by that understanding of the importance of the sanctions regime, as well as the need to send a clear and positive signal to the Government of the Central African Republic, we have shown flexibility in the negotiations, despite our concerns.

Today's decision must also be seen against the background of the widespread availability and proliferation of small arms in Africa. Those arms are a major driver of conflict. Germany is committed to combating that scourge, including through our support for the African Union Silencing the Guns initiative.

In that context, I wish to stress the importance of the responsibility that we have placed on the shoulders of the Government of the Central African Republic today, namely, to administer additional categories of arms and to live up to the highest standards in assuming that responsibility. We urge the Central African Republic to live up to the responsibility to tightly control any arms delivered to it, to use them only in strict compliance with all legal conditions, including international human rights and humanitarian law, and to prevent any risk of proliferation.

We would like to underline that we see the efforts of the Central African Republic, hand in hand with its international partners, as part of an ongoing process. We therefore strongly encourage the authorities of the Central African Republic to continue their efforts in making further progress on the benchmarks, particularly with regard to security sector reform, the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process and the management of weapons and ammunition.

**Ms. Hidalgo** (Dominican Republic) (*spoke in Spanish*): We welcome the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020). We understand that the adoption of this resolution reaffirms the Security Council's commitment to the authorities of the Central African Republic to contribute to their struggle to achieve sustainable peace. The Dominican Republic voted in favour of the resolution, recognizing the efforts of the authorities of the Central African Republic to implement the terms of reference and with a view to contributing to consensus in the Council.

We hope that over the next six months, the authorities will continue to implement the steps established in presidential statement S/PRST/2019/3, of 9 April 2019, which will enable the Council to finally lift the sanctions regime and the arms embargo. We urge all parties to redouble their efforts to implement the February peace agreement and to continue working on the remaining challenges with a view to bringing about peace and lasting stability for their people.

**Mr. Auväärt** (Estonia): We welcome the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020). We would like to thank the penholder, France.

It is regrettable that we are not unanimous regarding this resolution, whose sole purpose is to curtail the hostile actions of armed groups that seek to undermine peace and security in the Central African Republic. We should not be divided on the issue of restricting the illegal flow of weapons to a country that is suffering from warfare and violence, but should instead unite in finding ways to assist the Central African Republic in stopping massacres such as the one in Bria just this week. We extend our condolences to the delegation of the Central African Republic. We should join together in helping the Central African Republic to counter the spread of measles, which was declared a national epidemic three days ago, and assist the country in its disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and security sector reform processes.

Turning to positive developments, we welcome the commitment of the Government of the Central African Republic and the progress made on the five benchmarks agreed by the Council. We believe that it is our common goal to restrict the flow of weapons into hands that would use them to further destabilize the vulnerable situation in the Central African Republic.

**Mrs. Van Vlierberge** (Belgium) (*spoke in French*): Belgium today provided its support for the renewal of the sanctions regime. We would like to thank France for its constructive work and leadership in that regard.

Belgium is convinced that the arms embargo measures on the Central African Republic remain essential in order to create the conditions for lasting peace in the country. We recall that the authorities also benefit from an exemptions mechanism. We encourage the authorities to continue their security sector reform efforts so as to ensure that they have well-trained and adequately equipped armed forces and police who are aware of their responsibilities to the people and supported by a long-term strategy. That is a long-term task, and we are ready to assist the Central African Republic as a partner at the national level as well as through the European Union.

I would like to conclude by recalling Belgium's support for the Government of President Touadera, Special Representative Ndiaye and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic.

**Mr. Djani** (Indonesia): Indonesia welcomes the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020) and thanks the penholder for its efforts in trying to find consensus and bridge differences.

We heard the call from the Central African Republic and recognize its efforts to fulfil its obligations under the benchmarks. Today's adoption is a form of support to the Government of the Central African Republic in the need to combat armed groups and maintain stability closer to the upcoming national election.

Today's adoption also emphasized our views on sanctions. First, sanctions are not an end in themselves but a means to achieve our collective goals. Secondly, sanctions are not forever and should be used in line with the real situation on the ground.

Indonesia reiterates its support for the efforts made by the Government of the Central African Republic and further calls on the wider membership of the United

Nations to continue its support to the country. Indonesia will continue to push for unity in the Council and the bridging of differences among members in order to move forward in our collective goal to save lives.

**Mr. Wu Haitao** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): The current political and security situation in the Central African Republic is improving overall. The Government of the Central African Republic is committed to implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and is actively making progress in the implementation of the benchmarks for the arms embargo assessment. China commends those efforts.

China has always believed that sanctions are not an end in themselves but rather a means to the end, which is to help the Central African Republic to restore national stability and a normal social order at an early date. The Security Council should base itself on the actual situation on the ground in the Central African Republic, particularly the aspirations of its Government, and lift the arms embargo sanction measures against the Central African Republic as soon as possible. That will help the Government of the Central African Republic to strengthen its capacity to maintain national safety and security and facilitate the political settlement of the Central African Republic issue.

China wishes to thank France, the penholder, for its efforts. However, resolution 2507 (2020) failed to fully respect the wishes of the Government of the Central African Republic regarding the lifting of the arms embargo, nor did it reflect the constructive ideas of some members of the Security Council. China therefore had no choice but to abstain.

**Mr. Clay** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020). I would like to begin by thanking France for its efforts to secure the Council's consensus on the resolution and for its inclusive approach to the negotiations.

We regret that, despite the considerable effort of the penholder, consensus could not be reached and the Council was obliged to agree on a renewal period of only six months. We believe that six months is too short to allow for the effective implementation of the resolution and sends the wrong signal to the armed groups targeted by the resolution.

I would like to be set out the position of the United Kingdom on the arms embargo. The arms

embargo is designed to prevent weapons from reaching armed groups, not from reaching the Government of the Central African Republic. The notification and exemption procedures, as set out in the resolution, are the mechanisms through which the defence and security forces of the Central African Republic can access all the arms and equipment that they need to perform their role. To claim otherwise risks giving a false impression that adjusting or lifting the arms embargo will necessarily make the Central African Republic defence forces better able to protect the citizens of the country.

The United Kingdom welcomes the commitment of the Government of the Central African Republic and the progress made since April towards the five benchmarks agreed by the Council in the areas of security sector reform, disarmament, demobilization and reintegration and weapons and ammunition management. Progress on weapons management, in particular, is vital to ensure that weapons intended for the Central African Republic defence and security forces do not fall into the hands of armed groups. We encourage the Government of the Central African Republic to continue its efforts. It has our full support.

**Mr. Polyanskiy** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): Russia was unable to support today's resolution 2507 (2020). We sincerely appreciate the penholder's efforts; however, not all of our arguments were taken into account in the drafting the text of the resolution. We advocated for a greater easing of the arms embargo. Unfortunately, neither Bangui's official appeal nor our position were duly considered.

The arms embargo on the Central African Republic may have played a positive role in the early stages, but now it is effectively an obstacle to the rearming of the national army and security forces — the very institutions that bear the primary responsibility for upholding the peace and security of their own citizens. Meanwhile, the saboteurs of the peace process among the armed groups remain unhindered in replenishing their stockpiles of weapons through smuggling.

Simplifying procedures for the Central African Republic to obtain certain categories of armed vehicles for its own needs, as provided for by the present resolution, is another small step in supporting the Central African Republic. However, we must not forget that the legitimate Central African authorities have urged the Council to fully lift the arms embargo, and in our view they have every reason to do so. We are

therefore determined to further review the Security Council's restrictive sanctions in July with a view to their easing and, ultimately, their full lifting.

Sanctions are one of the many important tools in the Council's toolkit to stimulate the peace process and political dialogue, and they should be used with the full measure of responsibility and caution in order to avoid causing harm. Moreover, any Security Council restriction must evolve and adapt in line with the changing dynamics on the ground.

We wish to assure the Council that Russia will continue to provide assistance to the Central African Republic, both in its process of national reconciliation and in the context of strengthening its security forces, with a view to normalizing the situation in the country and reaching a sustainable settlement to the protracted armed conflict.

**Ms. Norman-Chalet** (United States of America): The United States is pleased to join the large majority of Council members in voting in favour of resolution 2507 (2020), renewing the sanctions regime in the Central African Republic. We hope that the extension of the arms embargo, assets freeze and travel ban will keep necessary pressure on the armed groups that continue to undermine peace and security in the Central African Republic.

That decision is grounded on our overarching goal to strengthen the Central African Republic as a country, as a whole, and support its institutions. However, the resolution aside, given the dynamic that played out in this negotiation, we must raise the issue of the recent remarks made on this matter by the Russian Ambassador in Bangui that are deeply concerning. In public comments, the Ambassador denigrated any member of the Council who would disagree with Russia's position, saying that those Governments — including my own — “do not want peace and security in the country” and “are against the interests of the Central African people”.

In fact, nothing could be further from the truth. The members of the Council differ regarding technical elements most appropriate for an effective sanctions regime, the issues that we seek to highlight in Security Council resolutions and even sometimes how to characterize recent developments in the Central African Republic. But all of us are engaged on this matter because we want to see peace and security in the

Central African Republic and elevate the interests of the Central African people.

The United States demonstrates our commitment as the largest single-country humanitarian donor in the Central African Republic. Our life-saving assistance of more than \$140 million in just the past year is directly helping millions of Central Africans who were forced to flee their homes. Moreover, we are helping to rebuild the Central African Republic's security institutions so that they can protect the people and the territory of the Central African Republic. If our Russian colleagues are suggesting that life-saving humanitarian aid is against the interests of those who depend on it, it would not be the first time that they have done so in the Security Council this month. But that would not make the claim true.

As other speakers have noted, we believe that the Council would be favourably disposed to exemption requests from the Central African Republic Government to import new arms, but we have not received any such requests since the last relaxation of the arms embargo in September. We look forward to future reporting on progress towards the benchmarks for the next iteration of the resolution.

Russia's divisive propaganda leads down a dangerous path. The Central African Republic is a fragile State, and it is in the interests of all of us in the international community to support its return to full sovereignty and avoid any acts that could destabilize the country. That point is crucial in the run-up to the December 2020 elections. We should all be seeking to de-escalate tensions and build confidence among political actors, rather than spreading false narratives. We should support political dialogue and transitional justice and work transparently to address violations of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic in a constructive, consultative manner with the United Nations and the African Union.

Rather than questioning the motives of Council members whose views do not align with their own, we hope that Russia will work cooperatively with the United States and other friends of the Central African Republic to support the strengthening of State institutions in a transparent and coordinated way, and to ensure that the 2020 elections are free and fair.

**The President:** I shall now make a statement in my capacity as the representative of Viet Nam.

At the outset, Viet Nam would like to thank France, the penholder, and other members of the Security Council for their hard work on resolution 2507 (2020). We welcome the adoption of the resolution, which renews the sanctions regime and further eases the arms embargo on the Central African Republic. It shows that the Council has been closely following the situation in the Central African Republic and seeking ways to support its Government and people in order to achieve sustainable peace in the country.

It is important that Security Council resolutions be fully implemented. We are of the view that the ultimate purpose of the sanctions is to pave the way forward for a peaceful and sustainable solution to the crisis. The application of sanctions has to be in conformity with international law and in respect of the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic. Viet Nam welcomes the recent positive developments in the Central African Republic and wishes to stress the importance of maintaining conditions favourable to dialogue, the peaceful settlement of disputes and the preparation for the upcoming electoral process.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

**Ms. Kpongo** (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): I must apologize in advance because I am losing my voice at this very important time and, as such, will be forced to be brief.

My delegation welcomes the adoption of resolution 2507 (2020), renewing the sanctions regime concerning the Central African Republic, even if the unanimity that we had hoped for was not achieved. I sincerely thank all members of the Security Council. We are especially pleased by the spirit of consensus and compromise that prevailed during the negotiations, given the fact that the fate of an entire people depends on the decisions that the Council takes in this Chamber. I sincerely commend France, the penholder, for its flexibility throughout these days of consultations, which yielded a concise text acceptable to all. My delegation welcomes the further easing of the arms embargo with respect to certain types of vehicles.

The activities of armed groups in the north of the country, specifically in Vakaga prefecture, remain a source of deep concern for the population, even if

the latest events in Bria led to casualties in the ranks of those groups themselves. Equipping the defence and security forces with vehicles will ensure their mobility in areas affected by insecurity and their rapid intervention to protect civilians in distress. Indeed, it is those criminal activities throughout the country that have led the Government to call for the complete lifting of the arms embargo.

I would be remiss in concluding without congratulating Viet Nam for its excellent work over the course of its presidency in the month of January, even though it is the last day of that presidency. I wish the new elected members of the Council every success in discharging their mandate over the next years.

**The President:** There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

As this is the last scheduled meeting of the Council for the month of January, I would like to express the sincere appreciation of the delegation of Viet Nam to the members of the Council and to the Council secretariat for all the support they have given us. Indeed, it has been a busy month, during which we rose to consensus on several important issues within our purview. We could not have done it alone or without the hard work, support and positive contributions of all members, their delegations, representatives of the secretariat, conferences services officers, interpreters, verbatim reporters and security staff.

As we end our presidency, I now speak on behalf of the entire Council in wishing the delegation of Belgium good luck in the month of February.

*The meeting rose at 10.40 a.m.*