



# Security Council

Seventy-sixth year

**8902**<sup>nd</sup> meeting

Friday, 12 November 2021, 10 a.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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<i>President:</i>	Mr. Gómez Robledo Verduzco . . . . .	(Mexico)
<i>Members:</i>	China . . . . .	Mr. Dai Bing
	Estonia . . . . .	Mr. Jürgenson
	France . . . . .	Mrs. Gasri
	India . . . . .	Mr. Ravindran
	Ireland . . . . .	Ms. Byrne Nason
	Kenya . . . . .	Mr. Kiboino
	Niger . . . . .	Mr. Maman Sani
	Norway . . . . .	Ms. Heimerback
	Russian Federation . . . . .	Ms. Evstigneeva
	Saint Vincent and the Grenadines . . . . .	Ms. DeShong
	Tunisia . . . . .	Mr. Ben Said
	United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Roscoe
	United States of America . . . . .	Mr. Mills
	Viet Nam . . . . .	Mrs. Tra Phuong Nguyen

## Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

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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**

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): 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/2021/945, which contains the text of a draft resolution submitted by France.

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:*

Estonia, France, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Niger, Norway, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Tunisia, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America, Viet Nam

#### *Against:*

None

#### *Abstaining:*

China, Russian Federation

**The President** (*spoke in Spanish*): The draft resolution received 13 votes in favour, none against and 2 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2605 (2021).

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

**Mr. Mills** (United States of America): Let me begin by thanking France for its work as penholder.

The United States voted in favour of resolution 2605 (2021) today because it reinforces the Council's support for the critical work of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). It affirms the centrality of the 2019 Political Agreement

for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, recognizes the important contributions of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region to the peace process in the Central African Republic, and endorses President Touadera's 15 October unilateral ceasefire. This mandate reinforces the importance of respect for the status-of-forces agreement between the Central African Republic and MINUSCA and supports the crucial work of the Government's special commission of inquiry to investigate human rights, abuses and violations.

However, we must clarify the United States position regarding important issues on which the resolution is silent. I want to be clear — individuals supported by the Russian Federation and invited into the country by the Central African Republic Government stand accused of committing egregious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, including those involving sexual violence, summary executions, torture and armed robbery. Numerous independent reports of the United Nations, the Panel of Experts of the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2374 (2017) concerning Mali, investigative journalists and the Central African Republic Government itself have concluded that Russian-supported actors have committed crimes during combat operations.

To that effect, we would like to call attention to the use of the phrase "all parties to the conflict" in the resolution, which in our view includes these Russian contractors. They must respect international humanitarian law and it is imperative that they respect the human rights of all Central Africans. We call on the Governments of both the Central African Republic and the Russian Federation to fully investigate abuses by Russian-supported actors and Central African soldiers and to hold those responsible accountable.

The United States is also disappointed that the resolution remains silent on the 1 November attack on a bus of unarmed, recently arrived Egyptian peacekeepers by members of the Presidential Guard. We urge the Central African Republic authorities to carry out a transparent and credible investigation to hold those responsible accountable and to counter disinformation regarding this incident. We emphasize that this incident highlights the urgent need to build trust and to improve operational and tactical coordination. Disinformation must stop.

We must also clarify the United States position regarding humanitarian access. While we recognize that, in certain circumstances, States may have obligations related to humanitarian aid, there is no universal and unlimited international legal obligation on States or other parties to an armed conflict to allow and facilitate “safe, rapid and unhindered” humanitarian access. Therefore, the United States disagrees with the use of the phrase “in accordance with relevant provisions of international law”, contained in paragraph 52 of the resolution, where its placement suggests that safe, rapid and unhindered humanitarian access is required by international law, without exception.

We note that legally accurate humanitarian access clauses appear in our resolutions for the African Union Mission in Somalia, the United Nations Mission in South Sudan, the United Nations Interim Security Force for Abyei, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali and the United Nations Mission in Somalia, among other resolutions. We urge members to draw on those examples going forward. To be clear, the United States continues to strongly support humanitarian access in conflict areas, and we have backed language in numerous Council resolutions that demands that parties to a conflict provide safe, rapid and unhindered access to humanitarian aid.

Allow me to conclude by underscoring that we strongly support the resolution. With this renewal, the Council has ensured the continued support of MINUSCA for the Central African Republic through the protection of civilians, the strengthening of local institutions and the promotion of peace.

**Ms. Evstigneeva** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*) The Russian delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 2605 (2021), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for a further year.

Despite the efforts of the French authors with respect to the adoption of decisions in the Security Council, which we believe to be generally constructive, we must not forget the views of the host country. Unfortunately, a number of fundamental points expressed by the Government of the Central African Republic and disseminated yesterday in an official Security Council document are not reflected in the resolution.

Nevertheless, we trust that the renewal of MINUSCA mandate will make a positive contribution to helping

the Central African Republic authorities to stabilize the situation in the country. In this regard, we welcome the decision of President Touadera to announce a ceasefire and the desire of the Government to push forward the implementation of the Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in Central African Republic and inter-Central African dialogue. We also note steps to strengthen and expand the authority of State organs in various regions of the country, which is necessary, inter alia, to address humanitarian problems.

Russia unfailingly supports the work of the Blue Helmets, which play a key role the overall security architecture of the Central African Republic. However, we cannot fail to note that, over the period of its existence, the Mission has frequently been a source of scandal. The Blue Helmets have been accused of sexual abuse, including against children, and of smuggling natural resources. The most recent example of that is the uncovering of a large-scale criminal network smuggling diamonds and gold via one country in Europe. There are many questions regarding the incident involving the Egyptian contingent on 1 November. We express our sincere wish to see the peacekeepers and friends from Egypt a speedy recovery and express our solidarity with them. However, the tragic event led, inter alia, to mistakes in the organization of troop transfers that the MINUSCA leadership allowed to occur. We need to carefully investigate that matter.

We note that the constant negative background issues surrounding MINUSCA are harming the Security Council’s reputation and undermining trust in the United Nations itself. Although the adoption of resolution 2605 (2021) is a token of trust in the Mission, unfortunately we cannot consider the work it has done to date satisfactory or competent. We intend to monitor how they are going to take advantage of the support expressed by the Security Council today.

We believe that a first step, which should have been taking a long time ago, is take the concerns of the host country into consideration and to establish mutually respectful trust with Bangui, without which it will not be possible to fully implement the peacekeeping mission’s mandate. That is the cornerstone of the mandate of any peacekeeping mission.

Today once again, we have heard accusations against the Russian specialists who are working in the Central African Republic. They are successfully improving the level of vocational training of Central African soldiers

and working there at the invitation of the legitimate Government. Thanks to their efforts, along with those of other bilateral partners, in particular the armed forces of the Central African Republic, the situation in the country has largely been stabilized. However, we have heard again and again from a number of Council members unfounded, egregious accusations regarding our specialists, which we have rejected on several occasions. If there have been violations, they should be investigated primarily by the national authorities in the Central African Republic. We are in bilateral contact with them and coordinate our work with them.

**Mr. Ravindran (India):** I take the floor to explain India's position on resolution 2605 (2021), just adopted.

The Central African Republic is at an important juncture in its tenuous journey towards peace. The announcement of a ceasefire few weeks back, ongoing efforts for the national dialogue and preparations for the local elections of 2022 indicate the firm commitment of the Central African Republic leadership to putting in place a democratic framework based on the rule of law and credible State institutions for a successful post-conflict recovery. Those efforts need the support of the international community and the Security Council. We believe they are priority tasks that the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) needs to focus on. To that end, good working relations, based on mutual trust between MINUSCA and the authorities of the Central African Republic, is critical. We expect MINUSCA leadership to pursue those tasks purposefully.

We also hope that the mid-year assessment of MINUSCA in 2022, as provided for in the resolution, will allow the Council to reflect on the evaluation of the performance of all components of MINUSCA, that is, the uniformed, civilian and mission leadership components.

**Mr. Dai Bing (China) (spoke in Chinese):** Over the course of this year, the Government of the Central African Republic has overcome considerable difficulties. It successfully held presidential and legislative elections and continues to improve the security situation, actively facilitated the "republican dialogue" and announced a unilateral ceasefire last month. China welcomes those achievements.

The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic

(MINUSCA), as mandated by the Security Council, has been actively carrying out its work under the leadership of Special Representative Ndiaye and has made important efforts to improve the situation in the Central African Republic.

At present, the Central African Republic has yet to achieve lasting peace, and the continued presence of MINUSCA is still necessary. Therefore, China supports the renewal of the mandate of MINUSCA. We hope that MINUSCA will engage more closely with the Government of the Central African Republic to increase mutual trust and work together with the Government to maintain peace and stability in the country.

The consent of the countries concerned is an important principle to which peacekeeping operations must adhere. The Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Central African Republic, Ms. Baipo Temon, sent a letter to the President of the Security Council with the hope that resolution 2605 (2021) would show greater respect for the Central African Republic and the leadership and ownership of its Government and place greater emphasis on the threats facing the Central African Republic, including armed groups. The reasonable suggestions of the Central African Republic have not been afforded full consideration, which China regrets. That is why China abstained in the voting on the resolution.

China hopes that the reasonable opinions of the Central African Republic will be given more attention by the penholder going forward.

**The President (spoke in Spanish):** I now give the floor to the representative of the Central African Republic.

**Mr. Kpatamango (Central African Republic) (spoke in French):** Indeed, I asked for the floor, but I have just received instructions from my capital. I am therefore not going to make a statement.

**The President (spoke in Spanish):** I thank the representative of the Central African Republic for his attention and for sharing that information with the members of the Security Council.

There are no more names inscribed on the list of speakers.

*The meeting rose at 10.25 a.m.*