



# Security Council

Seventy-seventh year

**9190**<sup>th</sup> meeting

Monday, 14 November 2022, 3 p.m.

New York

*Provisional*

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*President:* Mr. Agyeman. . . . . (Ghana)

*Members:*

Albania . . . . .	Mr. Spasse
Brazil . . . . .	Mr. De Almeida Filho
China . . . . .	Mr. Xing Jisheng
France . . . . .	Mrs. Broadhurst Estival
Gabon . . . . .	Mrs. Ngyema Ndong
India . . . . .	Mr. Vinito
Ireland . . . . .	Mr. Gallagher
Kenya . . . . .	Mrs. Toroitich
Mexico . . . . .	Mr. Ochoa Martínez
Norway . . . . .	Mr. Heines
Russian Federation. . . . .	Ms. Evstigneeva
United Arab Emirates . . . . .	Ms. Shaheen
United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland . .	Mr. Kariuki
United States of America. . . . .	Mr. Mills

## Agenda

The situation in the Central African Republic

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*The meeting was called to order at 3 p.m.*

### **Adoption of the agenda**

*The agenda was adopted.*

### **The situation in the Central African Republic**

**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.

On behalf of the Council, I welcome Her Excellency Ms. Sylvie Valérie Baipo Temon, Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans abroad of the Central African Republic.

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

Members of the Council have before them document S/2022/845, 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:*

Albania, Brazil, France, Ghana, India, Ireland, Kenya, Mexico, Norway, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, United States of America

#### *Against:*

None

#### *Abstaining:*

China, Gabon, Russian Federation

**The President:** The draft resolution received 12 votes in favour, none against and 3 abstentions. The draft resolution has been adopted as resolution 2659 (2022).

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

**Mrs. Broadhurst Estival** (France) (*spoke in French*): France welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in resolution 2659 (2022), which maintains MINUSCA's robust mandate as it operates in

a challenging environment. The situation in the Central African Republic remains fragile, and the country still needs MINUSCA.

During the negotiations, France was attentive to the position of each member of the Security Council. We deplore the abstentions, as MINUSCA needs our unanimous support.

France was also attentive to the position of the Central African Republic. Consultations were held in Bangui at the beginning of October, when a French delegation visited to hear the expectations of the Central African authorities. The draft resolution (S/2022/845) was therefore amended, as reflected, first, in the possibility of a strategic review being conducted once MINUSCA has achieved full operational capacity and, secondly, in MINUSCA's continued support for the extension of the authority of the Central African State throughout the territory. We worked tirelessly to promote a consensus in order to reconcile the sometimes-opposing positions of the members of the Council, while aiming to preserve MINUSCA's mandate.

The resolution just adopted contains two key points that I would like to briefly highlight.

First, it will enable MINUSCA to continue providing support for the peace process in the Central African Republic. The Council welcomes the progress that has been achieved and encourages the Central African authorities to continue their efforts to implement the Luanda road map, with the support of regional organizations and the countries of the region.

Secondly, the resolution addresses MINUSCA's freedom of movement. As the Council knows, freedom of movement must be guaranteed, without restrictions. It is a precondition for the force's operational effectiveness and essential for the safety of the Blue Helmets. We recall the tragic attack at the beginning of October that killed three Bangladeshi Blue Helmets. That is why, through resolution 2659 (2022), the Security Council reminds the Central African authorities to lift the ban on night flights in the country.

In conclusion, I would like to reiterate France's full support for the work of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Valentine Rugwabiza, and to pay tribute to the commitment of all MINUSCA personnel working to bring about peace in the Central African Republic.

**Mrs. Ngyema Ndong** (Gabon) (*spoke in French*): Gabon supports the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) and the efforts of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, Ms. Valentine Rugwabiza. However, as adopted, resolution 2659 (2022) does not meet the aspirations of the Central African Republic, which were clearly expressed in a letter addressed to the members of the Council.

Gabon has always advocated for a standing dialogue between peacekeeping operations and host countries, as well as for the consideration of the situation on the ground and the real needs of local populations. An effective mandate is a balanced and inclusive mandate that can engage all stakeholders.

As a country of the subregion, Gabon has always worked to restore peace and security in the sisterly Central African Republic. The efforts of the Central African authorities must be supported by a MINUSCA mandate that is aligned with the will of the people of the Central African Republic for stability and peace.

We therefore deplore the rejection during the negotiations of the proposals put forward, in particular, by the three African members of the Security Council — Gabon, Ghana and Kenya — in support of a strong commitment to restoring State authority, which would undoubtedly help to build peace. We also regret the lack of a differentiated treatment of armed groups and the Central African authorities, as well as the deletion of a well-defined deadline for the strategic review of the Mission.

Finally, the resolution does not take into account the efforts made by the Central African armed forces to fulfil their obligations to defend and secure their territory in difficult conditions, nor the measures taken by the Central African authorities in the area of justice and human rights in a particularly austere economic context.

**Mr. Mills** (United States of America): Let me start by thanking France, as the penholder, for its work on this important mandate. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) deserves the Council's broad support for its efforts to bring peace and security to the Central African Republic. The United States voted in favour of the mandate because its renewal empowers the Mission to continue

protecting civilians, supporting the peace process in the Central African Republic and playing a stabilizing role throughout the country. We also voted in favour of the mandate renewal because MINUSCA has made welcome advances in addressing the growing threat posed by explosive devices, countering disinformation and encouraging renewable energy use. Resolution 2659 (2022), which we just adopted, is further strengthened by its responsiveness to the host Government's requests, as communicated by the Central African Republic's Foreign Minister, Ms. Baipo Temon.

We are pleased with the mandate's unequivocal support for peacekeeper safety and security, including its call for full implementation of the status of forces agreement and the authorization of night flights. We welcome the Central African Republic's attention to that issue and the positive discussions in recent weeks and look forward to seeing the ban on MINUSCA flying at night lifted as soon as possible. Frankly, we find it difficult to understand why some Council members that purport to defend peacekeeper safety and security objected to including language on night flights in the mandate.

I would also like to highlight an important matter that was left out of the resolution. Although the mandate condemns the crimes of armed groups, it does not specifically name the Kremlin-backed Wagner Group. There is extensive publicly available information that forces sent to the Central African Republic by the Russian Federation have consistently obstructed MINUSCA's ability to fulfil its mandate. They stand accused of egregious human rights abuses and violations of international humanitarian law, including some involving sexual violence, rape, summary executions and torture. We should also convey our disappointment with the unfortunate changes to the preambular language on the Central African Republic Government's responsibility to protect all populations. Although the mandate no longer specifically mentions genocide, ethnic cleansing, war crimes or crimes against humanity, we stress that the Central African Republic has the primary responsibility to protect its populations from all of those.

**Mrs. Toroitich** (Kenya): My delegation thanks France for facilitating the negotiations on resolution 2659 (2022), which was just adopted.

Kenya's decision to vote for the resolution was a fine balance between the notable improvement in

the continued implementation by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) of its mandate in support of the Central African Republic and the critical need to improve the resolution in order to increase its chances of being more successful. We were persuaded by the need to give the new Special Representative of the Secretary-General time and support to build on the new impetus. We stress the importance of ensuring that MINUSCA coordinates appropriately with the Government at all times. It is also critical that both the Government and the Mission carry out their respective mandates with clarity, a willingness to consult and a spirit of professional regard and propriety.

After consultations with the Central African Republic, the three African members of the Security Council — Gabon, Ghana and Kenya — presented proposals that would have improved MINUSCA's mandate. While a few of the proposals were agreed on, important ones were left out. The resolution is therefore still not fully fit for purpose. We need to place that on record if we are to see improvements during the next renewal, because there remain critical gaps in the Mission's ability to deliver effectively on its mandate. We would single out in particular the proposal for promoting the task concerning the extension of State authority, the deployment of security forces and the preservation of territorial integrity from the category of "other tasks" to "priority tasks". The fact that it was moved up in the "other tasks" category is still not enough. In our considered view, that task, along with the protection of civilians, is the *raison d'être* of any peacekeeping mission that purports to robustly ensure that the host State eventually assumes its primary responsibility. The fact is that successfully implementing that and other tasks would result in the acceptance of any peacekeeping mission by host communities, as well as the safety and security of peacekeepers and the successful transitioning of the mission. We were also hoping to have stronger language condemning the activities of armed groups to send a strong message that the Council abhors their destabilizing activity.

We urge the Council to revisit the important matter of the independent strategic review of MINUSCA, as requested by the Central African Republic, at the earliest possible opportunity and with clear timelines.

On the overall conduct of the negotiations, we regret the manifest geopolitical considerations that

dictated the positions of certain delegations. The attendant polarization, as it has come to characterize discussions on matters concerning the Central African Republic, destroyed any hope of consensus. The net result is that civilians in the Central African Republic suffer the consequences of rivalries they have absolutely no interest in. We welcome the solid efforts of the Government of the Central African Republic, which have set the country on a path towards the stabilization of the political and security situation. We equally commend its frequent efforts to have its voice heard and responded to in the Council, as well as its commitment to cooperating with the United Nations.

In conclusion, Kenya reaffirms its respect for the sovereignty and territorial integrity of the Central African Republic.

**Mr. Heines** (Norway): As we have reached the end of a long process, we want to thank our colleagues — especially France, as penholder — for our discussions, which facilitated the possibility for the continued support of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to that country. We decided to vote in favour of resolution 2659 (2022) due to the importance of backing the Mission and the Special Representative of the Secretary-General's support for peace and progress in the Central African Republic.

As always, the troop- and police-contributing countries are a critical component for that to even be possible. We want to take a moment to once again thank them all profoundly and remember those who have made the ultimate sacrifice while serving the United Nations in the Central African Republic. We see it as our responsibility, as a member of the Security Council, not just to send United Nations personnel to help in the Central African Republic, but also to send a message about ensuring their safety and security while they carry out their tough and important jobs, including through the availability of quick casualty evacuations by air when needed — day or night.

**Mr. Gallagher** (Ireland): Ireland welcomes the adoption of resolution 2659 (2022), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for one year. In a context marked by the persistence of violence and with a heavy price being paid by the civilian population, humanitarian

workers and peacekeepers, it was essential for the Security Council to reaffirm its support for MINUSCA.

Challenges to the freedom of movement of the Mission, including continued restrictions on night flights, about which the Special Representative of the Secretary-General recently informed the Council (see S/PV.9156), make it difficult for MINUSCA to fulfil its mandate, given that night flights are essential for the safety and security of peacekeepers. I echo the Secretary-General in urging the Government to uphold its commitment to take appropriate measures to fully implement the status-of-forces agreement.

In conclusion, I would like to express my sincere appreciation to France as penholder for its untiring efforts to reconcile diverging views and secure agreement on this important resolution.

**Mr. Kariuki** (United Kingdom): The United Kingdom welcomes the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). We thank France for its efforts as penholder to reconcile the differing views of Security Council members. Delegations made difficult compromises.

The United Kingdom was disappointed by the loss of agreed responsibility-to-protect language. We maintain that the Government of the Central African Republic remains primarily responsible for the protection of all civilians from genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and that the issue will remain a key factor in future conversations.

The mandate renewal was adopted in a difficult political and security context. MINUSCA itself faces significant challenges, but the Mission retains a key role in helping to build long-term peace in the Central African Republic.

While we recognize the recent overall reductions in violations of the status-of-forces-agreement, we remain deeply concerned about the night flight restrictions imposed by the Government. Such restrictions limit the ability of MINUSCA to implement its mandate and jeopardize the safety and security of peacekeepers and civilians. We support the inclusion of new language in the mandate to address that critical issue, and we call on the authorities to ensure MINUSCA's freedom of movement, with unhindered and immediate access throughout the territory of the Central African

Republic, including by air and at night, as set out in the Mission's status-of-forces agreement.

With this mandate, MINUSCA can continue to provide effective support for long-term stability in the country. It is now up to the Government to deliver on its stated commitments to protect civilians and human rights, take definitive steps on the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic and uphold MINUSCA's freedom of movement.

**Mr. Spasse** (Albania): Albania voted in favour of resolution 2659 (2022), on extending the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) until 15 November 2023. However, we regret that, despite numerous and substantial compromises, the resolution did not receive united support. We commend the work of the penholder, France, in reaching those compromises.

There is one particular issue on which our delegation repeatedly expressed concern throughout the negotiations — the language concerning night flights. That is a long-standing issue, for which a solution was not found during the bilateral discussions between MINUSCA and the Central African Republic. We stand ready to welcome any updates on resolving it. Meanwhile, it is crucial that the Security Council send a clear message that the safety and the ability of the Mission to perform 24/7 is not in question.

In conclusion, let me reiterate our firm support for resolution 2659 (2022). A strong, well-equipped Mission that is able to react is a guarantee for the implementation of its tasks in support of the national authorities to promote peace and security and provide a better future for its people.

**Mr. Xing Jisheng** (China) (*spoke in Chinese*): Since the beginning of the year, the security situation in the Central African Republic has seen positive progress. The peace process is steadily moving forward, although elements of uncertainty remain. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) is working very hard to deliver on the tasks mandated by the Security Council and has made important contributions to improving the situation in the country. Under the current circumstances, the Mission remains critical to achieving peace and stability in the country. China supports the extension of the Mission's mandate, and

we continue to support its work and that of the Special Representative of the Secretary-General.

At the same time, there was room for improvement in the draft resolution (S/2022/845). As a major troop-contributing country, China attaches great importance to the safety and security of peacekeeping personnel and has always called for full respect for the status-of-forces agreement. Nevertheless, experience has demonstrated time and again that differences between the host country and United Nations peacekeeping operations can be resolved only through dialogue and negotiations. Merely resorting to pressure is not helpful.

United Nations peacekeeping operations should define their priorities based on the needs of the host country. Currently, the Government of the Central African Republic continues to recover lost territory and eagerly hopes that the Mission's assistance in extending State authority in regained territory will be prioritized. Regrettably, however, the country's request was not reflected in resolution 2659 (2022). In addition, China's views on the security threat posed by armed groups and the Mission's independent strategic review were not taken on board. Accordingly, China had no other choice but to abstain in the voting.

**Ms. Evstigneeva** (Russian Federation) (*spoke in Russian*): The Russian delegation abstained in the voting on resolution 2659 (2022) to extend the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) for one year. On 5 November, the country's Minister for Foreign Affairs, Ms. Sylvie Baipo Temon, who is here with us today, circulated a letter addressed to the members of the Security Council in which she outlined the vision of the Central African Republic with regard to the work of MINUSCA, the main goal of which is to support the official authorities of the Central African Republic in dealing with the challenges facing them, above all the challenge of stabilizing the country and creating the necessary conditions for establishing a lasting peace.

Despite the lengthy negotiation process leading to the adoption of resolution 2659 (2022), it in fact addresses only one of the many issues of principle raised by the Central African Republic — the termination of the authorization of the French assistance to MINUSCA — which is not in any way a concession, as it merely reflects what France already announced publicly.

In addition, Bangui's proposals regarding the mandate were not reflected in the document, which disregarded the justified request to designate assistance in maintaining State presence as MINUSCA's priority task. That amendment was supposed to faithfully reflect the changed situation on the ground and support further efforts by the country's authorities to stabilize the situation there, which, as we have seen, have already produced results.

We cannot accept a text that equates all the parties to the conflict and the armed groups with one another. It is well known that the latter are responsible for the overwhelming majority of cross-border crimes and violations of international humanitarian law and human rights. Neither was it possible to avoid making public the bilateral modalities between Bangui and MINUSCA on the authorization of Mission night flights, which was justified by purported concern for peacekeepers. Once again, we recall that the key to ensuring the safety of peacekeepers is contingent on constructive cooperation with the authorities of the host country.

We wonder why the French penholder did not include our proposed wording on the need to investigate the supply chains used to deliver explosive devices and their components deployed to the Central African Republic, which led to the deaths of three peacekeepers from Bangladesh. Emergency medical assistance was provided to one of the wounded on 3 October by a medical worker from a team of Russian instructors in the area. The Council should focus on why those explosive devices and components found their way into the country instead of engaging in pointless witch hunts and blame-laying. Besides what I have just discussed, there were many other aspects that did not make it into the final document. Had the French penholders really wanted to, they could have drafted a truly well-balanced document that responded to the vital interests of the people of the Central African Republic. But they preferred not to do that, which is why it was not possible for us to support the document.

Nevertheless, we hope that the renewal of the MINUSCA mandate will help to advance President Touadera's efforts to strengthen and expand the Government's presence in various regions of the country, which among other things is essential to addressing its humanitarian problems. We also count on the professionalism and wisdom of Ms. Valentine Rugwabiza, as she continues her intelligent leadership of MINUSCA and the work of addressing emerging

problems, in close cooperation with the Government of the Central African Republic. We believe that building a mutually respectful dialogue with the host country based on trust and partnership should be a priority, while taking into account Bangui's concerns, including in the area of security. Without that it is impossible for any peacekeeping mission to fully implement its mandate.

Russia has always supported the work of the Blue Helmets in the Mission, who occupy an important place in the overall security architecture of the Central African Republic. We continue to believe that MINUSCA is a fundamental element in ensuring that our approach to combating armed groups functions effectively. We will continue to give active assistance via bilateral channels to our friend the Central African Republic. Thanks to the efforts of Russian trainers, the capacity of its security forces has increased considerably, and the governing authorities have significantly stabilized the situation in their country. That means greater security for civilians, better protection of human rights and a better life for ordinary people. That is a fact, and no smear campaign aimed at my country will change it, because actions speak louder than words.

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

I would like to begin by first of all thanking the penholder, France, for its efforts in bringing about the adoption of resolution 2659 (2022). Ghana voted in favour of the resolution, but we did so in the wider interests of the peace and stability of the Central African Republic, and not because we were wholly satisfied with the processes or the final text submitted for adoption. We believe that the negotiations could have been more consultative and taken into account the views of all the members of the Security Council.

When the Council renewed the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) last November (see S/PV.8902), it did so in the belief that the Mission would support the Central African Republic's authorities in protecting its civilian population, which is threatened by physical violence, fully implement its strategy for the protection of civilians, safeguard State institutions, implement a strategy for the extension of State authority and promote and support the rapid extension of State authority over the entire territory of the Central African Republic.

Since the implementation of the Mission's mandate began, the situation in the Central African Republic has not been static. There have been developments requiring legitimate adjustments to be made to the mandate. It was in that context that the three African members of the Security Council proposed that some of the mandate's tasks be considered priority rather than ordinary tasks, in order to consolidate the gains made in the peace process. Regrettably, that proposal was not considered, nor were others such as the proposal to include, based on the similarity of the circumstances, the language that was agreed in paragraph 17 of resolution 2612 (2021), renewing the mandate of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Its inclusion would have sent an appropriate message communicating the Council's abhorrence of the activities of armed groups.

We also consider the views of host countries important and had hoped that those views would have been given due consideration in the negotiations on the resolution, especially as the cooperation of the authorities of the Central African Republic is needed if MINUSCA's mandate is to be successfully carried out. We believe that in future negotiations, the views of all Council members should be taken into account in order to forge a consensus and send a united message from the Council.

I now resume my functions as President of the Council.

I call on the Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad of the Central African Republic.

**Ms. Baipo Temon** (Central African Republic) (*spoke in French*): First of all, I would like to congratulate Ghana on its presidency of the Security Council for the month of November, and especially you, Mr. President, for your excellent guidance of the discussion in today's meeting. I warmly thank the representatives of the Security Council members here today and extend my best wishes to them. I would also like to thank the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic for her work and all of the other representatives for their statements.

The topic of today's meeting is extremely important to the Central African Republic in particular, but also to the Security Council, the organ with the primary responsibility of ensuring peace, both around the world and among the Member States of the United

Nations. My country, the Central African Republic, takes note that following the deliberations on the draft resolution setting the terms for the renewal of the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the peacekeeping operation in the Central African Republic, the penholder's text was adopted with 12 votes in favour and three abstentions as resolution 2659 (2022).

I would first like to take this opportunity to thank France, which as the Security Council's penholder on matters concerning the Central African Republic, presented the text of the resolution, taking care to do it with an attitude of openness to the Central African Republic, as the concerned party. The Central African Republic was pleased to receive a French delegation on Central African soil to whom, on behalf of my Government, I expressed our appreciation to France, as well as our expectations and the urgent needs of the MINUSCA peacekeeping operation.

The sensitivity of this subject is clear, owing to the lengthy discussions that were necessary to bring the text of the resolution to a vote. As far as the Central African Republic is concerned, the text is unsatisfactory because it does not take into account the needs and expectations of our country or the aspects that are vital to ensuring that the peacekeeping operation can be more effective. The text adopted by a majority vote of the Council today responds first and foremost to the call for solidarity and support from the international community, which is not in question, something that it is important to remember.

It is also important to highlight the vigilance of certain Member States, for which I am grateful and which has ensured that the reality on the ground and the situation in the Central African Republic have not been diminished by a text that would have focused more on geopolitical issues, directed by Powers to the detriment of weak countries such as the Central African Republic, and that would have diverged from the Security Council's primary mandate for the maintenance of international security. The Central African Republic would once again like to thank those Member States for their vigilance.

The Central African Republic commends the States that have supported the Central African cause by effectively helping to ensure that the principles of the Charter of the United Nations are not violated.

The reaction to such violations is based on the degree to which their continent resembles those of Council members, with double standards applied — so that, sadly, in Europe we see proactive solutions sought for conflicts, sanctions against aggressors, arms supplies and appeals for solidarity, whether voluntary or compelled, while the attitude to conflicts in Africa wavers, with peacekeeping operations whose limitations and inability to effectively live up to the situations they are placed in are clear for all to see. Those peacekeeping missions lack adequate resources and equipment to deal with heavily armed groups. They are not sufficiently proactive and have overly cumbersome methods of engagement on the ground, where we see contingents arriving after the violence. I will give two examples — houses burned down in Kaga Bandoro in 2021 and nuns being burned to death in their cars at the hands of armed groups in front of powerless contingents.

To take the Kaga Bandoro incident, which is a telling example. I would like to point out that, as various houses were on fire, the contingent present in the locality for many years was called on to help by the population. However, it did not arrive at the scene of the violence until the next day to see the dead burned alive and count them for the purposes of a statement strongly condemning the atrocities of armed groups.

We can continue the list of inconsistencies in the decisions taken by the powerful, the permanent members of the Council, with the support of States chosen à la carte. Moreover, we note that the majority vote here is also explained by the fact that many Member States represented here are both judge and jury as contributor States to peacekeeping operations in the Central African Republic and elsewhere.

The Central African crisis will not be resolved by summoning the State under attack, which is accused of not being able to ensure respect for human rights and of still experiencing an appalling situation in humanitarian terms. Neither will it be resolved by sanctions to hide the fact that nature abhors a vacuum and that futile disputes are not acceptable when a State is in survival mode, or by texts produced in comfortable ivory towers and in complete isolation from the reality on the ground. It should be noted that national and international public opinion observes and judges the credibility of the decisions taken within the Security Council.

The world is nothing but conflict, which means that, as with the League of Nations, there is an urgent need to rethink the organ that guarantees international security. The reform of the Security Council has become inevitable, and a more balanced representation of Africa in the Security Council can only be beneficial to ensuring international security. With its experience in conflicts, either as a victim or as an effective supporter — I am talking about Africa's contribution in the First and Second World Wars — Africa, fairly represented, could contribute to a better world. If even history does not commemorate or pay tribute to our African relatives who lost their lives in support of a cause that they deemed just, then Africa has a duty to remember history.

Moreover, it should be noted that a number of powerful countries are responsible for various theatres of conflict at the expense of the weakest. I would like to mention Libya, Iraq, Palestine, Afghanistan, the Central African Republic, Chad and so on. Similarly, there is a disconnect between the humanitarian discourse and humanitarian action, as we are all aware that 80 per cent of the major donations from contributor States are primarily used not for the human cause, but for the running of organizations that champion the humanitarian cause. Humanitarian action fuels humanitarian action and the insecurity of an entire population, which is made to rely only on humanitarian emergency plans, not economic development programmes.

Furthermore, the text listing the good offices of MINUSCA, even in matters of sovereignty, is proof of a desire not to resolve the Central African conflict but to maintain it, since we also know that the host agreement imposed and signed in 2014 at a time of extreme vulnerability deliberately maintains the country's dependence on the international community in its efforts to preserve a sense of dominance.

Multilateralism seems to lose its meaning when decisions are taken only on the basis of the bilateral positions of Member States. I therefore call for self-reflection on the part of all in order to clearly accept the consequences of destructive and often ill-timed actions.

Resolving the Central African conflict is simply a question of political will on both sides. For that to happen, we need to talk to each other at a human level. I said it before, and I cannot reiterate it often enough, that it is not enough to talk about being human; we

must practice being human and deal with conflicts in their context.

With regard to the Central African conflict, let us remain determined to support the efforts of the Central African Government in its quest to restore State authority throughout the country by supporting a policy of decentralization, which, by holding municipal elections, will make it possible to expedite the process and promote local development, thereby bringing about benefits for the population.

That is why the Central African Government asked the Security Council to prioritize that task in the MINUSCA mandate so that the protection of civilians becomes a tangible reality for the population, which is still waiting to see the results of a peacekeeping operation that is vaunted as being robust, but whose effectiveness on the ground is not apparent owing to the ongoing activity of armed groups.

Let us remain committed to security sector reform and restructuring. Let us overcome the sanctions that put an end to the training of uniformed personnel under false and unproven pretexts, driven by geopolitical stakes.

The Central African Republic would like to call on the Security Council, short of acknowledging the failure of previous solutions and peace missions, to demonstrate insight by providing adequate support to the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic so that, after 10 years, the MINUSCA operation can see signs of an end to the crisis. To that end, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General must have the freedom to use the strength of her mandate and employ armed force to deal with an ever-increasing insurgency, which shows the limits of a peace operation that has no mission or mandate to address the cause of the problem, namely, armed groups.

A new insurgency emerging on Central African soil will mark a failure of the resolution adopted today or will provide grounds to the population, worried about the lack of proactivity by troops from countries with military experience in dealing with armed militias.

The Government and the people of the Central African Republic reaffirm that no operation on Central African soil — to date, there have been 13, including the MINUSCA operation — has been free of human rights violations. Since 2013, unacceptable crimes and violations have been recorded: illicit trafficking in arms

and natural resources by peacekeepers in particular and the rape of minors by peacekeepers. Those crimes and violations remain unaddressed by the Human Rights Division of MINUSCA and the Human Rights Council, which stayed silent until 2021, when the cause of Central African victims became topical.

There are also reports of human rights violations against personnel employed by MINUSCA officials. I will not dwell on the illicit trade that is creating unfair competition for local traders, as even onions, tomatoes, potatoes and other staples are being exported in violation of the host country agreement, which has also reached its limits and is now hampering the country's economic development through unfair competition and loss of earnings.

The Government is also aware of the difficulties experienced by MINUSCA, particularly the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic, due to an operation that is not geared towards achieving the objectives set. Through me, the Government and the people of the Central African Republic give the Mission all the support that it needs to carry out its difficult task, and we urge the Council to provide it with all the support and backing in terms of equipment and mandate, not to politicize the mission, as some actors would like, but to perform the priority tasks of protecting civilians, restoring State authority, strengthening the rule of law, combating impunity and promoting security sector reform and support for the political process, in conjunction with African subregional organizations based on the principle of subsidiarity. That must be done in accordance with the basic principles of United Nations peace operations and the sovereignty of the Central African Republic.

Together, we must continue the collective work already started in order to bring the Central African Republic out of this crisis situation, in which armed groups want to confine it, so that we can break the vicious cycle of human rights violations as a result of poverty, instability and insecurity, since where people are condemned to live in poverty, human rights are always violated.

That is why the authorities of the Central African Republic are requesting an evaluation of MINUSCA's work on Central African soil in order to focus on effectiveness and, together, achieve our objectives.

I would like to share with the Council a comment that is relevant to the situation in the Central African

Republic, which was made by former American President John Fitzgerald Kennedy, who said: "Our progress as a nation can be no swifter than our progress in education. The human mind is our fundamental resource".

In other words, it is time for the Central African Republic to build itself and train its own elites, its own sons and daughters, who are committed to building a prosperous State by drawing on their own resources. It is unthinkable that, for generations, the daily life of Central Africans should depend only on the goodwill of the enemies of peace. As President Touadera has said repeatedly, the people of the Central African Republic have suffered greatly from misunderstandings and misinformation, which has unfortunately gone on for too long. Our people seek only peace and security for their development.

The Government of the Central African Republic is aware of the challenges it faces and asks that its tireless efforts be recognized and supported by prioritizing the actions that need to be taken to achieve the country's objectives, which are peace and stability. To do that, we must focus on peacebuilding and the recovery of the Central African Republic by stabilizing the country to create the right conditions in which the Government can go about its work.

The Government reiterates its readiness to work in a coordinated manner with MINUSCA and in strict compliance with its sovereignty in order to further and strengthen the significant progress made with the support of MINUSCA and all the technical and financial partners of the Central African Republic. The Government therefore reaffirms its willingness to work with MINUSCA teams on night flights, in accordance with the terms of the agreement between the Government and MINUSCA, as well as the regulations of international civil aviation and of the Central African Republic.

I would like to point out that there is not, and indeed has never been, a ban on night flights, although there have been some constraints owing to the national context and some difficulties related to the electrical grid. MINUSCA's freedom of movement has not been impeded either, as reflected in the recent arrival of the Bhutanese contingent in the Central African Republic without the authorities having been notified beforehand.

In addition, the Central African Republic once again calls for coordination and respect for its sovereignty. In particular, it requests that vehicles that

do not bear the emblem of the United Nations not be used and that illegal weapons not be transported in unmarked vehicles or in the direction of areas where armed groups are very active. A regulation cannot suddenly be subjected to conditions and pressure for the sake of a Mission whose limits have moreover been demonstrated elsewhere or with respect to which evidence of abuse has been noted.

Let us work together to prevent the laying of mines by armed groups and reduce the capacities of armed groups, which go as far as to attack peacekeepers in their bases. Let us work together for the development of the Central African Republic, in particular in terms of energy and infrastructure.

It is important to welcome the collective efforts that have been made and that have made it possible to achieve some important and unexpected gains, given the chaos in which the Central African Republic found itself in 2013. Let us avoid the cliché of friends versus enemies, because your friends may not be our friends, just as your enemies may not be our enemies. Beyond geopolitical interests, the Central African Republic wants to be a land of peace for all partners that share its goal of ensuring security for its people, its territory and its development.

We must therefore not forget the bloody aggression perpetrated from house to house, which created thousands of orphans and left families jobless and displaced. The perpetrators remain free and ready to take action because of the ambiguous message that the Security Council and the international community are sending them by not naming them explicitly in the resolution, which blurs the international community's message in favour of the armed groups and to the detriment of the victims, and because the peacekeeping operations are not deterring the perpetrators and

lack the necessary effectiveness on the ground and concrete action to support the Government's efforts to combat impunity.

Disputes over interference in the internal affairs of the Central African Republic that stir up division through misinformation create tensions within the institutions of our Republic. We cannot counter disinformation and incitement to hatred with more disinformation and incitement to division and hatred.

Let us work together for a better world and a better future for the Central African Republic. We can do that if and only if we want to do it. Everything is a matter of the will of people.

As Mr. Souleymane Boel said, "Marginalization is rarely the choice of an individual or a State, but rather the fate of a society whose poverty we want to maintain".

I will conclude — and I apologize for having spoken at length — by paying tribute to all those who have lost their lives in the Central African Republic in this despicable conflict perpetrated by the enemies of peace, which we must have the courage to condemn not in grand speeches but in a firm and factual manner. I refer in that regard to my Central African compatriots, the Forces armées centrafricaines, the internal security forces, the Blue Helmets and our brothers in arms who have come in the name of peace to the Central African Republic. I express the gratitude of the people and the Government of the Central African Republic to all partners who have stood by our side seeking peacebuilding and economic recovery, the international community, MINUSCA, the African Union, the Community of Central African States, the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region and all bilateral partners.

*The meeting rose at 3.55 p.m.*