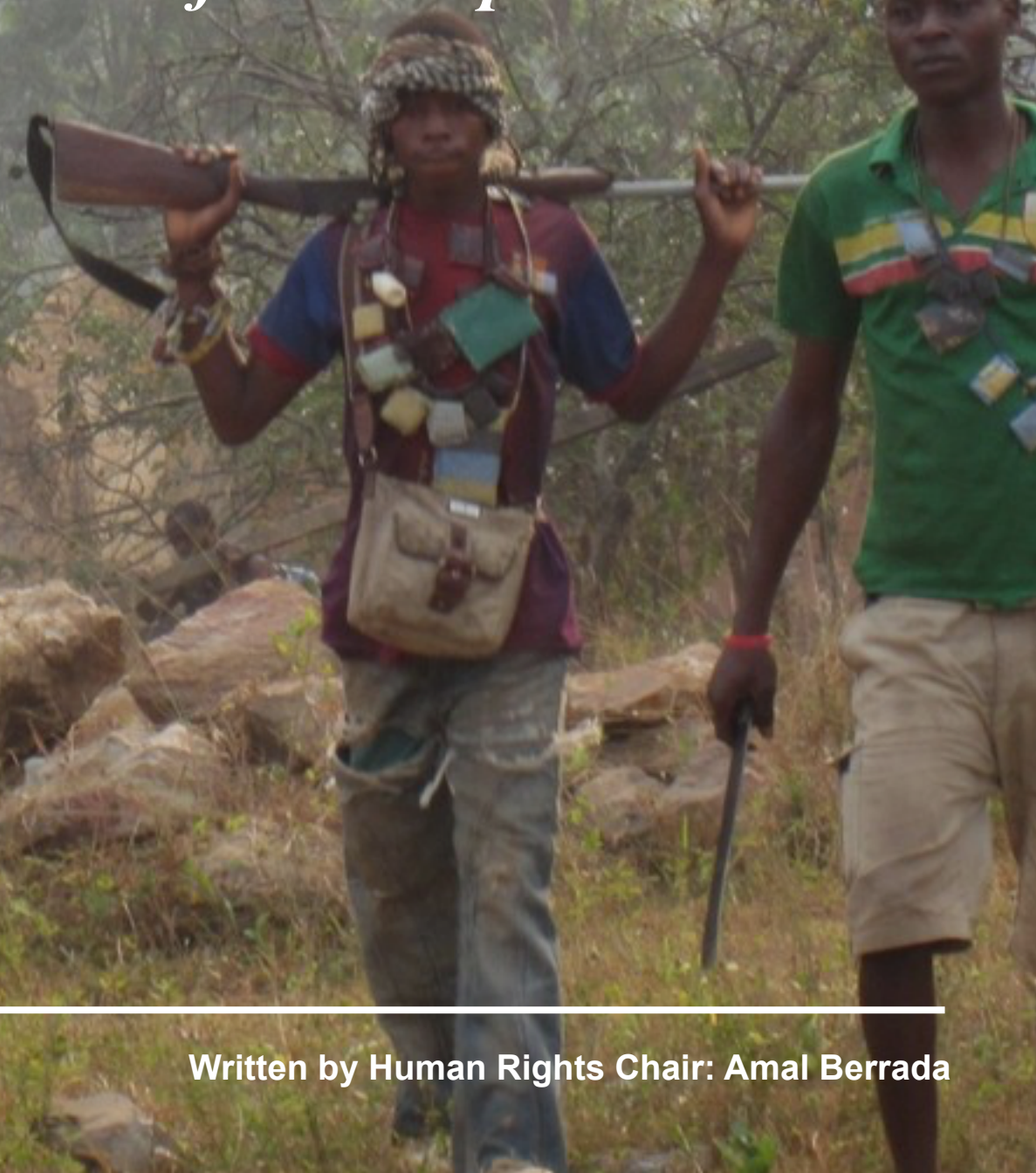


Human Rights Committee

*“Stabilizing the human rights situation
in the Central African Republic”*



Forum: Human Rights
Issue: Stabilizing the human rights situation in the Central African Republic
Student Officer : Amal Berrada
Position: Chair

Table of Content

Context & Historical background	Page 3 - 4
United Nations Involvement	Page 5 - 6
Different Perspectives	Page 6 - 7
Key Terms & Phrases	Page 7 - 8
Bibliography and Useful Links	Page 8

Context & Historical Background

Historical Context and Effect On Human Rights:

What started as a rebel coalition to overthrow a corrupt government, became a conflict split across religious lines.

In a small, country in the middle of Africa, a major conflict took place, one that led to horrific ethnic cleansing. The Central African Republic is a landlocked country in the middle of Africa. Despite being full of natural resources like gold, diamonds, and uranium; it remains one of the poorest countries in the world: according to the HDR (the Human Development Report), the CAR is placed 180th out of the 186 countries surveyed as of 2013. After being ruled by France for decades, the country gained independence in 1960. Since then, it suffered one coup after another in no small part due to the meddling of neighboring countries like Chad and Sudan as well as its former colonial nation, France. In 2003, Francois Bozize seized power and began a ten year reign of incompetence and corruption. As a result, different rebel groups rose up and by the end of 2012, a number of them formed an alliance called the Seleka -a mostly Muslim rebel coalition led by Michel Djotodia. The current conflict really began in March of 2013, when the Seleka overthrew Bozize's government and set about terrorizing the country: torturing, raping, and murdering. Djotodia declared himself president in April of 2014 and then proved either unwilling or unable to reign in the Seleka, the very group who helped bring him to power. In response, mostly Christian self-defense groups -called the anti-Balaka- formed and started fighting back. Many locals affirm that the conflict is not one between religions, but that the recent rise of the Seleka, made up of mostly muslims, triggered a lot of anger in the Christian majority population, giving birth to the

anti-Balaka. Civilians were caught in the middle as the fighting grew and increasingly became part of the quotidian. The chaotic political instability in the Central African Republic has led to many human rights abuses in the country. Lives were put on pause from fear, and camps formed around the country to escape the Seleka, with up to 30.000 civilians at a time in a single camp, with no clean water, food, basic hygiene, or shelter. Malnutrition or devastating diseases such as malaria killed thousands of them; doctors without borders (employing mostly Central Africans) was the only medical facility present. A letter written by doctors without borders was sent out to the United Nations on December 12th 2013, criticizing the lack of response from their humanitarian system.

Dear Ms. Amos,

VII
NE

With this Open Letter, Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) wishes to express its deep concern about the **unacceptable performance of the United Nations humanitarian system in the Central African Republic** over the last year.

In December 2012, when the first rebel offensive in CAR halted a few kilometers from the capital, most UN staff were already evacuated from Bangui and from field locations. Following the coup d'état, the UN finally redeployed beyond the capital six months later, its positioning justified by vague security concerns. Emergency directors did not carry out an assessment until October. During the growing emergency of the last three months, and most recently in Bangui just a few days ago, there has been **no evidence of an adequate humanitarian reaction to the needs generated by repeated outbreaks of violence**. The only actions undertaken by UN aid officials have been the collection of data related to the fighting and a few assessments confirming the need for an immediate response. Repeated

United Nations Involvement

- Concerning the human rights situation in the country, the Council reiterated the urgent need to hold accountable all perpetrators of violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law.
- It also called upon all parties to conflict, including ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka elements, to end all violations and abuses committed against children, in violation of applicable international law, including those involving their recruitment and use, rape and sexual violence, killing and maiming, abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals.
- “[The Council] further calls upon the CAR authorities to swiftly investigate alleged violations and abuses in order to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure that those responsible for such violations and abuses are excluded from the security sector,” read the resolution.
- 15 November 2017 – The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday extended the mandate of the Organization’s peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), until 15 November 2018, increased the mission’s troop level by 900 military personnel.
- The increase in the number of the Mission’s ‘blue helmets’ comes against the backdrop of increasing fighting in the African nation and the resulting added insecurity and misery of

its civilian population.

- The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR, known by its French acronym, MINUSCA, has also come under numerous attacks, which have killed at least 12 peacekeepers this year and injured many more.
- In an effort to draw attention to the fragile situation in the country that, in his words, is “often far from the media spotlight,” Secretary-General António Guterres travelled to CAR in late October.
- In CAR, the UN chief warned of religious divisions in the country, stressing that these rifts are a result of “political manipulation that must be condemned and avoided at all costs.”

Different Perspectives

France:

“France on Monday formally ended a peacekeeping mission in Central African Republic, hailing it a success despite sporadic outbreaks of violence in its deeply troubled former colony.” (France24) Thousands of people have been killed since the war erupted in 2013 and France was of great support, bringing in various provisions (food, hygienic and medical supplies) as well as its own army. But in October of 2016, France made the decision of deserting the CAR after 3 years of partnership, which has been heavily criticized by other nations.

South Africa:

Over 400 military troops were sent to the Central African Republic to help fight off the Seleka ever since the commencement of the war.

Key Terms & Phrases

Human Development Report:

The Human Development Report (HDR) is an annual milestone published by the Human Development Report Office of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP). As of 2013 the last decade saw convergence in human development indicators (HDI) values globally, although progress was uneven within and between regions. Developing countries' transformation into major economies with growing political influence has impacted human development progress.

The Seleka:

Séléka CPSK-CPJP-UFDR is an alliance of rebel militia factions and terrorist group that overthrew the Central African Republic (CAR) government on March 24, 2013. After its official dissolution in September 2013, the remaining rebel groups became known as Ex-Seleka. Séléka leader Michel Djotodia became the nation's president from March 2013 until his resignation in January 2014. Members of Séléka are almost entirely Muslim.

The Anti-Balaka:

The Anti-balaka are a militia and terrorist group based in the Central African Republic composed primarily of Christians. However, some Church leaders have contested the exclusively Christian character of such groups and the Tony Blair Faith Foundation has also pointed out the presence of animists in Anti-balaka groups as has journalist Andrew Katz. They formed in the Central African Republic after the rise to power of Michel Djotodia in 2013. There have been reports that some members of Anti-balaka groups have forcibly converted Muslims to Christianity.

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