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**At a Hearing on**

**“Responding To The Humanitarian, Security And  
Governance Crisis In The Central Africa Republic”**

**Before the Subcommittee on African Affairs,  
Foreign Relations Committee,  
U.S. Senate**

**December 17, 2013**

Chairman Coons, Ranking Member Flake, Members of the Subcommittee, thank you for inviting the Congressional Research Service to testify today on the multi-faceted crisis in the Central African Republic.

I will begin by providing an overview of the situation in the Central African Republic, including an analysis of the escalating patterns of violence in recent months and the country’s history of poor governance. I will also address the role of regional actors and the presence of the Lord’s Resistance Army. I will conclude with an analysis of some of the potential policy issues and challenges facing Congress as you look ahead. I will provide a timeline of selected key events at the end.

## **Overview**

The Central African Republic (CAR) is in crisis. Armed factions are exploiting a security vacuum after a loosely allied rebel coalition known as Seleka (“Alliance” in the local Sango language) took control of the central government in March 2013. A transitional government led by a self-appointed president, a Seleka leader, appears unable, or unwilling, to halt the violence and human rights abuses. CAR has long been seen as peripheral to core U.S. policy interests. However, U.S. policymakers are now focused on the deteriorating humanitarian conditions in CAR and the potential impact of the crisis on regional stability. U.S., U.N., and French officials have warned of the potential for mass atrocities and even “genocide.”<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Robert Jackson, testimony before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, “Crisis in the Central African Republic,” November 19, 2013; Dow Jones, “France’s Fabius Says Central African Republic on Verge of Genocide,” November 21, 2013; and U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) Director John Ging, quoted in CNN, “‘Seeds of Genocide’ Sown in Central African Republic, U.N. Official Warns,” November 13, 2013.

Policy issues of possible interest to Congress include whether the planned provision of U.S. support to French and African military operations in CAR is appropriate and/or sufficient, and if so, what additional funds and/or authorities may be necessary. An ongoing debate at the U.N. Security Council concerns whether to authorize a U.N. peacekeeping operation in the coming months, which could create further U.S. funding requirements. CAR's security vacuum has also reportedly driven an increase in wildlife poaching, and could threaten U.S.-supported regional efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a small but vicious militia of Ugandan origin that has been active in CAR since 2008. The United States supports a Ugandan-led African Union (AU) military operation against the LRA in CAR and neighboring states, including through the deployment of U.S. military advisors in the field.

Seleka faction commanders, who are mostly Muslim, have overseen seemingly systematic attacks targeting Christian communities, leading to the mobilization of largely Christian militias that have, in turn, brutally attacked Muslims.<sup>2</sup> (CAR's population of 5.2 million is reportedly roughly 15% Muslim and 85% Christian or animist. CAR's territory is slightly smaller than Texas.<sup>3</sup>) While violence along ethno-religious lines had been relatively rare in CAR, complex tensions over access to resources, control of trade networks, and national identity are now translating into large-scale upheaval. Moreover, the recent pattern of militia-inspired violence has increasingly led civilians to take up arms against each other. Seleka was formally disbanded in September 2013, although with few clear practical implications.

Seleka leaders mostly hail from CAR's remote northeast. This area is culturally and geographically close to parts of neighboring Chad and Sudan, where some of the movement's members and commanders reportedly originate. Acting President Michel Djotodia is CAR's first Muslim president, and the first from the northeast. While Seleka leaders appear to share a sense of marginalization and persecution by successive CAR regimes with many northerners and Muslims in CAR, they otherwise appear to be united by little other than their opposition to the former government, which they ousted in March 2013. Their opportunism, brutality, and internal divisions have led to a spiral of chaotic violence and the further collapse of an already weak state.

Humanitarian conditions remain dire, although the full impact of the current crisis is difficult to assess. At least 602,000 residents have been displaced to date, including 69,000 who have fled to neighboring countries as refugees and 533,000 who are internally displaced.<sup>4</sup> Conditions prior to the current crisis were already poor, due to a lack of basic health care, education, and other social services, as well as a legacy of past conflicts. Indeed, conflict and political instability have been recurrent in CAR, fed by the tendency of successive governments to foster narrowly-based regimes more interested in pursuing patronage networks than in expanding state services and social inclusion. Seleka leaders have followed this pattern, for example carrying out a series of targeted assassinations of army officers associated with the former president earlier this year.<sup>5</sup> Still, the current situation in CAR is not a timeless status quo. Violence has worsened dramatically over the past year, and has, in turn, severely constrained the ability of humanitarian organizations to provide vital services.

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<sup>2</sup> See, e.g., Human Rights Watch (HRW), *"I Can Still Smell the Dead": The Forgotten Human Crisis in the Central African Republic*, September 2013. As elsewhere in Africa, there have long been latent tensions between majority-Muslim ethnic groups, who are generally semi-nomadic pastoralists, and majority-Christian or animist groups, who are generally sedentary farmers. However, violence along ethno-religious lines at the current scale does not appear to have occurred in the past.

<sup>3</sup> CIA World Factbook, 2013.

<sup>4</sup> USAID, *Central African Republic—Humanitarian Update #8*, December 12, 2013.

<sup>5</sup> HRW, "Central African Republic: Horrific Abuses by New Rulers," September 18, 2013.

The pace of violence accelerated in early December 2013, with at least 500 killings reported in the capital, Bangui, as the U.N. Security Council prepared to adopt Resolution 2127. The resolution authorizes an AU intervention force and the French military, which has long had a presence in CAR, to “take all necessary measures” to protect civilians, stabilize the country, enable humanitarian access, support the disarmament of militias, and contribute to security sector reform.<sup>6</sup> Following passage of the resolution, France rapidly increased its troop levels in CAR from about 400 to 1,600. French patrols, along with civilian protection efforts by regional troops, have led to a decrease in violence, for now. French forces have directly engaged militia fighters, leading to at least two French casualties and, reportedly, the killing of a senior Seleka commander. CAR’s transitional government and many of the country’s beleaguered citizens have welcomed France’s deployment. However, conditions remain tense and volatile.

## A Challenging Political Transition

Michel Djotodia, a previously little known figure, declared himself president after the Seleka rebellion rapidly seized control of the state in March 2013, deposing President François Bozizé.<sup>7</sup> He has clung to that position despite initial condemnation by regional leaders, who subsequently agreed to recognize him as the “head of state of the transition.” Under regional and international pressure, Djotodia has acquiesced to a transition road-map culminating in elections in early 2015, in which he cannot be a candidate.<sup>8</sup> He also nominally shares power with Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye, a human rights activist and opposition politician who was appointed under a January 2013 peace accord between Seleka and then-President Bozizé, known as the Libreville Agreements. As a member of the transitional government, Tiangaye is also barred from running for president under the Libreville framework.

Despite this stated roadmap, the timeline for the planned political transition is likely to be hindered by ongoing violence, a lack of political will on the part of transitional authorities, and the scale of needed preparations. A new constitution and electoral law may be needed, along with new voter registration as many civic records have reportedly been destroyed.<sup>9</sup> Based on his actions to date, Djotodia appears likely to seek to prolong his hold on power, while attempting to exercise greater influence within armed factions

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<sup>6</sup> A transition of missions, from the existing Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in CAR (MICOPAX, also referred to as the Central African Multinational Force or FOMAC) operation, which has been present in CAR since 2008—and replaced an earlier regional stabilization operation—to the African Union’s African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic (MISCA, also known as AFISM-CAR) is anticipated on December 19, 2013. U.N. Security Council Resolution 2127 directs the U.N. Secretary-General to undertake “contingency operations and planning” for the possible transformation of MISCA into a U.N. peacekeeping operation, and to provide recommendations on such a possible transformation to the Security Council within three months. The resolution also mandates human rights investigations and imposes an arms embargo.

<sup>7</sup> Djotodia appears to have risen to power in CAR by outmaneuvering other would-be leaders within Seleka. Prior to 2013, Djotodia had a minimal public profile. He reportedly studied in the Soviet Union in the 1970s, returning to CAR in the 1980s and obtaining a low-level job in the civil service. After trying and failing to win election to parliament, he reportedly entered the mining trade in northern CAR, where he pursued connections to a rebel movement known as the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), a faction of which later became a founding component of Seleka. Djotodia later lived in Nyala, in the Darfur region of Sudan, where he reportedly represented the CAR government as Consul. The connections he cultivated with Darfuri militia groups in Nyala later apparently became an asset both to Seleka (which leveraged these seasoned fighters to win its military victory in March 2013) and to Djotodia, who managed to sideline potential rivals within Seleka who had more extensive combat credentials. He was appointed First Deputy Prime Minister for National Defense (representing Seleka) in a January 2013 unity government, and subsequently declared himself president after Seleka seized power in March. See Louisa Lombard, “President Michael Djotodia and the Good Little Putschist’s Tool Box,” *African Arguments*, April 2, 2013; Agence France Presse (AFP), “Djotodia: Central Africa’s Rebel Boss-Turned-President,” April 13, 2013; and Scott Sayare, “Mystery Shrouds Rise and Aims of Rebel at Helm of Central African Republic,” *New York Times*, April 13, 2013.

<sup>8</sup> French officials have recently suggested that this timeline could be shortened to mid-2014.

<sup>9</sup> Remarks by French Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius before the French Senate on October 16, 2013.

and state institutions. Warlords and potential rivals within the Seleka movement are also unlikely to agree to a diminution of their power or freedom of action. The balance of power between Djotodia and other Seleka figures—such as strongman Nouredine Adam, who until recently served as Security Minister—is uncertain, and factional violence is possible as the fractious coalition comes under new pressures.

## Escalating Violence

In recent months, Seleka forces and largely Christian militias known as “anti-balakas” (anti-machetes) have engaged in tit-for-tat massacres, threatening to create a new dynamic of violence along ethno-religious lines. These events could easily spark tensions throughout the religiously diverse central Africa region. They have also created a humanitarian crisis. Local populations who have fled their homes in rural areas due to fear of Seleka or anti-Muslim violence are reportedly living in abominable conditions.<sup>10</sup> CAR’s religious leaders have sought to calm tensions, often at considerable personal risk. They too have come under assault in recent days, and French troops reportedly recently intervened to protect the national leader of the Muslim community from a mob.<sup>11</sup>

Abuses by armed groups against civilians, including killings, looting, torture, and the burning of villages, have been particularly salient in the western region of Bossangoa and Bangui. This may be because Bossangoa and parts of the capital are associated with support for the former president, because they are particularly ethnically diverse, or because of Bossangoa’s strategic location on the road linking Bangui to Chad. Still, the motivations behind the attacks remain largely unclear, along with the identities of many of the perpetrators. It is also possible that the international community is simply not yet aware of similar abuses in more remote locations. Civilians from both religious communities also appear to be increasingly targeting each other for violent retribution.

The largely Christian militias that have organized in response to Seleka abuses appear in many cases to be community-driven, decentralized, and uncoordinated. However, in some cases, such as during a recent assault on Bangui, “anti-balaka” groups have displayed relatively sophisticated capacities and armaments, contributing to perceptions that they are supported—perhaps by design, perhaps opportunistically—by ex-military officers and/or regional figures who seek the return of deposed President Bozizé.<sup>12</sup>

President Djotodia appears unable, or unwilling, to exercise control over combatants associated with Seleka. In September, following high levels of violence by Seleka forces, Djotodia ordered the former rebel movement dissolved, but this has had little practical impact on the actions of already fractious commanders. Seleka elements are reportedly asserting increasing control over state resources, including customs revenues and mining concessions. Additional fighters, including from neighboring states, have reportedly self-identified with Seleka since March, driving its numbers up from some 4,000 in early 2013 to an estimated 20,000 in November.<sup>13</sup> They may hope to benefit from government patronage or to profit opportunistically from looting and access to more fertile land than is available to the north.

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<sup>10</sup> Testimony of Human Rights Watch (HRW) U.N. Director Philippe Boloignon, House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and International Organizations, “Crisis in the Central African Republic,” op. cit.

<sup>11</sup> Reuters, “Central African Republic Humanitarian Crisis Mounts Even As Attacks Ease,” December 13, 2013.

<sup>12</sup> Roland Marchal, “Central African Republic: Back to War Again?” *Global Observatory*, September 12, 2013; Boloignon/HRW testimony, op. cit.; France24.com, “Crise en Centrafrique: revivez les événements du jeudi 5 décembre,” December 5, 2013; *Africa Confidential*, “Central African Republic: On the Brink,” December 12, 2013.

<sup>13</sup> Testimony of Principal Deputy Assistant Secretary of State Jackson, “Crisis in the Central African Republic,” op. cit.; similar figures were reported by the AU in July 2013—see U.N. Security Council, *Letter dated 9 August 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council*, August 9, 2013, U.N. doc. S/2013/476.

Some community leaders in CAR argue that the vast majority of Seleka combatants are foreigners from Chad and Sudan, and that there is a “de facto foreign occupation” of CAR.<sup>14</sup> Yet as the anthropologist Louisa Lombard has documented, the term “foreigner” is often used by non-Muslim inhabitants of C.A.R. to refer interchangeably both to persons from other countries and to northeastern, often Muslim and Arabic-speaking ethnic groups with cross-border family ties.<sup>15</sup> Given such sentiments, international policymakers may wish to be cautious in their use of the term “foreign” to refer to Seleka leaders, so as to avoid creating the perception that pressure to disband Seleka is an endorsement of efforts to expel Muslim communities that have been in C.A.R. for generations. Such perceptions could drive Muslim civilians into the ranks of Seleka or other militias; prompt Seleka leaders to cling to power through violence; or create a narrative of Muslim persecution that could reverberate throughout the region.

The relationship between (ex-)Seleka commanders and CAR’s military is unclear. AU and U.N. reports suggest that much of the original army has either deserted or been forcibly disarmed, while some Seleka commanders have reportedly been appointed by Djotodia to head regional military units.<sup>16</sup> Western and African diplomats have also expressed concern over reported plans by Djotodia to integrate thousands of (ex-) Seleka elements into the defense and security forces.<sup>17</sup> The armed forces of CAR, known as the FACA, numbered 7,000 or fewer troops prior to 2013—far too few to secure the countryside. The military, and particularly the Presidential Guard, have been implicated in abuses—notably during a counterinsurgency campaign in the north between 2005 and 2007<sup>18</sup>—and have exhibited ethnically biased recruitment under successive regimes. The FACA has also been noted for its internal disarray and neglect. Repeated attempts at supporting security sector reform, including recent efforts by France and South Africa, seem to have had limited impact.

## A History of Poor Governance

CAR’s government has struggled to assert control over the country’s remote and relatively unpopulated rural areas since independence from France in 1960. The country has long served as terrain for competition over resources and regional influence among neighboring states and national elites, as well as a hinterland for poaching and raiding by non-state actors.<sup>19</sup> Foreign troops, including from France and neighboring states, have been present for decades in various roles. Chad, Libya, and Sudan have periodically sought to wield influence over CAR governments or rebel movements to gain access to resources and leverage over opponents. In turn, CAR leaders have regularly appealed to outside forces to protect and advance their interests.

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<sup>14</sup> Testimony of Nestor-Désiré Nongo Aziagbia, Roman Catholic Bishop of Bossangoa, before the House Foreign Affairs Subcommittee on Africa, “Crisis in the Central African Republic,” op. cit.

<sup>15</sup> See, e.g., Louisa Lombard, “Is the Central African Republic on the Verge of Genocide?” *Africa is a Country*, December 5, 2013. In a recent French TV report, a Muslim resident of Bangui who had sought shelter from anti-balaka assailants stated angrily, “We’re Muslim... But this country belongs to all of us. There are idiots who don’t understand this country who think we are foreigners – we’re not foreigners!” France24, “Bangui, la capitale, en état de siège,” December 5, 2013.

<sup>16</sup> U.N. Security Council, *Letter dated 9 August 2013 from the Secretary-General addressed to the President of the Security Council*, August 9, 2013, U.N. doc. S/2013/476; and *Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic Submitted Pursuant to Paragraph 22 of Security Council Resolution 2121 (2013)*, November 15, 2013, U.N. doc. S/2013/677.

<sup>17</sup> Declaration of the 3<sup>rd</sup> Meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic, presided by the Republic of Congo and AU Commissioner for Peace and Security, Bangui, November 8, 2013; a.k.a. the “Bangui Declaration.”

<sup>18</sup> HRW, *State of Anarchy: Rebellion and Abuses Against Civilians*, September 2007.

<sup>19</sup> See Louisa Lombard, *Raiding Sovereignty in the Central African Borderlands*, Dissertation, Duke University, 2012.

Until the early 1990s, CAR had a series of autocratic governments. The most notorious was that of Jean-Bédél Bokassa, who styled himself an Emperor and was implicated in massive embezzlement and human rights abuses. He was deposed in a coup backed by French troops in 1979. In 1993, Ange-Félix Patassé was elected president. A decade of ethnic tension and instability followed, including army mutinies in 1996-1997 that led to high levels of violence and the deployment of a U.N. peacekeeping operation. In 2002, Patassé reportedly called on a rebel movement based in neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo to help fend off domestic insurgents, leading to large-scale abuses against civilians, for which the leader of that rebel movement is currently on trial before the International Criminal Court.<sup>20</sup>

François Bozizé, an army general, rebelled against Patassé and, backed by Chad, ultimately took power in 2003. Bozizé's tenure brought relative stability to CAR for a time, along with modest donor-aided economic improvements. His rule was marked by successive, mostly low-level insurgencies in the north and northeast, however, and as of 2012 he was viewed as increasingly autocratic. His reliance on a Chadian security detail—and related perceptions that armed Chadians enjoyed impunity for abuses against civilians—reportedly contributed to local anger toward Muslims in general, and Chadians in particular. These tensions built on enduring resentment of external plundering of CAR resources. Such dynamics, as well as internal divisions among groups that had supported Bozizé's rise to power, drove successive rebellions and non-inclusive peace processes over the past decade.

At its inception, Seleka drew on widespread frustrations with President Bozizé. These included the concentration of power among Bozizé's family, close associates, and members of his Gbaya ethnic group; extensive state corruption; and the government's inability to deliver tangible socioeconomic development outside of Bangui. Growing insecurity amid the deterioration of the army (due to lack of resources, among other factors), and Bozizé's failure to implement peace accords with armed movements, also drove popular grievances.<sup>21</sup> Reportedly flawed elections in 2011, in which Bozizé was returned to office and a number of his family members were voted into parliament, were arguably a turning point, with donors and Central Africans alike increasingly viewing Bozizé as a problem. Significantly, Bozizé also angered the government of Chad by failing to crack down on Chadian anti-government rebels who were using northern CAR as a safe haven. The International Crisis Group has pointed to an additional apparent factor in Seleka's rise—disaffected actors in the diamond sector who were reportedly fed up with state extortion under Bozizé and may have contributed financing to Seleka leaders.<sup>22</sup>

## The Role of Regional Actors

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), a sub-regional body, has played a front-line role in responding to the crisis in CAR.<sup>23</sup> However, regional rivalries, divergent interests, and a lack of capacity may threaten ECCAS's ability to channel international efforts to stabilize CAR. The regional leaders involved in addressing the situation in CAR are among the longest-serving on the continent, and for the most part they have cultivated authoritarian regimes focused on protecting their own interests. This is likely to drive their calculations vis-à-vis CAR. The presidents of Chad and Republic of Congo have each sought to position themselves as key regional mediators on CAR, but they are likely to have divergent security and financial interests there. Chad may also be a problematic actor in CAR given its

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<sup>20</sup> See International Criminal Court Pre-Trial Chamber II, *Decision Pursuant to Article 61(7)(a) and (b) of the Rome Statute on the Charges of the Prosecutor Against Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo*, June 15, 2009.

<sup>21</sup> International Crisis Group (ICG), *Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition*, Africa Report No. 203, June 11, 2013.

<sup>22</sup> ICG, *Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

<sup>23</sup> ECCAS member states are: Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Republic of Congo, Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, Rwanda, and São Tomé & Príncipe.

role in bringing former President Bozizé to power, local perceptions that Chad's President Idriss Déby allowed the Seleka to seize power when he became dissatisfied with Bozizé, and the fact that some Seleka commanders are reportedly Chadian nationals or have other ties to Chad.<sup>24</sup> Cameroon, meanwhile, hosted former president Bozizé when he first went into exile, and is now contending with an influx of refugees from CAR into its already fragile north, amid ongoing concerns about instability emanating from Nigeria.

In 2012, South Africa was seen as cultivating growing ties with Bozizé's government. This included the deployment of South African troops to CAR, ostensibly for bilateral security cooperation and assistance. Some analysts interpreted South Africa's moves as part of a strategy of protecting potential mineral interests, and more broadly of seeking greater influence in francophone Africa.<sup>25</sup> They were therefore seen as a potential challenge to French and Chadian interests. South Africa withdrew its troops amid domestic pressures after 13 of its soldiers were reportedly killed during the Seleka assault on Bangui.

### Lord's Resistance Army Presence

The LRA presence in CAR reportedly dates to a series of cross-border raids from Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in early 2008 and 2009. CAR appears to have been used by LRA commanders as an ideal location for transiting through the region and procuring abductees and supplies, due to its remoteness, lack of an effective military, and location near territory familiar to the LRA in DRC and South Sudan.<sup>26</sup> LRA activities in CAR have generally been concentrated in the remote southeast, an area that has not historically been considered of strategic importance to the central government in Bangui. However, the region has received increased international aid and attention since Ugandan troops deployed to the area to pursue LRA leaders in mid-2009. (The population of southeastern CAR, as in much of the country, is largely made up of Christian and animist sedentary farmers, with a minority, largely Muslim, population of traders and nomadic herders. The Ugandan-led LRA, while nominally drawing on a messianic Christian ideology, has separate origins from the current ethno-religious violence in CAR.)

The Ugandan military operation to counter the LRA has recently expanded into a multi-country effort headed by the African Union. Within CAR, the operation remains largely Ugandan-led. Non-governmental organizations have surmised that LRA senior leaders are currently located in CAR. Recent LRA attacks have been reported west and north of the LRA's previous areas of activities, in the CAR provinces of Haute-Kotto (near Sudan and South Sudan) and Mbomou (near DRC).

### Outlook

As Congress probes the situation in CAR, you may examine the immediate crisis, its complex roots, and its longer-term implications. In the short-run, Congress plays a role in determining the appropriate funding levels, duration, and mechanisms of any U.S. international humanitarian assistance to CAR's population and any additional support for French and African military operations to disarm militias and restore stability. Much of the U.S. assistance package for regional military forces in CAR to date has been provided through the State Department's Peacekeeping Operations (PKO) account, which is already stretched due to its use as a primary vehicle for crisis response, counterterrorism, and security sector reform efforts elsewhere on the continent. Congress may also consider the degree to which the United

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<sup>24</sup> For example, powerful Seleka figure Noureddine Adam, who was reportedly born in northern CAR and fought in several CAR rebel movements, also reportedly served in the Chadian army in the mid-2000s. See ICG, *Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

<sup>25</sup> France24, "South Africa 'Downplayed' Casualties in CAR Fighting," April 4, 2013.

<sup>26</sup> The Enough Project, *On the Heels of Kony: The Untold Tragedy Unfolding in the Central African Republic*, June 2010.

States might assist with future elections and other elements of the political transition in CAR, as well as any future efforts to support national reconciliation and accountability for atrocities.

Beyond questions of cost and duration, these lines of effort are likely to confront significant challenges. These include a complex operating environment for foreign troops, in which the enemy is not clearly defined; a lack of effective state institutions, particularly outside of Bangui; a deeply traumatized and increasingly divided society; and a probable lack of support for the planned political transition among CAR's currently most powerful figures. Newly authorized U.N. sanctions monitoring may provide valuable information on the role of regional actors, but acting on such information may pose difficult dilemmas for international policymakers, for example if partner states in the region are found to be implicated in abuses and/or criminal activities. Such dilemmas have been salient, for example, in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Somalia, and elsewhere.

French and African military interventions may bring a temporary end to tit-for-tat massacres, and could create the space for national-level discussions on the way forward. However, they are also likely to encounter difficulties in coordinating operations. African troops are likely to exhibit shortfalls of equipment, capacity, and financing, and could provoke local backlashes in some areas due to their nationality (e.g., association with Chad) and/or behavior. Indeed, Congress has restricted U.S. security assistance to several of the African states with troops in CAR, due to human rights concerns.

In the longer-term, CAR confronts significant governance and security challenges, and the internal political and military arrangements that could allow for greater future stability may be elusive. States in the region, at times supported by France, the European Union, and U.N. agencies, have attempted multiple iterations of external military intervention, peace negotiations, and security sector reform efforts in CAR. Policymakers may therefore examine various past approaches and their limitations. In Resolution 2121, adopted in October 2013, the U.N. Security Council charged the previously existing U.N. Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR (BINUCA)—a political mission, not a peacekeeping operation—with a range of tasks, including support for disarmament efforts. However, U.N. staff face significant security constraints, and the mission's capacity to fulfill its new mandate has yet to be seen.

Ongoing international debates regarding the merits of primarily African-led versus U.N.-conducted multilateral stabilization operations are also at play in CAR. The international response to the security deterioration in CAR has a number of parallels to the debate a year ago over Mali—where the French military also took the lead, with U.S. bilateral support, while a regional stabilization force was deployed, and later incorporated into a U.N. peacekeeping operation. As observers have noted with regard to Mali, there are pros and cons to both African Union-conducted and U.N.-conducted peacekeeping operations. While neighboring states may have greater political commitment to resolving a crisis in their back yard, regional operations in Africa have also frequently been limited by a lack of capacity and handicapped by rivalries and competing interests.

On the other hand, U.N.-conducted peacekeeping operations, while better funded and vetted to a higher standard in terms of capacity and adherence to human rights principles, can be slow to materialize. U.N. troop contributors are also often more cautious in interpreting rules of engagement. With some exceptions (e.g., the U.N. operation in the Democratic Republic of Congo), the U.N. Security Council has also appeared more willing to grant stronger military mandates to AU military interventions than to U.N.-conducted peacekeeping operations. The AU Mission in Somalia, for instance, has repeatedly undertaken robust military action to counter violent extremists, and the West African operation in Mali that predated the current U.N. peacekeeping operation was initially given a wide-ranging mandate that, unlike its U.N. successor, would have included counterterrorism operations. There were reasons specific to the Mali context that influenced this evolution, and it remains to be seen how the Security Council will act in



CAR. This debate is therefore likely to continue as donors, including the United States, consider how, and to what extent, to strengthen the AU operation in CAR or support any future U.N. operation there.

Mr. Chairman, this concludes my statement. I will be pleased to respond to any questions the subcommittee may have.

### *Timeline: Selected Events*

**2002.** The Economic Community of West African States (ECCAS) deploys a stabilization force to CAR in response to a rebellion by dissident military general-turned-rebel-leader Francois Bozizé.

**2003.** Bozizé seizes power with Chadian backing while then-president Ange-Félix Patassé is abroad.

**2005.** Bozizé is elected president in a vote considered free and fair, after promulgating a new constitution.

**2007-2008.** Peace agreements are signed with three northern rebel groups. A national “political dialogue” is initiated, an amnesty law is promulgated, and preparations are made for rebel disarmament.

**2008.** A European Union Force (EUFOR), designed to contain regional instability emanating from Darfur, deploys to Chad and northeastern CAR under U.N. Security Council authorization.

**2008-2009.** The Lord’s Resistance Army (LRA) launches its first known attacks in CAR.

**2009.** The U.N. peacekeeping operation MINURCAT, authorized in 2007, assumes EUFOR’s mandate, deploys troops to northeastern CAR and eastern Chad.

**2010.** The U.N. Integrated Peacebuilding Office in CAR (BINUCA) opens, replacing a previous U.N. political mission in CAR since 2000. MINURCAT’s mandate ends and the mission withdraws.

**2011.** President Bozizé wins reelection and his coalition sweeps parliamentary elections that opposition groups claim are flawed.

**Aug. 2012.** A remaining northern rebel group signs a peace deal with the government. However, a faction joins with two other rebel groups to form the Seleka (“Alliance”) rebellion.

**Dec. 2012.** Seleka forces advance toward the capital. ECCAS member-states send more troops.

**Jan. 2013.** The “Libreville Agreements” with Seleka, mediated by regional powers, provide for Bozizé to remain in power, a prime minister to be appointed from the opposition, and a government of national unity to be established. Human rights activist Nicolas Tiangaye is appointed prime minister.

**March 2013.** Claiming the Libreville Agreements are not being respected, Seleka renews its advance and seizes power. Bozizé goes into exile. Obscure Seleka figure Michel Djotodia declares himself president.

**July 2013.** The AU establishes a stabilization operation, MISCA, to absorb and replace the existing regional force, known as MICOPAX. A formal transition to MISCA is anticipated on December 19, 2013.

**August 2013.** Djotodia is formally sworn in as president, and an 18-month political transition timeline, agreed to by ECCAS, officially begins—with elections due in February 2015.

**Sept. 2013.** Djotodia orders Seleka disbanded amid mounting violence. Nominal Seleka commanders are implicated in a series of attacks on Christians and churches in western CAR.

**Oct. 2013.** U.N. Security Council Resolution 2121 expands BINUCA's mandate and requests options for providing additional international support to MISCA.

**December 5, 2013.** U.N. Security Council Resolution 2127 authorizes MISCA and French troops "take all necessary measures" to protect civilians and stabilize the country, among other tasks. The Resolution also directs the U.N. Secretary-General to undertake "contingency operations and planning" for the possible transformation of MISCA into a U.N. peacekeeping operation, and to report to the Security Council within three months on recommendations on such a possible transformation. It also mandates human rights investigations and imposes an arms embargo.

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