

Report of the Chair's visit to the Central African Republic (CAR)

6-10 April 2011

I. Introduction

1. The Chairperson of the Central African Configuration (CAR) of the Peacebuilding Commission (PBC), H.E. Mr. Jan Grauls, conducted a working visit¹ to CAR from 6 to 10 April 2011. The main purposes of his visit were to assess progress made in the country's peacebuilding process, particularly following the holding of presidential and parliamentary elections in January and March 2011, discuss the ongoing elaboration by the CAR government of a second generation Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRSP II), and the inclusion therein of a peacebuilding dimension, and the ongoing preparations for a donors' roundtable to be held in June 2011 in Brussels, organised by the Government with the support of

II. Political context

6. The mission arrived in Bangui just over a week after the holding of the second round of legislative elections in CAR on 27 March 2011. The first round, held on 23 January 2011, had seen the victory of incumbent President François Bozizé, who was formally sworn in on 15 March 2011.
7. Several international observation missions were present in the country, including the Electoral Institute for the Sustainability of Democracy in Africa (EISA), the *Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie* (OIF), and the African Union, complemented by over 500 national observers from the *Observatoire National des Elections* (ONE) supported by the National Democratic Institute (NDI). Overall the electoral process was described as marred by serious operational and technical challenges, including involving the late posting of electoral lists, late opening of several voting sites, and an important number of missing ballot boxes (some of which were later recovered and processed). The Independent Electoral Commission was encouraged to address these shortcomings in the second round. It has been recognized however, that the ballot took place in a peaceful environment, and no major security incidents were reported. A large number of appeals have been filed with the Constitutional Court, some of which have resulted in the invalidation of the results requiring new elections to be held.
8. One additional independent assessment has been conducted by two international elections experts, analysing the final results and comparing them to available international statistics. Some of these assessments have cast serious doubts on the transparency of the electoral process, claiming wide-spread intentional fraud, particularly in the parliamentary elections, aimed at bringing to power a number of politicians with ties to the President. Divisions within the international community and between some key partners of CAR and the Government have occurred as a result of these serious allegations, pu Twtpnor.

11.

have taken into account other parts of the national security institutions, and would have promoted more synergies with proposed activities for instance in the field of rule of law and strengthening of the justice sector. The alleged refusal by the national coordinator to make

representative of the detainees raised concerns related to preliminary detention timeframes, which are regularly overstepped, both in cases of minor offences (maximum six months) and major crimes (maximum one year). A large number of detainees remain incarcerated for periods of time exceeding these limits, without ever being formally charged with a crime. Detainees also complained about the lack of facilities for physical exercise, reading, basic health facilities, and basic furniture such as beds. Most detainees sleep on the floor. Prison officials expressed their frustration with the limited resources available to them, including clean water supply, electricity, and ev

**Visit to the Central African Republic by the
Chairperson of the CAR CSM**

6 to 10 April 2011

Objectives and key messages

I. Objectives of the visit

Overall objectives:

- (a) To continue the dialogue with the Government of the Central African Republic and other relevant actors in the country's peacebuilding process;
- (b) To discuss the progress made in the implementation of key peacebuilding priorities in the Central African Republic as commonly defined in the country's Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding, with a focus on the electoral process;
- (c) To discuss and assess the recently completed electoral cycle.

Specific objectives:

- (a) To discuss the state of play for the organization of a donors' round table for peacebuilding and reconstruction challenges in the Central African Republic (Government, United Nations, World Bank);
- (b) To learn about the status of preparation of the country's second generation Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS);
- (c) To meet with the European Union delegation and discuss plans for the start of the implementation of the development hubs programme;
- (d) To assess progress made in the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme, and assess the latest development in the elaboration of a reintegration strategy;
- (e) To assess progress made on the second review of the Strategic Framework for Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic (Government, United Nations).

II. Key Messages

To all interlocutors:

- (a) The Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) followed closely the electoral process in the Central African Republic, as well as the ongoing developments in the country's DDR process;
- (b) The focus of the PBC's interest will gradually shift towards the other peacebuilding priorities: SSR, rule of law and good governance and the development hubs programme;

- (c) The PBC would benefit from the views of the actors in CAR on the next steps in the country's peacebuilding process, and how the PBC can best support efforts to that effect;
- (d) The PBC is interested in hearing partners' views on how to take forward its engagement with the Central African Republic, taking advantage of the ongoing elaboration of a second generation Poverty Reduction Strategy (PRS) and the review process of the Strategic Framework;
- (e) The PBC reiterates its readiness to support, with the World Bank and UNDP, the

the international community's support on developing a solid second generation peacebuilding-sensitive PRSP, which would serve as the basic document at the forthcoming donors' round table;

- (f) SSR: Discuss the importance of pursuing efforts towards the development of a SSR strategy, elements of which could be included in the second generation PRS;
- (g) Children and Armed Conflict: explain the need to develop individual action plans per rebel group to halt the recruitment and use of child soldiers.

To the UN family:

- (a) Praise the UN for the impressive job they are doing, in very challenging circumstances, and inquire about how the PBC can best support the UN's activities on the ground;
- (b) Inquire about how the newly developed UN Integrated Strategic Framework (ISF) and the future UNDAF+ are being articulated with the ongoing process of elaborating the second generation PRS;
- (c) Inquire about how the UN is supporting national authorities in developing a peacebuilding sensitive PRS which will serve as a key document for the upcoming donors' round table;
- (d) Inquire about how the UN is supporting the implementation of the recommendations of the Security Council Working Group on Children and Armed Conflict;
- (e) Inquire about the implications of the inclusion of the CAR on the list of priority countries of the Special Representative of the Secretary General on Sexual Violence and Conflict.

To International partners:

- (a) Inquire about the assessment by international partners of the situation in the Central African Republic;
- (b) Inquire about the prospects for a donor's round table.

To women's associations:

- (a) Inquire about the assessment by women's organizations of the level of participation by women in the electoral process;
- (b) Inquire about the current situation of sexual violence and violence against children in the country and how this situation is being addressed.

Annex 2: Programme of Visit

Time	Activity
Wednesday, 6 April 2011	
19:30	<i>Meeting with SRSG Sahle-Work Zewde</i>
Thursday, 7 April 2011	
8:45 – 9:00	<i>Meeting with SRSG and DSRSG</i>
9:00 – 10:15	<i>Meeting with SRSG, DSRSG, World Bank, UNDP</i>
10:30 – 11:00	<i>Meeting with the UN Country Team and BINUCA Section Chiefs</i>
11:30	<i>Meeting with the President – followed by working lunch</i>
15:30 – 17:15	<i>Meeting with the Minister of State for Planning and PRSP II Steering Committee</i>
17:30 – 18:30	<i>Meeting with the SRSG, DSRSG, World Bank, UNDP, EU, France, US</i>
18:45 – 19:45	<i>Meeting with representatives of humanitarian community</i>
20:00	<i>Dinner with international partners</i>
Friday, 8 April 2011	
8:30	<i>Briefing on SSR (SRSG, Chief Security Institutions Unit, BINUCA)</i>
9:00 – 10:00	<i>Meeting with representatives of women's organisations</i>
10:30 – 11:30	<i>Meeting with the Minister of Justice</i>
12:45	<i>Working lunch at United States Embassy</i>
14:30 – 15:30	<i>Meeting with European Union</i>