

***THE POSSIBLE SCENARIO FOR PEACE IN
CENTRAL AFRICA REPUBLIC FOCUSING ON THE
REGIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL PERSPECTIVE***

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ICGLR Who are we?

- A consortium of the Heads of States from the 13 member States of the Great Lakes Region. Heads of States meet once a year (SUMMIT) or if an urgent matter affecting the 13 states arises. Focuses on cross cutting issues be they security, economical political, or AD Hoc that seriously affect any or all the member States.
- Members of ICGLR are Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, Zambia, Angola, Congo Brazaville, DR Congo and Central Africa Republic.
- The Secretariat is based in Bujumbura and ICGLR works through National coordinators in each Country, Women Forum(RWF), Youth Forum, Parliamentary Forum and Civil Society Forums. These forums also have their annual or quarterly meetings and make reports that inform the Regional Ministerial committees meetings who in turn inform the Summit. All Forums attend the Summits as observers

CONFLICT SITUATION IN CAR

PREAMBLE

- The ongoing conflicts in several African countries particularly Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Central African Republic, Mali and South Sudan/Sudan continue to have significant negative impact on the general population of civilians with women and children being the most vulnerable and most affected.

A Case in Central Africa Republic

- After ten years in power, President Bozizé has left in the same way he arrived: ousted by a rebellion and abandoned by the security forces amid widespread discontent. In 2010, Crisis Group warned against the risk of a deteriorating security situation should Bozizé fail to fulfill the commitments of the 2008 Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD). At the time, the IPD was met with real enthusiasm and was considered a model for negotiations. However, nearly five years later, the overwhelming feeling is bitter disappointment: the inclusive government was never put in place; the 2011 elections took place but, according to observers, were marred by many accusations of fraud; the state disintegrated further; the “grey zones” outside state control expanded; most of the agreed essential reforms were never implemented; and the attitude adopted by both the government and rebel groups meant the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) program never saw the light of day for combatants in the north east.

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- In recent years, the CAR has been virtually ungoverned. The government's failure to take political responsibility has led to growing poverty and insecurity as well as financial, humanitarian and security dependence. President Bozizé's ouster was yet another episode in the cycle of crisis that occur every ten years in the CAR.

THE FALL OF BOZIZE GOVERNMENT

- François Bozizé's departure on 24 March 2013 was the result of his government's decline and the prevailing feeling that armed opposition groups could easily seize power. In ten years, the government did not promote development, the life expectancy remained the same as 30 years ago, national gross per capita income fell and the average number of years of schooling per person is now less than seven years. In addition, the government lost control of much of the national territory, while foreign support receded. Isolated internally and externally, the government chose the strategy of political monopoly, which it no longer had the resources to maintain and which provoked the creation of a rebel coalition: the Seleka. The latter's emergence was the direct consequence of the government's failure to deal with the problem posed by armed groups in the north east of the country, its inability to tackle insecurity and the withdrawal of regional support. In this respect, the rebellion that is now in power in Bangui was more a symptom than a cause of the crisis that began at the end of 2012.

Background to current conflict

A. Francois Bazize' weak governance

- All government and diplomatic circles in Bangui agree that the end of François Bozizé's rule was marked by his solitary and paranoid exercise of power, which prompted all his allies to join forces against him. However, the regime was already weakened well before the end of 2012.

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- An ethnic-family power system developed during Bozizé's second term, his family members entered politics, strengthening the family's grip on power. The 2011 elections were controversial, particularly because the president's family and close associates (widely known as the "board" in Bangui) were elected. On 4 May 2011, Socrate Bozizé and Monique Bozizé, the president's wives, were elected to parliament for the constituencies of Gambo and Bimbo respectively. Members of the president's family controlled security and finance. His son Francis succeeded him as Defence minister. Another of his children, Franklin, "controlled the airport" due to his position as security manager. Two other sons held key positions as heads of the Research and Investigation.

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- In the public financial sector, both the director of the central bank and the finance minister, ex-mines minister, were the president's "nephews". The key posts in the finance ministry were held by members of the president's ethnic community, while most of the managers and directors in the mines Ministry were from his region, Bossangoa. At the beginning of 2012, President Bozizé dissolved all the boards of directors of state-owned companies and replaced them with a Special Council for the Surveillance and Reform of State-Owned Companies and Agencies, which he chaired himself. He also chaired the Treasury Committee. This monopolization of the management of public finances provoked much criticism. Moreover, management of the budget was generally inefficient and at least half of allocations in the Finance Act were not spent in 2012, even though some of them were in priority sectors, such as health and education.
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- *B. A policy of insecurity*
- Government blocked reforms and outsourced security. The Bozizé government neglected the security sector. The tribal-family domination of the security services could hardly be expected to promote Security Sector Reform (SSR), while the inertia and indecision that characterized the presidency made it unable to anticipate the threat posed by Seleka, even though this had been apparent for several months. In CAR, army reform has been on the agenda since the 1996 mutiny. Although the government took some action and designed an SSR strategy in 2008 and 2009, the momentum was lost despite the organization of several seminars on the issue and support from international partners. The decline of the army was due to the way the government undermined the authority of military. Bozize did not believe in a strong army for fear of being overthrown and therefore hardly allocated it enough resources (equipment or cash).

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- Things were not rosy for Bozize elsewhere. While disquiet grew, the family members who controlled almost everything started quarrelling among themselves. Bozize mistrusted and even detained some.

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- After removing his chief adviser, François Bozizé, who was known for his openly solitary exercise of power, chose to become more isolated than ever. He no longer listened to the board, became increasingly paranoid, managed security issues directly with the help of a few loyal supporters, systematically purged his opponents or perceived opponents. Seleka was ripe to overthrow him and this they did in march 2013.

Séléka, the new leadership...

- From a coalition of armed groups the new rebel coalition in the name of Seleka that overthrew the Bozizé government was a heterogeneous consortium of malcontents. Its leaders, its armed groups and initial demands have long been a part of the CAR political and security landscape. As the movement gathered support as it advanced to Bangui, time for revenge, in addition to this fighting force had come for Seleka's members and supporters who included dissatisfied economic actors and the diamond collectors. One of the demands put forward by Seleka and some rebel commanders was for the "unconditional return of diamonds, gold, cash and other goods taken by the government in 2008. Conflict was far from over.

Leading to the the Current Crisis

- Seleka's swift offensive in December 2012 brought the rebellion to the door-step of the capital, Bangui. The intervention by Chad and Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)'s and Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in CAR (MICOPAX) forced them to stop and negotiate with the Bozizé government. The 11 January 2013 Libreville Agreement, imposed by ECCAS, temporarily prevented a coup and initiated a three-year power-sharing arrangement. However, this transition plan failed due to Bozizé's refusal to engage in a concerted and peaceful transition; failure by ECCAS to monitor the agreement; and Seleka's tactical advantage on the ground. Eventually, the Seleka took over Bangui on 24 March 2013 during an attack that claimed the lives of several South African soldiers.

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- This coup by the Seleka rebel coalition that ended François Bozizé's decade-old rule plunged the Central African Republic into a new and dangerous crisis. In response, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other partners of the Central African Republic (CAR) offered an all-too-common compromise: a de facto recognition of the new power and a transition framework under international supervision. However, uncertainty remains due to the absence of the State, Seleka's fragility and tensions between Christians and Muslims. To avoid having an ungovernable territory in the heart of Africa, the new government of national unity must quickly adopt emergency security, humanitarian, political and economic measures to restore security and revive the economy. For their part, international partners must replace their "wait-and-see" policy with more robust political and financial engagement to supervise and support the transition.

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- To overcome all these challenges, the government will need two types of assistance: funding and experts from donors for three important initiatives – Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), Security, Sector, Reforms (SSR) and the management of reconstruction funds; and political and military support from ECCAS. With the help of the UN and France, the regional organization should ensure rigorous monitoring of the Libreville Agreement and the decisions taken at its April 2013 heads of state summit in N'Djamena. It should also act as a mediator to mitigate political and military tensions that may arise. Should the transition fail, it will be impossible to govern the country and this will create a “grey zone” at the heart of the continent. CAR is already a haven for various armed groups; combatants from the Lord’s Resistance Army have been present in the south east of the country since 2008 and the Vakaga region is a transit route for poachers and traffickers from neighbouring countries, including Sudan. State collapse could pave the way for new criminal networks to establish.....

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-themselves in the country and further undermine regional stability. To prevent the country's further decline, international partners must go beyond their "wait-and-see" attitude and mixed commitments that have too often characterised international supervision of political transitions.
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- In the Heads of States Special Summit of the Conference of the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR - Kenya, Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda, Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan, Zambia, Angola, DR Congo, Congo Brazzaville and Central Africa Republic) held in Nairobi in July 2013, the Heads of States further called on the international community to increase support to the existing regional efforts to address the alarming Humanitarian situation in DRC, CAR and Darfur.

Recommendations:

Possible scenarios for peace in CAR

- *To address security emergencies*
- **To the MICOPAX and France:**
 1. Increase security patrols in Bangui.
- **To the government of CAR, UN, European Union, Micopax and France:**
- Establish a body of experts from MICOPAX and the UN, supported by France and funded by the EU, to develop a second generation DDR program emphasising community and economic reintegration of demobilised combatants. Under the prime minister's authority, the body should report to the transition steering committee on its progress.
- Link the reinsertion component of DDR to the implementation of development programs in the north east of the country in order to provide employment opportunities for demobilised combatants.
- Establish a body composed of the army chief of staff, security, justice and defence ministers, representatives of civil society and international experts, to design and implement an SSR program that provides for the integration of rebels in the army based on pre-established quotas and clearly defined recruitment standards (ie, skills, education and/or previous experience within the security forces). Under the prime minister's authority, the body should report to the transition steering committee on its progress.

To address humanitarian emergencies

- **To non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the UN:**
- Submit a joint request to Seleka leaders asking for the deployment of trustworthy military commanders in regions identified as high-risk areas.
- Create a specific position for a security coordinator for the NGOs working in CAR and lead a security risk assessment mission in each area.

To protect Human Rights

- **To the government of CAR:**
- 7. Ensure the independence of the new joint commission of inquiry by providing it with sufficient resources to lead proper investigations and appointing more individuals with proven experience in defending human rights.
- **To the government of CAR and the EU:**
- 8. Support research conducted by the Central African Republic Human Rights League, including through the allocation of EU funds dedicated to human rights.
- **To the EU:**
- 9. Launch a consultation process with the CAR authorities, pursuant to Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, and until this process is finalised, continue to provide financial support to CAR through the European Development Fund (EDF), but only directly to specific programs and not through government channels.
- **To the International Criminal Court:**
- 10. Conduct a mission to CAR to ensure that witnesses in the trial of Jean-Pierre Bemba are safe and to send a warning to perpetrators of abuses.

To address economic emergencies

- **To ECCAS, the African Development Bank, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and EU:**
- 11. Consult each other on granting emergency budgetary support to enable the government to pay civil servants, resume the provision of basic social services and face the main challenges of the crisis.
- **To the government of CAR and international donors:**
- 12. Establish a body composed of members of the government of national unity and international experts, to manage funds dedicated to reconstruction, organisation of elections and other challenges of the transition. The body will manage the special solidarity fund announced at the Brazzaville meeting; undertake a needs assessment mission to determine immediate priorities for assistance and allocate funds accordingly; and assess the implementation of these initiatives. Under the prime minister's authority, the body should report to the transition steering committee on its progress.
- **To the government of CAR and the African Development Bank:**
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- 13. Allow the African Development Bank to assess the mining and oil contracts signed by the former regime to determine if these contracts are in accordance with the sector's standards.
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- 14. Restore mandatory administrative controls to ensure the integrity of the diamonds supply chain and organise a Kimberley Process review mission in all diamond-producing areas.
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- **To the Kimberley Process**
- 15. Investigate the diamond smuggling networks in CAR.

To address Political Emergencies

- **To the government of CAR:**
- 16. Prepare for the elections by establishing the Election National Authority and appointing its members.
- **To the UN:**
- 17. Send a preliminary electoral mission to CAR to assist in the design of an action plan, a budget and a realistic timetable for the elections.
- **To the transition steering committee:**
- 18. Organise a monthly meeting to assess progress on implementation of the Libreville Agreement and decisions taken at the ECCAS summit and discuss adjustments needed; and if necessary, identify, disclose and implement sanctions against those individuals responsible for the lack of progress, including international investigations, targeted international sanctions, exclusion from the political process with the prime minister's consent, etc.
- **To the African Union, ICGLR, ECCAS, UN and EU:**
- 19. Organise meetings to draw lessons from the management of the CAR crisis and find solutions to the political and military problems that have emerged and ways to improve Africa's peace and security architecture.

Source

- The above conclusions were reached at the Nairobi/Brussels meeting – June 2013
- Extracts also from the Heads of State Summit ICGLR meeting in Nairobi Gigiri - July 2013