

GHAMUN XI

Forum: Human Rights Commission

Issue: the ongoing conflict between the Seleka rebels and the militia in Central African Republic

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INTRODUCTION

The Central African Republic conflict is an ongoing civil war in the Central African Republic between the *Séléka* rebel coalition and government forces, which began on 10 December 2012. The conflict arose after rebels accused the government of President François Bozizé of failing to abide by peace agreements signed in 2007 and 2011. Many of the rebel groups were previously involved in the Central African Republic Bush War.

Rebel forces known as *Séléka* (meaning "union" in the Sango language) captured many major towns in the central and eastern regions of the country at the end of 2012. *Séléka* comprises two major groups based in north-eastern CAR: the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) and the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), but also includes the lesser known Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country (CPSK). Two other groups based in northern CAR, the Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC) and the Chadian group Popular Front for Recovery (FPR), also announced their allegiance to the *Séléka* coalition.

These tensions, which culminated in the killing and displacement of Muslims from the west, are still very high in the centre of the country, the front line between armed groups. The conflict between anti-balaka and ex-Seleka is thus now compounded by a conflict between armed communities. In areas with frequent intercommunal clashes, the link between armed groups and communities is strong: ex-Seleka combatants are seen as the protectors of Muslims and anti-balaka fighters as the defenders of Christian communities. By contrast, communities in other parts of the country are keeping their distance from armed groups.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO RESOLVE ISSUE

The Bangui National Forum was a national reconciliation conference organized by the transition government of the Central Africa Republic (CAR). It took place in Bangui from May 4 to 11, 2015 and was part of the third phase of the Brazzaville process. Following the Brazzaville ceasefire conference of July 2014 and the CAR popular consultations during the first quarter of 2015, the forum resulted in the adoption of a Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the CAR and the signature of a Disarmament, Demobilisation, Rehabilitation and Repatriation (DDRR) agreement among 9 of 10 armed groups.

SOLUTIONS TO CONSIDER:

To avoid an intensification of tensions and violence between armed groups, and to ensure a peaceful climate conducive to elections, Crisis Group recommends that the following measures be rapidly implemented by CAR authorities and international partners:

1. Strengthen the international forces by increasing the number of French troops (the most effective force on the ground) and UN forces, and by increasing their crowd-control capacity;
2. Initiate the disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration program with willing armed groups;
3. Arrest militia leaders who refuse to disarm and try leaders of the anti-balaka and ex-Seleka suspected of involvement in the recent upsurge in violence;
4. Delay elections to the first half of 2016;
5. Finalise the electoral budget, clearly formulate the eligibility criteria and appeals process for candidates in legislative and presidential elections, and publicly uphold the right to vote for CAR's Muslim population; and
6. Promote reconciliation efforts between communities, specifically through the revitalisation of economic exchanges at the local level, the announcement of development plans for peripheral regions of the country, and the preparation of a massive investment plan in the education sector, which should include teaching about tolerance.