



JUNE 2016

# Central African Republic: Walking the Fine Line of (un) Governability

Jordi Calvo Rufanges and Josep Maria Royo Aspa

Escola de Cultura de Pau / Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: WALKING THE FINE LINE OF (UN) GOVERNABILITY

June 2016

D.L.: B-16799-2010

ISSN: 2013-8032

Authorship: Jordi Calvo Rufanges and Josep Maria Royo Aspa.  
Support investigators: Elena Fernández Sandiumenge, Laura Marco Gamundi, Eira Massip Planas, Ainhoa Ruíz Benedicto, María Villellas Ariño

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cultura de pau

Project financed by l'Agència Catalana de Cooperació al Desenvolupament  
(Catalonian Agency for Cooperation and Development)

 Agència Catalana  
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al Desenvolupament

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## INDEX

04	Executive summary
05	1. Introduction
06	2. Roots of the conflict
08	3. The rise of Bozizé
11	4. The last cycle of violence?
15	5. Regional initiatives
17	6. Transition and elections: starting point or finish line?
20	7. Gender dimension
23	8. Arms exports
23	8.1. Defense equipment exports to the CAR
26	8.2. Spanish arms exports
28	9. Militarism and military spending
28	9.1. Analysis of the weapons used
28	9.2. Armed forces and military spending
30	10. Outstanding issues
32	11. Conclusions

## 33 BIBLIOGRAPHY

## ANNEX

08	Chart 3.1. Armed group affiliations 2014
11	Chart 4.1. ¿Who is behind Séléka?
12	Map 4.1. Crisis in CAR (2013-2014)
13	Chart 4.2. Who are the Anti-balaka?
14	Chart 4.3. The post Séléka era in CAR
17	Map 6.1. Areas of Influence of the actors involved in CAR (2015)
23	Table 8.1.1. Authorized defense equipment exports from the EU to CAR – by export countries 2001-2012
23	Table 8.1.2. Actual defense equipment exports from the EU to CAR – by export countries 2005-2013
24	Graph 8.1.1. Exports authorized and undertaken in defense material from EU to CAR 2005-2013 – time evolution
24	Table 8.1.3. Types of weapons made and exported sorted by type of EU defense material to CAR 2005-2013
24	Graph 8.1.2. Total global exports of light and small weapons made to CAR between 2005-2014
23	Graph 8.1.3. Global exports of small and light arms sorted by type World exports made to CAR by the type of weapon
25	Table 8.1.4. Global exports of light and small weapons by sort of material made to CAR between 2005-2014
25	Table 8.1.5. Total global exports of light and small weapons made to CAR between 2005-2014
26	Graph 8.2.1. Spanish exports on small and light weapons to CAR between 2005-2014
26	Table 8.2.1. Spanish exports on small and light weapons to CAR between 2005-2014 (according to customs)
26	Table 8.2.2. Exports of hunting and sport shooting weapons (2008-2014)
27	Table 8.2.2. Small and light weapons exports to CAR sorted by Spanish provinces (2005-2013)
28	Table 9.1.1. Identified weapons to CAR by armed group
29	Table 9.1.2. Arms found coming from Spain
29	Table 9.1.3. Estimated stocks of arms in CAR. State bodies and agencies and other non-state armed groups and types of weapons in September 2003
29	Table 9.2.1. Military personnel evolution to CAR (2005-2015)

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Although Central African Republic (CAR) achieved *de jure* Independence from France in 1960, the situation since then has been characterized by continued political instability. There have been several coups d'état and military dictatorships, the most egregious being that of emperor Bokassa in the 1970s. Both internal and external forces contribute to the situation. On the one hand, political elites compete for power while the population is excluded and marginalized. Neighboring states such as Chad, Sudan and Libya play prominent roles in the ongoing conflict in order to extend their influence in the region, and France and China also compete for the country's natural resources. The crisis and the disintegration currently overwhelming the country can be tied to ethnic divisions, the existence of numerous armed groups – such as the older Séléka coalition and the Anti-balaka militias - which are progressively more fragmented and involved in criminal activities. The instrumentalization of religion also aggravates tensions between communities, and the combination of all of these factors have hindered efforts towards the consolidation of national unity and the reparation of the social fabric.

Elections in 2005 were won by François Bozizé, consolidating the power he had seized in a previous military coup. Muslim insurgencies began to emerge in the North of the country, which by December of 2012 had forced the establishment of peace negotiations. Consequently, in January 2013, in Libreville, the government of François Bozizé and a coalition of armed groups under the name Séléka agreed on

a transitional government. However, Séléka broke the agreement and overthrew the Bozizé regime, taking power. Nevertheless, self-defense militias, fractions of the army and supporters of Bozizé calling themselves “Anti-balaka” rebelled against the Séléka government, creating a climate of chaos and impunity. In December 2013, a new offensive ended the Séléka Government and in January 2014 a transitional government was established, lead by Catherine Samba-Panza. France, the EU and a regional mission of the UN intervened militarily to try and control the situation. Regional leaders, headed by the Congolese Denis Sassou Nguesso, promoted dialogue initiatives at the same time a process of national dialogue was taking place. Talks ended in May 2015, but the implementation is still pending. Presidential elections in December 2015 and February 2016 have lead to the establishment of a new government, but whether peace can arise from the ungovernable situation is still to be seen.

The CAR does not receive significant arms imports, and its army has traditionally been relatively small. This has conditioned the conflict, and better-armed external forces have often joined the conflict. The permanent presence of troops of the former colonial power, and the intervention of other international forces has had its influence. Despite this, the CAR has been the object of diverse arm sales from some of the largest of the world's small and light arm exporters, including leading countries in EU defense material exports, as well as China. In the Spanish case we find a dynamic role in the sale of small munitions, particularly hunting rifles.



## 1. INTRODUCTION

This study is the result of monitoring and analysis of international news out coming from multiple sources and local, regional and international media, as well as local and international organizations, other authors and specialized literature on the issue. It has also taken into account databases on conflicts around the world, such as ACLED database, UCDP from the Department of Peace and Conflict of PRIO and the IISS conflicts database, among others. Analysis of the arms race is based on the principal reports of the groups of experts conducted ad-hoc about arms transfers to the conflict and several reports from some of the leading research centers on arms transfers as SIPRI and Small Arms Survey. In regard to Spanish participation in the arms trade, we have used official reports of the Spanish government and others conducted by the Centre Delàs itself. Finally, we have consulted the major arms trade databases: SIPRI and NISAT global, Centre Delàs Spanish weapons sales and the Spaniard DataComex. As for the military presence, the main sources used were SIPRI's database on military expenditure and annual reports of the IISS.

The report has been divided in ten chapters, the first of which is a methodological introduction. The second chapter aims to identify the roots and causes of the conflict afflicting the country. The third chapter summarizes the rise to power of one of its main political figures today, François Bozizé. Subsequently, the fourth chapter introduces the last period of violence and instability; followed by a fifth chapter which analyzes the different local and regional initiatives aimed at promoting dialogue and peace negotiations. The sixth chapter is a review of the last electoral period and some of the challenges arising in this new stage. The seventh chapter refers to the gender dimension of the conflict afflicting the country from different perspectives. An analysis of the arms race in the conflict in CAR is presented in the eighth chapter, which itself is divided into different sections. The first refers to exports of arms bound for CAR from any country in the world, with particular attention to EU Member States. The second section analyzes Spanish arms exports, since Spain is identified as a major player in the transfer of arms and ammunition to the Central African territory. Subsequently, the ninth chapter incorporates two parts, the first of which analyzes the most significant arms transfers in qualitative terms, their distribution to the armed groups and identifies the weapons found in the field. The second part presents a parallel analysis of militarism in CAR, looking at both military spending and the Armed Forces on the ground in terms of origin and troop numbers. Finally, the tenth chapter outlines some of the outstanding challenges and provides preliminary conclusions.

## 2. ROOTS OF THE CONFLICT

From its Independence in 1960, the situation in CAR – a landlocked country with more than 5 million inhabitants and a territory the size of France - has been characterized by lasting political instability which has resulted in several coups d'état and military dictatorships. Despite five different national dialogue and reconciliation forums that have taken place since 1980, there has been no end of instability, the product of governmental problems and institutional weakness. The keys to understand the current situation are both internal and external in nature.

Internal, because infighting among political elites belonging to different families and ethnicities compete for the national resources of the country. This tension has been exacerbated due to the marginalization of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) by the succession of leaders since independence that have preferred French protection over their own army. Political leaders have used the FACA as an instrument to enter into power or to maintain it. Each president rebuilt the army with officials that they could trust, mainly of the same ethnic background as themselves. For this reason, new presidents are fearful of a part of the army, which stays faithful to deposed leaders and could represent a future threat. The roots of the different rebellions the country has suffered from 1960 until now stem from institutional fragility, a lack of democracy, dissent of large sectors of the population who are excluded from social and humanitarian projects, the exacerbation of ethnic and religious differences for political gain, economic difficulties and borderline bankruptcy which the different governments have suffered due to ongoing corruption, as well as the destruction of the social fabric.

External, due to the role assumed historically by its neighbors, Chad, Sudan and Libya, thirsty and willing for influence in the region of central Africa, because of the richness of CAR in natural resources (diamonds, uranium, gold, exotic woods, and oil and gas reserves); and for its strategically position in the continent among other reasons. We should highlight France's role as a colonial power (from the end of the 19th century, by defining the

borders of the modern state as a territory within the French Congo in 1888, integrating it afterwards into Equatorial French Africa) and which has continued to have great control over the established governments. China is also playing a role while competing for natural resources in the country.

A number of factors have contributed to the country's instability. The ungovernable situation is fueled by the climate of political instability, persistent outbreaks of violence at the regional level, the proliferation of small weapons, and the insertion of troops from neighboring conflicts such as from Chad, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

*The different rebellions the country has suffered from have their roots in the marginalization of the armed forces, institutional fragility, a lack of democracy, a population excluded from social and humanitarian projects, the exacerbation of ethnic and religious differences for political gain.*

Six political leaders have dominated the political sphere of the country since its Independence in 1960. David Dacko was the first president of the country in a single-party political system from which he was expelled through a coup d'état perpetrated by his cousin, Colonel Jean-Bedel Bokassa.

Since 1965, CAR has suffered the effects of the Bokassa regime. The country has been governed since its independence by political leaders from the southeast. Moreover, many of these politicians are of gbaya ethnicity, the largest one (one-third of the population), as of Ange-Félix Patassé or François Bozizé. Many of these leaders are part of the same political class which has emerged throughout the 20th century from the French Colonial army prior to leading the country – this is the case for Bokassa, Dacko and Kolingba, etc – or have been generals or chiefs of state of the very leaders which they have afterwards attempted and sometimes succeeded to overthrow.

The Bokassa government (1965-1979) was known for corruption, exploitation of natural resources, a lack of freedom and the repression of dissent. With French support, the emperor was crowned and governed until 1979 when the gradual approximation to the Libya's young Muammar Gaddafi raised alarms for European chancellorships. The country became a troublesome ally to France, which conspired to support Bokassa's predecessor David Dacko to substitute him and restore power.<sup>1</sup>

1. Bozizé was General of Bokassa and minister of Defense of Dacko; Dacko was minister under the leader who brought independence, Barthélemy Boganda, and distant cousin of Bokassa; Kolingba was ambassador of Bokassa when he was overthrown by the Dacko coup d'état, and he became the main head of state of Dacko, and then lead a coup against his teacher, Dacko, who he replaced. Then, he led out another coup d'état against Patassé, after losing against him in the elections, y Patassé himself was prime minister of Bokassa, among other things.

The trigger was a student massacre<sup>2</sup> (perpetrated by General François Bozizé, who years later would become president of the country) which contributed to justify the French attitude reversal. Since that date, the country was dominated by successive military governments (David Dacko, André Kolingba) until September 1993, when Ange-Félix Patassé, Bokassa's former prime minister was elected president. The '90s were characterized by extreme fragility of political institutions which translated into a wave of rebellions and attempts to replace Patassé by force. In 1996, three mutinies against the government by a group of

soldiers obliged the president to request French intervention. Thereupon, Patassé and the rebel leader, Anicet Saulet, agreed on the substitution and replacement of the French forces by a special guard made up of different African troops but financed by Paris. Subsequently, Patassé sought distance from France, and sought US support so that French troops might be withdrawn. In 1998, the UN Security Council authorized the UN mission in the country (MINUCAR), which, from 2000 evolved into BONUCA. Up to 13 different international military missions have taken place in the country from the 90s to date.

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2. The numbers vary, but source agree that from 100 to 400 students died in January 1979 This date has become important in the struggle for democracy and human rights in the country.

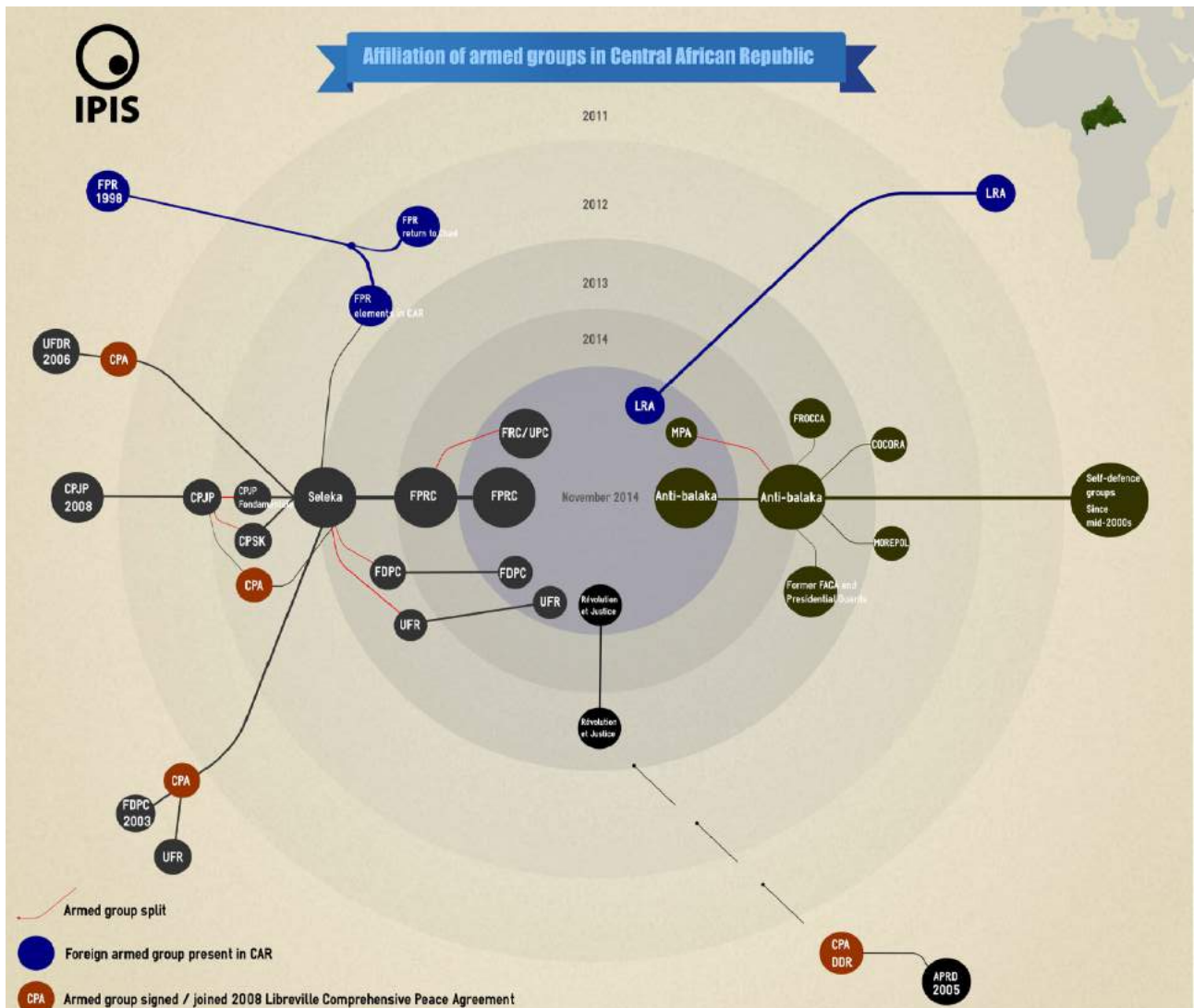
### 3. THE RISE OF BOZIZÉ

With the passing of years, one of the leaders whom had a distinctive place in Central African politics and whom continues playing that role today is François Bozizé. After the Barracuda operation in September 1979, in which France contributed to overthrow Bokassa, David Dacko came to power and General François Bozizé became Minister of Defense. In 1982 Bozizé and Ange-Félix Patassé attempted a coup d'état which failed, resulting in their exile to Togo. Bozizé was the military leader and Patassé the political leader of the failed attempt. In 1993, the first multi-party elections (the first democratic elections since 1960) were held, and Ange-Félix Patassé emerged victorious. Patassé ousted his other opponents including Bozizé. Patassé, like Bozizé, of northern-central origin, was in office between 1993 and 2003, during which he suffered several attempted

coups in 1996-7 by sectors of southern origin, closest to his predecessor, André Kolingba. Over the years, Bozizé became Patassé's right hand and bridge to the army, and with French support they managed to prevent the 1996-7 coup attempts, consolidating more power in the central government. Both of them secured the integration of the large catholic north into the governmental structure. In the aftermath of an attempted coup in 2001, avoided due to the Libyan military support, Patassé broke with Bozizé and accused him of perpetrating the coup. Bozizé went into exile in Chad, and began a new rebellion to take power in CAR.

In October 2002, the rebellion lead by Bozizé, supported by Chadian mercenaries, the Congolese armed group MLC commanded by

Chart 3.1. Armed group affiliations 2014



Source: Mapping Conflict Motives: The Central African Republic, IPIS, November 2014.



Jean-Pierre Bemba with the backing of Uganda, culminated in march 2003 with the fall of Patassé's government and the proclamation of a new president. France, acknowledging Patassé's weakening position, decided not to intervene and facilitated the overthrow, by evacuating its military bases. Four years later, French troops were sent to ensure the victory of the coup, as had been done in Chad and the Congo. Bozizé called for presidential elections in May 2005 which he won and legitimated his power. Even so, despite the elections being declared democratic by the international community the exclusion of Patassé's community led him and his allies to initiate another rebellion against Bozizé's recently established presidency.

The coup d'état which brought François Bozizé to power against Ange-Félix Patassé in 2003, electoral fraud in the 2005 elections, and above all, the exclusion of large sectors of the population were the seeds of the different insurgent movements which emerged in the north and northeast of the country. Since the beginning, Bozizé was confronted by armed groups distrustful of his authority but with limited political ambitions. According to several sources, many of the armed Central African groups had similar origins. Repression and abuses by the armed forces incited existing armed self-defense groups, and marginalized political actors used these rural militias as a springboard to national politics. Their principal demands were an end to the manipulation of electoral results and a more democratic political system. The northern population and northeast communities in the country, in their majority Muslim, have been excluded historically from power, and they have even been denied Central African nationality due to nomadic origins. A number of armed groups emerged in 2005 with the objective of overthrowing Bozizé, as Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la République et de la Démocratie (APRD), directed by Jean-Jacques Demafouth; la Union des Forces du Renouveau (UFR), lead by Florian Njadder-Bedaya; the Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR), guided by Michel Djotodia y Damane Zakaria; and the Front Démocratique pour le Peuple Africain (FDPC), lead by Abdoulaye Miskine. Some of the above mentioned and their leaders later came together in the Séleka group, while the FDPC continued to focus in the West, particularly in the border with Cameroon, where they continued

*Repression and abuses by the armed forces incited existing armed self-defense groups, and marginalized political actors used these rural militias as a springboard to national politics*

pillaging and attacking convoys. Others, such as members of APRD, joined the anti-balaka militias or came together at the end of 2013 in the region of Ouham Pendé to form Revolution and Justice, headed by Armel Sayo (a military leader close to Patassé whom is still active).

In 2007, François Bozizé promoted the so called Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD) to reconcile the different existing political groups and military services in the country. The IPD suffered several delays but was finally celebrated in December 2008. At the same time between 2007 and 2008, different groups signed the peace agreements with the Bozizé government which was translated into the inclusion and participation of new agents in the structures of power. In February 2007, the FDPC reached an agreement with the government in Sirte, Libya, with the mediation of the countries president Muammar Gaddafi, and in 2008 the UFDR and the APRD signed the Peace Agreements of Libreville with the Central African government, which the mediation of the Gabonese president, Omar Bongo. Bongo speaks Sango, the official language of Central African Republic, and Bozizé was born in Gabon, underlining the good relation between them. Meanwhile, in July the peacekeeping mission MICOPAX entered into force. MICOPAX was a mission of the Multinational Force of Central African States (FOMAC) emerged from the Economic Community of Central African States (CEEAC). This was a substitution of the Multinational CAR Force created in October 2002. MICOPAX had the financial and logistical support of both France and the EU.

The Economic and Monetary Central Africa Community (CEMAC), the BONUCA, and the International Organization of Francophonie (IOF) and the Center for Humanitarian Dialogue facilitated the IPD, although a large part of its recommendations were not put into practice. Among them, the establishment of a unified national government stands out as the creation of an independent electoral commission for the 2010 elections that were postponed to 2011. The Libreville Agreement established amnesty for insurgents, a DDR program and the reform of the security sector but wasn't put into practice.

Another actor to mention in the central African environment is the Ugandan group *Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)*. Established in 1987 in the North of Uganda under the messianic leadership of Joseph

Kony, their will was to overthrow Yoweri Museveni Government and release the northern region of Uganda from marginalization. The failure of peace negotiations held from 2006 to 2008 between the LRA and the Ugandan government, followed by offensives from Ugandan forces against their bases in the DRC pushed the group towards South Sudan and CAR. To date, they operate in small groups mainly of a predatory nature, pillaging to ensure their survival, especially in the external borders of the Congolese provinces Haut Uélé and Bas Uélé (northeast of DRC) and in the prefectures of Haute-Kotto and

*The Ugandan LRA, which operates in the southeast of the CAR, survives from the illegal trade of ivory, diamonds and gold in an opportunistic alliance with other groups in Central Africa*

Mbomou, in the southeast of CAR. The group operates across the borders of these uncoordinated states, surviving from the illegal trade of ivory, diamonds and gold in an opportunistic alliance with other groups in Central Africa. The initiative of regional cooperation to eliminate the LRA, made up of the DRC and South Sudan and led by Uganda with the logistical support of US Africa Command (AFRICOM), has failed to disband the group. Various reports indicate that Joseph Kony is based between CAR and Kafia Kingi, an enclave located in South Sudan on the borders of Sudan and CAR.

## 4. THE LAST CYCLE OF VIOLENCE?

In 2012 a new coalition of armed groups from the northeast of the country was created under the name of Séléka. This time, the reemergence of the armed insurgency in the North was transverse and unified, the result of abandonment of the region by the government, and the increasing influence of Chad and Sudan in the region. The government failed to solidify its authority in the region either via repression or through engaging groups who

had been conceded a role in governance in prior peace dialogues. This failure resulted in the proliferation of armed groups in the North and the circulation of arms and combatants from southeast Chad and western Darfur in the Sudan. This coalition, lead by Michel Djotodia, reached the capital in December 2012 forcing new peace talks, again in Libreville.

### Table 4.1. ¿Who is behind Séléka?

The armed groups which compose Séléka in 2012 are *Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR)* and two splinter groups *Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP)* (CPSK and CPJP). Early on, the ranks of Séléka were populated by mercenaries from Sudan and Chad and structured tactical alliances with other groups from CAR, such as FPR (Chadians lead by Baba Laddé) and the FDPC. The UFDR was created in November 2006 from the prefectures of Vakaga and Haute-Kotto. It clusters different groups and leaders among which Michel Djotodia, Abakar Sabone (leader of the MLCJ group) or Hassan Justin (member of the presidential guard of Patassé) stand out, the majority coming from high positions in Séléka and the UFDR. They signed the Peace Treaty of Libreville in 2008. La CPJP was formed in 2008 in the northeast and was led by Abdoulaye Hissène, and is mainly people of Runga descent: Central Africans, Chadians and Sudanese. Opposed to the UFDR for ethnic differences and over control of natural resources, and it had requested the investigation of the death of Charles Massi, its leader. This group practically disintegrated in March 2012 over rifts between leaders over whether to ally with the UFDR to fight Bozizé, and in that same year ended up adhering to the Peace Treaty (from 2008). Some commanders ended up joining Séléka, such as Nourredine Adam, who created the *CPJP Fondamentale*, or Moussa Dhafane, founding father of the *Convention Patriotique du Salut du Kodro (CPSK)*. The CPSK was created in June 2012 and was the origin of the *Séléka Rénovée*. Nourredine Adam (CPJP Fondamentale) and Moussa Dhafane (CPSK) met in August in Djamena, and in September they announced the creation of Séléka ('alliance' in Sango, the other official language of the country besides French). From September to December, both leaders convinced Djotodia to join the new project. From the alliance consolidated by these three African groups and the size of the offensive of December 2012, large groups of mercenaries from Sudan and Chad joined the alliance. When Bangui was taken in March 2013, It is estimated the forces from Séléka were 10,000-20,000 combatants in accordance to the AU.<sup>3</sup> Other sources estimated Central African combatants to be around 5,000, with another 10,000 foreign fighters<sup>4</sup>. Despite this date, the fact is that Séléka took Bangui with 4,000 combatants and in the peace dialogues with the UN about the DDR process, its leadership estimated they had between 7,000 y 10,000 in their ranks.

Séléka not only demands the development of the Northeast, but also reforms in the existing power structure, a condemnation of the failure to implement the agreements and recommendations reached in the Inclusive Political Dialogue in 2007, they claim for an investigation of the devastating human rights violations committed during Bozizé's rule, moreover they imply for economical compensation for their combatants and the restoration for the diamonds and gold stolen by the regime in 2008 during Operation Closing Gate.<sup>5</sup> Séléka denounced the discrimination and marginalization of the Northeasterners as of their main demands, yet not in religious terms. Even so, during the first offensives in the East, the combatants seemed to discriminate against non-Muslims, despite this, the Muslim community was not untouched by violence. When the Anti-balaka militias were organized and became more active, Christians were targeted and complaints of discrimination against Muslims became more visible. Once in power, the Séléka leadership did not undertake to establish good governance or socioeconomic development. Meanwhile, the president and his underlings used their access to power and public funds for their own enrichment.

3. African Union Commission, Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in the Central African Republic, 18 June 2013, p. 5.

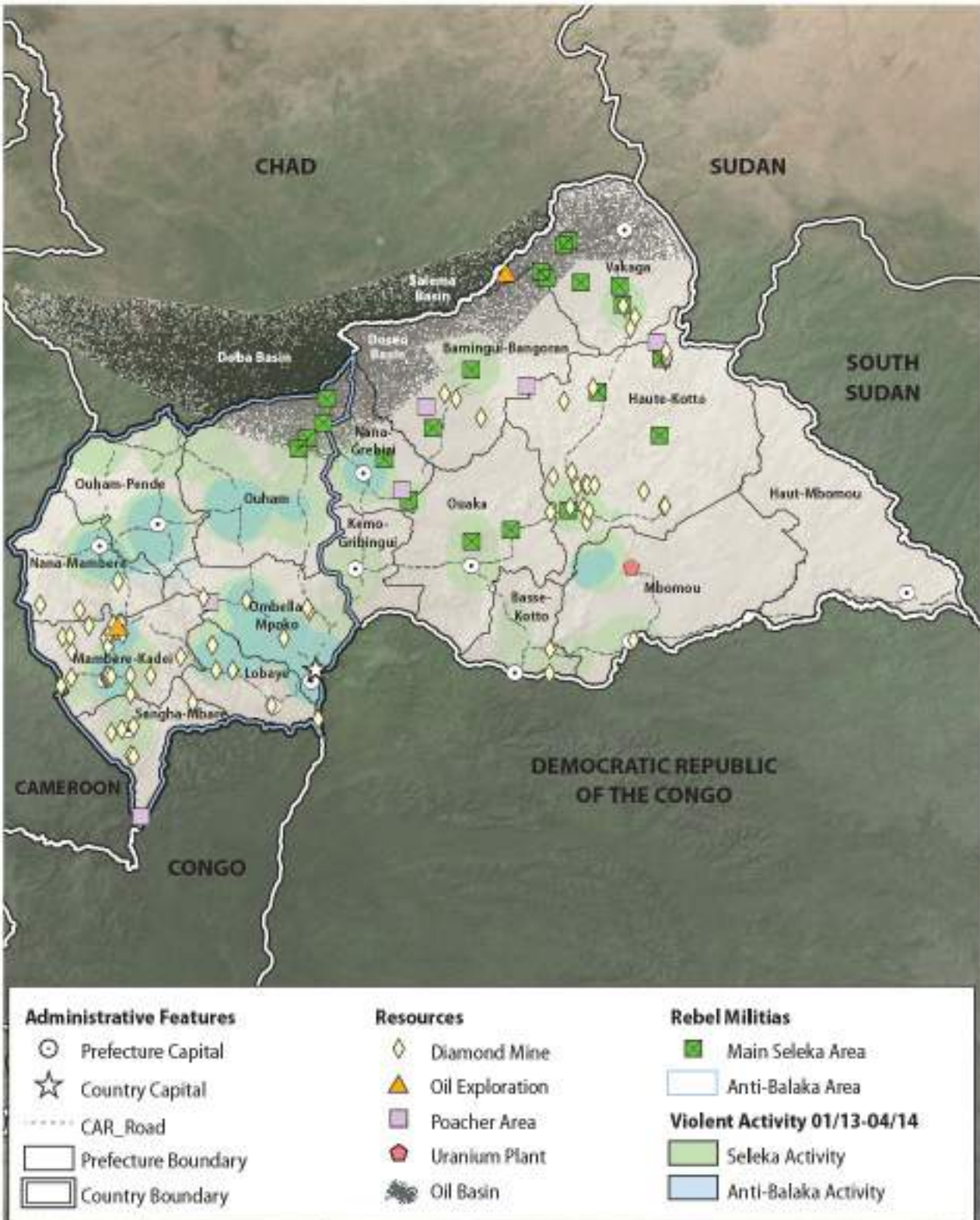
4. FIDH, Central African Republic: A country in the hands of Seleka war criminals, September 2013, p. 16, <https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rca616a2013basdef.pdf>

5. Weyns, Yannick; Hoex, Lotte; Hilgert, Filip; Spittaels, Steven (2014), Mapping Conflict Motives: The Central African Republic, IPIS, November.

The CEEAC facilitated the peace talks which took place the 10 of January of 2013. The USA, France and the EU, pressed the two sides to reach a political solution and protected the civil population. France announced they would not interfere in the conflict, rejecting the petition of president Bozizé to intervene militarily. The

conversations led to the signature of an agreement which included a multilateral cease-fire and left Bozizé in power until the end of his mandate in 2016. The agreement also allowed for the establishment of a government of national unity in charge of organizing elections of a legislature in one year, anticipating the dissolution of the National

Map 4.1. Crisis in CAR (2013-2014)





Assembly. The government was to be inclusive, with the participation of the political opposition and whose prime minister had to emerge from the opposition. MICOPAX was to be reconstituted and the new goal of applying the accords. Likewise, foreign forces were to be withdrawn from the territory. Nevertheless, violence persisted, as some groups of Séléka were opposed to the agreement, and in February accused Bozizé of non compliance with the accords and threatened a return to arms. At the end of March, their threat became reality, and an offensive on Bangui, the capital, forced Bozizé's to flee with his family to DRC. The leader of the rebellion, Michel Djotodia, became the new president of the country and Nicolas Tiangaye was reinstated as prime minister, who then designed a new government which included the different political tendencies, members of the rebellion, former position and civil society, as previously established in Libreville.

Despite this, in 2013, the situation in the country worsened and the government's inability to solve the many challenges facing the country was evident. The members of the rebel coalition Séléka who brought Djotodia into power established a climate of violence and general impunity which led to the deepening of religious rifts in the country. Simultaneously, self-defense militias of mainly Christian faith (the majority religion of the country) began to organize under the name of "*Anti-balaka*", and they confronted the Muslim Séléka, who were seen as outsiders. Not far from the truth, as they had combatants from neighboring countries among their ranks, though there were also former allies of President Patassé. Supporters of president Bozizé were among those behind the appearance of the *Anti-balaka* militias.

#### Table 4.2. Who are the *Anti-balaka*?

"*Balaka*" in Sango means machete. Other sources point towards the French for AK-47 bullets ("*balle AK*"). Both ideas imply 'invincibility', power beyond machetes or bullets (*anti-balaka*). This goes along with spells, costumes and war trophies which hang from combatants' necks (known as *gris-gris*), used to give immunity to the enemy's weapons, a product of animistic beliefs and practices, which are deeply ingrained in the religious traditions of the country. The term came to the fore in 2009, when it was applied to the self-defense units founded by President François Bozizé – in the absence of effective official security forces – to protect communities from highwaymen and livestock thieves (*zaraguinas, coupeurs de route*). After the coup d'état in March 2013 many army members (from FACA) joined the militias. This fact manifests the evolution highlighted in 2015 and 2016 several *Anti-balaka* voices called for integration into the national army with the 'appropriate rank'. They have multiple groups, in Bangui alone it's estimated that there are more than 10 militias with bases in the different districts, and many others around the country. The former Muslim bastions in Bangui – PK12, PK13, Miskine and Kilo 5 – are now forsaken and no Muslim residents remain. After the accession to power of Séléka in March 2013, the government partially lost control over the country's combatants. Soldiers began attacking and plundering villages, establishing roadblocks, blackmailing the civil society and the mining industry. Progressively, soldiers and civil joined forces in the *Anti-balaka*, not as much due to faith as much as for revenge or for survival. Former members of the FACA joined the militias and coordinated their movements, from September 2013 they incremented the attacks until December 2013, when they took over Bangui, which ended in a bloodbath with more than a thousand fatalities.

The *Anti-balaka* come from the Southeast, which is majority christian, they justify their extreme violence in the violent deeds perpetrated by the Séléka since the coalition came to power. However, the violence is also directed at the civilian Muslim population. A reflection of the individualistic origins of the *Anti-balaka*, there isn't an ideology behind the movement as much as an obscure desire for survival and revenge, despite the presence of militias with high officers and political leaders under Bozizé who hope to recover power. Feelings of resentment can be found toward the marginalized North, but in general the relationship between these communities was one of harmony and intermarriage was common. Even so, one must keep in mind that between the 17th and early 20th centuries, Muslim slave hunters from the Sahara plundered the territories which today make up CAR, and so a feeling of fear tied to this ancient slave trade arose with the attacks perpetrated by Séléka. Corresponding with the desertification of the Sahel and the southward expansion of the Sahara, the mostly nomad communities from the North had to migrate to the South, putting increasing pressure on resources and putting the agricultural settlements of the southern Christian communities in conflict with semi-nomadic ways of life. In addition, as grazing has increasingly been less viable, Muslims have increasingly become merchants. At the time of the coup, they controlled most of the country's financial system.

As of early 2016, among the militias is the *Coordination Nationale des Libérateurs du Peuple Centrafrican* (CNLPC), formed in 2014 and led by Patrice Edouard Ngaissona, who had strong links with former President Bozizé and is based in the Boy Rabe neighborhood in the capital. As well, the conflict between two groups of Anti-balaka militias and movements has to be mentioned. On the one hand is Ngaissona, which highlights the division that occurred when he signed the DDR agreement as coordinator of the militias. The agreement was rejected by Maxime Mokom and Joachim Kokaté, who challenged Ngaissona's leadership and claimed the right to coordinate the alliance. Both Kokaté as Ngaissona were Bozizé government ministers, although he has denied having any control over the group.

The decree of President Djotodia in early October 2013 dissolving Séléka arrived late and did not prevent subsequent events. By mid-year, the Council for Peace and Security of the AU gave the green light to the transformation of the MICOPAX and its military branch (FOMAC) into the African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (Misca / AFISM-CAR), led by the AU. Misca was only deployed in the capital and the airport to ensure security. In December 2013, there was a serious increase in violence when Anti-balaka militias attacked the capital, triggering Séléka's response and fueling interfaith clashes that killed more than a thousand people. France organized an international summit on CAR in Paris, where they called for greater involvement of the international community which in December organized a European summit calling for the involvement of

the EU in CAR as of the creation of a European mission to replace the French operation Sangaris, which was viewed by the local population as part of the conflict. In early January 2014, due to the chaotic situation, the regional organization ECCAS held a summit in N'Djamena (Chad) of members of the National Transitional Council (Provisional Parliament of CAR) and representatives of political parties to try and reverse the dire developments. This prompted the resignation of Djotodia in early 2014. He was replaced by the former mayor of Bangui, the civilian Catherine Samba-Panza. French, EU and AU mission (Misca) forces intervened in an attempt to reduce the confrontations. Samba-Panza led the political transition until elections in late 2015 and the first quarter of 2016.

#### Table 4.3. The post Séléka era in CAR

**The main components of the old Séléka coalition as of late 2015 are:** *the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance of Centrafrique* (FPRC), the *Rassemblement Patriotique pour le Renouveau of Centrafrique* (RPRC), the *Unité pour la Paix in Centrafrique* (UPC), *Séléka Rénovée* and the *Mouvement pour la Centrafrique Patriotique* (MPC).

**The Front Populaire pour la Renaissance of Centrafrique (FPRC)** is led by the former president and coup leader Michel Djotodia and Nourredine Adam. In August 2014, Séléka was renamed with this acronym. It is the main faction of the former coalition and its sphere of influence is in the northeast regions - the Bamingui-Bangoran, Vakaga and Haute Kotto. The FPRC rejected the disarmament agreement presented at the Forum 2015 in Bangui.

**The Rassemblement pour le Renouveau Patriotique of Centrafrique (RPRC)** was formed in Bria (Haute-Kotto region) in November 2014 and is led by Djoro Ahaba, who was a minister in the Séléka government. As the FPRC, the RPRC is mainly made up of members of the Gula community, but also by members of the Runga community and Arab groups.

**The Unité pour la Paix in Centrafrique (UPC)**, mainly from the Fulani community, was formed in September 2014 after rifts with other Séléka factions. It is led by Ali Darassa and has a large presence in Bambari. In late 2014, he formed an alliance with Al Khatim, a former Séléka leader, who controls Kabo and Moyenne Sido in the center and north of the country.

Moussa Dhaffane, the second vice president of the Séléka coalition, left over disagreements with Djotodia, and formed **Séléka Rénovée**. The **Mouvement pour la Centrafrique Patriotique (MPC)** emerged in July 2015 and consists of former Séléka members from the Kaga Bandoro region, and its leader, Mohamed Bahar, is originally from Chad. He was the intelligence chief and defense minister during the government of Djotodia. Al Khatim is also part of the coalition.

## 5. REGIONAL INITIATIVES

Regional leaders, headed by the President of the Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, who became the official mediator in the process, tried to promote peace talks during the national dialogue to try to reunify the country. Violence and clashes increased in rural areas, particularly in central and west regions, where Fulani Muslims and herders associated with the Séléka were targeted for attack by Anti-balaka militias, according to reports of the International Crisis Group. The country was divided de facto into the Séléka-controlled North-Central and the Anti-balaka South, where government troops and international missions tried to guarantee a secure environment. On one hand, the former Séléka coalition and Anti-balaka militias were not homogeneous political-military blocks and were fragmented by inter-community tensions, grudges between leaders, grievances and local particularities. On the other hand, the Misca was unable to control the situation and some soldiers were accused of partiality, such as the Chadian contingent. Consequently, in March 2014, the Security Council UN approved the transfer of responsibilities to a UN mission, MINUSCA, despite the discontent of the AU.<sup>6</sup>

*The mandate of Samba-Panza was characterized by the de facto division of the country and the inability to bring the dire situation under control*

The presidency of Samba-Panza was characterized by the de facto division of the country and the inability to bring the dire situation under control. However, in July 2014 they managed to hold a regional conference in Brazzaville, the Forum for National Reconciliation and Political Dialogue from 21-23 of July, which reached an agreement on the cessation of hostilities, though it was not respected by the parties involved, nor did it include a plan for disarmament. The official mediator in the process was Congolese President Denis Sassou-Nguesso. This minimal agreement reached by the thirty countries and international organizations making up the International Contact Group for the CAR should have led to an immediate cessation of hostilities. It was signed by some forty representatives, both Central Africans and foreigners. 170 people attended the summit, representing militias, the transitional government and neighboring countries. However, there was little participation from the representative armed groups. Struggles to designate representatives for the negotiations reflected divisions within the

two parties of the insurrection. Political elites and civil society organizations were also divided, and not all of them participated at the Forum. In addition, several political and religious leaders called for peace talks to be held inside the country. A few days later, the fighting resumed and the agreement ceased to be valid.

The Government requested a six month extension for the transition phase which was to start in January 2014 and was to be completed in February 2015. Denis Sassou-Nguesso approved the extension, to August 2015. The UN and the US imposed sanctions on former president François Bozizé, Anti-balaka leader Lévi Yakite and Séléka forces leader Nouredine Adam. Even the USA

imposed sanctions on former Séléka leader and former president, Michel Djotodia, and FDPC leader, Abdoulaye Miskine. Given the stagnation of the situation, the official mediator of the conflict, Denis Sassou-Nguesso, together with Kenya, facilitated in December 2014, this was called the Nairobi process, which consisted in promoting peace negotiations between representatives from the former Central African president, Michel Djotodia (representative to the former Séléka coalition) and François Bozizé (Anti-balaka militias). They culminated on January 22, 2015 in Nairobi, with a ceasefire and a cessation of hostilities, which was short-lived. The agreement was immediately rejected and criticized by the government and the international community, since Bangui had not been included in the talks which had started in December. Several diplomats said this was a simple catalog of claims advanced by supporters of the two former presidents, Michel Djotodia (by Séléka, delegation headed by Nouredine Adam) and François Bozizé (by Anti-balaka), and could not be validated, as highlighted by the official vice-mediator Soumeylou Boubèye Maïga, former Malian Minister of Defense. The agreement announced a ceasefire and demanded a general amnesty, a change of government and a new transitional phase. The government rejected the whole proposal, and felt that it was only a maneuver to block the upcoming elections and allow some people to evade justice. Nguesso at first accepted the discussions, but upon

6. International Coalition for the Responsibility to Protect, "In the Central African Republic, Urgent Challenges Mean UN Peacekeeping no 'Silver Bullet' Solution", 17 April 2016. <https://icrtopblog.org/2014/04/17/in-the-central-african-republic-urgent-challenges-mean-un-peacekeeping-no-silver-bullet-solution/>.

seeing general disapproval he distanced himself from them. In February, trying to remedy the situation and regain the upper hand, the two former presidents Michel Djotodia and François Bozizé agreed to sign a joint statement claiming that they would join the Congo-Brazzaville dialogue process initiated in July 2014 between different political and military forces and the transitional government led by Catherine Samba-Panza. Acceptance of the Brazzaville agreement amounted to an implicit recognition of Samba-Panza's authority. In addition, the two expressed their willingness to participate in preparations for the inclusive political forum that was finally held in Bangui in May and elections that would bring to end to the transition.

Previously, a dozen politicians, among whom there were four former prime ministers of the country and future candidates for the presidential elections, met in Rome on February 27, 2015, at the invitation of the Community of Saint Egidio, a meeting which formed part of government initiatives for the Bangui National Forum for Reconciliation. The Rome Appeal committed its signatories not to resort to force to become president of the country, to participate in free and transparent elections scheduled for July and August, and to respect the results. The meeting in Rome coincided with an official visit to Italy by the official mediator of the CAR conflict, the Congolese President Denis Sassou Nguesso, a fact that was considered to be a coincidence, but also as a new attempt by the Congolese president to outsource the mediation. Analysts and members of the press highlighted Nguesso's fatigue with respect to the Central African dossier, especially with the

appointment of Mahamat Kamoun as the new prime minister, the renewed influence of the president of Chad in the conflict and the failure of the Nairobi meeting.

Finally, in May 2015 the so-called Bangui Forum for National Reconciliation, which brought together 700 representatives and leaders of various groups and civil society, was announced as a success. The Forum, which took place between the 4th and 11th of May, resulted in a peace agreement known as the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the CAR.<sup>7</sup> Participants included transitional government, various political parties, the main armed groups in the country, employers, representatives of civil society, community leaders and religious groups. Various meetings were held and commissions deliberated on topics recognized as elements needed for peacebuilding in the country, such as peace and security, justice and reconciliation, economic and social development, and good governance. The main agreements were for a new ceasefire, disarmament, integration of members of the guerrillas into the security forces, an electoral timetable, the extension of the current mandate of Samba-Panza, reform of the Constitution and the code of nationality, commissions of justice and reconciliation; promotion of economic and social development; and the revitalization of the agricultural, livestock and mining industries. The HD Centre, which had already been involved in the DPI in 2008, had been supporting this process since 2014. Despite the success of the event and results, challenges and difficulties were immense, and insecurity and violence persist(ed). The political transition in the country progressed

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<sup>7</sup> UN Security Council (2015), Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the Central African Republic in Annex I to the letter dated 15 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations addressed to the President of the Security Council S/2015/344, 15 May, <http://peacemaker.un.org/node/2738>.

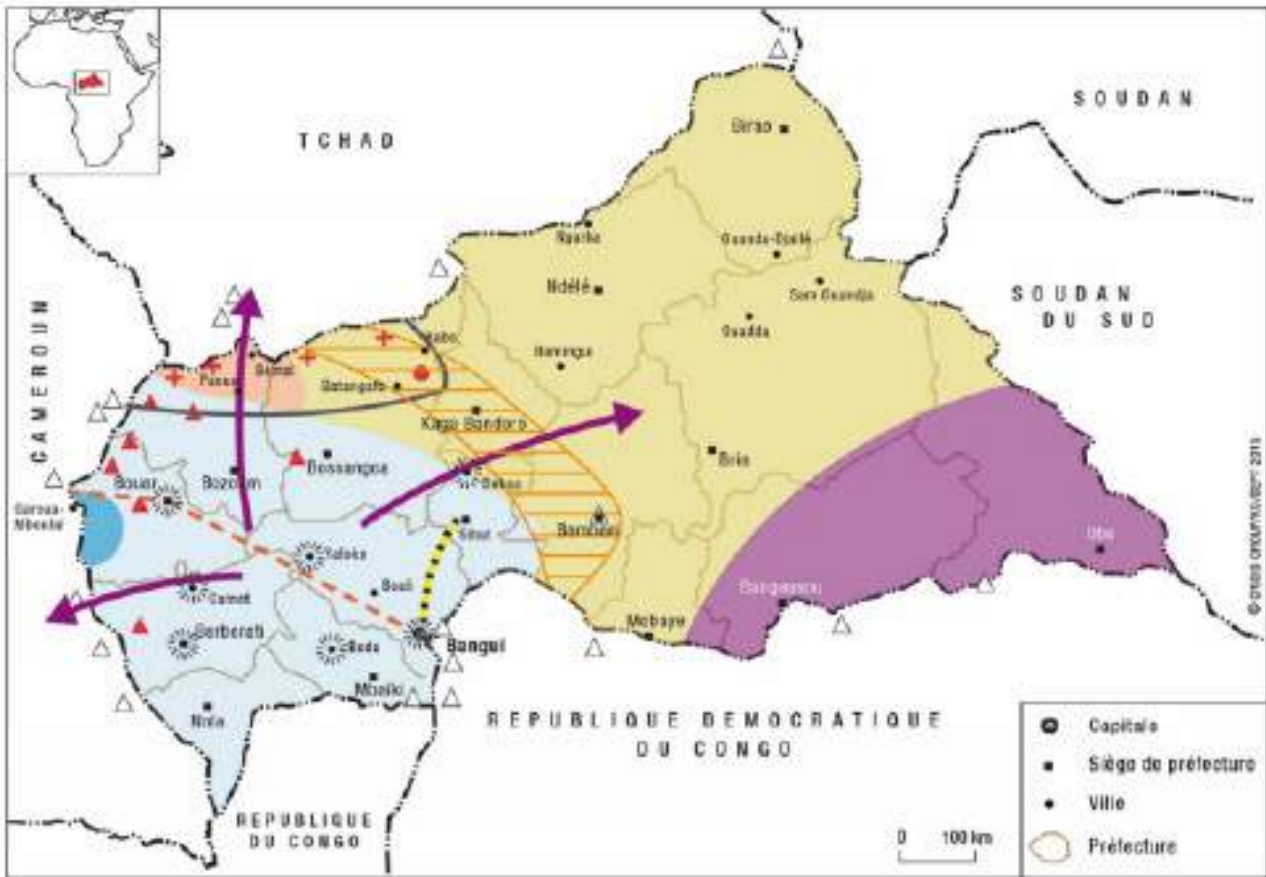


## 6. TRANSITION AND ELECTIONS: STARTING POINT OR FINISH LINE?

despite delays in the electoral process, instability and permanent violence. Violence and insecurity continued throughout 2015, despite the efforts of international missions to ensure security. Even so, their activity was focused in Bangui, while the rest of the country remained in rebel

hands. The country remained divided into two main areas of influence in the north, groups that made up the former Séléka coalition; in the center-west, the Anti-balaka militias area; and southeast, the original group of armed Ugandan LRA. An example of this fragmentation was rebel

Map 6.1. Areas of Influence of the actors involved in CAR (2015)



### Zones d'influence des groupes armés et coupeurs de routes

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| LRA : Armée de résistance du Séléka               | RJ : Révolution et justice  | Bases traditionnelles des coupeurs de routes zargüas                     |
| Ex-Séléka   | Ex-APRD : Ex Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (2006-2012)  | Attaques de groupes de pasteurs tchadiens, bandits et coupeurs de routes |
| Anti-balaka                                       | Ex base du Front populaire pour le retressement (FPR) de Baba Laddé (2008-2012) | Axe ayant subi un grand nombre de braquages (2014-2015)                  |
| FDPC : Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain |   |  |

### Zones de tensions intercommunautaires

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Ligne de front anti-balaka/Séléka et affrontements communautaires | Principal axe commercial Bangui-Garoua-Mboali |
| Camps de réfugiés   | Déplacements des tensions communautaires      |
| Enclaves avec présence de minorités                               |   |

Source: International Crisis Group (2015), "Central African Republic: The Roots of Violence", Crisis Group Africa Report N°230, September 21

Nourredine Adam, leader of a faction of Séléka, proclaiming the independence of the Republic of Logone, in the north, in December 2015. The epicenter of the clashes between Anti-balaka militias and some elements of the former Séléka coalition stood at the contact area between the respective areas of influence, between Batangafo, Kaga Bandoro and Bambari, as already stated by the International Crisis Group. Clashes between militias were accompanied by inter-community tensions. In addition, a climate of instability and crime prevailed at the border with Cameroon and partially with Chad, in the hands of Zaraguinas (highwaymen). Amnesty International issued an appeal to the Government to control the illicit trade of diamonds, as it was one potential source of funding for armed groups.

In July 2015, Global Witness said European companies were making profits from wood harvesting with firms suspected of financing the militias on both sides of the conflict.<sup>8</sup> One of the worst moments of the year was the escalation of violence that occurred in late September when fights broke out in Bangui between the two rival militias, leading to the forced displacement of nearly 30,000 people and at least 60 fatalities and over 300 wounded, according to several sources. The militias attacked Bangui's prison, freeing about 500 people. The MINUSCA and the French mission Sangaris intervened to stop demonstrations taking place in the capital which demanded the resignation of the president and criticized the role of international forces. Other mobilizations occurred in Bambari and Kaga Bandoro. The situation in Bangui had been relatively quiet for months, and new clashes coincided with the absence of President Catherine Samba-Panza, who was in New York participating in the UN General Assembly. She cut her trip short, returning immediately. Upon arrival, in September 30, the president denounced an attempted coup, which allegedly sought to affect the electoral process and put a stop to the political dialogue.

Under the electoral period in 2015, the UN decided to increase the mission with 1,140 blue helmets, and deployed unmanned aircraft in Bangui. In November, Senegal, Egypt and Mauritania agreed to send new military and police

contingents to reinforce the 12,000 members of the MINUSCA. This was simultaneous to the downsizing of the French troops, who went from having more than 2,000 troops to about 900. Another fact to highlight from 2015 was the visit of Pope Francisco to the country in late November, as part of his trip to Africa that also took him to Kenya and Uganda. The Pope greeted crowds and met with religious leaders, political authorities and the diplomatic corps, despite the insecurity and violence, and he was surrounded by heavy security. Especially relevant and symbolic was his visit to the mosque Koudoukou in PK5, a neighborhood under siege in which around 15,000 Muslims live surrounded by Anti-balaka militias, in a city where, before the last period of war started in 2013, there were more than 122,000 people of that faith.

*At the end of March 2016 the transition ended with the appointment of Faustin-Archange Touadéra as the new president of the country, although instability and serious challenges to governance persisted*

Though elections were proposed to be held in October, the Electoral Authority postponed them until the 27th of December, given the paralysis of the implementation of the recommendations agreed upon in the Forum of Bangui, deteriorating security, and the slow pace of preparations and registration of the refugee population. Finally, legislative and presidential elections were held on December 30 in a calmed and controlled climate. They resulted in the victories of Anicet-Georges Dologuélé and Faustin Archange Touadéra, both with the support of the KNK, the party of former president François Bozizé. Although the international community welcomed the elections, the vote count was slow and problematic.

Previously, 30 nominations, including Bozizé's, had been overruled by the Constitutional Court. A dozen candidates released a statement questioning the electoral process and labeling it a farce, and brought accusations of fraud, intimidation and other irregularities before the Court. In parallel, on December 13, a constitutional referendum was held, ratifying the Constitution with support of 90% of the vote, according to the UN, a fact that was celebrated by the international community despite significant logistical and technical deficits. In the second round on the 14th of February, 2016, Faustin-Archange Touadéra won with 63% of the vote, and was named president on March 30. The transition period lasted until March 31, 2016,

<sup>8</sup> Global Witness (2015), Blood Timber. How Europe helped fund war in the Central African Republic, July. <https://www.globalwitness.org/en/campaigns/forests/bloodtimber/>

a decision accepted by the Summit of Heads of State of ECCAS.

Upon entry in office, president Touaderá began a first round of talks with armed groups, including factions of the former Séléka coalition and the Anti-balaka militias, with the will to address the

root causes of the conflict, among which grievances and the marginalization of certain communities and regions, political and economic inclusion, protection, services and presence in the state structures have to be featured. In mid-May 2016, the groups expressed their willingness to participate in the DDR process, though some asserted preconditions.

## 7. GENDER DIMENSION

The armed conflict in CAR has had numerous impacts on gender relations, due in part to the serious inequalities that exist in the country between men and women and in part due to the dynamics of the conflict, which have helped to consolidate inequality.<sup>9</sup> According to the Social Institutions and Gender Index (SIGI) from the OECD, CAR is a country with high levels of discrimination against women. The gender dimension in armed conflict is manifested mainly in the differentiated impacts that violence has on men and women. Thus, sexual violence, forced displacement, disruption of education and health services, the disintegration of community support networks, and impoverishment are some of the examples of direct or indirect consequences that can affect women disproportionately. In parallel, men continue to constitute the majority of those killed in armed conflicts and are the main victims of genocides and massacres. Yet these impacts occur in a context of enormous complexity, where women are victims of violence, just as men, but also active participants in the dynamics of conflict, and, of course, in peace-building at a very different level.

The armed conflict has had serious consequences for the civilian population and especially for women in the CAR. Sexual violence is being used by all parties, particularly against women and children.<sup>10</sup> The main impact of the armed conflict in terms of gender has been the use of sexual violence as a deliberate weapon of war, as noted by *Alert 2016*.<sup>11</sup> Most of the country is at the mercy of armed groups – militias, State security forces, and criminal groups – all committing systematic violations of human rights among the civilian population, abuses that have been repeatedly documented by Amnesty International, Human Rights Watch and the UN. Both militias and the Armed Forces have forced minors to enlist against their will. The Armed Forces have forced such minors as combat, according to the Coalition to Stop the Use of Child Soldiers. Since 2007, in

the southeastern CAR, the Ugandan armed group LRA has also taken on a permanent presence, only worsening an already desperate situation. However, most of the serious violations of human rights on the civilian populace are attributable to State security forces.

According to the UN, this violence has had a particular impact on the internal displaced population, which is mainly women and children, as well as female refugees. This climate of permanent insecurity in certain areas affected by the conflict in the center and north of the country, has forced hundreds of thousands to seek refuge in neighboring states, particularly Chad and Cameroon. In the case of Chad, the UNHCR denounced the increase of rapes, kidnappings, trafficking of women and other abuses and serious violations of human rights among the civilian population.

On the other hand, the intervention of international armed forces to address the instability and the grave humanitarian situation has been severely tarnished by scandals of sexual abuse and violence by civilian and military members of the AU and Misca missions, and now the MINUSCA, which add to the violations committed by the French soldiers of Operation Sangaris and the EU mission to the country, EUFOR CAR, as well as the mismanagement of the situation by the UN itself. A report in February 2016 of the UN's own statistics on allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeeping mission staff showed that the CAR had the more allegations of sexual violence and abuse than any other peacekeeping mission in the world in 2015.<sup>12</sup> Out of the total of 69 complaints, 22 correspond to the CAR.<sup>13</sup> This total represents an increase over 2014 (52) as of 2013 (66), surpassed only by 2011 (75) and previous years. According to the UN, an important part of this increase can be attributed to the same MINUSCA. And more cases have been opened in

9 El gènere és la categoria analítica que posa de manifest que les desigualtats entre homes i dones són un producte social i no un resultat de la naturalesa, evidenciant la seva construcció social i cultural per a distingir-les de les diferències biològiques dels sexes. El gènere pretén donar visibilitat a la construcció social de la diferència sexual i la divisió sexual del treball i el poder. La perspectiva de gènere busca evidenciar que les diferències entre homes i dones són una construcció social producte de les relacions de poder desiguals que s'han establert històricament en el sistema patriarcal. El gènere com a categoria d'anàlisi té l'objectiu de demostrar la naturalesa històrica i situada de les diferències sexuals.

10 UN News Center "Central African Republic: sexual violence is constant threat, UN envoy warns", 21 March 2014, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47408>

11 School for a Culture of Peace, *Alert 2016! Report on conflicts, human rights, and peacebuilding*, Icaria, Barcelona, 2016. <http://escolapau.uab.cat/img/programas/alerta/16/alerta16i.pdf>

12 UN, Special measures for protection from sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Report of the Secretary General, A/70/729, 16 February 2016, [http://www.un.org/ga/search/view\\_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/729](http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/70/729)

13 Of these 69 reports, 38 were of adult victims, 41 in all, and another 19 reports of 22 minors. The 12 remaining reports didn't specify enough information to determine the number of victims, whether they were adults or minors. Of these, 60 reports implicated 79 civilians and soldiers of UN peacekeeping missions, in 6 of these reports, either it was considered that there wasn't sufficient credibility to justify an investigation, or else the investigation continued until the end of 2015; the three remaining reports were rejected for lack of information.



2016. Between January and May 2016, the UN reported that there were 44 new complaints of sexual abuse by UN peacekeeping missions in the world, 29 of which were from the CAR. The next country is the DRC, with 7 complaints. On March 31, the UN reported that 108 girls and women had made allegations of sexual abuse by international peacekeeping forces in the leadership of Kemo, CAR, committed between 2013 and 2015. The American NGO AIDS-Free World, that was the first to report these abuses, has said that the UN investigations had documented 41 additional cases since the 4th of April.

A fact that highlights the seriousness of the situation the most is the case of Anders Kompass, Swedish diplomat and director of field operations of the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR). Kompass leaked classified information to the French authorities on child sexual abuse committed by 14 French soldiers in the country between December 2013 and July 2014, a fact that quickly led to the initiation of an investigation led by France. This investigation is still ongoing. Even so, the High Commissioner of the OHCHR, Prince Ra'ad Bin Zeid, considered that Kompass had broken the rules of conduct for not having consulted and requested approval from his superior before filtering the report (with sensitive data on victims) and he suspended him from his position, although he was reinstated because the UN disputes tribunal considered that the dismissal was illegal. Prince Zeid then proposed to dismantle the unit field operations of OHCHR, a fact that would have involved the expulsion of Kompass' organization. However, US and several Member States harshly criticized UN leadership, which apparently made more efforts to discredit Kompass due to the leaks than to prosecute those responsible and make them pay for their crimes.<sup>14</sup>

After several continuous government and media critics, the Secretary General UN appointed a panel of independent experts in June 2015 which produced a report released in December

of that same year, pointing out the failure and mismanagement by the UN, the lack of attention and lack of the required sensitivity. The report grew out of allegations of sexual abuse and rape by soldiers under French command of Operation Sangaris in order to determine the responsibility of the organization in question.<sup>15</sup> Although the French soldiers who committed the abuses were not under UN command, the report shows that the organization which discovered the abuse, did not handle the case with the speed, attention or the sensitivity required. The group of independent experts, led by Canadian Judge Marie Deschamps, denounced "blatant failure of the UN," both in terms of the staff in Bangui as well as agencies and senior officials in Geneva and New York, for the mishandling of allegations of rape of children by French soldiers in the CAR. This report particularly

*The reputation of peacekeeping missions has been severely tarnished by scandals of abuse and sexual violence committed by international troops in the CAR, as well as the mismanagement of the situation by the UN*

criticizes the outgoing head of the UN mission in the country, and questions the officials responsible for UNICEF in Bangui and the High Commissioner for Human Rights of the UN for failing to transmit the allegations to his superiors or for not having taken the necessary measures as quickly as possible to protect and assist minors. According to the report, "the information about these accusations have passed from office to office (...) no one has taken responsibility for dealing with these serious violations of human rights". The report exonerates Anders Kompass and concludes that, after all, he had full authority to share information

with the French authorities and that the risk for the fact that the reports include the identity of victims had been exaggerated. On June 8, 2016, Kompass announced his resignation from the UN, arguing the complete impunity for all those who had committed an abuse of authority in the case and also by the inability of UN leadership to apologize for the way they he had been treated.<sup>16</sup>

Despite UN efforts to investigate cases of rape and sexual exploitation perpetrated by members of the organization and especially by soldiers of peacekeeping missions, its reputation has been greatly tarnished by Member States failure to impose sanctions and prosecute those responsible

14 Foreign Policy, "The U.N. Official Who Blew the Lid off Central African Republic Sex Scandal Vindicated", 17 December 2015, <http://foreignpolicy.com/2015/12/17/the-u-n-official-who-blew-the-lid-on-central-african-republic-sex-scandal-vindicated/>.

15 United Nations, Statement of the Secretary-General on the External Independent Review of the UN Response to Allegations on Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and other serious crimes by Members of Foreign Military Forces not under UN command in the Central African Republic, UN, 17 December 2015, <http://www.un.org/sg/statements/index.asp?nid=9348>.

16 BBC, "UN whistleblower resigns over French peacekeeper 'child abuse'", 8 June 2016, <http://www.bbc.com/news/world-africa-36481372>

for sexual abuse and rape. The UN has been unable to correct this issue. Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon, held in September 2015 calls upon Member States to which the soldiers of the missions of peacekeeping UN belong in which rape and sexual exploitation was there, such as CAR, to stop protecting them for their crimes and bring them to trial. Sources of the institution and the secretary general himself pointed out that the response of the organization has been limited by the fact that States are reluctant to cede authority and take measures that go beyond ordering those responsible for sexual abuse to return to their home country. Ban Ki-moon has contacted leaders of the countries involved in recent cases of abuse to ensure that those responsible for crimes be prosecuted under the laws of those states.

Ban Ki-moon attempted to address this grave discredit to the organization by forcing the resignation of its representative in the country in August 2015, Senegalese Babacar Gaye, for failing to deal with the numerous and serious allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeepers in the central African country.<sup>17</sup> Thus, the UN Secretary General appointed the Gabonese Parfait Onanga-Anyanga as his new special representative UN and head of MINUSCA.<sup>18</sup> As part of a policy of responsibility and zero tolerance, Ban Ki-moon implemented an unprecedented decision in which the UN

Security Council met behind closed doors, after the publication by Amnesty International of new cases of rapes by blue helmets in CAR. This recall comes after allegations of sexual crimes against children committed by blue helmets in the country: there are 57 allegations of sexual abuse, 11 of which correspond to child abuse.

*A report in February 2016 of the UN's own statistics on allegations of sexual abuse by peacekeeping mission staff showed that the CAR had more allegations of sexual violence and abuse than any other peacekeeping mission in the world in 2015*

Finally, in addition to the suffering caused by sexual violence and insecurity caused by the continuing instability plaguing several areas of the country, the Central African women face a situation of severe poverty, nationally legalized polygamy, a high prevalence of female genital mutilation and inadequate health care. Thus, the permanent political and economic instability in the country since its independence in the sixties has diminished women's access to minimal health, protection, food assistance, and education. Still, as noted by executive director of UN Women, Phumzile Mlambo-Ngcuka,

in May 2014 following a mission undertaken with Bineta Diop, AU special envoy on Women, Peace and Security, despite the extreme seriousness of the sexual violence and abuse,<sup>19</sup> we must also highlight positive aspects such as the organization of civil society, including women, to survive and thrive in the context of the conflict. Women leaders have expressed a clear determination to overcome religious and social differences.

<sup>17</sup> Radio France International, "RCA: l'ONU nomme un nouveau chef à la tête de la Minusca", 14 August 2015, <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20150814-onu-rca-demission-babacar-gaye-nouvel-chef-minusca-parfait-onanga-anyanga>

<sup>18</sup> Amnesty International, "CAR: UN troops implicated in rape of girls and indiscriminate killings must be investigated", 11 August 2015, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2015/08/car-un-troops-implicated-in-rape-of-girl-and-indiscriminate-killings-must-be-investigated/>

<sup>19</sup> UN Security Council, Deadly Attacks in Central African Republic Test International Efforts to Restore Calm, Special Representative Tells Security Council, 24 June 2014, <http://www.un.org/press/en/2014/sc11449.doc.htm>

## 8. ARMS EXPORTS

This chapter consists of two sections. Chapter one define exports of defense equipment to the CAR by the EU and at international level, and the second section refer to the Spanish exports to the country.

### 8.1. Defense equipment exports to the CAR

In the period analyzed, from 2005 to 2013, the volume of defense material authorized to be exported from the EU to CAR reached 11 million Euros. Major European countries involved in the arms trade with CAR include France, Portugal, Slovakia, Germany and the UK. It is important to highlight the role of Slovakia as the country granted the greatest authorization, worth almost 8 million Euros. Second was Portugal, which approved permits worth more than 3 million Euros. Followed by Germany, France and the UK. In any case, Portugal was the country with greatest exports to the CAR, with a figure of more than 3 million Euros during the period analyzed, followed by Slovakia with 799,000 Euros. Therefore, we can affirm the existence of a important involvement of Portugal through the arms trade even during the civil war. Other EU arms exporter countries sent weapons to the CAR in previous periods.

We must underline the role of the UK, which authorized exports worth nearly € 23,000 in 2013, when the country suffered a coup d'état. We must also emphasize the role of France, former colonial power in the CAR with an intense military activity in the country, which stands out as the fourth country in authorized exports and the third in terms of exports which were actually carried out.

It should be kept in mind that the period 2003-2014 was particularly problematic for the CAR, with the conflicts growing in intensity and extended over time as well as the coup by Séléka in 2013. During the years immediately preceding, some European countries stepped up exports of defense material to CAR until 2013, when an embargo on the country was established.

The responsibility of some European countries, especially Portugal, Slovakia and France concerning the arms trade during the years of conflict in CAR is established. This is a clear infringement of several criteria concerning the common position of the European Union (CFSP/ 944/2008), regarding risks to regional peace, internal conflicts, or possible human rights violations. It is no surprise that an embargo was imposed starting May 2013, which UN Security Council extended to January 31, 2017.

Table 8.1.1. Authorized defense equipment exports from the EU to CAR – by export countries 2001-2012

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTALS
Slovakia		1.129.547		2.351.293	2.622.062	1.697.062				7.799.964
Portugal						2.869.307	239.664	287.184		3.396.155
Germany			15.955					239.664		255.619
France		21.320				109.987	28.440			159.747
United Kingdom	3.407			9.240		47.960			22.879	83.486
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>3.407</b>	<b>1.150.867</b>	<b>15.955</b>	<b>2.360.533</b>	<b>2.622.062</b>	<b>4.724.316</b>	<b>268.104</b>	<b>526.848</b>	<b>22.879</b>	

\*Data in EUR

Source: EU Annual Reports According to Operative Provision 8 of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports ([http://www.eeas.europa.eu/nonproliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/nonproliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index_en.htm))

Table 8.1.2. Actual defense equipment exports from the EU to CAR – by export countries 2005-2013

	2006	2008	2010	2011	2012	TOTALS
Portugal			2.682.748	239.664	79.192	3.001.604
Slovakia	594.609	204.481				799.090
France	21.320		2.875	4.275		28.470
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>615.929</b>	<b>204.481</b>	<b>2.685.623</b>	<b>243.939</b>	<b>79.192</b>	<b>3829164</b>

\*Data in EUR

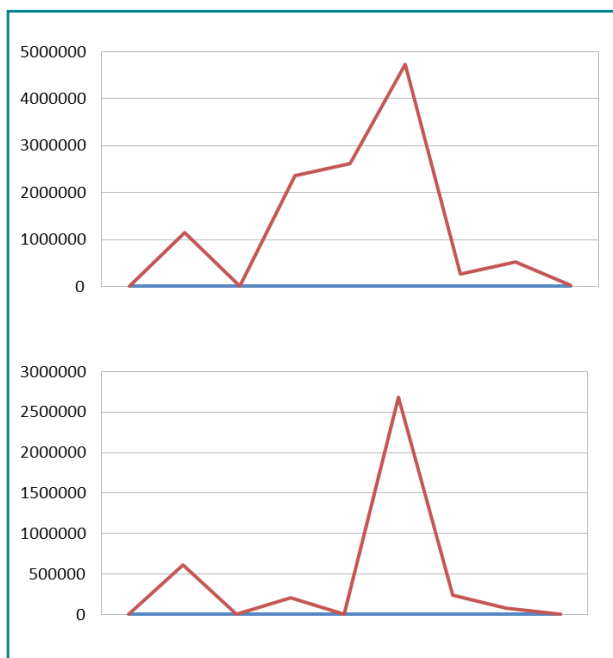
Source: EU Annual Reports According to Operative Provision 8 of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports ([http://www.eeas.europa.eu/nonproliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/nonproliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index_en.htm))

### Global Exports of Small and light weapons to the CAR

Worldwide, the total volume of small and light weapons actually exported to the CAR in the analyzed period of 2005-2014 is \$ 18,809,958, almost 17 million Euros, according to the NISAT. The data shows an enormous surge in the volume

of exports in 2014, breaking the trend of world exports up to that time, which did not exceed 2 million for these categories of weapons. Only a year before this rise in exports, the country suffered a coup by the rebel group Séléka and an arms embargo was also approved that year by United Nations and the EU upon the country, which lasted until January 2014 and March 2015 respectively.

Gràfic 8.1.1. Exports authorized and undertaken in defense material from EU to CAR 2005-2013 – time evolution



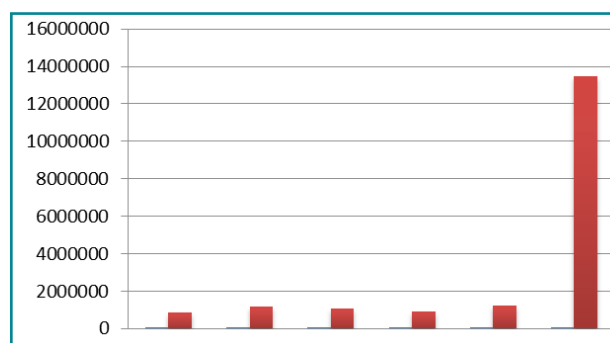
Source: EU Annual Reports According to Operative Provision 8 of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports ([http://www.eeas.europa.eu/non-proliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/non-proliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index_en.htm))

Table 8.1.3. Types of weapons made and exported sorted by type of EU defense material to CAR 2005-2013

Country	Material
France	Aircraft, armored equipment and constructions, cryogenic and superconducting equipment.
Germany	Smooth-bore weapons with a caliber of less than 20 mm, munitions , devices and components. Fire control systems
Slovakia	Munitions , devices and components. ATVs
United Kingdom	Armored equipment and constructions . ATVs
Portugal	Aircraft

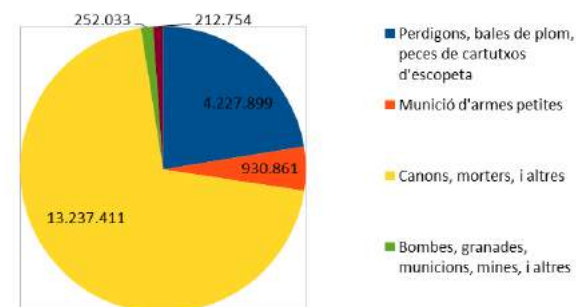
Source: EU Anual Reports According to Operative provision 8 of the EU Code of Conduct on Arms Exports ([http://www.eeas.europa.eu/non-proliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index\\_en.htm](http://www.eeas.europa.eu/non-proliferation-and-disarmament/arms-export-control/index_en.htm))

Graph 8.1.2. Total global exports of light and small weapons made to CAR between 2005-2014



Source: NISAT, value in current USD

Graph 8.1.3. Global exports of small and light arms sorted by type World exports made to CAR by the type of weapon (2005-2013)



Source: NISAT, value in current USD



Table 8.1.4. **Global exports of light and small weapons by sort of material made to CAR between 2005-2014**

	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2014	TOTALS
Perdigons, bullets of lead, pieces of cartridges of shotgun	255.781	584.696	1.091.757	922.262	1.373.403		<b>4.227.899</b>
Small arms ammunition	360.653	570.208					<b>930.861</b>
Guns, mortars, and other						13.237.411	<b>13.237.411</b>
Bombs , grenades , ammunition , mines and other						252.033	<b>252.033</b>
Shotgun shells	212.754						<b>212.754</b>
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>829.188</b>	<b>1.154.904</b>	<b>1.091.757</b>	<b>922.262</b>	<b>1.373.403</b>	<b>13.489.444</b>	<b>18.860.958</b>

Source: NISAT, value in current USD

Table 8.1.5. **Total global exports of light and small weapons made to CAR between 2005-2014**

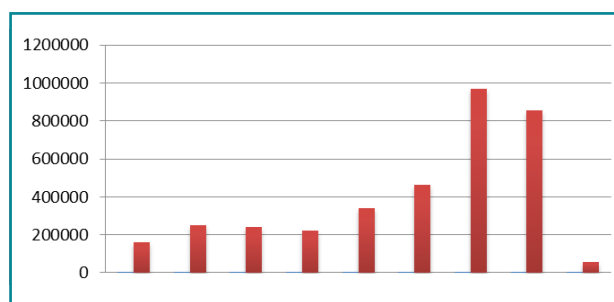
	2005	2008	2009	2010	2011	2014	TOTALS
Belgium					22.855		<b>22.855</b>
Camerun	102.783						<b>102.783</b>
Chad					22.855		<b>22.855</b>
China					45.303		<b>45.303</b>
Republic of Congo	278.780						<b>278.780</b>
Denmark	22.857						<b>22.857</b>
France	240.514	878.362	543.209	306.340	151.013		<b>2.119.438</b>
Gabon					61.723		<b>61.723</b>
Germany					83.397		<b>83.397</b>
India					61.728		<b>61.728</b>
Italy					79.761		<b>79.761</b>
Japan					302.722		<b>302.722</b>
Moroco						252.033	<b>252.033</b>
Namibia					54.341		<b>54.341</b>
The Netherlands					79.766		<b>79.766</b>
Pakistan						13.237.411	<b>13.237.411</b>
Rwanda					21.776		<b>21.776</b>
Saudi Arabia					57.165		<b>57.165</b>
Spain	207.110	276.541	548.549	615.922			<b>1.648.122</b>
Turks and Caicos Islands					22.857		<b>22.857</b>
United Arab Emirates					61.720		<b>61.720</b>
United Kingdom					22.633		<b>22.633</b>
United Staates					57.439		<b>57.439</b>
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>854.049</b>	<b>1.156.911</b>	<b>1.093.767</b>	<b>924.272</b>	<b>1.211.065</b>	<b>13.491.458</b>	

Source: NISAT, value in current USD

## 8.2. Spanish arms exports

The Spanish State, according to the Estacom database, has exported small weapons to CAR for a total value of 3,560,000 Euros. 2011 was the year when the greatest export of defense material occurred. It is also important to note that only a year later there was an escalation of the conflict with new attacks between the groups Séléka and Anti-balaka and Spain continued exports of such weapons, for a total value of 856,000 €.

Graph 8.2.1. Spanish exports on small and light weapons to CAR between 2005-2014



Source: DATACOMEX (Spanish foreign trade statistics)

The previous information is corroborated with arms sales of hunting and sport shooting which are certain, and largely included in customs data presented in the table below. In any case, it shows how Spain has sold hunting and sport shooting weapons to a country immersed in a situation of poverty and permanent social disintegration, in which these weapons and ammunition, as will be shown below, have been used in armed clashes that have taken place during the various sudden rises in violence suffered throughout its recent history.

Table 8.2.2. Exports of hunting and sport shooting weapons (2008-2014)

Year	Value
2008	250.900 €
2009	753.090 €
2010	355.690 €
2011	297.590 €
2012	636.000 €
2013	-
2014	-
<b>Total</b>	<b>2.293.270 €</b>

Source: Spanish Foreign Commerce sub-dictorate of defence and dual use material

### Exports by provinces of Small and Light Weapons (SALW)

The customs databases give us the opportunity to analyze which were the main provinces of origin of the products included in the category considered to be SALW. Thus, the data show that the main source of small arms to the CAR is Álava. The volume of exports of this province, which includes most of the production of all of Spain, is nearly 3.5 million. It should be mentioned that one of the companies that could have sold weapons to the CAR in any of these years is very likely Maxam. In addition to Maxam's possession of production facilities in two of the exporting provinces of arms to the CAR (Alava and Biscay), witnesses corroborate the presence of munitions Maxam in Central African territories. In any case, in 2014 a collaboration of the United Nations identified one case of possible violation of the embargo on arms exports to the CAR because munitions for hunting and sport shooting crossed the border.<sup>20</sup>

Table 8.2.1. Spanish exports on small and light weapons to CAR between 2005-2014 (according to customs)

2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	TOTAL
159.540	249.670	242.880	224.300	341.100	461.400	966.800	856.100	58.400	<b>3.560.190</b>

Source: DATACOMEX (Spanish foreign trade statistics)

<sup>20</sup> Conflict Armament Research, 'Non-State Armed Groups in the Central African Republic: Types and sources of documented arms and ammunition', London, January 2015

Table 8.2.2. **Small and light weapons exports to CAR sorted by Spanish provinces (2005-2013)**

	Alava	Madrid	Leon	Biscay	
2005	159.542				<b>159.542</b>
2006	249.666				<b>249.666</b>
2007	242.884				<b>242.884</b>
2008	224.339				<b>224.339</b>
2009	314.096	2.070		24.585	<b>340.751</b>
2010	456.974			4.392	<b>461.366</b>
2011	936.144		30.655		<b>966.799</b>
2012	856.092				<b>856.092</b>
2013		58.426			<b>58.426</b>
2014					<b>-00</b>
2015					<b>-00</b>
	<b>3.439.737</b>	<b>60.496</b>	<b>30.655</b>	<b>28.977</b>	<b>3.559.865</b>

Source: DATACOMEX (Spanish foreign trade statistics)

## 9. MILITARISM AND MILITARY SPENDING

This chapter consists of two sections. The first part is an analysis of the available information on the weapons found on the ground, both origin and source. The second part deals with the process of militarization that this country has experienced in recent years.

### 9.1. Analysis of the weapons used

The information available regarding weapons found on the ground also shows that there is a transit of arms from neighboring countries, in this case from Sudan to CAR in periods of armed conflicts, such as those who have given rise to groups such as Séléka and Anti-balaka. Porous borders have already been identified and there is evidence of the need to assess the involvement of neighboring countries of CAR in arms trafficking. However, what is discussed below is the indirect participation of third countries supplying military equipment to armed groups in CAR. Thus we see that the countries of origin of ammunition, rocket launchers, mortars, grenades, machine guns, grenade launchers and military vehicles are those with a stricter regulating export of arms, as are the following Member States of the EU: Germany, Belgium, Bulgaria, United Kingdom, Czech Republic, Spain and Italy; but also others such as

Iran, China and the aforementioned Sudan. The Spanish case focuses, as noted above, on shotgun cartridges, and exports of weapons intended for hunting and sport shooting.

The bodies of defense and security of CAR also receive light weapons, as usual, especially the famous Kalashnikov and other rifles and assault rifles, which are easy to carry and use. It is also common for these weapons to fall into the hands of rebel groups, which, in most cases, know how to use the more common weapons found in African conflicts.

### 9.2. Armed forces and military spending

The processes of militarization in CAR, excluding foreign intervention, show a clear trend of growth, both in the number of troops of the Armed Forces, exceeding 7,000, and in regard to the military budget which has more than tripled in absolute terms and doubled as a percentage of GDP. We can see that an increased military presence has not resulted in events unfolding any differently in the period of the latest clashes. In any case a clear dependence on foreign military presence, mainly from the former colonial power, France, but also of its neighboring powers in the region and security missions of the AU and the UN.

Table 9.1.1. Identified weapons to CAR by armed group

Armed group	Country of origin	Type of armament	"Provenance"	
Séléka	Iran	ammunition launchers	Sudan	
	China	ammunition Mortars and their shells "Fussell assault" "grenades"	Sudan	
	Sudan	ammunition "Mortar shells" heavy machine		
	Germany	"military truck"		
	Belgium	launchers		
	Bulgaria	"grenades" launchers	Sudan	
	United Kingdom	ammunition		
	Czech republic	ammunition		
	anti-balaka	Camerun Spain Italy	ammunition	Sudan



Table 9.1.2. Arms found coming from Spain

Object	Year of production	Origin	Localization	Date	Actor	Required by
Shotgun cartridges 'Flash '12 gauge Lot number YVJ2'	unknown	Spain	Bangui	Setember 2014	Anti-Balaka and armed civils	Sangaris Operation
Shotgun cartridges 'Red Star' 12 gauge	unknown	Spain	Bangui	Setember 2014	Anti-Balaka and armed civils	Sangaris Operation
Shotgun cartridges 'Trust Hunting' BB 12 gauge	unknown	Spain	Bangui, Sangaris camp	Setember 2014	Anti-Balaka and armed civils	Sangaris Operation

Source: Conflict Armament Research, 'Non-State Armed Groups in the Central African Republic: Types and sources of documented arms and ammunition', London, January 2015

Table 9.1.3. Estimated stocks of arms in CAR. State bodies and agencies and other non-state armed groups and types of weapons in September 2003

Institutions and state agency	estimated effectives	"existencias estimadas"	Type of arms	Other armed groups	Estimated effectives	estimated stocks	Type of arms
FACA	4442	5552	"Assault Rifles (Kalashnikov) mortars, machine guns "	Balawas	510	342	Rifles d'assalt (Kalashnikov)
Gendarmerie	1310	1507	"Pistols, sub-machine guns, bolt action rifles and assault rifles"	Sarawis	600	400	Rifles d'assalt (Kalashnikov)
Police	1600	1072	Assault rifles (Kalashnikov)	Karakos	593	397	Assault rifles (Kalashnikov)
Presidential guard	1000	3000	"Assault rifles, machine guns Lightweight launcher"	MLPC	820	1640	Automatic weapons , Launcher
Others*	250	250	Rifles, pistols	USP	1345	4035	Assault rifles (Kalashnikov)
				SCPS	850	1700	Assault rifles (Kalashnikov)
				"Unitat d'autodefensa (Vakaga districte) SDU"	275	358	Assault Rifles (Kalashnikov ) Automatic rifles
<b>TOTALS</b>		<b>11381</b>				<b>8872</b>	

Source: Small Arms Survey 2005-Institut universitaire de Hautes Études Internationales

Table 9.2.1. Military personnel evolution to CAR (2005-2015)

Year	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014	2015
Army	1.400	1.400	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	2.000	7.000	7.000	7.000
Air force	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150	150
paramilitary	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000	1.000
<b>Total actives</b>	<b>2.550</b>	<b>2.550</b>	<b>3.150</b>	<b>3.150</b>	<b>3.150</b>	<b>3.150</b>	<b>3.150</b>	<b>3.150</b>	<b>8.150</b>	<b>8.150</b>	<b>8.150</b>

Source: Military Balance (yearbook several years)

Table 9.2.2. Military spending evolution to CAR (2005-2014)

	2005	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	2014
USD constants	24,6	..	25,8	36,4	42,3	62,7	..	..	..	..
USD corrents	15,4	..	19,1	31,5	36,0	51,6	54*	50*	..	.72*
% GDP	1,1%	..	1,1%	1,5%	1,7%	2,5%	..	..	..	..

Source: SIPRI data baste with the exception \* of Military Balance

## 10. OUTSTANDING ISSUES

To put into context the seriousness of the situation, in 2012, the CAR was 180th of a total of 187 countries in the Human Development Index. Between 2013 and 2015, the government budget was funded almost entirely by donations. However, national income began to increase in 2015 and managed to approach 100 million dollars, having fallen to 24 million in 2013. The new Government enjoys strong support from the population, but has to overcome many challenges to move past the current instability in the medium and long term. In addition, the new president has tried to form an inclusive government with representation of some of the presidential candidates who had competed against him in elections, and also a former minister of former President Bozizé. He has excluded representatives of armed groups, a decision that was criticized by some of the leaders of the former Séléka coalition. The country is still virtually split between the Government and armed groups, and violations of human rights and criminal acts in rural areas are common. As noted by the International Crisis Group (ICG) and other actors in the international scene, there are four priority areas in which the new government would have to focus their efforts, and they were already included in the Republican Pact signed on 15 May 2015.

*As of May the 30th, the CAR was the least-financed humanitarian crisis resulting from armed conflict in the world, receiving only 9% of the resources that were requested*

### Reconciliation and citizenship

The crisis that has hit the country has revealed numerous inter-community tensions, grievances and predation by different actors, some of which have their roots in the country's history, and they demonstrate the failure of the social contract between the different communities in the country. The state should regulate these divisions rather than promote them. Issues such as national identity and citizenship rights are still unresolved. The visit of Pope Francisco in November 2015 was an attempt in this direction, given the serious religious split that armed groups have created in the country. His visit aimed to promote interfaith dialogue and reconstruct the climate of coexistence that existed prior to the last phase of the conflict and address the division between the capital and the periphery. Multiple international interventions since the nineties have prioritized and naturalized military responses to problems over other

approaches, and have resulted in them becoming simply one more actors in the conflict, whether France with the different operations carried out in the country or regional actors (AU) or international (UN). Multiple cases of sexual violence and abuse by the international missions have only exacerbate the rejection of the international community.

### Repatriation of refugees and displaced peoples

The humanitarian coordinator of the UN, Italian Aurélien Agbénonci before leaving office in early 2016, said that if the humanitarian needs continued to outstrip the resources available, a failure to address the major humanitarian needs would affect the prospects for building peace in the country. The UN noted that there are 2.5 million people in danger of famine as of late April 2016, representing more than half of the country's population. UNHCR established that at the end of April, there were 482,000 refugees Central African Cameroon, Chad, DRC and Republic of Congo, and 418,000 others displaced inside the country, of which 28% were living in camps in the capital or housed with families. UN agencies made a consolidated appeal of \$531.5 million for the year, and in May only 9% of this figure had been raised, becoming the least-financed humanitarian crisis resulting from armed conflict in the world.<sup>21</sup> This situation of displacement and crisis was transforming the country, creating ethnic and religious boundaries in different localities and entire neighborhoods becoming homogeneous on a religious and ethnic level. In addition, there were still clashes in different parts of the country, so the refugees and displaced people feared returning to their hometowns for the risk faced and because they had lost land, homes, and possessions. It should be noted, too, that the civilian population's access to humanitarian aid was still very limited due to logistical and security problems. In the east, access has been restricted as a result of the increase in attacks in June 2016.

UN Security Council extended the UN multidimensional mission in April until late July, when it will likely be renewed. In parallel, France announced that the military operation Sangaris, launched in December 2013, would put a stop to all

21 OCHA (2016), Humanitarian Funding Update May 2016 - United Nations Coordinated Appeals, 30 de maig, <http://reliefweb.int/report/world/humanitarian-funding-update-may-2016-united-nations-coordinated-appeals>

troop movements at the end of the year, and that its mandate would be led by the mission of European military training, EUFOR CAR, as it decided by the European Council on 19th April 2016 .

### The fight against impunity

Although the president promised to make the fight against impunity one of his main objectives, the reality is that the resources available at the level of state structures (prisons, courts, police stations, police forces, and judges) are practically nonexistent, these have disappeared or are inactive for fear of reprisals in areas not under government control. The fight against corruption is now almost a losing battle. In recent years there have been few cases of diversion of funds from international donors who have been investigated, tried and convicted. As confirmed by the UN, the 28 courts and 162 judges in the country stopped working after the events of 2013 have since been reassigned to 23 magistrates courts in Bangui and the rest of the country with the support of the MINUSCA. In Bangui, the courts have again become operational, and have held the first criminal hearings since 2010. The judges appointed in some parts of the country under the influence of armed groups remain in Bangui for fear of reprisals.

*The presence of armed groups, crime, and inter-community violence, and the incapacity of the nation's security forces are the most urgent and dangerous challenges to stability in the CAR*

### The disarmament of armed groups

The presence of armed groups, crime, and inter-community violence, and the incapacity of the nation's security forces are the most urgent and dangerous challenges to stability in the CAR. Armed groups and other actors continue to threaten civilians, diverting and illegally exploiting natural resources, undermining security and the rule of law and preventing the government from gaining

access to large areas of the country or exercising authority over them. Although the capabilities of the armed groups have declined, many have become criminals in rural areas, far from the presence of the security forces, where they carry out looting raids in the towns and convoys on the roads.

Several armed groups have demanded as a precondition to participation in the process, that their demands be met, including participation in the processes and institutions of government, integration into the internal security and defense forces and socioeconomic development in the Northeast. Pending a national disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation, MINUSCA is performing previous projects of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration based on the agreement signed in 2015 at the Bangui Forum. By June 2016, more than 2,800 fighters, including 413 women, had enrolled in the program of disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of armed groups. Although, the president repeatedly expressed his willingness to transform the FACA to be a professional and inclusive body, the military is still dominated by only three ethnic groups of mainly Christian origin, and the defense industry has an endowment of excessive staff, with 8,300 people on the payroll, representing a quarter of public spending. This shows the

fragility of the situation - despite the drafting by the Transitional Authorities of a national security policy, the roles and responsibilities of the FACA and institutions of internal security have not been clearly defined. As the UN Secretary General points out, there are no overall policies or frameworks, and if there are, they are anachronistic, as long as the democratic civilian oversight of security organizations is weak. The absence of a dedicated supervisory civil authority to oversee arms and ammunition and related activities also contributes to the unlawful flow of arms.

## 11. CONCLUSIONS

Since its independence, Central African Republic has been characterized by continuous political instability, which has resulted in several coups d'état and military dictatorships. Both internal and external factors have been key to this chaotic situation. The confrontation between power-hungry political elites has excluded the vast majority of the country. Several countries such as Chad, Sudan and Libya, have also played a role in the conflicts to expand their regional influence, while external actors such as France and China compete for natural resources. The crisis and disintegration currently afflicting the country can be linked to several factors, including ethnic divisions, the existence of numerous armed groups (the former Séléka coalition and Anti-balaka militias), their increasing fragmentation and criminal activity, and religious instrumentalization. Tensions between religious and ethnic communities have complicated efforts to build national unity and repair the social fabric.

The country faces many challenges which call for a national response, such as the promotion of reconciliation, management of refugee and displaced populations, the fight against impunity and the disarmament of armed groups. The new Government enjoys strong support from the population, but faces many challenges to get the country out of the current instability in both the medium and long term. The country is still virtually

divided between the Government and armed groups. Violations of human rights and criminal acts in rural areas are common.

Military responses to the situation of instability and violence in CAR have only contributed to a degradation of an environment for peaceful resolution of conflict. CAR has not received heavy weapons or significant defense material itself, or at least this information is not available. The traditionally reduced FACA has grown considerably in number in recent years and has received more public funding, though this has not led to large expenditures on military equipment.

The permanent military presence of the former colonial power and other international forces have also played a role. Still, CAR itself has been the destination for arms sales of some of the major exporting countries of the world, particularly small and light weapons. Among the top sellers are the first EU exporters as well as some

of the sellers of small arms ammunition, of which the most active is China. As for Spain, it has played a dynamic role in the sale of small arms, especially hunting weapons, at least until 2013. Some Spanish companies that have benefited economically from the armed conflict in CAR, as in the case of Maxam, an explosives company which produces sport and hunting cartridges. The latter product has been found in the hands of armed groups, according to reports consulted for this study.

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## ESCOLA DE CULTURA DE PAU (UAB)

The Escola de Cultura de Pau (School for a Culture of Peace, hereinafter ECP) is an academic peace research institution located at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. The ECP was created in 1999 with the aim of promoting the culture of peace through research, Track II diplomacy, training and awareness generating activities. Its main scope of action includes analysing conflicts, peace processes, gender, human rights and transnational justice, and education for peace.

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- Track II diplomacy. The ECP promotes dialogue and conflict-transformation through Track II initiatives, including facilitation tasks with armed actors.
- Consultancy services. The ECP carries out a variety of consultancy services for national and international institutions.
- Teaching and training. ECP staff gives lectures in postgraduate and graduate courses in several universities, including its own Graduate Diploma on Culture of Peace at Universitat Autònoma de Barcelona. It also provides training sessions on specific issues, including conflict sensitivity and peace education.
- Advocacy and awareness-raising. Initiatives include activities addressed to the Spanish and Catalan society, including contributions to the media.

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## CENTRE DELÀS D'ESTUDIS PER LA PAU

The Centre d'Estudis per la Pau J.M. Delàs (Study Centre for Peace J.M. Delàs) was created in 1999, it is an independent Center of Research on issues related to disarmament and peace. The mission of the Centre is to strengthen the culture of peace and the construction of a disarmed society, making people aware of the negative effects of arms and militarism. The Centre combines the work of research and publication with divulgation and social mobilization against militarism's consequences, such as military expenditure, military R&D and the manufacture and trade of arms. Besides, it works to denounce governments' lack of compliance with the international agreements regulating these issues.

### **Escola de Cultura de Pau**

Edifici MRA (Mòdul Recerca A)  
Campus de la UAB  
08193 Bellaterra (Cerdanyola del Vallès)  
Barcelona, España  
Tel.: +34 93 586 88 42 / Fax: +34 93 581 32 94  
escolapau@uab.cat  
<http://escolapau.uab.cat>

### **Centre Delàs d'Estudis per la Pau**

Carrer Erasme de Janer, 8 (Entresol - despatx 9)  
08001 Barcelona, España  
Tel.: +(34) 93 441 19 47  
info@centredelas.org  
<http://www.centredelas.org/ca/>