CIVIL WAR IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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The political instability of the Central African Republic (CAR) dates back to the years of independence. This status quo has provoked marginalization of specific ethnic groups in the country by different leaders of state institutions. Located in the center of Africa, the CAR enjoys a strategic position, and is endowed with natural resources coveted by the West, but particularly by France, its former colonizer. Various sub-regional forces are set up in CAR for the purpose of stabilizing the country for lasting peace. MINUSCA replaced troops deployed by the African Union, to include MISCA, with UN forces after their failure to stabilize the country in September 2014. Despite the presence of UN forces, armed groups continue to sow the terror among the population. This inter-religious conflict between Muslims and Christians has nearly divided the country in two. This paper concludes that a solution is only likely if the various actors mentioned herein are involved in the peace process.

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ABSTRACT

CIVIL WAR IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC, by Major Junior Fresnel Nkonta Mokono, 54 pages.

The political instability of the Central African Republic (CAR) dates back to the years of independence. This status quo has provoked marginalization of specific ethnic groups in the country by different leaders of state institutions. Located in the center of Africa, the CAR enjoys a strategic position, and is endowed with natural resources coveted by the West, but particularly by France, its former colonizer. Various sub-regional forces are set up in CAR for the purpose of stabilizing the country for lasting peace. MINUSCA replaced troops deployed by the African Union, to include MISCA, with UN forces after their failure to stabilize the country in September 2014. Despite the presence of UN forces, armed groups continue to sow the terror among the population. This inter-religious conflict between Muslims and Christians has nearly divided the country in two. This paper concludes that a solution is only likely if the various actors mentioned herein are involved in the peace process.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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ACRONYMS

AEF	Federation of French Equatorial Africa
AU	African Union
CAR	Central African Republic
EU	European Union
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MINUSCA	United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
U.S.	United States
UN	United Nations

ILLUSTRATIONS

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The purpose of this research is to analyze how authorities of the Central African Republic (CAR) have failed in their duties to bring peace to their people from its independence in 1960 to the present day. The results of this instability have affected neighboring countries in several areas, including economic and security. This research is relevant because global players in stability throughout the world need to understand this country to make decisions in the face of this scourge.

The CAR, with an area of about 623,000 square kilometers, is a developing country in Central Africa with an estimated 4.5 million inhabitants. It borders various countries, including Cameroon in the west, Chad in the north, Sudan and South Sudan in the east, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo in the south. The CAR is a member of the African Union (AU), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States. The vast majority of the country has a humid tropical climate, although it shared between Savannah and equatorial forest in the south. The CAR also has many natural resources, including oil, uranium, gold, and diamonds. From its geostrategic position, the CAR is located in the heart of Africa and is surrounded by countries rich in natural resources, but also with all that such a situation implies as to the precarious political and social balance of the surrounding region. The CAR is surrounded by countries whose tensions are reflected in its territory. For example, the period from 1990 to 2010 saw many peripheral conflicts penetrate the country, and then in 2010-2016, a Christian-Muslim conflict resulted in Muslims refugees fleeing to the northern part of the country (Country Watch 2017). Another

conflict arose from the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) movement from Uganda located in the southeast part of the country, close to South Sudan. The CAR often serves as a rear base for traffickers and poachers.

Figure 1.   The Central African Republic

Source: Wikipedia, "CAR," 2018, accessed 1 October 2017, https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Central_African_Republic.

Figure 2.   CAR Prefectures

Source: Wikimedia Commons, "CAR Prefectures," 2018, accessed 1 October 2017, https://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:CAR_prefectures.png.

The CAR, formerly the French colony, Oubangui-Chari, became independent in 1960, like many other African countries. Since independence, the state had enormous political instability, many *coup d'état*, and tumultuous times during the reign of President Jean-Bedel Bokassa, who named himself Emperor. Despite the allocation of significant agriculture and mineral resources, including gold and diamonds, CAR's poor infrastructure, limited transportation, and unqualified workforce makes it one of the most impoverished countries in the world. Following a coup in 2013 perpetrated by the Séléka rebel group, the CAR was once again embroiled in unprecedented political instability in

the grip of a humanitarian crisis with a never-before elucidated record until nowadays. Since 2014, new violence has occurred throughout the country where the predominantly Islamic Séléka conducted a purge against "Anti-Balaka" Christians. This period was marked by horrible massacres, murder of children, and cannibalism under the helpless eyes of foreign troops responsible for pacifying the country. It should be noted that in 2014, as many as two thousand people were killed, and more than seven hundred thousand people were displaced in CAR as a result of the chaos in that country (Country Watch 2017). Appointed as President of the CAR Transition, Catherine Samba-Penza brought only a slight improvement in security. Lack of adequate leadership has plunged the country into a failing state; the peace agreements signed in Kenya in 2015 are the proof.

The CAR has been inhabited for at least eight thousand years. The colonization of the CAR was overlapped with empires and ethnic groups based in Sudan, Lake Chad, and Upper Nile.

The CAR was claimed by several sultanates using the Ubangi region as a slave reservoir by the Europeans from which exchanges took place north of the Sahara and in West Africa. In the seventeenth-century, deported slaves interacted with the Central African people and other foreign groups. Influenced by the various slave traders in the area, some ethnic groups eventually became slave traders themselves. In the eighteenth-century, the region attracted migrations of Zande, Banda, and Baya-Mandjia.

In the 1800s, Egyptian Sultan Rabah ruled the Upper Ubangi, which included people in the current CAR. The arrival of Germans, French, and Belgians in the African continent in 1885 consolidated their rights on this zone by a convention of 1887 with the

state of the neighboring Congo, which ceded the right bank of Ubangi to France. In the following years, the French established the capital of the present CAR in Bangui, and the Ubangi-Chari came under the control of France in 1894.

After defeating the forces of Sultan Rabah of Egypt in 1903, the French consolidated their control over the region, establishing colonial administration throughout the territory. In 1910, the Oubangui-Chari territory merged with the Chadian colony, and became one of four territories under the Federation of French Equatorial Africa (AEF) including Gabon, Congo (Brazzaville), and Chad. Small-scale revolts against French rule continued for thirty years with the development of a plantation economy. In 1940, the territories of the AEF responded to the call of French President, General de Gaulle to fight to free France from its invaders. The French Constitution that followed the Second World War inaugurated a series of reforms that granted complete independence to the countries of West and Equatorial Africa under French supervision, granting French nationality to AEF inhabitants, and allowing them to establish local assemblies. Barthélemy Boganda, a Catholic priest known for his direct statements to the French Assembly on the need for African emancipation, was the first president to lead the CAR Assembly. After the French constitutional referendum dissolved the AEF in September 1958, the Assembly proclaimed the birth of the Central African Republic with Boganda at the head of the government on 1 December of the same year. Boganda ruled until his death in a plane crash in March 1959. After its independence on 13 August 1970, David Dacko became Provisional President of the Republic and remained there until 1965.

In 1966, almost without bloodshed, Colonel Jean-Bedel Bokassa made a quick coup and proclaimed himself President of the Central African Republic (Dagne 2017, 4).

He abolished the 1959 constitution, pronounced a decree conferring on him all legislative and executive powers as President and dissolved the National Assembly. In 1976, the CAR became a monarchy when the President proclaimed himself as Emperor Bokassa I and promulgated a new imperial constitution. Despite a famine that affected the country, Bokassa spent about $22 million for his coronation and the construction of his palace, considered one of the largest ever built. He acquired a dubious reputation as a megalomaniac that reflected Uganda's Idi Amin's tastes as the worst of African tyrants.

Bokassa tortured prisoners, dismembering them to make public examples of them, and killed all those who threatened his authority. In 1979, schoolchildren protested against the decision to put Bokassa's effigy on their school uniforms, and ordered the arrest and beating of the children. According to testimonies, Bokassa, himself, participated in the beatings, which cost the lives of several children. After this despicable act was described to the international community, the French broke off their relations with Bokassa. French paratroopers took advantage of his state visit to Libya in September 1979 to restoreDacko to power as President until he, in turn, was overthrown in a coup without bloodshed by General André Kolingba.

In 1993 Ange Felix Patassé, from northern CAR, became the first democratically elected president to face a series of three mutinies from 1996 to 1997. After the French managed to repress the mutineers, the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB), an African peacekeeping force, occupied Bangui until 1998 when it was re-released by the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA).

The lack of responsible leadership plunged the country on the path of the "failing state" distinction. In early 2014, CAR reached a low point when Christian militias fought against Muslim counterparts with deadly consequences. This fractious war between Christian and Muslim militias took a worrying turn to the end of registering children as victims. The UN Security Council, to stabilize the country with the growing death toll, voted to allow the deployment of French, AU troops, and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) (Morris 2017).

<u>Political Relations with France</u>

France as a former colony power is the only country in Europe that has an embassy in Bangui, capital of the CAR. With its long-standing relations with the CAR, France continues to support its elected authorities in its process of stabilization and sustainable development of the country. France has given its full support to the actions of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the AU at the multilateral level, and worked within the United Nations Security Council.

The European Union (EU), France, Germany, and the European Commission launched the first European multi-donor development fund for emergency and development situations in July 2014. The Bêkou Trust Fund allowed the implementation and rapid adoption of the health sector, food security, economic and social recovery, and urban infrastructure, representing 120 million Euros (France Diplomatie 2018). France continuously supports the CAR vis-à-vis international financial institutions. For example, it was able to achieve the completion of the Heavily Indebted Poor Countries (HIPC)

initiative in 2009, and the IMF Extended Credit Facility and the Peacebuilding Commission.

French President François Hollande and Foreign Minister Laurent Fabius visited Bangui on several occasions on 10 December 2013, 28 February 2014, and 13 May 2016. The bilateral visits reflect the intensity of relations between France and CAR. In addition to military spending (Sangaris, and support for the EU operations as well as the AU, MISCA, and MINUSCA), France has granted more than 76 million Euros to the CAR (France Diplomatie 2018).

Research Questions

Primary Research Questions

How can the current mission in the CAR set the conditions for stability?

Secondary Research Questions

1. What are the significant historical events that shape this environment?

2. What are the underlying stability issues in the CAR?

3. Are the forces assigned to United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) sufficient to meet its mandate?

4. What are the primary reasons for the failure to achieve a peaceful resolution and progress in this area?

Problem Statement

The various politico-military instabilities known to this country since its accession and its independence have weakened and contributed to impoverish the CAR. In general,

the situation in the country remains catastrophic. Internal tensions have facilitated the deterioration of socio-economic and security status. This study will analyze the different problems that led to the rise of the crises in the CAR (from ethnic to confessional issues), creating the displacement of populations from within and across the country in the period from 2011 to 2016.

Significance of the Research

The importance of this study is to provide information on the prevailing conflicts in CAR, and enumerate the impacts in neighboring countries. Knowledge about the country's instability is vital. The wish is to allow the international community to complete the access to the broader information, which will contribute not only to stabilize the country, but also the regions that surround it. The researcher hopes that this research will increase attention to the sub-region for more concrete and sustainable peace solutions.

Assumptions

The conflict in the CAR dates from its independence to the atrocities perpetrated since the 2000s. First, the conflict has its roots in the racial injustices encountered. Secondly, the intervention of external powers controlled the management of power through coups d'état. Third, inefficient peacekeeping forces kept a country prisoner with internal quarrels for a decade. Fourth, political leaders practiced poor governance of state affairs. These assumptions are likely to study in this research.

Delimitation

This research will analyze different causes of the conflict in CAR, and describe its recent evolution. It will examine the initiatives taken by peace organizations, such as the AU, MISCA, and MINUSCA, since their interventions in the country in the management of the crisis. The research will also address the role that neighboring nations or Western nations have played in this instability. Finally, it will examine different approaches by the Central African authorities to secure their citizens.

Definition of Concept

The following concepts have been defined to enhance the understanding of this research.

Conflict: A clash of interests, values, or political ideas between two or more groups.

Anti Balaka: Christian Self-Defense Group of the CAR.

Séléka: A coalition of Muslim rebels mostly of foreign origin (Sudan, Chad).

Security: State in which the government guarantees the tranquility of a population.

Zaraguinas: Armed bandits sowing terror on the roads and in the countryside.

Road Cutters: Armed gangs who attack motorists on the roads.

Summary

CAR is a country in Central Africa that has suffered from political instability since the 1960s when it became independent. This uncertainty has generated several armed group conflicts that continue to delay the country's development. The coming of

power of several leaders favored the growth of ethnic rivalries with only the interest of promoting self-interests to the disadvantage of the majority of the people. The first Muslim head of the state has since led to a religious crisis between Christians and Muslims, claiming revenge for suffering since the years of independence.The lack of a responsible leader and the increasing corruption are among the proof of his insecurity.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The purpose of this research is to analyze how CAR authorities have failed to bring peace to their people since its independence in 1960 to the present day, and how chaos and instability have affected the environment. This knowledge can assist national and international policymakers' decision making to facilitate peace in the CAR.

Political upheavals mark the history of the CAR, leading to a climate unfavorable to the development and chronic institutional instability. On an external level, with the exception of Cameroon, the CAR has always lived in an environment marked by political instability and civil war. Numerous recurring military-political crises have affected socio-economic components and the defense and security forces. Today, CAR's image is a politically unstable, economically weak country, in which insecurity in the hinterland remains a significant concern.

Different blood ties and the use of the SANGO language as a means of communication are a determining factor in crisis resolution and national reconciliation. The conflicts that persist in this country since its accession to independence is an astonishing paradox, and finds its causes in the difficult socio-economic situation. The factors and causes of conflict in CAR are diverse. These include the fragility of state institutions, failure of democratization efforts, proliferation of armed groups and small arms, intransigence, lack of flexibility of social and political actors, poverty and misery, wage arrears or the non-payment of wages in arrears, and the exploitation and instrumentalization of ethnic differences.

As a result, these factors constitute an insidious source of conflict, and their accumulation has made the country more explosive. The excessive accumulation of wage arrears or the irregular payment of wages has contributed to the poverty of officials and other State agents, which adds to the population, to the extent that where, in the CAR, civil servants are the only supporters of their respective families taken in their broadest sense. However, poverty can reflect the highest causes of the Central African crisis but also one of the fundamental reasons for its perpetuation.

The CAR is a landlocked and fragile country that depends on international aid for economic and social reasons. As income capital is low, it affects the security domain. Since 2013, the CAR has been the victim of several armed insurgencies that have led to humanitarian crises and civil war. However, a victim of several *coup d'états* since its independence in 1960, the country's instability has never reached sectarian dimensions to the point of making a conventional war. People fled to the capital for internal camps or in neighboring countries to save their lives, thereby stopping economic productivity (Hume 2015). The national army, lacking an adequate means of accomplishing their missions, gave way to foreign forces to address restoration of internal security. Two years after the transition period, CAR is slowly emerging from the crisis with the help of the international community.

<p style="text-align:center">Evaluation of Threats</p>

Against the backdrop of regional instability, internal crises have degraded the security situation through several types of threats currently affecting the CAR. Uprisings in the west, northwest, northeast, and central CAR, the Zaraguinas attack populations by looting their property. These bandits officially target fundraisers, traders, and farmers.

Operating on the main roads, the Zaraguinas disrupt the free movement of people and their goods inside the country, consequently affecting critical supply routes into a landlocked country. The most affected are the state treasuries, which are desperately empty because of penuries and the high cost of living. Poachers, mainly from different neighboring countries, enter the country and engage in blind poaching because of the permeability of the borders. Therefore, this armed presence considerably reduces the number of tourists who want to go to the northern part of the country. The inability of authorities to stem these insecurities result in significant economic losses. Because of its border porosity, the CAR continues to suffer despite the gradual normalization of the security situation in neighboring countries, which have also experienced armed conflicts and the harmful effects of the proliferation of illegal weapons of war.

The unresolved situation of military refugees returning from exile makes them vulnerable and promotes their dissemination throughout the country, despite rehabilitation efforts made by the government. This persistent problem may have led to recruitment among the groups destabilizing the country. Repeated crises accentuate the structural deficiencies of the Central African Armed Forces. The Defense and Security Forces are in an advanced state of degradation with an aging staff without training and short of means.

In early 2013, Séléka's takeover of power confirmed the collapse of the Central African state, plunging the country into chaos that may take time to resolve. Periodic coups since CAR's independence have caused the disintegration of state institutions. The intercommunal conflicts and the return to a survival economy have led to the division of the country. The persecution of Muslims by the Anti-Balaka militias in the west forced

them to move, provoking revenge, and a debate over the partition of the country. Since

then, the conflict is characterized by deadly communal reprisals, the emergence of

banditry throughout the territory, the establishment of Muslim enclaves in the east of the

country, and a combat zone in the center. Moreover, this fratricidal conflict has revived

the question of how to live and own land in CAR. Muslims now considered as foreigners

in their own country, revealing deep social divisions expressed in sectarian warfare.

<u>The Darfur Conflict and Impact in CAR</u>

The CAR is mostly affected by the Sudan crisis in its territory because of the

repeated rebellions supported by the Sudanese government, according to regional leaders

and human rights groups (Dagne 2007, 4). Conflicts between the respective governments

and specific armed groups are mostly internal political conflicts since 2003. The conflict

that took place in the CAR displaced more than seventy thousand people in the northeast

part of the country. The Central African Armed Forces (FACA), have managed to contain

the rebels with support of French troops and the multinational force of the Economic and

Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC). In the same period, a ceasefire

agreement was reached between the government of President Bozize and the rebel

groups. In February 2007, two rebel leaders, Abdoulaye Miskine and André Le Gaillard,

signed an agreement with the Central African government. Following this, the UN

scheduled the deployment of a peacekeeping force in Chad and CAR. The mandate of the

multidimensional UN presence included the protection of civilians and displaced persons,

maintenance of law and order, facilitation of the free flow of humanitarian assistance, and

coordination with the African Union Mission in Sudan and the United Nations Mission in

Sudan (UNMIS). In August 2007, the Security Council submitted necessary amendments

to change the nature of the multidimensional force's mission. The report stipulated that the EU would deploy about four thousand peacekeepers in Chad and CAR in September of the same year.

The History of Armed Groups

It is sometimes difficult to differentiate between armed groups, criminal gangs, self-defense militias, and even the government armed forces in the CAR. The opportunistic instinct of rebel leaders has made them masters in the art of changing sides when it suits them. These armed groups derive from marginalized rural populations and traditions of self-defense and resistance.

At the beginning of 2013, the Anti-Balaka complained to the farmers of the advancement of the Séléka coalition in the west. The presence of Peul youths within the ranks of the Séléka, some poor and confused, often disconnected from traditional structures, have provoked a cycle of bloody rebelliousness. The recruitment of young Peuls turned into the allegation and stigmatization of the Peuls community as a whole. The education of Peuls in the Muslim religion previous resentments among pastoralists and farmers in rural areas favored this perception. A wave of violence broke out against the breeders between September and December 2013 due to a coalition by Séléka to attack the capital. In Bossangoua, in the northwest, and in Boali, north of the capital, Bangui, punitive operations followed, as well as attacks against the herders. Some breeders had to be radicalized and arm themselves because they were animating a desire for revenge. This hatred prompted them to respond with killings, as was the case in the town of Bambari in the center of the country. This settling of accounts led to an escalation of violence in rural areas, far from the eyes and concerns of the institutional

actors responsible for the Central African crisis resolution (the transitional government, UN, AU, the Economic Community) (States of Africa Central and the EU).

Sources of Conflict

Livestock is not only a significant economic asset in the CAR and the countries of the sub-region, but is also a source of both wealth and violence. The Gbaya, mainly from the West, imposed taxes on livestock in the 1970s to marginalize Peuls. This decision resulted in the weakening of the once good relations between the Peuls and the Gbaya farmers. These practices were later extended to other provinces. Central African army soldiers and armed groups have benefited from their wealth, and participated in their militarization and migratory change. This insecurity has benefited both the Anti-Balaka and Séléka. The same actors commit the same misdeeds under other labels. For example, one of the most famous Anti-Balaka leaders is a former bandit, who rampaged throughout northern CAR until 2012, and became a herdsman with his stolen cattle. In the regions of Central Africa in general and in CAR in particular, the phenomenon of the conversion of herdsmen to banditry is not of new. Among the "road cutters" (highwaymen), there were many farmers. Poverty from the loss of livestock incites some to practice subsistence banditry, and this fragility leads to generational conflicts, which leads some to integrate with armed groups to take revenge. The crises attracted young people that led to the advent of the Séléka. The desire for revenge for the theft of herds and the promise of an integration bonus in the armed groups were the ingredients of an explosive cocktail. In southern Chad, young peul refugees in the camps often cross the border to enlist for financial reward. Many of the breeders, who engage in abuses, have decided to integrate with the Séléka or participate in independent militias.

<u>MINUSCA: Current Issues</u>

The United Nations Security Council authorized the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in 2014. This decision replaced the stabilization force of the already existing AU, as well as the pre-existing political mission in the United States. Resolution 2212 (2015) authorized the Security Council to deploy a staff of 12,870 personnel including 10,750 military and 2,080 police officers. Due to the persistence of the conflict, resolution 2301 (2016) extended the mandate of the operation until 2017. Although it has reached more than 95 percent of its authorized military strength and 84 percent of its authorized police force (United Nations 2016, 1); by August 2016, its effectiveness was questioned. Its ability to deploy efficiently throughout remote areas was hampered by logistical problems, such as a lack of infrastructure for the transportation of material. Air transport to the east and north areas were restricted due to high dust levels, high winds, and the scarcity of operational runways after sunset (United Nations Security Council 2016, S/2016/565; United Nations 2016, 8).

<u>External Forces</u>

Since the Séléka group's takeover of the government, the CAR has been fighting the collapse of the state, and seeking an exit from the conflict since 2013. The Anti-Balaka were formed in reaction, and struggled to defend their interests. This fratricide has further weakened the institutions for a decade. Since 2014, the violence has declined considerably, but periodic outbreaks continue to undermine social cohesion and the return of displaced populations. The CAR completed the national elections in 2016 with the victory of President Faustin Archange Touadera, and the subsequent transition of an

interim government in place since 2014. The latter received the support of the

international community while leaning towards political concerns, such as links between

military groups and the Anti-Balaka on the one hand and peacekeeping on the other.

MINUSCA is mandated to protect civilians, facilitate humanitarian assistance, support

security sector reform efforts, support reconciliation and the extension of state authority,

and combat impunity. France, a former colonizing country, deployed forces in Operation

Sangaris to disarm the militia and secure the capital. The Bangui, in the same year, made

an additional effort. With a strength of about two thousand soldiers, France ended its

mandate in 2016, while maintaining a rapid reaction force and a cooperation program. To

support the efforts already begun by the international powers, the EU not only deployed

about seven hundred and fifty soldiers to participate in the reconstruction of peace, but

also set up the European Union Advisory Mission (EUMAM), a mission of military

council. The locals' opposition to MINUSCA has been fueled by scandals involving

alleged sexual abuse and exploitation by foreign forces. According to American sources,

about 450,000 refugee Central Africans are in neighboring countries compared to

152,500 in mid-2012. While 385,000 were internally displaced before the conflict out of

a population of about five million people (United Nations High Commission for Refugees

(UNHCR 2016, 2; USAID 2013).

Although gross domestic product (GDP) remains below pre-conflict levels, the

CAR has seen its economy partially improve, while continued violence threatens to

reverse gains. Considered one of the poorest countries, CAR ranks 187th out of 188

countries in 2015.

Economic Overview

In CAR, the institutional framework has improved slightly. The forest and mining codes have been revised to comply with international laws and improve the treatment of natural resources. Since March 2011, this institutional framework has become compliant with the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative (EITI) (IHS Markit 2018). A voluntary partnership agreement on forest regulations, governance, and trade was signed between the government and the EU in 2010. In the same year, CAR also joined the emissions from deforestation and forest degradation in the developing country for the management of the Congo Basin forest. The reform aims to improve government control of the timber and mining industries as well as strengthen the revenue mobilization capacity. Weak private sector and inadequate infrastructure limit economic potential. Bad governance, mistakes, and political efforts have hindered the development of the private sector and kept investors out. These different events made the infrastructure scarce. The weak private enterprises sector contributes to a diversified economy while the domestic market due to poverty remains weak. Two-thirds of the population is affected by poverty.
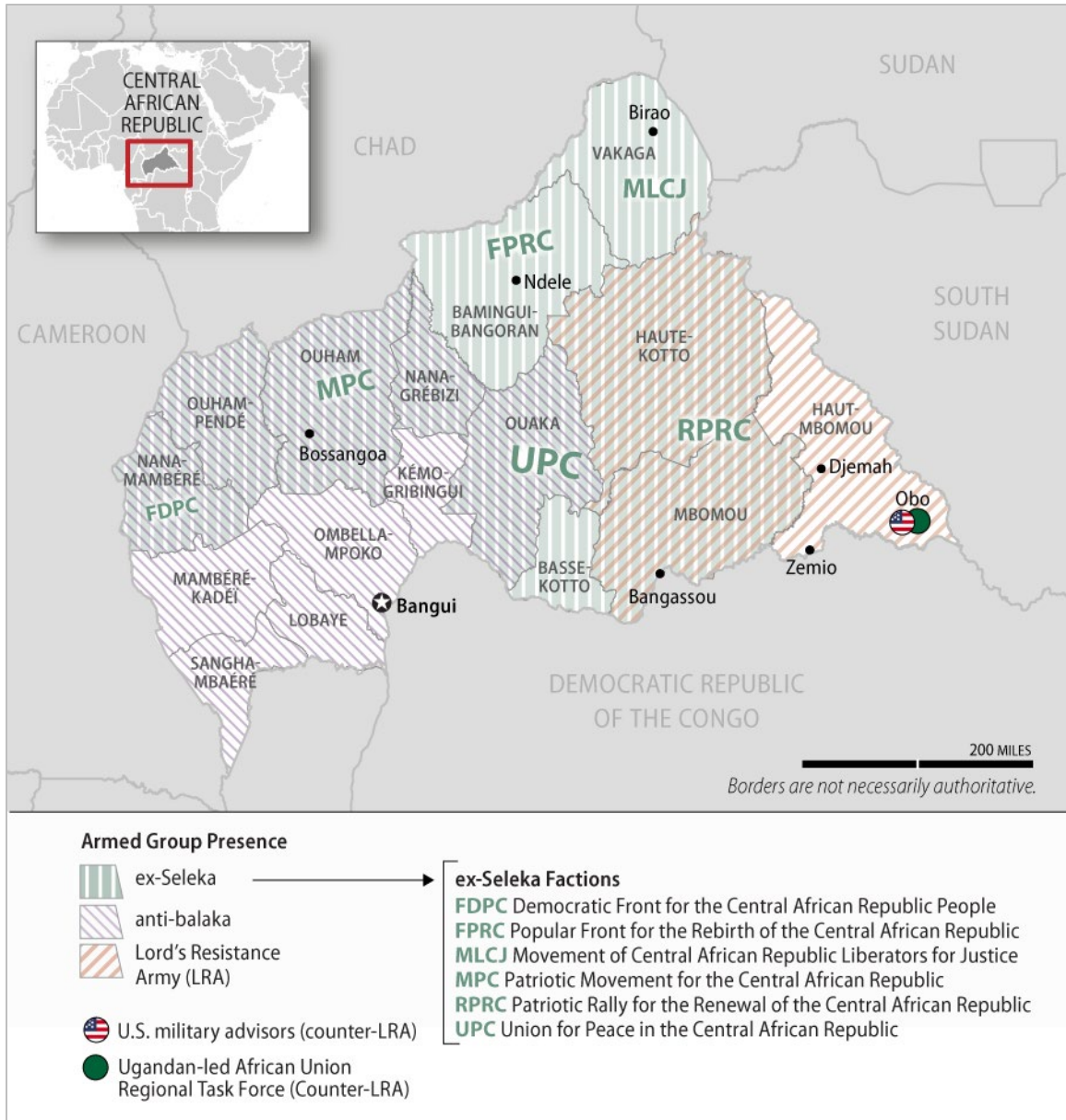
Figure 3.   Central African Republic: Armed Group Presence

CHAPTER 3

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the CAR government and the peacekeeping mission failure to preserve or establish security in the country. International and national actors should take ownership of this situation to put in place a policy to serve peace throughout the sub-region. This analysis will include a summary of stakeholder perspectives that will consist the CAR, neighboring states, and the UN at a minimum.

Research Methodology

The methodology used for this research qualitative case study. This methodology was chosen because of the complexity of its nature and the environment in which it is studied. The author provided the necessary tools to explore this complex phenomenon in its context and estimate the actors by analyzing their relations, functions, and tensions (RAFT) in the studied environment. The lack of access to data for quantitative analysis is also addressed to simplify this type of methodology for the qualitative case study.

Professional Case Study Research Method

This method will provide details and a picture of what has occurred in the CAR since its independence until the present day. However, research will focus primarily on the period from 2011to 2016. The research method used for the professional case study is one that systematically analyzes quantitative case studies to provide a detailed description of the issues that are at the heart of the CAR conflict. This detailed description gives a

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more accurate picture of what is happening in Central Africa, and could serve as a basis for different decisions.

Case Study Design

Explanatory Case Study

This kind of research facilitates understanding of the crisis from its root. It will study why the ethnic problem has been transformed into religious issues that tear apart the country. The thesis could not use surveys or experimental strategies due to the complex nature of the armed conflict. For a better understanding and credibility of the thesis, several sources will be used to answer the different questions. This case study will first focus on the investigation of the conflict in CAR based on the literature reviewed in its context. The researcher investigated the reason for the failure of the CAR authority to maintain peace and security in the country since its independence. This study allows the researcher to critically review the documentation and information. Secondly, this type of case study allows the researcher to have answers, but also explanations about the fratricidal conflict that has destroyed the CAR for decades, despite the presence of the international forces and their implications for the stabilization of the country. Third, because of its complex nature, this thesis could not use preliminary surveys to provide the necessary information. Also, coalitions of armed gangs have been formed by nationals of neighboring countries, such as Chad and Sudan. Fourth, different sources of information used are from the internet and books to facilitate the understanding and elucidation of aspects of this problem.

Single Case with Integrated Units

This kind of conflict in CAR is unique in that it has led to a so-called

conventional war. This problematic situation made it possible to analyze the phenomenon

according to the actors involved in the conflict and the roles played by each one to

perpetuate or prevent it. Critically, some individualities have been scrutinized, exposing

their alleged roles in this instability. Each actor's involvement in this armed conflict has

been examined.

Data Sources

The researcher focused on several secondary sources to address the various issues

to enhance the credibility of this thesis. Documented material was the primary source of

data. The collection of the rest of the data was used to complete the process of the

analysis to improve the understanding of the case study.

Database

The success of this research is due to the creation of a database that facilitated the

sorting and organization of information to better identify access data. Information

categories are grouped into public forces of the CAR; the different intervention forces for

peace; and government, regional, and continental interventions. This organization made

the work more accessible for the researcher when collecting data.

Data Analysis

The creation of data allowed the processing of a significant amount of information

to allow the author better understanding of the research. The collected data will identify

the different activities that cause instability in the CAR using multiple reports. The research data is confined to the conflict CAR and the nationals of neighboring countries.

Stakeholder Analysis Model

This model uses critical analysis of the stakeholders who participated in the CAR conflict. The study was done on different international organizations, such as the UN's use of peacekeeping forces and various armed groups. This approach required a particular knowledge of the conflict perpetuation due to specific figure since the years of independence to the present day. Specific analysis was done on the key players, splitting them according to their interests, objectives, values, and roles in the conflict.

Summary

The advantage of using the qualitative methodological research is the ability to focus on a single case study and analyze it in depth. The chronology used in chapter 3 provides understanding of the situation and a general overview of the armed conflict in CAR. This approach focuses on the research method while providing different types of case studies that facilitate the understanding of the thesis.

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS

This chapter will generate results through thematic analysis. The different

questions facilitated the production of the reviewed literature. The purpose of the

research was to assess the Central African Government's inability to maintain peace in its

country. The research examined why instability that has persisted since its independence

years ago is still relevant today, as well as influences by the main actors and neighboring

countries. This country, endowed with critical natural resources, is often ignored by

international policies. This rather complicated situation must be exposed to the world to

improve certain decisions that lend support to peace and stability. Critically, the various

issues were carefully analyzed and detailed. The result of this analysis is included in this

chapter.

For many years, African states have been of great interest to the superpowers.

Throughout colonization to independence, and independence to the present day, France

has always had significant economic and political influence with its former colonies,

including the CAR. Three objectives are the acquisition of a strategic advantage, use of

its influence in African states, and the economic benefit of treating its images with the

international community (Profant 2010, 43). French foreign policy is aimed at

maintaining its superior power in Africa (Radiff 2012). The UN Security Council gave

France a permanent seat because it was considered one of the world's most significant

powers. France has a unique position in the Security Council so it aligns neither with the

West nor with Russia and China (Judge 1999, 22-23). This position allows France to be

neutral on significant issues without traditional allies when it needs support in essential

matters. This is why France seeks to influence African heads of state to vote in favor of France when asked. French politicians have nurtured this close relationship to facilitate dominance over Africa.

Since its independence in 1960, the CAR has been marked by years of rebel violence and governance difficulties. France operated military bases in this country well before President Jacques Chirac's announcement to reduce its presence in Africa in 1997. France witnessed two coups d'état in CAR (1966 and 1979) before helping to establish the first democratic elections in 1993. Regarded among the poorest countries in Africa, the CAR was dependent on foreign aid. The French government was one of the major suppliers of this aid to facilitate the maintenance of its bases in the country. Given its status as a supplier, France benefited from the political support of the Central African government. During a demonstration by the rebel militia against President Anges Félix Patassé in 1996 for not paying wages for more than three months, French troops were of paramount importance to reestablish order. They also played the role of mediator between the government and the militia (McFarlane and Malan 1998). Peace negotiations and the creation of a peacekeeping force have demonstrated the power of France to settle disputes. France was able to help Patassé to stay in power, but also to improve his strength all over the world.

In 1997, France provided substantial financial and logistical support to the peacekeeping force in the Central African Republic (MISAB), and subsequently announced the withdrawal of its military troops from Africa. The UN, aware of the inability of MISAB to maintain itself without the support of France, established the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) in 1998 (Reuters

2016). Although French troops were part of the active UN forces, France considerably reduced its finances and its commitment. However, to keep a hand on its former colony, France has maintained part of its troops to help train the Central African army and ensure aerial reconnaissance. This included the usage of Mirage aircraft in 2006 and 2007 offensives to counter the advance of rebel forces towards the capital. This intervention again demonstrates France's role as a crucial player in the process of stabilization and peace in the CAR.

<p align="center">Other Actors</p>

The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) as a subregional intergovernmental body has played a significant role in trying to stabilize the crisis in CAR, mediating peace agreements, selecting policy frameworks as well as the choice of deployment of troops on the territory (Reuters 2015). However, differences of interest between regional chiefs of state and their rivalries have delayed efforts to stabilize the country. In 2014, the President of the Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso, was the principal mediator who facilitated the peace talks in Brazzaville (Congo). These talks resulted in a cessation of hostilities agreement signed by the Séléka, Anti-Balaka representatives, and the government. Unfortunately, this agreement was violated immediately after its signature on the pretext that it took place outside the CAR. The UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for Central Africa, Abdoulaye Bathily, has long criticized the Nairobi (Kenya) talks that took place in 2015, and warned that he wanted the UN Security Council's resolutions for a lasting peace. Chadian President Idriss Deby is considered a person with influence on Central African policy and its security, but he is also one of the most problematic actors because of his role with former

President Bozizé (UN OCHA 2014). According to some allegations, he allegedly supported the Séléka during their attacks in the capital. The majority of the Séléka troops were composed not only of Muslims, but also of Chadian nationals for the most part. In 2013, Chadian soldiers who were deployed under the AU label, MISCA, were accused of having participated, if not encouraged, to abuse the Séléka (Schlein 2014). Many Central African Muslims trace their origins to Chad, and this family overlap seems to have motivated anti-Muslim violence in 2014. While violence against Muslims and Arabs was growing, neighboring countries, including Chad, were evacuating Muslim citizens out of the capital of Séléka CAR with the help of the international community, which facilitated their access to the Séléka bastions in the northeast and Chad. Although Chad was the first contributor of personnel to MISCA. It has hosted more than ninety thousand Central African refugees in its territory (Schlein 2014).

The Chadian government considered Central African refugees traveling to Chad during this period as returning Chadian migrants rather than internationally recognized refugees (UNHCR 2015). Cameroon has not only welcomed former President Bozizé in exile, but also faced a migratory influx in its northern territory, already weakened by terrorists. According to UNHCR estimates, nearly 250,000 Central African refugees have been identified in Cameroon, of whom 128,000 have been there since 2013. Adding to the internal security challenges, Cameroon is also confronted in the north by the violent extremist Islamist group, Boko Haram, from Nigeria.
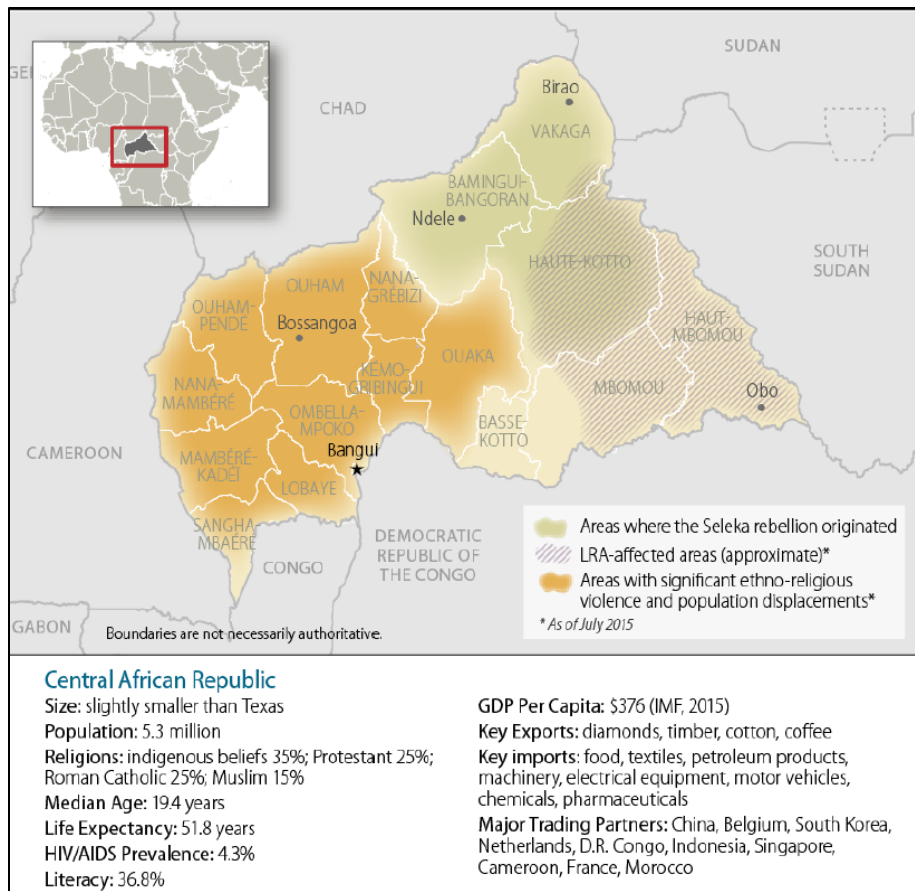
Figure 4.   Lord's Resistance Army Presence

Source: LRA Crisis Tracker, "Central African Republic," 2018, accessed 23 March 2018, http://www.lracrisistracker.com. Map created by CRS based on U.N., U.S. government, and non-government organization reports; data on recent LRA attacks from the LRA Crisis Tracker. Basemap generated by Hannah Fischer using data from Department of State, ESRI, and Google Maps. At-a-glance information is from CIA World Factbook and IMF (2015); figures are 2014 estimates unless otherwise indicate.

The LRA is an armed Ugandan militia operating in southeastern CAR for nearly a decade (see figure 4). This incursion into the sub-region resulted in the displacement of thousands of people in the CAR, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), and South Sudan. This precarious security in CAR and the lack of an efficient army were the reasons that allowed its leader, Joseph Kony, to settle there (Cakaj 2010). In 2013, the

international community downplayed information about his location (Arieff and Husted 2015).

The Ugandan army, in collaboration with significant logistical support U.S. military, has conducted attacks against the LRA since 2009. The Ugandan army has deployed its military advisers on the ground since 2011 (Towell 2015). Since 2012, this operation has been led by the Regional Task Forces of the African Union (UA-RTF) aided by the Ugandan army. The U.S. has provided non-military aid for humanitarian assistance and facilitated reconciliation programs in LRA-affected areas (Consolidated and Further Continuing Appropriations Act, 2015, 2130-830).

In southern CAR, U.S. advisers were unaffected by the crisis triggered by the Séléka. Taking advantage of this instability, the LRA made a coalition with Séléka to increase its involvement in the illicit trafficking of gold and diamonds through parts of Sudan, and obtain food and other aid (Ronan 2015). The LRA has nearly three hundred combatants in its ranks after a recent non-governmental estimate (Okiror 2015). According to human rights defenders, this militarized organization represents a threat in the region, and could increase its capacity to harm in the coming years (Invisible Children 2012).

<p style="text-align:center"><u>The Religious Dimension of the Conflict</u></p>

The CAR is a country with a Christian majority with a Muslim militia from the north called Séléka, where Islam is the majority religion. Their leader, Michel Djotodia, was president of the CAR between August 2013 and January 2014 with a Muslim majority under his command. On the other hand, the armed group Anti-Balaka is a predominantly Christian militia with connections to the François Bozizé regime. The

Séléka insurgency in the capital did not target mainly civilians and certain actors because of their belief (Käihkö and Utas 2013). However, the acts of murder, violence, and rape committed by the Séléka have contributed to the spread of sectarian hostility in the country (Amnesty International 2014). Unlike the Séléka, the Anti-Balaka showed a more specific pattern that targeted Muslims since its goal was to defend the Christian cause (Pont 2015). They made no distinction between Muslim civilians to the armed Séléka, which led to widespread attacks against Muslim civilians (Human Rights Watch 2014a). The Séléka were not slow to retaliate, resulting in both groups targeting members of the other's religion.

Rebellions have contributed to increased political violence by informal religious militias. This conflict created a mass exodus of Muslims from the south to the north of the country, nearly ending in secession from the CAR. Some Séléka members wanted to formalize this breakaway, but it was abandoned in July 2014 during the Brazzaville cease-fire talks (U.S. Department of State 2014). Considering the conflict as being only religious, problems would solve it by half. The sectarian targeting of civilians should not be underestimated because it has increased involvement in security in the coexistence of different religious faith communities. Religious leaders of both faiths align themselves with armed groups to avoid amalgamation (Pont 2015). During the Anti-Balaka attacks, tens of thousands of Muslims forcibly fled their homes as their properties and businesses were looted and destroyed. In parts of the capital, Muslims found themselves in precarious enclaves, their survival depending on the protection of international troops (Human Rights Watch 2014b). Many were later displaced in 2014 to the northeast or neighboring countries (Arieff and Husted 2015). The UN Secretary General has warned

that the security and humanitarian situation remains critical around Muslim neighborhoods. These violent attacks, whose origins may be ethnic or religious, were partly due to access to raw resources and control of commercial networks (Lombard 2012). The politicization of religious identity grew under the Bozizé, who ran an evangelical church (Lombard 2014). This popular hatred increased during the perceived looting of CAR's natural wealth by foreign actors, in this case, the Chadian and Sudanese traders. Neighboring Chad contributed to Bozizé's rise to power in 2003, and the impunity enjoyed by these soldiers helped increase these feelings.

<u>Some Possible Solutions to Stabilize the CAR</u>

The situation of instability in CAR is worrying. Its control is an obligation to facilitate the normal functioning of the state and thus to cause the desired democratic alternative. However, with the emergence of new forms of violence committed, much remains to be done, especially with the presence of armed gangs in the country that impede the adequate protection of people and property. Specific provisions must be recommended such as the prepositioning of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and the Gendarmerie throughout the territory. Although the personnel of the defense forces will not be able to cover the majority of the Central African area, mainly the North and East of the country acquired with the insurgents. Reduced workforce, lack of equipment and adequate funding will hinder the efficient conduct of defense and security missions on the ground. The support of MINUSCA troops and French cooperation may reinforce the security measures that will be installed gradually. Thus, short- and medium-term solutions must be considered for a return to constitutional legality, but also to ensure the best conditions for economic recovery and lasting peace.

In the short term, the CAR can take into account the continuation of the actions undertaken by France within the framework of the restructuring of the defense and security forces. It can take into account in the context of cooperation, the formation of defense units and arrange the various infrastructures for their accommodations. Organize recruitment competitions for a better selection of executives of the Gendarmerie then it also plays role police administrative. Promote the prepositioning of troops for sufficient coverage throughout the national territory with a focus on areas of insecurity. This deployment will facilitate the rapprochement of forces in sensitive areas and reduce the response time in case of crises. However, it will limit cross-border incursions and could coordinate both the return of CAR refugees safely to the country. In addition, for efficiency in the accomplishment of missions, it would be necessary to increase the numbers by providing them with adequate logistical means. Given the vastness of the territory, these defense forces should have the support of UN forces with mandates that allow the use of force in case the need arises.

In the medium term, the restructuring of the defense and security forces is necessary to equip the CAR with an operational, professional and, above all, republican army. For continued success, the government in collaboration with foreign organizations should focus on the reorganization and rejuvenation of the defense and security forces think of the ethnic balance in recruiting for a fair representation to support the tranquility of society. It is also essential to improve the living and working conditions of the defense forces by upgrading equipment and training. For a lower cost, it is necessary to rehabilitate the existing infrastructure like barracks, strengthen bilateral and sub-regional cooperation, and set up a prevention and crisis management unit.

Disarmament, Demobilization, and Reintegration (DDR)

In general, regional conflicts and the permeability of borders are the cause of the uncontrolled ebb and flow of weapons of war on the Central African soil. This uncontrolled traffic contributes to the creation of militias that perpetuate violence within groups of people with precarious living conditions and desertion soldiers escaping the control of their hierarchy. Considering the preceding, the security of the country also involves the conquest of all these armed bandits through the implementation of a Disarmament, Demobilization and Reinsertion program.

CHAPTER 5

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Conclusions

The purpose of the research is to assess the inability of the Central African government to establish and maintain security throughout the country to understand why this country was destabilized by a devastating conflict with both internal and external impacts for so long. Both national and international policymakers must learn from the crisis that is undermining the nation to understand the situation better and make better decisions that promote peace and civilization.

Recommendations

Since 2013, interventions by the international community in the Central African conflict have prevented a more severe crisis (Brown 2013). In spite of different responses, the situation remains difficult to control the military forces's limited ability to protect civilians (Paris 2014). Despite the presence of ground troops, aid, and diplomatic engagement, insurgent attacks on the populace are still prevalent throughout the country. The different causes of the conflict in this study make it difficult to find one definitive solution, and the prospects for a peaceful democratic transition in the short term seem slim.

Africa-led military operations evolved into peacekeeping operations in 2014, prompting some observers to examine MINUSCA's ability to stabilize the country compared to the AU mission. Sub-regional states, including CAR, may have the political will to resolve a crisis of this magnitude, but their lack of capability often slows

committed forces and is hampered by rivalries and competing interests. Paradoxically, the better equipped and funded peacekeeping operations are often late in deploying and avoid risk to the point of undermining effectiveness.

Peacekeeping operations in CAR need to broaden their scope of activities to include local authorities in this partnership process to stimulate the economy (Vircoulon and Lesueur 2014). In the long term, the various political and security agreements that could improve the governance of the CAR could encounter specific obstructions. Military interventions, the strengthening of state power through diplomatic channels, has brought only precarious results. During the Bangui Forum in 2015, the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) of the militia, bringing to justice of human rights abuses, and strengthening of the security forces did not progress as expected. The memories of atrocities among the communities have proven to be durable and difficult to forget (International Crisis Group 2014).

The flow refugees into CAR are a challenge to the limited resources as insecurity impedes the free movement of food and goods. Neighboring states are limited to their ability to stem violence in case of an eruption. Rwanda's genocide in 1994, which caused the influx of refugees into DRC's neighboring country Zaire, was the basis for the sustained regional security crisis. International extremist organizations will continue to find refuge in the CAR if conflicts persists or if the radicalization of conflict-affected peoples continues.

The first recommendation to achieve stabilization in the CAR is for credible leadership. The different heads of state of the countries of the sub-region of Central Africa—the most stable countries Gabon, Republic of Congo, and Cameroon—must

develop a partnership agreement for the management of conflict backed up by the ECCAS and UN, and under the supervision by a neutral country like Canada or Switzerland. An organization must be set up with a rotating presidency to participate in the reunification of the country through interethnic and confessional dialogue. Given the cultural similarities of the region, it would be wise for the paternity of the problem to be taken into account by the leaders of the region for a better interpretation of the situation and the confidence of the populations.

The second recommendation focuses on better communication between UN missions in the area. To resolve disputes that undermine the country, the UN should adopt a model of analysis. MINUSCA should take share information with the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS) and United Nations Mission and the African Union in Darfur (UNAMID). Through their respective structures, they will have better control of the borders and pacification of the sub-region because the various rebellions operate for similar reasons. This collaboration will the CAR in the search and mitigation of belligerents in the northeastern region of the country.

Chad should be included in this peace process because of its Muslim influence, a common religion among the rebels of the Séléka. The communication between UN missions will help to mitigate rebel crossings and religious tension. UN administrators could integrate the different actors to stabilize the CAR. As the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) are ineffectual, the UN should include France as an actor.

The third recommendation focuses on the role of France in the area. As the French model is the foundation of the Central African Republic, it should participate in training of Central African leaders in the legal field or training the military. The

deployment of more French troops should help to strengthen the military already in the territory to better enable the Government of the Central African Republic to protect its sovereignty while fighting against armed groups. The Central African armed forces are not able to secure the entire territory because they are almost non-existent. France should also consider the different rebel resistances while integrating the FACA for better performance on the ground. Only open collaboration among all these actors can lead to active peace. France can also provide funding and humanitarian assistance to support the efforts of the various international organizations fighting to stabilize the country.

The fourth recommendation would be to involve the Chadian president in the Central African peace process. He has the capability to sign defense agreements with the Central African Republic to secure their shared borders and unite with the international community to fight rebel factions. The agreements will help him to not only stabilize his country against rebel factions in southeastern Chad, but also to lessen the freedom of movement of the rebel factions of neighboring countries in areas not controlled by the government. As a Muslim, President Deby can be an asset to convince the Séléka to participate in the dialogue to appease the country.

The fifth recommendation should focus on the Central African government to consider creating a national unity government to facilitate an inclusive dialogue across the nation that would bring all regions of the country together. Discussions should include the type of motivations that undermine the country. The different faiths, both Muslim and Christian, need to confront their leaders about the distribution of wealth. Through this union, a sense of patriotism can be developed and weapons silenced. However, this union must not cause an external infiltration that contributes to the

destabilization of the country. Once this is done, it will facilitate the establishment of the FACA to make it operational with the help of forces already present in the territory.

<div align="center">

Recommendations for Further Study
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Future research could concentrate on the capacity of MINUSCA to stabilize the country and understand the degree of which this instability plays in the peacefulness of neighboring countries. Due to several interferences in the conflict, it is almost impossible to leave the management of CAR's peace and stability to the country's government. The intervention of the various actors has contributed to the destabilization of the country; a concerted effort of Central Africans and the international community is required. However, this commitment must be of general interest to satisfy the needs of all stakeholders. Due to the complexity with which this research has been conducted and its outcome in the identification of significant players identified, this method can be used to determine the various problems that undermine the instability of Mali.

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