



## Briefing on MINUSCA (Central African Republic) 20 June 2023

Malta Statement delivered by Ms Francesca Gatt  
Deputy Permanent Representative of Malta to the United Nations, New York

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Thank you, President. I also thank SRSR Rugwabiza, UN Women Executive Director Sami Bahous, AU Commissioner Adeoye and Mr Ngatondang for their insightful remarks. I also would like to welcome the presence of the CAR Minister of foreign affairs to the meeting.

At the outset, I express our sympathy to the Burundian peacekeepers that were injured in an attack against MINUSCA on 13 June.

President

We reaffirm our commitment to the sovereignty, independence, and ownership of the Central African Republic in defining political priorities. Nevertheless, we express concern at the recent decision to suspend local elections and to call for a constitutional referendum on 30 July. It is crucial that the people of the Central African Republic are provided with the necessary information to guide their opinions with sufficient time, and in an open and inclusive civic space.

We condemn the violence in the country, and urge all armed groups to unconditionally lay down their weapons. We also deplore the presence of foreign armed groups and militias.



At the same time, we encourage the authorities to continue investing in a holistic manner, prioritising political dialogue and the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation over military action, keeping permanent demobilisation at the forefront of their efforts. We also commend ongoing efforts to address bilateral issues with Chad through sustained dialogue.

The impact of military operations on local communities is often unbearable, and military gains need to be accompanied by progress in good governance, accountability, and the strengthening of the judicial system.

The conflict in Sudan has had severe spill-over effects in the Central African Republic, and we express our solidarity with the authorities as they continue to welcome refugees and returnees. There is undoubtedly a need for reinforced support from the international community and humanitarian partners.

President

We express alarm at the figures concerning abductions, recruitment, and the use of children in the country, with increased grave violations due to the movement of armed groups. Sustainable financing, especially for projects such as vocational training centres, is crucial for children's return to society following release from armed groups.



Malta calls on Member States to ensure proper financing for child protection efforts through the 5<sup>th</sup> Committee and MINUSCA.

We also welcome today's focus on Women, Peace and Security in the Central African Republic. Gender-sensitive conflict analysis has been largely absent from reporting, particularly on women's role in political, security, peace and humanitarian efforts and related barriers.

On the week of the International Day for Women in Diplomacy, we emphasise the need for women to be respected, consulted, and included in every process of policy and decision-making. Incitement, violence, and intimidation of women human rights defenders, peacebuilders and women's civil society groups must cease to ensure a safe environment that ensures women's full, equal, and meaningful participation.

The establishment of gender-responsive legal frameworks and the decree on the implementation of the parity law, as well as a revision of the law on political parties and the electoral code, must be given priority.

We commend MINUSCA and SRSG Rugwabiza's leadership for their renewed efforts in coordinating with the authorities and extending State authority in the country. We deplore allegations of sexual abuse by a contingent from the Mission and fully support the decision to repatriate the concerned peacekeepers. We strongly encourage MINUSCA to take all measures to assist and support the victims.



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President

To conclude, we remain convinced that addressing the root causes of conflict while investing in the protection and promotion of the fundamental rights of the people of the Central African Republic, especially children and women, are key to unlocking peace and security in the region. It is only by cultivating an inclusive public space and extending State authority that a peaceful and promising future for the country can be spearheaded.

I thank you.