

Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition

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Table of Contents

Executive Summary.....	i
Recommendations.....	iii
I. Introduction	1
II. The Fall of the Bozizé Government: A Cautionary Tale.....	2
A. François Bozizé’s Weak Governance	2
1. An ethnic-family power system.....	2
2. A policy of insecurity: Government blocks reforms and outsources security	3
3. Constitutional revision and disunity in the presidential clan.....	5
B. Seleka as a Symptom	6
1. From a coalition of armed groups to a consortium of malcontents	6
2. Time for revenge.....	7
C. Chad’s Invisible Hand and Disaffection in the Region.....	8
1. Regional isolation.....	8
2. ECCAS: A fragile security net.....	11
III. From Libreville to N’Djamena: From One Transition to Another	13
A. The failure of Libreville 2.....	13
1. Another transition ten years later	13
2. Impossible coexistence.....	14
B. The Transition: Same Old Story	16
1. The N’Djamena summits: The usual compromise.....	16
2. A new government and a new political paradigm.....	17
C. The Seleka in Power: Insecurity and Uncertainty in Bangui	18
IV. The Priorities of the Transition	21
A. The Security Priority: DDR and SSR	21
1. New generation DDR	22
2. SSR: The need for an innovative approach	24
B. The Humanitarian Priority	25
1. Ensure security for humanitarian work	25
2. Human rights: Investigate the past and safeguard the future.....	26
C. Budgetary, Economic and Social Priorities	27
1. Relaunching basic services and paying civil servants.....	27
2. Supporting the private sector	28
3. Maintain income from the diamond sector	29
D. The Political Priority.....	29
1. Coordinated and continued international supervision for the transition	29
2. Rethinking the peace and security architecture.....	30
3. Accelerating the work of transitional institutions and preparing the elections	30
V. Conclusion	32
APPENDICES	
A. Map of the Central African Republic.....	33
B. Seleka’s military command structure.....	34
C. Chronology	35

D.	Glossary	36
E.	List of members of the provisional government of national unity	38

Executive Summary

The coup by the Seleka rebel coalition in March 2013 that ended François Bozizé's decade-old rule plunged the Central African Republic into a new and dangerous crisis. In response, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other partners of the Central African Republic (CAR) offered an all-too-common compromise: a de facto recognition of the new power and a transition framework under international supervision. However, uncertainty remains due to the absence of the state, Seleka's fragility and tensions between Christians and Muslims. To avoid having an ungovernable territory in the heart of Africa, the new government of national unity must quickly adopt emergency security, humanitarian, political and economic measures to restore security and revive the economy. For their part, international partners must replace their "wait-and-see" policy with more robust political and financial engagement to supervise and support the transition.

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

The new government of national unity is fragile and faces considerable challenges. Securing the country, organising elections, restoring public services and implementing judicial, economic and social reforms, were agreed to in Libreville and remain on the agenda. But dissension within Seleka, the proliferation of weapons in Bangui and the deterioration of the social environment could jeopardise the very fragile transition. The humanitarian situation is deteriorating: the population is suffering from deprivation, which will be compounded by the rainy season, and there are some 150,000-180,000 internally displaced people. Faced with multiple problems, the new government will have to define security, humanitarian, budgetary and political priorities. To secure the peace and stability that previous governments failed to achieve, it must develop a new disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) program and rethink security sector reform (SSR). Restoring security and promoting innovative approaches tailored to the country's needs are key to ensuring the success of the transition.

To overcome these challenges, the government will need two types of assistance: funding and experts from donors for three important initiatives – DDR, SSR and the management of reconstruction funds; and political and military support from ECCAS. With the help of the UN and France, the regional organisation should ensure rigorous monitoring of the Libreville Agreement and the decisions taken at its April 2013 heads of state summit in N'Djamena. It should also act as a mediator to mitigate political and military tensions that may arise. Should the transition fail, it will be impossible to govern the country and this will create a "grey zone" at the heart of the continent. CAR is already a haven for various armed groups; combatants from the Lord's Re-

sistance Army have been present in the south east of the country since 2008 and the Vakaga region is a transit route for poachers and traffickers from neighbouring countries, including Sudan. State collapse could pave the way for new criminal networks to establish themselves in the country and further undermine regional stability.

To prevent the country's further decline, international partners must go beyond their "wait-and-see" attitude and mixed commitments that have too often characterised international supervision of political transitions.

Recommendations

To address security emergencies

To the MICOPAX and France:

1. Increase security patrols in Bangui.

To the government of CAR, UN, European Union, Micopax and France:

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

To address humanitarian emergencies

To non-governmental organisations (NGOs) and the UN:

5. Submit a joint request to Seleka leaders asking for the deployment of trustworthy military commanders in regions identified as high-risk areas.
6. Create a specific position for a security coordinator for the NGOs working in CAR and lead a security risk assessment mission in each area.

To protect human rights

To the government of CAR:

7. Ensure the independence of the new joint commission of inquiry by providing it with sufficient resources to lead proper investigations and appointing more individuals with proven experience in defending human rights.

To the government of CAR and the EU:

8. Support research conducted by the Central African Republic Human Rights League, including through the allocation of EU funds dedicated to human rights.

To the EU:

9. Launch a consultation process with the CAR authorities, pursuant to Article 96 of the Cotonou Agreement, and until this process is finalised, continue to provide financial support to CAR through the European Development Fund (EDF), but only directly to specific programs and not through government channels.

To the International Criminal Court:

10. Conduct a mission to CAR to ensure that witnesses in the trial of Jean-Pierre Bemba are safe and to send a warning to perpetrators of abuses.

To address economic emergencies

To ECCAS, the African Development Bank, World Bank, International Monetary Fund and EU:

11. Consult each other on granting emergency budgetary support to enable the government to pay civil servants, resume the provision of basic social services and face the main challenges of the crisis.

To the government of CAR and international donors:

12. Establish a body composed of members of the government of national unity and international experts, to manage funds dedicated to reconstruction, organisation of elections and other challenges of the transition. The body will manage the special solidarity fund announced at the Brazzaville meeting; undertake a needs assessment mission to determine immediate priorities for assistance and allocate funds accordingly; and assess the implementation of these initiatives. Under the prime minister's authority, the body should report to the transition steering committee on its progress.

To the government of CAR and the African Development Bank:

13. Allow the African Development Bank to assess the mining and oil contracts signed by the former regime to determine if these contracts are in accordance with the sector's standards.
14. Restore mandatory administrative controls to ensure the integrity of the diamonds supply chain and organise a Kimberley Process review mission in all diamond-producing areas.

To the Kimberley Process

15. Investigate the diamond smuggling networks in CAR.

To address political emergencies

To the government of CAR:

16. Prepare for the elections by establishing the Election National Authority and appointing its members.

To the UN:

17. Send a preliminary electoral mission to CAR to assist in the design of an action plan, a budget and a realistic timetable for the elections.

To the transition steering committee:

18. Organise a monthly meeting to assess progress on implementation of the Libreville Agreement and decisions taken at the ECCAS summit and discuss adjustments needed; and if necessary, identify, disclose and implement sanctions against those individuals responsible for the lack of progress, including international investigations, targeted international sanctions, exclusion from the political process with the prime minister's consent, etc.

To the African Union, ECCAS, UN and EU:

19. Organise a meeting to draw lessons from the management of the CAR crisis and find solutions to the political and military problems that have emerged and ways to improve Africa's peace and security architecture.

Nairobi/Brussels, 11 June 2013

Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition

I. Introduction

After ten years in power, President Bozizé has left in the same way he arrived: ousted by a rebellion and abandoned by the security forces amid widespread discontent. In 2010, Crisis Group warned against the risk of a deteriorating security situation should Bozizé fail to fulfil the commitments of the 2008 Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD).¹ At the time, the IPD was met with real enthusiasm and was considered a model for negotiations. However, nearly five years later, the overwhelming feeling is bitter disappointment: the inclusive government was never put in place; the 2011 elections took place but, according to observers, were marred by many accusations of fraud; the state disintegrated further; the “grey zones” outside state control expanded; most of the agreed essential reforms were never implemented; and the attitude adopted by both the government and rebel groups meant the demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration (DDR) program never saw the light of day for combatants in the north east.

In recent years, the CAR has been virtually ungoverned. The government’s failure to take political responsibility has led to growing poverty and insecurity as well as financial, humanitarian and security dependence. President Bozizé’s ouster was yet another episode in the cycle of crises that occur every ten years in the CAR.² This report is based on continuous monitoring, several visits to the CAR and many foreign contacts since 2012. It analyses the most recent crises and proposes solutions for breaking the cycle, averting a botched transition and avoiding the emergence of another “démocrature”.³

¹ See Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°69, *Central African Republic: Keeping the Dialogue Alive*, 12 January 2010. Also see Thierry Vircoulon, “Central Africa: the coup and the future of an agreement”, African Peacebuilding Agenda, Crisis Group blog (www.crisisgroupblogs.org/africanpeacebuilding), 27 March 2013.

² Since André Kolingba’s forces took power in 1981, CAR presidents have remained in power for an average of ten years. Kolingba, who overthrew David Dacko in 1981, was president for twelve years before losing to Ange-Félix Patassé in the 1993 presidential election. Patassé led the country until 15 March 2003, when he was overthrown by his former chief of staff, François Bozizé. The cycle has been repeated. Like his predecessor, François Bozizé was president for ten years before being overthrown, once again by force. See Crisis Group Africa Report N°136, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, 13 December 2007.

³ The concept of “démocrature” was coined by the Uruguayan writer, Eduardo Galeano, and used by Max Liniger-Goumaz to describe African regimes. This neologism means a dictatorship disguised as a democracy. Max Liniger-Goumaz, *La démocrature, dictature camouflée, démocratie truquée* (Paris, 1992).

II. The Fall of the Bozizé Government: A Cautionary Tale

François Bozizé's departure on 24 March 2013 was the result of his government's decline and the prevailing feeling that armed opposition groups could easily seize power. In ten years, the government did not promote development, the life expectancy remained the same as 30 years ago, national gross per capita income fell and the average number of years of schooling per person is now less than seven years.⁴ In addition, the government lost control of much of the national territory, while foreign support receded. Isolated internally and externally, the government chose the strategy of political monopoly, which it no longer had the resources to maintain and which provoked the creation of a rebel coalition: the Seleka.⁵ The latter's emergence was the direct consequence of the government's failure to deal with the problem posed by armed groups in the north east of the country, its inability to tackle insecurity and the withdrawal of regional support. In this respect, the rebellion that is now in power in Bangui was more a symptom than a cause of the crisis that began at the end of 2012.⁶

A. François Bozizé's Weak Governance

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

1. An ethnic-family power system

During Bozizé's second term, his family members entered politics, strengthening the family's grip on power. The 2011 elections were controversial, particularly because the president's family and close associates (widely known as the "board" in Bangui) were elected. On 4 May 2011, Socrate Bozizé and Monique Bozizé, the president's wife, were elected to parliament for the constituencies of Gambo and Bimbo respectively.⁷

Members of the president's family controlled security and finance. His son Francis succeeded him as defence minister but was dismissed after the December 2012 crisis. Another of his children, Franklin, "controlled the airport" due to his position as security manager. Two other sons held key positions in the gendarmerie – Aimé Vincent Bozizé, alias "Papy", was head of the Research and Investigation Department (Section de recherches et d'investigations, SRI).⁸ The presidential guard, which was probably the army's only operational unit, was accused of discriminatory practices: despite its seeming ethnic diversity, precedence was given to the Gbayas (the president's ethnic community).⁹ The heads of the presidential guard and the Central African Office for

⁴ Life expectancy fell from 49 in 1985 to 48 in 2012. National gross per capita income fell from \$909 to \$722 in the same period. The average number of years of schooling per person increased by only one year between 1985 and 2012 and is less than seven today. See "Central African Republic: Human Development Indicators", UN Development Programme (UNDP), <http://bit.ly/19mzliB>.

⁵ In Sango (national language), "seleka" means alliance.

⁶ "We are bad. The Seleka is bad but the worst thing in the country is exclusion. Change and we will change as well", Mohamed-Moussa Dhaffane, one of the Seleka's leaders, Bangui, 17 January 2013.

⁷ CAR National Assembly website, <http://bit.ly/11htA6X>.

⁸ Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 25 January 2013.

⁹ For example, according to a member of the presidential guard who defected to the Seleka, only the Gbayas in the presidential guard were provided with training by the South African army. Similarly,

the Repression of Crime (Office centrafricain de répression du banditisme, OCRB) were both from Bozizé's region.¹⁰

In the public financial sector, both the director of the central bank and the finance minister, ex-mines minister, were the president's "nephews". The latter, Sylvain Ndoutingai, was said to be the president's chief adviser before Bozizé dismissed him in 2012.¹¹ The key posts in the finance ministry were held by members of the president's ethnic community,¹² while most of the managers and directors in the mines ministry were from his region, Bossangoa.¹³ At the beginning of 2012, President Bozizé dissolved all the boards of directors of state-owned companies and replaced them with a Special Council for the Surveillance and Reform of State-Owned Companies and Agencies (Conseil spécial de surveillance et de redressement des entreprises et offices publics CSSREOP), which he chaired himself. He also chaired the Treasury Committee.¹⁴ This monopolisation of the management of public finances provoked much criticism.¹⁵ Moreover, management of the budget was generally inefficient and at least half of allocations in the Finance Act were not spent in 2012, even though some of them were in priority sectors, such as health and education.¹⁶

2. A policy of insecurity: Government blocks reforms and outsources security

The Bozizé government neglected the security sector. The tribal-family domination of the security services could hardly be expected to promote security sector reform (SSR), while the inertia and indecision that characterised the presidency made it unable to anticipate the threat posed by Séléka, even though this had been apparent for several months.

In CAR, army reform has been on the agenda since the 1996 mutiny.¹⁷ Although the government took some action and designed an SSR strategy in 2008 and 2009, the momentum was lost despite the organisation of several seminars on the issue and support from international partners.¹⁸ The decline of the army is due to the lack of resources; the way in which the government undermined the authority of military

the Muslims who had helped Bozizé take power in 2003 were marginalised. Crisis Group interview, Bangui, 23 April 2013.

¹⁰ Ibid.

¹¹ Crisis Group interviews, diplomats and economic operators, Bangui, 21 and 22 April 2013.

¹² Notably the posts of director of the treasury and director of customs. Crisis Group interview, former official at the finance ministry, Bangui, 21 April 2013.

¹³ Crisis Group interview, member of the Groupement interprofessionnel de Centrafrique, Bangui, 24 April 2013.

¹⁴ "François Bozizé: il suffirait d'un rien pour que la Centrafrique renaisse", *Jeune Afrique*, 29 January 2012; "Centrafrique: dissolution des conseils d'administration des entreprises publiques", *Jeune Afrique*, 9 February 2012.

¹⁵ Crisis Group interviews, member of the Groupement interprofessionnel de Centrafrique, Bangui, 24 April 2013; diplomat, Bangui, 22 April 2013.

¹⁶ Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, 10 May 2013.

¹⁷ "La réforme du secteur de sécurité en République centrafricaine", Group for Research and Information on Peace and Security (GRIP), May 2009. For more on the 1996 and 1997 mutinies, see Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, *Chronique de la crise centrafricaine 1996-1997, le syndrome Barracuda* (Paris, 1997), pp. 21-72.

¹⁸ There was no spending on SSR in either 2011 or 2012. Crisis Group interview, UN SSR expert, Bangui, 26 January 2013.

officers, which systematically short-circuited the army hierarchy; and the recruitment of personnel on the basis of ethnic criteria.¹⁹

Attacks on the towns of Sibut and Damaraby a dissident group of the Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP) in September 2012 were an early sign of troubles to come and the government established preliminary contact with the rebels.²⁰ Despite the growing threat, the government decided not to negotiate and chose the military option, believing itself to be strong when it was in fact weak. It had hastily organised a round of military recruitment in August 2012, which caused a riot in Bangui.²¹ It also acquired arms from abroad and contracted security services.²²

These last-minute initiatives could not compensate for years of neglect and the military was in no condition to face the threat. The government therefore outsourced security. The CAR army was unable to counter either the internal or external threat, as demonstrated by the proliferation of armed groups since 2005²³ and the long-standing or temporary intrusion of foreign armed groups: the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) since 2008, Sudanese poachers and armed Chadian groups, such as the Front uni pour le changement in 2006 and Baba Laddé's Front patriotique pour le rassemblement.

Many foreign armed forces used CAR territory for their own priorities. Uganda deployed troops in the south east, alongside U.S. forces, to fight Joseph Kony's LRA. Chadian and Sudanese soldiers in the tripartite force based at Birao ensured security in the north-eastern region of Vakaga. Finally, an African peacekeeping force, the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic (MICOPAX) has been present for a long time. Composed of contingents from ECCAS countries, it replaced the Multinational Force in Central Africa (FOMUC) in 2008. MICOPAX is supported by the French military mission called Boali.²⁴

President Bozizé always felt that a strong army would be a direct threat to his government. According to a source close to power, he refused to provide the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) with heavy military equipment for fear they would use

¹⁹ N'Diaye Boubacar, "Security Sector Reform in Central African Republic", in Hans Born and Albrecht Schnabel (dir.), *Security Sector Reform in Challenging Environments* (Münster, 2009), pp. 40-66.

²⁰ Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 26 January 2013. On 16 September 2012, the CPJP Fondamentale, a dissidence of the CPJP, attacked Sibut and Damara and announced it wanted to overthrow Bozizé's government to avenge the death of Charles Massi, former CPJP leader. "Les attaques de Damara and Sibut revendiquées par une branche de la CPJP", Radio Ndeke Luka, 17 September 2012.

²¹ Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 26 January 2013. "Contestation des résultats du recrutement dans les FACA", Radio Ndeke Luka, 2 August 2012.

²² From the end of 2012 to the start of 2013, a French private security company supplied security services, provided military training and repaired an attack helicopter. Crisis Group interview, member of the security services and former chief of staff, Bangui, 22 January 2013 and 24 April 2013, and Crisis Group telephone interview, security company manager, 6 May 2013. "Bozizé Jr en mission spéciale à Pretoria", *La Lettre du Continent*, no. 647, 22 November 2012. "Le repreneur d'ATE prend des risques en Centrafrique", *Intelligence Online*, no. 686, 10 April 2013.

²³ Including the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (APRD), the Front démocratique pour le peuple centrafricain (FDPC), then the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) in 2006 and the CPJP two years later.

²⁴ See "Military forces in the Central African Republic", interactive map, International Crisis Group, 8 February 2013, <http://crisisgroup.org/maps/central-african-republic-map/central-african-republic-map.html>.

it against him.²⁵ He reportedly told his son, then defence minister, “if you give them all the equipment they ask for, you can be sure they will organise a coup against me within four hours”.²⁶

Incapable of ensuring a minimum of security on national territory, the army was unable to defend the regime, which soon started losing control.²⁷

3. Constitutional revision and disunity in the presidential clan

Tribal-family control of key security and finance posts were both a strength and a weakness of the Bozizé system. Although this gave him a certain stability, the system fell apart as soon as family members started to argue among themselves. Ndoutingai’s arrest and hasty departure from the country revealed the hidden conflicts between the president and his “nephew”. Although it was common knowledge that Bozizé wanted to amend the constitution so that he could stand for reelection in 2016, Ndoutingai, his closest adviser, reportedly was not warm to the idea because of his own presidential ambitions.²⁸ Accused of plotting, he spent several months under house arrest in 2012 before being released, whereupon he left the country, following the example of one of his allies, the justice minister, Firmin Findiro.²⁹

After removing his chief adviser, François Bozizé, who was known for his openly solitary exercise of power,³⁰ chose to become more isolated than ever. After the December 2012 crisis, he no longer listened to the board, became increasingly paranoid,³¹ managed security issues directly with the help of a few loyal supporters, systematically short-circuited the military hierarchy and alienated his army by publicly describing it as incompetent.³²

²⁵ Crisis Group was able to confirm that the recently purchased arms were not delivered to the army. Crisis Group researchers saw 22 containers full of ammunition and weapons at the Bossembélé military camp in April 2013. Crisis Group interview, former chief of staff, Bangui, 24 April 2013.

²⁶ “Centrafrique: le Président Bozizé craint un coup d’Etat”, Afrik.com, 26 December 2012.

²⁷ “Give me Narkoyo and a bit of money and I could easily overthrow the government in Bangui”, a senior CAR leader ironically told Crisis Group to describe the government’s extreme fragility and vulnerability. Crisis Group interview, CAR minister, Bangui, 23 January 2013. Colonel Narkoyo was Seleka’s military spokesperson.

²⁸ Crisis Group interview, politician, Bangui, 15 December 2012.

²⁹ In June and July 2012, the president dismissed Sylvain Ndoutingai, finance minister and former mines minister, and Firmin Findiro, justice minister. These two, nicknamed “semi-gods” in Bangui, would not have agreed to a constitutional amendment to allow President Bozizé to stand for a third term as president. Following their dismissals, the two men went into exile in Europe and Burkina Faso respectively. Crisis Group telephone interview, Seleka member, 17 February 2013. Crisis Group interview, former politician, Bangui, 20 April 2013.

³⁰ “François Bozizé: ‘Il suffirait d’un rien pour que la Centrafrique renaisse’”, *op. cit.*

³¹ He accused one of his former associates of financing the Seleka. Crisis Group interviews, former adviser of President Bozizé, former chief of staff and diplomat, Bangui, 22 and 24 April 2013, and economic operator, Paris, 17 April 2013.

³² Crisis Group interview, former chief of staff, Bangui, 24 April 2013. During his address to the nation on 31 December 2012, François Bozizé openly criticised his army: “if it had been disciplined and fulfilled its mission correctly, we would not be in the situation we are in”. “RCA: François Bozizé fait le ménage dans la haute hiérarchie militaire”, RFI, 3 January 2013.

B. *Seleka as a Symptom*

1. From a coalition of armed groups to a consortium of malcontents

The new rebel coalition that overthrew the Bozizé government in March 2013 is a heterogeneous consortium of malcontents.³³ Its leaders, its armed groups and initial demands have long been a part of the CAR political and security landscape. When the movement started, the vast majority of Seleka members were from the north east of the country, a geographically remote and historically marginalised region where the state is almost absent.³⁴ The lack of governance in the regions of Vakaga and Haute Kotto led to structural insecurity. The north east of the CAR, which forms a “Darfurised” periphery where foreign rebels,³⁵ local armed groups and traffickers fighting for control of diamond-producing areas operate, has been the country’s main “grey zone” for several years.³⁶

Far from being a new rebellion, Seleka brought together elements that were dissatisfied with the regime.³⁷ The alliance is made up of dissident factions of armed groups from the north east such as the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) and the Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP) and has intermittent and limited support from other movements such as the Union des forces républicaines (UFR) and the Alliance pour la refondation (A2R).³⁸ Some of their demands related to promises that were not kept. The rebels accused the government of not respecting either the 2007 Birao Peace Agreement or the 2008 IPD recommendations. In particular, they denounced the failure to implement the DDR program for armed groups in the north east.³⁹ As they advanced towards the capital in December 2012, the rebels increased their demands, radicalised their discourse and called for the president’s departure.⁴⁰

However, this coalition of armed groups is an unlikely and heterogeneous alliance of convenience.⁴¹ The new brothers-in-arms of the UFDR and the CPJP have long

³³ See “Military forces in the Central African Republic”, interactive map, op. cit.

³⁴ See Crisis Group report, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, op. cit. This report details the “Darfurisation” of north-eastern CAR.

³⁵ In 2006, the Chadian rebel group, the Front unipour le changement (FUC) led by Mahamat Nour, used the Vakaga region as a base from which to launch an offensive against N’Djamena. Ibid.

³⁶ Gaïdz Minassian, *Zones grises, quand les Etats perdent le contrôle* (Paris, 2011).

³⁷ See Appendix B on the Seleka’s military command structure.

³⁸ Relations between the A2R and the Seleka fluctuated during the December 2012 crisis. The A2R, a new armed group that emerged during the crisis, initially announced its total support for the Seleka and then kept its distance.

³⁹ The UFDR and the CAR government signed the Birao Agreement on 13 April 2007. This provided for a cessation of hostilities, the cantonment of UFDR troops and their integration into the CAR army or civilian life. The comprehensive peace agreement in 2008 and the IPD recommendations made the same year both provided for a DDR program for UFDR combatants. See “Accord de paix de Birao entre le gouvernement centrafricain et l’UFDR”, article 2, Birao, 13 April 2007; “Accord de paix global”, article 4, Libreville, 21 June 2008; “Dialogue politique inclusif”, Commission sécurité et groupes armés, Bangui, 20 December 2008. See Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°69, *Central African Republic: Keeping the Dialogue Alive*, 12 January 2010.

⁴⁰ “Centrafrique: Bozizé doit partir, affirme la rébellion qui veut prendre Damara”, Agence France-presse, 31 December 2012.

⁴¹ A first coalition was negotiated between the UFDR, the FDPC, the Front pour le salut de la République and the Collectif des officiers libres in March 2012 in Niger, but it did not hold. Protocole d’entente, d’assistance et de défense mutuelle conclu entre le Front uni pour la renaissance de la Centrafrique et le Front pour le salut de la République, Niamey, 15 March 2012.

been enemies, reflecting the ethnic tension between the Gulas and the Rungas over the control of land and natural resources. At the beginning of the rebellion, most combatants and military commanders were members of or loyal to the UFDR. The current president of the transition, Michel Djotodia, succeeded in uniting around his leadership many combatants that form the basis of the coalition army.

The other components of Seleka were led by professional rebels from the north east. Nouredine Adam and Moussa Dhaffane, respectively leaders of the CPJP dissidence and the Convention patriotique du salut du Kodro (CPSK), were former CPJP combatants who opposed their movement's support for the August 2012 Global Peace Agreement signed in Libreville.⁴² Accusing CPJP President Abdoulaye Hissene of selling out in exchange for personal wealth, they refused any compromise with the government and continued the armed struggle.

Many of the former "liberators" who brought Bozizé to power in 2003 swelled the ranks of the rebellion, including members of the presidential guard who openly declared they were changing sides: "Bozizé promised to pay us but never kept his word so we have turned against him".⁴³ In addition to the combatants who were originally from the north east, many Sudanese, mainly from Darfur,⁴⁴ and Chadians joined Seleka in the hope of benefiting from the financial gains of the rebellion.⁴⁵ The movement gathered support as it advanced on Bangui. Its ranks filled with people from the centre of the country and were further swelled by the massive recruitment of young people in the capital.⁴⁶ Enlistment was not restricted to adults and many minors joined the movement, as reported by several witnesses and as demonstrated in the clashes with the South African army.⁴⁷

2. Time for revenge

In addition to this fighting force, Seleka's members and supporters include dissatisfied economic actors, the diamond collectors. Operation Closing Gate, launched by the government in 2008, was a veritable "state hold-up",⁴⁸ which had a major impact on the sector. One of the demands put forward by Seleka and some rebel commanders was for the "unconditional return of diamonds, gold, cash and other goods taken

⁴² Nouredine Adam and Moussa Dhaffane both fought under Charles Massi, former CPJP leader. After the latter's arrest, Dhaffane was imprisoned in Chad then kept under house arrest in N'Djamena. In June 2012, he founded a new movement, the CPSK. Released in the middle of the crisis by the Chadian government, Dhaffane returned to the CAR where he joined other Seleka members. Crisis Group telephone interview, Seleka leader, 15 February 2013.

⁴³ Crisis Group interview, Seleka military commander, Bossembélé, 11 April 2013. This commander said that 60 men left the presidential guard on 25 August 2012 to oppose the president. He led the Seleka's first attacks under the flag of the CPJP Fondamentale in September 2012 at Sibut and Damarara. He later went to the north where he attacked Kobo on 19 December 2012 with the help of about 50 poachers. Crisis Group interview, humanitarian actor, Bangui, 12 April 2013.

⁴⁴ Crisis Group interview, CPJP member, Bangui, 22 April 2013

⁴⁵ Crisis Group interview, humanitarian actor, Bangui, 26 January 2013.

⁴⁶ "We know that recruitment is still going on in the Seleka that is not right and we are going to stop that". Crisis Group interview, Nouredine Adam, Seleka vice president and minister of public security, immigration-emigration and public order, Bangui, 6 April 2013.

⁴⁷ Crisis Group interview, teacher, Bria, 25 January 2013. "Groupes rebelles et milices pro-gouvernementales recrutent des enfants", RFI, 7 January 2013. "We were killing kids", *Sunday Times*, 30 March 2013. "Child soldiers patrol CAR capital", *News 24*, 20 April 2013; "UN: CAR groups still recruiting child soldiers", *Voice of America*, 12 April 2013.

⁴⁸ Crisis Group interview, diamond operator, Bangui, 19 April 2013. See Crisis Group Africa Report N°167, *Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in Central African Republic*, 16 December 2010.

by the government in 2008”.⁴⁹ According to a Seleka leader, “the entire diamond sector” helped to finance the movement. Meanwhile, a former minister of Bozizé did not hesitate to call Seleka’s takeover as a “coup by diamond operators”.⁵⁰

This crisis is the result of personal ambition and political exclusion. Michel Djotodia, Seleka’s main leader during the crisis, was an official in the planning ministry and foreign ministry under Patassé and Bozizé. Bozizé later appointed him consul in Nyala, the capital of South Darfur. Disputes with the government hindered Michel Djotodia’s career: he was abandoned by President Bozizé and imprisoned in Benin where he had sought refuge.⁵¹ Djotodia is not the only Seleka leader to have been sidelined by the Bozizé government. According to accounts from several members of the rebellion, the former justice minister, Firmin Findiro, played a role in the political wing of the rebellion.⁵² As is often the case in CAR, the armed struggle was conducted by disgraced former politicians looking for vengeance and a return to political power.⁵³ Seleka is therefore a heterogeneous coalition of Central African and foreign combatants who have nothing in common except being Muslims.

C. *Chad’s Invisible Hand and Disaffection in the Region*

1. Regional isolation

Chad’s influence in the coup

Bozizé’s fall was also due to a loss of regional support. He came to power in a coup orchestrated from Chad in 2003⁵⁴ and was viewed sympathetically by his peers in the region who were exasperated at the bankruptcy of Ange-Félix Patassé’s 1993-2003 government. This support gradually dissipated to the point that some observers feel that Chad was responsible for the Seleka’s increasing power.

Ironically, as in 2003, the 2013 rebellion was instigated by malcontents outside the country and, according to Bozizé, enjoyed the support and assistance of foreign sponsors. “We annihilated the Seleka forces on Saturday 23 (March) but we are able to say that overnight from Saturday 23 to 24 the rebels received support from an African country, which I think inevitably has to be Chad”.⁵⁵ Distrustful of Chad, President Bozizé insisted that the January 2013 negotiations should take place in Libreville and not in N’Djamena.⁵⁶

⁴⁹ “Déclaration de la Seleka CPSK-CPJP-UFDR relative à la situation politico-sécuritaire en vue d’une sortie de crise”, Seleka, 12 December 2012. Crisis Group interview, Seleka leader, Bria, 25 January 2013.

⁵⁰ Crisis Group interviews, Seleka leader and former minister, Bangui, 12 and 20 April 2013.

⁵¹ At the request of President Bozizé, Michel Djotodia and Abakar Sabone, the two founders of the UFDR, were arrested in Benin, in November 2006. The Benin authorities said the two men were imprisoned for making “statements on Benin territory seeking to destabilise the government of a friendly country”. They were released in February 2008. “Bozizé veut libérer ses deux opposants détenus au Bénin”, *L’Express*, 22 October 2007.

⁵² Djotodia was alleged to have drafted a decree appointing Findiro as the director of his cabinet but abandoned this initiative under pressure from CAR’s international partners. Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 5 April 2013. Sylvain Ndoutingai denies any links with the Seleka. “Ndoutingai se rebiffe”, *Jeune Afrique*, 7 April 2013. Findiro has never publicly stated he has links with the Seleka.

⁵³ Crisis Group Report, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, op. cit.

⁵⁴ Ibid.

⁵⁵ “Bozizé accuse le Tchad d’avoir soutenu la rébellion”, Agence France-presse, 2 April 2013.

⁵⁶ Crisis Group telephone interview, journalist in Chad, 13 February 2013.

Chad's position in this conflict is at the very least ambiguous. Chadian President Déby had been showing signs of irritation with his Central African counterpart for several months. He criticised him for not initiating a dialogue with the opposition and the armed movements despite his promise to do so and for not doing anything to end the chronic instability that prevailed in northern CAR.⁵⁷ N'Djamena feared that the instability would spill over into southern Chad, an oil-producing area traditionally opposed to Déby's government.⁵⁸ Moreover, repeated incidents with Chadian traders in Bangui did not go unnoticed in Chadian government circles, with which the traders had contacts.⁵⁹ Finally, at the end of 2012, Déby reportedly warned the French president of the risk of problems in CAR.⁶⁰

In the light of the strained relations between Bozizé and Déby, the withdrawal of Chadian members of Bozizé's presidential guard and N'Djamena's decision to release the Seleka members under house arrest in the Chadian capital corroborated the claims made in some quarters that Déby's entourage had established preliminary contacts with the rebels.⁶¹ It seemed that after giving an amber light to the rebels in December 2012, Déby reportedly gave a green light in March 2013⁶² – although Chadian authorities formally deny this.⁶³

In addition to N'Djamena, CAR also lost the support of other neighbours. Relations with Gabon deteriorated over Jean Ping's candidacy for a new term as chair of the African Union commission; relations with Equatorial Guinea and Congo-Brazzaville deteriorated after Ange-Félix Patassé's death; and relations with Cameroon were affected by the Ntsimi case.⁶⁴

⁵⁷ On 5 May 2012, while on an official visit to Bangui, Idriss Déby recommended a dialogue between the government, the opposition and the armed movements. Ten days later, Bozizé convened CAR politicians to announce a political dialogue that never took place.

⁵⁸ See Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°65, *Chad: Escaping from the Oil Trap*, 26 August 2009.

⁵⁹ The dominance of Chadian traders in Bangui, particularly at the PK5 market, had attracted criticism for years and sparked regular violent incidents. In 2011, following the discovery of the dead bodies of two children, Chadian traders were suspected of their murder and targeted by some sectors of the population, leading to violent incidents in which eleven people were killed and many more injured. In 2012, the police clashed with Chadian traders on three occasions in Bangui. "Des violences inter-confessionnelles font une dizaine de morts à Bangui", *France 24*, 3 June 2011; Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bangui, 25 January 2013.

⁶⁰ "France – Tchad: ce que Hollande et Déby se sont dit à Paris", *Jeune Afrique*, 12 December 2012.

⁶¹ In an interview, Bozizé said he had to dismiss Chadians from the presidential guard because of repeated incidents with CAR nationals. "François Bozizé: c'est une guerre pour le pétrole", *Jeune Afrique*, 24 March 2013. Crisis Group television interviews, Seleka members, 15 February 2013. "Centrafrique: les secrets de la Seleka", *AfrikArabia*, 14 February 2013.

⁶² Crisis Group telephone interview, SELEKA member, 27 March 2013.

⁶³ "Hassan Sylla: il n'y a pas eu de forces spéciales tchadiennes en RCA", *RFI*, 8 April 2013. The Chadian ambassador to CAR also rejected Bozizé's allegations about his country's role in the coup and denounced what he described as the former president's bad strategy of using religion to divide Central Africans. Crisis Group interview, Chadian ambassador to CAR, Bangui, 23 April 2013.

⁶⁴ CAR supported the South African candidate Ndlamini Zuma against Jean Ping. The Equatorian and Congolese presidents asked Bozizé to let Patassé travel abroad to get health care. On 21 March 2012, the Cameroonian Antoine Ntsimi, president of the CEMAC Commission based in Bangui, did not receive authorisation to enter CAR territory. Head of the commission since 2007, Ntsimi wanted to stand for re-election at a time when Bangui wanted a CAR national to be appointed to the presidency of the commission on the basis of the "principle of alphabetical rotation of offices in the different regional institutions" adopted at the CEMAC heads of state summit in January 2010. Bozizé's decision to bar Ntsimi at Bangui airport severely annoyed the Cameroonian authorities and the CEMAC president, Sassou Nguesso, who criticised Bozizé for not having warned him of the problem.

Incapable of ensuring security and confronted by military threats, the Bozizé government followed the example of his predecessor and tried to break its isolation by obtaining external support.⁶⁵ In a panic, Bozizé launched requests in all directions in December 2012.⁶⁶ The few Western powers with official representation in Bangui chose not to reply. Following the attack on the French embassy on 26 December by pro-Bozizé demonstrators led by young members of his party, the Kwa na Kwa (KNK),⁶⁷ France strengthened its local military capability, but President Hollande emphasised his policy of vigilant neutrality and declared that French troops were there “to protect French citizens and not to defend the regime”.⁶⁸

South Africa enters the Central African trap

Bozizé’s appeals for assistance only found a favourable response in Pretoria. South Africa tried to take responsibility for security in the CAR, a role previously assumed by France. Within the framework of the 2007 bilateral military cooperation agreement, 400 South African soldiers were deployed to Bangui to support the regime.⁶⁹ The agreement was renewed for five years and the South African defence minister made a short visit to Bangui.⁷⁰ South Africa’s reasons for acting so quickly outside its normal zone of intervention – the Southern African Development Community, (SADC) and the Great Lakes region – without consulting ECCAS⁷¹ remain unclear.⁷²

In January 2013, the South African military deployment provoked discontent among the rebels and discrete criticism from within ECCAS. The deaths of thirteen soldiers in clashes with the rebels when Bangui was taken caused considerable con-

“CEMAC - affaire Ntsimi: le grand déballage”, *Jeune Afrique*, 10 April 2012; Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 26 January 2013.

⁶⁵ At the time of the 1996-1997 mutinies, President Patassé received assistance from the French army; at the time of the attempted coup in 2001, he called on Libya to help him; and during the 2003 coup, Congolese troops of the Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC), led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, came to his rescue.

⁶⁶ Bozizé contacted Nigeria, Uganda, Angola and South Africa. Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 26 January 2013.

⁶⁷ Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 21 January 2013.

⁶⁸ “La France refuse d’intervenir en Centrafrique”, *Le Monde*, 28 December 2012.

⁶⁹ Very (too) symbolically, the South African contingent was housed at the National Police School, near the headquarters of Bozizé’s party, the KNK.

⁷⁰ “South Africa is concerned about the situation in Central African Republic”, press release, international relations and cooperation minister, Pretoria, 2 January 2013.

⁷¹ Interviewed by Crisis Group, a senior MICOPAX officer said he “did not know what the South Africa army was doing in CAR and had no contact with it”. Crisis Group interview, MICOPAX officer, Bangui, 28 January 2013.

⁷² In response to questions internally and externally, the South African authorities used several arguments to justify their military intervention: observance of the 2007 military cooperation agreement, strengthening the capacities of the CAR army and assistance for DDR and regional stability. The South African cooperation and international relations minister said that the intervention was meant to show that Africa could solve its own problems without external help. The fact that the CAR is not an important economic partner of South Africa and that it does not belong to SADC provoked heated questions about the reasons for this intervention, while some South African parliamentarians expressed concern about its cost. “Cost of sending soldiers to Central African Republic ‘more than R1bn’”, *BDFive*, 11 February 2013; “President Jacob Zuma employs South African National Defence Force personnel for service in Central African Republic”, press release, South African presidency, 6 January 2013.

troversy in South Africa, where public opinion questioned the reasons for military intervention.⁷³

2. ECCAS: A fragile security net

The region's disaffection towards the Bozizé government is also shown by the attitude of ECCAS, which was heavily involved at first but disengaged between December 2012 and March 2013.

The CAR government has always enjoyed some measure of foreign assistance to maintain security.⁷⁴ The French army acted against the UFDR in 2007 and the Chadian army acted against the CPJP in 2010 and against the FPR in 2012. Now it was ECCAS's turn to come to the aid of François Bozizé. The regional organisation had already responded to crises in CAR in the past, but had never played such a prominent political and military role as it did in December 2012.⁷⁵ At that moment, ECCAS quickly took responsibility for the political management of the crisis and masterminded the 11 January 2013 Libreville Agreement, almost appearing to place the CAR "under its supervision".⁷⁶ In December 2012, ECCAS heads of state held an emergency summit meeting in N'Djamena and recommended the immediate cessation of hostilities, the withdrawal of the rebels from occupied towns and the immediate dispatch of a MICOPAX peacekeeping mission. In Libreville, at the beginning of January, Presidents Déby and Sassou Nguesso imposed a compromise on CAR actors and appeared to be the masterminds of the crisis management.⁷⁷

Under pressure from neighbouring countries and after a visit from the African Union chairperson, Bozizé had already announced that he would not amend the constitution to stand for a third term in office and that he was ready to form a government of national unity.⁷⁸ The Libreville meeting forced him to go one step further and agree to hold legislative elections within one year. The Seleka did not obtain the president's removal from office, nor did it win the office of prime minister that it coveted. The new prime minister was a member of the democratic opposition, considered to be the major winner at Libreville 2.⁷⁹

With regard to the military situation, the Chadian intervention, followed by the MICOPAX deployment to Damara, the last strategic town on the way to Bangui, con-

⁷³ Helmoed Heitman, *The Battle in Bangui, the Untold Inside Story* (Johannesburg, 2013). "Central African Republic: is this what our soldiers died for?", *Mail & Guardian*, 28 March 2013; "Zuma on CAR: Decision not SA's", *News 24*, 2 April 2013.

⁷⁴ See Section II.A.2 of this report.

⁷⁵ When the comprehensive peace agreement was signed in Libreville in 2008, the region's states were already strongly involved. At that time, Omar Bongo, president of the CEMAC ad hoc committee on Central African questions, had played an important mediation role in bringing the CAR government and representatives of the political-military groups (APRD, UFDR and the FDPC) to the negotiating table. Abdoulaye Miskine, head of the FDPC, finally signed the agreement one year later in July 2009.

⁷⁶ Crisis Group interview, CAR politician, Bangui, 22 January 2013.

⁷⁷ Crisis Group interview, CAR politician, Bangui, 26 January 2013.

⁷⁸ Benin President and AU Chairperson Thomas Boni Yayi made a short visit to Bangui on 30 December 2012 and, on leaving the meeting, Bozizé announced for the first time that he was ready to go to Libreville and that he would not stand for re-election in 2016. "Central African Republic crisis: Bozizé promises coalition", BBC, 30 December 2012.

⁷⁹ In the interests of clarity, Libreville 2 refers to the 11 January 2013 agreement and Libreville 1 refers to the 2008 agreement.

tained the rebel advance and avoided bloody clashes in the CAR capital as happened in 1996, 1997, 2001 and 2003.⁸⁰

ECCAS heads of state also became the arbiters of the transition. The Libreville 2 Agreement established a ceasefire monitoring commission and a separate commission to monitor the political agreement chaired by the president of Congo-Brazzaville, Sassou Nguesso. It also gave an important role to MICOPAX, broadening its mandate and increasing its numbers.⁸¹ The mission was tasked with helping to reestablish security in the country, support implementation of DDR, guarantee the security of the transition's political leaders, support humanitarian organisations and protect the civilian population in the event of imminent violence.⁸² In addition, in order to promote a successful transition, Sassou Nguesso appointed the Congolese general Léonard Essongo as his "special representative", to act both as a communication channel with ECCAS presidents and a mediator in Bangui.⁸³

ECCAS, in particular Chad and Congo-Brazzaville, were the mediators of the CAR crisis at the time of the Seleka's initial advance in December 2012, but they seem to have renounced this role when the Seleka advanced a second time. Although all parties considered that ECCAS was the natural choice to manage the CAR crisis, it was slow to ensure the monitoring of Libreville 2: General Essongo only arrived in Bangui in March 2013, the monitoring committees never met and President Sassou Nguesso put off going to Bangui although he knew the situation was deteriorating.⁸⁴ Moreover, like France, Chad critically reduced its military presence after the signature of Libreville 2 and following its involvement in Mali. The lack of monitoring provoked concerns at the African Union and in Paris,⁸⁵ and became clear on 23 March 2013 when the MICOPAX did not react to the Seleka offensive against Bangui.⁸⁶

⁸⁰ Following Bozizé's repeated demands, N'Djamena sent troops to Sibut to stop the Seleka's advance. In accordance with the decisions taken at the extraordinary summit in N'Djamena on 21 December, a MICOPAX peacekeeping force joined Chadian forces a few days later. In order to block access to Bangui, MICOPAX soldiers were transferred from Sibut and stationed at Damara, 75km from Bangui. "Communiqué final du Sommet extraordinaire des chefs d'Etat de la ECCAS sur la situation sécuritaire en République centrafricaine", ECCAS, N'Djamena, 21 December 2012.

⁸¹ The MICOPAX force was reinforced following the crisis and includes police units, military units and observers. "Décision portant mandat de suivi de l'application du cessez-le-feu et des décisions de l'accord politique de Libreville par la mission du conseil de paix et de sécurité de l'Afrique centrale en République centrafricaine", Article 3, 11 January 2013.

⁸² Ibid, Article 7 and 8.

⁸³ Decree 2013-31 of 1 February 2013 on the appointment of Léonard Essongo as special representative of the president of the Republic of Congo, chair of the monitoring committee on the crisis in CAR, *Official Gazette*, Republic of Congo.

⁸⁴ He had indicated his wish to go to Bangui at the February 2013 Malabo summit. Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 23 April 2013.

⁸⁵ In a press release, the AU chairperson, Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, called on ECCAS states to continue to help resolve the CAR crisis and to quickly put in place a committee to monitor implementation of the Libreville Agreement. See "L'Union Africaine souligne la nécessité d'efforts accrus pour la mise en œuvre des accords de Libreville", press release, African Union, Addis-Ababa, 2 March 2013. Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Paris, 15 March 2013.

⁸⁶ MICOPAX's non-intervention contrasts with the speech made by the mission's commander in January 2013: "We will interpret any rebel attack on Damara as a declaration of war and that will mean they have decided to take on the ten states of Central Africa". See "La Force multinationale sécurise Damara, dernier rempart contre les rebelles", France 24, 3 January 2013.

III. From Libreville to N'Djamena: From One Transition to Another

The transition scenario defined by Libreville 2 has got out of control but remains in play. Although the Seleka seized power, it nevertheless stated, in response to international pressure, that it wanted to observe Libreville 2 and implement the transition without Bozizé. However, the example of the preceding transition (2003-2005) does not encourage optimism⁸⁷ and the new government still seems to be unstable.⁸⁸

A. *The failure of Libreville 2*

1. Another transition ten years later

Organised under the aegis of ECCAS in January 2013, within four days the Libreville negotiations produced a political agreement, a ceasefire agreement, a declaration of principles signed by the various actors as well as a decision to entrust MICOPAX with monitoring the ceasefire and the political agreement. Arriving at Libreville with completely antagonistic positions, the Seleka, the “non-combatant” political-military movements,⁸⁹ the presidential majority and the democratic opposition finally accepted a power-sharing agreement imposed by ECCAS.

Although the agreement to end the crisis maintained Bozizé in office until the next presidential elections in 2016, it prevented him from standing for a third term in office, which would have required an amendment to the constitution.⁹⁰ Neither were the members of the new government of national unity led by Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye⁹¹ allowed to contest the election.⁹² This explains the absence from the gov-

⁸⁷ The preceding transition followed François Bozizé's coup against President Patassé. Nicolas Tiangaye was appointed president of the National Transition Council. There are several differences between the two transitions. In 2003, there were two major objectives: the organisation of elections in 2005 and of a national dialogue. Today, the objectives are more numerous and are security, political, economic and social in nature. Finally, unlike in 2003, the new transition is based on an agreement concluded under the aegis of ECCAS.

⁸⁸ Political transitions are moments of power sharing imposed by exceptional and usually violent circumstances. Consequently, they are periods in which the political battle continues in a peaceful way and under international surveillance while elections are organised with a view to a return to constitutional normality. See “Not always in the people's interest: power sharing arrangements in Africa peace agreements”, German Institute of Global and Area Studies, no. 83, July 2008; also see Crisis Group Africa Reports N°176, *A Critical Period for Ensuring Stability in Côte d'Ivoire*, 1 August 2011 and N°58, *Guinea: The Transition Has Only Just Begun*, 5 March 2009.

⁸⁹ Expression used in Libreville to describe the armed groups that had already signed an agreement with the government and ended the armed struggle.

⁹⁰ Article 24 of the Constitution provides that the presidential mandate shall be “renewable once only” and Article 108 on the conditions for amending the constitution excludes any amendment pertaining to the number or length of presidential mandates. In theory, it was not possible to amend the constitution to allow a third term in office but, in practice, it would have been possible to organise a referendum to do so.

⁹¹ Following Bozizé's take-over in 2003, Nicolas Tiangaye became president of the National Transition Council. A lawyer, he defended Bokassa and Bozizé. President of the Convention républicaine pour le progrès social (CRPS), he was also coordinator of the Front pour l'annulation et la reprise des élections de 2011 (FARE-2011).

⁹² In 2003, Bozizé, then-president of the transition, announced that he would withdraw after the transition. He reneged on his commitment, stood for president in 2005 and 2011 and was elected. Crisis Group Report, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, op. cit.

ernment of leading opposition figures, such as Martin Ziguélé and Jean-Jacques Démafourth, who want to contest the 2016 presidential election.⁹³ The provisions of the agreement, which were also adopted in April at N'Djamena as part of the arrangements for the new transition, were designed to promote a more peaceful working climate within a pluralist government.

Despite being dominated by the KNK, the National Assembly was maintained but neutralised until the next legislative elections, which were scheduled for the beginning of 2014.⁹⁴ In order to avoid government paralysis, it was decided that the assembly should pass the most urgent government bills, namely a review of the electoral code, the Finance Act and reorganisation of the armed forces.⁹⁵ Libreville 2 also defined the agenda of the transition government, including DDR, SSR, reform of the judiciary and the local government and undefined “economic and social reforms”.⁹⁶

2. Impossible coexistence

The consent given by the Bozizé clan and the Seleka to the Libreville 2 Agreement was only a façade. It was not long before each side showed their real intentions and tension increased.

Seleka's dissatisfaction became apparent immediately after the signature of the agreement. Nouredine Adam, one of the coalition leaders, denounced the agreement. Despite the ceasefire, his men allegedly committed crimes in several towns throughout January, prompting the AU to react.⁹⁷

Seleka combatants threatened to take up their arms again and march on Bangui. They made it clear they were in conflict with the leadership of the organisation. The soldiers took Seleka ministers as “hostages” during a mission to Sibut.⁹⁸ According to Colonel Narkoyo, spokesperson for the Seleka military, “they [the Seleka ministers] have lost their voice. They are in the government, they have been working but nothing has changed. It is people at the grassroots who decide, it is General Issa [Issaka], the chief of staff, who is the leader”.⁹⁹ They demanded integration into the army and the release of political prisoners.

⁹³ Former prime minister under Patassé from 2001 to 2003, Martin Ziguélé went into exile in France when Bozizé took power in 2003. A losing candidate at the 2005 and 2011 presidential elections, he is now president of the Parti du Mouvement de libération du peuple centrafricain (MLPC). Former defence minister under Patassé from 1999 to 2001, Jean-Jacques Démafourth led the rebellion of the APRD, dissolved in 2012. Crisis Group interview, politician, Bangui, 19 January 2012.

⁹⁴ The president's party had 78 seats out of a total of 104.

⁹⁵ “Accord politique de Libreville sur la résolution de la crise politico-sécuritaire en République Centrafricaine”, Article 7, 11 January 2013.

⁹⁶ *Ibid*, Article 5.

⁹⁷ In January and February 2013, according to a Seleka leader, elements of the rebel coalition led by Nouredine Adam were accused of committing atrocities in the towns of Kembe, Mobaye, Alindao, Bangassou, Sido, Kabo and Kaga Bandoro. Crisis Group telephone interview, Seleka leader, 3 March 2013. “Centrafrique: l'attaque de Bangassou attribuée au CPJP fondamentale, une faction de Seleka”, Xinhua, 13 March 2013; “Sido: l'attaque de la Seleka a fait des déplacés”, Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme en RCA (www.rjh-rca.net), 2 March 2013. Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian actor, 13 February 2013. See “L'Union Africaine souligne la nécessité d'efforts accrus pour la mise en œuvre des accords de Libreville”, press release, African Union, Addis Ababa, 2 March 2013.

⁹⁸ “Cinq ministres issus des rangs de la coalition Seleka retenus à Sibut”, RFI, 17 March 2013. According to a member of the delegation that went to Sibut, the “hostage taking” was not as serious an incident as it appeared. Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 20 April 2013.

⁹⁹ “La rébellion dit reprendre les armes”, AFP, 20 March 2013.

The presidential clan rearmed, repeatedly provoked its opponents and saw the transition as a “permanent power struggle”.¹⁰⁰ On 15 March 2013, Bozizé held a rally in Bangui Stadium to celebrate the tenth anniversary of his time in power and told the international press “I am still the boss”.¹⁰¹ Contrary to the commitments he made at Libreville, Bozizé said that his opponents would have to beat him at the ballot box in 2016 before he would leave power, in effect announcing he would be a candidate at the next elections. He also called on young people to take responsibility and oppose the Seleka.¹⁰² Besides buying arms, he asked Nigeria to send troops¹⁰³ and invited companies interested in the country’s national resources to come to Bangui to investigate the opportunities for exploration projects.¹⁰⁴ In addition, he imposed a government with a dual command structure.

While the prime minister wanted to prioritise the criterion of competence¹⁰⁵ and form a government of technocrats restricted to only 24 or 25 ministers, the government of national unity appointed by decree on 3 February 2013 had 33 members and reflected the Bozizé clan’s continuing control over government. Although the Seleka was given the defence ministry and four other portfolios, the president succeeded in holding onto most of the key ministries, including justice (Jacques Mbosso), foreign affairs, African integration and Francophonie (Colonel Anicet Parfait Mbaye) and security, immigration and public order. Moreover, the mines ministry was split in two: “geology, research and hydraulics” on one hand and “mining and energy project development” that was put under the KNK’s control. President Bozizé was careful to position his closest associates in strategic portfolios as deputy ministers.¹⁰⁶

In addition, in March, prisoners taken during the crisis were still incarcerated at several detention centres, including the Bossembélé military camp, which had been converted into a prison and was commonly called “Guantanamo”.¹⁰⁷ The incidents that had marked the new government’s first month in office convinced many people that it would be impossible for the parties to coexist peacefully in this transition.¹⁰⁸

¹⁰⁰ This expression has often been used by interlocutors to describe the situation of the government of transition. Crisis Group interviews, CAR politicians, UN and AU officials, Bangui, 25 and 26 January 2013. For more on rearmament, see Section II.A.2 of this report.

¹⁰¹ “François Bozizé: c’est une guerre pour le pétrole”, *Jeune Afrique*, 24 March 2013.

¹⁰² “Bozizé invite la jeunesse de la RCA à la prise de responsabilité face à Seleka”, Radio Ndeke Luka, 16 March 2013.

¹⁰³ “CAR: The AU, Nigeria and the unspoken issue”, *The Guardian Nigeria*, 11 May 2013.

¹⁰⁴ At least two oil companies sent representatives to Bangui between January and 23 March 2013. Crisis Group interview, economic operator, Bangui, 20 April 2013.

¹⁰⁵ Crisis Group interview, prime minister, CAR, 22 January 2013; “Conférence de presse à la Primature”, prime minister, Bangui, 25 January 2013.

¹⁰⁶ Antoine Gambi, former foreign minister, was appointed deputy to Michel Djotodia at the defence ministry and Dieudonné Tokofeïssé, former director of Albert Besse’s cabinet, was appointed deputy to Tiangaye at the finance ministry.

¹⁰⁷ A prisoner said that they thought they would be released quickly when they heard that the Libreville Agreement provided for the release of political prisoners. It was only when their jailers fled during the Seleka’s final offensive that they were able to recover their freedom. Crisis Group interview, former prisoner at Bossembélé, Bangui, 21 April 2013.

¹⁰⁸ The new communications minister and Seleka member tried to stop pro-president radio broadcasts. “Centrafrique: bras de fer entre la radio publique et son ministre de tutelle”, Afrik.com, 26 February 2013. “Bozizé-Tiangaye en chiens de faïence”, *Jeune Afrique*, 20 January 2013; “Nicolas Tiangaye sur RFI: c’est l’entêtement de Bozizé qui a conduit à cette situation”, RFI, 28 March 2013.

B. *The Transition: Same Old Story*

1. The N'Djamena summits: The usual compromise

After Libreville 2, the Seleka took power by force, leading to the suspension of the CAR by the African Union. A new government was formed but the state was paralysed. To break the deadlock, two summits were organised in the Chadian capital on 3 and 18 April, where participants opted for the usual compromise: de facto recognition of the new government within the framework of a transition supervised by the international community.¹⁰⁹

The first summit witnessed disagreement between supporters of a hard line against the Seleka (the AU, South Africa's President Jacob Zuma and Benin's President Boni Yayi) on one side and ECCAS countries, supported by the Organisation internationale de la Francophonie (OIF) and the EU, which advocated a pragmatic approach, fearing that ousting the Seleka leader would lead to deadlock and violence. While the AU took its decisions in accordance with its principles, and after the usual round of condemnation,¹¹⁰ the meeting led to a compromise. It was decided that an "updated" Libreville 2 Agreement would remain the general framework for the transition. The transitional period was changed from three years to eighteen months; a National Transition Council replaced the National Assembly as the body responsible for legislating and drafting a new constitution (a formula already used between 2003 and 2005); and a transitional constitutional court should be created to ensure the constitutionality of legislation, resolve future electoral disputes and announce the results of the next elections.¹¹¹

N'Djamena 2 validated the usual formula for ending crises provoked by coups: the new government was not called into question but limited to a brief period in office and subjected to international supervision. Michel Djotodia, who had proclaimed himself president, dissolved the assembly and planned to govern by decree, had to make concessions, accept an assembly (the CNT) and prohibition from contesting the next

¹⁰⁹ This report refers to these two meetings as N'Djamena 1 and 2. International organisations always condemn unconstitutional changes of government in Africa, but very rarely try to restore constitutional order by force. The international community recognises the de facto leaders but insists on supervising the new government, which is supposed to be only an interlude leading to the restoration of democracy via elections. This kind of political transition took place in the DRC, Guinea, Niger, Mauritania, etc.

¹¹⁰ The UN, AU, U.S., EU, France and the OIF condemned the coup and the atrocities committed against the civilian population. The AU was the only organisation to apply severe measures, including sanctions (travel restrictions and asset freezes) against the Seleka's leaders (Michel Djotodia, Mouhamed Moussa Dhaffane, Christophe Gazam Betty, Amal Amias Aroune, André Ringui le Gaillard, Noureddine Adam, Eric N. Massi). See "363rd Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the Situation in Central African Republic (CAR)", press release, AU, 25 March 2013. The AU accused the rebels of "violating the Constitutive Act of the AU, the Lomé Declaration on unconstitutional changes of government, the African Charter on Democracy, Elections and Governance, and decisions of the Union's Council and Conference". The OIF momentarily suspended the CAR while awaiting visible progress in installing a transitional government. "Résolution sur la République centrafricaine du Conseil permanent de la Francophonie", OIF, 8 April 2013. Although the UN Security Council abstained from taking coercive measures, it warned the perpetrators of crimes that "those responsible for violations and abuses of international humanitarian and human rights law ... must be held accountable". See "Security Council Press Statement on Central African Republic", 25 March 2013.

¹¹¹ "Déclaration de N'Djamena: quatrième sommet extraordinaire des chefs d'Etat et de gouvernement de la communauté des Etats de l'Afrique centrale", ECCAS, 18 April 2013.

elections. He was elected president of the transition on 13 April 2013 by acclamation at the CNT's first session.¹¹²

The prime minister's role has been strengthened, his irrevocability confirmed and he seems to be the international community's main interlocutor.¹¹³ After leaving N'Djamena, Nicolas Tiangaye went to Paris, Brussels, Brazzaville and Pretoria in order to raise funds, break the CAR's diplomatic isolation and reconcile with South Africa.¹¹⁴ Meanwhile, Michel Djotodia visited several of the region's heads of state in May 2013, reaffirming his status as the CAR's new strongman.¹¹⁵ During the eighteen-month transition, Michel Djotodia and Nicolas Tiangaye will jointly rule the country.

In order to facilitate political, financial and security support for the CAR, the country's partners have reactivated bodies to accompany the transition, a contact group responsible for mobilising funds has been created¹¹⁶ and MICOPAX forces will be increased from 500 to 2,000. At the International Contact Group on CAR's inaugural meeting on 2-3 May in Brazzaville, ECCAS member states reiterated this commitment and said they wanted to reach the objective of 2,000 men by the end of May.

The 18 April N'Djamena declaration allowed ECCAS states to officially recognise the new government in Bangui, but there are still holes in the agreement. The most urgent problem is the security situation and although MICOPAX is deploying reinforcements (several hundred combatants have already been deployed in Bangui), the initial objective of 2,000 men will be impossible to achieve. The announcement was more a declaration of intent rather than a carefully thought decision. The financial and logistical organisation (contacts with countries contributing troops, the search for more funds, etc.) only began after the decision was taken.¹¹⁷ Moreover, the Chadian president now seems to be the main person managing the crisis but the ambiguity of his relations with the Seleka and the mistrust shown by sectors of the CAR population towards their northern neighbour could compromise his role.¹¹⁸

2. A new government and a new political paradigm

The government of national unity appointed on 31 March 2013 reflected the dual control of the country exercised by the Seleka and the former democratic opposition. It had 34 members: nine official members of the Seleka, eight ex-opposition figures, sixteen civil society representatives and one KNK member.¹¹⁹ However, party alle-

¹¹² "Centrafrique: les annonces de Michel Djotodia ne font pas l'unanimité", RFI, 29 March 2013. "Michel Djotodia, président par acclamation", *Libération*, 14 April 2013.

¹¹³ The irrevocability of the prime minister was agreed at Libreville and confirmed at the Brazzaville summit; he cannot be dismissed by either the president or the CNT.

¹¹⁴ "Centrafrique: bilan mitigé pour la tournée internationale du Premier ministre", RFI, 28 April 2013.

¹¹⁵ "Centrafrique: les enjeux de la tournée régionale de Michel Djotodia", *Jeune Afrique*, 15 May 2013.

¹¹⁶ This meeting was held under the auspices of the AU Commission and ECCAS.

¹¹⁷ An ECCAS technical evaluation mission went to Bangui during the week beginning 29 April and communication seems to have been far from optimum between the ECCAS headquarters and the MICOPAX. Crisis Group interview, MICOPAX officer, Bangui, 22 April 2013. Moreover, the International Contact Group created a special solidarity fund at the Brazzaville meeting to finance urgent measures and the electoral process. See Conférence de presse du Premier ministre, Bangui, 8 May 2013.

¹¹⁸ Some Seleka members, who did not want "the CAR to become the 24th[sic] province of Chad", resented Chad's influence over the rebel coalition. Crisis Group telephone interview, Seleka member, 17 April 2013. For more on Chad's predominant role in the CAR, see "Idriss Déby Itno, pilote, chef d'Etat, nouvel homme fort", *Afrique Magazine*, May 2013. "Centrafrique: les secrets de la Séléka", *AfrikArabia*, 15 February 2013.

¹¹⁹ "Le nouveau gouvernement national donne la part belle à la Seleka", RFI, 31 March 2013

giances are unclear and several civil society representatives have expressed support for the Seleka. Although the prime minister must organise a cabinet reshuffle and bring more members of the former KNK majority into the next government, there is no doubt that the Seleka will insist on retaining control of key ministries (mines, oil and hydraulic resources, water and forests, public security and defence). Following the example of his predecessor, President Michel Djotodia has retained the defence portfolio for himself.¹²⁰

The Seleka's rise to power has changed the political paradigm. While preceding governments practised clanism and regionalism, the new authorities include many people from Vakaga and Bamingui Bangoran, two Muslim-majority regions of the north east. The political, geo-ethnic and religious balance within the country's leadership has been shaken up, provoking fears and confusion in CAR and in neighbouring countries. The military aircraft transporting the Seleka's wounded flew to Khartoum and Rabat,¹²¹ the visit made by Central African leaders to Qatar and the concerns expressed by neighbours (South Sudan, Uganda, Congo-Brazzaville) about the rise of religious fundamentalism have created a climate of suspicion and dangerous religious tensions within the country and the region.¹²² Conscious of these dangers, Idriss Déby warned Michel Djotodia about the need "to preserve the secular character of the Central African Republic and peaceful coexistence among its communities".¹²³

C. *The Seleka in Power: Insecurity and Uncertainty in Bangui*

Although some Bangui residents welcomed the Seleka's victory rally on 24 March, the rebel takeover quickly resulted in looting, atrocities and clashes, leading to strong resentment against the Seleka in the capital.¹²⁴ The new government is experiencing many problems in controlling its own creature and although the situation has become slightly more stable in the capital, the authorities seem to be overtaken by events.

As Seleka itself admits, it has been unable to ensure security and order, the most important task expected from governments.¹²⁵ After bringing several thousand combatants to the capital, the Seleka leadership does not seem to be able to fully control them, let alone pay them.¹²⁶ Much like in the provinces, the 3,000-5,000 combatants that entered the capital looted private companies, NGOs, public buildings and religious establishments. They showed a particular liking for 4x4 vehicles.¹²⁷ They targeted the Boy Rabe district, where Bozizé's ethnic group is well represented, and villas belonging to leading figures of the former government.¹²⁸ The Seleka took over the reins of

¹²⁰ See Appendix D for a list of the members of the provisional government of national unity.

¹²¹ Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, 20 April 2013.

¹²² "Sassou s'inquiète du fondamentalisme en RCA", *La Lettre du Continent*, no. 657, 17 April 2013.
Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Paris, 30 April 2013.

¹²³ "Centrafrique: les enjeux de la tournée régionale de Michel Djotodia", *Jeune Afrique*, 15 May 2013.

¹²⁴ Several leaders of the rebel coalition acknowledge that "out of control" Seleka soldiers were responsible for looting and atrocities in Bangui following the coup. Crisis Group interviews, Seleka leader, Bangui, 6 April 2013.

¹²⁵ "The country is in immediate danger". Crisis Group interview, Seleka leader, Bangui, 8 April 2013.

¹²⁶ "CAR rebels demand payment", *News 24*, 11 May 2013.

¹²⁷ During its advance, the Seleka looted hunting camps, NGOs, the Bambari sugar refinery, the Paoua and Biffa cotton mills, the mining company Axmin's camp, etc. "Annual Report 2012", AXMIN, April 2013.

¹²⁸ Under the cover of an operation officially conducted to disarm the population in the Boy Rabe neighbourhood on 14 April 2013, Seleka combatants systematically looted the area. According to

government in an atmosphere of urban anarchy: its leaders moved into rooms at the best hotel in town, the Ledger Plaza, giving rise to the nickname “The Ledger Republic”, while their men took over the military camps and private homes of former members of the Bozizé government. Ringing the alarm bell about the deteriorating situation in CAR, the special representative of the UN Secretary-General to the CAR, Margaret Aderinsola Vogt, told the Security Council in New York in May that the country had plunged into a “state of anarchy”.¹²⁹

More than two months after the fall of the city, the security situation in Bangui has improved but remains worrying. The evaporation of the security forces on the arrival of the Seleka and the proliferation of arms have raised fears of an increase in crime in the city, which since now has been relatively unaffected by this phenomenon.¹³⁰ The armouries at the Roux and Béal camps were looted, weapons were distributed by the deposed president and many FACA members who fled the capital left their arms behind.¹³¹ As a consequence, security in Bangui has been privatised and become part of the informal sector. The troublemakers have become protectors: the Seleka’s men have entered the field of private security.¹³² MICOPAX contingents have rented their services to companies and NGOs while the French army and MICOPAX patrol the city.¹³³

In a context of looting, environmental crimes,¹³⁴ racketeering and intimidation, the overwhelming majority of the population has grown angry and hateful. There have been an increasing number of clashes with the Seleka to the extent that they have inter-

several Boy Rabe residents who witnessed the looting, the combatants went to each house and killed anyone who showed any resistance. Crisis Group interviews, Boy Rabe residents, Bangui, 12 April 2013. “Centrafrique: scènes de pillage et heurts à Bangui”, RFI, 14 April 2013.

¹²⁹ “The Central African Republic had descended into a state of anarchy ... the Secretary-General’s Special Representative told the Security Council today”, press release, UN Information Department, New York, 15 May 2013.

¹³⁰ Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, 5 April 2013. The old government’s security officers left the country or found refuge with MICOPAX. Some FACA personnel went to the border with Cameroon and there have been some reports of atrocities by former members of the army. “Des ex soldats centrafricains abattus au Cameroun”, *Journal de Bangui*, 13 May 2013. The government’s fall also led to the looting of some armouries. Crisis Group interview, member of civil society, Bangui, 6 April 2013. Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, 15 April 2013.

¹³¹ Ibid.

¹³² Private security companies recruited some Seleka combatants, doubling the usual number of security personnel. They can be seen patrolling at Bangui’s gated villas.

¹³³ MICOPAX soldiers are paid to guard some company and NGO premises. Chadian soldiers are particularly sought after. Crisis Group interviews, economic operators and NGO staff, Bangui, 21 and 22 April 2013.

¹³⁴ On 12 May 2013, “out of control” Seleka soldiers killed 26 elephants in Dzanga Bai Forest, a protected site in south-western CAR. Poaching is on the increase since the Seleka took power. The absence of local authorities and security forces benefits those involved in the trade in elephant ivory and meat. “26 éléphants massacrés en Centrafrique où l’instabilité laisse le champ libre au braconnage”, *Le Monde*, 12 May 2013. Also see “Comment sauver les éléphants d’Afrique centrale”, press release, African Parks Network, International Fund for Animal Welfare, Fondation pour le tri-national de Sangha, Projet d’appui à l’application de la loi sur la faune sauvage, TRAFFIC, International Union for Conservation of Nature, Wildlife Conservation Society, Worldwide Fund for Nature, Brazzaville, 26 April 2013; also see “Communiqué de presse n°02”, Organisation centrafricaine pour la défense de la nature, 13 May 2013.

ferred with traffic.¹³⁵ Moreover, the strong anti-Seleka feeling that has taken hold of Bangui residents is taking on anti-Muslim overtones.¹³⁶

The disagreements within the Seleka are also coming out into the open. The movement seems unstable: some generals do not hide their deep dissatisfaction about decisions made by the political leadership. Some of them have denounced the appointment of former FACA officers to important positions in the new army and the nepotism of some leaders of the movement.¹³⁷ Symbolic of this distrust is the absence of several military leaders reputedly belonging to the Seleka from the new FACA military hierarchy. Finally, as in 2003, the new “liberators” who facilitated Djotodia’s bid for power are threatening to take up their arms again against the new government if they are not paid very soon. A sign of these internal tensions: on the evening of 20 April, Michel Djotodia turned the Ledger Hotel into a bunker by bringing in a security force of his own men. The former rebels now face a major challenge: pay their combatants at a time when the state’s financial resources are dwindling and rule a country that has been bled dry.

At the moment, the transition authorities are finding it difficult to formulate a realistic roadmap to restore security in Bangui and the rest of the country, disarm combatants and integrate them into the security forces as part of a DDR program and reestablish basic social services. Until the region’s countries provide strong political, financial and military assistance, return to normality will remain elusive.

¹³⁵ Taxi drivers were the victims of a racket run by Seleka combatants. After several were killed, they went on strike during the week beginning 22 April 2013. On 4 May, a Cameroonian lorry driver was killed by Seleka soldiers at a checkpoint north of Bangui. In response, Cameroonian lorry drivers said they would no longer use the Douala-Bangui road – the CAR capital’s main supply route – until the incident was solved and measures taken to ensure their security. “Douala: la menace des camionneurs camerounais”, *Journal de Bangui*, 7 May 2013. On 9 and 10 May 2013, following the death of a young man crushed by a Seleka vehicle in the Gobongo district, residents came out on to the streets to show their exasperation. Clashes with the Seleka left three dead. “RCA: nouveaux heurts meurtriers entre civils et Seleka à Bangui”, RFI, 11 May 2013.

¹³⁶ This feeling was aggravated by the fact that Muslim districts were not looted and the fact that stolen vehicles were driven north or were repainted in PK5, the main Muslim district in Bangui. Crisis Group researchers were able to verify this in person. Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 20 April 2013.

¹³⁷ Crisis Group interview, Seleka military commander, Bangui, 7 April 2013.

IV. The Priorities of the Transition

The Seleka's rise to power has plunged CAR into yet another crisis, followed by yet another political transition. The country has had more coups and attempted coups than free elections. The security crisis is of course accompanied by a grave humanitarian and financial crisis. However, it would be a serious error to downplay this crisis and count on the population's resilience to overcome it. Contrary to previous crises, which only affected some regions, the current turmoil represents a change of political paradigms and affects almost the entire country. It manifests itself in the collapse of the state, making the country impossible to govern and leaving the population unprotected on the eve of the rainy season.

At the moment, the main risk of the CAR state's withdrawal is the creation of a "grey zone" at the heart of Central Africa that will be occupied by warlords and transformed into a criminal economy whose victims will be the local population and regional stability. Neither CAR's neighbours nor its other partners stand to gain from the collapse of the state, which could be provoked by a wait-and-see attitude and a purely declamatory management of the transition. The country's neighbours and other partners must therefore resolutely engage in ensuring that the transition responds to the security, humanitarian, socio-economic and political priorities. That requires strong international coordination, close political monitoring, the deployment of several joint missions (DDR, SSR and management of a special fund) and the allocation of efficiently administered emergency aid. In other words, the country cannot afford the kind of minimalist approach to managing the transition or failure to monitor implementation of the agreements that prevailed between January and March 2013

A. *The Security Priority: DDR and SSR*

The restoration of a minimum level of security in the country comprises three stages: making Bangui secure, DDR and SSR. The first stage entails clearing combatants out of the capital and reestablishing the security services. In April 2013, the MICOPAX and the Seleka began this task but were hampered by a lack of organisation and resources.¹³⁸ On 13 May, an operation to transfer Seleka troops out of Bangui took place and MICOPAX escorted 200 rebel combatants to Bria.

Since then, the authorities have conducted cantonment operations for rebel combatants in Béringo and Bossembélé but the hardcore of Seleka forces remain in Bangui.¹³⁹ In April, the deputy defence minister, Colonel Bertrand Mamour, said he wanted to create training centres in a number of district capitals and "military regions" in each of sixteen district capitals, with the exception of Haut-Mbomou, where Ugandan contingents are stationed.¹⁴⁰ However, there is little possibility of implementing this plan, and this should only be considered within the framework of SSR.

Moreover, the prime minister has announced that "stray" combatants, including Seleka members and former FACA members, are not authorised to carry arms and must hand them in as soon as possible prior to being transferred out of Bangui.¹⁴¹

¹³⁸ Hundreds of combatants were moved to barracks in Bossembélé and Béringo in April, but a lack of supervision and management structures led to many of them returning to the capital. Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, 21 April 2013.

¹³⁹ "Centrafrique: le cantonnement de la Seleka a commencé", *Jeune Afrique*, 14 May 2013.

¹⁴⁰ Crisis Group interview, defence minister, Bangui, 15 April 2013.

¹⁴¹ Press conference, prime minister, Bangui, 8 May 2013.

For these announcements to be translated into an improvement in security in Bangui, MICOPAX and the French army must increase their patrols and financial incentives must be provided in the form of a substantial bonus for combatants stationed outside the capital. To avoid well-armed rebels creating other pockets of rebellion or following a familiar pattern in the region and reverting to crime,¹⁴² the transition government, supported by its partners, must urgently implement DDR as set out in the Libreville Agreement without at the same time compromising reform of the army by integrating too many rebels into its ranks. Although short-term stability depends on DDR, long-term stability depends on SSR.

1. New generation DDR

Past errors

The Libreville Agreement 1 and the IPD recommendations in 2008 included DDR provisions. However, only the APRD in the north west has undergone this process so far and the program has been conducted in controversial conditions and produced controversial results.¹⁴³

The failure to implement DDR is due to the lack of representativeness of some political-military group leaders; the use of DDR to gain financial benefits; the government's lack of political will; and the lack of pressure from the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA).¹⁴⁴ Similarly, the strategy of giving large sums of money to armed group leaders in return for their agreement to demobilise their own combatants has harmed DDR because it has accelerated splits in armed groups and strengthened the idea that DDR is a corrupt operation.¹⁴⁵ Many CPJP combatants have denounced this "money diplomacy".¹⁴⁶

¹⁴² Many ex-combatants of the Front patriotique pour le rassemblement (FPR) led by the Chadian rebel Baba Laddé refused to put down their arms and are now engaged in banditry in the Kabo, Bata-tangafo, Kaga Bando triangle region. See "Kaga Bando: des ex-éléments de Baba Laddé terri-fient la population", Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme en RCA, 6 February 2013.

¹⁴³ Although more than 6,000 APRD combatants have been demobilised, disarmament has only resulted in the recovery of about 100 conventional weapons. Crisis Group telephone interview, DDR expert, 3 March 2013.

¹⁴⁴ BINUCA's mandate includes several components. It supports reforms to promote good governance and improve the electoral process. It provided logistical and technical support for workshops on revising the electoral code in 2012. It also builds the capacities of national human rights associations in CAR and helps to protect children. BINUCA must also "contribute to the efficient implementation of disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration and security sector reform". See BINUCA's website: <http://bit.ly/14hkK8T>. However, BINUCA has not had enough influence over CAR leaders or been able to impose an agenda for implementing DDR for combatants from the north east. For more on the failure of DDR in the CAR, see "2011 Report on International Engagement in Fragile States: Central African Republic", Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), 2011, p. 30; "Rapport RCA: le DDR sans GPS", final report from the independent evaluation mission of the Programme de Réinsertion des Ex-Combattants et d'Appui aux Communautés en République Centrafricaine, commissioned by the Multi-Country Demobilisation and Reintegration Program (MDRP), December 2007.

¹⁴⁵ Crisis Group interview, UN personnel, member of the DDR steering committee, Bangui, 15 December 2012.

¹⁴⁶ "Communiqué de presse de l'alliance CPSK-CPJP", Colonel Alkassim, 17 September 2012.

Rethinking DDR

The new program must work fast and do better because the security situation is very fragile. Under pressure from current events, decision-makers may be tempted by easy solutions that seem beneficial in the short term but will compromise stability in the long term. Instead of proceeding with the massive integration of Seleka's combatants into the security forces, as many combatants would like, the government should define quotas and prioritise economic reinsertion.

In this context of crisis, it is crucial to reinvent DDR and impose a new institutional structure. The UN, EU, ECCAS and France should take charge of all aspects of the DDR program. At the political level, the monitoring committee should put DDR on the agenda of its first meeting. At the operational level, members of the MICOPAX and UN experts supported by France should form a DDR mission. Because of its knowledge of the CAR military context, Paris should second a team of experts to the UN structures responsible for DDR. The MICOPAX should ensure security at cantonment sites, proceed with disarmament and store weapons. This mission should be placed under the authority of the prime minister and the EU, which had already budgeted funds for DDR in 2012, should fund the entire operation. This simpler and more closely supervised institutional framework (one donor, one implementation agency) will reassure both the people of the CAR and international partners who have already been put off by previous failures.

In addition to the institutional framework, the whole concept of DDR should be reviewed. The socio-economic reintegration of former combatants, often a neglected aspect of DDR, is essential for restoring stability. Reintegration must be adapted to the socio-economic profile of the soldiers being demobilised, the labour market and the needs of the communities affected by the conflict.¹⁴⁷ A study of the socio-economic profile of Seleka members would identify their training needs and, while this training takes place, the creation of local jobs should be stimulated. The DDR program should liaise with the development poles project in the north east of the country. Demobilised soldiers could be employed on labour-intensive reconstruction work.¹⁴⁸

In addition, the many rebel combatants who were previously miners could be given a tool kit and financial incentives to form mining cooperatives and formalise their activity. DDR could then be linked to the program for formalising artisanal mining prepared by the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID). However, the reintegration of combatants into artisanal mining can only go ahead if suspension of the Kimberley Process is lifted.

Many combatants still want to join the national army.¹⁴⁹ To appease disappointed combatants, the CAR authorities should start to register combatants and encourage the majority of them to join the DDR program by making them a generous offer in exchange for economic reintegration into civilian life. This will require significant support from traditional donors.

¹⁴⁷ "Second Generation Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) Practices in Peace Operations", UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations, 18 January 2010, pp. 3-5.

¹⁴⁸ The development poles project, launched in 2007 and funded by the EU, aimed to strengthen the capacities of decentralised public services, build and repair basic and socio-economic infrastructure and promote local development projects. "Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper 2011-2015", Central African Republic government, Bangui, 2011.

¹⁴⁹ Crisis Group interview, Seleka military commander, Bangui, 7 April 2013.

2. SSR: The need for an innovative approach

The reconstitution of a national army is one of the conditions for ensuring security and stability in the long term. The need to reorganise the defence and security forces has been recognised since the 1996-1997 mutinies. But the massive integration of combatants into the army is not as good an idea as it might appear: it is an easy short-term solution that will prove problematic in the long term. As SSR is at a standstill, to integrate massive numbers of Seleka combatants would weaken the institution further, “militianise” the army and put a strain on the state budget. DDR should not mean army reform will not take place.

Non-selective integration was already tried in the past without conclusive results;¹⁵⁰ and the CAR army, previously numbering 6,000 men, does not have either the financial resources or the capacity to absorb several thousand new combatants. Although few FACA members have returned, it is likely that most of them will want to be reintegrated into the army once the situation has stabilised. The chief of staff, General Jean-Pierre Dollé-Waya, has called on the regular army soldiers who fled to come back to the capital and they are beginning to return.¹⁵¹ Seleka forces are estimated at between 3,000 and 5,000 combatants, which would double the army’s size.¹⁵²

First, the authorities should analyse capacities by conducting a thorough assessment of the forces and equipment available to the future army, police force and gendarmerie and their management system. Secondly, financial planning should take place to set the realistic budget and size of the army. The Seleka’s combatants could then be integrated according to well-established professional criteria and previously defined quotas.¹⁵³ Particular attention should be given to restoring reliable financial management of the security forces.

To help the authorities conduct a genuine process of selection of combatants and recreate a robust security system, an SSR mission should be created, composed of international experts, the chief of staff, the security, justice and defence ministers and civil society representatives. It would be placed under the authority of the prime minister and its work would be supervised by the monitoring committee. In 2003, France helped the authorities organise the army and stabilise the country.¹⁵⁴ Given its experience, Paris should second a team of experts to this mission, which should make a detailed review of the preparatory work done before 2010.

Instead of trying to recreate Western security institutions in CAR, this mission should identify the country’s security problems and propose solutions appropriate to

¹⁵⁰ In his book of interviews, Jean-Jacques Démafouth recalls that after the third mutiny, the mutineers were reintegrated and two officers were “placed in each post, ... a loyalist and a representative of the mutineers. Rather than unify the army, this divided it”. Samy Abtroum, *Jean-Jacques Démafouth* (Paris, 2010), pp. 85-86.

¹⁵¹ “Un général appelle l’armée en exil à rejoindre la Centrafrique”, *Le Monde*, 6 May 2013.

¹⁵² Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, 5 April 2013.

¹⁵³ This option will only apply to Seleka members who meet standard professional recruitment criteria such as level of education, physical condition, age, technical skills required for military jobs and previous experience in the security forces. The Seleka leadership has already accepted the idea of quotas: the plan is to integrate 500 combatants into the police force, 500 into the gendarmerie and 1,000 into the army. Crisis Group interview, deputy defence minister, Bangui, 20 April 2013.

¹⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, military expert, Bangui, 10 April 2013.

the social, political, economic and cultural context. In CAR, the army has too often been the response to all kinds of security problems, with very little success.¹⁵⁵

B. *The Humanitarian Priority*

The crisis in CAR has caused a real deterioration in what was already a very precarious humanitarian situation.¹⁵⁶ According to the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), on 30 April 2013, there were 37,755 CAR refugees in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and thousands more in Chad, Cameroon and the Republic of Congo.¹⁵⁷ In addition, there were about 150,000-180,000 internally displaced people at the beginning of May.¹⁵⁸

According to a recent report by the EU humanitarian agency (DG ECHO), food security and health are the main humanitarian concerns: “the origin of these needs results from the loss of agricultural inputs due to fighting and population movements in an emergency context”.¹⁵⁹ The combination of population movements, the impossibility of planting crops and the start of the rainy season risks creating a health and food crisis because the displaced people have no access to health services and cases of malaria and diarrhoea are on the increase.¹⁶⁰ In Bangui, many people are unemployed and the price of basic foods is increasing. Admissions to nutritional centres are rising, a strong indication of the difficulties facing the capital’s residents.¹⁶¹

1. Ensure security for humanitarian work

The humanitarian response is hindered by persistent security problems, especially in rural areas. Since the crisis started, NGO equipment worth an estimated several million euros and about 600 tons of food aid from the World Food Programme (WFP) have been stolen. NGO premises are still frequently looted.¹⁶²

Donors of humanitarian funds have already mobilised and NGOs are assessing the situation in several provinces.¹⁶³ NGOs are establishing a nutritional and health alert system to warn of imminent humanitarian crises during the rainy season. However, given the level of insecurity, NGOs have tended to withdraw to Bangui. Although they are now gradually moving back into other areas, access to some regions is still difficult. The presence of “out of control” combatants in the region of Bangassou, Mobaye,

¹⁵⁵ This new approach (starting from the problems and designing local solutions rather than using Western schemes) is based on “second generation” SSRs. Rachel Kleinfeld, *Advancing the Rule of Law Abroad, Next Generation Reform* (Washington DC, 2012).

¹⁵⁶ According to a recent report by the EU humanitarian agency (DG ECHO), the CAR is the second most vulnerable country in the world. For more details, see “Humanitarian Implementation Plan, Central African Republic”, ECHO, 12 February 2013, pp. 1-2.

¹⁵⁷ Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian actor, 7 May 2013.

¹⁵⁸ *Ibid.*

¹⁵⁹ “Humanitarian Implementation Plan”, *op. cit.*, p. 1.

¹⁶⁰ Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian actor, 7 May 2013.

¹⁶¹ *Ibid.*

¹⁶² At Bocaranga, the office of the International Rescue Committee (IRC) was attacked twice within one week. Neither was the International Committee of the Red Cross spared the looting in Bangui. Three of the seven premises of a French NGO were looted. Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian workers, Bangui, 19 April 2013 and Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian worker, 7 May 2013. “Kabo, un véhicule d’une ONG humanitaire prise de force par la Seleka”, Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l’homme en RCA (RJDH), 27 February 2013.

¹⁶³ EU humanitarian aid for the CAR could reach €30 million this year. Crisis Group interview, humanitarian actor, Bangui, 23 April 2013.

Alindao and Rafai has greatly complicated deployment of humanitarian workers in these areas.¹⁶⁴

Although MICOPAX's mandate provides for the protection of the personnel and equipment of international organisations, the ECCAS mission at Ndélé, Paoua and Kaga Bando has never fulfilled this task. In order to allow humanitarian workers to resume their activities in the provinces, humanitarian organisations should collectively request the Seleka to dispatch trustworthy men, respected by their soldiers, to the high-risk regions.¹⁶⁵ They should also create the position of security coordinator for all NGOs¹⁶⁶ and conduct a careful evaluation of the risk of abduction in the north of the country.

2. Human rights: Investigate the past and safeguard the future

The Seleka's takeover of power was accompanied by looting and settling of scores, including targeted killings of key figures in the Bozizé regime and others. Although Michel Djotodia called on his combatants to refrain from conducting a "with-hunt", they carried out several summary executions and systematically looted districts where close associates of Bozizé lived, such as Boy Rabe. Human rights violations were not limited to the capital and there seems to be general impunity.¹⁶⁷ Worse still, instead of firmly denouncing these activities, the Seleka have consistently blamed them all on supporters of the former president. It must now send out a clear message that there will be no immunity for its supporters and that Seleka combatants who commit atrocities will be arrested and punished.

Since the fall of Bozizé, people are more willing to speak openly about the atrocities, acts of torture and killings committed by the deposed government, in particular by the former president's entourage. Several prisoners detained at Bossembélé, at the Roux camp and at the SRI have given accounts of the torture they endured and the extrajudicial killings they witnessed.¹⁶⁸ At the beginning of May, the new justice minister, Arsène Sendé, asked the prosecutor's office at the High Court of Bangui to begin judicial proceedings to identify the perpetrators of these crimes.¹⁶⁹ Since then, the authorities have conducted investigations and interviewed witnesses. On 29 May 2013, the judicial system issued an international warrant for the arrest of François Bozizé. The charges include crimes against humanity and incitement to genocide.¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁴ A Seleka colonel was opposed to a return of humanitarian personnel to the area and seemed to be acting autonomously. He has reportedly left the area now and NGOs are making a careful return. Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian actor, 7 May 2013.

¹⁶⁵ Negotiations between NGOs and the authorities are now proceeding on a case by case basis. Each NGO is asking Seleka officers to send a trustworthy military commander to their area of activity. Crisis Group telephone interview, humanitarian actor, 28 May 2013.

¹⁶⁶ In the DRC, Iraq, Afghanistan and other such countries, international NGOs, with financial support from international donors, use the services of organisations like the International NGO Safety Organisation, which specialises in assessing and advising on security.

¹⁶⁷ Crisis Group interview, humanitarian worker, Bangui, 23 April 2013.

¹⁶⁸ Crisis Group interview, former director of the joint secretariat of the finance ministry and ex-detainee at the Bossembélé prison, Bangui, 21 April 2013. Also see "Central African Republic: rampant abuses after the coup", Human Rights Watch, 10 May 2013.

¹⁶⁹ "Crimes de la Bozizie: le ministre de la Justice instruit le Procureur général au sujet des crimes de sang et crimes économique de Bozizé et ses acolytes", *Centrafrique presse*, 3 May 2013. "Centrafrique: Bozizé visé par une enquête pour violations des droits de l'homme", *Le Monde*, 4 May 2013.

¹⁷⁰ "Mandat d'arrêt international contre l'expresident centrafricain François Bozizé", *Le Monde*, 31 May 2013.

The prosecutor believes the former president to be guilty of many killings, summary executions and arbitrary arrests.¹⁷¹

However, justice should not only apply to the vanquished. The new joint commission of inquiry created by presidential decree on 20 May 2013 should document the atrocities committed by Seleka combatants, conduct genuine investigations and bring the perpetrators to justice. The government should guarantee the commission's independence by providing it with the resources it needs to act, deploy in the field and recruit personnel with experience in protecting human rights.¹⁷² It is also necessary to support the documentation work carried out by the CAR Human Rights League throughout the country, in particular with EU funding dedicated to human rights.¹⁷³ Fatou Bensouda, the prosecutor of the International Criminal Court (ICC), who has said the situation in CAR is under close scrutiny, should also send a mission to verify the security of witnesses in the Bemba trial and send a strong warning to the perpetrators of atrocities.¹⁷⁴

Finally, in order to allow the CAR judiciary to function, the technical and operational capacities of judicial institutions and prisons must be strengthened. In fact, since the Seleka took power, the prisons have been emptied and prison staff have fled. The government should restore the prisons and conduct a review of staff prior to organising further recruitment. Judicial institutions are in the same condition as the country, in their death throes. Many courts have been wrecked and judges in the provinces have fled before the Seleka's advance. To allow the judiciary to begin operating normally, the EU should prioritise a resumption of its justice project in CAR.

C. *Budgetary, Economic and Social Priorities*

1. Relaunching basic services and paying civil servants

The transition government is already in a budgetary impasse. The state payroll is estimated at CFA 3.5 billion per month (close to \$7 million), to which should be added the quarterly payment of pensions with an estimated total of CFA 1.2 billion (\$2.3 million).¹⁷⁵ The state of public finances means the government cannot foot this bill and ensure even the minimum operation of an administration that is in ruins.¹⁷⁶ Moreover, the crisis is likely to have a devastating impact on the state budget.

The prime minister is aware of this catastrophic situation and intends to assess the cost of reconstruction, identify emergency measures and has asked donors, espe-

¹⁷¹ "RCA: François Bozizé visé par un mandat d'arrêt international", *Jeune Afrique*, 1 June 2013.

¹⁷² Crisis Group telephone interview, member of the Observatoire centrafricain des droits de l'homme, 9 June 2013.

¹⁷³ "Central African Republic: rampant abuses after the coup", Human Rights Watch, 10 May 2013.

¹⁷⁴ "Prosecutor's statement in relation to the situation in Central African Republic", ICC, 22 April 2013. In addition, the court has asked MICOPAX to guarantee the security of witnesses in the Bemba trial during the crisis. Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 15 April 2013. Jean-Pierre Bemba, leader of the Mouvement de libération du Congo (MLC) is being prosecuted for crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in the CAR in 2002 and 2003. His trial at the ICC began in 2010 but hearings have been suspended several times. For more details, see Crisis Group report, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, op. cit.

¹⁷⁵ Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, 16 February 2013.

¹⁷⁶ The CAR Treasury's net holdings at the end of February 2013 were about CFA 45 million (\$89,000). Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, 10 May 2013.

cially the EU, for immediate aid.¹⁷⁷ All the ministers involved should meet, under the prime minister's authority, to assess the cost of rebuilding public infrastructure and organise the reactivation of basic social services such as education, health and the supply of drinking water. This should lead to a "re-assessment of budget objectives".¹⁷⁸

Given the violent nature of the change in government and repeated violations of human rights, the EU should launch a consultation procedure with national authorities, in accordance with Article 96 of the Cotonou agreement, and condition its aid on the implementation of emergency measures decided during these consultations. In the meantime, the EU must continue to financially support the CAR but should ensure centralised management of funds from the European Development Fund so as to avoid government interference.¹⁷⁹

The CAR's poor reputation with donors¹⁸⁰ means that the prime minister's request for emergency budgetary aid will only meet a positive response if donors obtain guarantees of transparency and efficiency. A fund management mission for reconstruction should be placed under the authority of the prime minister. Composed of members of the CAR administration and international experts seconded by donors, the body will manage the special solidarity fund announced at the Brazzaville meeting.¹⁸¹ The EU should organise its implementation and be responsible for financial management of the funds. This mission will identify priorities, allocate funds accordingly and verify the results. Donors who froze their projects due to the lack of an administration in place should channel this aid through the special solidarity fund if the funds have not been reallocated to another country.

2. Supporting the private sector

Private companies have been badly affected by the crisis: the employers' organisation, Groupement interprofessionnel de Centrafrique (GICA), estimates members' losses at CFA 57 billion (\$112 million). In addition, a 40-70 per cent fall in economic activity is expected for 2013, depending on the sector. The deterioration in the economic situation has of course been accompanied by a wave of dismissals and a rise in layoffs.¹⁸² A resumption of activity depends on restoring security, especially along the main trading corridors, and introducing temporary tax exemptions. In this perspective, the prime minister has already announced "the discharge of the commercial debt of national and foreign companies that are victims of vandalism".¹⁸³ It would also be useful to reactivate the framework for dialogue between the government and the private sector so that companies can make their concerns known to the authorities.

¹⁷⁷ Prime minister's press conference, Bangui, 8 May 2013.

¹⁷⁸ Ibid.

¹⁷⁹ Cotonou Agreement, Articles 34 and 96, revised in Ouagadougou, 22 June 2010; and "Guide to the Financial Procedures of the 10th European Development Fund", Europe Aid Development and Cooperation Office, March 2009, p. 15.

¹⁸⁰ Crisis Group interviews, development agency representatives, Bangui, 22 and 24 April 2013, and Nairobi, 16 May 2013.

¹⁸¹ Ibid.

¹⁸² Crisis Group interview, GICA president, Bangui, 23 April 2012. "Memorandum du secteur privé pour la relance de l'activité économique", GICA, Bangui, 12 March 2013.

¹⁸³ Prime minister's press conference, Bangui, 8 May 2013.

Meanwhile, the transition authorities should ask the African Development Bank to assess the mining and oil contracts signed by the former regime to determine whether they are in accordance with the sector's standards.¹⁸⁴

3. Maintain income from the diamond sector

Diamonds are one of CAR's main exports.¹⁸⁵ The Seleka's advance revived the debate on "conflict diamonds". After issuing a warning in December 2012,¹⁸⁶ the Kimberley Process (KP) temporarily suspended CAR at the beginning of May 2013.¹⁸⁷ This suspension was confirmed at the KP meeting in South Africa at the beginning of June. This means that CAR can no longer certify its diamonds as being "conflict-free".¹⁸⁸ The KP asked the CAR authorities to present a plan to restore the integrity of the diamond supply chain, decided to monitor the exports from countries in the region that are KP members (Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville, DRC) and asked Chad and Sudan, who are not KP members, to do the same.

The CAR authorities say they are ready to welcome a KP verification mission to ensure that KP standards are being observed.¹⁸⁹ KP's decision reflects the fact that the rebels come from diamond-producing regions and that the local administration has disintegrated since the Bozizé government's collapse. With the government's support, the KP mission should investigate the diamond smuggling networks that undermine the credibility of the process in the CAR.¹⁹⁰ The KP should make contact with the Sudanese and Chadian authorities and equip itself with the research capacity necessary to carry out this task.

D. *The Political Priority*

1. Coordinated and continued international supervision for the transition

In order to avoid N'Djamena repeating the implementation failure of the Libreville agreement and considering the weakness of the political and security situation, the new transition requires continuous and well-coordinated international supervision. ECCAS presidents must now ensure real monitoring. The monitoring committee created by the agreement should meet every month in the region (including in Bangui) to evaluate observance of the agreements and progress on the components of

¹⁸⁴ "Centrafrique: de l'ordre dans les mines", Reuters, 29 March 2013.

¹⁸⁵ "Gold and diamonds in the Central African Republic. The country's mining sector, and related social, economic and environmental issues", International Peace Information Service, March 2013, p. 6. Presentation by CAR authorities, Kimberley Process meeting, Kimberley, 5 June 2013.

¹⁸⁶ Gillian A. Milovanovic, Letter of the president of the Kimberley Process to all KP participants and observers, 28 December 2012. "Diamonds exportable – but under scrutiny", *Africa Mining Intelligence*, no. 289, 15 January 2013.

¹⁸⁷ "Administrative decision on the Central African Republic, temporary suspension", Kimberley Process, 23 May 2013.

¹⁸⁸ At the Kimberley Process meeting, the CAR authorities proposed a compromise, which was rejected. They suggested a moratorium on the export of diamonds produced in the east of the country in exchange for the go-ahead to export diamonds produced in the west. Presentation by the CAR authorities, Kimberley Process meeting, Kimberley, 5 June 2013.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid.

¹⁹⁰ For more on the smuggling problem, see Cédric Foumena and Jaff Bamenjo, *Artisanat minier, un challenge pour le processus de Kimberley: cas du département de la Kadey-Est Cameroun*, Relufa, January 2013, and Crisis Group Africa Report, *Dangerous Little Stones*, op. cit.

the transition (DDR, SSR, emergency reconstruction, creation of transitional institutions, preparation of elections) and advise the CAR authorities on these issues. If necessary, the committee should not hesitate to identify those responsible for any deadlock and punish them (international investigations, targeted international sanctions, exclusion from the political process with the prime minister's agreement, etc.).

The monitoring committee's role is essential to show all actors in the transition that no deviation from the objectives set at Libreville and N'Djamena will be tolerated. The committee should also be a forum for debate in which the CAR's political and economic partners and authorities discuss progress and any adjustments required. The committee should bring together all partners and normally be chaired by Sassou Nguesso and monthly by his special representative. The latter should facilitate political dialogue between the different parties in government and the CNT and issue alerts in the event of a failure to fulfil commitments made at Libreville and reiterated at N'Djamena. Such close coordination will reassure donors that the transitional authorities are acting responsibly and that the use of their aid is being monitored. In order to avoid an unnecessary, counter-productive multiplication of coordination bodies, the International Contact Group should be dissolved.

The region's countries and traditional donors must understand that a successful transition is not only an imperative for the people of CAR. It is also a security imperative for the country's neighbours: the slow "Somalisation" of the country would quickly destabilise the whole region. There is also a financial imperative for donors: a successful transition would represent the first step towards better governance and, in the longer run, be less expensive for donors than the charity with which they have indulged the CAR for years.

2. Rethinking the peace and security architecture

The diplomatic and military response to the CAR crisis, which started in December 2012 during the Seleka's first offensive, proved to be inadequate in March 2013. MICOPAX's behaviour during and immediately after this offensive raised certain questions, while it became clear that the AU and ECCAS had different positions towards the Seleka.¹⁹¹ The AU, ECCAS and the EU, which is one of the main donors towards the peace and security architecture, should therefore organise a feedback session on their response to the CAR crisis. It may help solve the political and military problems that have appeared since the crisis began.¹⁹²

3. Accelerating the work of transitional institutions and preparing the elections

The prime minister should quickly determine his priorities and present his roadmap and a realistic timetable in a public speech. With this in mind, he should quickly organise a major consultation in the form of a two-day working seminar for members of the government, economic actors and humanitarian NGOs to get an accurate assessment of the situation and listen to proposals from these actors. He should present an action plan with practical security, economic and humanitarian measures in order to make government policy crystal clear. He has to show the people of CAR and foreign

¹⁹¹ The AU quickly imposed targeted sanctions against Seleka leaders and called on other organisations to do the same. The ECCAS did not follow this recommendation.

¹⁹² Some of these problems were analysed in Crisis Group Africa Report N°181, *Implementing Peace and Security Architecture (I): Central Africa*, 7 November 2011.

partners that the country is governable and is being governed. However, this plan must be realistic and avoid being too ambitious.

In addition, the prime minister and president should accelerate the creation and work of transitional institutions. The government should be reshuffled to become more inclusive, the National Transitional Council should be expanded “without any rigging”,¹⁹³ a transition charter should be drafted and a constitutional court established. The CNT should begin work on a new constitution and preparations for legislative and presidential elections should start.

Combined presidential and legislative elections should theoretically be organised within eighteen months, but the destruction of public infrastructure means that this timetable is unrealistic. In fact, the example of the last elections, initially scheduled for 25 April 2010 and postponed twice before being held on 23 January 2011, does not give grounds for optimism.¹⁹⁴ In order to establish a realistic timetable, a UN exploratory mission should visit the CAR to propose an action plan, a budget and a realistic timetable. In addition, in order to dissipate any suspicion that it may want to prolong the transition, the CNT, which adopted a bill on revision of the electoral code on 23 May 2013, should work with the government to install the new national electoral authority and quickly appoint its members.¹⁹⁵

¹⁹³ Words of the prime minister himself. Press release, prime minister, Bangui, 8 May 2013.

¹⁹⁴ The elections were postponed at the request of the president of the Independent Electoral Commission, on the grounds that technical problems made it impossible to adhere to the agreed timetable. The opposition requested a further postponement of the elections, arguing the conditions for free and transparent elections were not met and that the electoral register was incomplete because of insecurity in parts of the country. However, President Bozizé rejected the idea and elections finally took place on 23 January 2011.

¹⁹⁵ The new National Elections Authority (Autorité nationale des élections, ANE) will replace the National Independent Electoral Commission, whose action drew strong criticism from the opposition. There is a broad consensus among CAR politicians about the ANE. The decision to create this body was taken during the third workshop of the committee for dialogue on the revision of the electoral code in September 2012.

V. Conclusion

This new crisis reflects several decades of weak governance in CAR. The international community has been willing to financially drip-feed the country for too long. The CAR government has outsourced responsibility for the security of its territory and social services are mostly provided by non-state actors, including foreigners.

As difficult as it may be, the transitional period may, if it is well managed, get the country out of this situation. The politically diverse government of national unity has the difficult task of making up for lost time and carrying out governance reforms that have been on the agenda for a very long time. In a country where everything is urgent, it must first show pragmatism by prioritising security, humanitarian, budgetary and political measures. In order to do this, the transition needs a dual support strategy: close political and military advice and support from ECCAS countries, with the support of the UN and France, and supervised financial and technical aid from donors.

Nairobi/Brussels, 11 June 2013

Appendix A: Map of the Central African Republic



Appendix B: The Seleka's Military Command Structure

Noureddine Adam

A Runga from north-eastern CAR, Noureddine Adam is one of the Seleka's most experienced military commanders. Trained at the Cairo Police Academy, he has also worked in the Gulf states, including as a bodyguard for government leaders in Dubai and Saudi Arabia. In 2003, he was among the liberators who ousted Patassé and brought Bozizé to power. Close to the Chadian rebels, he finally joined the Armée nationale tchadienne (ANT) to fight the Union des forces de résistance (UFR) led by Timan Erdimi. In 2008, he joined the CPJP and became one of its undisputed leaders. But in 2012, following the example of Moussa Dhaffane, he denounced the agreements reached by Abdoulaye Hissene and the government in Bangui and decided to continue the rebellion. One of the Seleka's key leaders, Noureddine Adam decided not to lay down his arms after the Libreville Agreements and mobilised the combatants around him to resume fighting. He is currently minister of state for public security.

Moussa Dhaffane

A former member of the CPJP, Moussa Dhaffane was imprisoned in Chad before being placed under house arrest in N'Djamena following the arrest of Charles Massi. In June 2012, he created a new movement, the Convention patriotique du salut du Kodro (CPSK). Released in the middle of the crisis by the Chadian government, Dhaffane returned to the CAR to continue his fight against the government. He is currently minister of state for water and forests.

Aubin Issa Issaka

UFDR chief of staff and then Seleka chief of staff, Issa Issaka has led operations since the beginning of the rebellion, including the first attack on the town of Ndélé in December. Given the task of leading the final offensive against Bangui, he led a column of combatants from Sibut and Damara. He was reportedly wounded in a clash with South African forces and is currently in a critical condition.

General Arda Hakouma

During the final offensive, he led the second column of combatants along the Bossangoa-Bossebele-Bouali road before joining the column led by Issa Issaka to attack the South African army in a pincer movement.

Colonel Christian Narkoyo

The Seleka's military spokesman and a former gendarme from north-eastern CAR, Colonel Narkoyo, who led the Seleka combatants at Bria, has been a key interlocutor of the government in Bangui and the media. He denounced the passivity of the Seleka ministers in the government of national unity formed after the Libreville Agreements and announced that the rank-and-file supporters of the coalition were taking up arms again.

Colonel Abdelaziz

Former liberator and former member of François Bozizé's presidential guard, he decided to join the rebellion after criticising Bozizé for not paying him the money he had been promised for helping him to power in 2003. He led the Seleka combatants at Kabo, in the north of the country, and more recently, led missions to apprehend the FDPC leader, Abdoulaye Miskine, in south-western CAR.

Appendix C: Chronology

21 June 2012

CPSK founded. Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, leader of the movement, announces he is leaving the CPJP and will take up arms unless there are fresh negotiations with the government.

20 August 2012

Strategic military agreement between the CPJP dissidence led by Nouredine Adam and Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane's CPSK. Michel Djotodia adhered to this agreement shortly after.

16 September 2012

Attack on towns of Sibut and Damara, respectively 160km and 75km from Bangui. A dissidence of the CPJP and later the Seleka claim responsibility for these attacks.

27 November 2012

Clashes between the FACA and the rebels near Kabo following attacks led by armed combatants in the periphery of the town. The Seleka claims responsibility for these attacks. Several FACA soldiers are killed during fighting.

10 December 2012

The Seleka rebels attack and take Ndélé, Ouadda and Sam Ouandja.

12 December 2012

The Seleka issues its first press release, in which the coalition sets out its demands.

15-29 December 2012

The Seleka rebels attack and take Bamingui, Mbrès, Bria, Kabo, Batangafo, Ippy, Bambari, Kaga Bando, Sibut.

18 December 2012

Chad sends troops to the CAR to contain the rebel advance.

21 December 2012

The ECCAS holds an extraordinary summit at N'Djamena. The heads of member states call for negotiations to take place at Libreville and for the cessation of hostilities. They decide to create a MICOPAX intervention force.

30 December 2012

Boni Yayi, AU president-in-office, visits Bangui for talks with Bozizé. Following these talks, Bozizé announces that he will not stand for a third term in office and that he agrees to form a government of national unity.

January 2013

"Out of control" Seleka combatants attack Kouango, Alindao, Mobaye and Bangassou.

6 January 2013

South Africa announces it will send 400 troops to Bangui "to help stabilise the country".

11 January 2013

Libreville Agreement on the crisis in the Central African Republic.

17 January 2013

Following the Libreville Agreement, Nicolas Tiangaye is appointed prime minister of the government of national unity.

3 February 2013

Government of national unity appointed, composed of representatives of the different tendencies among the signatories to the Libreville Agreement.

15 March 2013

At a rally to celebrate ten years in power, held at the Boganda Stadium, François Bozizé announces that his opponents will have to beat him at the ballot box if they want him to leave office and he calls on his supporters to resist the Seleka.

17-18 March 2013

The Seleka holds five ministers of the government of national unity (leaders of the movement) hostage at Sibut and issues an ultimatum, giving Bozizé's government three days to remove South African troops from the country, release political prisoners and recognise the ranks obtained by combatants in the Seleka forces.

20 March 2013

François Bozizé signs two decrees authorising the release of prisoners detained since 15 March 2012, suspending the curfew and lifting the barriers erected in Bangui.

21-24 March 2013

In a final offensive, the Seleka rebels cross the red line at Damara, confront the South African soldiers and finally take Bangui on 24 March. Bozizé flees to the DRC and then to Cameroon.

2 June 2013

François Bozizé leaves Cameroon for an unknown destination.

Appendix D: Glossary

A2R	Alliance pour la refondation (Alliance for Renewal).
ANE	Autorité nationale des élections (National Electoral Authority). The third workshop of the committee for dialogue on the revision of the electoral code decided to create the ANE in September 2012. The ANE replaced the National Independent Electoral Commission after parliament voted for a new electoral code.
APRD	Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy). This rebel group appeared in 2005 in the north west and centre-north. It signed the comprehensive Libreville Agreement in 2008. Its leader, Jean-Jacques Démafouth, announced the dissolution of the movement on 17 May 2012 and its combatants joined the DDR program.
AU	African Union
BINUCA	Bureau intégré des Nations unies pour la consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine (United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic).
CEMAC	Central African Economic and Monetary Community
CPJP	Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace). Rebel group that appeared at the end of 2008 to the north of Ndélé in the prefecture of Bamingui-Bangoran, in the north east of the country. This armed movement adhered to the comprehensive peace agreement on 25 August 2012 and signed the 2013 Libreville political agreement to resolve the crisis in the CAR.
CPSK	Convention patriotique du salut du Kodro (Wa Kordo Salute Patriotic Convention). Dissidence of the CPJP founded in June 2012 by Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, the CPSK is part of the Seleka and signed the 2013 Libreville political agreement to resolve the crisis in the CAR. Moussa Dhaffane is now minister of state for water and forests in the government of national unity.
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration
ECCAS	Economic Community of Central African States
EDF	European Development Fund
FACA	Forces armées centrafricaines (CAR Armed Forces).
IPD	Inclusive Political Dialogue
FDPC	Front démocratique pour le peuple centrafricain (Democratic Front for the Central African People). Rebel group led by Abdoulaye Miskine. It appeared in 2005 in the centre-north of the country, near Kabo, in Ouham prefecture. It signed the comprehensive Libreville Agreement and the 2013 Libreville political agreement to resolve the crisis in the CAR as a non-combatant armed movement. However, some FDPC combatants have never laid down their arms.
FOMUC	Force multinationale en Centrafrique (Multinational Force in the Central African Republic)
GICA	Groupe interprofessionnel centrafricain (Central African Inter-Professional Group).
KNK	President Bozizé's party. Kwa Na Kwa means "work, nothing but work" in Sango, the national language.
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army. Ugandan rebel movement founded in 1987. It extended its operations into the DRC, South Sudan and the CAR. The Ugandan Army tracked the LRA into the CAR in 2009 and, at the end of 2011, it was reinforced by about 100 U.S. military advisers from the special forces based in Obo and Djéma.

MICOPAX	Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central African Republic. Created under the ECCAS's authority in July 2008, it replaced FOMUC. Its mandate was initially to help consolidate peace and stability, assist the political process, help the government and NGOs to ensure respect for human rights and coordinate humanitarian aid. Following the crisis in the CAR, it was decided to extend its mandate and increase its numbers to 2,000.
MLPC	Mouvement pour la libération du peuple centrafricain (Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People). Founded by former president Ange-Félix Patassé in January 1979. After he was ousted in March 2003, Martin Ziguélé represented the party in the presidential election of 2005 and remains its leader.
OCHA	UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OIF	Organisation internationale de la francophonie
PRSP	Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper. It sets out the macroeconomic, structural and social policies in the CAR and the program for promoting growth and reducing poverty.
SRI	Section de recherches et d'investigations (Research and Investigation Department).
SSR	Security Sector Reform
UFDR	Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (Union of Democratic Forces for Unity). This Gula-dominated rebel group was formed in November 2006 in the districts of Vakaga and Haute-Kotto. The movement was founded by Michel Djotodia and later led by Zacharia Damane. The UFDR signed the comprehensive Libreville Agreement and the 2013 Libreville political agreement to resolve the crisis in the CAR.
UNHCR	UN High Commissioner for Refugees
WFP	World Food Programme

Appendix E: List of Members of the Provisional Government of National Unity

Ministers of State

Minister of State for Mines, Oil and Hydraulics:
Djono Ahaba

Minister of State for Equipment, Public Works and Development; government spokesperson:
Crépin Mboli-Goumba

Minister of State for Public Security, Emigration-Immigration and Public Order: Nourredine Adam

Minister of State for Water, Forests, Hunting and Fishing, responsible for the Environment and Ecology: Mohamed Daffhane

Minister of State for Communication, Civic Culture and National Reconciliation:
Christophe Gazambetty

Ministers

Minister of Defence, Army Reform, Army Veterans, War Victims and DDR: Michel Djotodia

Minister of Posts and Telecommunications:
Pouzere Henri

Minister of Foreign Affairs, Integration, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad:
Doubane Charles Armel

Minister of the Economy, Planning and International Cooperation: Abdallah Kadre Hassane

Minister of Commerce and Industry: Amalas Amias

Minister of Local Government: Aristide Sokambi

Minister of Education: Loudegue Marcel

Minister of Transport and Civil Aviation: Arnaud Djoubaye Abazene

Minister of Finance and Budget: Georges Bozanga

Minister of Justice, Guardian of the Seals and Reform of the Judiciary: Arsene Sendé

Minister of Health, Population and the Fight Against HIV/AIDS: Dr Aguide Soubouk

Minister of SME and Improving the Business Climate: Maurice Yondo

Minister of Rural Development: Tchimanguere Jérémie

Minister of Social Affairs, National Solidarity and Gender Promotion: Moussa Yadouma Marie Madeleine

Minister of the Civil Service, Labour, Employment and Social Security: Kpokolo Sabin

Minister of Urbanisation, Reconstruction of Public Buildings and Land Reform: Risigala Ramadan

Minister of Housing: Nkouet Marie Madeleine

Minister of Youth, Sports, Arts and Culture:
Abdoulaye Hissene

Minister of Tourism: Yacoub Ataib Mahamat

Minister responsible for the General Secretariat of the Government and Relations with Institutions: Ahamat Harol

Deputy Ministers

Defence, Army Reform and DDR: Colonel Bertrand Mamour

Budget: Bounandele Koumba

Central Africans Abroad: Anne Victoire Yakoussoube

Development Poles: Mbremaidou Christophe

Livestock Farming: Bendounga Joseph

Education, Basic and Vocational Education:
Claude Lenga

Urbanisation, Land Reform: Honore Douba

Environment and Ecology: Michel Doko

Regionalisation: Parfait Kongo

Presidential Cabinet

Director of the Presidential Cabinet (Minister):
Mahamat Kamoun

Assistant Director of the Cabinet: Idriss Salao

Private Cabinet Secretary: Fotor Abdel Djoubar

General Secretary of the Presidency of the Republic: Etienne Boda

Diplomatic Adviser to International Organisations (Minister): Dieudonné Salamato