

Consensus Building Dialogue Central African Republic, Sudan /South Sudan



2nd September 2015, Pretoria

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This workshop was a consensus building dialogue on the political developments in Central African Republic (CAR), the conclusion of the transitional government, the forthcoming elections scheduled for 27 December 2015, and implications for the Sub-region of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). It also discussed South Sudan and Sudan in the context of peace and security within the Central African Region. The dialogue was chaired by Ms. Molly Dhlamini, Projects and Stakeholder Relations Manager at Southern African Liaison Office (SALO). It was in the form of two panel presentations, each followed by a question and answer session.

The first session panellists comprised of Ambassador Andre Nzapayeke, Ambassador of CAR in South Africa who gave an insight on the historical background of the conflict in CAR. Ambassador Nzapayeke was followed by Mr. Handy, policy analyst and specialist at the United Nations, who provided an analysis of CAR's conflict on a global scale, taking an account of sub-regional dynamics. Ambassador Achiekh Ibn-Oumar Said Katir, former Chadian Government Minister, discussed the impact of the French colonies on the conflict in CAR. The final presentation was given by Ms Venetia Govender, Director of Crisis Action in South Africa. She discussed conflict patterns in Sudan and South Sudan and gave insight on how conflict in those two countries affects the rest of the central Africa. Participants for the workshop were drawn from government, industry, civil society, and the diplomatic community.

SUMMARY OF THE PRESENTATIONS:

Ambassador Nzapayeke: Ambassador of the Central African Republic (CAR) in South Africa

His Excellency Nzapayeke began his presentation by outlining the historical background of CAR to contextualise the conflict, highlighting that it was modelled by French colonisers who often used violence to exploit the country's resources. After independence the use of violence to gain power did not stop, which led to the establishment of a dictatorship by Jean-Bedel Bokassa (who termed himself 'Emperor of Central Africa'). According to ambassador Nzapayeke, from this period onwards, CAR experienced constant mutinies that led to rebellions and coup d'etats since the deposition of President David Dacko by Jean-Bédél Bokassa. Ambassador Nzapayeke stated that the 2013 coup saw Seleka, a coalition of rebel groups, seize the country's capital



Bangui and the fleeing of President François Bozizé to neighbouring Cameroon. He stated that the majority of the Seleka rebels were Muslims who, after gaining power, conducted mass killings that were met by a very strong reaction from the CAR population which consists of about 80% Christians. This reaction from the population became known as 'anti-Balaka'. Currently there is a struggle between the Seleka that came from the north and the Anti-Balakas and it is still going on today despite all the efforts to stabilise it.

Additionally, he noted that CAR's geographical location and proximity to certain countries has enabled the continuation of conflict within the country. For instance, the majority of the neighbouring countries also have a history of violent conflict. He highlighted that the key causes of conflict in CAR are a result of poor governance since the independence. CAR has had a patrimonial ruling system where the ruling elite saw the CAR as their own personal property. There continues to be marginalisation and exclusion, a lack of vision, and corruption. These issues have resulted in the decay of social services, government institutions, and limited opportunities for youth. As such, the youth out of frustration, end up joining rebel groups as a means of survival.

According to Ambassador Nzapayeke the United Nations (UN) has intervened by introducing a transitional government consisting of neutral individuals.

Unfortunately, the transitional government has had weak buy-in from critical stakeholders and inadequate resources. As such, the intervention has not been completely effective. In July 2014 a ceasefire agreement was signed, however national reconciliation remains a big challenge.

Mr. Handy: policy analyst and specialist on issues of peace, post-conflict reconstruction, mediation and international security at the UN

Mr. Handy began his presentation by acknowledging the importance of history in understanding the current situation in CAR. His presentation was an analysis of the CAR's conflict on a global scale, taking into account sub-regional dynamics. He made reference to a strategic study seminar of the National Assembly he attended on the 8th of April 2008 in Paris, hosted by the Ministry of Defence, which aimed at devising a prospective analysis and a new power narrative regarding global power dynamics. This considered the shift in innovation and ball technologies of a new relationship, as well as the main strategic markers of global power in 2040. Three significant trends emerged. Firstly, the slow and gradual erosion of Western domination is paving the way to the affirma-



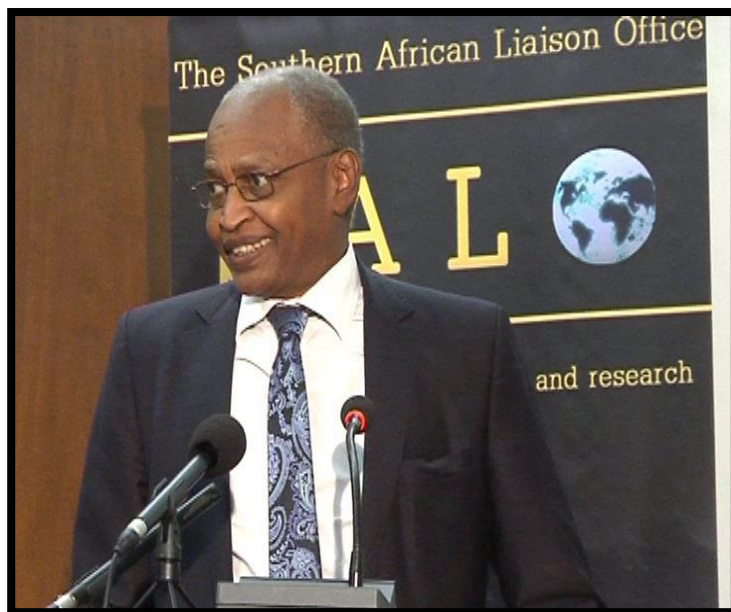
-tion of new powers, however their path remains uncertain. Secondly, the acceleration of globalisation and the explosion of transnational flows resulting in increased inter-dependence among states and required adjustments, which in the African context have resulted in variety of structural vulnerabilities. Meanwhile, the stability of the international system requires the strengthening of its regulatory frameworks and international cooperation. Lastly, the geo-political transition period, outlined above, has been marked by growing instability and volatility, a gradual rise in tensions, and an increase in conflict both through inter-state confrontation as well an increase in asymmetric threats such as rebel groups, the Seleka, ISIS, and many others that are highly prevalent in CAR.

According to Mr Handy the fundamental parameters of the CAR crisis are static and have not changed much over half of the century. This premise is further supported by the video footage, which showed that this feature of the conflict has not changed. Moreover, Mr Handy stated that the cycle of conflict and instability in the country would not end until there is an establishment of a single central source of authority that exercises legitimate monopoly of both force and territory over CAR. Such a central authority would thus be able to keep peace and enforce the law. He advised that in order maximise chances of success for the current transition CAR, the country's leadership must address, among others, the challenges facing the mining sector and the country's mismanagement of natural resources. This could be achieved through implementing an effective regulatory system that would contribute towards the sustainable development of the country's resources. Furthermore, such leadership would have to establish a tax and royalty regime that ensures that the revenue generated from the minerals serves as an effective catalyst for development. Central to this initiative or effort would be to introduce a mining code, deploy national security forces to reduce smuggling activities, and build on the Kimberley Process framework for leadership in order to prevent conflict diamonds from further fanning tensions within the country and across its borders.

Since its inception on the 15th of September 2014, the UN Multi-Dimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the CAR, MINUSCA, and a former presence by this UN Mission has now been established in forty localities across the country where there was no state presence before. Mr Handy highlighted that MINUSCA is currently the UN's most ambitious mission, yet it faces great challenges and even greater responsibility. Therefore, the coming months ahead will be a test for the CAR's transitional government and it will also be a test for the international community's responsiveness in stabilising a country severely ravaged by war.

Ambassador Achiekh Ibn-Oumar Said Katir: Former Chadian Government Minister, advisor, and military leader

According to Ambassador Said Katir, the crisis in Central Africa is just a replica of other crises on the continent. After African countries had attained independence, many thought that the only problem that would follow political liberation would be economic liberation. This was and remains not entirely true due to the fact that African countries are plagued with other challenges that have followed a similar pattern. The challenges faced by the African continent go back to the colonial system, more especially in French-speaking countries. Ambassador Katir pointed out that colonial Africa had just an administration and the armed forces and security forces, with no economy, no private businesses and no education. Highlighting these challenges, Ambassador Said Katir argued that bad governance, re-



bellions, armed groups, and the international community's efforts in intervening in Africa are at the centre of Africa's struggle towards achieving development. Furthermore, the transitional framework often adopted by the global community in its attempt to establish governments of national unity, election processes and peace-keeping missions have not addressed the major problems facing African countries. The Central African Republic is no exception, though the country has its own specificities. According to Ambassador Said Katir, these commonalities are a symptom of deep-rooted problems on the African continent which were inherited from the colonial power, especially in French-speaking Africa, that go beyond rebellions, power sharing, or elections. The administration, which consisted of armed forces and security forces with no economy, no private businesses and no education, hindered important links towards the development of the postcolonial state when the liberation movements took power. He stated that for an effective intervention by the international community, these deep-rooted causes need to be resolved first.

Additionally, he asserted that CAR was the most neglected country during French colonialism. Within most French colonies there were minimal transportation networks and the formation of local traders and businessmen as go-betweens amongst the international companies was encouraged. This did not occur in CAR, thus resulting in higher poverty rates. Moreover, according to Ambassador Said Katir, the electoral legislation of excluding foreigners in the electoral process enhanced the cycle of conflict in the country. Some native citizens were classified as foreigners because they fled to neighbouring countries in their quest for opportunities and some non-native citizens were classified as citizens due to the naturalisation law. Thus, native citizens who were treated as foreigners may become frustrated at being deprived of their right to vote and thus join further rebellious groups, as witnessed in Rwanda in the 1960's. In conclusion, Ambassador Said Katir stated that beyond elections and power-sharing, CAR needs a massive financial investment in the economic sector, the rehabilitation of the administration, and integrating the armed groups into civil and economic activities.

2ND SESSION

Venetia Govender: Director of Crisis Action, South Africa



Ms. Govender provided an insight on issues causing conflict in South Sudan. She stated that attempts at stabilising South Sudan are grappling with the implementation of the various agreements that have been signed, both on the Intergovernmental Authority for Development (IGAD) and the AU level. The geo-political position of South Sudan is very important, therefore so is dealing with the crisis in the CAR. For South Sudan, it means that one would have to deal with the issues of both Uganda and Sudan in their own respective roles. Sources of conflicts involve ethnic, religious, economic divisions, and spill-overs from other countries in the regions. Furthermore, these countries have a huge amount of natural resources. As such, it makes it

difficult to truly understanding some of the underlying features of all these conflict in the Horn of Africa. According to Ms. Govender, CAR and South Sudan are similar in that they both have fragile governments. Such fragile governments are faced with ethnic divisions and these divisions make it impossible for these countries to have stable domestic security frameworks. Moreover, power struggles after the independence have completely stained unity in South Sudan.

As a result, the new state is currently faced with a dramatic humanitarian situation. The few available resources have been diverted away from social and economic development towards sustaining the armed forces of the state and maintaining the conflict with rebel factions. The spill-over effects have resulted into increased ethnic-based militia in South Sudan and in the CAR.

According Ms. Govender, often the work that is done to resolve the conflict in South Sudan does not directly interrogate issues occurring within the country due personalised interests, national interests, and a kind of elitism that seems to exist. She stated also that there is a strange sense of unpredictability in the making of peace deals. On the one hand there's this deep insidious crisis that is continuing and on the other hand you have the continuation of the very normal activities of government and never shall the two meet, she pointed out. Analysing the situation in South Sudan, Ms. Govender argued that the conflict in the country has resulted in various companies pulling out their investments and surrounding countries losing money through humanitarian assistance. Emphasising the role of 'elitism' in that conflict, she argued that politicians have become completely morphed into business persons. For her, this kind of elitism is a major constraint for all African countries because benefits of foreign investment pushed towards enhancing social development. In conclusion, she felt that IGAD made an effort to bring in some neighbouring countries and countries that have a direct hand on South Sudan as an attempt to deal with the violence in South Sudan.

Ambassador Achiekh Ibn-Oumar Said Katir: Former Chadian Government Minister, advisor, and military leader

Ambassador Said Katir concluded the presentation by noting that Africans should be patient with peace processes, as most of these have historical roots that date back to the colonial era and these have to be understood and adequately addressed by those involved in the peace process. Secondly, the five countries, Libya, Sudan,

South Sudan, Chad, and the CAR, have been engaging in intricate political and military relationships for decades and this has made it difficult to achieve sustainable peace and security in the region. This has opened up opportunities for rebel groups due to the failure to reach a common understanding amongst these neighbouring countries. For instance, some groups from CAR, in unison with a rebel group from the southern part of Darfur in February had intense battles with the central government of Sudan. The Sudanese government has accused South Sudan of supporting this group and claims that they arrived in Darfur through North Eastern CAR. Moreover, the Darfur rebellion was openly backed by the government in Chad and the reverse was also true because the Sudanese government has been backing rebels in Chad. Therefore, the whole region is enmeshed in that kind of contradiction that exacerbates conflict. According to Ambassador Said Katir, the AU, UN, and regional organisations should work constructively with the aforementioned governments in order to establish a coherent and organised approach; and to set aside egotistic and purely pragmatic calculations. In conclusion, Ambassador Said Katir stated that tens of thousands of young people throughout central Africa have no skills other than manipulating weapons, which then has a negative psychological effect towards their development and growth. Such issues cannot be solved through a transitional government or through so-called transparent elections, it will only be solved through bold socio-economic programmes.

SUMMARY OF THE QUESTION AND ANSWER SESSION

As part of the discussion, questions were raised about the law that former transitional government officers are excluded from running for office in CAR. Ambassador Nzapayeke clarified that the objective of that law was for those in power not to manipulate results to extend their term in the executive. Mr. Handy shared Ambassador Nzapayeke's sentiments on the topic and explained that the law is merely a technical measure which is meant to ensure that those that are running the transitional process are solely focusing on putting in place the necessary mechanisms to ensure a clean and transparent process in order to pave the way for the return of constitutional governance and democratic change.

Additionally, the discussion touched on South Africa's position on the current situation in CAR, especially after South African defence force members died whilst trying to aid the CAR government. According to Ambassador Nzapayeke, the incident was unfortunate and sad. CAR is, however, still continuing to nurture their relations with South Africa as there are many lessons to be learnt from South Africa. Ambassador Said Katir rectified his previous statement of foreigners not being able to vote, he discovered that they are now allowed and sees that as a step in the direction for CAR. Moreover, he attributed some of the problems that are fuelling conflict in French speaking African countries as the lack of context specific constitutions after colonial liberation; instead constitutions were a "copy and paste process from the French Constitution". As a result, the respective constitutions are often disconnected from the realities of these countries. Participants highlighted the importance of having Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programmes to develop and enhance reconciliation amongst the rebel groups.

The analysis and recommendations included in this Policy Dialogue Report do not necessarily reflect the view of SALO or any of the donors or conference participants, but rather draw upon the major strands of discussion put forward at the event. Participants neither reviewed nor approved this document. The contents of the report are the sole responsibility of SALO, and can under no circumstances be regarded as reflecting the position of the donors who provided financial assistance for this policy dialogue session.

About the Southern African Liaison Office:

The Southern African Liaison Office (SALO) is a South African-based not-for-profit civil society organisation which, through advocacy, dialogue, policy consensus and in-depth research and analysis, influences the current thinking and debates on foreign policy especially regarding African crises and conflicts.

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