

The Central African Crisis: From Predation to Stabilisation

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Executive Summary

The crisis that has plagued the Central African Republic (CAR) since December 2012, particularly predation by both authorities and armed groups, has led to the collapse of the state. Under the Seleka, bad governance inherited from former regimes worsened. Its leaders looted state resources and controlled the country's illicit economic networks. Ending this cycle of predatory rule and moving peacefully to a state that functions and can protect its citizens requires CAR's international partners to prioritise, alongside security, economic revival and the fight against corruption and illegal trafficking. Only a close partnership between the government, UN and other international actors, with foreign advisers working alongside civil servants in key ministries, can address these challenges.

Governance under the short Seleka rule (March-December 2013) was deceptive: the regime proclaimed its positive intentions while, like its predecessors, plundering public funds and abusing power for self-enrichment. Though Seleka fighters were involved in illicit activities even before, once in power the movement asserted control of lucrative trafficking networks (gold, diamond and ivory). Their systematic looting destroyed what was already a phantom state. Retaliation by anti-balaka fighters against Muslims – the majority of traders are Muslim – aggravated the economic collapse.

The economy fell apart even before the state; yet the current international intervention spearheaded by the G5 (African Union, UN, European Union, the U.S. and France) focuses for the most part on security. Troops are being mobilised, but if a principal cause of the conflict – entrenched predation – is left unaddressed, the international community will repeat the failures of its past interventions. Protecting citizens is important; but so too is rekindling economic activity and improving financial public management to help build an effective public governance system delivering services for all CAR citizens, both Muslim and Christian.

A new UN mission (MINUSCA) will be deployed in September 2014. In addition to its current mandate – protecting civilians, assisting a political transition, supporting humanitarian work and monitoring human rights – it must change the incentive structure for better governance. It should prioritise rebuilding the economy and public institutions and fighting trafficking. The region and relevant multilateral organisations should be involved too. Targeted sanctions against spoilers in and outside CAR should be embedded in a more comprehensive strategy to revive the economy.

Some politicians with ties to armed groups or who are eying what are for the moment hypothetical presidential elections could resist a tight partnership between the state and international community. But the transitional government's demand for strong international support offers an opportunity to forge such a partnership and adopt the policies essential to both stabilise the country and promote a change of governance.

Recommendations

To define a stabilisation and reconstruction strategy that benefits all sectors of the CAR population

To the transitional government, donors and the G5:

1. Agree on a partnership for the transition that includes:
 - a) an agreement on co-management of key revenue generating state institutions; strict selection of candidates for top public administration jobs and a rigorous training program for new civil servants;
 - b) job creation, improved financial public management and the fight against illicit economic networks; and
 - c) thematic donors groups under the authority of the Secretary-General's special representative (SRSG) to implement this policy.

To create jobs

To the transitional government, the private sector and donors:

2. Launch labour intensive projects to boost the agricultural sector and rehabilitate infrastructure.
3. Identify and support job-creating activities within the private sector.

To fight against state corruption

To the transitional government and donors:

4. Deploy a team of experts to work as counterparts to civil servants, with the power to veto expenditures in the ministries of finance and mines and the main public companies.
5. Reform the tax administration by creating a single tax agency to centralise tax collection.
6. Reinforce financial checks and balances and provide capacity building to civil society organisations to enable them to monitor financial public management.

To fight against the illicit economic networks

To the transitional government:

7. Investigate alleged embezzlement by the two previous governments and request assistance from Interpol, donors and the UN.

To the UN, regional countries, the CAR government and specialised organisations:

8. Reach a consensus on the fight against international trafficking originating from the CAR, and create a cell within MINUSCA to fight against diamonds, gold, ivory trafficking and militarised poaching.

9. Resume control of main gold and diamonds production sites by deploying there international forces and civil servants, and implement the Kimberley Process certification mechanism for diamonds coming from these areas.

To the transitional government, UN and donors:

10. Revive and improve impartiality of the judiciary in Bangui and in cities secured by international forces, by providing technical assistance for the police and the courts.

To create a new administrative elite

To the transitional government and donors:

11. Develop and implement rigorous training programs for new civil servants in the public infrastructures, finances and security sectors.

Nairobi/Brussels, 17 June 2014

The Central African Crisis: From Predation to Stabilisation

I. Introduction

The current crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR) has sealed the fate of a state that depends on international aid and has long ceased to exist.¹ Government has become little more than a patronage exercise,² in which appointments to decision-making posts are based on ethnic criteria and clientelism.³ After the 1993 elections that brought Ange Félix Patassé to power, predation triumphed over democratisation.

Poor governance and successive crises frightened away the most serious investors,⁴ destroyed the formal economy and impoverished the people. The collapse of the economy preceded and prepared the collapse of the state. Development indicators have fallen sharply,⁵ the number of mid-sized or large enterprises has fallen starkly since the start of the 1990s,⁶ the once flourishing coffee and cotton sectors have collapsed,⁷ and the almost non-existent social services have been subcontracted to donors and their operators, the NGOs.

¹ See Crisis Group Africa Report N°136, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, 13 December 2007.

² In a recent report, Didier Niewiadowski, a French diplomat posted in Bangui for several years, described how Central African presidents constructed a political system in which an elite with access to power can live from unearned income. See "La République centrafricaine: le naufrage d'un Etat, l'agonie d'une nation", Paris, 21 January 2014.

³ Tribalisation began to poison the system in the 1981 elections, when General Kolingba came to power. The opposition between southerners (*riverains*) and northerners (*savaniers*) crystallised during his presidency (1981-1993) and was later manipulated by Patassé. Kolingba placed his friends and members of his own ethnic group (Yakoma) at the head of the strategic institutions, in defence, security, the civil service and state-owned companies. At the start of the 1990s, the presidential guard was mainly Yakoma. Members of that group were at the head of 29 of 36 state-owned and mixed companies. His successors also played the ethnic card and did not shy from stirring up conflicts in order to take control of state resources and harness them for their personal benefit or for that of their respective ethnic groups. Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, *Chronique de la crise centrafricaine 1996-1997. Le syndrome Barracuda* (Paris, 1997); Emmanuel Chauvin, "Rivalités ethniques et guerre urbaine au cœur de l'Afrique – Bangui (1996-2001)", *Enjeux*, no. 40 (2009), pp. 30-38.

⁴ The country's decline discouraged investors most sensitive to issues of governance and transparency and left the field clear for existing (Syrians, Yemenis, Lebanese) and new operators (Chinese, Indian). Didier Niewiadowski, *op. cit.*

⁵ Life expectancy fell from 49 in 1985 to 48 in 2012, while gross national income per capita fell from \$909 to \$722 in the same period. The average length of time spent at school increased only in one year between 1985 and 2012 and is now less than seven years. See "Central African Republic: Human Development Indicators", UN Development Programme (UNDP), <http://bit.ly/19mzliB>.

⁶ Crisis Group interview, economic operator, Bangui, 6 March 2014.

⁷ Commercial agriculture, once prosperous, has collapsed. Cotton, coffee and tobacco crops were developed in the colonial period. Since the 1970s, while cotton production has grown exponentially in other French-speaking African countries, the CAR has experienced periods of stagnation and a fall in production. Support and price stabilisation structures have been negated by corruption, which has had a major impact on the cotton sector. The coffee sector has suffered from low production and an increase in smuggling to Sudan and ex-Zaïre. Jean-Joël Brégeon, *Un rêve d'Afrique*,

The 2013 crisis made matters much worse. The many atrocities committed by the Seleka and anti-balaka militias⁸ caused a humanitarian disaster,⁹ provoked fierce community tensions and systematic targeting of Muslims in Bangui and the west of the country and destroyed an already declining economy.¹⁰

The collapse of the economy and government corruption have encouraged the shift from a productive to a predatory economy for which the authorities and the armed groups are equally responsible.¹¹ The predation, which also took place under former President François Bozizé despite international aid, has led to the current crisis and state collapse.

Following on from previous reporting on the security crisis, this report focuses on the political economy of the conflict. It describes how the predatory economy and trafficking intensified and spread under the Seleka and what the government needs to do to stabilise and rebuild the country. It also highlights the need to broaden the security intervention, so as to revive the productive economy and combat trafficking during a transition that is only just beginning.

administrateur en Oubangui-Chari, la cendrillon de l'Empire (Paris, 1998); Eric de Dampierre, "Coton noir, café blanc, deux cultures du Haut-Oubangui à la veille de la loi-cadre", *Cahier d'études africaines*, vol. 1, cahier 2 (1960), p. 128-147; and Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, *op. cit.*

⁸ For more on the anti-balaka militias, see "The Central African Republic: the Third Government in Thirteen Months Gets Under Way", Crisis Group blog (crisisgroupblogs.org/africanpeacebuilding), 21 January 2014.

⁹ According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there were 603,000 internally displaced persons in the CAR in April 2014, 178,900 in Bangui. See "Central African Republic Situation Report n°22", OCHA, 23 April 2014. OCHA counted 348,093 CAR refugees, with 59,000 in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), 16,000 in Congo-Brazzaville, 181,000 in Cameroon and 92,000 in Chad. See "Central African Crisis: Regional Humanitarian Snapshot", OCHA, 22 April 2014.

¹⁰ All the country's indicators fell in 2013: GDP, already low, dropped 36 per cent and tax revenues by half; inflation increased from 5.9 per cent to 6.6 per cent, and the current account deficit doubled. See "IMF Mission and the Central African Republic Reach Staff-Level Agreement on Financial Assistance Under the Rapid Credit Facility", press release 14/153, International Monetary Fund (IMF), 14 April 2014. Moreover, the departure of Muslims from Bangui and the west will have a major economic impact, as they controlled a large part of commerce.

¹¹ With the exception of the south west, which, before the recent crisis, was spared militia attacks, armed groups have had a disastrous effect on the CAR. In the north west, road-cutters proliferate and armed groups such as the Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD) have long held control over territory even though they were officially dissolved. In the north and centre of the country, Abdoulaye Miskine's Democratic Front for the Central African People (FDPC) and Baba Laddé's Patriotic Front (FPR) have all committed atrocities against civilians. The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) established itself in the south east a few years ago. The north east, home of some Seleka combatants, has served as a support base for rebel Darfuri and Chadian groups. See Crisis Group African Reports N°182, *The Lord's Resistance Army: End Game?*, 17 November 2011 and N°203, *Central African Republic: Priorities of the Transition*, 11 June 2013. There were fourteen armed groups in the CAR at one point. See "République centrafricaine: géopolitique d'un pays oublié", revue géopolitique, diploweb.com, 1 October 2013.

II. Looting the State

A. *The Predatory State*

In June 2013, Crisis Group described the predatory techniques used by the Bozizé government, as it monopolised public finances, took control of part of the diamond sector and, like its predecessors, turned the CAR into a “gemocracy”.¹²

The Seleka perpetuated and reinforced this tradition of predation.¹³ From the moment he took control of Bangui in March 2013, Michel Djotodia, conscious of the transient nature of the situation, reportedly used the same methods as his predecessor.

1. Bleeding the treasury

Several government sources alleged that Djotodia demanded a 50 per cent increase in the funds allocated to the presidency,¹⁴ failed to repay several advances allocated for cancelled missions and misappropriated public funds on a number of occasions.¹⁵ While his predecessor increased the procedures for extraordinary expenditure, Djotodia is said to have spent money and demanded reimbursements without even informing the finance minister.¹⁶ Several ministers reportedly benefited greatly by claiming exorbitant expenses for foreign trips.¹⁷

Obsessed with his own security,¹⁸ Djotodia spent large sums renovating the Roux army base, a Seleka stronghold, where he lived.¹⁹ He followed in Bokassa’s footsteps

¹² The term “gemocracy” describes political regimes that monopolise diamond resources. See Olivier Vallée, *Les gemmocraties: l’économie politique du diamant africain* (Paris, 1997). A former CAR prime minister (1996-1997) described successive presidents as “CAR’s leading diamond operators”. Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, op. cit.; and Crisis Group report, *Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit., and Crisis Group Africa Report N°167, *Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic*, 16 December 2010.

¹³ See Crisis Group Report, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, op. cit.

¹⁴ The budget allocated to the presidency grew from CFA30 million (about \$62,000) to CFA45 million (about \$93,000) a week under Michel Djotodia. Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 25 February 2014; and telephone interview, CAR politician, 10 May 2014.

¹⁵ Several sources claim that Michel Djotodia’s team misappropriated some of the money reserved for food allowances for Seleka combatants stationed in Bangui. Crisis Group interviews; adviser to prime minister, Paris, 21 December 2013; former CAR minister, Bangui, 25 February 2014; and former CAR minister, Paris, 16 June 2014.

¹⁶ These practices were not new. Before the emergence of the Seleka, several ministers contracted loans with India, Sudan and China without notifying the finance minister. Didier Niewiadowski, op. cit. Extraordinary spending procedures became the rule. In 2013, an audit concluded that, under Bozizé, many expenditures were for “special programs” by the presidency. “RCA: état des lieux de la situation de trésorerie au 28 February 2013”, mission report (volume 1), 2AC, April 2013.

¹⁷ With the country in the middle of a security crisis, ministers travelled to Qatar, Senegal, South Africa, India and Europe in 2013. One requested permission to attend a basketball tournament in Abidjan. Crisis Group interviews, former prime minister, Bangui, 16 January 2014 and former CAR minister, Bangui, 25 February 2014.

¹⁸ Seleka’s leading military commanders privately threatened to overthrow Djotodia if he tried to dismiss them. Crisis Group interview, Seleka military leader, Bangui, 25 March 2013.

¹⁹ Built by the French on Bangui’s heights, above the Oubangui River, the Roux army base has been redeveloped several times, including by Presidents Bokassa and Patassé. After Seleka took control of Bangui, much of the hard core of the armed coalition was based there. In order to create a secure fortress, security equipment, including video-surveillance cameras, was installed at a cost of CFA300 million (about \$622,000). The presidency’s administrative and financial director reportedly over-invoiced CFA1 billion (about \$2 million), which is said to have resulted in her dismissal at the

and, during his brief presidency, lived a life that was far removed from the everyday life of CAR citizens. In November 2013, with state coffers empty and civil service wage arrears accumulating, the transitional president asked the council of ministers to release CFA400 million (about \$830,000) to pay for a 1 December celebration that was eventually held, though at lesser cost.²⁰

Now in Benin with his Beninese wife and several members of his entourage, Djotodia is said to enjoy a comfortable retirement and seems to easily cover his expenses.²¹ He reportedly lives in Ayène, a district in the north of Cotonou, protected by Beninese soldiers. According to the local press, he is building a house in Abomey Calavi, in the suburbs of Cotonou, and reportedly owns a farm 70km from the capital.²²

2. Malpractices of the Seleka barons

The Seleka barons in Bangui were reportedly quick to make money from their posts. They controlled the coveted water and forests ministry, in which there were allegations of repeated fraud.²³ In November 2013, according to official documents, twelve ivory tusks seized from poachers in the Dzanga-Sangha reserve were taken to Bangui and unloaded but never received by the water and forests ministry.²⁴ Moreover, timber illegally sold by traders on the Magali market in Bangui was reportedly seized and resold on the black market.²⁵ Sources claim that, at the end of 2013, officers stopped a vehicle driven by a member of a minister's family at the airport control, found arms and diamonds inside but made no arrests.²⁶

3. The complete disorganisation of public finance

Budgeting and accounting rules were violated in the context of major financial difficulties. Widespread insecurity, the suspension of international aid that followed the eruption of the crisis and the halt to formal economic activities and revenue generat-

end of 2013. Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 25 February 2014 and telephone interview, Central African politician, 10 May 2014.

²⁰ The celebration was the annual commemoration of the proclamation of the Central African Republic on 1 December 1958. The CAR became independent less than two years later, on 13 August 1960. Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 25 February 2014.

²¹ "Djotodia, chef de chantier à Cotonou", *La lettre du continent*, no. 676, 12 February 2014, p. 5. "Centrafrique: Michel Djotodia, cool à Cotonou... Mais jusqu'à quand?", *Jeune Afrique*, 24 February 2014; "Michel Djotodia, en exil au Bénin", *Radio France internationale*, 11 January 2014.

²² Crisis Group email correspondence, journalist, Cotonou, February 2014. The Beninese opposition criticised Djotodia's move to near Cotonou. "Bénin: des députés interpellent le gouvernement sur l'asile de Michel Djotodia", *La nouvelle tribune*, 23 January 2014.

²³ During the days that followed the coup, the water and forests ministry was completely vandalised by looters. Stores holding "trophies", including tusks, hides and skins, firearms and traps used by poachers were taken. Many ministry records were destroyed. Crisis Group tour of ministry, 15 March 2014.

²⁴ Crisis Group interview, water and forests ministry official, Bangui, 15 March 2014. Dzanga-Sangha reserve is in the south west and forms part of the Sangha protected area on the borders with Cameroon and the Republic of Congo. UNESCO declared this area a world heritage site in July 2012. "Le site tri-national de la Sangha inscrit au patrimoine mondial de l'UNESCO", *Congo-site*, 5 July 2012.

²⁵ Seized illegal timber should normally be sold by auction and receipts paid into the account of the water and forests ministry. Crisis Group interview, water and forests ministry official, Bangui, 15 March 2014 and telephone interview, economic operator, 15 April 2014.

²⁶ Crisis Group telephone interview, former minister, 7 May 2014 and interview, mines ministry official, Bangui, 3 March 2014.

ing administrative services such as customs drastically reduced the state's financial resources in 2013. These were limited to a few revenue streams from taxes and a CFA25 billion (about \$51 million) loan from the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC).²⁷ The treasury could not pay civil servants at the end of the year.

There were no budgetary controls over the Djotodia government's expenditures. Most went for security, since the entire country was plagued by insecurity, and Seleka leaders were unable to keep their troops under control in Bangui.²⁸ These practices bled the public finances dry, and anyone who opposed them was sidelined.²⁹ The finance minister and the treasury's director general were dismissed, reportedly after challenging them, extending the long list of treasury leaders replaced for "insubordination".³⁰ After their dismissal, Abdellah Kadr, a close ally of the president, became interim finance minister, and significant amounts were seemingly paid out by the treasury.³¹

B. *Seleka in Power: New Business*

Crises often coincide with the arrival of certain investors. The CAR is no exception, notably in the extractive resources and private security sectors.

1. *Extractive resources*

As soon as the Seleka came to power, about twenty mining and oil companies requested exploration rights from the mines ministry.³² A short time before his ousting, former President Bozizé had agreed to contracts with companies that were not well known.³³ The concessions granted to South African companies aroused the curiosity of that country's parliamentarians, who, after their troops intervened to defend Bozizé in March 2013,³⁴ raised questions about relations between Pretoria and the

²⁷ Crisis Group interview, National Transition Council (CNT) member, Bangui, 23 January 2014. "Congo: 25 milliards de FCFA pour les centrafricains", *Journal de Bangui*, 10 June 2013.

²⁸ Three-quarters of spending were described as being for security purposes. The security committee, chaired by Djotodia, met weekly. Crisis Group interview, CNT member, Bangui, 23 January 2014.

²⁹ In February 2014, only €60,000 remained in the treasury. Crisis Group interview, EU expert, Bangui, 1 March 2014.

³⁰ For example, in April 2007, Jean-Serge Wafio, president of the Central African Democratic Party (PDCA) and former Bozizé ally, was accused of not following instructions given by the government and the prime minister, Elie Doté, and dismissed as treasury director general. "Centrafrique – Trésor Public: Jean Serge Wafio limogé", Agence France-Presse, 20 April 2007. In 2012, Serge Warassio Mokomsé Ouarassio, who held the same post, was dismissed following disagreements with Bozizé. "Bozizé nomme un nouveau directeur général au Trésor public", *Centrafrique-presse*, 20 August 2012.

³¹ Crisis Group interview, former minister, Bangui, 25 February 2014.

³² Crisis Group interview, mines ministry official, Bangui, 26 February 2014.

³³ On 30 December 2012, Bozizé granted a gold and diamonds exploration license to a Cameroon-based company in an area that included the Dzanga-Sangha protected area, which is part of a world heritage site. The Worldwide Fund for Nature (WWF) tried to persuade the authorities not to grant the license. Decree 12-293, Bangui, 30 December 2012. Crisis Group interview, WWF official, Bangui, 22 January 2014.

³⁴ See Crisis Group Report, *Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

Bozizé government.³⁵ Negotiations, led by dignitaries of the former regime, were reportedly opaque.³⁶

Although the new government showed some willingness to clean up the extractive resources sector and break with bad practice, the lack of transparency continued under the Seleka. The new authorities did not revise existing contracts as promised;³⁷ instead they confirmed their validity and visited foreign countries in an attempt to attract new investors.³⁸ A license for exploration in a protected area, signed by Bozizé and granted to an unknown company, was implemented.³⁹ An oil company reportedly sent a delegation to Bangui with the intention of securing a license for Bloc C, in the vicinity of the town of Carnot, in the south west, where the operator was Dig Oil.⁴⁰ Similarly, a Portuguese company interested in prospecting for minerals approached the CAR authorities but apparently did not sign a contract with them.⁴¹

2. The private security sector: a French business

In times of crisis, the security sector, like extractive resources, attracts private foreign operators. Governments may change, but the sector remains under French influence. A French private security company advised François Bozizé and provided training to the armed forces at Bossembélé.⁴² Since the emergence of the Seleka, another company, registered in the U.S. but managed by a French citizen, has taken over. It dispatched a team led by a former French military officer.⁴³ Since Catherine Samba-Panza took over as president, a new French security company has approached the transitional government in the hope of securing a contract to provide training.⁴⁴

The disengagement of the French government allowed French private companies in, but they have not made up for the lack of military training. Both Bozizé and Djoto-

³⁵ "Central African Republic: Is this what our soldiers died for?", *Mail & Guardian*, 28 March 2013.

³⁶ "Sylvain Ndoutingai: Central African Republic", *Africa Energy Intelligence*, no. 673, 11 April 2012. Former finance and mines minister Sylvain Ndoutingai, "a nephew" of François Bozizé and his closest adviser, was suspected by the president of plotting against him. He was arrested and kept under house arrest for several months. Once released, he left the country and is believed to be in France. Crisis Group interview, CAR politician, Paris, 12 April 2014.

³⁷ An adviser to the mines minister said the new government was trying to obtain copies of all the contracts signed by the previous government in order to review and renegotiate them if necessary. Crisis Group interviews, Bangui, 13 April 2013, and Kimberley, 5 June 2013.

³⁸ Ministers travelled to South Africa and Europe with this objective. Crisis Group interview, mines ministry official, Bangui, 24 February 2014.

³⁹ See section III.B on entrepreneur comzones.

⁴⁰ Dig Oil signed a contract for the Bloc C oil concession in November 2011. www.digoil.co.za/digoil_prospects.html. According to Sapetro's website, the company owns a 45 per cent share of "Licence C". www.sapetro.com/our-operations/central-african-republic/. Also, "Le groupe Sapetro fait affaire avec Dig Oil", *Africa Energy Intelligence*, no. 706, 17 September 2013. Crisis Group interview, journalist, Nairobi, 28 April 2014.

⁴¹ Crisis Group interview, mines ministry official, Bangui, 26 February 2014.

⁴² This company had to pay several social security contributions; its contract ended in January 2013. Crisis Group telephone interview, company director, 6 May 2013.

⁴³ A former French soldier was introduced to Djotodia by a Senegalese acquaintance and was at his side shortly after the fall of Bangui. Crisis Group observation, Bangui, April 2013. He was subsequently appointed security adviser to President Djotodia and facilitated conclusion of a contract with a French security company to train the presidential guard. Having stayed three months at the Oubangui-Chari hotel without paying, the representatives of this company were obliged to leave. Crisis Group interviews, economic operator and former soldier, Bangui, 21 and 25 January 2014.

⁴⁴ Crisis Group interview, economic operator, Bangui, 25 February 2014.

dia were unreliable financially. Amid a crisis and human rights violations, their closeness to former French military officers now working in the private sector causes embarrassment in Paris. “We cannot be happy about the presence of French mercenaries in Bangui”, said a French leader.⁴⁵

3. A self-interested entourage

Michel Djotodia was courted by childhood friends, advisers of all kinds and opportunistic economic operators resident in Bangui hotels and sniffing for new contracts.⁴⁶ These included security advisers, but also the coup leaders’ communications specialists.⁴⁷ Djotodia’s “spin doctors” succeeded Bozizé’s special advisers. They pretended they could gain access to African and European capitals for the transitional president but failed in their attempts to draw international attention to “the benefits of the Djotodia government”.⁴⁸ They bet on the Seleka having a future in power in the hope of being rewarded for their services.⁴⁹ As a former CAR prime minister said, “the smaller the cake to be shared out, the more intense is the dance around it and the more likely are the knives to come out”.⁵⁰

⁴⁵ “Sécurité: des retraités français très spéciaux débarquent en Centrafrique”, *Jeune Afrique*, 17 July 2013.

⁴⁶ Crisis Group interview, prime minister, Bangui, 16 January 2014.

⁴⁷ “Michel Djotodia, l’homme qui ne voulait pas du pouvoir... mais qui aimerait bien le garder”, *Jeune Afrique*, 30 December 2013.

⁴⁸ Crisis Group interview, communications advisor, Bangui, 25 January 2014.

⁴⁹ Ibid.

⁵⁰ Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, *op. cit.*, p. 179.

III. Takeover of the Illegal Economy

In a country characterised by mass poverty, porous borders, state failure and an easily corruptible administration, the illegal economy prospers, and smuggling is common. Although traders play the main role, armed groups have also become key figures and are trying to gain control of the most profitable networks.

The Seleka commanders facilitated the extension of the predatory economy. They quickly extended their field of action and activities to benefit from territorial gains in the west and centre of the country. They organised the looting of economic operators, public administration buildings and NGOs, took over new mining sites in the west, allied with traders in Bangui and poachers and reorganised the parallel fuel-resale networks.

A. *Looting and Kidnapping: The Meaning of Victory*

Domestic and foreign rebellions in the CAR have often led to massive looting of the civilian population, private companies and NGOs.⁵¹ Frequent looting accompanied the 1996-1997 mutinies and partly caused the departure of big companies and the arrival of new economic operators.⁵²

Looting was never so widespread or targeted as in the 2013 crisis. Organised looting took place, including in the regions. According to the UN, this was the price paid for the Seleka victory.⁵³ Cars owned by NGOs, the UN and private companies were stolen and sold in neighbouring countries on such a scale that the Seleka coup seemed more like a car theft operation than the result of political struggle.⁵⁴ Some were repainted in the PK5 district, Bangui's commercial centre, which quite openly became the hub for stolen goods.⁵⁵ Companies like SUCAF, CFAO and Total all recorded heavy losses because of damage to their installations and offices, causing a partial or total halt to their activities.⁵⁶ In Bangui, many unemployed youths participated in the looting in the wake of the Seleka but then joined the anti-balaka.

In Bayanga, in the south west, Seleka combatants emptied all public buildings and the fuel and arms depots at the police station and damaged the mobile telephone in-

⁵¹ Among the most vulnerable populations are the Yoruba, often been the victims of "road-cutters" (*zaraguinas*) and armed groups such as Baba Laddé's FPR, which, however, claims to defend their cause. In the south east, the population has for years suffered repeated looting by the LRA. Crisis Group Africa Report N°215, *The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa*, 1 April 2014.

⁵² In the 1990s, many medium-sized and large companies were located in the Bimbo district, on Bangui's southern edge. Now, there is only the MOCAF (Motte coordonier Afrique) brewery. Some have relocated to Cameroon. The CAR now imports products like yoghurt and milk that it used to manufacture. Crisis Group telephone interview, economic operator, 15 April 2014.

⁵³ International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, Preliminary Report, 27 May 2014.

⁵⁴ Crisis Group interview, economic operator, Bangui, 7 March 2014.

⁵⁵ In April 2013, Crisis Group researchers noticed young Bangui people in the back streets of PK5 repainting stolen cars. Bangui's main market is in PK5. The large majority of traders are Muslims, who contributed a significant proportion of the capital's economy. Trafficking increased after the Seleka came to power. See section III.E on the parallel networks for resale of fuel. The great majority of Muslims have now fled, and PK5 is regularly vandalised by anti-balaka militias who beat up civilian Muslims. "Ethnic cleansing and sectarian killings in the Central African Republic", Amnesty International, February 2014.

⁵⁶ Crisis Group interviews, businessmen, Bangui, January and February 2014.

frastructure.⁵⁷ The forestry sector, which represents about 10 per cent of GDP and CFA30 to 40 billion (about \$62 to about \$83 million) in export revenues, was also severely affected.⁵⁸ Only two forestry companies have resumed their activities, and they currently operate at 50 per cent of their usual turnover. In the south west, the Central African Forestry Company (SEFCA), located in Mambélé and Mbaïré on the road between Berberati and Nola, was looted successively by members of the presidential guard and the Seleka, the latter of which did not, therefore, bear sole responsibility.⁵⁹ Once the Seleka broke up, the less well-armed and organised anti-balaka tried to loot the SEFCA transit site in Berberati and stole vehicles.⁶⁰

In addition, Seleka commanders organised kidnappings. Although most businessmen in Bangui left the country either before or soon after the Seleka took control of the capital in March 2013,⁶¹ some who stayed were kidnapped by Seleka military leaders. One, suspected of being a business partner of Bozizé, spent eleven days in detention in a house there even though Djotodia and the public prosecutor reportedly were both aware and even visited him.⁶² For his release, he was forced to pay the Seleka commanders, who told him “we are the state”.⁶³

B. The “Comzone” Entrepreneurs and the Diamond Sector

The Seleka’s military commanders adopted the Côte d’Ivoire term “comzone” to describe their own system of dividing up the country between them.⁶⁴ Predation and protection being two facets of the same activity, they practised extortion and used threats to persuade private actors to employ them as security services. Moreover, Michel Djotodia officially entrusted them with administering regions of the country. The varying levels of natural resources wealth in these regions gave rise to power struggles between them.⁶⁵

1. A precious stone for the armed groups

In 2010, Crisis Group described how the diamond sector was caught between poor governance and the armed groups.⁶⁶ In 2013, the sector was subjected to intensive extortion and then collapsed into complete disorder.

The Seleka came to power with the support of many discontented actors of the sector.⁶⁷ A government minister even talked of a “coup” by the diamond merchants.⁶⁸ Many Seleka military leaders had prospered in the sector before taking up arms. A

⁵⁷ Crisis Group interview, municipal official, Bayanga, 27 February 2014.

⁵⁸ Crisis Group interview, chief of staff, water and forests ministry, Bangui, 15 March 2014.

⁵⁹ In Mbaïré, some workers said they recognised Captain Ngaïkosset, a Bozizé ally : “They were getting away with well-armed dual cabin lorries”. Crisis Group interviews, former Seleka minister, Bangui, 22 February 2014; forestry company representative, Berberati, 13 March 2014.

⁶⁰ Crisis Group interview, forestry company representative, Berberati, 13 March 2014.

⁶¹ Crisis Group interviews, economic operator, Douala, 20 February 2014 and member of the CAR diaspora, Yaoundé, 9 May 2014.

⁶² Crisis Group interview, kidnapped economic operator, Bangui, 26 January 2014.

⁶³ Ibid.

⁶⁴ Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°83, *Côte d’Ivoire: Continuing the Recovery*, 16 December 2011.

⁶⁵ See Appendix B. Decree 13.406 of 8 October 2013 on the appointment or confirmation of national army officers to leadership posts in the military regions.

⁶⁶ See Crisis Group Report, *Dangerous Little Stones*, op. cit.

⁶⁷ See Crisis Group Report, *Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

⁶⁸ Crisis Group interviews, Seleka leaders and former minister, Bangui, 12 and 20 April 2013.

member of the guard and close ally of Djotodia, General Younous, a Fulani from Toulous in southern Darfur and a member of the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), previously worked as a buyer for the purchasing offices.⁶⁹ Others, like the deceased Mahamat Saleh, former military leader of the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) and “in charge of Seleka operations”,⁷⁰ were artisan miners and diamond collectors.⁷¹ They used their experience to develop their strategy for raiding production zones.

The expansion of the Seleka’s zone of influence was rapid and strategic. In its advance towards the west of the county, the coalition’s commanders quickly set their sights on the main mining zones. The west is perceived to be the richest of the country’s three diamond producing areas.⁷² Villagers and artisan miners resisted, for example at Garga, near Yaloké, and Gadzi, and many died in violent clashes before the Seleka took control.⁷³ The attack on the artisan-mining site at Beaugouin in the Ombella-Mpoko in October 2013 and the Seleka’s theft of their goods encouraged many miners to join the anti-balaka. In an irony of history, in the east, some traders joined the Seleka to take revenge for the mass theft perpetrated by Bozizé in Operation Closing Gate in 2008,⁷⁴ while in the west, some miners joined the anti-balaka to seek revenge for the atrocities and extortion committed by the Seleka.⁷⁵

The Seleka controlled the diamond sector in different ways, the most common being extortion and the least common organisation of production under its control. After taking over the meagre resources in the Bayanga sub-prefecture, the local Seleka leader tried to restart production at a gold and diamonds mine about 20km away.⁷⁶ His men also provided security for several months to Chinese prospectors, who harboured them before discreetly crossing the border into Cameroon.⁷⁷

Seleka combatants stationed themselves at mine exits in order to extort the miners, particularly around Nola and Carnot.⁷⁸ In Carnot, an important diamond-producing area, some miners remained in the bush and tried to avoid contact with the Seleka militia in order to retain the fruits of their labour.⁷⁹ In their attempt to control the diamond sector in the west, Seleka commanders even tried to take over the local mines ministry administration, before realising that the revenues of a large proportion of the licences were paid in Bangui. In Berberati, the regional mines ministry

⁶⁹ See Crisis Group Report, *Dangerous Little Stones*, op. cit.

⁷⁰ Mahamat Saleh was reportedly killed in Bangui during a clash with international forces. “Centrafrique: le général Mahamat Saleh tué”, Afrik.com, 11 December 2013.

⁷¹ In the course of an interview, a mines ministry official in Bangui said, “the purchase counters are their bosses”. Crisis Group interview, 26 February 2014.

⁷² See Crisis Group Report, *Dangerous Little Stones*, op. cit.

⁷³ “Centrafrique: plus de 50 personnes tuées à Garga au nord-ouest”, Xinhua, 9 October 2013.

⁷⁴ See Crisis Group Report, *Dangerous Little Stones*, op. cit.

⁷⁵ The Seleka stole gold and equipment from miners at Beaugouin. In response, most joined the anti-balaka. Crisis Group interviews, anti-balaka militiamen, Bangui, 25 January 2014.

⁷⁶ The Seleka’s local commander funded the work and pumps for several weeks. Crisis Group interview, municipal authority, Bayanga, 27 February 2014.

⁷⁷ These Chinese prospectors worked from May to September 2013 before crossing the Cameroon border without alerting their protectors in the Seleka. Crisis Group interviews, municipal authority and WWF staff, Bayanga, 27 February 2014.

⁷⁸ Crisis Group interview, artisan miner, Berberati, 12 March 2014.

⁷⁹ “La Centrafrique: un pays pauvre de ses diamants”, Médiapart, 28 November 2013.

office was looted in the presence of General Saad, the local Seleka commander, but his men found neither diamonds nor money.⁸⁰

Diamond operators and the Seleka often cooperated.⁸¹ Around Berberati, collectors in league with the Seleka went to the mines under the protection of their armed sponsors and forced diggers to sell at a low price.⁸² In the same town, the Seleka installed itself in a purchasing office and assumed an ambiguous role.⁸³

For all that, diamond collectors did not always benefit from favourable treatment by Seleka combatants. In Berberati, the great majority of the 40 collectors in the town before the anti-balaka attacked it in early February were Muslims. Among them were Arabs from Chad and sedentary Fulanis, many of whom migrated from Cameroon to the CAR at the beginning of the twentieth century.⁸⁴ The two communities attended different mosques and had longstanding economic rivalries.⁸⁵ The Seleka's impact on trade mainly disadvantaged the Fulanis. Many Fulani collectors suffered under the Seleka yoke and, like many other economic operators, were forced to pay money and give fuel to their new masters.

In the east, Seleka commanders continued to profit from the diamond trade and extorted money from local collectors and artisan miners. Seleka combatants robbed several collectors shortly before Djotodia left office.⁸⁶ A few months before his resignation, he had sent a close ally, Zacharia Damane, to Bria, where he became known as "General" and quickly established an interest in the diamonds of the "sparkling" town he knew well, as a former artisan miner thoroughly familiar with the business.⁸⁷

2. Drop in activity but smuggling continues

Alerted by the security situation at the start of 2013 and aware of the Seleka's control of production zones, the Kimberley Process suspended the CAR on 10 May 2013. Consequently, buyers were banned from trading in CAR diamonds.⁸⁸ Funding for artisanal activities partly dried up, while the anti-Muslim campaign unleashed by the anti-balaka in the country's largest gold and diamond producing areas hurt the sector by chasing out its key actors: the collectors. Although activity slowed, it did not stop, and smuggling continued.

The Cameroonian route

In Berberati, purchasing offices continued to buy and store diamonds until the end of January 2014.⁸⁹ Buyers left the town at the start of February, after the Seleka and before the attack ten days later by anti-balaka arriving from Carnot and Mbaïki. That

⁸⁰ Crisis Group interviews, regional director, mines, and residents, Berberati, 12 March 2014.

⁸¹ "CAR diamond trade in limbo as rebels take over", France 24, 1 April 2013.

⁸² Ibid.

⁸³ Crisis Group interviews, artisan miner, Berberati, 13 March 2014; mayor of Berberati, Berberati, 12 March 2014.

⁸⁴ See Crisis Group Report, *The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa*, op. cit.

⁸⁵ Crisis Group interview, mayor of Berberati, Berberati, 12 March 2014.

⁸⁶ Crisis Group interview, diamond collector, Bria, 2 March 2014.

⁸⁷ "The sparkling town" is the name given to Bria and appears on the sign at its entrance. Before military training to become a forest ranger, Damane was successful in the diamond trade in Damalango, near Bria. As UFDR leader, he extended the influence of his armed movement to the Bria mines in 2008 and knows the area well. Crisis Group interviews, diamond collector and residents, Bria, 2 March 2014. See Crisis Group Report, *Dangerous Little Stones*, op. cit.

⁸⁸ "PK: la suspension maintenue sur le diamant centrafricain", *Journal de Bangui*, 13 June 2013.

⁸⁹ Crisis Group interview, purchasing office representative, Bangui, 26 February 2014.

attack caused all Muslims in Berberati to flee. Some sought refuge in the bishop's palace prior to setting out for Cameroon, sometimes escorted by the International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA). During the attack, anti-balaka militia looted Poto Poto, Berberati's Muslim district, and killed about twenty Muslim civilians.⁹⁰

Suspension of the Kimberley Process and the flight of Muslim traders transformed the diamond sector in the south west.⁹¹ Mining activity is now severely limited, and diamonds are exported along the smuggling route to Cameroon that existed before the crisis. The gold and diamond mining sites on the Cameroon side of the border had a reputation for being less wealthy than those on the CAR side. Smuggling has formed part of the border economy for a long time.⁹² Some CAR artisan miners, mostly Christian, sell their diamonds on the other side of the border, as do even the former diamond collectors from Berberati who are now refugees in Cameroon.

In the past, Cameroonian and CAR smugglers took goods from Cameroon into the CAR and returned with gold and diamonds for sale in Douala and Yaoundé. Gold and diamonds were also resold at border markets in eastern Cameroon, such as Kentzou and Gbiti,⁹³ now home to 17,000 and 21,000 CAR refugees respectively.⁹⁴

Efforts to combat this phenomenon were recently made on both sides of the border. In the CAR, regional offices of the mines ministry deployed a team at Gamboula. It intercepted some parcels of diamonds, but the quantities were relatively small.⁹⁵ On the Cameroon side, the authorities organised an awareness-raising campaign aimed at local collectors, warning them not to buy diamonds of unknown origin. The focal points for the Kimberley Process were alerted and investigations conducted when diamonds of dubious provenance were detected.⁹⁶ The smuggling problem is especially delicate for Cameroon, which joined the Kimberley Process in 2013 and is striving to formalise its diamond sector.

The Sudanese route

Discouraged by the Seleka's presence and affected financially by the suspension of the Kimberley Process, many collectors from West Africa (Senegalese, Malians, Mauritians, Nigerians) left diamond zones like Bria in eastern CAR. On the other hand, as in the south west, some purchasing offices kept their buyers in place and continued to stock diamonds. While some collectors continued to sell to the purchasing offices, some diamonds produced in Bria and Sam Ouandja found their way to Sudan, notably Nyala, in South Darfur.⁹⁷ Traditionally, trade in north-eastern CAR is domi-

⁹⁰ "Berberati: des morts et plusieurs bureaux d'achats de diamants pillés", *Journal de Bangui*, 20 February 2014.

⁹¹ The flight of Muslims caused a strong downward turn in activity. However, some Christian collectors renewed their licenses, thanks to financial support from a Lebanese businessman who was a collector himself. Crisis Group interview, artisan miner, Berberati, 13 March 2014.

⁹² Crisis Group interviews, *ibid* and trader, Gbiti, 8 May 2014. For more on diamond smuggling between the two countries, see "Artisanat minier, un challenge pour le Processus de Kimberley: cas du département de la Kadey-est Cameroun", Relufa, January 2013, and the documentary "Les minerais de l'espoir", Revaf Pictures, 2013.

⁹³ Crisis Group interview, trader, Gbiti, 8 May 2014.

⁹⁴ Crisis Group interviews, humanitarian actors, Bertua, 6 May 2014 and Gbiti, 8 May 2014.

⁹⁵ Crisis Group interviews, artisan miner, Berberati, 13 March 2014; regional director, mines ministry, Berberati, 12 March 2014.

⁹⁶ Crisis Group interview, member, Kimberley Process national secretariat, Yaoundé, 5 May 2014.

⁹⁷ Crisis Group interview, diamond collector, Bria, 1 March 2014.

nated by Sudanese traders who have only weak links with the population. Diamond smuggling is a phenomenon observed in Sudan for some time.⁹⁸ According to the mines minister, activity on this smuggling route increased after the Kimberley Process was suspended.⁹⁹

The airport

In 2013, several people smuggling diamonds and gold at Bangui airport were intercepted.¹⁰⁰ For example, Chinese citizens were reportedly arrested before boarding a plane in November with gold and false documents issued by the mines ministry.¹⁰¹ Several private operators allegedly had an “arrangement” with customs officers to allow the diamonds through illegally, while others reportedly left the airport without their diamonds but were never prosecuted.¹⁰²

C. Poaching: an Uncontrolled Activity

Poaching fuels the lucrative bush meat sector. Bangui consumes about 70,000 tonnes of bush meat every year, and there is a substantial market that is supplied by the north (about 70 per cent of what is consumed in the capital) and south (30 per cent, from the Mbaïki area, including the other side of the Congo-CAR border).¹⁰³ This sector, previously controlled by the clan in power, was reportedly taken over in 2013 by Nourredine Adam, a Seleka strongman.¹⁰⁴ After the Seleka took power, bush meat deliveries from the north intensified.¹⁰⁵

Poaching also involves trafficking in ivory. While Michel Djotodia and President Ali Bongo of Gabon were signing an agreement to combat poaching in May 2013, Seleka combatants were involved in the activity themselves or in association with Sudanese poachers.¹⁰⁶ Aware of the financial gains to be made, the ex-rebels were quick to extend their zones of influence into protected areas in order to profit from ivory sales. Between 6 and 9 May 2013, seventeen Sudanese poachers, provided with a mission order signed by a government official in Bangui, killed 26 elephants in the Dzanga Bai clearing of the Dzanga Ndoki Park in the south west. Despite repeated

⁹⁸ See Crisis Group Report, *Dangerous Little Stones*, op. cit.

⁹⁹ Crisis Group interview, mines minister, Bangui, 7 March 2014.

¹⁰⁰ Crisis Group interview, former minister, Paris, 16 June 2014.

¹⁰¹ Crisis Group telephone interview, former Seleka minister, 7 May 2014.

¹⁰² Ibid and Crisis Group interview, security services member, Bangui, 24 January 2014.

¹⁰³ Crisis Group interview, environmental protection expert, Bangui, 21 January 2014.

¹⁰⁴ Ibid. A Runga from north-eastern CAR, Nourredine Adam was one of the Seleka's most important military leaders. Trained at the Cairo police academy, he also worked as a bodyguard in Dubai and Saudi Arabia. He joined the CPJP in 2008 but rejected the 2012 agreements signed by Abdoulaye Hissène and the government in Bangui and continued the rebellion. He is suspected of responsibility for a secret detention centre in Bangui. He left the government and his post as security and immigration minister in August 2013 to head the Extraordinary Committee for the Defence of Democratic Achievements (CEDAD). “Paris face au casse-tête centrafricain”, *Afrikarabia*, 8 December 2013. Like Bozizé and the coordinator of the anti-balaka militias, Lévy Yakité, he is on the UN sanctions list, under an assets freeze and travel ban. “L’ONU sanctionne trois responsables dont l’ex président Bozizé”, *Agence France-Presse*, 10 May 2014.

¹⁰⁵ Crisis Group interview, expert on environmental protection, Bangui, 21 January 2014.

¹⁰⁶ “Gabon-Centrafrrique: accord pour la lutte contre le braconnage”, *Journal de Bangui*, 21 May 2014.

requests by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), the Seleka commander of this zone did not intervene.¹⁰⁷

Although there are some locals, most poachers operating in the CAR for the last few decades come from neighbouring countries, especially Chad and Sudan. Groups of between twenty and 80 operate on a military scale in eastern CAR. According to corroborated sources, these groups are equipped with kalashnikovs and satellite phones and, in some cases, are funded by Sudanese families from the Nyala area in South Darfur. They buy ivory from poachers in the Sudanese towns of Buram, Tulus and Am Dafok, not far from the CAR border, then take it to Nyala, where it is sold to Sudanese and foreign traders who mainly export it to Asia.¹⁰⁸ The poaching season lasts from November to April-May.

In 2009, for the first time, foreign poachers were seen in south-west CAR, near Carnot, where there are still elephants. This means that poachers are now willing to cross the entire country, due to the elephant and rhinoceros disappearance in the east. The geographical expansion of their activities has been facilitated by the creation of a network of Central Africans that helps to locate elephants and store poachers' equipment.¹⁰⁹ In this region, poachers usually leave the meat for the local population and take only the tusks. Much of the ivory is then carried to the north east, and into Sudan, while a considerable proportion is transported to Bangui for sale to local traders (Chinese, Lebanese) and also to markets in Libongo and Yoka-douma in Cameroon.¹¹⁰ Poachers operate in the border area between Cameroon, Congo-Brazzaville and the CAR, as shown by the arrest of several CAR poachers on Cameroon territory.¹¹¹

Although the ivory trade was banned in the CAR in 1985, the authorities have always been powerless to deal with the large groups of well-armed poachers who enter the country.¹¹² Some local authorities, especially in the provinces of Bamingui-Bangoran and Vakaga, even work with the poachers.¹¹³ The European Union Ecofac and Ecofaune programs to protect wildlife reserves and combat poaching were a good idea but have had disastrous results: the former poachers and staff of the anti-poaching units trained by the program joined the Seleka.¹¹⁴

In this context, the words of President Bongo ("there is a direct link between blood ivory and stability in Africa") resonate widely in the CAR and indicate that armed groups are increasingly profiting from poaching.¹¹⁵ Ivory is available in remote areas

¹⁰⁷ See "At least 26 elephants massacred in world heritage site", press release, WWF Central Africa Program Office, Yaoundé, 10 May 2013. "The Director-General of UNESCO Expresses Deep Concern at the Rising Violence in the Central African Republic, at the Heart of the Sangha Trinational Site", press release, Unesco, Paris, 3 May 2013. According to the WWF staff, no more could be killed due to insufficient transport. Crisis Group interview, Bayanga, 27 February 2014.

¹⁰⁸ Crisis Group interview, wildlife protection association member, Bangui, 27 February 2014.

¹⁰⁹ Ibid.

¹¹⁰ Crisis Group interviews, water and forests ministry official and former director of Sangha natural reserve, Bangui, 26 February 2014.

¹¹¹ Crisis Group interview, WWF staff, Yaoundé, 9 May 2014.

¹¹² See Order 85.046 of 31 October 1985 on the ban on collecting and trading in ivory in the Central African Republic and implementing decree 84.364.

¹¹³ Crisis Group interview, expert in environmental protection, Bangui, 21 January 2014.

¹¹⁴ See Crisis Group Report, *The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa*, op. cit.

¹¹⁵ "Ali Bongo préoccupé par la conservation de la faune centrafricaine", afrik.com, 22 May 2013. For more on the use of ivory by armed groups in Africa, see "Ivory's curse: the militarization and professionalization of poaching in Africa", Born free USA, 21 April 2014; Bradley Anderson and Johan

where the state's presence is weak and is easy to sell in local markets. Prosecutions are rare, and demand, especially in Asia, is high.¹¹⁶ Two UN Security Council resolutions on the CAR and the DRC in January 2014 noted that poaching is a way of funding armed groups.¹¹⁷

D. Informal Taxation

While customs administration has long been problematic,¹¹⁸ Seleka control over new territory was immediately followed by the introduction of a parallel customs system that took different forms in each region. In Bangui, Seleka commanders ordered wholesalers "to seek customs clearance with them".¹¹⁹ They also allowed the entry of many containers in partnership with Muslim businessmen without payment of customs duties and tried to intimidate customs officials.¹²⁰

Like it had with the army under the Bozizé government, the number of "barriers" increased as more and more territory came under Seleka control. The Seleka collected taxes in Bayanga, in the extreme south west.¹²¹ In Berberati, a town through which many lorries pass and the main economic crossroads of the south west, the Seleka set up checkpoints at the entrances and exits and demanded payment of much higher taxes. Surrounding the large towns, the Seleka increased check-points on the Berberati-Nola, Berberati-Carnot and Berberati-Gamboula roads.¹²² "A trip to Cameroon cost four times more than previously", complained an economic operator.¹²³ When the Seleka left, the anti-balaka used the same system and set up many road-blocks themselves, demanding money and fuel and examining vehicles for Muslims, especially between Berberati and Nola.¹²⁴

The system is well established in the east, with each lorry paying taxes in accordance with its cargo. In towns like Ndélé and Bria, the Seleka acts as police force, customs and even traditional judge in the event of disputes.¹²⁵ However, the deployment of MISCA's Cameroon contingents in the south west and the recent arrival of Congolese contingents in several eastern towns could change the situation.

Jooste, "Wildlife Poaching: Africa's Surging Trafficking Threat", Africa Security Brief no. 28, May 2014; and "Elephant poaching on rise in Lord's Resistance Army stronghold", Reuters, 14 May 2014.

¹¹⁶ A large majority of illegal ivory sales goes to Asia, where the price sometimes reaches \$2,000 per kg on the streets of Beijing. "Elephants dying in epic frenzy as Ivory fuels wars and profits", *The New York Times*, 3 September 2012.

¹¹⁷ See UN Security Council Resolutions 2134 on the CAR and 2136 on the DRC.

¹¹⁸ For CAR civil servants, a customs officer post, whether low paid or unpaid, provides opportunities for significant additional income. Since the 1970s and 1980s, the customs service staff has been increasing. For more information, see Jean-Paul Ngoupandé, *op. cit.* In 2006, Bozizé dissolved the customs service and replaced it with a private company owned by an ally who had helped him in exile. The Detection of Fraudulent Imports Company (SODIF) was given responsibility for customs controls and provoked many disputes, Crisis Group interview, SODIF director, Bangui, 23 April 2013.

¹¹⁹ Crisis Group interview, businessman, Bangui, 26 January 2014.

¹²⁰ Crisis Group interviews, employer, Bangui, 21 January 2014; customs officer, 17 January 2014.

¹²¹ Crisis Group interview, municipal authorities, Bayanga, 27 February 2014.

¹²² Gamboula is a town on the border with Cameroon in the region of Mambéré-Kadéï.

¹²³ According to statements made by economic operators, during the week after the Seleka arrived in Berberati, every lorry that left town was forced to hand over several litres of fuel. Crisis Group interview, Berberati, 13 March 2014.

¹²⁴ Crisis Group interview, humanitarian actor, Berberati, 13 March 2014.

¹²⁵ Crisis Group interview, local authority, Bria, 2 March 2014.

E. *The Informal Market for Fuel*

The informal fuel market has long existed. In recent years, smuggling from Chad and Sudan has increased, especially after the opening of a refinery in southern Chad in 2011. The smuggled fuel is sold at a price much lower than that charged at service stations. In recent years, in the towns of Paoua, Bouar, Bossangoa and Bozoum, service stations have experienced a sharp fall in the volume of petrol sold. The Bozizé family reportedly became involved in the sale of smuggled fuel, especially in Bossangoa.¹²⁶

In Bangui, fuel traded on the informal market increased with the Seleka's arrival. Between May and September 2013, according to recent estimates, the government fuel budget tripled.¹²⁷ Equipped with signed official mission orders, Seleka combatants allegedly threatened service station managers, took petrol and sold it to street dealers known as "Jaguars", who sell it at a price below that of the service stations. This practice already existed under previous governments, especially with regard to Bozizé's presidential guard. However, under the Seleka, the networks became more extensive and converged on PK5, where fuel flowed in abundance. Government consumption has now fallen drastically, an indication of return to normality and better management.¹²⁸

¹²⁶ According to a well-informed economic operator, François Bozizé's resort of Bossangoa did not use Socasp (Société centrafricaine de stockage de produits pétroliers) for petrol supplies. Crisis Group interview, Bangui, 6 March 2014.

¹²⁷ Ibid.

¹²⁸ Ibid.

IV. From Predation to Production: The Challenge of Reconstruction and Stabilisation

The CAR is in ruins, but the international community has been reluctant to get involved because the crisis comes after many interventions.¹²⁹ In 2008, a Bangui-based diplomat told Crisis Group: “The CAR is in a permanent post-conflict situation; it is like a flat tyre that can no longer be repaired with patches”.¹³⁰ This historic failure is due to a combination of predatory government (state crime) and opposition (armed groups). Previous interventions ignored the structural problem of predation as a system of government.¹³¹ The response to previous crises has been and is still limited to three important, but insufficient, elements: a military presence, major humanitarian assistance and budgetary aid to ensure survival of the administration.¹³²

More than a Marshall Plan,¹³³ the CAR needs to resolve the problem of structural predation. Long-term recovery involves transforming a predatory economy into a productive economy. A year and a half after the start of the crisis, the hesitation displayed by donors and demonstrated by the lack of stabilisation or reconstruction strategy is largely due to a contradiction between the desire to avoid previous failures and adherence to the paradigm for those earlier interventions. Nevertheless, it is still possible to adapt this paradigm.

Since the CAR and its partners agree that structural predation is driving the crisis, they should be able to agree on putting this issue at the heart of their conflict resolution strategy. The government and its international partners should agree on an “ethical reconstruction contract” that promotes the revival of productive economic activity, reduces the opportunities for predation and punishes those at the head of the illegal networks.

It is a considerable task, but reconstruction and all the efforts already made by the international community will only have a long-term impact if a new toolbox is used to resolve the crisis. The international community must rethink its intervention strategy. The mission should not only be to protect the population.¹³⁴ It should also include a

¹²⁹ The UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA), which succeeded the Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB) in 1998, aimed to bring stability to the capital and surrounding area. The Multinational Force in the Central African Republic (FOMUC), created in 2002, was replaced by a Central African regional force, the Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) in 2008. From 2007 to 2010, the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) deployed on both sides of the border. The EU intervened, 2007-2009, as part of the EUFOR Chad/CAR operation to secure the refugee camps. Crisis Group report, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, op. cit.
¹³⁰ Ibid.

¹³¹ This problem was not mentioned in any of the mandates of previous peacekeeping missions, though it is one of the recurring obstacles to building peace. Christine Cheng and Dominik Zaum, *Corruption and Post-Conflict Peacebuilding: Selling the Peace?* (New York, 2012).

¹³² On 14 May 2014, the IMF’s Board of Directors approved financial assistance of \$12.9 million under the Rapid Credit Facility. This should now be followed by aid from the EU, the African Development Bank and World Bank. “IMF Executive Board Approves US\$12.9 million Disbursement Under the Rapid Credit Facility for the Central African Republic”, press release no. 14/226, IMF, 15 May 2014.

¹³³ “Centrafrique: André Nzapayéké demande un plan Marshall pour son pays”, Radio France internationale, 1 February 2014.

¹³⁴ UN Security Council Resolution 2149 on the CAR, 10 April 2014. For an analysis, see Charlotte Arnaud and Thierry Vircoulon, “Central African Republic: the flawed international response”, Open Democracy, 19 May 2014.

major component dedicated to reconstruction of the economy and part of the state apparatus and a further component to deal with trafficking, and it should likewise involve the region and specialised organisations. If they are to be effective, the recent targeted sanctions against several CAR individuals should be part of this broader strategy of cleaning up the economy,¹³⁵ but though a close political partnership is possible with the transitional government, the intervention should do more than impose those usual measures.

Though the CAR crisis is a security crisis, and fighting continues in some parts of the country, there are three reasons why it is indispensable to start reconstruction and stabilisation now. First, the situation is not the same everywhere; some areas are sufficiently secure for deployment of civil servants and humanitarian and economic actors. Secondly, the transition will be longer than expected – elections will not take place in February 2015, and the transition period is likely to be extended¹³⁶ – and reconstruction should begin during it to create the conditions for government to take the first steps toward establishing a new civil service model. Thirdly, the disintegration of the economy and public administration gives ammunition to those who advocate partitioning the country.

A. An Indispensable Partnership: An Ethical Reconstruction Contract

In a country where “the state stops at PK12”, that is on the edge of Bangui, and partition is now officially mentioned by the Seleka,¹³⁷ it is indispensable for the government to begin effective action to enhance its credibility vis-à-vis the population.

The new president of the transition and the UN are both aware that administration has collapsed; Catherine Samba-Panza is asking for strong international support.¹³⁸ The G5 and transitional government should formalise and conclude a partnership under the banner of an “ethical reconstruction contract” in which the transitional authorities agree to fight predation and international partners agree to reconstruct the country.¹³⁹ This partnership should involve a series of interventions (see below) based on three principles: co-management of some key functions of the state apparatus; strictly controlled recruitment of civil service managers; and training of new civil servants. Partners and transitional authorities should agree on a much-needed stabilisation strategy, and focus on the following issues: creating jobs, cleaning up public finances and fighting the predatory networks.

A strong partnership between government and donors requires an official request by the transitional authorities; a division of labour, under clearly defined UN leader-

¹³⁵ François Bozizé, Lévy Yakité and Nourredine Adam are on the UN targeted sanctions list and, with Michel Djotodia and Abdoulaye Miskine, the U.S. list. “Executive Order blocking property of certain persons contributing to the conflict in Central Africa”, White House, 13 May 2014.

¹³⁶ Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, June 2014.

¹³⁷ “L’Etat s’arrête à PK12”, a popular expression used by many residents, refers to the absence of state authority throughout the country. “Assemblée Générale de l’ex-coalition rebelle Seleka”, final press release and recommendations, Ndélé, 10 May 2014.

¹³⁸ During meetings with the main donors, Samba-Panza requested on several occasions a strong international presence at the treasury and other state institutions. Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 15 March 2014. “Expressing concern at the collapse of the already fragile administration which limits the ability of the new Transitional Authorities to govern”, preamble, Resolution 2149, op. cit.

¹³⁹ The group of countries and organisations (UN, African Union, EU, France and the U.S.) involved in managing the CAR crisis since 2013 is known as the G5 in Bangui. See “La République centrafricaine, une troisième transition en 13 mois”, In Pursuit of Peace, 21 January 2014.

ship; and a major training component to prepare the post-transition period.¹⁴⁰ In this partnership, the involvement of international partners in strategic government functions (security and finance) should be accompanied by the deployment of a team of experts, political and financial support for the transitional authorities and training for new civil servants.¹⁴¹

A significant part of the political class would welcome such a partnership. Indeed, former members of the democratic opposition to the Bozizé regime said they were impatient to see these measures implemented.¹⁴² Moreover, some “technocrat” members of the transitional government would receive them warmly.¹⁴³ Some politicians close to armed groups or future candidates for the presidency might oppose them, as they might view the partnership as a hidden form of external control over the power they covet.

There are technical tools for implementing such a partnership. The G5, with added transitional government and regional representation, could act as a steering mechanism. Two funds could be used to centralise the finances,¹⁴⁴ and the current UN peacekeeping mission could be the institutional standard-bearer. G5 decisions would be implemented by the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General. That official would purposely create thematic donor groups (economic revival and reconstruction, public management, fight against trafficking, training and capacity building). In order to achieve results, the partnership would need to last for a minimum of four to five years.

Postponing these measures would mean that errors from the past have not been learned, and similar crises will emerge in the near future. The human cost would be as dramatic as it is today, and international security and humanitarian missions would be more and more expensive. To treat only symptoms of the crisis, while neglecting its real causes and the fight against the double predation, would contribute to the stalemate of the international peacekeeping mission. While interventions have been increasingly criticised, such a failure would discredit the international community and create the risk of a spillover effect in Central Africa.

¹⁴⁰ The fight against corruption is a political, not technical, problem, so requires political will. Christine Cheng and Dominik Zaum, op. cit. Also see Mark Shaw and Walter Kemp, “Spotting the Spoilers”, International Peace Institute, 2012.

¹⁴¹ Such programs of post-conflict international support were implemented in Liberia, Timor Leste, etc. On Liberia, see Crisis Group Africa Report N°98, *Liberia’s Elections: Necessary but Not Sufficient*, 7 September 2005, and Comfort Ero, “Peacebuilding through Statebuilding in West Africa, in Devon Curtis and Gwinyayi Dzinesa (eds.), *Peacebuilding, Power and Politics in Africa* (Johannesburg, 2013) pp. 232-252. Donors have also implemented an ambitious public finances co-management program in Timor Leste. “Timor Leste – Planning and Financial Management Capacity Building Program Project”, World Bank, report no. 33803, 17 February 2006.

¹⁴² Crisis Group telephone interview, Central African politician, 10 May 2014.

¹⁴³ Samba-Panza’s government has often been called technocratic, due to the former functions of a majority of its ministers.

¹⁴⁴ The UNDP and the French Development Agency (AFD) have both created a trust fund.

B. *Reviving the economy and improving economic management*

1. Using economic recovery to stabilise the whole country, not just Bangui

The major omission in the discussion about resolving the CAR crisis is the indispensable need to revive the economy.¹⁴⁵ There are two key objectives: in the short term, introduce reconstruction programs to provide work; and, in the long term, rebuild the productive economy to reduce the scope for action by armed groups. Although the first is now shared by institutional donors and the CAR authorities,¹⁴⁶ the second is absent.

The realisation by some donors of the need to implement labour-intensive projects is positive. Limited to Bangui at the moment, the projects should absorb some of the anti-balaka combatants and put them to work. The projects should be upgraded in the capital and gradually extended to other towns as and when they are made secure. They should aim to repair roads and agricultural infrastructure, as a way of employing a large number of workers, relieving the isolation of the regions and providing local markets for food products. The reconstruction teams previously suggested by Crisis Group should plan these projects. Management should be entrusted to the local authorities, whether prefectures, municipal or traditional authorities, in the spirit of a decentralised partnership.¹⁴⁷ At the same time, and working with a more long-term perspective, a program to strengthen technical and financial capacities should be organised under the aegis of the public works ministry.

A genuine economic revival is needed to stabilise the country in the long term. In order to quickly identify sectors to be supported and actions to take, government, the main international partners and a panel of business representatives of the various economic sectors, including leaders of the agricultural and livestock federations, should form a mission. It should propose a rapid recovery program based on job creation in secure areas. Particular attention should be paid to agriculture and livestock in order also to supply the internal market's food needs. The government should revive the permanent framework for dialogue with the private sector to assist in this but also include international actors.¹⁴⁸

2. Changing economic management: the fight against corruption

Reviving the economy should be complemented by reform of public finances in order to fight corruption. Cleaning up public finances and reorganising government financial services should be prioritised. These tasks are often more complicated to implement in countries hit by successive crises like the CAR, because they often come up against leaders' lack of political will to reform their administrations.¹⁴⁹ But the polit-

¹⁴⁵ For now, no donor has plans to support companies in the CAR. Crisis Group interview, AFD official, Paris, 11 April 2014 and telephone interview, World Bank official, 29 April 2014.

¹⁴⁶ The AFD and World Bank plan to fund labour-intensive projects; the World Bank has already budgeted \$11 million for this. Crisis Group interview, AFD official, Paris, 11 April 2014 and telephone interviews, World Bank official, 29 April 2014, and EU official, 21 May 2014. "World Bank approves emergency support for CAR's internal refugees and to jump start agriculture", press release, World Bank, 7 March 2014.

¹⁴⁷ See Crisis Group Africa Briefing N°96, *Central African Republic: Better Late than Never*, 2 December 2013.

¹⁴⁸ Crisis Group report, *Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

¹⁴⁹ "The EU's state building contracts: Courageous assistance to fragile states, but how effective in the end?", European Center for Development Policy Management, briefing note no. 60, December 2013.

ical transition should be seen as an opportunity to be seized. That is the message Samba-Panza has been whispering in the ears of international partners for the last few months, and she specifically requested a strong international presence in the treasury.¹⁵⁰

Several courses of action have already been identified. The main donors, including the International Monetary Fund (IMF), and the government have set the priorities for straightening out the public finances. These include introduction of more effective tax collection mechanisms, better monitoring of financial management at the treasury and reorganisation of public service pay and operations. They also stress the need to return to conventional expenditure procedures.¹⁵¹ Several initiatives have already been taken, including a survey of staffing in certain ministries.¹⁵² Experts arrived in Bangui in March 2014 to prepare for creation of a central accounting agency at the treasury.¹⁵³ It is well known that the public finances are susceptible to misappropriation, so donors should focus on addressing the failures of the management system.

The tools required to stop corruption are very familiar.¹⁵⁴ The task will involve simplifying and entrusting tax collection to a single agency¹⁵⁵ and strengthening existing spending control agencies.¹⁵⁶ Special attention should be paid to certain expenditures associated with misappropriation, such as fuel; civil society should be involved, and a large number of technical assistants and advisers should be deployed in the finance and mines ministries and the main state-owned companies. In addition, training programs should be started to prepare a new generation of civil servants for the finance and mines ministries.

A political partnership must be in place for these measures to be effective. Otherwise, none of the technical tools will have any impact. At Samba-Panza's request, the advisers should have the right to veto expenditure proposals in the departments in

¹⁵⁰ Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 16 March 2014.

¹⁵¹ "IMF mission and the Central African Republic Reach Staff-Level Agreement on Financial Assistance Under the Rapid Credit Facility", press release no. 14/153, FMI, 3 April 2014, and "World Bank endorses emergency funds to restore public financial management in the Central African Republic", press release, World Bank, 24 April 2014.

¹⁵² On 16 April 2014, the CAR launched a vast auditing operation in the transport, civil aviation and civil service ministries to check civil service pay and functions. The aim was to identify precisely the amount spent on salaries and the number of civil servants. See "RCA: lancement du contrôle du fichier de la solde et de la Fonction Publique", Radio Ndeke Luka, 16 April 2014.

¹⁵³ A mission of French technical assistants, EU funded, was in Bangui 11-18 March 2014 to plan a Treasury Central Accounting Agency (ACCT) to assist budget and treasury managers. "Mission d'expertise technique en RCA", ADETEF (Assistance au développement des échanges en technologies économiques et financières), 2 April 2014.

¹⁵⁴ As many anti-corruption reforms have been implemented, there is a well-documented range of measures and evaluations available. Christine Cheng and Dominik Zaum, *op. cit.* "Integrity in State-building, Anti-Corruption Strategy with a Statebuilding Lens", Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), Paris, August 2009.

¹⁵⁵ Reform of fiscal administration in Burundi involved creating a single agency, the Burundi Revenue Office. "For state and citizen: reforming revenue administration in Burundi", Africa Research Institute, October 2013.

¹⁵⁶ Regulatory and auditing agencies such as the Economic and Social Council, the Court of Auditors, the Constitutional Council, the General State Inspectorate and the Council of State, indispensable for the sound operation of the state and its institutions, "have never been attractive because they are not very lucrative". These bodies have been left lying fallow and are very poorly resourced in human, financial and material terms. Didier Niewiadowski, *op. cit.*

which they are working, thereby safeguarding respect for procedures and ensuring money is spent in accordance with government decisions.¹⁵⁷

3. Reducing the opportunities for predation

The fight against predation requires suspending current mining contracts, regaining control of the diamond sector, combating international trafficking and identifying money presumably misappropriated by the two previous governments.¹⁵⁸ The UN, the CAR and other countries in the region should organise a seminar to build a consensus on how to combat trafficking in gold, diamonds and ivory and should create a special unit within MINUSCA to lead the fight against trafficking. It should be composed of experts and representatives of CAR and other countries in the region and draw on the expertise of specialised organisations and institutions (Kimberley Process, the World Customs Organisation, Interpol, WWF, etc.). Using the research done by the UN group of experts, the special unit's composition and UN mandate would allow it to conduct international investigations and obtain cooperation of governments should proceedings be needed in their country. The system of targeted sanctions is a first stage that should be complemented by investigations and criminal proceedings.¹⁵⁹

The extractive resources sector

As Crisis Group previously suggested,¹⁶⁰ the African Development Bank should review the contracts signed by the Bozizé and Djotodia governments. The transition authorities should also decree a moratorium in the extractive sector until this review is completed. That would avoid rumours about possible exploitation that are fuelling mistrust between neighbouring countries and would cause the CAR elite to stop believing that mining contracts will solve all the country's problems.¹⁶¹

Gold and diamond production should be channelled through official networks. In the case of diamonds, this network exists and was described in Crisis Group's preceding report. It would be useful to identify the main production sites and replace armed groups with international forces and government administrators in charge of this sector. Once under the protection of these forces and brought under the CAR administration, purchasing office collectors registered in Bangui would be able to return and do their business. It would only be necessary to make the main sites secure.

¹⁵⁷ This has already been put into practice in Liberia. Between 2006 and 2010, a Governance and Economic Management Assistance Program (GEMAP) was introduced by the government and its partners. Its objectives were to improve tax collection, make budget management and government expenditure more transparent, review mechanisms for granting mining and other concessions, combat corruption in public administration and build state capacities. External financial managers were deployed in key ministries, state accounting and regulatory agencies and state-owned companies to improve transparency. They also had counter-signing powers. See GEMAP's website, www.gemap-liberia.org/about_gemap/index.html, and Crisis Group Africa Report N°177, *Liberia: How Sustainable is the Recovery?*, 19 August 2011.

¹⁵⁸ Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, May 2014.

¹⁵⁹ For more on the need to integrate the fight against organised crime into peacekeeping missions, see James Cockayne and Adam Lupel, "From Iron Fist to Invisible Hand – Peace Operations, Organized Crime and Intelligent International Law Enforcement", *International Peacekeeping*, vol. 16 (February 2009), pp. 151-168.

¹⁶⁰ See Crisis Group Report, *Priorities of the Transition*, op. cit.

¹⁶¹ All governments dream of signing a fabulous mining contract that will make the CAR a producer country. This mirage contrasts with their bad practices that have ended with the departure of all mining companies and prevented the country from getting past the exploration stage.

Control by international forces should be accompanied by the resumption of normal government administration, with the deployment of mines ministry officials responsible for checking the legal status of buyers and issuing certificates. In order to supervise this operation and contribute to implementation of its mandate – to dissociate diamond trading from conflicts¹⁶² – the Kimberley Process should send experts to work alongside CAR officials. That would allow the government to again ensure the traceability of diamonds and therefore allow the suspension of the Kimberley Process to be lifted.¹⁶³ Without any control on production mining sites, the lifting of that suspension could benefit armed groups.¹⁶⁴

The government should also act against smuggling. Cameroon has already taken unilateral measures,¹⁶⁵ but, given the international nature of smuggling, the UN, the region's countries and specialised organisations (Kimberley Process, Interpol, etc.) should establish a research unit on gold and diamond trafficking. The Kimberley Process should encourage the countries to join a specialised subgroup on regional smuggling that could monitor the situation and provide technical expertise.

The fight against poaching

Poaching has become a national security problem in the CAR. Groups of poachers are more resilient than the security services and are able to travel around the country as they see fit. The fight against large-scale, militarised poaching should be among the priorities for reestablishing security. The sheer size of the territory means it is necessary to deploy a team that combines human intelligence and technology with rapid intervention capacity. The use of unarmed drones and human intelligence should allow identification of large groups of poachers; a professional military force equipped with rapid transport, notably aircraft, should be able to arrest them.¹⁶⁶ Since it already has an air surveillance operation and troops deployed in the south east as part of the mission against the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), the U.S. could take responsibility for this.¹⁶⁷ Dismantling the ivory trade could be entrusted to the special unit mentioned above.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶² This goal was reaffirmed during the Kimberley Process meeting in Shanghai. Speech of the President of the World Diamond Council, 10 June 2014.

¹⁶³ Peacekeeping missions tend to gradually realise they need to monitor the extraction of natural resources and analyse its impact on conflict. "From Conflict to Peacebuilding", UN Environment Programme (UNEP), 2009.

¹⁶⁴ "La Centrafrique demande sa réintégration au Processus de Kimberley de certification des diamants", Agence Ecofin, 11 June 2014.

¹⁶⁵ Before joining the Kimberley Process in 2013, Cameroon worried that the growth of smuggling in the CAR could compromise the integrity of its certification system. Crisis Group interview, member of the Kimberley Process national secretariat, Yaoundé, 5 May 2014.

¹⁶⁶ Surveillance drones are used in Nepal and South Africa. "Nepal deploys drones to fight rhino poachers", Al Jazeera, 7 October 2012; and "Drones join war on rhino poachers in South Africa", *The Telegraph*, 27 May 2013.

¹⁶⁷ "Ouganda: des renforts américains pour traquer la LRA de Joseph Kony", *Jeune Afrique*, 24 March 2014; and "Les États-Unis doublent le nombre de leurs forces spéciales chargées de traquer Joseph Kony", *La Voix de l'Amérique*, 24 March 2014. Crisis Group, telephone interview, consultant for U.S. Forces, Bangui, June 2014.

¹⁶⁸ A conference in London recommended enforcement action against trafficking in endangered species and greater cross-border cooperation in the form of information exchange and joint operations. Declaration on the Illegal Wildlife Trade, 13 February 2014.

The search for ill-gotten gains

The transition should also prioritise the search for ill-gotten gains and allegedly misappropriated public funds. The investigation begun in 2013 into former President Bozizé's conduct¹⁶⁹ should be entrusted to experts, funded by donors, endorsed by the UN and extended to include Djotodia, as well as his and Bozizé's respective entou-rages. If necessary, Interpol should be called in and any funds identified returned to the treasury.

Strengthening the judicial system

All these activities require an operational justice system (police and judiciary). UNDP and EU projects to strengthen judicial capacities are already underway,¹⁷⁰ but the government needs to go further and seek substantial technical assistance for a re-constituted police force, prosecution service and judiciary. The transitional president has expressed a wish to bring in foreign judges to work alongside local magistrates.¹⁷¹ The international community should act quickly to revitalise the judicial system and make it more impartial in Bangui and other towns secured by the international forces.

The government should build capacities and create an impartial prosecution service and judiciary to pursue and punish traffickers and smugglers and cooperate with foreign authorities in identifying misappropriated funds abroad and networks of diamond smugglers. In due course, a program to train police officers and magistrates must be designed and implemented.

¹⁶⁹ According to some accounts, former President Bozizé took public funds with him when he left the country. Crisis Group interview, diaspora member, Yaoundé, 9 May 2014. Crisis Group telephone interview, diplomat, June 2014. "Centrafrique: que reste-il de la Bozizie?", *Jeune Afrique*, 1 April 2014. For more on the sale of diplomatic passports, see "Centrafrique: vrais papiers, faux diplomates", *Jeune Afrique*, 20 April 2014.

¹⁷⁰ Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 26 February 2014.

¹⁷¹ Crisis Group interview, diplomat, Bangui, 15 March 2014 and discussion, transitional president and Crisis Group's president, Brussels, 3 April 2014.

V. Conclusion

The failure of previous international interventions calls for serious retrospective analysis and self-criticism, something that international actors are naturally reticent about. The most recent UN resolution represents continuity with the past and does not show much imagination, carefully avoiding MINUSCA involvement in the indispensable reconstruction and stabilisation task.

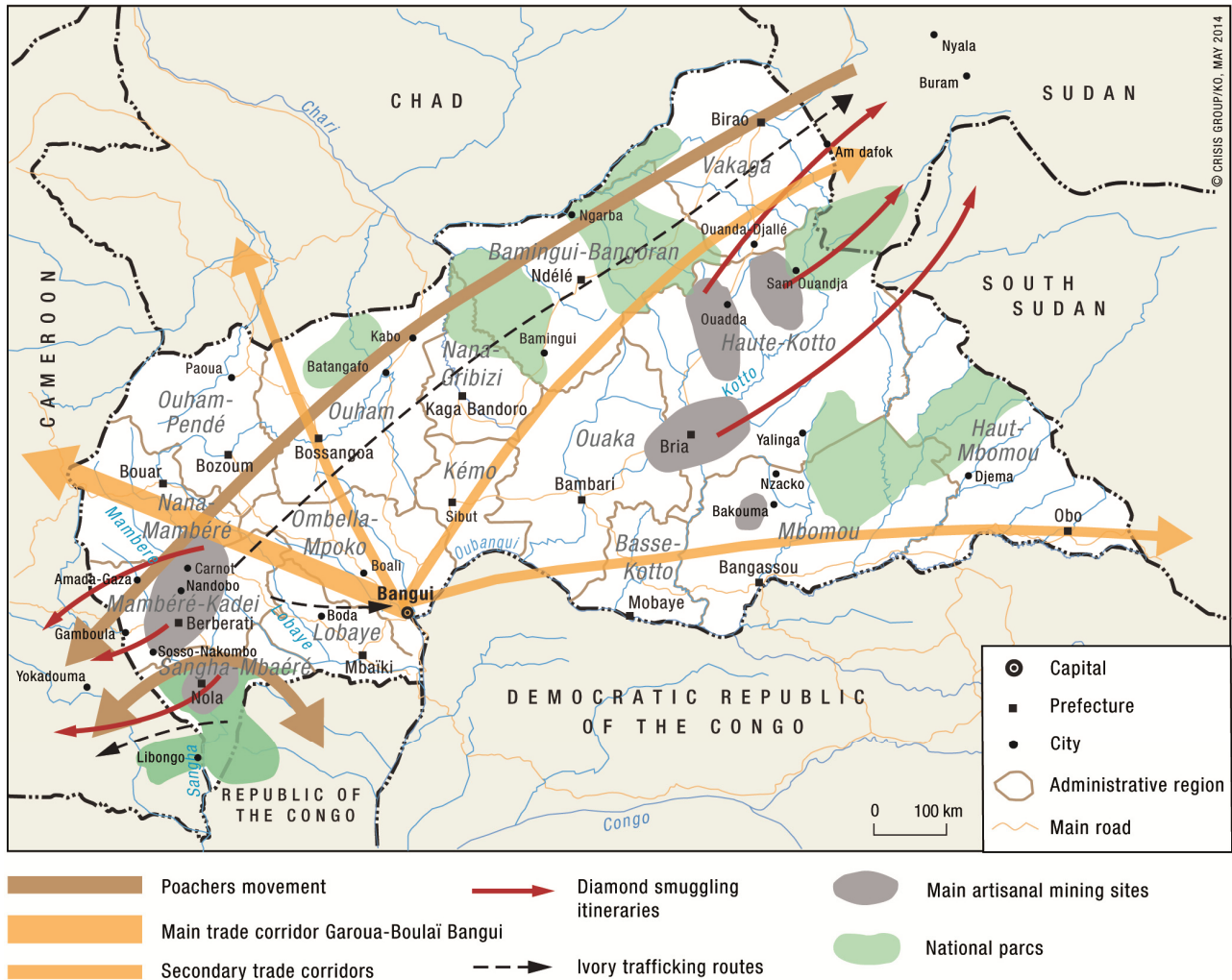
Although it is legitimate to prioritise the conventional tasks of a peacekeeping mission for the moment, it will become imperative in coming months to expand the UN mission's mandate so it can use the economy as a stabilisation tool, build the foundations for a more honest administration and mobilise regional and international actors in the fight against predation by trafficking networks. That requires going beyond a traditional mandate and appreciating that a peacekeeping operation is a tool, not a strategy, and that elections will not be enough to end the crisis. Both the transitional government and the international community should understand this to change the governance system in the Central African Republic.

Nairobi/Brussels, 17 June 2014

Appendix A: Map of the Central African Republic



Appendix B: Illegal Trafficking Routes



Appendix C: Decree for the Appointment of Regional Military Commanders

PRESIDENCE DE LA REPUBLIQUE

*Courrier arrivée
28-10-2013*



REPUBLIQUE CENTRAFRICAINE
Unité – Dignité – Travail

DECRET N° 13.406

**PORTANT NOMINATION OU CONFIRMATION
DES OFFICIERS DE L'ARMÉE NATIONALE AUX
DIFFÉRENTS POSTES DE RESPONSABILITÉ
DANS LES RÉGIONS MILITAIRES.**

LE CHEF DE L'ÉTAT DE LA TRANSITION.

- (/u la Loi N°13.001 du 18 juillet 2013, portant Charte Constitutionnelle de Transition ;
- (/u le Décret n°13.270 du 18 juillet 2013, portant promulgation de la Charte Constitutionnelle de Transition ;
- (/u le Décret n°85.015 du 06 juin 1985, modifiant l'Ordonnance n°70.013 du 24 avril 1970 accordant un pouvoir spécial au Chef de l'Etat en matière de nomination, de perte de grade ou de changement de position des Officiers d'Active de l'Armée Nationale ;
- (/u le Décret n°13.275 du 25 juillet 2013, portant Confirmation du Premier Ministre, Chef du Gouvernement de Transition ;
- (/u le Décret n°13.280 du 03 Aout 2013, portant Nomination ou Confirmation des Membres du Gouvernement d'Union Nationale et de Transition ;
- (/u le Décret n°13.269 du 16 juillet 2013, portant Organisation et Fonctionnement du Ministère de la Défense Nationale, de la Restructuration de l'Armée et Victime de Guerre et fixant les Attributions du Ministre;

- (/u Le Décret n° **85.431** du 12 décembre 1985, portant statut des Officiers d'Active de l'Armée Nationale ;
- (/u le Décret n° **00.006** du 05 janvier 2000, Modifiant et complétant le Décret n° **82.001** du 04 janvier 1982, Portant Règlement du Régime de Rémunération applicable aux Militaires, Gendarmes et Gardes Républicaines de l'Armée Nationale.

***SUR PROPOSITION DU MINISTRE DELEGUE A LA PRESIDENCE
DE LA REPUBLIQUE, CHARGE DE LA DEFENSE NATIONALE,
DE LA RESTRUCTURATION DE L'ARMEE, DES ANCIENS
COMBATTANTS ET DES VICTIMES DE GUERRES***

LE CONSEIL DES MINISTRES ENTENDU

D E C R E T E

Art. 1^{er}: Les Officiers Supérieurs et Subalternes dont les noms suivent sont nommés Commandants des Régions Militaires ci-après :

OMBELLA MPOKO

Commandant de Région
AHAMAT MAHAMAT AL HASSIM

Adjoint :
MAHAMAT SALLET DJOUMA, Mle 2001-2-1404 du BSS

LOBAYE

Commandant de Région :
ABDOULAYE AHAMAT MIYA

Adjoint :
Capitaine MOUSSA KITOKO, Mle 98-2-1061 du BSS

NANA MAMBERE

Commandant la Région :
Général DOCTEUR SELEMAN SAID

Adjoint :
SANDALE MAHAMAT

OUHAM

Commandant la Région :
YAYA ISSA

Adjoint :
Chef de Bataillon KONZELO Barnabé,
Mle 85-1-1005 du BSS

OUHAM-PENDE

Commandant la Région :
ZOUNDEKO Joseph

Adjoint :
Lieutenant MASSAMBA BANIKYA, Mle 2005-2-1044 du
BIT1

NANA-GRIBIZI

Commandant la Région :
MAHAMAT ALI OUSMAN

Adjoint :
BABA ISSENE 



BASSE-KOTTO

Commandant la Région :

Zackaria YAYA

Adjoint :

Chef de Bataillon **MODOI-NGUËNDE Edouard**,
Mle 82-2-1115 du BSS

OUAKA

Commandant la Région :

ALI DARASS

Adjoint :

Chef de Bataillon **GUEYORO Raphael Basile**,
Mle 86-1-1116 du BSS

MBOMOU

Commandant la Région :

Chef de Bataillon **NADJI Alexis René**,
Mle 86-2-1215 du BSS

Adjoint :

Lieutenant **MAHADJAR KAMIS HABALLA**, Mle 2003-2-1511 du BSS

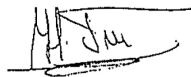
MAMBERE KADEI

Commandant la Région

Col **AMINE Joseph**

Adjoint :

Lieutenant **WAWODOGBOU Firmin**, Mle 87-2-1031 du BSS



KEMO

Commandant la Région
Issene ACHAGUI

Adjoint :
RADJAL David

SANGHA-MBAERE

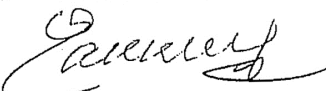
Commandant la Région
ANAMA AHAMAT DAGUACHE

Adjoint :
ALI AHAMAT

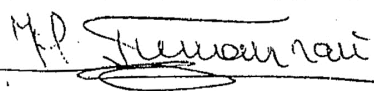
Art. 2: Le présent Décret qui abroge toutes dispositions antérieures contraires et qui prend effet à compter de la date de sa signature, sera enregistré et publié au Journal Officiel.

Fait à Bangui, le 10 08 OCT 2013

Le Ministre Délégué à la
Presidence de la République
Chargé de la Défense Nationale,
de la Restructuration de l'Armée,
des Anciens Combattants
et des Victimes de Guerres


Général Bertrand MAMOUR

Le Premier Ministre,
Chef du Gouvernement de la Transition


Me Nicolas TIANGAYE

Le Chef de l'Etat de Transition



Michel DJOTODIA AM NONDROKO