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Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the request contained in the statement of the President of the Security Council dated 29 May 2013 (S/PRST/2013/6), in which the Council requested me to keep it informed about the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the progress in the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army (see S/2012/481, annex). The report provides an assessment of the major political trends in the Central African subregion since my last report (S/2013/297), dated 20 May 2013, offers an update on progress in the implementation of the UNOCA mandate and reports on ongoing efforts to counter the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army.

II. Major developments in the Central African subregion

A. Political, peace and security developments

2. During the reporting period, the political landscape in the Central African subregion was dominated by the further deterioration of the overall situation in the Central African Republic, as well as mounting security concerns emanating from the Gulf of Guinea and the Sahel region. In addition, increased poaching activities in the subregion, risks linked to rising unemployment among the young, limits on freedom of the media and election-related tensions contributed to concerns over security in the region.

The regional impact of the crisis in the Central African Republic

3. The situation in the Central African Republic continued to deteriorate and to have growing regional implications. It was therefore the primary issue of concern for Central Africa's subregional organization, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), during the reporting period.



4. There were multiple and increasing incidents of violence and abuses committed against the civilian population by armed elements. In Bangui, sporadic incidents continued in the daytime and a high level of criminality remained prevalent at night. Violence increased in the countryside. There was also an alarming increase in intercommunal violence with religious underpinnings, and a cycle of attacks and reprisals with the new “anti-balaka” groups and ex-Séléka combatants. This cycle, if not addressed now, threatens to degenerate into a country-wide religious and ethnic divide, thereby raising concerns about the protection of civilians and the need for urgent action by the international community.

5. More than 63,000 persons originating from the Central African Republic have sought refuge in neighbouring States. The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimates that violence in the country has forced almost 400,000 people to flee their homes. The continued instability and insecurity in the country also fuelled tensions with some of its neighbours. The presence in Cameroon of elements that constituted the Central African armed forces, who fled the Central African Republic after the overthrow of former President Francois Bozizé, remains a source of tension between the two States. In addition, a number of ex-Séléka combatants of foreign origin continued to commit serious human rights violations against the local population.

6. ECCAS remained engaged, both militarily and politically, in trying to find a solution to the complex crisis. On 21 October 2013, Central African leaders welcomed the decision of the African Union Peace and Security Council, of 19 July, to authorize the deployment of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic. The Heads of State and Government also pledged to provide logistical support to the African force in its full deployment. On the political side, the ECCAS leaders instructed the Secretary-General of the Economic Community to organize an inclusive national conference with all stakeholders in the Central African Republic, and called on the national authorities to establish an electoral body to set up a calendar for the holding of elections, that should take place by February 2015. On 10 October the Security Council, in its resolution [2121 \(2013\)](#), reinforced the mandate of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) and requested the Secretary-General to provide ECCAS and the African Union with adequate assistance in the joint planning of the international Support Mission in the Central African Republic and to explore the possible option of its transformation into a United Nations peacekeeping operation.

7. During the extraordinary summit of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), held in Libreville on 14 June 2013, Heads of State pledged 25 billion CFA francs (\$50 million) to support ECCAS efforts in the Central African Republic. The situation in the country was also discussed at the thirty-sixth ministerial meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, held in Kagali from 20 to 23 August, as well as at the fifth extraordinary meeting of the Council for Peace and Security in Central Africa, held in Libreville on 16 September.

Maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea

8. Growing maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea also remains a pressing concern for the Central African subregion, and constitutes an increasing threat to the

peace, security and socioeconomic development of both coastal and landlocked States in the subregion, as well as a major threat to international trade. In the first nine months of 2013, 43 incidents of piracy and armed robbery at sea took place in the Gulf of Guinea, which, according to the International Maritime Bureau, has surpassed the Horn of Africa as the region most affected by such incidents on the continent. At a summit of heads of State, held in Yaoundé on 24 and 25 June, significant outcomes were adopted, paving the way for strengthened subregional cooperation and reinforced interregional cooperation and coordination between ECCAS, the Economic Community of West Africa (ECOWAS) and the Gulf of Guinea Commission.

Poaching and the illicit trade in ivory

9. The issue of poaching and the illicit trade in ivory in the Central African subregion, which was first brought to the attention of the Security Council in my report of 13 December 2012 (S/2012/923) has now reached alarming levels. A recent inter-agency report indicated that the Central African region has consistently displayed the highest levels of poaching on the continent.¹ The study further estimates that the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo may each have already experienced a 50 to 90 percent decrease in their elephant populations. Cameroon, Chad, the Republic of Congo and Gabon also remain vulnerable to poachers. There is broad regional consensus that poaching represents one element of illicit commercial activity used to finance transnational criminal networks and armed rebel groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army. During the reporting period, the issue ranked high on the agendas of several Central African Governments, with leaders recognizing that growth in the illicit trade of protected species presents an ecological and economic challenge, a transnational crime and a threat to the security of States.

10. At the thirty-sixth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa, ministers decided to include poaching as a standing agenda item at all future meetings. On 26 September 2013, President Ali Bongo of Gabon participated in the launch of the three-year \$80 million project by the Clinton Global Initiative to curb the global trade in poaching and trafficking of elephants. On the margins of the sixty-eighth session of the General Assembly, President Bongo also co-hosted, with Germany, a high-level panel discussion on poaching and illicit trafficking in wildlife. During the discussion, the Secretary-General of ECCAS emphasized that member States of the Community have taken drastic measures in their concerted fight against poachers, including: the recent deployment by Cameroon of 600 elite soldiers to block access routes used by wildlife traffickers; the involvement by Chad of its armed forces in the fight against poaching activities; the creation by Gabon of a specialized anti-poaching brigade and the public destruction of its national ivory stocks.

¹ United Nations Environment Programme, Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora, International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources and TRAFFIC International, "Elephants in the Dust: The African Elephant Crisis", a rapid response assessment, 2013.

Instability in the Sahel region and its impact on Central Africa

11. The security challenges facing the Sahel region and their impact on neighbouring subregions continued to be of concern for the countries of Central Africa. Flows of small arms and foreign fighters from the Sahel into the Central African Republic have fuelled violence in that country overall, further entrenching the vested interests of transnational criminal networks operating in the subregion. During a mission to Bangui, my Special Representative for Central Africa, Abou Moussa, was informed of the existence of a well-known corridor for illicit trade, passing from Darfur to the Central African Republic. On 11 September 2013, the second ministerial meeting of the countries of the Sahelo-Saharan region, which took place in N'Djamena, included ministers and representatives of ECCAS and the Community of Sahelo-Saharan States (CEN-SAD).

Youth unemployment

12. Rising youth unemployment is becoming a critical challenge for the countries of the subregion and poses a potential threat for peace and security in Central Africa. At the above-mentioned extraordinary summit, held in Libreville on 14 June 2013, CEMAC Heads of State decided to create the “Train My Generation” fund, dedicated to educating youth living in the CEMAC zone in key sectors of Africa’s economy, and contributed \$50 million for its activities.

Electoral processes

13. During the reporting period, two countries in the subregion organized elections. Equatorial Guinea held legislative and local elections on 26 May 2013, which resulted in the winning of an absolute majority for the ruling Democratic Party of Equatorial Guinea in all constituencies. In the run-up to the elections, tensions between the ruling party and the opposition were exacerbated by the detention of a number of opposition leaders, who were eventually released. Cameroon held parliamentary and municipal elections on 30 September, with the ruling Cameroon People’s Democratic Movement retaining control of the National Assembly and winning local elections. Elections in both countries took place in a generally peaceful atmosphere.

B. Socioeconomic trends

14. During the reporting period, the Central African subregion continued to enjoy strong economic expansion, with an estimated growth rate of 5.6 per cent in the second half of 2013, largely driven by public investment financed by high oil revenues. While macroeconomic stability has been maintained, with moderate inflation, the region’s main challenge is to implement the structural policies necessary to help promote sustainable and inclusive growth and reverse growing inequalities between rich and poor.

15. In the context of economic integration, during their extraordinary summit, CEMAC Heads of State decided to abolish visa requirements for nationals of the six CEMAC countries, effective 1 January 2014. The visa-free travel regime is a major step in the implementation of policies allowing the free movement of people and goods in Central Africa and a demonstration of the political commitment of

CEMAC member States to stimulating development by speeding up regional integration.

C. Human rights, including gender equality and freedom of expression

16. The subregion received three high-profile visits of human rights officials during the period under review, a reminder of the challenges requiring urgent attention. The United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, who visited Cameroon from 30 June to 2 July 2013, recommended more effective measures to implement ratified conventions, in order to boost the realization of economic, social and cultural rights. She urged the country to ratify the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities. The Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights, Ivan Šimonović, who visited the Central African Republic from 29 July to 2 August 2013, recommended that the authorities put in place effective transitional mechanisms to facilitate the return to stability. The Independent Expert on minority issues, Rita Izsák, visited Cameroon from 2 to 11 September 2013. While acknowledging the peaceful coexistence between the country's different ethnic and religious groups, she urged the Government to provide further guarantees of equal rights for persons belonging to indigenous minorities.

17. With respect to the human rights of women, women and girls in the subregion continued to suffer from a high incidence of rape (particularly in the eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo), female genital mutilation, early forced marriage, torture of widows (in Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon), denial to young women and girls of the right to education, high rates of maternal mortality and limited access to economic opportunities. The current conflict in the Central African Republic had displaced many civilians, with particularly devastating consequences for women and children. Women have not only been victims of sexual violence, but bore the biggest brunt of the declining social, economic and health situation in the country. The subregion also registered the lowest participation rates for women and youth in decision-making positions in parliaments, averaging 20 per cent, with the exception of Burundi, at 32.4 per cent.

18. During the reporting period, there was no major change regarding freedom of the media, which remained precarious for journalists who were critical of the authorities. Journalists continued to be the victims of arrest, arbitrary detention, intimidation, pressure and censorship, particularly during electoral periods, while some media outlets were subject to suspension or closure. Private media were especially targeted because of their diligence in reporting acts of corruption and violations of democratic principles, as well as for their potential to mobilize aggrieved groups against the authorities. The continuing application of prison sentences for press offences remained a major concern, although several civil society organizations in a number of countries had advocated the abolition of such measures.

III. Activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

A. Supporting Member States and subregional organizations

19. During the period under review, UNOCA remained engaged with key stakeholders to promote peace and security in the subregion, particularly on issues that have a regional, cross-border dimension, and continued to carry out good-offices roles and special assignments in countries in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, in line with its mandate.

Economic Community of Central African States

20. UNOCA and ECCAS pursued their collaboration and worked closely in support of regional mediation and peacebuilding efforts. In this regard, my Special Representative continued meeting regularly with the Secretary-General of ECCAS, and, on 26 August 2013, received the newly appointed Secretary-General of the Community, Ambassador Ahmad Allam-Mi, who replaced Nassour Guelengdouskia Ouaidou on 5 August, to exchange views on the existing cooperation between UNOCA and ECCAS and to discuss the security situation in the subregion, including ongoing exchanges between ECCAS and the African Union on the transformation of the ECCAS-mandated Mission for the Consolidation Of Peace in the Central African Republic into the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic.

21. At the political and technical levels, senior officials of the two institutions continued to meet on a regular basis. UNOCA continued to provide support to ECCAS in order to enhance its capacity and its mechanisms to assist regional efforts in the prevention of conflict and the consolidation of peace in the 10 ECCAS member States within the context of the cooperation framework signed between the two institutions in May 2012.

22. Within the context of the UNOCA good offices mandate, and given the fruitful working relationship that UNOCA has forged with the African Union, particularly on joint efforts to counter the Lord's Resistance Army, my Special Representative, in close consultation with my Special Representative for the Central African Republic, facilitated talks between ECCAS and the African Union to harmonize their positions on the African Union Mission in the Central African Republic. The meeting, which took place on 2 and 3 September 2013 in Addis Ababa, served as a springboard to advance strategic and technical coordination between the two institutions regarding the deployment of the International Support Mission.

23. On security issues, UNOCA continued its fruitful collaboration with ECCAS to tackle, at the strategic level, the problem of increasing maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea (see paras. 32 to 34 below). UNOCA also facilitated the effective participation of ECCAS at the thirty-sixth meeting of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa (see para. 30 below).

24. Recognizing the linkages between youth unemployment and regional stability, UNOCA continued to advance the process of co-organizing with ECCAS, the World Bank, the African Development Bank, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and others, a regional forum on youth employment and conflict prevention

in Central Africa, to be held before the end of 2013. In this context my Special Representative chaired a second meeting on 26 September to discuss the proposed regional forum, and a third preparatory meeting was held on 2 October at the ECCAS secretariat. ECCAS welcomed the initiative and expressed its readiness to support the organization of the forum.

Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa

25. My Special Representative, who was invited to address the CEMAC Heads of State for the first time at the Extraordinary Summit in Libreville on 14 June 2013, took the opportunity to communicate the readiness of UNOCA to support the Community on issues of common interest. He also met with the President of the CEMAC Commission on 31 October in Bangui to discuss the Commission's financial support to ECCAS in the context of the crisis in the Central African Republic, the involvement of the Commission in the regional forum on youth employment and conflict prevention and the finalization of the framework of cooperation between CEMAC and UNOCA.

Chad

26. UNOCA undertook an assessment mission to Chad from 10 to 14 June 2013, following the announcement by the Government of Chad of an aborted "destabilization plot", which led to the arrest and detention of a number of political actors who were provisionally released. The UNOCA team met with the United Nations country team, Government officials and other stakeholders to discuss key political and security challenges, elections and governance issues, human rights, the growing threat of terrorism in the Sahel region and the situation in the Lake Chad Basin area.

Sao Tome and Principe

27. Further to a request made by the Prime Minister of Sao Tome and Principe, Gabriel Arcanjo, UNOCA conducted an assessment mission to the country from 21 to 25 October 2013. The UNOCA team met with a number of stakeholders, including Government officials, representatives of civil society organizations, and diplomatic missions and political leaders, as well as the United Nations Resident Coordinator, to discuss the issue of the proliferation of small arms and light weapons raised by the Government, and the impact of such proliferation on peace, security, stability and regional integration.

28. The team also identified areas in which it could provide support to Sao Tome and Principe in addressing these challenges. UNOCA plans to work with the United Nations country team, ECCAS, the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa, the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, the International Maritime Organization and other bilateral and multilateral partners in order to help the authorities and people of the country to address the challenges they face.

B. Preventive diplomacy and peacebuilding

Equatorial Guinea

29. My Special Representative travelled to Malabo from 20 to 22 May 2013, amid media reports concerning the detention of members of the opposition and rising political tensions ahead of the legislative and local elections scheduled for 26 May. He took the opportunity to meet with the Minister for Foreign Affairs to assess the situation. While the Government had indeed detained several leaders of the opposition for organizing an unauthorized demonstration, the Minister assured my Special Representative of their imminent release, which did occur, and the elections took place in a peaceful atmosphere.

United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

30. UNOCA, in its capacity as the secretariat of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee, supported the organization of the thirty-sixth ministerial meeting of the Committee from 20 to 23 August 2013 in Kigali. At the meeting, Ministers adopted the Kigali declaration, in which they expressed concern at the political, security and humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic. Concerning disarmament, participants reviewed the Kinshasa Convention on the control of small arms and light weapons and encouraged Member States that had not yet ratified the Convention to do so by the end of 2013. Given the increasing security implications of poaching, Ministers decided to include the subject of poaching as a standing agenda item during all future meetings of the Committee.

31. Member States of the Advisory Committee welcomed the initiative of Chad to host the thirty-seventh ministerial meeting in N'Djamena. UNOCA conducted an assessment mission to Chad in October 2013 to commence preparations for the meeting, which is scheduled to be held from 9 to 13 December 2013.

C. Piracy and armed robbery at sea committed off the coast of the States of the Gulf of Guinea

32. In line with Security Council resolutions [2018 \(2011\)](#) and [2039 \(2012\)](#), UNOCA provided full support to ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission, in close collaboration with the United Nations Office for West Africa (UNOWA), in their preparations for the regional summit of heads of State and Government on maritime piracy and armed robbery at sea in the Gulf of Guinea, which took place in Yaoundé on 24 to 25 June 2013.

33. The heads of State and Government, 13 of whom were represented at the Presidential level, adopted the foundations of a common regional strategy against maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea. This highly anticipated summit saw the adoption of a code of conduct concerning the prevention and repression of piracy, armed robbery against ships and illegal maritime activities in West and Central Africa, which defines the regional maritime security strategy and paves the way for a legally binding regional instrument. The summit also adopted a political declaration of the heads of State and Government of the Gulf of Guinea on maritime safety and security, as well as a memorandum of understanding among ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission on maritime safety and security in

West and Central Africa. In my statement of 26 June 2013, I welcomed this significant demonstration of collective political will and of international, regional and national cooperation to tackle a pressing collective security issue in a coherent manner.

34. In order to operationalize the decisions of the Yaoundé summit, UNOCA and ECCAS jointly organized a meeting of technical experts from UNOCA, ECCAS, UNOWA, ECOWAS, the Gulf of Guinea Commission and the Republic of Cameroon on 29 and 30 July 2013, in Libreville, and my Special Representative attended a meeting of the chief executives of ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission on 26 October in Dakar. UNOCA continues to participate in an informal experts group, the Group of Eight Plus Friends of the Gulf of Guinea, which supports the efforts of Member States and regional organizations in tackling the maritime insecurity issue.

IV. Lord's Resistance Army

A. Current situation

35. Suspected attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army continued to be reported in the remote border areas of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, where State and security institutions are weak or non-existent. According to figures released by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs during the reporting period, the total number of such incidents declined slightly during the second and third quarter of 2013 compared to the first quarter. However, a comparison for the periods from January to September of 2012 and 2013 indicates that, whereas the number of attacks decreased in 2013, the related number of deaths and abductions were higher. A total of 31 attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army were reported in the third quarter (a slight decrease of 7 per cent from the second quarter) resulting in two deaths and 39 abductions. The Democratic Republic of the Congo recorded the majority of the attacks (29), while the Central African Republic recorded most of the abductions (34) from a single attack. A suspected attack was also reported in South Sudan after almost two years without such an incident.

36. In the Central African Republic, while the Lord's Resistance Army continues to threaten the local population in the south-eastern region of the country, it has now shifted its activities onto the north-eastern region as a result of the prevailing security vacuum and in order to avoid the operations of the African Union Regional Task Force in the south-east. Activity of the Lord's Resistance Army decreased in the Haut Mbomou prefecture, where the Regional Task Force is authorized to operate, and increased in the mine-rich Haut-Kotto prefecture, where the majority of attacks took place. From May to October 2013, 7 attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, including 17 deaths and 79 abductions, were reported in the Central African Republic. The activity of the Army has also led to the displacement of an additional 300 internally displaced persons in the Nzacko area, while 58 people have returned home. On 22 September 2013, BINUCA was informed by the authorities of the Central African Republic that about 2,000 to 4,000 persons, including some 500 children, reported as Lord's Resistance Army elements were allegedly ready to surrender to the authorities in the locality of Nzacko. BINUCA was not able to verify this information and none have surrendered thus far.

37. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the majority of the attacks continued to occur in the Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé districts of Orientale Province, on the porous border with the Central African Republic. During the third quarter of 2013, a total of 29 presumed attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army, including 2 deaths and 21 abductions, were reported in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Water, health, protection and food remain the priority needs in these areas. During the third quarter of 2013, attacks by the Lord's Resistance Army and related deaths in the Democratic Republic of the Congo declined by 3 per cent, but the number of reported abductions increased. An estimated 256,000 people remain displaced in Orientale Province, which also hosts 6,505 refugees from the Central African Republic.

38. As of 29 October 2013, the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs reported that 353,000 persons remained displaced in the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and South Sudan, representing a decrease of 15 per cent as compared to the second quarter. Of the displaced, 325,931 were internally displaced persons and 27,761 were refugees, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo hosting 255,932 internally displaced persons and 6,505 refugees, the Central African Republic hosting 21,008 internally displaced persons and 6,304 refugees and South Sudan hosting 49,000 internally displaced persons and 15,222 refugees. In the Central African Republic, increased activity by the Lord's Resistance Army, coupled with the prevailing insecurity, continues to induce internal displacement, particularly in the Haut Mbomou and Haute-Kotto prefectures. In Zemio, UNHCR reported frequent security and protection incidents involving refugees, particularly during cross-border movements between the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. For example, in early October, a group of 26 refugees who were trying to cross the river bordering the two countries were kidnapped by elements of the Lord's Resistance Army, robbed and released after two days.

39. Despite some encouraging trends, the humanitarian situation in the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas continues to be dominated by uncertainty and insecurity. Humanitarian access in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains problematic with only a few humanitarian agencies and non-governmental organizations able to provide assistance in remote areas where no State institutions are present. Furthermore, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo many humanitarian actors have left areas affected by the violence of the Lord's Resistance Army, which are no longer considered to be in a state of emergency. As insecurity increases, the lack of access by and departure of humanitarian actors has resulted in a gap in the delivery of basic services and has exposed displaced individuals, including children rescued from the Lord's Resistance Army, to additional protection risks. Local church organizations, which play a critical role, continue to report high levels of fear and psychological trauma among communities affected by the Lord's Resistance Army owing to the seeming unpredictability of its movements, its vast reach, and its historic brutality.

40. The general decrease in the number and the intensity of attacks is attributable to the success of recent operations carried out to counter the Lord's Resistance Army by the African Union Regional Task Force during the reporting period. There is broad consensus among military representatives and humanitarian actors on the ground that military operations have degraded the Lord's Resistance Army, reduced the number of attacks and civilian deaths overall, limited its ability to establish

bases and increased pressure on its combatants to defect. On 27 July 2013, a senior commander in the Lord's Resistance Army, Major Thomas Okello Ondano, was removed from the battlefield during military operations of the Regional Task Force in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Recent unverified reports of mass defections in the Central African Republic and erratic overtures at negotiation may indicate that the organization is seriously threatened and attempting to buy time in a bid to ease military pressure.

41. The modus operandi of the Lord's Resistance Army has changed, most likely as a result of increased military pressure. While it still maintains its chain of command, it is scattered into smaller units of three to five armed elements, who maintain a low profile and focus on survival activities such as looting and pillaging for food and supplies, rather than abductions and attacks against civilians. These units appear to be concentrated mainly in the Central African Republic, carrying out small-scale attacks, mainly in the Haute-Kotto prefecture and making incursions into the Haut-Uélé and Bas-Uélé districts of the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Garamba National Park in the Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to be a sanctuary for the Lord's Resistance Army and a source for its illicit trade in ivory.

42. The Government of the Sudan reports that there are no elements of the Lord's Resistance Army in the disputed Kafia Kingi enclave, on the border between the Central African Republic, South Sudan and the Sudan. However, reliable sources suggest that the Lord's Resistance Army operated periodically in Kafia Kingi from 2009 until late February or early March 2013. Further sources suggest that a small group, including the leader Joseph Kony, may have returned to Kafia Kingi in late March 2013. However, Kony is believed to have since departed, while some elements of the Lord's Resistance Army may still remain.

B. Coordination and resource mobilization

43. On 24 and 25 July 2013, my Special Representative and the African Union Special Envoy for the Lord's Resistance Army issue, Francisco Madeira, co-chaired the biannual meeting of focal points on the Lord's Resistance Army in Entebbe, Uganda. Indicating the high level of commitment to the issue, more than 50 participants, including national, regional and international partners, attended the meeting. Participants took stock of military, political, humanitarian and human rights initiatives and elaborated activities for the next six-month period in the context of the implementation plan for the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army (S/2013/240, annex).

44. On 2 October 2013, my Special Representative participated in a conference hosted at the European Parliament in Brussels to refocus international attention on the Lord's Resistance Army issue. This was followed, on 4 October, also in Brussels, by his participation in the International Working Group on the Lord's Resistance Army co-chaired by the European Union and the United States of America. Members of the Working Group agreed that in order to capitalize on the recent expansion of military operations, strengthening political and financial support for the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative was essential. There was also consensus that military pressure was weakening the Lord's Resistance Army and that that momentum should be sustained. Specific ideas were put forward to advance progress in the areas of benchmarks for measuring progress, funding of activities in the regional strategy implementation plan and coordination of collective efforts.

45. In addition to the continuing support provided by the United States and the European Union, Luxembourg, a member of the European Union, has pledged a contribution to support the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative and is working closely with the African Union to advance a proposal in this regard. However, many projects in the implementation plan of the United Nations regional strategy are yet to be funded. As several donors, including some European Union countries, have expressed interest in providing funding, pending greater clarity on the priority needs and envisioned support, additional donor outreach will be required.

46. With regard to the issue of coordination, the International Working Group acknowledged the role of UNOCA in coordinating collective efforts to combat the Lord's Resistance Army, including the convening of the biannual meetings of the focal points and of reporting to the Security Council. The Working Group therefore agreed that UNOCA will maintain its lead role in facilitating coordination and identifying areas for further improvement.

C. Implementation of the United Nations regional strategy

1. Operationalization and full implementation of the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army

47. During the reporting period, significant progress was achieved in operationalizing key elements in the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army. Specifically, with training, planning and operational support from US military advisers, the Ugandan, South Sudanese and Congolese contingents of the African Union Regional Task Force became fully operational. The joint diplomatic intervention of my Special Representative and the African Union Special Envoy in June in the Central African Republic,² combined with international pressure, led to the resumption of the operations of the African Union Regional Task Force in the Central African Republic in August 2013.³ In addition, the African Union Special Envoy brokered the easing of national border restrictions by the Democratic Republic of Congo, allowing the South Sudanese contingent to operate in Congolese territory.

48. The operationalization of the three contingents, combined with their ability to conduct time-sensitive cross-border operations when required, has dramatically increased the overall effectiveness of the Regional Task Force in its efforts to weaken the Lord's Resistance Army. Although the current standing capacity is at 3,085 of the 5,000 committed troops, the contingents have made an impact. In view of the encouraging progress, and given the demonstrated commitment of the participating States, on 17 June 2013, the African Union Peace and Security Council extended the mandate of the Regional Cooperation Initiative until 22 May 2014.

49. My Special Representative and the African Union Special Envoy conducted two separate joint diplomatic missions, in June and October 2013, to the Central

² The intervention led to the signing of a statement by the head of the transition, Michel Djotodia, supporting the resumption of the operations of the African Union Regional Task Force in the Central African Republic, on the basis of which military operations resumed.

³ It should be noted that the operations of the African Union Regional Task Force are still limited to the Haut-Mbomou prefecture of the Central African Republic, resulting in increased activity by the Lord's Resistance Army beyond the theatre of operations of the Task Force.

African Republic, South Sudan and Uganda. They engaged the troop-contributing countries at the political level, secured their continuing support for the Regional Cooperation Initiative, briefed them on the operations of the Regional Task Force and encouraged them, as necessary, to meet their commitments with regard to troops and logistics. In South Sudan, the planned handover of 500 additional troops in July was delayed due to a sudden cabinet shuffle. During the second mission to the Central African Republic in October, the joint delegation engaged the head of the transition of Government, the Prime Minister and non-governmental organizations and assessed developments related to the expressed desire of a group of combatants in the Lord's Resistance Army in the eastern part of the country to leave the rebel group.

50. Gaps in this area of support include critical resources needed by the African Union Regional Task Force. Despite the operational support of the United States, the Task Force still requires sufficient human resources and equipment to gather information and analysis in order to operate effectively, as well as adequate transportation, including air assets, communications equipment, mission start-up capacity, medical support and mission-appropriate training for troops. Therefore, during its meeting in Brussels on 4 October 2013, the International Working Group prioritized equipping the headquarters and sectors of the African Union Regional Task Force as a particularly critical area of support required to sustain military pressure on the Lord's Resistance Army.

51. The full operationalization of the Regional Cooperation Initiative against the Lord's Resistance Army is dependent on mobilizing resources and equipment for the Regional Task Force at its headquarters in Yambio (South Sudan) and the three sectors: Nzara (South Sudan), Dungu (Democratic Republic of the Congo) and Obo (Central African Republic). The African Union, with the assistance of the United Nations Office to the African Union (UNOAU), has refocused its attention on a review of the support requirements needed to facilitate the Regional Cooperation Initiative, taking into consideration resources that may be provided by the African Union, those that may be mobilized through partners and gaps that the United Nations may be able to bridge. In this regard, the Department of Political Affairs has provided an extrabudgetary contribution of \$254,250 to UNOCA in order to facilitate the implementation of the United Nations regional strategy.

2. Enhancement of efforts to promote the protection of civilians

52. Progress was also achieved at the United Nations system level in efforts to protect civilians in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas. In September 2013, UNICEF formalized an agreement for the enhanced engagement of religious and community leaders in protecting civilians working in the affected countries. In the Central African Republic, UNICEF is working with partners to carry out monitoring and reporting activities and undertaking projects that contribute to a protective environment for civilians. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, several hundred children formerly associated with the Lord's Resistance Army have benefited from UNICEF reintegration programmes through its partnership with a local non-governmental organization. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNICEF is working on enhancing a durable protective environment and sustainable national ownership of protective mechanisms. While UNICEF has received funding from the British Foreign Commonwealth Office for regional efforts to protect women and children in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas, significant resource

gaps remain in providing the reintegration of children associated with armed forces and groups in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas, most notably in the Central African Republic.

53. Through its core protection activities and its role as the lead protection agency, UNHCR has organized protection training for civilian and military authorities in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas on human rights and protection of civilians. UNHCR also continues its key protection monitoring activities and collects information that is used as the basis for advocacy with Government authorities and for informing military counterparts, including the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO), about the areas most at risk in terms of protection of civilians.

54. In the Haut Mbomou prefecture, UNHCR consolidated the three refugee camps to mitigate the security risks for the refugees as well as for UNHCR staff and its partners. In South Sudan, UNHCR and its partners continue to support the efforts of the Government to provide protection and assistance to thousands of refugees from the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas. Efforts have been made to reduce sexual and gender-based violence and advocacy has been undertaken to enhance the physical protection of vulnerable communities. UNHCR has also worked closely with other child protection actors for the handover, interim care and family tracing of children rescued from the Lord's Resistance Army by the Regional Task Force.

55. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the first early warning network using cellular phones was established in Dungu, while the United States, through a partnership with Vodacom, and with logistical support from MONUSCO, funded the establishment of several new mobile phone towers in the Haut Uélé district. MONUSCO also established mobile operating bases in targeted localities to deter attacks and restore confidence within the population.

3. Expansion of current disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration activities to cover all Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas

56. The roll-out of standard operating procedures on the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration of the Lord's Resistance Army is ongoing. A number of regional and mission-specific standard operating procedures have been signed by the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), MONUSCO and the United Nations Mission in South Sudan (UNMISS). The United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations is planning for their roll-out in the respective missions. The disarmament, demobilization and reintegration section of the Department continues to conduct an awareness-raising and capacity-building project focusing on developing messages to further encourage combatants in the Lord's Resistance Army to defect.

57. Significant advances have been made in defections information operations being conducted against the Lord's Resistance Army. Numerous FM radio stations are broadcasting "Come Home" messages with infrastructure support provided by a range of partners in Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries. MONUSCO, the United States and the Regional Task Force are broadcasting messages from helicopters directed at the combatants of the Lord's Resistance Army. Leaflet drops are being employed, containing messages, photos of ex-combatants who have successfully returned home and maps indicating where LRA members can safely

defect. In addition, MONUSCO has set up a working group to coordinate disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration-related activities in Dungu and is also facilitating trauma healing and peacebuilding workshops for former combatants and communities affected by the Lord's Resistance Army.

4. Promotion of a coordinated humanitarian and child protection response in all Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas

58. During the reporting period, humanitarian and human rights actors, including UNICEF (through Save the Children), conducted training of the African Union Regional Task Force contingents in child protection and the prevention of sexual violence. UNICEF continues to play a coordinating role by leading the child protection subcluster and participating in the protection cluster in the Central African Republic and by undertaking activities such as identification, interim care, vocational training and reintegration. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, it leads the Child Protection Working Group and ensures that children's issues remain a primary concern. In South Sudan, operational plans for cross-border repatriation, care and reunification for children escaped or rescued from the Lord's Resistance Army in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Central African Republic, Uganda and South Sudan continue to be in place. A transit centre for the reception of children and women rescued or escaped from the Lord's Resistance Army, the provision of psychosocial support to them and a system for cross-border family reunification is in place. UNICEF has also provided technical support to the Child Protection Working Group in Western Equatorial State in order to improve protection for children arriving at the child transit centre at Yambio. An inter-agency contingency plan for the reception of over 200 women and children from the Lord's Resistance Army arriving in South Sudan has been developed, and agencies are currently seeking funding to implement the preparedness phase of the plan.

59. In South Sudan, UNHCR and its partners continue to support efforts by the Government to provide protection and assistance to thousands of refugees from the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic. UNHCR works closely with the Ministry of Social Development, the Regional Task Force, UNICEF and other child protection actors for the handover, interim care and family tracing of children rescued from the Lord's Resistance Army by the Uganda People's Defence Forces. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNHCR facilitates interim care and family tracing of children rescued from the Lord's Resistance Army and provides assistance to survivors of sexual violence.

60. In contributing to rebuilding livelihoods, promoting stability and enhancing food security and the food value chain in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas in South Sudan, the World Food Programme (WFP) continues to offer small-holder farmers and small-scale traders a structured demand for surplus food through its Purchase for Progress initiative. The initiative is ongoing in Yambio, Nzara, Ezo and Tambura counties, where agricultural production potential is high but challenges, such as limited infrastructure, nascent markets, poor harvest management and storage practices, limit the quantities of surplus food that small-holder farmers can sell. WFP uses its purchasing power and works with supply-side partners to increase the incentive for small-scale farmers to produce a surplus and invest in production,

while simultaneously addressing some of the foundational issues stunting agricultural growth in post-conflict South Sudan.

61. The Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs continued to issue quarterly regional updates on the humanitarian situation and response in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas. The data gathered through collective efforts indicated that, as a result of decreased attention, the humanitarian response related to addressing the impact of the Lord's Resistance Army has received less funding in the Central African Republic and in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

5. Provision of support to Lord's Resistance Army-affected Governments in the fields of peacebuilding, human rights, the rule of law and development to enable them to establish State authority across their territory

62. In the justice sector, MONUSCO continued to work with the judicial authorities to address the outstanding issues of security and living conditions in Dungu prison. Mobile court sessions organized in June 2013 resulted in the release of a dozen prisoners, reducing the number of pretrial detainees. MONUSCO provided logistical support and is working with authorities in the construction of a tribunal for sustainable solutions. With the reopening of the police station in Gangala-na-Bodio, MONUSCO provided support to the Police nationale congolaise, and a project to build another in Faradje territory is under way.

63. To enhance capacity of local authorities, MONUSCO organized workshops in Isiro and Dungu to train officials on decentralization and public finance. Campaigns to raise awareness about State authority and good governance were undertaken in Dungu and Bangadi. In the area of cross-border dialogue, UNMISS and MONUSCO held preparatory meetings with authorities in South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to discuss border security, economic exchanges and the movement of armed groups, with parties on both sides confirming their interest in participating in further dialogue.

64. In Uganda, the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) supported the Government's Justice Law and Order Sector during the drafting process of the national policy on transitional justice. OHCHR and UN-Women provided technical assistance to reinforce the human rights and gender perspectives of the draft policy. The Office has also supported the Government's efforts to undertake consultations with parliamentarians to build consensus on this policy. OHCHR and other stakeholders' advocacy contributed to the prohibition of a blanket amnesty in the policy. In addition, OHCHR and the Uganda Human Rights Commission are mobilizing resources for a project on documenting the key events of the conflict with the Lord's Resistance Army, including affected persons and responsible parties.

65. On 29 July 2013, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, Navi Pillay, expressed her regrets that a public regional report requested by the Secretary-General on the human rights abuses in Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas from 1987 to 2012 could not be produced due to a number of challenges encountered in collecting such a substantial set of data. Although some information was gathered from human rights field presences, it was considered insufficient to provide a credible, fair and comprehensive report. Nonetheless, OHCHR continues to monitor the situation.

V. Observations and recommendations

66. The Central African region continues to face numerous challenges to peace and security. I remain very concerned about the continued deterioration of the situation in the Central African Republic, the precarious situation of internally displaced persons and refugees in the subregion, the continuing grave violations of human rights, the presence of foreign fighters and armed groups and the proliferation of weapons in that country, as well as the fuelling of intercommunity and religious divisions. This complex and multilayered crisis has also impeded progress in the implementation of the strategy on the Lord's Resistance Army in the Central African Republic and in the monitoring of its activities.

67. I am particularly concerned by the ongoing human rights violations and abuses committed in the Central African Republic as well as by the growing intercommunity tensions and violence. The implications of these developments for regional peace and security are worrisome. I am encouraged that the Security Council, in its resolution [2121 \(2013\)](#), has taken action to reinforce the mandate of BINUCA, to deploy planners to work with the African Union and ECCAS in the joint planning of the African-led International Support Mission for the Central African Republic and to explore the option of a possible United Nations peacekeeping mission in that country. It is critical that urgent action be taken in order to prevent the Central African Republic from spiralling out of control, a situation which would have untold consequences for the country, the subregion and beyond. The international community must act now, without further delay, to prevent further loss of life.

68. The leaders of ECCAS and CEMAC have shown a commendable commitment to working together in order to find a solution to the multidimensional crisis in the Central African Republic and to foster peace and stability as well as greater regional integration. I reiterate my appreciation to Central African States and institutions for their important and valuable role in addressing the ongoing crisis in the Central African Republic, in collaboration with the African Union, and for their commitment to better coordinate their efforts to address the security challenges that affect the subregion.

69. I welcome the deployment of the International Support Mission for the Central African Republic, which will help stabilize the situation in that country. As this will result in two separate African Union forces with different mandates operating simultaneously, I encourage the African Union to elaborate modalities for coordination between the Support Mission and the African Union Regional Task Force as early as possible, so that efforts to counter the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army in that country can be maximized.

70. I welcome the initiatives of Heads of State, the Governments of concerned countries and ECCAS to tackle the issue of poaching and the illicit wildlife trade. I remain concerned by the links between poaching and the illicit wildlife trade which sustain armed groups in the subregion, including the Lord's Resistance Army. My Special Representative will continue to support efforts in the subregion to identify potential actions and to develop a regional approach to address this disturbing trend.

71. I applaud the significant step towards political and economic integration taken by CEMAC Heads of State by their decision to establish a visa-free travel regime for

nationals of CEMAC member States in 2014. This represents a milestone achievement for subregional cooperation and potential catalyst for economic development.

72. I welcome the demonstration of collective political will by Heads of State and Government during the Yaoundé summit in support of a regional strategy for tackling the challenges of maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea, in line with Security Council resolutions 2018 (2011) and 2039 (2012). I encourage the various Member States, ECCAS, ECOWAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission to spare no effort in operationalizing the decisions adopted during the summit and to enhance interregional cooperation towards a more secure Gulf of Guinea. I encourage all Member States in the region to sign and implement the code of conduct, and I call on bilateral and international partners to provide the necessary support in this endeavour. My Special Representative and UNOCA will continue assisting States of the region as well as ECCAS and the Gulf of Guinea Commission in their joint endeavour to enhance maritime security in this region, including their cooperation and coordination efforts.

73. I welcome the overall progress made in the fight against the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army and commend the contributions of the affected countries, non-governmental organizations and the entities of the United Nations system, as well as of partners and donors, including the European Union and the United States, who serve as the co-chairs of the International Working Group on the Lord's Resistance Army. The operationalization of the African Union Regional Task Force, the reduction of restrictions on national borders and the acceptance of foreign Regional Task Force contingents operating in the sovereign territory of other countries represent a significant step forward for regional cooperation, despite the complex politics of the region.

74. However, despite the decrease in Lord's Resistance Army-related incidents and a reduction in the number of displaced people in the affected areas, the force remains a serious threat, with its senior leadership intact and with an enormous capacity for brutality. I wish to remind all actors that the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army provides a comprehensive approach to addressing both the short- and long-term needs in the affected areas. Unresolved humanitarian issues, such as the displacement of more than 350,000 persons and the long-term reintegration needs of ex-combatants, will require sustained political and financial commitment.

75. I acknowledge the efforts of national and international non-governmental organizations and civil society groups from Lord's Resistance Army-affected countries to directly engage with policymakers. This demonstrates the level of collaboration and commitment by all stakeholders to the issue, which still remains among civil society organizations in the United States, Europe and Africa.

76. In my last report, I called on the international community to provide the requisite support to fund the implementation plan adopted by the Security Council in December 2012 to support the United Nations regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the Lord's Resistance Army. I regret that very little donor assistance has been provided in this regard. I reiterate my call on the international community to support ongoing efforts to address the threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army in order to ensure that the progress achieved over the past several years is sustained.

77. I would like, once again, to express my appreciation to the Governments of Central African countries, ECCAS, CEMAC, the African Union, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region and other subregional and regional institutions for their continued collaboration with UNOCA. I thank the various entities of the United Nations system working in Central Africa, including the heads of United Nations peace operations, regional offices, country teams and other relevant entities, for their support and cooperation with UNOCA. Finally, I would like to express my appreciation to my Special Representative, Abou Moussa, and the staff of UNOCA for their continuing efforts to advance peace and security in Central Africa.
