

Central African Republic: UN mission mandate extended, additional 'blue helmets' authorized

15 November 2017 – The United Nations Security Council on Wednesday extended the mandate of the Organization's peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic (CAR), until 15 November 2018, increased the mission's troop level by 900 military personnel.

The increase in the number of the Mission's 'blue helmets' comes against the backdrop of increasing fighting in the African nation and the resulting added insecurity and misery of its civilian population.

The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR, known by its French acronym, MINUSCA, has also come under numerous attacks, which have killed at least 12 peacekeepers this year and injured many more.

In an effort to draw attention to the fragile situation in the country that, in his words, is "often far from the media spotlight," [Secretary-General António Guterres](#) travelled to CAR in late October.

In CAR, the UN chief warned of religious divisions in the country, stressing that these rifts are a result of "political manipulation that must be condemned and avoided at all costs."

SEE ALSO: [UN chief warns of religious divide in CAR, seeks global solidarity to rebuild country](#)

Security Council condemns incitement to ethnic, religious hatred

Through a [unanimously adopted resolution](#), the 15-member Council condemned "in the strongest terms" incitement to ethnic and religious hatred and violence and the multiple violations of international humanitarian law and the widespread human rights violations and abuses, including sexual and gender-based violence, committed – in particular – by the mainly Muslim ex-Seleka and mainly Christian anti-Balaka elements, as well as other militia groups, and the targeting of civilians from specific communities.

The Council also reiterated its serious concerns over the "dire humanitarian situation" in the country because of the deteriorating security situation, and the lack of access for and attacks against relief workers.

According to estimates, over 600,000 people have been internally displaced within the country and more than 500,000 have sought refuge beyond CAR's borders. This total figure of more than 1.1 million displaced – internally or abroad – is the highest ever recorded for the country.

Also by the resolution, the Security Council called on the national authorities to take concrete steps, "without delay and as a matter of

priority," to strengthen justice institutions and to fight impunity and urged them continue their efforts to restore the effective authority of the State over the whole territory of the CAR.

Human rights, including child protection and sexual violence in conflict

Concerning the human rights situation in the country, the Council reiterated the urgent need to hold accountable all perpetrators of violations and abuses of international human rights and humanitarian law.

It also called upon all parties to conflict, including ex-Seleka and anti-Balaka elements, to end all violations and abuses committed against children, in violation of applicable international law, including those involving their recruitment and use, rape and sexual violence, killing and maiming, abductions and attacks on schools and hospitals.

"[The Council] further calls upon the CAR authorities to swiftly investigate alleged violations and abuses in order to hold perpetrators accountable and to ensure that those responsible for such violations and abuses are excluded from the security sector," read the resolution.