

Continued violence in the Central African Republic undermines the chance for inclusive political dialogue

Thank you, Madam President, and thank you to the Special Representative to the AU, Special Representative, and to Mr Caholo.

Firstly, the United Kingdom is concerned that the continued violence in the Central African Republic undermines the chance for inclusive political dialogue. We urge all parties to respect the ceasefire.

We also welcome the return of opposition parties to the Republican Dialogue process and acknowledge the immense efforts on the Luanda joint roadmap initiative. This is positive progress. The political agreement remains the only way to achieve long-term peace and stability for the citizens of the Central African Republic.

Secondly, the United Kingdom remains concerned by the continuing deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the CAR and the on-going threats to civilians. The high levels of displacement and conflict-related sexual violence highlighted in the Secretary-General's report are unacceptable. And the on-going targeting of humanitarian personnel and denial of humanitarian access must stop.

Sadly, reporting shows that violations of International Humanitarian Law, and violations and abuses of human rights by all parties to the conflict continue. The United Kingdom deplores the indiscriminate killings of unarmed civilians, and targeting of Fulani and Muslim communities by the FACA and the Russian mercenary group, Wagner – as we've heard from others. Wagner plays a destabilising role in the country. Its presence undermines the work of the UN mission to the detriment of the citizens of the CAR. We call on the government to ensure the full application in the country of international humanitarian and human rights law and that all perpetrators of violations or abuses are held to account.

Thirdly, I want to touch on threats to the safety and security of UN peacekeepers. We note the decrease in violations of the status-of-forces agreement in the last reporting period. However, we continue to call for clarity regarding the attack on a UN police bus last November which resulted in UN casualties and a civilian death.

We are also deeply concerned by the jamming of MINUSCA's GPS signals and satellite communications. This requires urgent investigation. Any delay in resolving the issue will put UN civilian and uniformed personnel at unacceptable risk.

Lastly, I'd like to once again emphasise that the arms embargo exists to prevent weapons falling into the hands of armed groups and fuelling violence.

It is not intended to prevent the government from obtaining the equipment it needs for defence and security sector reform. Indeed, to date, the Committee has approved all exemption requests submitted under the framework of the arms embargo.

We welcome any progress the government has made in regards to meeting the Council's benchmarks, but it's critical that the block on the Panel of Experts is lifted soon.

And finally, Madam President, if I may, I would like to add my voice to those of my Council colleagues to thank the Special Representative for his tireless work and service over the past three years and wish him the best in his future endeavours.

Thank you