

'Security vacuum' in Central Africa may be exploited by armed groups – UN envoy

13 June 2017 – The United Nations envoy for Central Africa today expressed his concern that the withdrawal of troops from the regional force by some contributing countries would create a security vacuum that may be exploited by an armed group.

The continued threat by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) to regional stability should not be underestimated, in particular as the Ugandan and the South Sudanese forces have now disengaged from the African Union Regional Task Force (RTF), along with the United States special forces, François Loucény Fall, the Special Representative and head of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa ([UNOCA](#)), told the Security Council.

He explained that the Central African Republic national security forces, which could in the long run fill the gap left by the exit of the Ugandan forces, still require training and structural reforms. And the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the country, known by its French acronym MINUSCA, is not mandated to conduct anti-LRA military operations.

Any training efforts would need to be in line with the overall security sector reform process and coordinated with other partners supporting the Central African armed forces, he added.

Collectively, there is a need to remain focused on efforts aimed at the total eradication of the LRA, he said, stressing that UNOCA will remain engaged, including by reviewing the UN regional strategy to address the threat and impact of the LRA, and ensuring coordination among the various stakeholders working on the issue.

His semi-annual briefing also touched on political tensions that have persisted in some Central African countries, mostly related to recent or future electoral processes, including Gabon and the Republic of the Congo.

As for Lake Chad Basin, he said that the activities of the Boko Haram terrorist group have undermined development and exacerbated economic hardship in the region. Boko Haram remains a serious threat to regional stability despite the military progress achieved by the Multi-national Joint Task Force (MNJTF) against the terrorist group.

In conclusion, he called for a strong commitment of the Security Council to the promotion of peace and security in Central Africa.