

Supporting MINUSCA's crucial efforts to help the CAR Government build lasting peace

Thank you President. I thank SRSG Rugwabiza for her briefing and I also welcome the participation of the Minister for Foreign Affairs of CAR and the representative of Rwanda.

I will make three points in response to what we have heard today.

First, the United Kingdom welcomes the progress on the political track including steps to implement the Peace Agreement and preparations to hold local elections in January 2023. We strongly encourage the CAR authorities, with MINUSCA's support, to build on political progress and ensure meaningful engagement with civil society, including women.

Second, freedom of movement is fundamental to MINUSCA's work. We welcome the recent reductions in status-of-forces agreement violations and more widely the positive relationship that the SRSG has established with the CAR authorities. We very much hope this trend will continue.

We also encourage the CAR government to work in partnership with the UN Mine Action Service to tackle landmines and IEDs with more urgency. Explosive devices are a grave threat to civilian populations and their access to humanitarian assistance, as well as to the safety and security of peacekeepers. I join others in expressing deep concern at the attack of 3 October in which three Bangladeshi peacekeepers were killed and one injured, and offer sincere condolences to their families and to Bangladesh.

Third, the UK is alarmed by the dramatic increase in the number of human rights violations and abuses reflected in the Secretary-General's report. The violence in the Central African Republic, including conflict-related sexual violence, continues to take a distressing toll on the population. It compounds an already acute humanitarian situation and risks undermining progress on reconciliation. The targeting of civilians not only by armed groups, but also by national forces and the Russian mercenary group Wagner, continue to play a destabilising role in the country and will not help long-term peace as others have also emphasised today. We call on the CAR Government to conduct full and timely investigations into allegations of human rights violations and abuses, to ensure that all perpetrators are held accountable.

Finally, President, we welcome the Secretary-General's recommendation to extend MINUSCA's mandate. It is vital that the Security Council supports MINUSCA's crucial efforts to help the CAR Government build lasting peace. The SRSG and her team has our full support.

Thank you.