



Security Council

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The situation in Central Africa and the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

Report of the Secretary-General

I. Introduction

1. The present report is submitted pursuant to the statement of the President of the Security Council dated 1 November 2024 (S/PRST/2024/7), in which the Council requested the Secretary-General to keep it informed about the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) every six months. It provides an assessment of the major political and security trends in Central Africa since the report dated 30 May 2024 (S/2024/420). It also provides an update on the situation in the Lake Chad basin region, pursuant to Council resolution 2349 (2017).

II. Major developments in the Central Africa subregion

A. Political, peace and security developments and trends

2. During the reporting period, significant steps were taken towards the completion of the political transitions in Chad and Gabon. Concurrently, 7 of the 11 Central African countries entered a pre-electoral period, with preparations for polls in 2025 and 2026.

Political development and trends

3. In Angola, on 6 August, the parliament approved a bill on the political administrative division of the country, with the ruling party, Movimento Popular de Libertação de Angola, voting in favour, and the key opposition party, União Nacional para a Independência Total de Angola, voting against. The Government argued that the law, which is expected to enter into force in 2025, would help to address territorial disparities and improve State presence and services, while the opposition criticized it as a method to further delay the holding of local elections.

4. In Burundi, on 27 June, the Supreme Court upheld the life sentence against the former Prime Minister, Alain Guillaume Bunyoni, which had been issued by the Court on 8 December 2023, adding a fine of 22.7 billion Burundi francs (approximately US\$ 7.8 million) and ordering the immediate confiscation of his undeclared assets. The Court had convicted Mr. Bunyoni of illegal possession of weapons and plotting against the Head of State to overthrow the constitutional regime, among other



charges. On 15 October, the Independent National Electoral Commission published the calendar for the legislative, district and village-based elections.

5. In Cameroon, on 10 July, members of the National Assembly voted to extend their term by one year, thereby postponing legislative elections until after the 2025 presidential election, citing a need to “lighten the electoral calendar”, a decision that was criticized by the opposition. On 16 July, the Senior Divisional Officer of the Department of Mfoundi, where Yaoundé is located, issued a decree allowing authorities to ban individuals from staying in the Department of Mfoundi if they were found to be inciting an uprising or insulting State institutions or their representatives. Media professionals and some members of the opposition perceived the decree as an attempt to suppress dissent before the elections. On 31 August, Elections Cameroon, the national electoral management body, concluded its annual voter registration exercise. Meanwhile, a prolonged absence from the country by the President of Cameroon, Paul Biya, had led to speculations in the media about his health. On 11 October, the Ministry of Territorial Administration banned all media from discussing the health of the President through a ministerial note addressed to regional governors. On 21 October, Mr. Biya returned to Cameroon.

6. In Chad, on 19 July, Succès Masra, the former Transition Prime Minister, former presidential candidate and leader of the opposition party Les Transformateurs, reiterated his contestation of the results of the presidential election. Mr. Masra called for a complete overhaul of electoral institutions, a revision of the electoral code and a halt to the new delineation of electoral districts, alleging manipulation. In a statement on 22 July, the opposition coalition Groupe de concertation des acteurs politiques called for the withdrawal of the texts for the new delineation of administrative and electoral districts to be considered by the transition legislature in the following days. Some opposition figures argued that the new electoral and administrative divisions favoured northern communities to the detriment of the south. On 29 and 31 July, the National Transitional Council adopted the organic laws on the composition of the parliament, the regime of ineligibilities, incompatibilities and allowances of parliamentarians and on the number, names and territorial limits of the autonomous communities, and required that 30 per cent of candidates in districts with more than two seats be women.

7. On 8 August, in a social media address marking the second anniversary of the Doha Agreement for Peace and the Participation of the Political-Military Movements in the Inclusive National and Sovereign Dialogue, the President of Chad, Mahamat Idriss Déby Itno, emphasized the need to accelerate the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants and urged non-signatory politico-military groups to join the national reconciliation process. In an address for the country’s sixty-fourth Independence Day on 11 August, Mr. Déby Itno pledged to pursue political outreach, declared a zero-tolerance policy against corruption and announced the strengthening of the Government’s anti-corruption mechanisms.

8. On 21 August, the electoral management body of Chad announced that the legislative, provincial and municipal elections would be held on 29 December 2024. On 13 October, the parties of the opposition platform Groupe de concertation des acteurs politiques that had not participated in the political transition announced their decision to boycott the upcoming elections, citing inadequate conditions for credible elections. On 16 October, Mr. Déby Itno convened political party leaders to inform them that the elections would be held as scheduled. On 20 October, Les Transformateurs also announced its boycott of the elections, questioning the fairness of the electoral process and citing recent floods as a reason to boycott. On 22 October, the Minister of Regional Integration of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Didier Mazenga Mukanzu, in his capacity as Special Envoy of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) facilitator for Chad, Félix-Antoine Tshisekedi

Tshilombo, President of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visited N'Djamena, calling for an inclusive and peaceful electoral process.

9. On 22 September, the opposition party Parti socialiste sans frontières reported that its Secretary General had been missing since 20 September and alleged that the National State Security Agency had abducted him, noting that he had previously been subjected to harassment and intimidation by the security services. According to the party, the abduction took place after a press conference denouncing the detention in the Koro Toro high-security prison of certain party members since the events of February 2024 that had led to the killing of the party president, Yaya Dillo Djérou Bétchi.

10. In Gabon, one year after the military coup d'état, the transitional authorities took steps to advance the political transition. On 10 June, a parliamentary subcommission was established to review the draft electoral code and propose revisions within 10 days. On 19 June, the National Assembly adopted the electoral law, followed by the Senate on 15 July. Several parliamentarians criticized the adoption of the law before the revision of the Constitution and called for its subsequent review, in line with the transition timeline. They also opposed the powers granted to the Ministry of the Interior and lamented the law's disregard for key recommendations from the national dialogue held in April 2024, such as stronger regulation of the electoral process, limits on campaign financing and gender quotas. On 30 May, the former Prime Minister, Alain Claude Bilie By Nze, said that the national dialogue had not addressed national reconciliation, warning against xenophobia and ethnic divisions. He also criticized the age and nationality eligibility criteria for the presidential election that were outlined in the draft constitution, which he said would exclude key political actors.

11. On 31 August, the Transitional Minister for Institutional Reform and head of the National Constitutional Committee of Gabon transmitted the draft constitution to the Transition President. On 8 October, the Constituting Assembly submitted its report on the draft constitution to the Transition President. On 17 October, the Council of Ministers adopted the final draft constitution and announced the constitutional referendum for 16 November. The final version relaxed the controversial eligibility criteria for the presidency and government members, requiring candidates to have one Gabonese parent, as opposed to two. While the presidential nature of the political system was maintained, one of the two positions of Vice-President was eliminated. The constitutional referendum was held on 16 November. According to preliminary results announced by the Ministry of the Interior on 17 November, 91.8 per cent voted in favour, with a voter turnout of 53.5 per cent.

12. From 12 to 13 September, the Peace and Security Council of the African Union visited Gabon, followed on 14 September by a visit from the Chairperson of the African Union Commission. The meetings focused on progress made in the political transition and discussed the eventual reintegration of Gabon into the African Union. In a communiqué, the Presidency of Gabon expressed optimism about the latter, while in a press brief, the Chairperson of the African Union Commission welcomed progress towards constitutional order, stating that the African Union was "eagerly awaiting the return of Gabon".

13. In Rwanda, general elections took place on 15 July. On 22 July, the national electoral commission announced that the incumbent President, Paul Kagame, had won 99.18 per cent of the votes. The ruling Rwandan Patriotic Front won 37 of 53 parliamentary seats, while 27 seats that were reserved for women, youth and persons with disabilities were filled through indirect elections. That included 24 women elected by electoral colleges from each province and Kigali, two members, including one woman, elected by the National Youth Council and one member, a woman, elected

by the Federation of the Association of the Disabled. The proportion of women in the Chamber of Deputies increased from 61 to 63.75 per cent. On 11 August, Mr. Kagame was sworn in as President for a fourth term. On 16 August, one week after Édouard Ngirente was reappointed as Prime Minister, his Office announced the appointment of 21 Ministers and nine Ministers of State. Almost 30 per cent of Cabinet positions were allocated to women.

14. In Sao Tome and Principe, a national commission of experts presented a draft electoral code on 5 July, which elicited negative reactions from opposition parties. On 15 August, the Prime Minister, Patrice Trovoada, dismissed the opposition's concerns, noting that the drafting of the code was being monitored by regional and international partners. On 27 August, the Government established a technical committee on security sector reform to help guide the reform process. On 25 September, the Prime Minister suggested a revision of the Constitution. In a subsequent media interview, the President, Carlos Manuel Vila Nova, agreed, while underscoring the importance of dialogue. On 10 October, the President vetoed five justice reform bills adopted by Parliament. In response, the Prime Minister suggested that the bills be referred to the Constitutional Court for further review.

15. In the Congo, sensitivities around an alleged concession of land to Rwanda signed through partnership agreements in Brazzaville in April 2022 continued to fuel both popular and political discontent. Congolese and Rwandan officials issued several statements in which they noted that the bilateral agreements related to economic and agricultural cooperation.

16. In Equatorial Guinea, on 26 July, the Prime Minister, Manuela Roka Botey, together with her Cabinet, resigned after the President, Teodoro Obiang Nguema Mbasogo, criticized their management of the economy and inability to contain corruption. On 16 August, the President appointed the Director General of the National Bank of Equatorial Guinea, Manuel Osa Nsue Nsuga, as the new Prime Minister. On 19 August, a Government of 60 members was appointed, 10 per cent of whom were women, down from 16 per cent in the previous Government. In parallel, developments pertaining to the President's family drew attention, with one of his sons, Ruslan Obiang Nsue, who is a former managing director of the national airline company, facing national legal proceedings related to alleged corruption charges.

17. From 26 to 27 June, representatives of Cameroon and the Central African Republic met in Bangui for the sixth session of the ad hoc border commission and the third session of the Permanent Joint Commission on Cross-Border Security. The parties agreed on joint efforts to formally demarcate the border and to hold regular meetings between respective local authorities to address transborder challenges. On 18 October, the Ministers of Defence of the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo signed a cooperation agreement providing for intelligence-sharing and joint training of their armed forces. On 21 and 22 October, the joint bilateral commission between Chad and the Central African Republic met in Bangui for the first time since 2019. The countries agreed to establish a joint force along their border to improve security and decided to hold more regular political consultations. They also signed a tripartite agreement with the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees concerning the voluntary repatriation of Central African refugees living in Chad.

Security development and trends

18. A general decline in the number of violent incidents was noted in the Lake Chad basin; however, Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups continued to pose a security threat. Armed separatist groups pursued their attacks against defence and security forces and civilians in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon.

In addition, the effects of climate change increasingly influenced local conflicts and amplified competition over natural resources and instability across the subregion.

19. Violence persisted in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon. On 24 June, a Cameroonian lawyer filed a complaint in Los Angeles, United States of America, against Norway and the United Kingdom, alleging that they supported terrorism by harbouring Lucas Ayaba Cho, a German national and leader of the separatist group “Ambazonia Governing Council”. On 25 September, the Norwegian police arrested Mr. Ayaba Cho on charges of inciting crimes against humanity in connection with the crisis in the two regions. The Cameroonian authorities expressed their willingness to assist in the investigation by the Norwegian police.

20. On 19 June, two civilians were killed by an improvised explosive device in Melim, North-West Region of Cameroon. The civilians were reportedly instructed by security forces to investigate the device when it was remotely detonated, leading to tensions between the community and security forces. On 25 August, alleged armed separatist fighters attacked a police station in Buea, South-West Region, killing three officers. The incident was part of a series of attacks that had resulted in the killing of eight officers over a period of three weeks around Bamenda, North-West Region. On 9 September, the All Anglophone Teachers Trade Unions called for an end to school attacks in the North-West and South-West Regions and urged the resumption of classes; however, by 10 September, most public schools in the North-West Region remained closed owing to a separatist-imposed lockdown, with only boarding schools operating.

21. Local authorities announced that, on 12 June, unidentified armed individuals had attacked the village of Toumbao in Logone Oriental Province of Chad, resulting in five people killed and seven injured, the theft of more than 500 cattle and the looting of businesses.

Boko Haram/Lake Chad Basin crisis

22. The reporting period was marked by numerous surrenders and arrests of elements of Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, and the destruction of camps and ammunition. Although the Multinational Joint Task Force intensified its military operations against those groups, on 3 November, Chad announced that it was considering withdrawing its forces from the Task Force owing to the lack of coordination.

23. In Cameroon, between 1 June and 15 November, 20 Boko Haram-related security incidents resulting in 48 civilian fatalities were confirmed and reported by the United Nations, compared with 23 incidents resulting in 81 civilian fatalities for the same period in 2023. In Chad, also between 1 June and 15 November, 56 Boko Haram-related security incidents resulting in 99 civilian fatalities were confirmed and reported by the United Nations, compared with 67 incidents resulting in 117 civilian fatalities for the same period in 2023.

24. On 2 July, the Chadian army reported killing 70 alleged terrorists, destroying five camps and a base in Lac Province. On the same day, Cameroonian security forces issued a “maximum alert” owing to the alleged deployment of 23 women suicide bombers by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups along the Cameroon-Nigeria border. On 8 September, alleged elements of Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups attacked a health centre in Liwa, Lac Province of Chad, killing the head of the health centre and abducting two women personnel. On 27 October, an attack by Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups on a military base near Ngouboua, Lac Province, killed around 40 soldiers, according to the Government. The President of Chad, Mr. Déby Itno, visited the scene of the attack and launched a military operation to pursue the attackers. On 30 October, Chadian security sources reported killing at least

65 alleged terrorists. On 31 October, the President of the Borno Fishermen's Association claimed that Chadian airstrikes targeting suspected jihadists had killed numerous fishermen along the Chad-Nigeria border. On 1 November, the Government of Chad denied those allegations.

Lord's Resistance Army

25. On 25 October, the International Crimes Division of the High Court of Uganda sentenced the former "commander" of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), Thomas Kwoyelo, to 40 years in prison for war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, slavery, pillage, kidnapping, rape and torture.

26. On 15 October, the International Criminal Court postponed the hearing in the case of the founder of LRA, Joseph Kony, who has been on the run for nearly 20 years. Mr. Kony is charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity, including murder, cruel treatment, enslavement, rape and attacks against the civilian population in 2003 and 2004 in northern Uganda.

Maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea

27. During the reporting period, one security incident was reported across the ECCAS maritime zone in the Gulf of Guinea, down from the three incidents recorded during the same period in 2023. According to the Interregional Coordination Centre for the Implementation of the Regional Strategy for Maritime Safety and Security in Central and West Africa, in the evening of 29 May, a Ghana-flagged cargo vessel, which had left Douala, Cameroon, and was travelling towards the port of Koko, Nigeria, was boarded by nine suspected pirates, near the island of Bioko, Equatorial Guinea. Of the seven crew members, one Ghanaian captain and one Nigerian engineer were abducted. After the incident, the vessel returned to Douala.

Effects of climate change, ecological changes and natural disasters on regional stability, including farmer-herder and intercommunal conflict dynamics in Central Africa

28. The subregion continued to face growing vulnerability to the accelerating impacts of climate change, with extreme weather events, such as intense rainfalls that cause widespread flooding, becoming more frequent and severe. Climate-induced natural disasters disrupted food security, displaced populations, hindered economic development and strained the fragile social fabric of communities in several areas across the subregion, with a particular impact on women and marginalized groups.

29. In Chad, on 27 June, a land dispute between farmers and herders in Logone Occidental Province led to one death, several injuries and the displacement of several people. Civil and military authorities intervened to restore order. On 27 August, a clash between farmers and herders in Molori, Kanem Province, resulted in one death and six injuries. On 31 August, a violent land dispute between farmers and herders in Palakoundja, Logone Occidental Province, resulted in five deaths and seven injuries. External sources reported that farmer-herder conflicts intensified to unprecedented levels over the past three years, resulting in over 1,000 deaths and 2,000 injuries.

30. In Cameroon, reports indicated that the Far North Region continued to experience recurrent intercommunal tensions over water reserves that displaced tens of thousands of people.

B. Humanitarian developments

31. Violence by armed groups, intercommunal violence, epidemics, food insecurity, forced displacement and natural hazards exacerbated by the impacts of climate change continued to drive humanitarian needs in Central Africa. Across the subregion, more than 37.8 million people needed vital assistance and protection. Humanitarian actors drew up plans to support almost 18 million vulnerable people, at a cost of \$4.4 billion. As at 4 November, just 47.7 per cent of the funds required to implement those plans had been received.

32. Central Africa faced numerous health challenges, including mpox and cholera. In June and July, a total of 102,997 laboratory-confirmed cases of mpox, including 223 deaths, were reported. The subregion accounted for more than 92 per cent of mpox cases and almost 80 per cent of deaths across the continent, with the Democratic Republic of the Congo remaining the most affected country.

33. Between 1 June and 31 October, floods in Central Africa reportedly caused 694 deaths and 115 injuries. The most affected countries were Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Heavy rainfall displaced more than 238,000 persons within those countries. Floods also destroyed or severely damaged over 299,000 homes, 75 health facilities and 307 schools. Moreover, 444,000 hectares of agricultural land were affected, making a total area of almost 521,000 hectares impassable for agricultural and livestock production. Some 77,680 cattle were swept away by the floods, significantly affecting livelihoods, posing a severe threat to food security and nutrition and increasing the need for humanitarian assistance.

34. Southern Angola continued to face food insecurity owing to the impact of the worst drought in the region in over 40 years, which further diminished households' income and degraded livelihoods, increasing the need for emergency assistance. To complement government efforts, a \$3 million project, funded by the Central Emergency Response Fund, is being implemented to help mitigate the effects of the El Niño-induced drought. Meanwhile, as at 30 September, Angola was hosting approximately 25,500 refugees and 31,500 asylum-seekers.

35. In Burundi, El Niño-induced flooding, which affected over 239,000 people, resulted in damage to more than 10 per cent of the country's food crop areas. The floods were also linked to a prolonged cholera outbreak. In addition, Burundi was affected by an outbreak of mpox, which was declared on 25 July.

36. In Cameroon, as at the end of September, there were 1 million internally displaced persons and 408,500 refugees. Floods have impacted 459,000 people to date, primarily in the Far North Region, including an estimated 21,115 Nigerian refugees. In total, 38 people lost their lives, 85,253 hectares of land were inundated and 5,510 animals were killed as at 18 October. Approximately 2.465 million people were projected to be food insecure. The 2024 humanitarian response plan was only 38.5 per cent funded as at 4 November, with \$142.8 million received out of the \$371.4 million required.

37. In Chad, 2.4 million people were projected to be food insecure, with an additional 3.3 million, including 500,000 children under 5 years of age, expected to face food insecurity during the 2024 lean season. Fighting in the Sudan compounded existing challenges in eastern Chad, leaving approximately 2.7 million people, including refugees, returnees and host communities, of the 5 million residents in the provinces of Ennedi-Est, Ouaddaï, Wadi Fira and Sila in humanitarian need. On 15 July, the Government briefed representatives of international organizations on the refugee situation in eastern Chad, highlighting the severe impact of the influx of

refugees on the economy, fragile ecosystems and society of Chad. It proposed issuing identity documents to refugees and finding ways to integrate them into society. As at 30 September, Chad had approximately 220,610 internally displaced persons. As at 3 November, it was hosting some 1.243 million refugees, with 1.07 million coming from the Sudan. It was estimated that 6 million people needed humanitarian assistance. As at 1 October, over 1.9 million people were affected by floods, with 576 deaths and the destruction of 432,203 hectares of arable land. The 2024 humanitarian response plan, amounting to \$1.12 billion, was funded at 49 per cent as at 4 November.

Lake Chad basin crisis

38. As at 30 September, there were about 21,650 refugees, more than 220,600 internally displaced persons and about 16,885 returnees in Lac Province in Chad. As at 30 September, there were about 120,600 refugees and 453,660 internally displaced persons in the Far North Region of Cameroon.

C. Human rights trends

39. Recent developments in Central Africa continued to underscore significant challenges related to human rights, particularly political freedoms, with concerns over restrictions on freedom of expression, association, peaceful assembly and movement. They also highlighted the need for focused efforts to promote stability and civil liberties across the subregion.

40. On 18 July, the National Assembly of Angola adopted a bill on vandalism of public goods and services, which provides for up to 25 years in prison for those who participate in protests resulting in vandalism. On 7 August, the National Assembly passed a law on national security, providing for increased government oversight of the media, civil society organizations and private entities. Both bills were signed into law by the President, João Lourenço, on 29 August. Domestic and international human rights groups expressed concerns that the bills limited basic human rights while empowering the Government to take repressive measures.

41. In his statement at the fifty-seventh session of the Human Rights Council, the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in Burundi reported that civic space was facing challenges in the country. On 16 August, a Burundian journalist who had been serving a 10-year prison sentence was released following a presidential pardon. Her release was welcomed by media and human rights organizations.

42. From 5 to 7 August, the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights visited Cameroon. He praised efforts to address human rights concerns, while stressing the importance of fighting impunity and enhancing political inclusion ahead of the upcoming elections. In the North-West and South-West Regions, human rights abuses by armed separatist groups continued to severely disrupt civilian life, limiting in particular freedom of movement and access to healthcare and education. On 30 July, armed separatist fighters reportedly set fire to three taxis for failing to adhere to their directive to change taxi colours from the national yellow to separatist-aligned blue and white. On 15 August, another three taxis were torched by armed separatist fighters for the same reason. On 11 August, separatists abducted a nun in Ngo-Ketunjia, North-West Region, resulting in the closure of a health centre reportedly due to continued threats against medical personnel. Alleged human rights violations by government forces further compounded the challenges faced by civilians. On 8 August, a police officer in Bamenda, North-West Region, fatally shot a motorcycle rider after reportedly mistakenly identifying him as a separatist fighter.

43. In Chad, a series of incidents since August raised concerns regarding respect for the right to freedom of expression and freedom of the media. On 5 August, a Catholic priest in N'Djamena was arrested by the authorities for allegedly inciting division. Criticized for its brutality by the Archbishop of N'Djamena, the arrest led to a public outcry, and the priest was released the following day. On 7 August, the editor-in-chief of a private online media outlet was arrested following the suspension of the outlet in late July over accusations of plagiarism. Media organizations condemned his arrest as a violation of press freedom. He was released on 8 August. That same day, the president of the Organisation tchadienne des droits humains, was also released after five months in detention on charges of undermining the constitutional order. On 8 August, the Government rejected a Human Rights Watch report alleging severe abuses at the Koro Toro prison, affirming that detainees were treated according to the law. On 2 October, the publication director of a private radio station was reportedly questioned by the judicial police and arrested on 7 October following a complaint lodged by the president of the National Transitional Council. On 2 October, authorities in N'Djamena prevented a public conference on the compensation of victims of the regime of the late President, Hissène Habré, from taking place for lack of prior authorization. The main speaker at the conference, a former legal adviser to and spokesperson for Human Rights Watch, was arrested and expelled from Chad the same day.

44. In the Congo, human rights organizations criticized alleged human rights violations, including alleged forced disappearances, instances of torture while in detention and deaths in custody. On 26 July, the Collectif des jeunes du Congo et de la diaspora led a protest to denounce rising poverty, public mismanagement and corruption, and demanded the Government's resignation. The authorities arrested and detained the president of the group and three other activists for not seeking prior authorization. They were released three days later. In a press conference in Brazzaville on 31 July, several civil society organizations called for a stronger legal framework to protect citizens and human rights defenders from arbitrary arrest and intimidation.

45. In Equatorial Guinea, on 21 July, security forces responded to protests on the island of Annobón, where the local community had expressed concerns regarding the exploitation of natural resources by the Government. The Internet and phone connection were cut for more than a month, and defence and security forces were dispatched to Annobón, resulting in the arrest of at least 20 local islanders, all from the Annobón ethnic group. Reports indicated that police had used excessive force, and those arrested were transferred to prisons in Malabo and Bata, where they were allegedly detained without charges. On 25 July, the Vice-President, Teodoro Nguema Obiang Mangue, announced on social media that the Government planned to charge protestors and those obstructing public works on Annobón with sedition and other crimes. A civil society platform condemned those actions by the Government and called for greater commitment to human rights and environmental protection.

46. In Rwanda, a law governing national and international non-governmental organizations was adopted on 20 June. Among other things, the legislation calls for all non-governmental organizations to submit their operating plans and budgets to the authorities for approval.

D. Socioeconomic trends

47. Moderate growth was projected for the Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) zone, with an average rate of 2.3 per cent in 2024, and a slight increase anticipated for the period 2025–2026. Inflation was expected to continue its downward trend throughout 2024 and into 2025. However, the zone faced significant

risks, including commodity price shocks and external financial pressures, which could affect that outlook. Poverty reduction was expected to remain limited. Public debt rose in several countries, with the Congo and Gabon surpassing the CEMAC debt ceiling of 70 per cent of gross domestic product (GDP). Socioeconomic unrest, marked by strikes over low or unpaid salaries and protests against poverty and corruption, highlighted growing public discontent, while widespread power shortages affected multiple sectors.

48. In Angola, escalating transportation and commodity costs sparked public protests. In response, the Government implemented targeted social assistance programmes. Following a visit from 8 to 17 July, the United Nations Independent Expert on foreign debt and human rights, particularly economic, social and cultural rights emphasized the need for transparency, economic diversification and investment in children's rights, healthcare and education to combat poverty and malnutrition and to address and reverse the effects of economic downturns. On 11 September, the Angolan kwanza reportedly fell to its lowest level against the United States dollar since 1999. That situation, in combination with low oil prices, meant that the economy of Angola remained under significant pressure.

49. In Burundi, a continued fuel crisis led to the International Monetary Fund (IMF) revising the projected GDP growth rate from 4 to 2 per cent. Inflation, which had been declining since February 2024, increased from 12.5 to 18.5 per cent between May and August.

50. In Cameroon, debt servicing by the Government consumed over 30 per cent of the 2024 budget. IMF completed the sixth review under the Extended Credit Facility and Extended Fund Facility, and the first review under the Resilience and Sustainability Facility, enabling an immediate disbursement of \$72.7 million and \$45.4 million under these respective arrangements. The economy of Cameroon was projected to grow by 4.3 per cent in 2024, compared with 3.3 per cent in 2023; however, inflation had increased to 7.4 per cent by the end of 2023 from 6.3 per cent in 2022.

51. The economy of Chad showed resilience, with GDP growth for 2023 at 4.1 per cent, driven by increased oil production and public investment. Inflation eased from 4.8 to 4.1 per cent owing to improved agricultural output. About 30 per cent of the population, or 5.5 million people, remained in extreme poverty.

52. In the Congo, a series of strikes continued, owing to accumulated arrears of salary payments in the public sector spanning three to six months.

53. Following a technical mission to Sao Tome and Principe from 23 May to 5 June, IMF stressed the urgent need for energy sector reform, a prerequisite for securing its support. On 7 June, the Council of Ministers announced a 50 per cent cut in the Government's operational expenses due to financial difficulties and the lack of an agreement with IMF. Economic growth was forecast to be 1.2 per cent in 2024 and 2.1 per cent in 2025, while inflation was expected to decline from 19.7 to 16.1 per cent in 2024.

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

A. Good offices, preventive diplomacy and mediation

Cameroon

54. From 1 to 12 July, following a request from Elections Cameroon, UNOCA participated in an electoral needs assessment mission led by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs. The mission recommended, inter alia, support for the capacity-building of electoral process actors; support for youth and women's participation, the enhancement of national and regional consultation platforms; the capacity-building of Elections Cameroon personnel; and support for awareness-raising through civic and electoral education.

55. On 29 August, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA met with the Prime Minister, Joseph Ngute, on the margins of the Council of Foreign Ministers of the Organization of Islamic Cooperation (OIC) in Yaoundé. The Prime Minister underlined that, despite ongoing attacks in the Far North Region, no Cameroonian territory was occupied by violent extremists. He expressed appreciation to the United Nations for supporting social cohesion and peace in the North-West and South-West Regions.

Chad

56. On 28 August, the Special Representative met with the Minister for Foreign Affairs of Chad on the margins of the Council of Foreign Ministers of OIC in Yaoundé. Discussions centred on United Nations support to help advance the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration process envisaged by the Doha Peace Agreement and to seek ways to improve the inclusiveness of that agreement.

57. On 18 October, on the margins of the twenty-fifth ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS in Malabo mentioned in paragraph 65 below, the Special Representative met with the Prime Minister of Chad. They discussed the upcoming legislative and local elections. The Special Representative emphasized the importance of inclusive dialogue to address the concerns raised by political parties.

Gabon

58. The Special Representative maintained regular contacts with transitional authorities, notably the Minister for Foreign Affairs, whom he met on 14 August on the subject of the next steps in the transition, including the 2025 presidential election.

59. In October, the Special Representative undertook good offices engagements ahead of the constitutional referendum, calling for a continued peaceful transition, social cohesion and respect for freedom of expression. On 10 October, he met the Transition President. They discussed the political transition and the draft constitution. He also met with the Prime Minister and the Minister of Justice on 14 October, as well as with the opposition figure and former Prime Minister, Mr. Bilie By Nze.

Sao Tome and Principe

60. On 5 June, UNOCA co-hosted an ambassadorial-level partner meeting for Sao Tome and Principe in Libreville, jointly with the Resident Coordinator Offices in Sao Tome and Principe and Gabon. The meeting was attended by bilateral partners. The Embassy of Sao Tome and Principe in Gabon also participated. Following an

overview of the situation in the country, discussions focused on topical political and socioeconomic issues.

61. At the request of the Prime Minister, Patrice Trovoada, UNOCA facilitated the deployment of the United Nations Security Sector Reform and Governance Standing Capacity from 29 June to 13 July to advise the Government, in partnership with the African Security Sector Network, on designing, planning and conducting a security sector review.

62. In a letter dated 22 August, the Government requested United Nations electoral assistance for the 2026 presidential and legislative elections. In her response on 20 September, the Under-Secretary-General for Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and United Nations Focal Point for Electoral Assistance Activities approved the conduct of an assessment that will define the areas where the requested support could be provided. The assessment was led by the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs together with UNOCA and the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).

63. On the margins of the session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS mentioned in paragraph 65 below, the Special Representative met with the President, Carlos Manuel Vila Nova. They stressed the importance of a calm political climate in the delicate pre-electoral period.

64. From 1 to 5 November, the Special Representative visited Sao Tome, where he met with the President, the Prime Minister and other senior officials. Discussions focused on the need for a calm political climate that was conducive to dialogue between key political actors on constitutional and other reforms.

B. Enhancing subregional capacities for conflict prevention and mediation

Collaboration with regional, subregional and intergovernmental organizations, including support provided to the Economic Community of Central African States

65. From 16 to 18 October, the Special Representative participated in the twenty-fifth ordinary session of the Conference of Heads of State and Government of ECCAS, held in Malabo. Discussions focused on consolidation of the ECCAS institutional reform and the strengthening of regional integration. The First Lady of Equatorial Guinea organized a first ladies' forum at which a regional road map was developed to protect women victims of abuse in cross-border areas, promote greater women's representation in decision-making roles and establish a regional fund to support academic and vocational training for women. On the margins of the session, the Special Representative also met with the Prime Minister of Equatorial Guinea, the Ministers for Foreign Affairs of Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda and the Deputy Minister for Foreign Affairs of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

66. On 17 September, the Special Representative participated remotely in the ECCAS consultations on the implementation of the Global Compact for Safe, Orderly and Regular Migration, and delivered opening remarks. Participants focused on improving migration procedures, strengthening migrant protection through integrated border management and enhancing regional and national cooperation.

United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa

67. On 1 and 2 July, UNOCA and the Government of Sao Tome and Principe organized a regional conference on unconstitutional changes of Government in Central Africa. Recommended by the fifty-sixth meeting of the Standing Advisory Committee in Kigali in November 2023, the conference addressed the root causes of unconstitutional changes of Government and how ECCAS member States could respond to those challenges in a sustainable manner. The recommendations will be presented by Sao Tome and Principe at the fifty-eighth meeting of the Committee, scheduled to be held in Bangui from 25 to 29 November.

68. The bureau of the Standing Advisory Committee undertook a field visit to Angola from 7 to 11 October, focusing on the impact of economic development on reconciliation and reconstruction processes in post-conflict contexts. The bureau members visited Benguela, Huambo and Bié Provinces, which were the most affected by the Angolan civil war. Participants formulated recommendations for the Angolan authorities, the States members of the Standing Advisory Committee and ECCAS, which will be presented at the fifty-eighth meeting of the Committee.

Partnerships with civil society and support to civil society networks

69. From 12 to 14 June, UNOCA participated in a workshop in Musanze, Rwanda, which focused on the role of journalists in ensuring transparency and improving ethics as well as journalist protection during election coverage. The workshop was organized by the Rwanda Journalists Association with support from UNOCA, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa, UNDP and the Resident Coordinator Office in Rwanda. Thirty journalists from Rwanda participated, including 13 women.

70. From 12 to 18 July, UNOCA supported and participated in the fifteenth edition of the Central Africa Annual Cross-Border Fair in Ebolowa, Cameroon, a city close to the country's borders with Equatorial Guinea and Gabon. Discussions focused on the free circulation of people and goods at borders and its impact on women's trade initiatives. Participants underlined the need to continue raising awareness on issues pertaining to women, youth, peace and security, transborder mobility and gender-based violence.

71. From 24 to 30 June, UNOCA provided technical and financial support to several Gabonese women's and youth organizations to raise awareness of key recommendations from the inclusive national dialogue. These included the need to ensure at least 40 per cent women in decision-making positions, the creation of a gender advisory council, and the inclusion of 20 per cent youth and 10 per cent persons with disabilities in the drafting and adoption processes of the new constitution.

72. From 12 to 14 August, UNOCA held a workshop in Douala, Cameroon, on gender equality and media responsibility. Participants issued a declaration on sexual harassment in the media and established an organization to advance women's leadership and cooperation in the media in the subregion.

73. On 30 and 31 October, UNOCA organized a workshop in Libreville to facilitate an exchange of experiences between women leaders from the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Gabon. The workshop aimed to enhance women's political engagement and participation in Gabon by increasing their representation in political institutions and governance bodies, while also strengthening their leadership and dialogue skills.

C. Support to the United Nations, regional and subregional initiatives on peace and security

Lake Chad basin crisis

74. On 20 September, the Special Representative participated in the 5th meeting of the Steering Committee on the implementation of the Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region, which took place virtually. Participants approved the adjusted Regional Strategy and Community-based Reconciliation and Reintegration Policy and a regional study on the transitional justice framework. The documents will all be submitted for endorsement by the Council of Ministers of the Lake Chad Basin Commission.

75. From 11 to 16 November, the Special Representative for Central Africa and the Special Representative for West Africa and the Sahel carried out a joint visit to Chad. They met with the Prime Minister, the High Representative of the African Union for Chad, the Executive Secretary of the Lake Chad Basin Commission and the United Nations country team. They also travelled to Bol, Lac Province, where they engaged with the local authorities and recently displaced persons.

Climate, peace and security

76. From 27 to 29 August, UNOCA participated in a workshop on the draft common African position on climate, peace and security, organized by the African Union in Nairobi. The workshop brought together representatives from the African Union, regional economic communities and regional mechanisms, African climate commissions, civil society organizations, representatives of academia and other regional stakeholders. UNOCA highlighted the unique challenges of Central Africa and its contributions to the climate-security nexus.

77. From 2 to 4 October, UNOCA, the Department of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs, the Department of Peace Operations and the United Nations System Staff College organized a capacity-building workshop on climate, peace and security in Central Africa in Ntoum, Gabon. Representatives of resident coordinator offices in the subregion, United Nations peace operations in Central Africa, the Subregional Centre for Human Rights and Democracy in Central Africa as well as ECCAS and regional civil society organizations attended the workshop. Participants established a community of practice on climate, peace and security in Central Africa.

Transhumance and farmer-herder conflicts

78. In July, UNOCA and ECCAS agreed to revise the draft regional protocol on peaceful transhumance in Central Africa, initially developed in November 2019, incorporating new developments and challenges faced by the subregion. UNOCA continued to support ECCAS in the development of a comprehensive regional strategy to promote peaceful transhumance throughout Central Africa.

D. Enhancing United Nations coherence and coordination in the subregion

Internal United Nations exchanges, collaboration, coordination and joint initiatives

79. On 11 October, UNOCA and the United Nations Office for West Africa and the Sahel held a desk-to-desk review of their coordination efforts on climate, peace and security, transhumance, maritime security in the Gulf of Guinea, violent extremism in the Lake Chad basin and cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth and human

rights. They agreed to enhance cooperation on the implementation of their joint regional activities and initiatives. A new joint programme will be launched in early 2025.

80. The Peacebuilding Fund approved a new initiative amounting to \$3 million to promote social cohesion and socioeconomic opportunities in the communities in eastern Chad that were hosting Sudanese refugees and Chadian returnees.

IV. Observations and recommendations

81. The reporting period highlighted the complex governance challenges in Central Africa, which continue to undermine the subregion's stability and efforts towards sustainable peace and development. Strengthening democratic institutions and the rule of law, promoting political inclusivity, enhancing transparency, respecting human rights, advancing gender equality and women's empowerment and addressing the root causes of instability are essential to fostering long-term peace and development. Ongoing conflicts and crises, as well as the impact of climate change, exacerbate existing vulnerabilities, particularly for women and marginalized groups, and amplify the subregion's political, security, socioeconomic and humanitarian challenges. Continued coordinated action by national Governments, regional bodies and the international community is needed to address those multifaceted threats effectively and ensure stability and long-term development.

82. As seven countries of the subregion enter a pre-electoral period, the steps already taken by them to organize the elections are welcome. In this regard, the integrity of electoral processes and the protection of human rights and fundamental freedoms remain essential to ensuring the full participation of all political actors and segments of society and their eventual acceptance of the outcome of those elections. While progress has been made, challenges persist, including increasing restrictions on civic space observed in several countries. The United Nations is committed to supporting efforts to strengthen democratic institutions and creating an environment conducive to peaceful, transparent, inclusive and credible elections. In this regard, joint efforts by local, regional and international stakeholders, with particular attention to ensure the increased representation of women and their full, equal and meaningful participation, are essential to achieving these objectives and ensuring lasting peace and stability in the subregion.

83. The continued violence in the North-West and South-West Regions of Cameroon remains of concern. The lasting impact of this violence on the people of Cameroon, including the children of those regions, is deeply troubling, not least because of the denial of their right to education, in contravention of Security Council resolution [2601 \(2021\)](#), the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights and the Convention on the Rights of the Child. I reiterate the importance of an inclusive political, Cameroonian-led resolution to the crisis and reiterate the availability of the United Nations in supporting such a process. The protection of civilians in the affected regions is of vital importance, in accordance with international law, including international human rights law and humanitarian law. I welcome the cooperation of countries that have shown solidarity in the fight against impunity, contributing to the broader goal of ensuring stability in Cameroon. All Member States hosting Cameroonian diaspora leaders are encouraged to actively engage in preventing hate speech and incitement to violence from abroad, in a manner consistent with their international obligations.

84. I welcome the announcement of legislative, provincial and municipal elections in Chad. The Government of Chad and all political actors are encouraged to fully seize the important opportunities these elections provide to foster participatory

governance and advance sustainable peace. Continued progress towards a national vision for an inclusive and viable disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programme is also vital. The international community is called on to generously support peacebuilding efforts throughout Chad, particularly in the east, which is affected by the spillover from the conflict in the Sudan.

85. The political transition in Gabon continues to progress in line with the established transition timeframe. I welcome the peaceful conduct of the constitutional referendum. I call on the transitional authorities to build on this achievement and to continue to strengthen the country's institutional and legal electoral framework, notably through the revision of the electoral code and the elaboration of the law on political parties, ahead of the upcoming presidential election. Freedom to express dissenting voices contributes to a climate conducive to peaceful and credible elections as well as to social cohesion and sustainable peace. I welcome the recent high-level mission of the African Union and its assessment of the progress made by Gabon towards a return to constitutional order, which can facilitate its eventual reintegration into the regional organization.

86. The protracted conflict in the Sudan continues to result in large-scale displacement, with many seeking refuge in neighbouring Central African countries, particularly Chad and the Central African Republic. I commend the generous hospitality of host communities in both countries. The influx of refugees continues to place immense strain on already fragile host communities, exacerbating existing humanitarian, socioeconomic and social cohesion challenges. I call on the international community to increase humanitarian aid and strengthen support for long-term resilience and development initiatives for both the refugee populations and host communities.

87. The situation in the Lake Chad basin remains of concern. The sustained commitment of the countries contributing to the Multinational Joint Task Force and the support of the international community are vital for regional stability. I welcome the Steering Committee's endorsement of the adjusted Regional Stabilization, Recovery and Resilience Strategy for Areas Affected by Boko Haram in the Lake Chad Basin Region and look forward to its adoption by the Council of Ministers of the Lake Chad Basin Commission. In line with Security Council resolution [2349 \(2017\)](#) and as part of the transitional justice framework, the United Nations remains available to support the development and implementation of a regional strategy on disarmament, demobilization, rehabilitation and reintegration of former members of Boko Haram-affiliated and splinter groups, while ensuring complementarity with accountability mechanisms, such as the screening and prosecution of individuals suspected of being responsible for terrorist acts.

88. The outbreak of the mpox virus has underscored the subregion's vulnerability to public health emergencies with a disproportionate impact on children, women and marginalized communities. While paying tribute to the pivotal role of the Africa Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in enhancing surveillance, improving diagnostics and coordinating a continent-wide response, I wish to thank the Member States that committed to provide vaccines to the affected countries, thereby allowing Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of the Congo to initiate their vaccination campaigns. The international community should strengthen its collective efforts to provide additional support and prevent the further spread of the epidemic.

89. The recent extreme weather events in the subregion underscore the critical linkages between climate change, peace and security. The international community should provide increased financial and technical assistance to countries affected by climate change, supporting them to build resilience in a gender-responsive manner, enhance natural disaster preparedness, safeguard livelihoods and prevent extreme

weather events from exacerbating intercommunal tensions over natural resources, non-State armed group recruitment and forced migration.

90. The significant debt levels in the subregion continue to hinder the capacity of Governments to address critical challenges effectively, as resources that could be directed towards stabilizing peace processes, mitigating climate risks and building sustainable development pathways are instead allocated to servicing external debt. There is a need for effective long-term debt restructuring that puts people at the centre and is interlinked with governance reforms, as well as for the long overdue reform of the international financial system.

91. I would like to express appreciation to the Governments of the subregion, the African Union, ECCAS, CEMAC, the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the Gulf of Guinea Commission, and other regional and subregional institutions for their continued collaboration with UNOCA. I remain grateful to Gabon for its hospitality towards and support for UNOCA.

92. Lastly, I would like to thank my Special Representative, Abdou Abarry, and the staff of UNOCA for their continuing support to regional efforts and initiatives for peace in Central Africa.
