

## HUMAN RIGHTS COUNCIL – 51<sup>st</sup> SESSION

### Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic

05 October 2022

In his opening remarks, **Mr. Yao Agbetse, Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Central African Republic**, commended the Central African Government for its continuous cooperation with the mandate and various human rights mechanisms. He expressed that local elections in the CAR on January 2023 will be a decisive stepping stone to strengthening local democracy, ensuring the country's recovery in terms of territorial administration, and restoring completely the authority of the State. He urged the authorities to facilitate the safe return of internally displaced persons and refugees to their homes, and commit to inclusive political actions and fight against impunity. With regards to the implementation of the Peace Agreement, it is imperative that the international community focuses its efforts on ways and means to dissolve the armed groups for the full restoration of the authority of the State. The situation remains volatile despite the declaration of a unilateral ceasefire by the President, as there has been a resurgence of attacks by armed groups such as the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) and Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R) targeting the civilian population. He also stressed the need for financial and technical support for the CAR's security forces, the FACA. He also expressed concern about hate speech, the proliferation of messages of hatred, and incitement to violence and misinformation.

The IE also expressed deep concern about the increasing number of displaced persons and refugees. He said that economic and financial sanctions by countries are affecting several social projects that benefit the population. The lack of appropriate financial resources is currently affecting the financing of projects to implement transitional justice mechanisms, Sustainable Development Goals, and the payment of salaries to state agents working in the social sector. He stated that the number of human rights abuses is increasing and is mostly attributable to state actors (the FSI and the FACA) followed by armed groups. The FSI and the FAC have carried out arbitrary arrests and detentions. He condemned abuses committed by the Russian allies on the civilian population, such as sexual violence, acts of intimidation, destruction of homes, racketeering, acts of torture, and cruel and inhuman acts. There are reports of obstructions to the conduct of investigations into alleged violations in areas under the control of Russian allies. He expressed concern about conflict-related sexual violence perpetrated by the UPC and FPRC and the increasing level of impunity.

With regards to the fight against impunity and national reconciliation, the IE said that some progress has been achieved in the transitional justice process. Even though the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR) has started its activities, there are still insufficient resources for it to properly function. He called upon national and international institutions to support the Commission. He further mentioned there is still a long way to go in the fight against impunity as well as in carrying out impartial investigations. Finally, he called upon the authorities as well as technical and financial partners to mobilise and coordinate efforts to encourage youth entrepreneurship and youth participation in the civic space and the electoral process. The international community should also provide technical support so that national institutions can effectively promote social cohesion, human rights, the rule of law, and good economic, financial, and social governance.

#### Interactive dialogue

19 country delegations took the floor during the interactive dialogue. The majority of countries commended the work of the Independent Expert. **The EU, the U.S., the UK, Belgium, and Norway** stressed the importance of the effective implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation (PAPR) and the Luanda Roadmap by all parties. They reiterated the need to effectively combat impunity for perpetrators of violations and abuses, including within the Central African armed forces and internal security forces. They called for an investigation of the acts committed in Boyo and Aïgbado in January 2022. They expressed deep concern regarding the recruitment of child soldiers and called for their protection urgently. Additionally, states condemned the actions of the Wagner group mercenaries involved in massive extortions. States also condemned the obstruction of the action of MINUSCA's investigators by **Russian allies**. The **EU** welcomed the abolition of the death penalty. **The U.S. and Belgium** expressed concern about the new constitution since it is not being done in

a participatory and inclusive framework. **Belgium** specifically condemned new allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse.

**The Russian Federation and Venezuela** especially commended efforts made by the government of the CAR. The **Russian Federation** condemned the actions of a number of States that continue to sponsor militants. The normalization of the situation in the country, which affects human rights, will be delayed. Along with **Sudan**, they urged the HRC to further cooperate with the CAR. **Venezuela** called upon the CAR to support its inclusion under Agenda Item 10 and said that the IE should further respect the sovereignty and independence of the CAR. **Sudan** also stressed the need to respect the national sovereignty, territorial integrity, and political independence of the CAR. It also called upon the OHCHR to provide technical assistance and build the capacities of authorities and agencies concerned with law enforcement and justice. **China** said that the situation had improved in the CAR and called upon the international community to provide technical assistance. **Angola** invited national authorities to implement the recommendations resulting from the republican dialogue, with a view to re-establishing the State authority, as well as the implementation of transitional justice. While holding the presidency of the CAR contingent of the UN Peacebuilding Commission, **Morocco** highlighted its commitment to peace and stability in the CAR, noting that it remains on the side of the Government and its people. **Gabon** expressed it has appointed a National Investigator to carry out the necessary investigations into all forms of sexual exploitation in the CAR, in conjunction with the UN Office of Internal Oversight Services (OIOS).

**Some NGOs** expressed concern about the alleged violations of human rights and humanitarian law by Russian mercenaries from the Wagner Security Group and the impact of these violations on security, peace, and reconciliation. They also expressed concern about the increasing violation of human rights in the CAR, especially relating to sexual violence, rape, and exclusion. An NGO called upon international donors to establish a fund to support victims of torture and to increase support for programs undertaken by civil society to reintegrate women victims of violence into society. Several NGOs said inclusive dialogue between communities must be promoted and local elections must be fair and genuine to allow the population to feel represented. They reiterated the need to provide the country with the required technical and financial support. They also condemned the persistence of ceasefire violations by all parties who continue their acts of belligerence, the stigmatisation and public incitement to violence against opposition leaders, and the crimes committed by the FACA and armed groups against civilians.

#### Delegations that took the floor during the Interactive Dialogue (19 country delegations):

*European Union, Belgium (on behalf of BENELUX), Norway (on behalf of the Nordic-Baltic countries), Morocco, Egypt, Ireland, France, Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of), Russian Federation, Mauritania, China, United States of America, United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, Angola, Portugal, Togo, Sudan, Gabon, Botswana.*

#### NHRIs and NGOs that took the floor (4):

*Christian Solidarity Worldwide, Elizka Relief Foundation, Rencontre Africaine pour la defense des droits de l'homme, International Organization for the Elimination of All Forms of Racial Discrimination.*

#### International organizations (0)

To watch the full meeting refer to [UN Web TV](#).