

UNSC Background Guide

Committee Overview

The United Nations Charter, signed in San Francisco in 1945, established the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) as one of the six primary organs of the UN. The UNSC acts to maintain international peace and security, as well as to foster cooperation in solving international issues. Additionally, the Council recommends the appointment of the Secretary-General and, with the General Assembly, elects the Judges of the International Court of Justice. The Security Council is the only organ of the United Nations that has the authority to issue binding resolutions to all member states. While the General Assembly and other bodies of the UN can pass resolutions or make recommendations of their own, only the Security Council has the power to make decisions that all member states are obligated to carry out. Since the General Assembly's resolutions are not binding, these issues are often recommended to the UNSC so that a binding resolution can be passed on the topic. Whenever an issue threatening international peace is brought before the Council, the first step is usually to seek a peaceful resolution. The Security Council often sets up mediation for disputes. When a dispute leads to a conflict, the Council seeks the fastest solution to the subsequent violence possible by brokering ceasefire agreements or through military observers and peacekeeping forces. The UNSC can use other measures such as sanctions, embargoes, financial restrictions, travel bans, severance of diplomatic relations, blockade, and peacekeeping military action to enforce international security.

The Council itself consists of fifteen members. The United States of America, the United Kingdom, France, the Russian Federation, and the People's Republic of China serve as the five permanent members of the UNSC. These five permanent members all have veto power over any Security Council resolutions; without the unanimous approval of all five nations, the resolution

automatically fails. However, abstentions are not usually counted as vetoes, except for votes concerning admission of new UN member states or when amending the UN Charter. The other ten members of the Security Council are elected by the General Assembly to two year terms. For a procedural vote to pass, there must be nine affirmative votes, while a resolution requires nine affirmative votes including the concurring votes of the five permanent members. As opposed to the General Assembly, the UNSC meets all year-long, often holding emergency sessions to discuss various crises.

It is the duty of the United Nations Security Council to address the most pressing and critical issues throughout the world. The resolutions of the UNSC seek to maintain stability, peace, and prosperity, while condemning violations of international law and human rights, wherever they may occur.

Procedure

The procedure of this committee will differ from that of other committees.

I. Peacekeeping in the Central African Republic

Background

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a small former French colony of just over 4.5 million inhabitants, bordering several other central African nations such as the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Chad, and Cameroon. The country gained its political independence from France in 1960, and ever since then has been plagued by corrupt government, political repression, extreme violence, and abject poverty. Despite the abundant natural resources of the region, including gold, diamonds, and uranium, the Central African Republic remains one of the poorest countries in the world due to endemic corruption and exploitation.

For over five decades, changes in government for the CAR have mainly been brought about by coup d'état. David Dacko, the first president of the CAR, took control of the Movement for the Social Evolution of Black Africa (MESAN) and established a one-party state. General Jean-Bédél Bokassa conducted the first coup in 1965, ousting Dacko and proclaiming himself emperor. After fourteen years of brutal rule, France aided Dacko in deposing Bokassa in 1979, thereby restoring him to power. In 1981, General André-Dieudonné Kolingba ousted Dacko again and suspended the constitution, ruling through a military junta. Kolingba remained in power until 1993, when a pro-democracy movement brought Ange-Félix Patassé to power in the first elections since independence. After Patassé's government became unstable and increasingly unpopular, General François Bozizé launched multiple attempts to overthrow the government, until eventually taking control in 2003. In March of 2013, Michel Djotodia ousted Bozizé in a coup and declared himself President. Djotodia stepped down as President in January of 2014 to allow an interim government to govern the country and establish order.

After each coup d'état, the new governments always made attempts at national reconciliation. However, these efforts did not benefit the people of the Central African Republic, but instead served to reconcile political elements and provide amnesty to participants of the coups. Upon taking power in 2003, Bozizé was pressured by both the Central African people and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) to hold elections, which occurred in 2005. Other political parties, however, considered these elections to be fraudulent, and various rebel groups formed during this time period to violently protest Bozizé's government. The current conflict stems from this eight-year struggle against Bozizé. Some of the primary fighters include the Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC), the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), and the People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD) led

by Michel Djotodia. These various groups fought against the Bozizé government for multiple years in the Central African Republic Bush War. The ECCAS held several peace conferences during this period, many of which took place in Libreville, Gabon, in order to form peace agreements between the government and all opposition parties. However, during the the 2011, leaders of the armed groups and opposition parties accused Bozizé of failure to implement the various agreements made from 2006 to 2011. The opposition groups massed in the north east, combining with other rebel groups such as the Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country (CPSK), the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (PJCC), and the Union of Republican Forces (UFR). In late 2012, these elements formed an alliance called “Séléka”, meaning “coalition” in the native Sangho language.

Séléka forces quickly took over several major north-eastern towns, before advancing towards the capital of Bangui. The ECCAS hurriedly arranged peace talks in order to prevent another coup from taking place. All parties managed to show up and sign the Libreville Agreement on Resolving the Political and Security Crisis in the Central African Republic in early 2013. However, this last minute agreement failed to stop Séléka forces from continuing into Bangui and forcing out Bozizé. Michael Djotodia, the leader of the Séléka forces, took control of the government. Most of the populace celebrated the change in power, as Bozizé had proven to be an ineffective leader kept in power by political support from other African countries fearing the instability that another coup would cause. After taking over the government, Djotodia signed a presidential decree dissolving the Séléka forces in September of 2013. Despite this decree, Séléka continues to operate throughout the Central African Republic.

As Séléka forces organized and took over almost half of the country, they committed wanton acts of violence, looting, and destruction. While many in the capital initially welcomed

the change in power, the killings quickly made the Djotodia regime very unpopular. The primarily Muslim Séléka consists of various Central African rebel groups, as well as foreign fighters allegedly recruited from Chad and Darfur. In response to the Séléka killings and violence, self-defence groups known as the anti-balaka, meaning anti-machete or sword, formed armed militias. The primarily Christian anti-balaka consists of mostly autonomous groups of young men, originally formed to defend villages and communities from robbers and cattle rustlers. Anti-balaka forces confronted Séléka fighters, believing them to be a threat to their lives and property. The situation quickly devolved into violent attacks and retaliation killings on both sides. After failing to control the Séléka forces and under mounting international pressure, President Djotodia and Prime Minister Nicolas Tiangaye both resigned in January of 2014 to allow for an interim government to be put into place. The mayor of Bangui, Catherine Samba Panza, was elected as the interim president due to her past neutrality. However, the situation in the Central African Republic continues to degenerate.

Current Status

During and after the overthrow of Bozizé, members of Séléka committed numerous human rights violations against the populace of the CAR. Séléka forces systematically looted and destroyed throughout the areas they occupied. These incidents of looting were widespread and commonly perpetrated against civilian populations, resulting in property destruction and the deaths of many civilians. Members of Séléka were also involved in the indiscriminate killing and mass executions of civilians whom they believed to be anti-balaka. In addition to these extrajudicial killings and torture, Séléka members have also committed multiple acts of sexual and gender-based violence. These attacks on civilians by the Séléka rebels prompted reprisal attacks by the anti-balaka forces. The Christian anti-balaka forces primarily target Muslim

communities, and subsequently commit human rights violations against Muslim civilians. These acts of murder, torture, and destruction are meant to essentially remove the Muslim population from the territory of the CAR. Anti-balaka members consistently target and kill Muslim civilians along with Séléka soldiers, often while chanting anti-Muslim slogans. Men, women, and children have all been victims of this continued violence. The anti-balaka have also destroyed mosques and looted Muslim property. These acts of violence that systematically target the Muslim population are becoming part of a larger campaign of ethnic cleansing, and a possible precursor to widespread genocide.

This violence has taken its toll on the Central African Republic. Thousands have been killed in the inter-communal clashes, while 2.5 million are in need of humanitarian aid, which is nearly half of the total population. Almost 700,000 people have been internally displaced, with more than 232,000 in Bangui alone. Over 290,000 refugees have fled the country into neighboring Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo. Many state institutions have completely broken down, and the government is incapable of enforcing peace and order. Functioning courts, prisons, and law enforcement barely exist outside of regions like Bangui. Killings between the Séléka and anti-balaka occur often, with the armed forces splintered and unable to act.

The international community has sent multiple operations into the CAR in order to stabilize the country and prevent further violence from breaking out. In December of 2013, France sent Operation Sangaris, consisting of 2,000 troops, to contain the spreading violence. The African Union sent their own 6,000 troop peacekeeping operation, the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA) replacing the Central African Multinational Force (FOMAC). Despite the presence of these soldiers, violence

continued to persist. It was clear that there were not enough soldiers to adequately secure the country. In April of 2014, the UN Security Council created the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSCA). The newly mandated peacekeeping mission takes over the responsibilities of the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA). Authority is set to be transferred from MISCA to MINUSCA in September of 2014 with an initial force of 10,000 personnel.

In late July of 2014, Séléka fighters signed a ceasefire agreement with the anti-balaka in Brazzaville, the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The deal raised hopes for an end to the fighting, but both sides immediately accused each other of breaking the peace agreement after the signing. The sectarian violence resumed, with Séléka launching another wave of attacks in the north, while the anti-balaka continued to assault the Muslim fighters. Widespread atrocities and abuses of human rights continue to occur between Christians and Muslims in the CAR, while the interim government struggles to establish order.

Analysis

While a peacekeeping operation is set to deploy in the Central African Republic, questions remain over the state of the nation. The Central African Armed Forces are in tatters. By the time of Djotodia's coup, most of the army was already splintered and divided. Many of the soldiers fled in the face of the Séléka advance, abandoning their posts for friendly communities. Some of these men and women have regrouped under the anti-balaka banner, while others remain independent supporters of Bozizé. The interim government's control only extends over Bangui and parts of the country like it, while much of the CAR remains under Séléka or anti-balaka control. While Séléka is a fairly well organized force with a political and military command structure, the anti-balaka lack a credible hierarchy or structure. Ceasefires and

peace agreements have failed in the past, due to lack of participation or failure to adhere to the agreements by independent groups of Séléka or anti-balaka.

One of the major issues that the international community must face is the threat of ethnic cleansing and genocide. The conflict has become increasingly sectarian, and both Muslims and Christians are at threat. Despite President Catherine Samba Panza's recent selection of a Muslim prime minister, Séléka refuses to participate in a unified government, stating that they were not consulted over the choice. Some members of both the anti-balaka and Séléka have called for the partition of the CAR into separate Muslim and Christian states, although this proposal is not supported by the international community or the government. A major task for the interim government is to establish reconciliation between the two sides of the conflict.

Another critical problem for the CAR is the lack of a functional judiciary system. Without police forces, courts, or prisons in many areas of the country, it is difficult to establish stability. Investigating and prosecuting violations of human rights would be a step towards stabilizing the entire country. Humanitarian aid is also desperately needed throughout the CAR. International efforts must focus on providing aid to the millions of citizens, both within the country as well as those that have fled.

While the situation in the CAR is difficult, the international community must intervene. It is the mission of MINUSCA to stabilize the country and aid the people. It is essential that the United Nations take direct action to prevent further deaths and atrocities from occurring on either side of the conflict, and it is the obligation of the Security Council to solve this pressing issue.

Questions to Consider

- What should the main focus of the MINUSCA peacekeeping operation? Establishing order or humanitarian efforts?

- Is a political solution still possible? Can negotiations bring a peace agreement that lasts?
- How should refugees in other countries be dealt with? How will humanitarian aid reach those within the country?
- How can the interim government best establish stability? How can an effective judiciary and police force be implemented?
- When should elections be held? How can the UN ensure that these are fair and legitimate?

II. Peacekeeping in the Middle East

Background

Ever since its founding, Israel has been a point of tension in the Middle East. In 1973, the tension between Israel and the surrounding Arab nations culminated in the Yom Kippur War. An Arab coalition, led by Egypt and Syria, launched a surprise invasion into Israel on October 6th. While Egypt and Syria initially made gains into Israeli territory, the Israeli Defense Forces (IDF) locked Egypt into a stalemate at the Sinai peninsula, while pushing Syrian forces back over the Golan Heights and back into Syria. As the conflict continued to escalate, the United Nations Emergency Force II (UNEF II) was sent into the Israeli-Egyptian conflict in order to stabilize the situation. However, no force was initially sent to the Israeli-Syrian front.

Despite the UN-brokered ceasefire between Israel and Egypt, the situation in the northern front remained unstable. Israeli and Syrian forces continued a small-scale conflict of attrition, with skirmishes and bombings taking place throughout the battlezone. Through early 1974,

tensions continued to rise between the still-entrenched forces. To establish stability in the region, the United States launched an initiative for an agreement on disengagement. The agreement called for an area of separation between Syria and Israel and for a UN observer force to implement this zone. The UNSC established the United Nations Disengagement Observer Force(UNDOF) on May 31st of 1974, the same day that the agreement was signed.

The UNDOF began operations starting in June of 2014, in the Israel-Syria sector with an initial deployment of 1,250 personnel. The Force carries out its mandate by maintaining an area of separation over forty miles long and varying from 6 miles to 600 feet in width between the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights and Syrian territory, where no military personnel except for UNDOF are permitted. On either side of the area of separation are zones of limitation, where bi-weekly inspections are carried out to ensure the adherence to armament and forces limitations. The area is inhabited and under the governance and policing of the Syrian government. UNDOF is completely deployed in this hilly terrain and around the area of separation with multiple base camps, permanently manned positions, and numerous observation posts. Military observers actively patrol the area of separation to supervise the area and intervene when military personnel from either nation attempt to enter. UNDOF also participates in mine-clearing efforts, marking known minefields in the area and raising public awareness, as well as facilitating the medical aid of the International Committee of the Red Cross.

Since 1974, UNDOF has effectively carried out its mandate, maintaining stability between Israel and Syria with the cooperation of both governments. However, the outbreak of the Syrian Civil War in 2011 proved to be problematic for UNDOF operations. As the conflict in Syria escalated, both the Syrian armed forces and the armed opposition members have significantly raised the risk of disrupting the ceasefire between Syria and Israel. The fighting and

military operations of both sides raise the potential to jeopardize stability of the entire region by increasing tensions with Israel. Syrian armed forces or members of the opposition frequently violate the area of separation, provoking Israeli Defense Forces to respond with shelling or other military actions. These incidents directly violate the decades-old ceasefire agreement and could result in a major conflict.

The Syrian Civil War has also resulted in direct threats to the safety of UNDOF personnel and their ability to carry out their mandate. Members of the Syrian armed forces and the opposition have directly and indirectly fired at UNDOF military observers, destroyed UNDOF facilities and property, and even abducted personnel. In March of 2013, as clashes between the opposition and the government forces spilled over into the ceasefire area, Syrian rebels took twenty one Filipino UNDOF observers hostage following heavy combat at an observation post. While the observers were released under mediation from Jordan, this incident highlighted the growing safety risks for UNDOF. Croatia withdrew its regiment of observers, as did Austria, a long-time troop contributor. However, the UN Secretary General maintains that the presence of UNDOF is essential to prevent the Syrian conflict from spilling into Israel and provoking another major war in the region.

Current Status

The situation for UNDOF is extremely tense. As the Syrian Civil War continues, the ceasefire line and area of separation become increasingly difficult and dangerous to maintain. Syrian armed forces and armed opposition members constantly battle in the area of separation, where their presence is strictly forbidden by the disengagement agreement. These clashes often take place in close proximity to UN observation posts or facilities, endangering the military observers present. As of June of 2014, there were 1,249 troops, 49 international staff, and 108

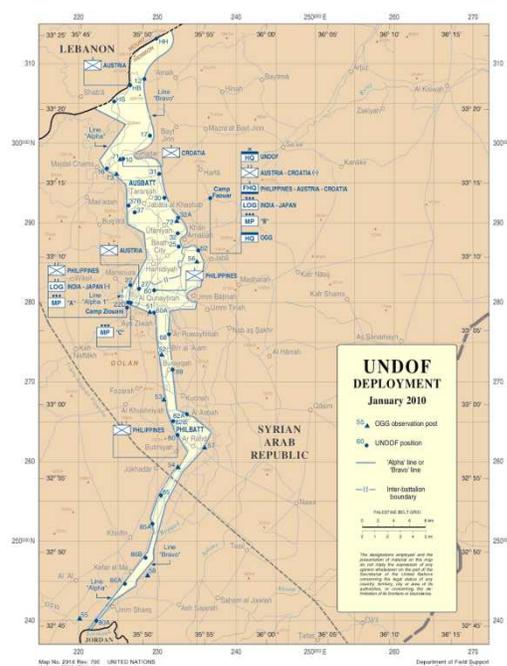
local civilian staff. Troops are contributed from Fiji, India, Ireland, Nepal, the Netherlands, and the Philippines. Despite the danger to UNDOF personnel from the Syrian conflict, the mission is considered essential to the stability of the region.

The reports of the Secretary General show a volatile situation. Tanks and air strikes are frequently used within the area of separation and the limitation zones. Syrian military and opposition forces Improvised explosive devices and mortar rounds often explode within the area or in Israeli territory, provoking shelling and airstrikes from the IDF. Violations of the ceasefire agreement take place on both sides of the area of separation. The continuing degeneration of the Syrian conflict has led to an increase of these incidents, as well as the perpetration of further atrocities.

UNDOF personnel themselves remain in danger from Syrian armed forces and the opposition. Mines and improvised explosive devices expose UN peacekeepers to extreme risk. The danger of personnel being caught in the crossfire of a battle is also deeply concerning. Additionally, UN property and facilities are also sometimes assaulted and placed in danger. All of these reasons make the safety of UNDOF a major concern for the Security Council.

Analysis

The UNDOF remains in a high-risk situation. The frequent military incursions



of both the Syrian military and the opposition forces directly violate the ceasefire and disengagement agreements. It is unacceptable for military personnel besides the UNDOF to be within the area of separation. The airstrikes and tanks within either the area of separation or the zones of limitation are strictly forbidden by the disengagement agreements. The presence of armed Syrian forces also risks escalating tensions with Israel. Before the Syrian Civil War, the Israeli-Syrian border remained relatively stable, despite general tension between Israel and all of its Arab neighbors. However, Syria now risks provoking an assault from Israel. Mortar shells, improvised explosive devices, and other attacks have crossed into the Israeli-occupied Golan Heights. The IDF often responds with warning shots, shelling, or even airstrikes within the area of separation, to force Syrian forces away. This volatile situation risks becoming a widespread conflict, and it is essential that both the Israeli and Syrian governments continue to work with UNDOF towards the resolution of these incidents.

The instability of the Syrian conflict makes it difficult for UNDOF to carry out its mandate, and often threatens the safety of the military observers and UN facilities. On multiple occasions, UN forces have been fired at directly or indirectly. So far, UNDOF has suffered 45 casualties throughout the entirety of its history, though the increased safety risk has convinced some countries to stop contributing troops. Syrian armed forces and opposition troops have sometimes disrupted UNDOF operations by closing supply roads or otherwise obstructing the Force from its duties. The primary responsibility for the facilitation and security of UNDOF lies with Syrian government, since the area of separation is Syrian territory. However, the UN must also act to ensure the safety of its military observers.

The continued presence of UNDOF is considered absolutely necessary to maintain

stability. Despite the volatility of the situation, maintaining the ceasefire and area of separation between Israel and Syria is essential to preventing a region-wide conflict.

Questions to Consider

- Is it safe for UNDOF personnel to remain in the area of separation?
- Should the size of UNDOF be expanded to provide more peacekeepers? How can the UNSC ensure that the Force can defend itself?
- How can the situation between Israel and Syria be de-escalated? Can negotiations be opened up through UNDOF?
- How can Syrian armed forces and opposition forces be moved out of the area of separation? How can UNDOF enforce the zones of limitation?
- Should humanitarian aid to the civilians in the area be considered? Is this a primary concern for UNDOF?
- How can the continued cooperation of both Syria and Israel with UNDOF be assured?

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