

Mapping Conflict Motives: The Central African Republic

Yannick Weyns, Lotte Hoex, Filip Hilgert and Steven Spittaels



Editorial

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Authors: Yannick Weyns, Lotte Hoex, Filip Hilgert & Steven Spittaels

Map production: Filip Hilgert, Alexandre Jailon, Yannick Weyns & Stef Verheijen (web mapping)

Main author and researcher chapter 4.1 and 4.2: Claudio Gramizzi, Senior Field Investigator at Conflict Armament Research

Editing: Fiona Southward

Layout: Anne Hullebroeck

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International Peace Information Service (IPIS) is an independent research institute, providing governmental and non-governmental actors with information and analysis to build sustainable peace and development in Sub-Saharan Africa. Our research is centred around four programmes: Natural Resources, Business & Human Rights, Arms Trade & Security, and Conflict Mapping.

Report highlights

Given the depth and length of this report, we would like to direct readers with limited time to some of the key sections of the report. The subsections listed below provide crucial analysis of the Seleka and anti-balaka conflict motives, foreign influences on the conflict as well as information that has thus far received limited attention in the press or in other research reports.

- Subsection 1.1.1 contains an overview of the Central African armed groups that were created after 2003 and played a role in the formation of the Seleka alliance.
- Subsection 1.1.3 describes recent political developments regarding the Seleka, including the split within the movement.
- Subsection 1.3.1 discusses Seleka political grievances, including religious grievances (p. 24-26).
- Subsection 1.3.2 analyses Seleka greed motives, with a detailed overview of the forms of control exerted by the movement in mineral mines (p. 29-34) and examples of how the Seleka leadership has used government positions for personal enrichment (p. 36-37).
- Subsection 2.1.3 describes how the anti-balaka movement is structured in the west of the country and in the capital, including leadership division.
- Subsection 2.3.2 analyses how deep-rooted socio-economic tensions have motivated anti-balaka fighters to commit sectarian violence.
- Subsection 2.3.4 discusses the role greed has played for anti-balaka groups, providing a detailed overview of anti-balaka control over mineral mines in the west of the country (p. 58-60).
- Subsection 3.1.1 describes the type of military and political support provided by Chad to the Seleka movement.
- Subsections 3.2.1 and 3.2.2 describe why Sudan supported the Seleka movement and what kind of support the Seleka has received from Sudan.

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List of acronyms

| | |
|---------------|--|
| ACLED | Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project |
| ANS | <i>Agence nationale de sécurité</i> |
| ANT | <i>Armée nationale tchadienne</i> |
| APRD | <i>Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie</i> |
| AU | African Union |
| BECDOR | <i>Ministère des mines, de l'énergie et de l'hydraulique - Bureau d'évaluation et de contrôle de diamants et or</i> |
| BINUCA | <i>Bureau intégré des Nations Unies pour la consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine</i> |
| BIR | <i>Bataillon d'intervention rapide, Cameroon</i> |
| BRGM | <i>Bureau de recherches géologiques et minières, France</i> |
| CAR | Central African Republic |
| CARPE | Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment |
| CEDAD | Comité extraordinaire de la défense des acquis démocratiques |
| CLPC | <i>Combattants de libération du peuple centrafricain</i> |
| CNPC | China National Petroleum Corporation |
| CNRD | <i>Comité national pour la restauration de la démocratie</i> |
| CPJP | <i>Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix</i> |
| CPSK | <i>Convention patriotique du salut du Kodro</i> |
| DDR | Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration |
| DGRMCM | <i>Ministère des mines, de l'énergie et de l'hydraulique - Direction de la géologie, des recherches minières et du cadastre minier (formerly DPER)</i> |
| DRC | Democratic Republic of the Congo |
| ECCAS | Economic Community of Central African States |
| ECOFAC | <i>Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale</i> |
| ECOFAUNE-RCA | <i>Ecosystèmes fauniques du Nord-Est RCA</i> |
| FAC | <i>Forces armées camerounaises</i> |
| FACA | <i>Forces armées centrafricaines</i> |
| FCFA | <i>Franc des Communautés financières d'Afrique</i> |
| FDPC | <i>Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain</i> |
| FNEC | <i>Fédération nationale des éleveurs centrafricains</i> |
| FOMAC | <i>Force multinationale de l'Afrique centrale</i> |
| Fondation IGF | <i>Fondation internationale pour la gestion de la faune</i> |
| FPR | <i>Front populaire pour le redressement</i> |
| FPRC | <i>Front populaire pour la renaissance de Centrafrique</i> |
| FRC | <i>Front républicain pour le changement</i> |
| FROCCA | <i>Front pour le retour à l'ordre constitutionnel en Centrafrique</i> |
| HDPT | Humanitarian and Development Partnership Team |
| IDP | Internally Displaced Person |
| IGN | <i>Institut géographique national, France</i> |
| IPIS | International Peace Information Service |
| JRC | European Commission - Joint Research Centre |
| KP | Kimberley Process |
| LACCEG | <i>Université de Bangui – Département de Géographie - Laboratoire de climatologie, de cartographie et d'études géographiques</i> |
| LRA | Lord's Resistance Army |
| MICOPAX | <i>Mission de consolidation de la paix en Centrafrique</i> |
| MINUSCA | <i>Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République centrafricaine</i> |
| MISCA | <i>Mission internationale de soutien à la Centrafrique sous conduite africaine</i> |
| MPA-IK | <i>Mouvance patriotique pour l'avenir – I Kwé</i> |
| NGO | Non-Governmental Organization |

| | |
|---------|--|
| NISS | National Intelligence and Security Services, Sudan |
| OCHA | (United Nations) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs |
| ORGEM | <i>Office de recherches géologiques et d'exploitation minière</i> |
| PRADD | Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development |
| RCA | <i>République centrafricaine</i> |
| RELUFA | <i>Réseau de lutte contre la faim au Cameroun</i> |
| RJDH | <i>Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme</i> |
| SAF | Sudanese Armed Forces |
| SAPETRO | Nigerian South Atlantic Petroleum |
| SPLA | Sudan People's Liberation Army |
| UFACARD | <i>Union des forces armées centrafricaines pour la restauration de la démocratie</i> |
| UFDR | <i>Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement</i> |
| UFR | <i>Union des forces républicaines</i> |
| UN | United Nations |
| UNOSAT | United Nations Institute for Training and Research (UNITAR)'s Operational Satellite Applications Programme |
| UPC | <i>Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique</i> |
| UPDF | Uganda People's Defence Force |
| US | United States |
| USAID | United States Agency for International Development |
| USGS | United States Geological Survey |
| WRI | World Resources Institute |
| WSA | World Sports Alliance |

Introduction

In 2009 International Peace Information Service (IPIS) published a report and a series of maps analysing the security situation in the Central African Republic, in particular the composition, actions, motives and interests of armed groups and other parties to the conflict.¹ Five years later, after the temporary seizure of power by the Seleka, the low-intensity conflict has escalated into widespread fighting between several armed groups and armed group factions. At first sight, it is unclear who, if anyone, is in charge of these armed groups. Moreover, analysts struggle to explain the current levels of intercommunal violence in a country where different communities and religions appear to have coexisted peacefully for many years.

Background

Central Africa's post-colonial history shows how the use of force has been the most effective strategy to follow for those who want to occupy the country's highest office. Political leaders used the national army FACA as a military instrument to gain power or to stay in power. Presidents built up an army they could trust, mainly composed of officers who shared their respective ethnic background. Accordingly, new incoming Presidents would fear at least part of the army, as the (ex-) FACA soldiers who remained loyal to the ousted President formed a threat.

This was not different for Francois Bozizé who took power in a coup in March 2003. From the onset he was confronted with armed opposition groups challenging his authority, especially in the north and the east of the country.

Despite past coups d'état and the continued existence of armed opposition groups in the CAR, there appear to be no real precedents for the 2012-2014 violence in the country's recent political history. Armed opposition against former President Bozizé showed only limited political and territorial ambitions, representing local movements defending rather narrow community interests.² The genesis, actions and motives of these armed actors indicated no imminent possibility of such large-scale, enduring and brutal violence as that which commenced at the end of 2012.

Several armed opposition groups challenging Bozizé formed the Seleka alliance at the end of 2012. Since, the armed militia staged attacks in the northeast of the country, moving towards Bangui and committing a coup d'état in March 2013. While the Seleka were in power they perpetrated serious crimes against the civilian population. At the end of 2013, long-standing village self-defence groups restructured to fight the Seleka, calling themselves "anti-balaka", and were reinforced by former FACA and Presidential Guards loyal to Bozizé. Under international pressure the Seleka leader Djotodia resigned from the presidency in January 2014. Shortly after, the Transitional Government headed by Samba Panza was established. Violent confrontations between, as well as attacks of, the Seleka, the anti-balaka and the civilian population have since continued on a regular basis. Presidential elections in the CAR are scheduled for mid-2015.

The international community has had a long presence in the CAR. The first United Nations (UN) peacekeeping mission started in 1998 and was replaced in 2000 by a peacebuilding mission³ that remained present until it was replaced on 15 September 2014 by the peacekeeping mission MINUSCA⁴. Since 1997 also various African-led missions have been present in the country, the last of which, MISCA⁵, was operating during the recent crisis until it integrated into the UN mission MINUSCA. France has had a military presence, both in the past and during the recent conflict through their intervention force

¹ S. Spittaels & F. Hilgert, *Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic*, IPIS report, February 2009.

² For more information on the motives of the rebel groups in 2009 see: Spittaels S. & Hilgert F., *Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic*, IPIS report, February 2009, pp. 33-34 & p. 38.

³ *Bureau d'appui des Nations Unies pour la consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine* (BONUCA) from 2000 to 2009, *Bureau intégré des Nations Unies pour la consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine* (BINUCA) from 2010 to 2014.

⁴ *Mission multidimensionnelle intégrée des Nations Unies pour la stabilisation en République centrafricaine*.

⁵ *Mission internationale de soutien à la Centrafrique sous conduite africaine*.

Sangaris. Finally, in February 2014, the European Union gave the green light for the deployment of a military operation, EUFOR RCA, aimed at contributing to international efforts to secure Bangui.⁶

Overview

The following study is an attempt to clarify the current dynamics and explain the motives underlying the actions of the Seleka and the anti-balaka militias. It is based on information gathered during three research trips to the CAR and neighbouring countries, extensive consultation of existing sources, and a thorough analysis of a series of interactive maps. For more information on the IPIS methodology behind this 'mapping conflict motives' research, see annex III.

The first two chapters of this report discuss the Seleka and the anti-balaka militia groups. Their background and structure are examined, followed by a chronological description of their actions and behaviour. Then, the political, economic and religious motives of both militia groups are analysed. The involvement of both groups, and especially the Seleka, in the CAR's mining business is extensively discussed here.

The third chapter of the report discusses the influences and interests of neighbouring countries in the current crisis in the CAR. Here, the political, security and economic interests of Chad, Sudan and Cameroon are analysed.

Annex II contains a description and analyses of other armed groups that are currently active in the CAR, *Révolution et Justice* and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), as well as the armed groups that created, or have been associated with the Seleka.

Web map

Together with this text, a web map of the area of focus has been published and is available at www.ipisresearch.be/mapping/webmapping/car. The web map presents various layers, which can be toggled on or off, including information on security incidents, areas under control of armed groups, natural resources, and a number of other features. The map is an integrated part of the research methodology and has been a crucial source for IPIS' analysis.

Given the difficulty of gathering precise geographic data on the CAR, and the poor quality of the information available, the map inevitably contains inaccuracies and is not comprehensive. Therefore, all of the map layers are to be considered indicative and limited, rather than an exact representation of the geographic features presented. IPIS welcomes any feedback or corrections at mapping@ipisresearch.be.

The **base layers** of the map let the user choose between different backgrounds (satellite imagery, terrain, streets) provided by Mapbox. A base layer with an empty background is available for [slow internet connections](#) and as a printer-friendly version.

The **searchable Places layer**, i.e. the towns and villages of the CAR, includes data from OCHA and the University of Bangui (LACCEG), completed or corrected with the use of the French IGN's maps *Carte de l'Afrique Centrale au 1/200 000 – République centrafricaine* (1955-1984) and *Carte touristique République centrafricaine 1 : 1 500 000* (3rd edition, 1980).

Sources for **state borders, boundaries of prefectures, and roads** are the World Resources Institute (WRI), the United States Agency for International Development's (USAID) Central Africa Regional Program for the Environment (CARPE), and the Humanitarian and Development Partnership Team (HDPT) CAR.

The **Incidents layer** shows human rights abuses in which combatants have been involved, and confrontations between two (or more) groups, in the period **September 2012 to August 2014**. On the **timeline**, conflict events that have taken place in one or more specific month(s) can be shown by clicking on the selected month(s).

⁶ For an overview of past and present international missions in the CAR, see www.operationspaix.net/; Spittaels S. & Hilgert F., *Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic*, IPIS report, February 2009, pp.17-18.

The incident layer shows where exactly armed elements have been active, while it also provides the opportunity to examine some specific events that may give an indication of the motivation of the combatants involved.

The incidents are represented on the map with different symbols according to the armed group or perpetrator. For each conflict event, the exact date, place, the parties involved, a short description, and the source is given.

The main source for this incident layer is the Armed Conflict Location & Event Data Project (ACLED), a project that compiles lists of armed conflict events for the whole of Africa using publicly available sources, notably online news articles and reports by human rights organisations. The ACLED data was corrected, and their geographic location made more precise. IPIS also included information from several UN agencies, from international NGOs active in the CAR, and from the LRA Crisis Tracker (Invisible Children – Resolve) for the southeast of the country.

The list of incidents represented on the map comprises over 1000 conflict events, including nearly 240 'key' incidents, but it is not and cannot be either comprehensive or exhaustive, in particular for remote regions in the interior of the country.

Attached to the incidents layer, is the layer **Damaged or destroyed buildings**. It gives an indication of the areas, or districts (Bangui), that have been most affected by the destruction caused by all parties in the conflict. The layer groups data from UNOSAT and Human Rights Watch, based on the analysis of satellite images taken between 9 July 2013 and 7 July 2014.

The **IDPs and refugees layer** uses data from OCHA and UNHCR respectively, and reflects the situation end of August/mid-September 2014.

The layer **Armed groups** shows the approximate areas of control or influence of the main conflict actors in September 2014, as well as a 'combat area', which indicates a zone where most of the clashes between anti-balaka and Seleka have taken place over the last six months. The layer also includes clickable points, located in the groups' strongholds, which give information on the group or faction, its commander(s), and the area controlled.

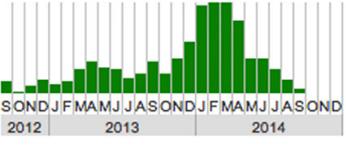
The map is based on information gathered through interviews with international NGOs, international and national military observers, UN agencies, and on the reports of the UN Panel of Experts, combined with the data available from our incidents layers.

The first of the **Natural Resources** layers, Artisanal mining sites, compiles locations of currently or recently active diamond and gold mines. Main sources are the Ministry of Mines' *Direction de la géologie, des recherches minières et du cadastre minier* (DGRMCM), prefectural mining authorities, the European Commission's Joint Research Centre (JRC), United States Geological Survey (USGS), *Ecosystèmes fauniques du Nord-Est RCA* (ECOFAUNE-RCA), *Conservation et utilisation rationnelle des écosystèmes forestiers d'Afrique centrale* (ECOFAC), USAID (Property Rights and Artisanal Diamond Development (PRADD)-CAR), *Bureau de recherches géologiques et minières* (BRGM), and *Réseau de lutte contre la faim au Cameroun* (RELUFA) for the Cameroonian sites along the border with the CAR. DGRMCM provided the mineral and oil concessions. The oil concessions in Chad were digitized from a map in *African Energy* (issue 274, March 2014, p. 18). WRI produced the map files of the logging permits, as well as those of the protected areas and hunting zones.

Two atlases, financed by the European Commission and produced in the framework of a past Security Sector Reform project, *Atlas des systèmes sociaux et institutionnels d'utilisation de l'espace est centrafricain* (November 2009), and *Atlas du profil socio-sécuritaire du Nord-ouest [et du Centre-sud] et des stratégies de réinsertion sociale et professionnelle des ex-combattants dans les pôles de développement* (October 2010), provided the data for **cattle migration routes**, **poaching routes**, and for the **ethnic map**. The last two layers were completed with data from the *Fondation internationale pour la gestion de la faune* (Fondation IGF) and *Fédération nationale des éleveurs centrafricains* (FNEC), and from the University of Bangui respectively.

Map legend

Incidents



Only show **key incidents**

Show as list

Incidents

- National armed forces
- Seleka
- LRA
- International forces
- Pastoralists
- Anti-balaka
- Civilians
- Other

● Damaged or destroyed buildings
(satellite imagery from 9 July 2013 to 7 July 2014, UNOSAT & HRW)

● IDPs and refugees

Armed groups

Zones of influence (September 2014)

- Seleka
- Anti-balaka
- RJ
- FDPC
- LRA
- None
- Combat area

Strongholds & commanders

- FRC
- FPRC
- Anti-balaka

Natural resources

- ★ Artisanal mining sites
- Diamond
- Diamond/gold
- Gold
- Gold/diamond
- Diamond mining areas

Mineral concessions

- Gold
- Uranium
- Diamond & gold
- Gold & diamonds
- Iron
- Gold & Iron

Oil

- Oil concessions
CAR & southern Chad
- Chad-Cameroon pipeline
- Logging permits

Pastoralism

- ⋯ Cattle migration routes 2009-10
- Central African cattle
- Chadian cattle
- Sudanese cattle
- Cameroonian cattle
- - - Official pastoral routes (2002)
- Central African cattle
- Chadian cattle
- Sudanese cattle
- Incidents involving pastoralists
- Peuhl areas

Protected areas & hunting zones

- Protected areas
- Hunting zones
- Poaching routes

Ethnic

Major ethnic groups

- Runga
- Gula
- Kara
- Sara
- Oubanguien
- Zandé
- Yulu
- Mboum
- Banda
- Bantu
- Gbaya
- Zakara
- Mandjia
- Protected area
- Uninhabited

Ethnic minorities

- Aka (Pygmies)
- Peuhl

1. The Seleka

1.1 Background and structure

In brief

Three Central African armed groups were originally at the core of the Seleka alliance: two breakaway factions of the CPJP (CPSK and CPJP Fondamentale) and the UFDR.

At the outset, the Seleka relied heavily on Sudanese and Chadian mercenaries, and entered into tactical alliances with other armed groups present in the CAR, such as with fighters of the FPR and briefly with the FDPC.

Since the fall of Seleka leader Michel Djotodia in January 2014, Seleka commanders in the east have grown increasingly distrustful of their representatives in the capital.

In August 2014 the Seleka was rebranded as the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central Africa (FPRC).

In September 2014, two senior Seleka commanders distanced themselves from the FPRC, creating their own faction, called the Republican Front for Change (FRC).

1.1.1 Creation of the Seleka alliance

Former President Bozizé was confronted with armed opposition groups challenging his authority from the outset of his presidency. These groups played an important role in the formation and development of the Seleka. Information about these groups, and about other armed groups associated with the Seleka, is summarized in the table below.

Table 1.1: Armed groups that formed or have been associated with the Seleka

| Group | Active since | Composed of | Leader(s) | |
|------------------------------------|-----------------|---|--|--|
| FRC ¹ /UPC ² | Sept./Oct. 2014 | Former Seleka | Ali Darassa, Mahamat Al Khatim and Habyalah Awal | Split off from FPRC in September 2014. Main zone of influence in northwest Ouham, Nana Grébizi and Ouaka prefectures |
| FPRC ³ | August 2014 | Former Seleka | Michel Djotodia, Nouredine Adam and Joseph Zoundeko | Main zone of influence in Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran and Haute-Kotto prefectures |
| Seleka | August 2012 | Former CPSK, CPJP Fondamentale and UFDR at core | Michel Djotodia, Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, Nouredine Adam | Rebranded as FPRC in August 2014; FRC split from FPRC in September 2014 |
| CPSK ⁴ | June 2012 | Former CPJP | Mohammed Moussa Dhaffane | Part of the Seleka since its creation. N. Adam suspended Dhaffane from his functions for 'high treason' in August 2014 |

| Group | Active since | Composed of | Leader(s) | |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------|---|--|--|
| CPJP Fondamentale | July 2012 | Former CPJP | Noureddine Adam ⁵ | Part of the Seleka since its creation. Now part of FPRC |
| CPJP ⁶ (see annex II 2) | Late 2008 | Runga communities | Abdoulaye Issène | The CPJP had concluded a peace agreement with Bozizé in August 2012, but eventually joined the Seleka in April 2013. |
| UFDR ⁷ (see annex II 1) | 2006 | Fighters from the northeast, in particular from the Gula communities. | Michel Djotodia and 'General' Zakaria Damane | Joined the Seleka at the end of 2012. Currently part of the FPRC. |
| FDPC ⁸ (see annex II 4) | 2003 | Confidants of former President Patassé | Abdoulaye Miskine | Brief alliance with Seleka from December 2012 to March 2013. The FDPC remains active, mainly in western Nana-Mambéré, although their leader, Miskine, was arrested in Cameroon in September 2013 |
| UFR ⁹ | Mid-2003 | Fighters from northwestern CAR | Florian Ndjadder | More political than military. Brief alliance with Seleka up to May 2013. Has expressed support to the Transitional Government. ¹⁰ |
| FPR ¹¹ (see annex II 3) | 1998/ 2000 ¹² | Chadian and Central African Peuhl pastoralists | 'General' Baba Laddé, Ali Darassa | Laddé is in Chad since September 2012, as well as some 400 FPR fighters. Those who stayed in CAR joined the Seleka and are under the command of Ali Darassa, FRC. |

¹ *Front républicain pour le changement.*

² *Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique.*

³ *Front populaire pour la renaissance de Centrafrique.*

⁴ *Convention patriotique du salut du Kodro.*

⁵ He was put on the UN sanctions list for his involvement in the attacks on the Roy Rabe neighbourhood in April and August 2013, killing dozens of people and plundering houses (FIDH, *Ils doivent tous partir ou mourir*, June 2014, pp. 25-27; United Nations: *List established and maintained by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic*, 14 May 2014; Decree 13.118 of 25 May 2013 concerning the creation of the *Comité extraordinaire de la défense des acquis démocratiques - CEDAD*).

⁶ *Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix.*

⁷ *Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement.*

⁸ *Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain.*

⁹ *Union des forces républicaines.*

¹⁰ Bernard-François Wagramale is the Secretary General of the UFR; Agence Centrafrique Press, *Le Secrétaire général de l'UFR, Bernard-François Wagramale invite les signataires de l'accord de cessation des hostilités à respecter leurs engagements*, 28 July 2014.

¹¹ *Front populaire pour le redressement.*

¹² Soon after the creation of the movement in 1998, Baba Laddé was arrested and detained for eleven months, before being released. FPR only in 2000 entered in 'operational mode'.

In March 2012, a meeting took place between representatives of different armed groups in Niamey, Niger. At the meeting, Michel Djotodia for the UFDR (*Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement*), Joachim Kokaté for the CPJP (*Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix*) and Abdoulaye Miskine for the FDPC (*Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain*) allegedly discussed the possibility of an

alliance to overthrow President Bozizé. Kokaté stated in an interview with IPIS that elements of Chadian armed groups were also present.⁷ However, the attempt to forge an alliance failed at that point, partly because of the reluctance of part of the CPJP leadership to quit peace talks they were conducting with the Government.⁸

This disagreement, exacerbated by personal rivalries, caused the CPJP to split into several factions. A first split occurred in June 2012, when Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, under house arrest in Chad since August 2009, left the CPJP and founded his own movement, the *Convention patriotique du salut du Kodro* (CPSK).⁹ In the run-up to a second split, on 10 July 2012, Nouredine Adam issued a statement rejecting the incumbent CPJP leadership and accusing it of collusion with the Bozizé regime.¹⁰ After Adam created his own 'CPJP Fondamentale', the remaining CPJP cadres, led by Abdoulaye Issène, concluded their negotiations with the Bozizé regime on 25 August 2012.¹¹

Following the CPJP's disintegration, Moussa Dhaffane and Nouredine Adam met in N'Djamena in August 2012 and decided to join forces, laying the foundations of the Seleka alliance.¹² On 15 September 2012, the term 'Seleka', which means 'alliance' in Sango, was used for the first time as a name for the alliance between CPSK and CPJP Fondamentale.¹³

Between September and early December 2012, Moussa Dhaffane and Nouredine Adam continued to work on building an alliance with Michel Djotodia, the leader of the UFDR, who had returned to the CAR earlier that year after having spent around five years in exile in Benin.¹⁴

As such, three Central African armed groups were originally at the core of the Seleka alliance. Two breakaway factions of the CPJP, the CPSK of Moussa Dhaffane and the CPJP Fondamentale led by Nouredine Adam, and the UFDR. From the outset of their December 2012 offensive, these Central African groups relied heavily on Sudanese and Chadian mercenaries.

As the Seleka quickly gained territory, they entered into tactical alliances with several other armed groups present in the country. Some of these alliances were long-term, such as those with fighters of the FPR (*Front populaire pour le redressement*), a group mainly consisting of Chadian and Central African Peuhl led by Baba Laddé (see annex II 3). Others were brief, a notable example being that of the FDPC of Abdoulaye Miskine, with whom the Seleka violently clashed soon after taking the capital (see annex II 4). The Seleka offensive caused the reappearance of some groups who had been dormant and wanted to profit economically or politically from jumping aboard the bandwagon of the Seleka. This was the case with the UFR (*Union des forces républicaines*) of Florian Ndjadder who acted as a senior Seleka spokesman.

1.1.2 Estimated Seleka strength

Reliable estimates of the number of Seleka troops are difficult to come by. According to the African Union (AU), the Seleka numbered 10-20,000 combatants before they arrived in Bangui.¹⁵ The United Nations International Commission of Inquiry states that at the beginning of their December 2012 offensive, the Seleka numbered about 1,600 fighters and about 3,500 when they were at the gates of the capital.¹⁶ Other sources still refer to 5,000 Central African combatants, supported by about 10,000 foreign mercenaries.¹⁷ Amongst these mercenaries were many who fought under the orders of anti-

⁷ IPIS Interview with J. Kokaté, Bangui, May 2014.

⁸ *Ibid.*; IPIS Interview with A. Issène, Bangui, May 2014.

⁹ CPSK, *Décision de Promulgation*, N° 001/CPSK/ACE/06-12, 21 June 2012.

¹⁰ CPJP Centrafrique (press release), *Communiqué*, No.0001/CPJP/RCA/10/07/2012, 11 July 2012.

¹¹ United Nations Peacemaker, *Acte d'adhésion de la CPJP à l'accord de paix global de Libreville*, 25 August 2012.

¹² IPIS Interview with M. Dhaffane, Bangui, May 2014; CPJP Centrafrique (Press release), *RCA:*

Protocole d'accord militaro-politique contre le régime de Bozizé, 20 August 2012.

¹³ CPJP Centrafrique (Press release), *Communiqué de presse de l'alliance CPSK-CPJP*, 15 September 2012.

¹⁴ Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country, S/2012/956, 21 December 2012, p. 2.

¹⁵ African Union Commission, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in the Central African Republic*, 18 June 2013, p. 5.

¹⁶ Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, S/2014/373, 26 June 2014, p. 13.

¹⁷ FIDH, *Central African Republic: A country in the hands of Seleka war criminals*, September 2013, p. 16.

Déby Chadian rebel leaders.¹⁸ Other mercenaries came from the Darfur region, such as Moussa Assimeh (see section 3.2.1).

Seleka numbers rose considerably after the beginning of the December 2012 attacks, as the movement actively recruited amongst local populations in the areas of which they took control. This recruitment saw thousands of combatants join, mostly mobilized by financial promises in the form of looting or money to be received through reintegration as part of a DDR (disarmament, demobilization and reintegration) programme.

The Seleka took Bangui with an approximate force of 4,000 combatants.¹⁹ Dhaffane in particular reportedly engaged in recruiting to strengthen his political position, as he only had command over few fighters. In July 2014, some 2,000 Seleka fighters were still present in Bangui and cantoned in three camps: camp Béal, camp RDOT and camp BSS. During preliminary talks with the United Nations (UN) on the possible future of a DDR programme, the Seleka leadership claimed to have an estimated 7-10,000 combatants under their command.²⁰

1.1.3 Structure and tensions within the alliance

BOX 1.1: Seleka/FPRC Political Structure²¹

President

Michel Djotodia Am Nondroko

1st Vice-President in charge of security and defence

Mahamat Nouredine Adam

2nd Vice-President in charge of logistics and administration

Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane (suspended)

3^d Vice-President in charge of economics and finance

Mahamat Taïb Yacoub (suspended)

Councillor in charge of DDR

Abdoulaye Issène Ramadane

Councillor in charge of defence

Zakaria Damane

Councillor in charge of civic culture and training

Ousmane Mahamat Ousmane

Secretary General

Moustapha Sabone

Vice-Secretary General

Mahamat Mal-Mal Essene

Treasurer

Sélémane Oumar Garba

Delegate in charge of external relations

Eric Neris Massi

¹⁸ M. Debos, *Le métier des armes au Tchad*. Paris, 2013; R. Marchal, *Le Tchad entre deux guerres? Remarques sur un présumé complot*, *Politique Africaine*, 2013(2), p. 220.

¹⁹ African Union Commission, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the situation in the Central African Republic*, 18 June 2013, p. 5

²⁰ IPIS interview, head of the MINUSCA-DDR Section, Bangui, July 2014.

²¹ Final Communiqué of the first general assembly of the political leadership of the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central Africa (FPRC) held in Birao, 6- 10 July 2014

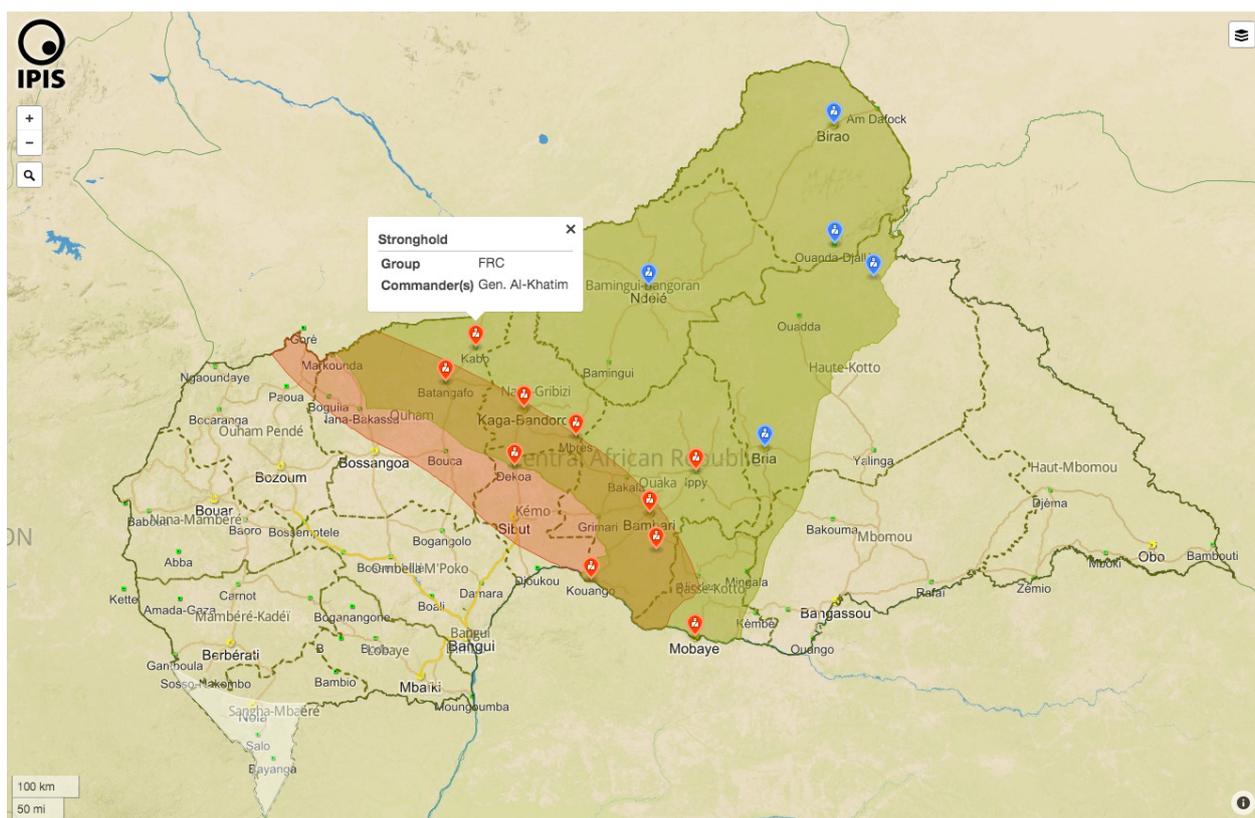
Table 1.2: Seleka leaders

| Leader | Background | Ethnicity | Close to | Interest | Current position |
|----------------------|--|-----------|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| Michel Djotodia | Former political leader of UFDR. Political leader of Seleka. Put under sanctions in 2014. ¹⁴ | Gula | Noureddine Adam | Among others: partitioning of the country, political power | Exile in Benin, President FPRC |
| Noureddine Adam | Former leader of CPJP Fondamentale, one of the founders of Seleka. Put under UN sanctions in 2014. ¹⁵ | Runga | Djotodia, Zoundeko | Among others: partitioning of the country | Vice-President FPRC |
| Mohammed M. Dhaffane | Former leader CPSK, one of the founders of Seleka | Bornu | Darassa and Al Khatim ¹⁶ | Support Brazzaville agreement, against partitioning of the country, political power | N. Adam suspended Dhaffane from his functions for 'high treason' in August 2014 |
| Abdoulaye Issène | Former political coordinator Seleka, former leader of the CPJP and former diamond <i>collecteur</i> | Runga | Eric Massi, Moustapha Sabone | Against partitioning of the country, influence in the mining business | Ministerial adviser to the President for Youth and Sport |
| Joseph Zoundeko | Seleka's official military Chief of Staff, of UFDR signature | Gula | Adam, Zakaria Damane | Among others: partitioning of the country, rent-seeking activities | Military leader FPRC |
| Ali Darassa | Former second in command of the FPR, Seleka leader | Peuhl | Al Khatim | Support Brazzaville agreement, against partitioning of the country, rent-seeking activities | Split from FPRC Leader FRC/UPC |
| Mahamat Al Khatim | Chadian ex-liberator and Seleka zone commander of Kabo | Salamat | Ali Darassa | Support Brazzaville agreement, against partitioning of the country, rent-seeking activities | Split from FPRC Leader FRC/UPC |
| Zakaria Damane | Former UFDR leader. Currently top FPRC commander in the Bria-Sam Ouandja region | Gula | Djotodia, Zoundeko | Economic interests in illegal diamond trade | FPRC top commander in Bria-Sam Ouandja area |

¹⁴ Djotodia is under sanctions by third countries, such as the United States (see annex to Executive Order 13667, June 2014).

¹⁵ Noureddine Adam figures on the UN Sanctions list (see: United Nations: *List established and maintained by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic*. 14 May 2014) and is under sanctions by third countries, such as the United States (see annex to Executive Order 13667, June 2014).

¹⁶ Although Ali Darassa and Al Khatim tend to consider Dhaffane as the Seleka's political representative, they do follow their own agenda; IPIS interviews with political observers, Bangui, May and July 2014; IPIS interviews with (former) rebel leaders, Bangui and N'Djamena, July and September 2014.



Seleka zone of influence, combat region and strongholds (September 2014) - legend: p.11

Since the fall of Michel Djotodia in January 2014, Seleka commanders in the east have grown increasingly distrustful of their representatives in the capital, and accused them of only negotiating in their own interests, i.e. obtaining positions within the government or the administration. Moreover, **Michel Djotodia and Nouredine Adam** were effectively declared *persona non grata* by the international community when placed under international sanctions.²² **Their exclusion from the political process meant that their interests, and the strategies used to further them, started to diverge from those of the rest of the Seleka leadership.** By strenuously demanding the partition of the country in particular, they have tried to exert influence over the political process and to strengthen their position within the alliance.

Different Seleka assemblies organised since May 2014 have highlighted these dynamics and rifts. The **Nouredine Adam and Michel Djotodia** camps have tried to keep the leadership from Bangui out of decision-making within the alliance and **vehemently tried to push for the partitioning of the country. Seleka commanders in Bangui do not, in general, support this demand, maintaining a more moderate position as they are still involved in the political process in Bangui.**²³ It therefore came as a surprise to many observers that during the Forum for national reconciliation and national dialogue held in July 2014 in Brazzaville, the Seleka delegation led by Dhaffane made the partition of the country a *conditio sine qua non* of any truce. Although this may partly have been a means of strengthening the group's negotiation position, it was also an attempt to maintain unity within the alliance.

This move appears to have been to little avail. **On 4 August 2014, Nouredine Adam suspended Dhaffane and the movement's third vice-president, Taïb Yacoub, from their functions for 'high treason'.**²⁴ At the same time, Joseph Zoundeko and Nouredine Adam rejected the ceasefire agreement

²² Nouredine Adam figures on the UN Sanctions list. Both him and Michel Djotodia are under sanctions by third countries, such as the United States (*Ibid.*).

²³ In particular Mohamed Moussa Dhaffane, Abdoulaye Issène, Eric Massi and Moustapha Sabone.

²⁴ Jeune Afrique, *Centrafrique : Dhaffane écarté de l'ex-Seleka, qui suspend sa participation à l'accord de Brazzaville*. 6 August 2014. RJDH-RCA (Réseau des journalistes pour les Droits de l'homme), *Bambari: Le chef de l'État-major de l'ex-Seleka conteste l'accord de cessation des hostilités signé à Brazzaville*, 28 July 2014.

reached in Brazzaville, and violent clashes erupted between Sangaris²⁵ and Seleka troops in Batangafo.²⁶ On 18 August 2014, the Seleka, which had been rebranded as the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central Africa (FPRC), reportedly issued a communiqué, declaring the creation of a new independent state in the northeast, called 'Dar el Kouti'.²⁷ Shortly thereafter, however, the movement denied having issued such a statement.²⁸

Another split emerged between zone commanders of the different factions in the east of the country. There, tensions arose **between fighters loyal to Joseph Zoundeko, the movement's official 'Chief of Staff' of UFDR signature**, on the one hand, **and those loyal to Ali Darassa, the former second in command of the FPR, and 'General' Mahamat Al Khatim, a Chadian ex-liberator and zone commander of Kabo**, on the other. These tensions revolved firstly around control over territory, as well as over the sharing of revenues from illegal taxation and other rent-seeking activities.²⁹ Moreover, Darassa-loyal fighters did not favour the FPRC's demands to partition the country, nor their rejection of the Brazzaville ceasefire agreement.³⁰ Finally, the Seleka of Ali Darassa accused the Seleka loyal to Zoundeko of raiding cattle belonging to the Peuhl population around Bambari.³¹ In Bambari in particular, violent clashes between the factions erupted. On 25 August 2014, for instance, 17 fighters were killed in a confrontation over control of a checkpoint.³²

These tensions led Ali Darassa and Mahamat Al Khatim to publicly distance themselves from the FPRC to create their own faction, the Republican Front for Change (FRC). In an official statement issued on 17 September 2014, they reiterated their support for the Brazzaville agreement.³³ During a meeting in Bambari among FRC leaders on 25 October, Ali Darassa and Al Khatim created a new politico-military movement, the Union for peace in the CAR, UPC. The UPC will have their provisional headquarters in Bambari.³⁴ At the time of writing it was unclear if this implied the end of the FRC, or whether the two movements will remain operational next to one another.



Box 1.2 UPC coordination³⁵

Military coordinator – Ali Darassa

Deputy military coordinator – Mahamat Al Khatim

Military Secretary General – Mahamat Garba

Political coordinator – Habyalah Awal

Deputy political coordinators – Djamdadine Saleh, Hassan Bouba Ali

²⁵ French forces in the CAR, with 2,000 troops on the ground.

²⁶ Jeune Afrique, *Centrafrique : Dhaffane écarté de l'ex-Seleka, qui suspend sa participation à l'accord de Brazzaville*, 6 August 2014; Jeune Afrique, *Centrafrique: les affrontements de Batangafo ont fait plusieurs dizaines de morts, deux soldats français blessés*, 5 August 2014.

²⁷ La Nouvelle Centrafrique, *Centrafrique : L'ex Seleka déclare la création de l'Etat du Dar El Kouti*, 18 August 2014.

²⁸ La Nouvelle Centrafrique, *Etat du Dar-El-Kuti: Rétropédalage de la Seleka*, 18 August 2014.

²⁹ IPIS interview with rebel leader in N'Djamena, September 2014.

³⁰ IPIS telephone interview with Seleka spokesperson, July 2014; FRC Press release, *Droit de reponse du FRC*, 27 September 2014.

³¹ IPIS interview with rebel leader in N'Djamena, September 2014.

³² Jeune Afrique, *Centrafrique: à la Seleka, c'est chacun pour soi*, 30 September 2014; RFI, *Centrafrique : violents combats entre factions de la Séléka à Bambari*, 26 August 2014.

³³ FRC, *Communiqué de Presse*, N.003/Cabcemba, 17 September 2014.

³⁴ UPC, *Communiqué final de l'Assemblée générale de Bambari*, 25 October 2014.

³⁵ *Ibid.*

1.2 Actions and behaviour

In brief

Between December 2012 and early January 2013, the Seleka quickly advanced and occupied military bases and central mining towns in the east of the country.

In the period immediately after the Libreville peace agreement in January 2013, the Seleka halted their advance on Bangui whilst targeting diamond mining areas in the southeast.

However, the Seleka increasingly criticized President Bozizé for not respecting the peace agreement, and on 24 March 2013 finally staged a coup d'état.

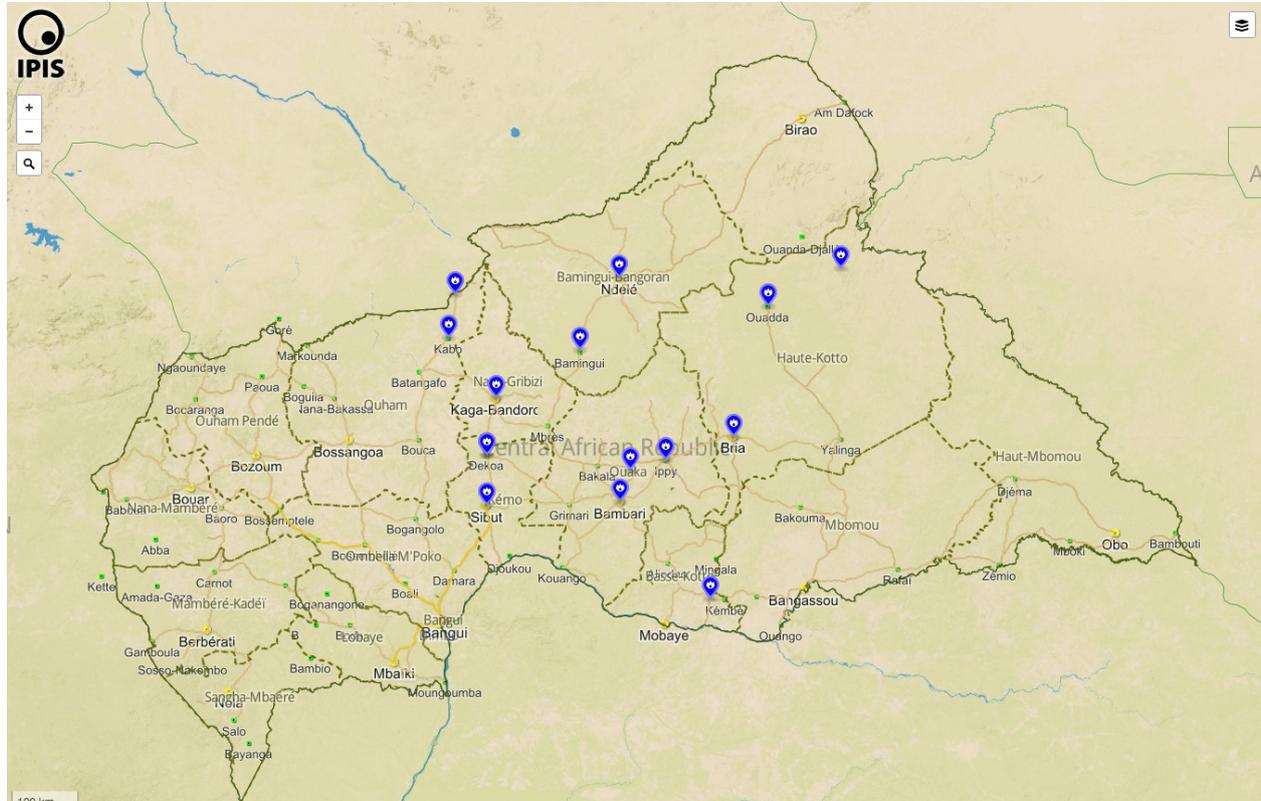
As soon as the Seleka had taken the capital, they started moving into the west of the country, committing serious human rights violations as they went.

President Djotodia disbanded the Seleka coalition in September 2013 under international pressure, and finally resigned from the Presidency on 10 January 2014.

Accordingly, Seleka forces began withdrawing from Bangui and their positions in the west, moving to the northeast of the country.

Between January and September 2014, violent clashes between Seleka and anti-balaka fighters, as well as violent Seleka attacks against civilians, occurred on a regular basis in central CAR.

1.2.1 December 2012 offensive and March 2013 coup



Seleka advance December 2012 - February 2013 - legend: p. 11

On 15 September 2012, the 'Seleka' – then still a coalition of CPSK and CPJP Fondamentale – claimed responsibility for attacks on Damara, Sibut, Grimari and Dékoa that had been launched that same day.³⁶ Following these attacks, the Seleka did not re-emerge until 10 December 2012, when it attacked and took control of the strategic town of Ndélé together with UFDR forces.³⁷

Between 10 December 2012 and early January 2013, Seleka fighters quickly advanced and occupied the military base and central mining town of Bria³⁸, Kabo³⁹, Ippy and Ndassima⁴⁰, and the regional capitals Bambari⁴¹ and Kaga-Bandoro.⁴² Consolidating their control over the eastern parts of the country, the Seleka also moved towards Bangui, taking Sibut, which is only 160 km north of the capital.

Under the political agreement signed in Libreville, Gabon, on 11 January 2013, President Bozizé was to remain in power until the end of his mandate in 2016. The Seleka obtained several important ministries in the Transitional Government, nominated early February 2013.⁴³

In the period immediately after the Libreville peace agreement, the Seleka halted its advance on Bangui whilst targeting diamond mining areas around Dimbi and Kembe in the southeast.⁴⁴ However, throughout February and March, they increasingly started criticizing President Bozizé for not respecting the provisions of the peace agreement.⁴⁵

Following this criticism, Seleka leaders started a new military offensive.⁴⁶ They first occupied Gambo and Bangassou in Mbomou⁴⁷, and ten days later took the towns of Bouca, Batangafo⁴⁸ and Bossangoa in the Ouham Prefecture.⁴⁹ Finally, on 22 March 2013, they took Damara⁵⁰, which is only 75 km from the capital. From Damara, they eventually invaded Bangui on 24 March 2013, effectively ending the Presidency of Francois Bozizé.

³⁶ CPJP Centrafrique (Press release), *Communiqué de presse de l'alliance CPSK-CPJP*, 15 September 2012.

³⁷ On 10 December 2012 (FIDH, *They must all leave or die*, June 2014).

³⁸ On 18 December (BBC, *Central African Republic rebels take diamond-mine town*, 18 December 2012).

³⁹ Seleka fighters said on 19 December they had taken the northern town of Kabo (AFP, *Central African rebels seize border town*, 19 December 2012).

⁴⁰ On 22 December 2012 Seleka forces seized Ippy and Ndassima. (Centrafrique Presse, *Les rebelles annoncent avoir pris deux nouvelles villes*, 22 December 2012).

⁴¹ On 23 December 2012 (BBC, *Rebels in Central African Republic take city of Bambari*, 23 December 2012).

⁴² On 25 December 2012 (Aljazeera, *CAR rebels advance on another major town*, 25 December 2012).

⁴³ Michel Djotodia became the Minister of Defence; Moussa Dhaffane became the Minister of Waterways, Forests and Environment. The Ministry of Mines was split into two, with Herbert Djono Ahaba, Djotodia's cousin, in charge of Geology and mining research, and Emilien Yeguida Danguéné, a cousin of President Bozizé, in charge of mining projects. Other Seleka positions went to Christophe Gazam Betty, who became the Minister of Communication (see Decree 13.035 of 3 February 2013).

⁴⁴ On 24 January 2013 (AFP).

⁴⁵ The Seleka accused President Bozizé of not implementing the Libreville agreement and of circumventing the government by overly relying on his Presidential administration. Moreover, President Bozizé had not yet released prisoners taken in connection with the crisis, nor had the South African forces left the country. From their side, the Seleka refused to withdraw their combatants from towns and villages, as required under the agreement; IPIS interview with M. Dhaffane, Bangui, May 2014; IPIS interview with former prime minister, Bangui, July 2014; Articles 13, 14, 17 and 18 of the 2013 Libreville Peace Agreement.

⁴⁶ AFP reported that the CPJP Fondamentale had taken control of Sido (Moyenne Sido) at the Chadian border already on 29 February.

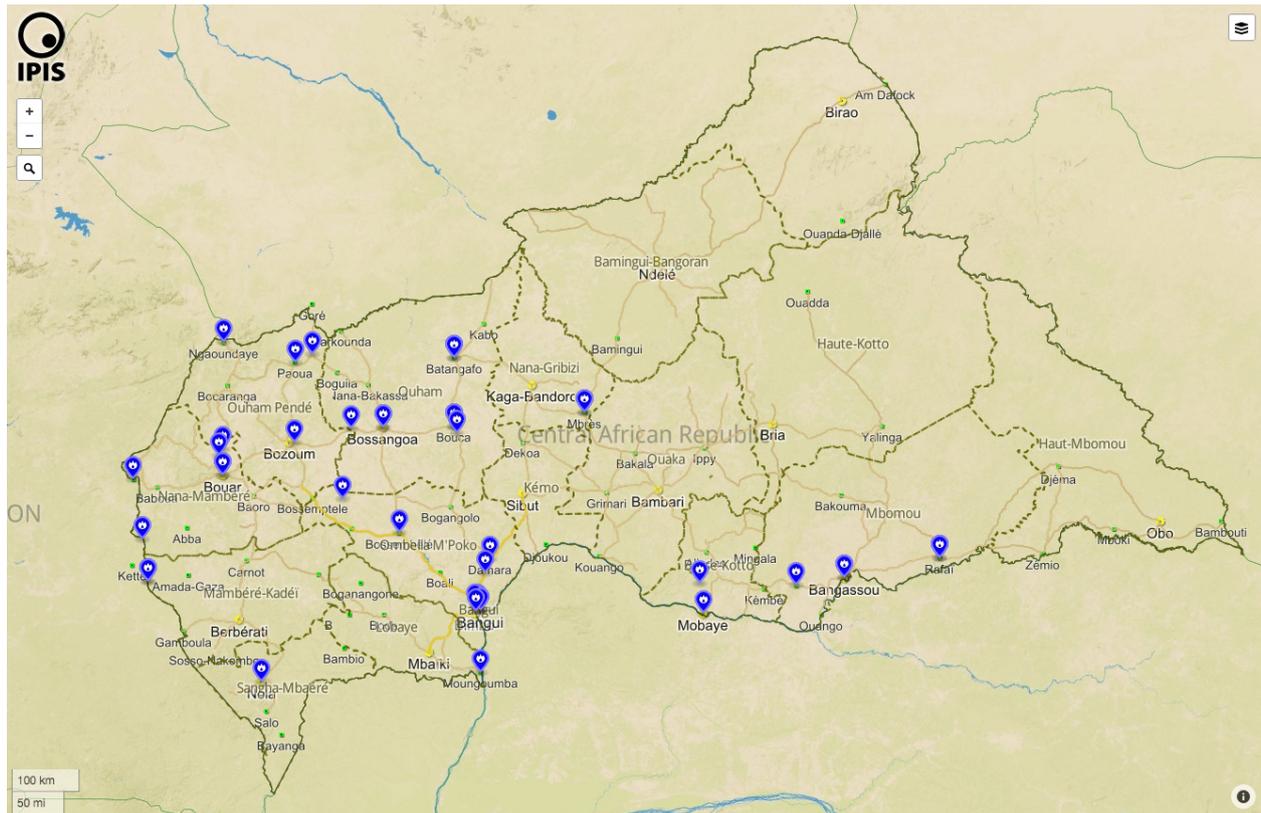
⁴⁷ On 11 March 2013 (Jeune Afrique).

⁴⁸ On 21 March 2013 (RFI).

⁴⁹ On 22 March 2013 the Seleka attacked Bossangoa, the fiefdom of President Bozizé (Jeune Afrique).

⁵⁰ On 22 March 2013 Seleka entered Damara, the strategic barrier that was controlled by FOMAC troops (Jeune Afrique).

1.2.2 The presidency of Djotodia



Conflict incidents involving Seleka March 2013 - January 2014 - legend: p. 11

After the March 2013 coup, Michel Djotodia assumed the CAR Presidency. Nicolas Tiangaye, who had been appointed Prime Minister in the Transitional Government in February 2013 under Bozizé, retained his position following international pressure.⁵¹

As soon as the Seleka had taken the capital, they quickly started moving into the west of the country. On their march west, they systematically pillaged villages and towns. As well as systematically plundering the mainly Christian population, the Seleka committed other serious and widespread human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, rape, ill-treatment and illegal detention.⁵²

Under international pressure, president Djotodia disbanded the Seleka coalition on 12 September 2013.⁵³ He declared the FACA (*Forces armées centrafricaines*) to be the only legitimate armed force in the country but continued integrating ex-Seleka fighters into the FACA, promoting ex-Seleka commanders to senior ranks and appointing them as zone commanders throughout the country.⁵⁴ Consequently, it was difficult to distinguish between ex-Seleka fighters who were officially integrated into the army, and Seleka fighters who continued to fight as rebels.⁵⁵

⁵¹ The main changes in the government were the appointment of Noureddine Adam as State Minister of Public Security, and the reunification of the Ministry of Mines under Herbert Djono. Abdoulaye Issène became the Minister of Sports and Youth.

⁵² For a comprehensive overview of these human rights abuses, see FIDH, *Central African Republic: A country in the hands of Seleka war criminals*, September 2013 and Human Rights Watch, *I can still smell the dead*, September 2013.

⁵³ Decree 13.334 of 12 September 2013.

⁵⁴ Decree 13.406 of 8 October 2013 concerning the nomination or the confirmation of officers of the national army to different positions at the command of military regions.

⁵⁵ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Central African Republic, S/2013/787, 31 December 2013, p. 8.

Box 1.3 Seleka versus ex-Seleka

Since Djotodia disbanded the Seleka coalition, the Seleka movement has referred to itself as the ex-Seleka. Accordingly, after September 2013 the Seleka have often been called the ex-Seleka (or “new” Seleka or former Seleka) in national and international media. **This report will however continue to use the term Seleka instead of ex-Seleka to denominate the movement.**

The Seleka remained a rebel group, at least until August 2014, albeit with a loose command, that continued its activities, especially in the east of the country. There is no clear distinction between the behaviour and motives of the Seleka and the ex-Seleka. It is therefore difficult, and more importantly artificial and confusing, to distinguish between Seleka and ex-Seleka. Whilst the behaviour and motives of these fighters have changed over time and the disbanding of the coalition was an important influencing factor, these changes have occurred gradually. As such, different activities and motives will be distinguished in this report by reference to dates, rather than the designation of the movement as Seleka or ex-Seleka. Following the split of the Seleka in the FPRC and FRC factions, the distinction between these two will be made where possible and relevant to the analysis.

1.2.3 After the emergence of anti-balaka and the departure of Djotodia

On 5 December 2013, the mainly Christian anti-balaka militia staged a well-coordinated attack on Bangui (see section 2.2.1). The offensive triggered a vicious cycle of revenge killings, causing the political and security situation to quickly spiral out of control. As a result, pressure mounted on Michel Djotodia to leave the Presidency.

After mediation by the Chadian President, Michel Djotodia agreed to resign on 10 January 2014, along with the prime minister. Upon Djotodia’s departure from office, Seleka forces began withdrawing from Bangui and their outposts in many areas of the west. Most fighters started moving to the northeast of the country. FPR fighters present in the area around Berbérati tried to cross the northwestern border into Chad, passing through Bouar. During their retreat in January and February 2014, Seleka fighters continued to carry out assaults on Christian civilians and their property, especially in Bangui and surroundings, Ouham-Pendé, Ouham, Nana-Mambéré, Lobaye, Kémo, Mambéré-Kadéï and Nana-Grébizi prefectures. The Seleka held the Christian population collectively responsible for anti-balaka attacks.⁵⁶

Between March and September 2014, clashes between anti-balaka and Seleka fighters continued in Kémo, Ouaka, Nana-Grébizi and Bangui, and the Seleka attacked the Christian civilian population in Bamingui-Bangoran, Ouham, Nana-Grébizi, Vakaga, Haute-Kotto, Ouaka and Bangui. Violence against civilians also often occurred during reprisal attacks between the two groups. For example in Bambari in June and July 2014, dozens of civilians were killed in retaliation attacks between anti-balaka and Seleka.⁵⁷

⁵⁶ Amnesty International, *Ethnic cleansing and sectarian killings in the CAR*, February 2014, p. 19.

⁵⁷ Human Rights Watch, *Central African Republic: Sectarian Violence Escalating*, July 2014.

1.3 Analysis of motives

1.3.1 Seleka's political agenda: power and grievances

In brief

During their initial advance towards the capital in December 2012, the strategies employed by the Seleka coalition indicated clear power motives.

According to the official discourse, the Seleka rebellion demanded political reform of the regime, the investigation of 'gross human rights violations' committed by Bozizé, financial compensation for its combatants, and the restitution of diamonds and gold 'stolen' by the regime in 2008.

The Seleka did raise the issue of discrimination against the population in the northeast as one of their initial demands, but this was not framed in religious terms.

During initial offensives in the east, Seleka fighters seemed to discriminate between the Muslim and non-Muslim population, though Muslims were not completely spared.

After the anti-balaka became active, Christians were more specifically singled out for targeted attacks, and grievances concerning discrimination against Muslims became more prominent.

Once in power, the Seleka leadership took no initiatives for socio-economic development or good governance. In the meantime, the President and his entourage benefited from their access to power and to public funding for their personal enrichment.

Political grievances

The demands and grievances of the Seleka coalition before the March 2013 coup are reflected in their official declaration of 12 December 2012.⁵⁸ These demands were broadly structured around four issues:

1. The Seleka claimed political reforms that were first and foremost related to the lack of implementation of former agreements reached with the Bozizé regime, such as the 2007 Birao agreement and the recommendations of the Inclusive Political Dialogue.

Other political grievances voiced by the Seleka, especially throughout interviews, are related to lack of 'good governance', causing the underdevelopment of the country and the structural marginalization of the population in the northeast. The Seleka has frequently denounced the 'predatory behaviour' of Bozizé and his 'clan' and called for his departure. That said, the Seleka have never formulated any specific political priorities or policies, let alone a concrete political programme, exclusively limiting their discourse to vague grievances.

2. The Seleka denounced several 'gross human rights violations' committed by the Bozizé regime for which they demanded an investigation and reparation. Notable examples are the disappearance of former CPJP leader Charles Massi, and violence by the Presidential Guard in Gula villages around Tiringoulou, Vakaga prefecture, in 2006.⁵⁹

3. The Seleka wanted financial compensation for their combatants. On the one hand, compensation was sought for the numerous ex-liberators within the Seleka who had previously fought beside Bozizé to help him to power in 2003, and felt poorly compensated. On the other, compensation was demanded

⁵⁸ Seleka CPSK-CPJP-UFDR (Press release), *Déclaration relative à la situation politico-sécuritaire en vue d'une sortie de crise*, 12 December 2012.

⁵⁹ In their memorandum issued at the onset of the Libreville negotiations, they made abundant references to reports of Human Rights Watch and other international NGOs. By appropriating such a human rights discourse, they not only tried to justify taking up arms, but also called for the departure of Bozizé and him being handed over to the International Criminal Court.

for former UFDR combatants, who felt betrayed by the stalled DDR process in the east. Interestingly, the declaration goes as far as to mention specific sums, fifteen million and one million CFA. These sums are alleged to be due because of former agreements. This indicates a financial motivation in starting or joining the rebellion.

4. The Seleka demanded the immediate and unconditional restitution of diamonds, gold and other goods looted in 2008 (see Box 1.4). As such, another source of discontent fuelling the resurgence of armed rebellion in the east was that of diamond traders. Bozizé had been tightening his grip over the diamond trade since he came into office, giving key positions to members of his family and his Gbaya ethnic group.

Box 1.4 Operation Closing Gate

In October 2008, the minister of mines, Bozizé's nephew Sylvain Ndoutingai, launched 'Operation Closing Gate'. Under this operation, mining officials and soldiers were deployed to the country's mining areas, where they confiscated diamonds and other goods from buying offices and collectors. The ministry withdrew the licences of eight out of the eleven buying offices in the CAR, and imposed heavy fines on individual entrepreneurs. One of the main objectives behind the operation was to take over the market share of those pushed out of business, and in so doing, establish a near monopoly for diamond traders close to the regime.⁶⁰

Seleka discourse and demands could partially explain the motivations of key players in the Seleka rebellion. Undoubtedly, marginalization and a lack of livelihood opportunities have contributed to the ease with which people joined the rebellion. Moreover, former UFDR combatants and ex-liberators may readily have been motivated by their perceived lack of compensation and the opportunity provided by the Seleka to take what they considered to be theirs. The same might be said for some of the diamond traders who were pushed out of business by the regime and wanted to regain their former positions, whilst at the same time having the regime replaced.

That being said, it is important to recognize the fact that the heterogeneous Seleka alliance represents a vehicle used to further the divergent and sometimes conflicting interests of its different constituents. This is especially true for the alliance's politico-military leadership, which had primary responsibility for furthering the Seleka's political agenda. Whether the Seleka's political leadership under the presidency of Djotodia used their political power to take initiatives to address these grievances, will be analysed in this section. First, the role of discrimination against the Muslim population as a potential grievance motive will be discussed.

Religious grievances

Apart from the aforementioned grievances, some Seleka representatives maintain that discrimination against Central African Muslims was a key grievance contributing to triggering the rebellion from the outset. According to Moussa Dhaffane, for instance, Muslims were tired of being considered second-class citizens in their own country.⁶¹ However, no single reference to discrimination against the Muslim minority was made in official Seleka communications during their initial offensive, nor did this grievance play a role in **negotiations in Libreville**.⁶² **The issue of discrimination against the population in the northeast was repeatedly raised during the talks, but it was not framed in religious terms.** This indicates that religious grievances were not a key consideration at the beginning of the Seleka rebellion.

When committing violence during their initial offensives in the east, Bangui and the west, Seleka fighters seemed to discriminate between the Muslim and non-Muslim population on several

⁶⁰International Crisis Group, *Dangerous little stones: diamonds in the Central African Republic*, 16 December 2010, pp. 5-6.

⁶¹ IPIS interview with M. Dhaffane, Bangui, May 2014.

⁶² IPIS interview with former Prime Minister, Bangui, July 2014; IPIS telephone interview with a participant to the negotiations, September 2014.

occasions.⁶³ Most of the fighters singling out non-Muslims are believed to have been foreign mercenaries within the alliance.⁶⁴ According to BINUCA (*Bureau intégré des Nations Unies pour la consolidation de la paix en République centrafricaine*),⁶⁵ several Seleka attacks specifically targeted people on the basis of their religious beliefs.⁶⁶ Churches were for instance systematically plundered in villages entered by these fighters.⁶⁷ This was also the case in Bangui, where the city's cathedral was looted as soon as the Seleka took the capital.

However, Muslims were not completely spared. In Berbérati, for instance, Seleka troops did not distinguish between different groups when plundering the town upon arrival. In Bouar, Peuhl pastoralists also fell victim to violence, although to a lesser extent than non-Muslim pastoralists in the area.⁶⁸ In at least some instances, the favourable treatment of Muslim populations seems to have been linked to the Seleka's recruitment drive throughout the country, during which they especially tried to draw Muslim minorities to their cause.

The scale by which Christians were targeted by the Seleka changed after the anti-balaka had become active.⁶⁹ As civilians were increasingly dragged into a cycle of attacks and revenge attacks, grievances concerning discrimination against Muslims, and the protection of Muslims, rose prominently to the fore.

As a result, **the idea of partitioning the country to protect the Muslim population was put forward by some prominent Seleka commanders.** Abakar Sabone first formulated this as a demand during a press conference on 22 December 2013. Shortly thereafter he was followed by 'General' Arda Hakoum, and, more importantly, Nouredine Adam.⁷⁰ As outlined above, the idea then quickly began to gain weight in Seleka meetings and negotiations in Brazzaville. Although this demand undoubtedly reflects religious grievances to some extent, it cannot be seen outside its political context, discussed under section 1.1.3.

Power motives

When interviewed, Seleka leaders readily admitted that the goal from the onset of the coalition's offensive was to topple the Bozizé regime, though they stopped short of stating that they wanted to take power themselves by means of a coup.

The objective of acquiring political power emerged clearly from the Seleka's initial offensive against Bangui. The aim of exerting political power on the national level became apparent from the swift and targeted nature of Seleka's advance towards the capital up to Sibut. Moreover, the coalition systematically took regional capitals, such as Ndélé, Bria and Bambari, and upon securing control over these towns, supplanted the administration in place with their own.

In their communiqué of 26 December 2012, the Seleka stated that they had not yet taken Bangui out of mere courtesy towards the international community, which was brokering an agreement. At the same time, they added that the Seleka had the necessary intellectuals in their midst to ensure a transition to 'good governance'. In early January 2013, the Seleka then unambiguously called for Bozizé's departure and his surrender to the International Criminal Court.

Lack of explicit declarations to that effect, renders it unclear whether the Seleka intended from the beginning to stage a coup and take the Presidency. The complete lack of trust in President Bozizé's willingness to implement the Libreville agreement, taken together with the clear military superiority of the Seleka over the FACA, may have been sufficient conditions for the Seleka to decide to take the low hanging fruit of Bangui.

⁶³ Confidential UN report, May 2013.

⁶⁴ IPIS telephone interview with former Prime Minister, September 2014.

⁶⁵ Peacebuilding mission of the United Nations, set up in 2010 as the successor of BONUCA that started its activities in the CAR in 2000.

⁶⁶ Confidential UN report, May 2013.

⁶⁷ Human Rights Watch, *I can still smell the dead*, September 2013.

⁶⁸ IPIS interviews with the *Fédération nationale d'éleveurs centrafricains* (FNEC), Bouar, July 2014.

⁶⁹ Amnesty International, *Ethnic Cleansing and Sectarian Killings in the CAR*, February 2014, p. 19.

⁷⁰ H. Février, *Centrafrique: menace de partition?*, TV5 Monde, 25 December 2013; RFI, *RCA : profondes divisions chez les ex-Seleka*, 14 February 2014.

Nevertheless, two additional elements should be taken into account. Firstly, as soon as the Seleka took power, their mode of warfare dramatically changed from fairly targeted to predatory (see section 1.3.2). This sudden change indicates an underlying shift in the objectives of the rebellion. An additional reason for deciding to stage a coup and capture the rest of the country may therefore have been pressure from within the alliance to take the spoils of war. This holds especially for those mercenaries and ex-liberators claiming payment for services rendered. Secondly, FOMAC (*Force multinationale de l'Afrique centrale*) troops did not intervene when the Seleka crossed the 'red line' at Damara. This development will be further discussed under section 3.1.1.

Djotodia presidency: tackling grievances is not the priority

When asked about any socio-economic initiatives undertaken, members of the Seleka leadership interviewed by IPIS in Bangui openly acknowledged the total lack thereof.⁷¹ They described the presidency of Michel Djotodia as 'predatory' and 'totally void of even the smallest initiative to improve people's lives'. At the same time they claimed that they would have done things differently.⁷²

If the Presidency of Michel Djotodia has been productive to any standard, it must certainly have been in the signing of decrees. **In little over nine months, Djotodia signed more than 500 decrees,⁷³ though not a single one of these related to substantive socio-economic issues.** The large majority of the decrees dealt with nominations to political and military positions, with a clear view to consolidating Djotodia's position, placating adversaries and rewarding senior Seleka members for services rendered. For instance, Zakaria Damane and Omar Younous, senior UFDR commanders allegedly implicated in diamond smuggling rings, were nominated as special adviser with the rank of minister and special adviser to the president, respectively (see section 1.3.2).⁷⁴

Meanwhile, the President and his entourage readily benefited from their access to power and to public funding for their own personal enrichment. Alongside opportunistic enrichment through, for example, travel allowances for unnecessary missions, they developed well-organized schemes conducive to embezzlement and fraud within several ministries.⁷⁵ For instance, money intended for the rations of cantoned Seleka fighters were systematically embezzled.⁷⁶ A comprehensive overview of the tactics employed within the Ministry of Mines is discussed under section 1.3.2.

⁷¹ IPIS interviews with Seleka leaders, Bangui, May and July 2014.

⁷² *Ibid.*

⁷³ President Djotodia signed 516 numbered decrees throughout 2013, and 8 in 2014 before leaving power on 10 January 2014 (IPIS consultations at the office of the Official Journal).

⁷⁴ Decree 13.281 of 7 August 2013; Decree 13.195 of 27 June 2013; Decree 13.047 of 8 May 2013.

⁷⁵ On travel allowances, see: International Crisis Group, *La crise centrafricaine : de la prédation à la stabilisation*, 17 June 2014.

⁷⁶ *Ibid.*; IPIS interview with adviser to the former Prime Minister, Brussels, April 2014.

1.3.2 Seleka's greed motives

In brief

As soon as the Seleka were in power, the strategic priorities and actions of the rebellion shifted from power to greed-related objectives.

After the coup in March 2013, the Seleka engaged in widespread looting, particularly in Bangui and in the west of the country.

The Seleka benefited from artisanal mining by levying parallel taxes, selling parallel mining authorizations, trading and smuggling diamonds and pre-financing mining activities, especially in the east. Here, the majority of Seleka elements were reportedly composed of UFDR and CPJP Fondamentale fighters.

Swathes of territory in the eastern diamond and gold producing regions continue to fall under the exclusive control of the Seleka.

Currently, the zones of influence of the FRC and the FPRC coincide with the main gold and diamond producing areas in the east respectively.

Compared to the east, Seleka's behaviour in the west has been more predatory, aimed at short-term gain through pillage and extortion. Here, the majority of Seleka elements were reportedly predominantly composed of Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries, ex-liberators and FPR elements.

President Djotodia and Herbert Djono, the then Minister of Mines, circumvented the official procedures related to the granting of mining concessions and to the payment of signing bonuses, allegedly to embezzle funds.

Several decrees granting mining concessions signed by Djotodia have disappeared from the administration altogether.

Seleka took control of administration at border crossings and established checkpoints where they levied illegal taxes.

Seleka units have taken advantage of ivory poaching and have been involved in the poaching of bush meat.

Poachers and cattle herders have been paying unofficial taxes to the Seleka

Looting

Widespread looting began to be reported in February 2013, further intensifying after the coup of 24 March 2013.⁷⁷ Throughout the period in which the Seleka controlled the capital, looting of houses, shops and medical centres reached endemic levels.⁷⁸ Armed



robberies, including auto theft, were rife. According to the UN, Seleka fighters recruited youngsters to identify targets for pillage.⁷⁹ A climate of total impunity further exacerbated the levels of violence used during these looting operations, with civilians often being killed and raped in the process. For the month of April 2013 alone, the United Nations confirmed the killing of at least 28 civilians and the wounding of 57 others.⁸⁰

⁷⁷ UN, Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic, S/2014/373, 26 June 2014, p. 18.

⁷⁸ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic, S/2013/261, 3 May 2013, p. 5.

⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 8.

⁸⁰ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic, S/2013/470, 4 August 2013, p. 11.

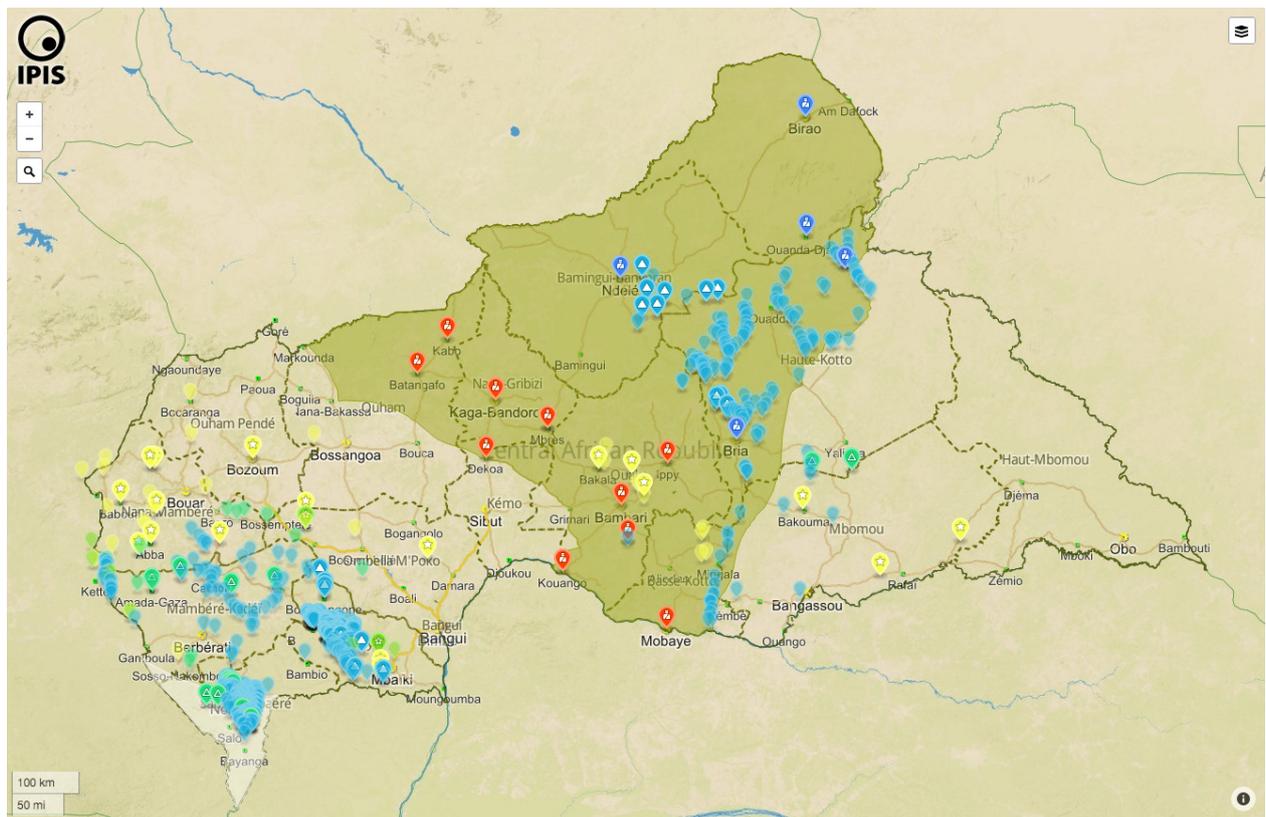
In their advance through the central and western parts of the country, Seleka forces again systematically plundered villages and towns, sometimes even razing entire villages to the ground. Human Rights Watch documented over 1,000 homes, schools and churches destroyed between February and June 2013 in at least 34 villages on the roads linking Kaga-Bandoro, Batangafoa and Bossangoa.⁸¹ Some towns were less affected, such as Bouar, where no widespread looting was recorded under Seleka occupation.⁸²



Looted goods were systematically transported to market towns across the border in neighbouring Cameroon and Chad. In this way, large profits were generated not only for the rank and file of the movement, but also for Seleka commanders.

With regard to looting, there was a marked change in conflict dynamics before and after the taking of Bangui. During their march to the capital, Seleka forces advanced quickly and purposefully. Although looting took place, such instances were mainly limited to offices and bases, and to assets that contributed to the Seleka war effort, such as food, arms, vehicles and fuel.⁸³ This indicates a shift in the strategic priorities of the rebellion from power to greed-related motives as soon as Bozizé had fled. As highlighted above, this development cannot be seen apart from the large numbers of mercenaries and former liberators putting pressure on the Seleka alliance to claim the spoils of war for services rendered in toppling the regime.

Profit from artisanal mining



Artisanal diamond and gold mining sites, Seleka zone of influence and commanders (September 2014) -legend: p.11

⁸¹ Human Rights Watch, *I can still smell the dead*, September 2013, p. 6.

⁸² IPIS interviews with officials and NGO workers, Bouar, July 2014.

⁸³ For instance: FACA base in Ndélé, Ecofaune bases in Manovo-Gounda National Park, AXMIN offices at Ndassima.

Seleka control over artisanal mining in the east

Box 1.5: Overall decrease in diamond production

According to local mining officials, diamond traders and artisanal miners interviewed by IPIS, the production of diamonds in the east of the country has declined steeply since the start of the crisis.⁸⁴ The first dip in production was caused by the extensive recruitment of young miners by the Seleka on their march to Bangui in December 2012. Most of these youths have since returned, but were then hit by the suspension of diamond exports imposed by the Kimberley Process (KP), which caused the second dip.

Since the KP suspension, buying houses and official collectors in the country no longer have the necessary cash flow to invest in new mining sites, pending resumption of exports.⁸⁵ With the money they have at hand, they prefer to buy diamonds to ensure a return on previous investments. Being cash-strapped and uncertain as to when they will again be able to export, buying offices have reduced the prices they offer per carat by up to 40 or 50 percent.⁸⁶ A side effect of this lower official price is that unofficial buyers and smugglers, who still have access to the international market, can also reduce their own prices. In this way, they can increase their profit margins by exploiting discrepancies between internal and external market prices.

In the east, the main diamond producing area is located in Haute-Kotto, stretching into Bamingui-Bangoran east of Ndélé and into Mbomou around Nzako. A second, smaller diamond mining area is situated in Basse-Kotto around Dimbi. Diamond mining in the east officially accounted for about 20 percent of national production before the start of the crisis.⁸⁷ This is though likely to represent a considerable underestimate, given that even before the creation of the Seleka, UFDR and CPJP elements controlled certain mining areas in the east.⁸⁸ This was particularly the case around Sam Ouandja, which was under the effective control of the UFDR.

Seleka forces took control of all eastern diamond mining areas during their December 2012 offensive. These forces were mainly comprised of former UFDR (Gula ethnicity) and former CPJP (Runga ethnicity).⁸⁹ As soon as they conquered new territory, they established a presence on the main mining sites and introduced a system of parallel mining authorizations and illegal taxation. Moreover, Seleka forces supplanted the mining administration in the towns over which they took control.

This situation, in which the Seleka supplanted the official mining administration with their own, continued unabated throughout the east until September 2013.⁹⁰ Then, the Seleka Minister of Mines, Herbert Djono, started implementing measures intended to secure the lifting of the CAR's suspension from the Kimberley Process. Amongst other things, the regional mining authorities were redeployed to the field. These measures reportedly occasioned a marked improvement as to armed interference in artisanal mining at first, as Seleka gradually refrained from levying taxes and started redeploying away from mining sites.⁹¹ However, the regional directors of the mining service told IPIS that many mining authorities have since returned to Bangui.⁹² The mining brigades of the gendarmerie still in place are hindered in their work because of the volatile security situation and a dire lack of means, which prevents them from patrolling their zones.

⁸⁴ IPIS interviews with mining officials and artisanal miners, Bangui, July 2014.

⁸⁵ IPIS interviews with buying offices and regional directors of mining service, Bangui, July 2014.

⁸⁶ *Ibid.*

⁸⁷ K. Matthyssen & I. Clarkson, *Gold and Diamonds in the CAR*, International Peace Information Service (IPIS), March 2013, p. 12.

⁸⁸ *Ibid.*

⁸⁹ The then zone commander in Bria, Ali Austa, and the zone commander of Mbomou, 'Colonel Isaka', were both said to be Gula. Omar Younous, UFDR, was zone commander of Sam Ouandja. 'Colonel Isaka' reportedly got killed during clashes between the Ugandan forces (UPDF) and Seleka in Nzako, Mbomou prefecture.

⁹⁰ IPIS interviews with regional directors of mining service in the east, Bangui, July 2014.

⁹¹ *Ibid.*

⁹² *Ibid.*

As a result, whole swathes of territory in the eastern diamond and gold producing regions continue to be under the exclusive control of the Seleka. It is not always clear though at which diamond mines they have currently (re-)established a presence. According to mining officials and artisanal miners interviewed in Bangui, the Seleka are not present at the diamond mines around Bria.⁹³ The area around Sam Ouandja has continuously been under the control of first the UFDR, then the Seleka. As will be discussed below, there are strong indications that the Seleka over the last year have considerably increased their presence at the mining sites south of the Manovo-Gounda national park. It is unclear whether Seleka forces are currently present on the mining sites around Dimbi.

Apart from profiting by imposing illegal taxes and selling parallel authorizations at sites and towns where they established a presence, **the Seleka also have been benefiting by trading and smuggling diamonds and by pre-financing mining activities.** Several senior Seleka figures, such as General Omar 'Sodiam' Younous and Zakaria Damane, both of UFDR signature and currently top commanders in the Bria – Sam-Ouandja area, have always been heavily involved in these activities.⁹⁴ An analysis of satellite imagery carried out by countries participating in the KP Process indicates that **diamond production in several areas in Sam Ouandja has increased in spite of the country's suspension from the KP Process.**⁹⁵ This suggests that **in Haute-Kotto mining operations are pre-financed through parallel networks.** IPIS has not been able to confirm the extent to which the aforementioned Seleka commanders are involved in these pre-financing activities. However, Seleka pre-financing of mining operations, thus boosting local diamond production, is clearly visible in the area around the Manovo-Gounda national park and, until recently, in the area around Nzako in Mbomou.

In the Manovo-Gounda national park and surrounding hunting zones, there has been a marked increase in diamond mining activity, especially since early 2014.



In December 2012, the Seleka looted Ecofaune bases during their march on the capital, and 22 of the 60 park rangers also allegedly joined the rebels' ranks.⁹⁶ This left the authorities without the necessary means to control activities in the park and hunting zones, where mining is prohibited. When the Seleka started moving back to the east in January 2014, many settled in the area to engage in the poaching of bush meat, and especially in mining. The main diamond mines in and around the park are located along the tributaries of the Manovo, Bohou and Idongo rivers. In July 2014, civilians and Seleka elements even started mining at the Bamingui river right next to the Ecofaune base in Sangba, thereby illustrating the impotence of the authorities.⁹⁷ **The Seleka in this area, who are reportedly almost exclusively Gula, profit from mining activities by investing in small diamond mines, rather than by imposing taxes.** Local commanders use money made from looting, bush meat and 'taxes' paid by Sudanese and Chadian pastoralists to make their investments. Acting as unofficial collectors or artisans they oversee the activities at a site, feed the miners and buy the diamonds produced at a derisory price. The diamonds are then reportedly sold either in Chad or to larger Seleka collectors.

In the Mbomou prefecture, Seleka also taxed miners, for instance at diamond mines around Nzako, and got involved in small-scale investments as soon as they had arrived.⁹⁸ At the end of June 2014, Seleka fighters clashed at Nzako with the Ugandan armed forces (UPDF), who are part of an AU-mandated force to fight the LRA. The repeated clashes caused the Seleka's retreat from the area.

Based on a mapping analysis of their respective zones of influence, it becomes clear that **the main diamond producing area in the east currently falls under the influence of the FPRC, rather than**

⁹³ These observations were corroborated by interviews conducted by the UN Panel of Experts during a field mission to Bria in May 2014: UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report, S/2014/452*, 1 July 2014, p. 18; IPIS interviews with mining officials and artisanal miners, Bangui, July 2014.

⁹⁴ Both had been appointed by Djotodia to senior positions in the presidential administration. They decided however to stay in the east rather than going to Bangui.

⁹⁵ The analysis covers the period between October 2013 and March 2014 (Satellite analysis carried out by KP participating countries, June 2014).

⁹⁶ IPIS interview with park conservationists and environment officials in Ndélé, Bangui, July 2014; UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report, S/2014/452*, 1 July 2014, p. 19.

⁹⁷ IPIS interviews with park conservationists and with local administrators, Bangui, July 2014.

⁹⁸ IPIS interviews with regional directors of mining service in the east, Bangui, July 2014.

The satellite analysis carried out by KP participating countries also showed some increased diamond production around Nzako, thereby indirectly corroborating the accounts of Seleka involvement in pre-financing activities.

the FRC of Ali Darassa and 'General' Al-Khatim. Moreover, it seems that **within the FPRC, former UFDR commanders and fighters (Gula) have established a firmer grip, both militarily and economically, on these sites than former CPJP (Runga) fighters.** The FPRC's control over the eastern diamond producing area to a large extent corresponds to the situation before December 2012. However, they have since strengthened their grip on areas that fell beyond their traditional strongholds.



The most important gold producing area in the east is located in the Ouaka prefecture north of Bambari, up to Mbrès in Nana-Grébizi. The area hosts several large artisanal gold mining sites, the most well known being at Ndassima, 50km north of Bambari. There, the Canadian company AXMIN Inc. holds the only industrial exploitation concession for gold in the country. In December 2012, the company closed down its operations following the Seleka offensive and the looting of its camp.⁹⁹ The site then quickly became a destination for hundreds of artisanal miners in search of gold.¹⁰⁰ Since June 2013 at least 50 miners have died in Ndassima due to collapsing mineshafts, the last incident dating from August 2014.¹⁰¹



Box 1.6: Sharp increase in gold production

Since the onset of the crisis, the number of people active in gold exploitation in Ouaka and around Mbrès, including diggers, porters and washers, reportedly doubled to between 6,000 and 8,000.¹⁰² This increase is due to the sharp decline in both the production and price of diamonds following the suspension of the CAR from the Kimberley Process.¹⁰³ Moreover, gold mining provides a more stable and predictable income, which is especially important in times of crisis. As a result, many former diamond miners have migrated from Haute-Kotto and Dimbi in Basse-Kotto to Ouaka. Conservative estimates put the total monthly production of gold in the region at 30 to 40 kg, 15 of which are produced at the Ndassima mine.¹⁰⁴

In the Ouaka prefecture, Seleka units in the main towns have allegedly been financially benefiting from mining activity by acting as a parallel administration throughout 2013. Although it is unclear whether they currently have a permanent presence on sites near Bakala, Agoudou-Manga and Mbrès, just across the border with Nana-Grebizi, the Seleka have installed a **'directeur régionale des mines' or regional mining unit at the Ndassima site.**

In 2013, the mining unit was reportedly comprised of Seleka from the Gula, Runga and Sara ethnic groups and led by a Gula commander, loyal to Damane. However, after Ali Darassa was appointed zone commander for Bambari, a power struggle ensued. As a result, the mining unit was replaced by Seleka from the Peuhl ethnic group.

Local mining authorities allege that throughout 2013, the unit levied taxes in kind to the sum of about five to ten percent of production.¹⁰⁵ On a monthly basis, this would have amounted to approximately 0,75 kg of gold for the entire site. At the entrance of the site, a territorial Seleka brigade also reportedly levied taxes.¹⁰⁶ It is unclear how this tax system has changed since December 2013.

⁹⁹ AXMIN news release, *AXMIN notifies the CAR government of a Force Majeure due to ongoing rebel activities in country*, 24 December 2014.

¹⁰⁰ When AXMIN was still conducting operations on their concession, they allowed local artisanal miners to exploit gold in a part of their concession.

¹⁰¹ La Nouvelle Centrafrique, *Centrafrique: 25 morts dans l'effondrement d'une mine d'or*, 23 August 2014.

¹⁰² Increase was already ongoing since 2008, when global demand for diamonds fell following the global economic crisis.

¹⁰³ See box 1.5.

¹⁰⁴ IPIS interview with regional director of mining service in Bambari and former research director Bambari, Bangui, July 2014; UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Final report*, S/2014/762, 29 October 2014, p. 36.

¹⁰⁵ IPIS interviews with mining officials, Bangui, July 2014.

¹⁰⁶ IPIS interviews with mining officials, Bangui, July 2014; UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014, p. 19.

According to the UN Panel of Experts, current profits from illegal taxation and parallel authorizations at the site could amount to 150,000 US Dollar on a yearly basis.¹⁰⁷

The extent of the gold mining activity at the Ndassima mine also indicates the existence of elaborate pre-financing operations. Contrary to most of the other sites in the east, the exploitation of gold at Ndassima is not alluvial.¹⁰⁸ This means that the gold is much harder to extract, as miners have to dig deep mining pits until they reach the gold veins. Before such a new pit can reach these veins at variable depths, investments typically starting at around 4,000 US dollars are needed.¹⁰⁹

Currently, the zone of influence of the FRC/UPC includes the area in between Mbrès ('General' Al-Khatim), Bambari and Ippy (Ali Darassa) and therefore encompasses the main gold mining sites in the east. As mentioned above, the area in between Sam Ouandja, Ndélé and Bria falls within the FPRC's zone of influence. **Therefore, it seems that a de facto partition has emerged whereby the FRC/UPC and FPRC are focussing on gold and diamond producing areas respectively.**



Summarizing on Seleka's control over artisanal mining in the east, some key trends can be identified. The inability of buying houses to invest in large-scale mines, has seen the overall production and price of diamonds go down. As a result, many miners have either turned to gold, causing a rise in gold production, or are exploiting smaller sites, at least some of which are pre-financed by Seleka. As soon as they took control over the east, the Seleka, mostly former UFDR and to a lesser extent former CPJP fighters, started implementing an organised system aimed at controlling and benefitting from mining activity. Not only did they start levying parallel taxes and selling parallel authorizations, but they also began investing in mining operations, thereby emulating the system of legitimate buying offices, collectors and artisans, and taking part of the market share. Securing profits from the production and trafficking of diamond and gold was therefore a clear priority of the Seleka coalition. This is further illustrated for instance by the fact that key Seleka commanders, such as Zakaria Damane and Omar Younous, preferred to stay in these areas rather than go to Bangui after they had been appointed to senior positions within the Presidency. Currently, the areas of influence of the FRC and FPRC correspond with the main gold and diamond producing areas respectively.

Seleka control over artisanal mining in the west throughout 2013

Immediately after the March 2013 coup, the Seleka moved into the western diamond and gold regions of the country, quickly taking control of the main towns. Unlike in the east of the country, the majority of Seleka elements in this region were reportedly Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries, ex-liberators and FPR elements. For instance, the zone commander of the Nana-Mambere prefecture, mainly rich in gold, was 'General Souleymane', a Sudanese national.¹¹⁰ Colonel Saad, the zone commander for Carnot and Berbérati, an important diamond-producing region, was a former FPR top commander.¹¹¹

Establishing control over the mining activities in the west of the country was clearly a strategic Seleka objective. Upon arrival in the **Nana-Mambere prefecture, the Seleka started fighting with the FDPC over control over the Abba sub-prefecture**, razing several villages in the process.¹¹² In this sub-prefecture, gold mining is the main economic activity of the population and the area is scattered with small mining sites, each exploited by up to 100 diggers.¹¹³ The estimated monthly production of

¹⁰⁷ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report, S/2014/452*, 1 July 2014, p. 19.

¹⁰⁸ Except for the part where the artisanals were previously allowed to mine. IPIS telephone interview with mining official formerly present at Ndassima site, September 2014.

¹⁰⁹ IPIS interviews with regional mining directors and mining officials, Bangui, July 2014.

¹¹⁰ IPIS interviews with UN staff, local officials and NGO workers, Bouar, July 2014. One former rebel leader interviewed in N'Djamena identified 'General' Souleymane as a Chadian national (IPIS interview with former rebel leader, N'Djamena, September 2014).

¹¹¹ The former zone commander of Kabo and Moyenne Sido was 'General' Al-Khatim, a Chadian ex-liberator linked to the CPJP Fondamentale and currently second-in-command of the FRC/UPC (IPIS interview with former Prime Minister, Bangui, July 2014). The zone commander in Paoua was 'Colonel' Haroun, reportedly a Chadian national with no command of French or Sango (IPIS telephone interview with international NGO worker, September 2014). The zone commander of Nola was however of UFDR signature and moreover reportedly a cousin of Djotodia (IPIS interviews with former administrators, NGO workers and conservationists, Bangui, July 2014).

¹¹² Interview with MINUSCA official, Bouar, July 2014; IPIS interview with mayor from Abba sub-prefecture, Bouar, July 2014.

¹¹³ IPIS interviews with officials mining brigade, NGO workers and mayor from Abba sub-prefecture, Bouar, July 2014.

gold there varies between 5 and 10 kg.¹¹⁴ Although not permanently present on most of these sites, the Seleka staged regular incursions to loot.¹¹⁵

The largest gold mining site in Nana-Mambere is located in Gbakana, 7 km to the west of Niem.¹¹⁶ It was discovered shortly before the March 2013 coup and hosted over 500 diggers, producing more than 8 kg a month. Arab-speaking **Seleka led by commander Al Canto, reportedly a Chadian national, took the site, and imposed taxes.** At the same time, these forces regularly took a part of miners' production by force. Some sources alleged that fighters physically prevented miners from leaving the site and subjected them to forced labour and ill-treatment.¹¹⁷ Similar accounts of ill-treatment and pillage were recorded at the **largest gold mining site in the Ombella-Mpoko prefecture, located in Gaga, close to Yaloké, which was controlled by Sudanese Seleka.**



In the **Lobaye and Mambere-Kadeï prefectures**, some - mainly Muslim - collectors managed to strike a deal on the payment of protection money.¹¹⁸ At most other mining sites, the Seleka levied taxes and did not seem to physically mistreat miners.¹¹⁹ However, allegations were made of forced labour in some mines.¹²⁰



In the **Sangha-Mbaéré prefecture**, in the area around Nola, control over the sites was less structured, with frequent pillaging and extortion of miners.¹²¹ As a result of insecurity at the sites, many artisanal miners ceased their activities, causing a further drop in production.¹²²

Apart from establishing control over mining sites themselves, the Seleka also collaborated with or extorted from diamond traders and collectors. Seleka reportedly offered protection to some collectors, who could then impose lower prices on artisanal miners, creating a business arrangement between Seleka and collectors.¹²³ Other collectors, such as Muslim collectors of Cameroonian Peuhl origin in Berbérati, were extorted into giving money and fuel to the Seleka.¹²⁴

Compared to the control and profiteering from mining activities exercised in the east of the country, Seleka activities in the west were more characterized by pillage and extortion. Although illegal taxes were levied in some areas, very few investments were made. This difference in dynamics seems to be linked to the different Seleka components active in the west. **Hosting far more foreign fighters and armed groups other than the UFDR and CPJP, the western hinterlands appear to have been used by these groups to claim their spoils of war with a more short-term perspective.**

It is therefore unclear to what extent these enormous profits from mining and, as outlined below, control over border posts, looting and cattle raiding, were reinvested in the Seleka war effort, or used for personal enrichment. An argument in support of the latter is the Presidential Decree of October 2013, nominating new zone commanders throughout the country. According to a senior Seleka leader, this decree was partly an attempt to curb the influence of Chadian and Sudanese Seleka in these areas.¹²⁵ Following the December 2013 offensives of the anti-balaka, this decree was never implemented.¹²⁶

Further developments concerning control over and profiting from artisanal mining in the west of the country by anti-balaka militia throughout 2014 will be discussed in section 2.3.4.

¹¹⁴ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁵ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁶ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁷ *Ibid.*

¹¹⁸ This was for instance the case for the gold mining site of Ndolobo, which then hosted 200-300 miners, and the large diamond mine at Banagbele (IPIS interview with supervisor mining site Lobaye, Bangui, July 2014).

¹¹⁹ IPIS interview with mining officials and regional directors, Bangui, July 2014.

¹²⁰ E.g. the Bagandou gold mine (IPIS interview with supervisor mining site Lobaye, Bangui, July 2014).

¹²¹ IPIS interview with park conservationists, Bangui, September 2014.

¹²² IPIS interview with supervisor mining site Lobaye, Bangui, July 2014.

¹²³ International Crisis Group, *La crise centrafricaine: de la prédation à la stabilisation*, 17 June 2014, p.13.

¹²⁴ *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

¹²⁵ 'General' Souleymane was however confirmed in his position in Bouar, which indicates rents going to the Seleka leadership in Bangui (IPIS interview with senior Seleka leader, Bangui, September 2014).

¹²⁶ IPIS interview with senior Seleka leader, Bangui, September 2014

Seleka control over (semi-)industrial mining – concessions



Mining concessions (September 2014) - legend: p. 11

The CAR has never been popular among international industrial miners due to a number of factors, including lack of infrastructure (transport and power supply), lack of exploration investment, political instability, insecurity, and – particularly under Bozizé – heavy fees and bonuses.¹²⁷

In 2012, Bozizé's last year in power, only two companies held exploitation permits: French AREVA held a uranium concession around Bakouma, Mbomou, and Canadian AXMIN¹²⁸ held a gold concession around Passendro, north of Bambari, Ouaka. AREVA suspended its preparatory activities in early 2012, while AXMIN declared *force majeure* with the State in December 2012, after its concession was pillaged and occupied by Seleka. Research permits were held by AXMIN¹²⁹, for gold, relating to two areas contiguous to the one of its exploitation permit, and by three Chinese miners¹³⁰ and one Central African company¹³¹, all for diamonds and gold, in the southwest of the country.

Although shortly after the Seleka coup Djotodia had announced that he would review all mining deals signed by Bozizé,¹³² the Seleka government apparently left nearly all existing arrangements unchanged.¹³³

¹²⁷ K. Matthysen & I. Clarkson, *Gold and diamonds in the Central African Republic*. International Peace Information Service (IPIS), February 2013; International Crisis Group, *Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic*, Africa Report N° 167, December 2010, p. 8.

¹²⁸ Through its wholly owned subsidiary SOMIO Toungou SA, or *Société des Mines d'Or de la Ouaka*.

¹²⁹ Through its wholly owned subsidiary Aurafrique SARL.

¹³⁰ DSTM, MTVC, and Clima Dubai MW International (see web map). The permit to the latter was granted on 30 December 2012 (Decree 12.293), when the Seleka was already approaching Bangui, and a few days before the Libreville talks. The permit area overlapped the protected Dzanga-Sangha Dense Forest Special Reserve, west of Bayanga.

¹³¹ Mossoro Mining Company (see web map).

¹³² BBC, *CAR rebel head Michel Djotodia to review mining deals*, 29 March 2013.

¹³³ Clima Dubai, the Chinese company that had obtained a research permit from Bozizé for an area overlapping the Dzanga-Sangha Reserve, allegedly fled its permit area when the Seleka were approaching Bangui in March 2013, but returned in May reportedly escorted by Chadian Seleka fighters, before eventually leaving the area again in September (IPIS interview with WWF, Bangui, May 2014). According to a mining official, though, the permit was already cancelled by Bozizé because of its overlapping with the Reserve (IPIS interview with mining official, Bangui, July 2014).

In one case, a deal concluded by Bozizé in November 2012 with the World Sports Alliance (WSA) was even officialized in May 2013 by Djotodia with a presidential decree. The decree granted two exploitation permits for diamonds, in Haute-Kotto and in Basse-Kotto (Dimbi) respectively, but it was revoked by the same Djotodia two and a half months later, only four days after WSA had announced the start-up of its project.¹³⁴

Although at first sight little seems to have occurred concerning the grant of new mining concessions, a look beneath the surface shows that the administration under Seleka rule dealt with several mining companies. In their dealings with these companies, they employed several tactics to evade scrutiny and did not follow official procedures, causing serious concerns of possible corruption and embezzlement.

On several occasions, **President Djotodia and Herbert Djono, the then Minister of Mines, circumvented the official procedures required to issue Decrees concerning mining concessions.** On the one hand, requests of mining companies to obtain concessions were reportedly not transmitted to the mining administration for preliminary examination.¹³⁵ On the other, such decrees were systematically signed when the Prime Minister was indisposed or on mission.¹³⁶ Minister Djono then signed the decrees as the Prime Minister's interim, reportedly without ever informing the latter about these decisions.¹³⁷ **In this way, President Djotodia, Minister Djono and their entourage could easily avoid scrutiny from both the mining administration and from the Government in their dealings with these companies.** One such case was that of the concessions granted to Swift International for diamond and gold exploration around Alindao, Basse-Kotto, and Bozoum, Ouham-Pendé. The same day the latter permit was granted, two research permits for iron north of Bambari, Ouaka, were granted to Romanian Centrafer.¹³⁸

The decrees granting the aforementioned concessions to Swift International and to Centrafer were eventually published in the Official Journal. However, under the Presidency of Michel Djotodia, **34 decrees were never transmitted to the administration for publication. IPIS investigations found that these have often disappeared from the archives at the Presidency as well.**¹³⁹ Copies of two such decrees, signed by Michel Djotodia and Herbert Djono, were obtained by Global Witness and **concern the grant of gold mining concessions to two Sudanese companies.**¹⁴⁰ Neither the Prime Minister nor any of the Directors at the mining administration in Bangui were reportedly aware of the existence of these decrees, nor of any contacts between the authorities and these companies.¹⁴¹

In this instance, the President and the Minister of Mines allegedly abused their ability to sign official looking decrees containing mining permits at will, without the knowledge of the rest of the authorities. The precise extent to which this tactic, which is highly conducive to corruption, was used with other companies is unclear, given that the contents of the other decrees no longer present within the administration, is difficult to ascertain.¹⁴²

¹³⁴ Decree 13.123 of 27 May 2013 (cf. Marketwired, *The World Sports Alliance Intergovernmental Organization Announces the Start-Up of a Major Diamantiferous Mining Project in the Central African Republic*, 9 July 2013), and Decree 13.262 of 13 July 2014. Motives referred to for revoking the permits are "*le non-respect du plan de développement et d'exploitation du gisement*" and "*le non-paiement de la taxe superficielle et de la redevance proportionnelle*".

¹³⁵ IPIS interviews with mining officials, Bangui, May and July 2014.

¹³⁶ IPIS interview with former prime minister, Bangui, July 2014; IPIS interview with adviser to former prime minister, Brussels, April 2014.

¹³⁷ *Ibid.*

¹³⁸ Decree 13.381 and 13.390 respectively, both signed on 23 September 2013 by Djotodia and Djono. Although published in the Official Journal, the legal validity of the permits is unclear. Ministers are only habilitated to take care of the current affairs in the absence of the Prime Minister. Granting mining permits can reportedly not be considered a current affair. Centrafer allegedly refused to pay the signing bonus because it considered the decree invalid for the above reason (IPIS interview with mining official, Bangui, July 2014).

¹³⁹ IPIS investigations at the Presidency, Bangui, July 2014.

¹⁴⁰ IPIS exchanges with Global Witness researchers, report forthcoming. It concerns decrees 13.381 and 13.388 signed in October 2013.

¹⁴¹ IPIS interviews with former prime minister, directors and officials mining administration, Bangui, May and July 2014.

¹⁴² In any event, the concessions possibly contained in any of these decrees are not opposable to third parties, as they have not been published in the Official Journal. Moreover, as the decrees were most probably not discussed and decided upon by the council of ministers, nor fall under the current affairs, they do not have any legal validity. See article 19 of the CAR 2009 Mining Code.

In their dealings with possible investors, the cabinet of the Ministry of Mines also repeatedly deviated from the established procedures for the payment of signing bonuses, reducing the traceability of these funds and making them more susceptible to embezzlement. According to the 2009 Mining Code, a signing bonus has to be transferred to the Mining Development Fund when the Government declares its intention to facilitate the research activities of the company (see box 1.7).¹⁴³

BOX 1.7: Mismanagement of signing bonuses

In deviation from the established procedures, an Italian investor was requested to transfer a sum of 150,000 US Dollar to the accounts of the Permanent Secretariat of the Kimberley Process in Bangui.¹⁴⁴ Although the investor wired the funds to the account in December 2013, the aforementioned sum does not figure in the official revenues of the Secretariat, which depends on the Ministry of Mines.¹⁴⁵ In another case, the cabinet director of the Ministry of Mines received the equivalent of 40,000 US Dollar in cash as an advance on the signing bonus of a Chinese company that wanted to acquire an exploration concession in Lobaye.¹⁴⁶ Although the cabinet director signed a receipt, the Ministry has never issued a permit. Minister Djono gave the company a 'ministerial authorization' instead. The issuing of such an authorization does not fall within the legal competence of the minister according to the Mining Code. In another case related to mining, but outside the Ministry of Mines, Abdoulaye Issène, president of the CPJP and ministerial adviser to the President, allegedly received 150,000 euro in cash from a Congolese businessman to act as a middleman in the acquisition of diamonds from the Nzako region in August 2013.¹⁴⁷

¹⁴³ Articles 7.2 and 52.7 of the CAR 2009 Mining Code.

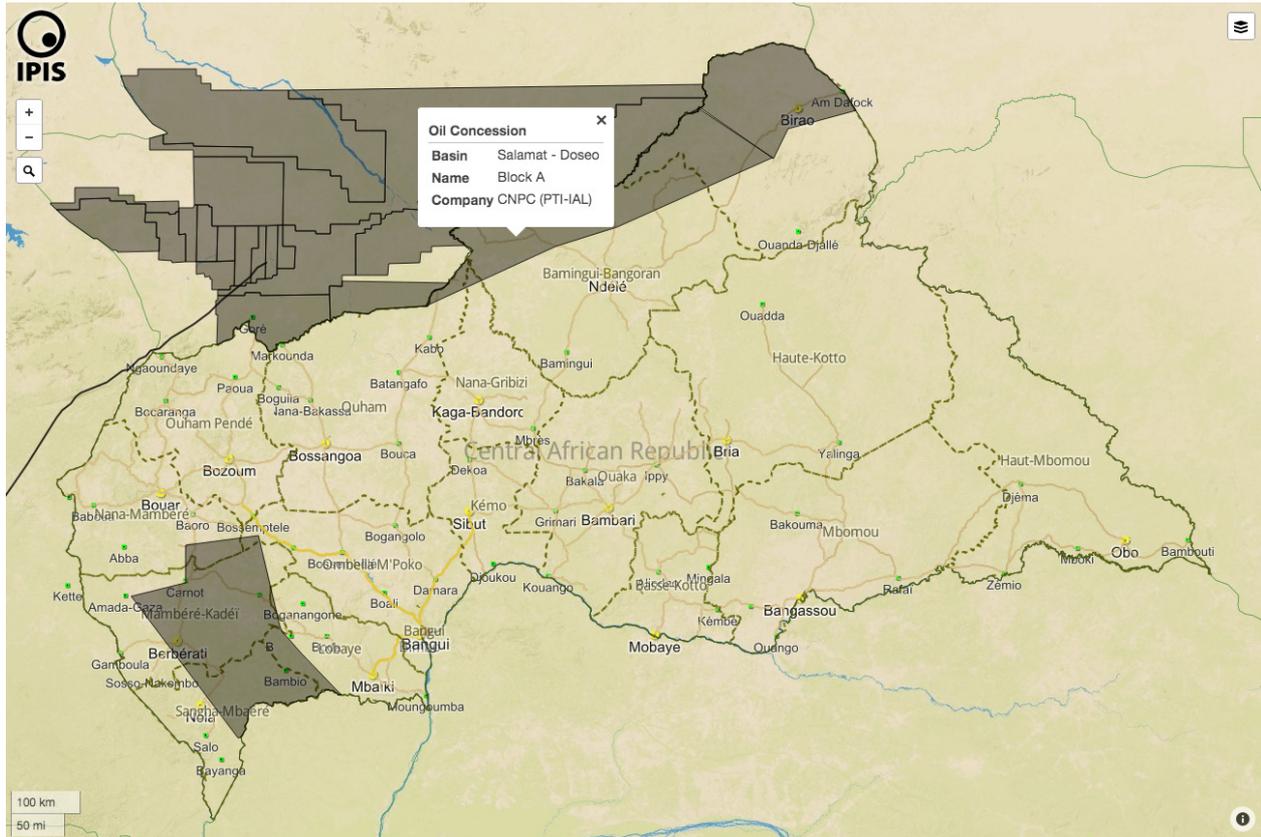
¹⁴⁴ The only official revenues of the SPPK are taxes on the export of diamonds (IPIS interview with SPPK secretariat, Bangui, July 2014; IPIS interview with former official Ministry of Mines, Yaoundé, August 2014; IPIS telephone interviews private sector, September 2014).

¹⁴⁵ Note of Bank Transfer dated 5 December 2013, in possession of IPIS; IPIS consultations of the official SPPK accounts as transferred by SPPK officials, August 2014.

¹⁴⁶ Receipt signed by cabinet director on 18 October 2013, in possession of IPIS.

¹⁴⁷ La lettre du continent, *Le très étrange business d'un ex-Seleka*, n°678, 12 March 2014.

Seleka control over oil exploration – concessions



Oil concessions in the CAR and Chad (September 2014) - legend: p.11

Before Seleka's coup, three permits for oil exploration had been granted in the CAR, two in the northeast along the border with Chad, block A and B, and one in the southwest, block C.

Block A was originally assigned in November 2000 by president Patassé to the American Jack Grynberg and his company RSM Production Corporation. After a long dispute, initiated by president Bozizé in 2007, Grynberg's rights were definitively cancelled on 20 February 2013 by the International Centre for Settlement of Investment Disputes. Already in 2011 though, president Bozizé discreetly granted the permit to the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC).¹⁴⁸ In 2012-2013, Chinese Zhongyuan Petroleum Engineering (ZPEB) International conducted seismic prospecting in block A, but was eventually blocked by the Seleka.¹⁴⁹ The engineers reportedly fled from Boromata to Birao, where they were protected by the tripartite forces.¹⁵⁰

Block B, to the east of block A in the Vakaga prefecture around Birao, originated as an extension of block A, when it was added to Grynberg's contract in February 2004. In October 2007, Bozizé assigned it though to IAS International, based in Doha, Qatar, under the company name PTI- IAS Petroleum Holding Company. The project is a joint venture between IAS and Poly Technologies Inc, a Beijing-based company wholly owned by the government of China.¹⁵¹ Chinese drilling company ZPEB International started seismic prospecting in block B in January 2011.¹⁵²

¹⁴⁸ Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 670, 29 February 2012, p. 4; n° 692, 5 February 2013, p. 1; n° 694, 5 March 2013, p. 7. The company name on maps from the Oil Ministry is PTIAL or PTI-IAL (International Petroleum Ltd.).

¹⁴⁹ ZPEB International, Market Distribution, 2012-2013; Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 691, 22 January 2013, pp. 3-4; n° 692, 5 February 2013, p. 1.

¹⁵⁰ IPIS interview with international observer, Bangui, May 2014.

¹⁵¹ Energy-Pedia, *Central African Republic: IAS wins exploration bid*, 26 October 2007. According to African Energy Intelligence (e.g. n° 699, 21 May 2013), the block belongs to CNPC. PTI- IAS is mostly referred to as a Chinese company: see next footnote 173; IPIS interview with Director General of Mines, Bangui, May 2014.

¹⁵² Seismic prospecting was initiated on 18 January 2011 with an official ceremony in Birao, personally attended by president Bozizé, together with officials from the Chinese Embassy, just five days before the presidential elections (Centrafrique Press, *Les Chinois dans le pétrole*, 19 January 2011; SINOPEC

Several sources have stated that the Seleka government wanted to “get rid of” the Chinese holding the rights to these oil blocks A and B.¹⁵³ A senior Seleka leader who had been a special adviser to Djotodia under his Presidency, alleged that Jack Grynberg has been financing the Seleka and supporting the partition of the CAR, in the hope of getting his oil concessions back.¹⁵⁴ Other sources confirmed Grynberg has good relations with some Seleka leaders, notably Eric Massi and Djotodia.¹⁵⁵ Although the oil permits were reduced in size by the Seleka government,¹⁵⁶ they eventually stayed in the hands of the Chinese.

In March 2014, the Transitional Government under Samba Panza cut up the parts removed from block A and B into smaller blocks of 500 km², and opened up an additional vast area covering large parts of Haute-Kotto, also divided into blocks of 500 km², to new oil investors.¹⁵⁷

Block C, in the southwest of the country, was discreetly assigned by president Bozizé to South African Dig Oil in November 2011.¹⁵⁸ In 2012 the company conducted a gravimetric and aeromagnetic survey, but had to postpone indefinitely its seismic prospecting campaign planned for the beginning of 2013 due to the advance of the Seleka.¹⁵⁹ When 13 South African soldiers died in the defence of Bangui against the Seleka, questions were raised in the South African press and in parliament about the possible business-related motivation for the deployment of 250 South African troops to the CAR.¹⁶⁰ The South African troops withdrew from the country, and so did Dig Oil.



Under Seleka rule, probably in October 2013, Nigerian South Atlantic Petroleum (SAPETRO) acquired a 45% stake in block C.¹⁶¹

Seleka control over border crossings

The border crossing between Garoua Boulai, Cameroon, and Beloko, CAR, lies on the country's main economic artery connecting Douala to Bangui. It therefore constitutes the most important border crossing into the CAR. When the Seleka arrived in the west of the country, they immediately took control of the administration at the border crossing, and started levying taxes.¹⁶² According to Cameroonian customs officials, **the Seleka in charge of the border crossing were Chadians and Sudanese fighters under the command of 'General' Souleymane, the zone commander for Bouar.** Only in December 2013 was control over the crossing ceded to Central African Seleka.¹⁶³

Following the March 2013 coup, with its associated insecurity and economic upheaval, the amount of goods imported into the CAR steeply declined.¹⁶⁴ Nevertheless, throughout the time that Seleka controlled the border crossing, roughly 30 to 40 trucks on average entered the CAR on a weekly basis. Drivers typically had to pay between 200 and 1,000 US dollars per truck, and also had to give a share of their fuel.¹⁶⁵ The trucks of non-Muslim drivers were often looted. Moreover, along the road to Bangui, different Seleka groups manned several checkpoints, each group demanding around 20,000 FCFA (*franc*

Weekly, *Central Africa President attends opening ceremony for Zhongyuan*, 18 January 2011.)

¹⁵³ IPIS interviews with mining officials and national observers, Bangui, May 2014.

¹⁵⁴ IPIS interview with Seleka leader, Bangui, August 2014. The interviewee showed a letter from Grynberg addressed to Djotodia, with Eric Massi and Abib Touré in copy. In the letter Grynberg states that his company is in favour of CAR's partition.

¹⁵⁵ IPIS interview with Central African rebel leader, N'Djamena, August 2014; Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 692, 5 February 2013, p. 1.

¹⁵⁶ For block B: Decree 13.385 of 25 September 2013, signed by Djotodia and twice by Minister Djono, once on behalf of the Prime Minister “*en mission*”. It is not clear when exactly the Seleka government reduced the size of block A (IPIS interviews with mining officials, Bangui, May 2014).

¹⁵⁷ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014, pp. 75, 77.

¹⁵⁸ Dig Oil, *Dig Oil Exploration Western Cuvette Mesozoic Graben, 2012-2013*; cf. Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 672, 28 March 2012, p. 3; n°673, 11 April 2012, p. 8.

¹⁵⁹ Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 691, 22 January 2013, p. 3.

¹⁶⁰ Mail & Guardian, *Central African Republic: Is this what our soldiers died for?*, 28 March 2013; VICE, *What was the South African military doing in the Central African Republic?*, 25 April 2013; cf. Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 692, 5 February 2013, p. 1.

¹⁶¹ Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 706, 17 September 2013, p. 4; SAPETO, 5th Eastern Africa Oil, Gas/LNG & Energy Conference 2014; SAPETO, 10th African Independents' Forum Cape Town, South Africa, November 2013.

¹⁶² IPIS interviews with tax officials and NGO workers, Bouar, July 2014; IPIS telephone interview with Cameroonian customs officials, August 2014.

¹⁶³ IPIS telephone interviews with Cameroonian custom officials, August 2014.

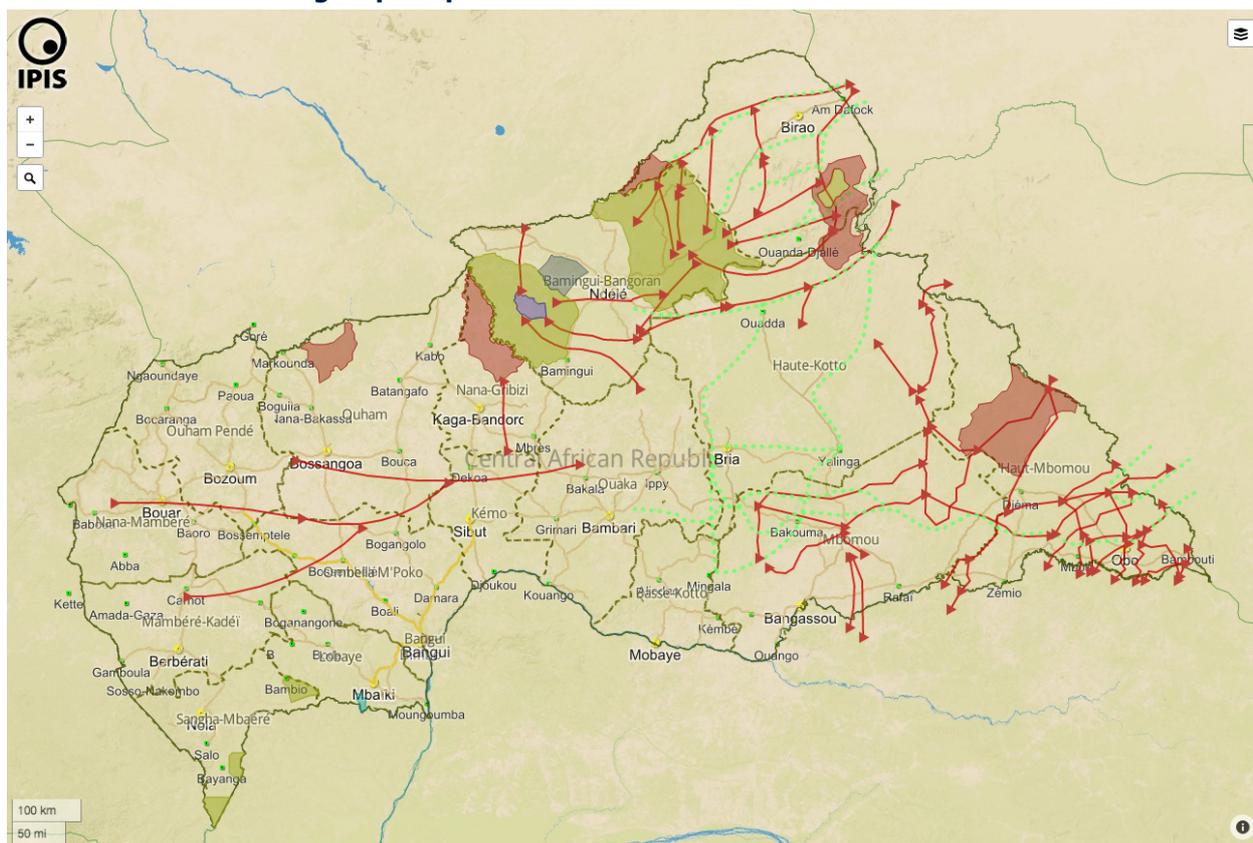
¹⁶⁴ For example, the total value of imported goods coming from Cameroon decreased in 2013 with 49% compared to 2012.

¹⁶⁵ IPIS telephone interviews with Cameroonian custom officials, August 2014.

des Communautés financières d'Afrique)¹⁶⁶ per truck, and causing insecurity. In response, Seleka at the border crossing started organizing paid 'convoys' for the trucks.

The Seleka systematically took over other border crossings as well. In the west, the **Gamboula border crossing**, which connects Kentzou in Cameroon with Berbérati, **was controlled by elements of Colonel Saad, a former FPR commander.**¹⁶⁷ Here as well, Seleka set up checkpoints along the main roads. As a result, it cost up to four times more to transport goods to Cameroon than before the crisis.¹⁶⁸ Similar practices took place at crossings in the east along the Chadian and Sudanese borders.¹⁶⁹

Collaboration between groups of poachers and Seleka



Protected areas, poaching routes and Sudanese cattle migration routes - legend: see p. 11

Since the mid-1980s, bands of well-equipped poachers started crossing the border from Sudan into the CAR to hunt for elephants and other big game in the national parks in the northeast of the country. These poachers enter the country through Am Dafock, Vakaga, from November onwards, and normally leave in June, at the end of the dry season. They move in heavily armed groups comprising up to 120 people, and often enter with livestock for which they seek pasture.

The highly organised nature of these poaching activities has caused the rapid depletion of wildlife in the region. In the 1970s, the CAR's parks and surrounding areas were renowned for their rich biodiversity, hosting about 35,000 elephants. **In 2010, an extensive survey by air and ground teams concluded that only between 68 and 150 elephants still lived in the parks and nearby hunting zones in the northeast.**¹⁷⁰

¹⁶⁶ 1 US Dollar = 526.32 FCFA (12 November 2014).

¹⁶⁷ IPIS interview with former senior negotiator with the FPR, September 2014.

¹⁶⁸ International Crisis Group, *La crise centrafricaine: de la prédation à la stabilisation*, 17 June 2014, p.19.

¹⁶⁹ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁰ The trends for other big game, such as buffalos and lord derby elands, are unfortunately highly comparable.

As a result, the poachers adapted their activities. Firstly, since 2009-2010 they have increasingly been involved in the poaching and selling of bush meat, an activity that was formerly mainly carried out by the local population. Secondly, around the same time, they started moving deeper into Central African territory, even regularly crossing the border into Cameroon. There, in January 2012, they were alleged to have been involved in the killing of between 250 and 300 elephants in the Bouba N'djida National Park.¹⁷¹

Following the December 2012 Seleka offensive, poachers started collaborating with the armed group in different ways. Some were involved in military operations during the December 2012 offensive, though it is unclear to what extent.¹⁷² Conservationists and local administrators further allege that **poachers, as well as Chadian pastoralists, took advantage of the power vacuum left in the parks by the Seleka offensive.**¹⁷³ They reportedly came in far bigger numbers, stayed longer, and with more cattle. Whereas in the past they used to stay in the forests, these poachers started encroaching on villages, destroying fields and crops. These developments are also partly caused by the acute shortage of grazing land in southern Chad, exacerbated by recent droughts and the massive influx of returnees and refugees.

Declaring themselves part of the Seleka, they have been intimidating the local population and staged several robberies at mining sites. Moreover, the poachers have been paying unofficial taxes to the Seleka. These taxes are then partly used to invest in mining activities in the park. Sometimes, the Seleka has also provided Sudanese poachers with weapons and ammunition, and traded meat and honey with them.¹⁷⁴

Events in early May 2013 raised concerns about collaboration in poaching for ivory between Seleka commanders and officials in the administration, and Sudanese poachers. Between 6 and 9 May 2013, a group of seventeen Sudanese poachers coming from Yaloké, killed 26 elephants in the Dzanga-Ndoki national park in the extreme south west of the country. The poachers were reportedly in the possession of a mission order from the Ministry of Defence, and when park officials demanded that the Seleka commander in the area intervene, these calls were repeatedly ignored. According to Moussa Dhaffane, the poachers were admitted in the park as payment for mercenary services rendered.¹⁷⁵

The Seleka themselves have also been involved in ivory poaching and trading. In February 2013, a group of Seleka combatants, reportedly comprising recently deserted ecoguards, killed twelve elephants close to the Ecofaune ranger post in Sangba.¹⁷⁶ In another instance, Seleka pillaged the stockpile of seized tusks and wildlife trophies at the Ministry of Environment, which contained 600 kg of ivory.¹⁷⁷ In November 2013, 12 tusks seized from poachers in the Dzanga-Ndoki national park went missing after they had been transferred to the Ministry in Bangui.¹⁷⁸

The Seleka thus took advantage of ivory poaching or stocks whenever the opportunity arose. However, given the low number of surviving elephants in the east and the Seleka's short-lived presence in the west, ivory does not constitute a reliable source of income. Therefore, **Seleka units in the northeast have mainly been involved in the poaching of bush meat, for which there is a large market in both the CAR and neighbouring countries.**¹⁷⁹ The current blockage in transport to Bangui somewhat mitigates the demand for bush meat from the parks.¹⁸⁰ However, the trade of bush meat on the market at Am Dafock on the border with Sudan has currently reportedly increased.

¹⁷¹ CNN, *Cameroon elephant slaughter latest in string of killings*, 27 March 2013; WWF, *Reinforcements needed to save remaining Cameroon elephants*, 15 March 2012.

¹⁷² K. Agger, *Behind the Headlines*, Enough Project, May 2014.

¹⁷³ IPIS interviews with park conservationists and local administrators, Bangui, May and July 2014.

¹⁷⁴ IPIS interview with local administrators, Bangui, July 2014; UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014.

¹⁷⁵ K. Agger, *Behind the Headlines*, Enough Project, May 2014, p. 11.

¹⁷⁶ IPIS interviews with park conservationists, Bangui, May and July 2014; K. Agger, *Behind the Headlines*, Enough Project, May 2014.

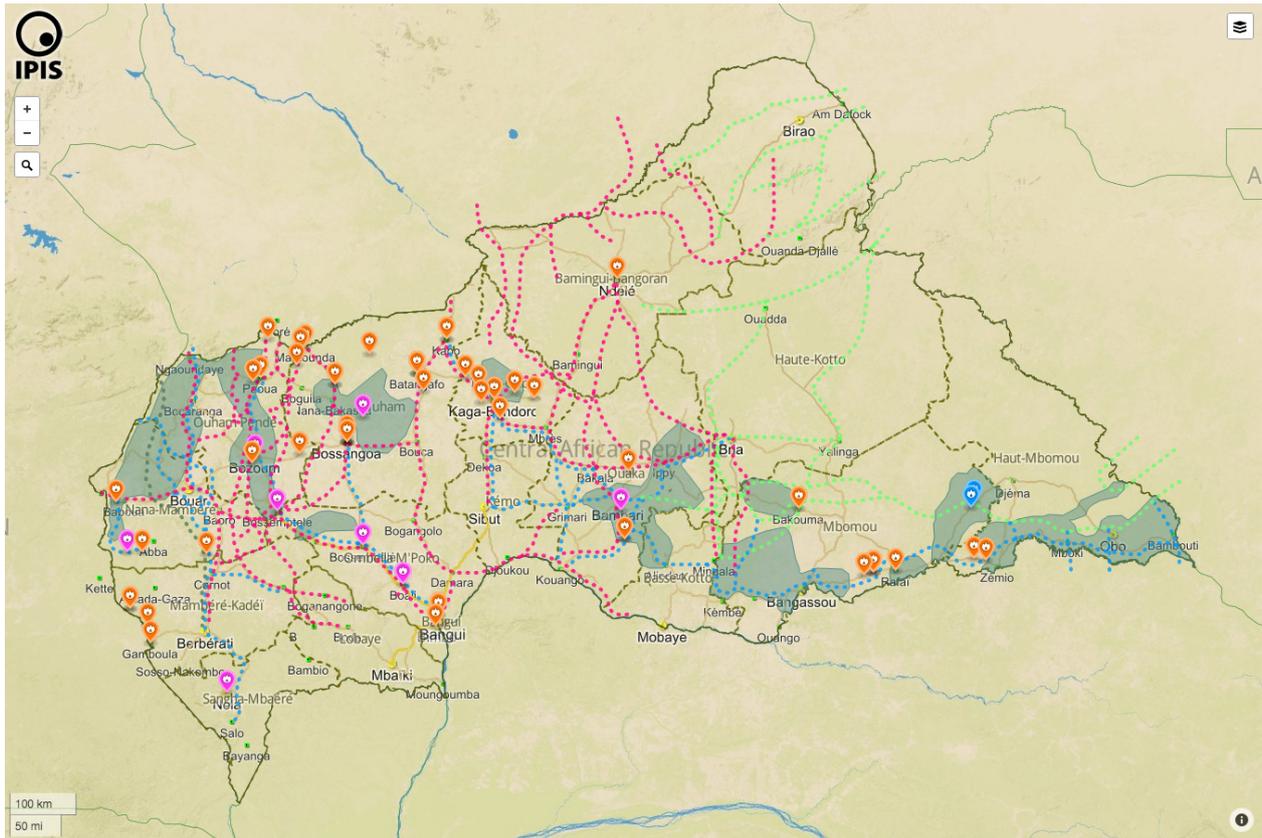
¹⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

¹⁷⁸ International Crisis Group, *La crise centrafricaine: de la prédation à la stabilisation*, 17 June 2014, pp. 5-6.

¹⁷⁹ According to Ecofaune, about 35 percent of animal proteins consumed in the CAR come from bush meat; UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014, p. 19.

¹⁸⁰ IPIS interviews with park conservationists, Bangui, July 2014.

Pastoralism



Map showing Peuhl areas, cattle migration routes and incidents involving pastoralists - legend: p.11

Apart from frequent cattle raiding throughout the territory under their control, Seleka imposed taxes on cattle herders, demanded payment for the settling of disputes, and forced them into paying arbitrary fines for a range of 'infractions'.¹⁸¹ In Bouar, for instance, Seleka fighters abducted the director of the National Federation of Central African cattle breeders, demanded a ransom for his release and took over the administration.¹⁸² According to officials of the veterinary services in Bangui and in Nana-Mambere, the control Seleka thus exerted was fairly structured and constituted a key source of revenue. Officials estimated that in Nana-Mambere about a third of all cattle was taken by Seleka, either through raiding or as payment in kind for the aforementioned taxes and fines.¹⁸³

In the Nana-Mambere and Ouham prefectures especially, non-Muslim, local agro-pastoralists had over the years acquired livestock to diversify their activities.¹⁸⁴ They became the primary victims of Seleka raids and racketeering in the area. Although Peuhl pastoralists were also targeted, this was to a considerably lesser extent.¹⁸⁵ Some pastoralists started to collaborate with the Seleka, buying raided cattle at reduced prices, or getting involved themselves in raiding operations.

As a result, when the anti-balaka militias were created, many disowned agro-pastoralists joined in an attempt to reacquire livestock and take revenge, thereby catalysing a vicious cycle. The Peuhl fled across the border into Cameroon or Chad (see section 3.1.2 and 3.3.2), or went into hiding in remote areas, such as in the Abba sub-prefecture. There, they often started aligning themselves with FPR elements (see annex II 3).

¹⁸¹ IPIS interviews with veterinary services and local administrators, Bouar, July 2014

¹⁸² *Ibid.*

¹⁸³ *Ibid.*

¹⁸⁴ G. Griette, *Etude sur les conflits impliquant les acteurs de l'élevage en République centrafricaine*, World Bank, November 2013.

¹⁸⁵ IPIS interviews with veterinary services, local and national administrators, Bouar and Bangui, July 2014.

1.3.3 Conclusion on Seleka motives

On their swift march to the capital in December 2012, the strategies employed by the Seleka coalition indicated clear power motives. They systematically took control of regional capitals, where they supplanted the administration with their own. Moreover, they used their military weight to push for the departure of Bozizé, and finally took power by means of a coup on 24 March 2014.

During their time in power, the Seleka did not launch a single initiative to tackle the grievances they had previously voiced regarding the socio-economic development of the northeast of the country or good governance. The power objective of the Seleka therefore was a means that served a clear end: greed. This motive played out at three levels, each following their own dynamics.

Firstly, the UFDR and CPJP constituents of the Seleka took control of the east of the country, where they developed elaborate rent-seeking strategies. They supplanted the local and mining administrations, levying illegal taxes and issuing authorizations. Their grip on the mining sector has further been strengthened by pre-financing mining operations, such as in and around the Manovo-Gounda National Park. Currently, the main zones of influence of the FRC and the FPRC coincide with the main gold and diamond producing areas respectively.

Secondly, foreign fighters and armed groups other than the UFDR and CPJP, concentrated their presence in the west of the country. Although systems of parallel taxation also developed in the west, they did so to a lesser extent. Predatory behaviour aimed at short-term gain, such as pillaging, armed robberies and ill treatment, was far more widespread in the west as compared to the east. This suggests that these areas of the country were intentionally left to Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries to claim their spoils of war.

Thirdly, when the Seleka took power in Bangui, they used their positions in the government for large-scale personal enrichment. This became especially apparent in their dealings surrounding the granting of mining concessions. President Djotodia and the Minister of Mines, his cousin Herbert Djono, repeatedly circumvented official procedures to avoid scrutiny from the administration. On at least two occasions, mining permits were issued by means of decrees that were never communicated to the administration, nor published, and have vanished from the Presidential archives. Moreover, the cabinet of the Ministry also repeatedly deviated from official procedures regarding the transfer of signing bonuses, making these funds more susceptible to embezzlement.

2. Anti-balaka

2.1 Background and structure

In brief

Anti-balaka groups became active in the second half of 2013.

They are composed of village self-defence groups and members of Bozizé's FACA, Presidential Guard, and Gendarmerie.

The anti-balaka in the west are a loose coalition of different armed groups, each with their respective local commanders.

In Bangui, the national leadership is divided into two groups with their respective leaders and areas of control.

2.1.1 Creation of the anti-balaka militias

The origin of the anti-balaka militias goes back to the village self-defence groups¹⁸⁶ that formed mainly in the mid-2000s, especially in the regions of Bossangoa, Bozoum and Bocaranga (Ouham and Ouham-Pendé), to fight road bandits (*zaraguinas*) and armed pastoralists. These original self-defence groups were composed of Christian, animist and Muslim members. Under Bozizé, some of these groups received support, mostly ammunition, from the presidency through local administrators.¹⁸⁷

Around August 2013 the first of these groups reformed, attacking the Seleka in and around Bossangoa and Bouca in September.¹⁸⁸ By the end of October, attacks against the Seleka by groups calling themselves "anti-balaka"¹⁸⁹ had spread to the northwest as far as Bouar, and to the south to Bossembélé and to Mbourouba, just north of Damara.



Although the first anti-balaka groups seem to have emerged spontaneously, they were rapidly joined by low-ranking officers and rank and file from Bozizé's FACA, Presidential Guard, and Gendarmerie, who started to rally new recruits and to organise the groups to fight against the Seleka.

The anti-balaka were able to expand their operations through the mobilisation of their main partisans: young men who were either direct or indirect victims of Seleka violence, unemployed, or both.¹⁹⁰

The anti-balaka groups who staged the major attack on Bangui in December 2013, were firstly composed of the self-defence militias. Secondly, a large number of young men from militias loyal to former President

¹⁸⁶ These groups were mainly composed of traditional hunters, initiated into secret rites that gave them supposed supernatural powers, such as invulnerability and invisibility. These powers are purportedly bestowed by the talismans that still hang around the necks of some anti-balaka fighters. The hunter groups are comparable to the Mai-Mai militias in the east of DR Congo.

¹⁸⁷ S. Spittaels & F. Hilgert, *Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic*, IPIS report, February 2009, pp. 16-17; IPIS interview with former minister under Bozizé, Bangui, April 2014.

¹⁸⁸ In Bouca the Seleka had already been attacked by young villagers in May and June, while in mid-August village youth forming vigilante groups had clashed with Seleka in the northern villages of Beboura, Markounda and Maïtikoulou, along the Chadian border.

¹⁸⁹ The name *anti-balaka* is explained in two different ways. Originally, the term seems to be derived from the French '*anti-balle AK*', referring to their use of fetishes they believe protect them against bullets of a Kalashnikov or AK-47. Most anti-balaka fighters themselves explain the word though as referring to the machete, which in the local Sango language is called *balaka*.

¹⁹⁰ Among them, several thousand young men referred to as "Promotion 5000". Between 2009 and 2011 the Bozizé regime had organized a major recruitment campaign to strengthen the FACA. The army was supposed to recruit 5,000 young people, but 20,000 sought to sign up, leaving 15,000 superfluous. As they were unable to enlist, many joined the ranks of rebels, road bandits and, later, anti-balaka militias. Cf. FIDH, *They must all leave or die*, June 2014, pp. 57-63.

Bozizé, active since the end of 2012, took part in the attack.¹⁹¹ These youth militias had merged into a movement created by Bozizé from Paris in August 2013, the Front for the Return to the Constitutional Order in the Central African Republic (FROCCA). It was composed of ex-army officers with the aim of returning to power by whatever means necessary.¹⁹²

Thirdly, in December 2013 another anti-balaka group emerged, wholly composed of former FACA and Presidential Guards close to Bozizé who had fled the country to the area of Garoua Boulai, just across the border in Cameroon. From there, they staged attacks against the Seleka on the CAR side of the border, in the villages of Cantonnier and Beloko. In January 2014, when the Seleka left the area, they took control of the important border crossing (see section 2.3.4).

2.1.2 Estimated anti-balaka strength

It is difficult to estimate the number of anti-balaka fighters, as anti-balaka attacks often involve civilian men who occasionally join, for example only during a reprisal attack in their village. One anti-balaka leader even told IPIS that the entire Christian population was part of the movement.¹⁹³

Anti-balaka leaders have used ambivalent figures: the anti-balaka's Chief of Staff said in February 2014 that the movement numbered 52,000 fighters, while the General Coordinator Ngaïssona in the same week said that the number was 70,000.¹⁹⁴ According to BINUCA, the anti-balaka have demanded a DDR process for 50,000 to 70,000 fighters.¹⁹⁵ These numbers are most probably exaggerated and would include civilian men who are not armed and only occasionally join the fighting. According to the UN Panel of Experts, in October 2014 around 1,500 anti-balaka fighters continue to pose a threat to security.¹⁹⁶

¹⁹¹ The *Coalition Citoyenne d'Opposition aux Rebellions Armées* (COCORA) and *Mouvement Révolutionnaire Populaire pour la Libération* (MOREPOL) under Lévy Yakité, and the *Coalition pour les Actions Citoyennes* (COAC) under Steve Yambété. See, e.g., RFI, *En RCA, la Cocora annonce qu'elle va durcir son action*, 3 March 2013.

¹⁹² FROCCA, communiqué de presse N.001, *Relatif à la mise en place du Front pour le Retour à l'Ordre Constitutionnel (FROCCA)*, 5 August 2013. FROCCA in its turn seems to have merged into the anti-balaka movement. Its last public statement was on 29 December 2013.

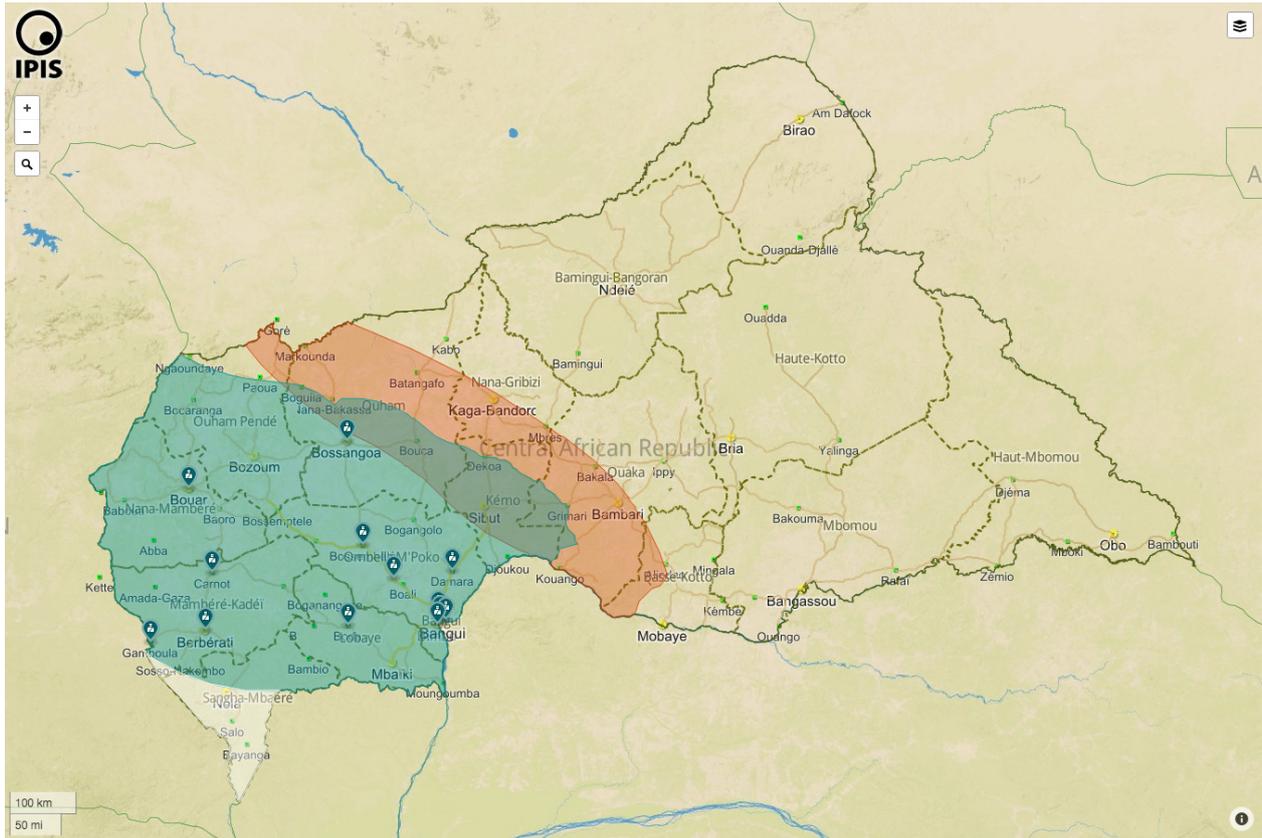
¹⁹³ IPIS interview with S. Wenzou, Bangui, July 2014.

¹⁹⁴ Jeune Afrique/AFP, *Centrafrique: les chefs auto-proclamés anti-balaka mettent en garde contre toute attaque*, 13 February 2014.

¹⁹⁵ IPIS interview with the Head of DDR/SSR Section BINUCA. Militia groups often exaggerate the number of their fighters when demanding a DDR process.

¹⁹⁶ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Final report*, S/2014/762, 29 October 2014, p. 2.

2.1.3 Structure and tension within the movement



Anti-balaka zone of influence, recent combat area and strongholds (September 2014) - legend: p. 11

Anti-balaka are active in most of the western half of the country, with strongholds in Bangui, Bimbo, Damara, Boali, Bossembélé (Ombella-M'Poko), Mbaïki, Boda (Lobaye), Berbérati, Carnot (Mambéré-Kadéï), Bouar (Nana-Mambéré), Bozoum, Bocaranga, Ngaoundaye (Ouham-Pendé), Bossangoa, and Bouca.¹⁹⁷

Initially, especially at the end of 2012 and the beginning of 2013, the movement must have had some central command and control, evidently given to it by former FACA, Gendarmerie and Bozizé's Presidential Guards. At that time the movement carried out some very well coordinated and prepared attacks. The obvious example is the attack on Bangui on 5 December 2013, which according to the UN was 'encouraged' by Bozizé and involved hundreds of fighters coming from different directions to attack the city.¹⁹⁸ Bozizé's influence diminished with time,¹⁹⁹ as did coordination between the different anti-balaka groups led by his former FACA and Gendarmerie.

While in Bangui and the surrounding areas self-proclaimed anti-balaka leaders have tried to set up some official structure for the movement (see below), **in the west of the country it remains a loose coalition of different armed groups, each with their respective local commanders, and with no political leader.** The anti-balaka presence in the northwest consists of different groups including low-ranking FACA and Gendarmerie mostly of Gbaya origin. Also in the southwestern Mambéré-Kadéï and Lobaye prefectures, the anti-balaka presence consists of different local militias, each with their respective leader. All these groups identify themselves as part of the movement, or are associated with it by default.

¹⁹⁷ In Sangha-Mbaéré, the southwest prefecture, the anti-balaka have no presence. FACA who are not linked to the anti-balaka have remained in control there since the coup d'état in March 2013. In Sibut (Kemo), anti-balaka are reportedly not present either. The town is controlled by the Gendarmerie under the command of lieutenant Jean Michel Wandé.

¹⁹⁸ UN Security Council, *The List established and maintained by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic. Narrative summaries of reasons for listing: CFI.001. François Yangouvonda Bozizé*, 14 May 2014.

¹⁹⁹ See section 2.3.3.

It is difficult to find clear links between these groups and the self-proclaimed leadership in Bangui. Moreover, the movement lacks a clear command and control structure, even within Bangui. This creates problems in terms of accountability and imputability. Anti-balaka leaders in Bangui often refer to “fake” anti-balaka as the perpetrators of violence against Muslim population, and thus claim they cannot be held responsible for the actions of these “infiltrators”.²⁰⁰ **Irrespective of the real vs. fake anti-balaka debate, it is clear that the Bangui leadership at this point in time has only limited influence over anti-balaka groups outside of the capital.** For example, shortly after the Brazzaville ceasefire was signed in July 2014, armed men launched an attack on Seleka forces in Batangafo. Although these men claimed to be anti-balaka, the spokesperson of the movement denied any anti-balaka involvement in the attack.²⁰¹

Box 2.1: The political and military structure of the anti-balaka (August 2014)

It is important to note that this structure has changed multiple times in the past, especially regarding zone commanders (Comzone), and will most probably change numerous times in the future. The leadership in Bangui does not recognise all of the zone commanders.

- **General Coordinator:** Patrice Edouard Ngaïssona
- **Deputy General Coordinator:** Lieutenant Sébastien Wenezoui (officially excluded in August 2014, see page 49)
- **General Secretary:** Alfred Ngaya
- **Chief of Staff:** Captain Gilbert Kamezoulaye (still a FACA Captain)
- **Head of Political Affairs:** Joachim Kokaté (former FACA Captain)

Other leaders and zone commanders (Comzones)

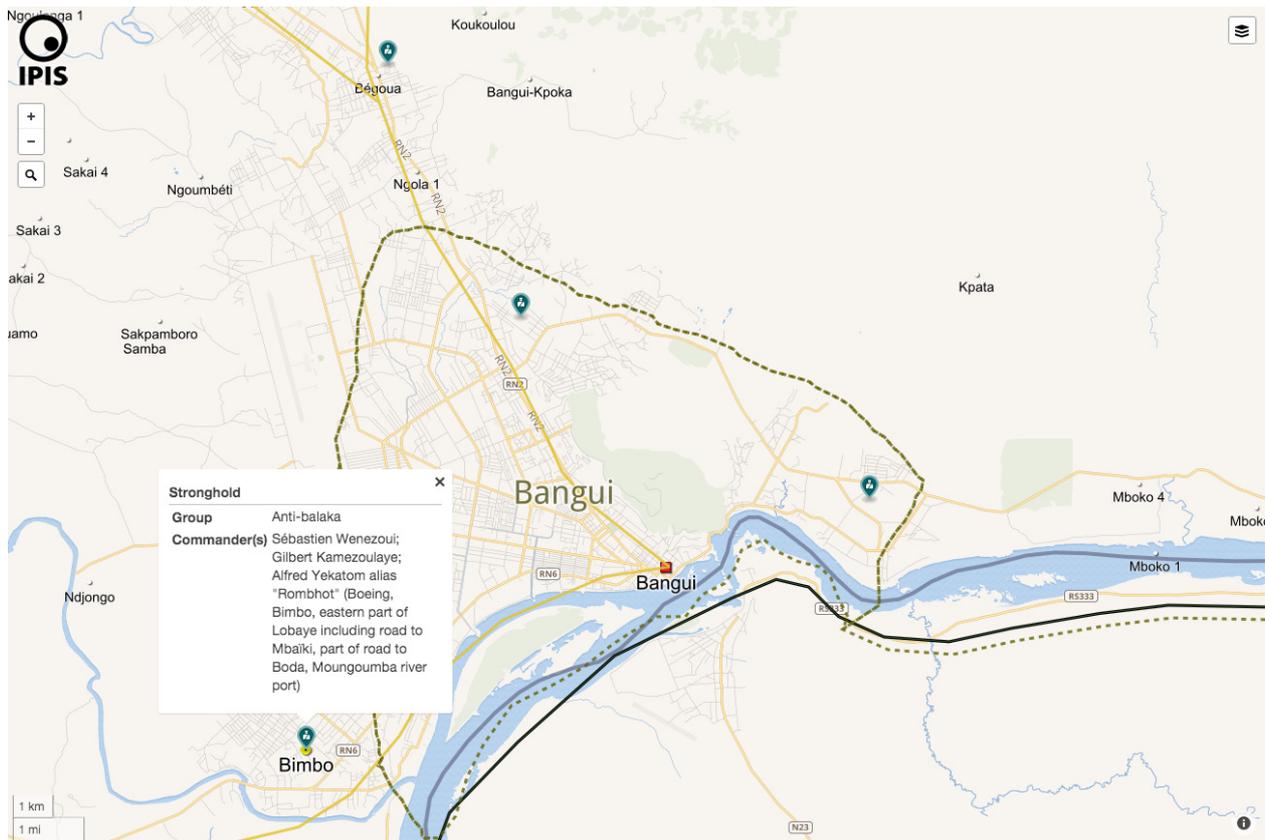
- Rodrigue Ngaïbona, alias “Andilo”: command over the troops in Ouham prefecture
- Alfred Yekatom, alias “Rombhot”: chief-corporal of FACA, Comzone southwest, controls the Boeing area close to Bangui’s airport, the town of Bimbo, the road to Mbaïki and part of the road to Boda
- Lieutenant Konaté: Comzone for north Bangui; still part of the FACA and a former member of the Presidential Guard
- Ludovic Namsio, alias “Emotion”: Comzone east Bangui, also controls the upstream part of the Oubangui river and its river transport up east towards Kouango, together with Thierry Lebene alias “Colonel 12 Puissances”
- Endjilo alias “sorcier”: controls men in Batangafo; believed to have supernatural powers
- Lieutenant Maxime Mokom Gawaka: Comzone Bouar; still part of FACA
- Joseph Kéma: Comzone Bossangoa
- Richard Bezouane: former anti-balaka chief in Bozoum before he was killed by Cameroonian MISCA soldiers
- Soussou Habib: Comzone Boda; still part of FACA²⁰²
- Sylvestre Yagoussou: Comzone Damara
- Chrysostome Berba Yapele: Comzone Berbérati
- Aristide Bakafe: Comzone Carnot
- Séraphin Kensem: Comzone Boali
- Sylvain Beorofie: Comzone Bossembélé
- Nice Demawanesse: Comzone Gamboula
- “Colonel” Aron Wilibona: controls the axis from the border post Cantonner (Béloko) to Bouar (April 2014)²⁰³

²⁰⁰ Anti-balaka, CLPC, *Communiqué de presse n° 5*, 1 February 2014, Bangui (no. 7/CLPC/13); Anti-balaka, CLPC, *Communiqué de presse n° 6*, 11 February 2014, Bangui (no. 14/CLPC/13).

²⁰¹ Radio Ndeke Luka, *Premières violations de la cessation des hostilités*, 1 August 2014.

²⁰² UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Final report*, S/2014/762, 29 October 2014, p. 20.

²⁰³ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014, p. 46.



Anti-balaka groups and commanders in Bangui (September 2014) - legend: p. 11

The political and military structure described in box 2.1 is split in two major groups, both with their respective leadership. The first, *Combattants de libération du peuple centrafricain (CLPC)*, used to have close links with Bozizé and still includes many former FACA officers. Its political coordinator is **Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona**,²⁰⁴ and its military coordinator Thierry Lebene, alias ‘Colonel 12 Puissances’, a former FACA officer. Their headquarters lie in the Boy Rabe neighbourhood²⁰⁵ in Bangui, and they operate in the north of the city, up to the town of Damara. They also seem to have some influence in Boda and Carnot.²⁰⁶

The second major group primarily operates in the southwest of the capital. The group was first represented by Joachim Kokaté,²⁰⁷ and then by Sébastien Wenezoui. FACA Captain Gilbert Kamezoulaye is its military leader, while Chief-Corporal of the FACA Alfred Yekatom, alias “Rombhot”, is its military head of operations.²⁰⁸ The group controls the zone from PK9 up to the eastern part of Lobaye prefecture around Mbaïki, a part of the important southern transport corridor linking Bangui to Cameroon.²⁰⁹ The group also controls the river port of Mougoumba, south of Bangui.

These two main groups have a tense relationship, more specifically in relations between their two leaders Ngaïssona and Wenezoui. Wenezoui told IPIS that these tensions are caused by Ngaïssona’s

²⁰⁴ Ngaïssona is recognized by his group as the General Coordinator of the anti-balaka. He is a businessman, and the ex-president of the CAR Football Federation. In 2002, as an official in the Ministry of Water and Forestry, he was accused of corruption. Following Bozizé’s coup d’état in 2003, he came back as an official into Bozizé’s government. In February 2013, he was promoted to Minister of Youth and Sports in the government of national unity.

²⁰⁵ The Boy Rabe district was the constituency of Bozizé until he was forced into exile. Many of his former bodyguards and political allies live in Boy Rabe, and therefore it was here that the Seleka rebels initially focused their attacks.

²⁰⁶ A local anti-balaka spokesperson said his group recognized Ngaïssona as the anti-balaka’s national coordinator, see: IRIN, *Tug of war over Muslim community in western CAR*, 24 March 2014.

²⁰⁷ Joachim Kokaté was part of the CPJP before he joined the anti-balaka. He publicly renounced the anti-balaka, and more specifically Ngaïssona, because of the violence they committed.

²⁰⁸ IPIS interviews with ‘Captain’ Rombhot, his deputy, and his political adviser, Bimbo, May 2014; Africa Confidential, *Central African Republic: Violence takes new shapes*, vol. 55, N° 5, 7 March 2014, p. 7.

²⁰⁹ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014, pp. 42, 50.

objective of getting Bozizé back into power.²¹⁰ During an election in May 2014, anti-balaka leaders voted for Wenezoui to be the coordinator of a unified anti-balaka structure. However, Ngaïssona declared that this election was not valid, and in mid-June Wenezoui accepted the role of Ngaïssona's deputy.²¹¹ Collaboration between the two leaders did not last long though. **In mid-August, Ngaïssona excluded Wenezoui from the anti-balaka movement** for not respecting the hierarchy after the latter went on a mission to Brazzaville earlier that month allegedly without informing Ngaïssona.²¹²

On 26 August 2014, Wenezoui created his own movement, *Mouvance patriotique pour l'avenir* (MPA), which is said to include both Muslims and Christians.²¹³ However, in a press conference on 25 September, Wenezoui spoke again in his capacity as deputy coordinator of the anti-balaka and declared that the entire anti-balaka movement would be transformed into a political party, called MPA – I Kwé.²¹⁴

Before the Government reshuffle in August 2014, the anti-balaka movement had two representatives in the Transitional Government. Léopold Narcisse Bara acted as the Minister of Youth and Sports, but both Ngaïssona and Kokaté have publicly stated that he was not the movement's choice.²¹⁵ Joachim Kokaté was an adviser to the Prime Minister. Since the reshuffle in August 2014, three ministers have represented the anti-balaka movement. Jacob Désiré Ngaya, the Minister of Finance and whom the anti-balaka proposed as their candidate for the Prime Minister, is especially close to Ngaïssona.

Robert Namséné is the Minister of Environment, and Romaric Vomitiadé, former Secretary-General of Ngaïssona's CLPC, the Minister of Tourism, Art and Culture.²¹⁶ In October, the anti-balaka coordination stated it lost confidence in the Transitional Government and asked the three ministers representing the movement to resign. Moreover, the anti-balaka coordination gave the President Samba Panza 48 hours to leave her function.

2.2 Actions and behaviour

In brief

The anti-balaka conducted their first operations against the Seleka in late August/early September 2013, mainly around Bossangoa.

On 5 December 2013, anti-balaka groups launched a well-coordinated and major attack on Bangui that represented a turning point in the conflict and triggered a vicious cycle of violence.

As soon as Seleka forces began to retreat from Bangui and the west, anti-balaka militias moved in to launch violent attacks against the Muslim minority.

Between January and September 2014, anti-balaka have continued to attack Muslim and Peuhl communities in the west of the CAR and in Bangui. The movement has also clashed with international forces.

²¹⁰ IPIS interview with S. Wenezoui, Bangui, July 2014.

²¹¹ Anadolu Agency, *RCA: réconciliés, les Anti-Balaka tiennent leur assemblée générale*, 28 June 2014.

²¹² The mission brought together leaders from anti-balaka, Seleka and civil society to discuss the nomination of the new Prime Minister Kamoun.

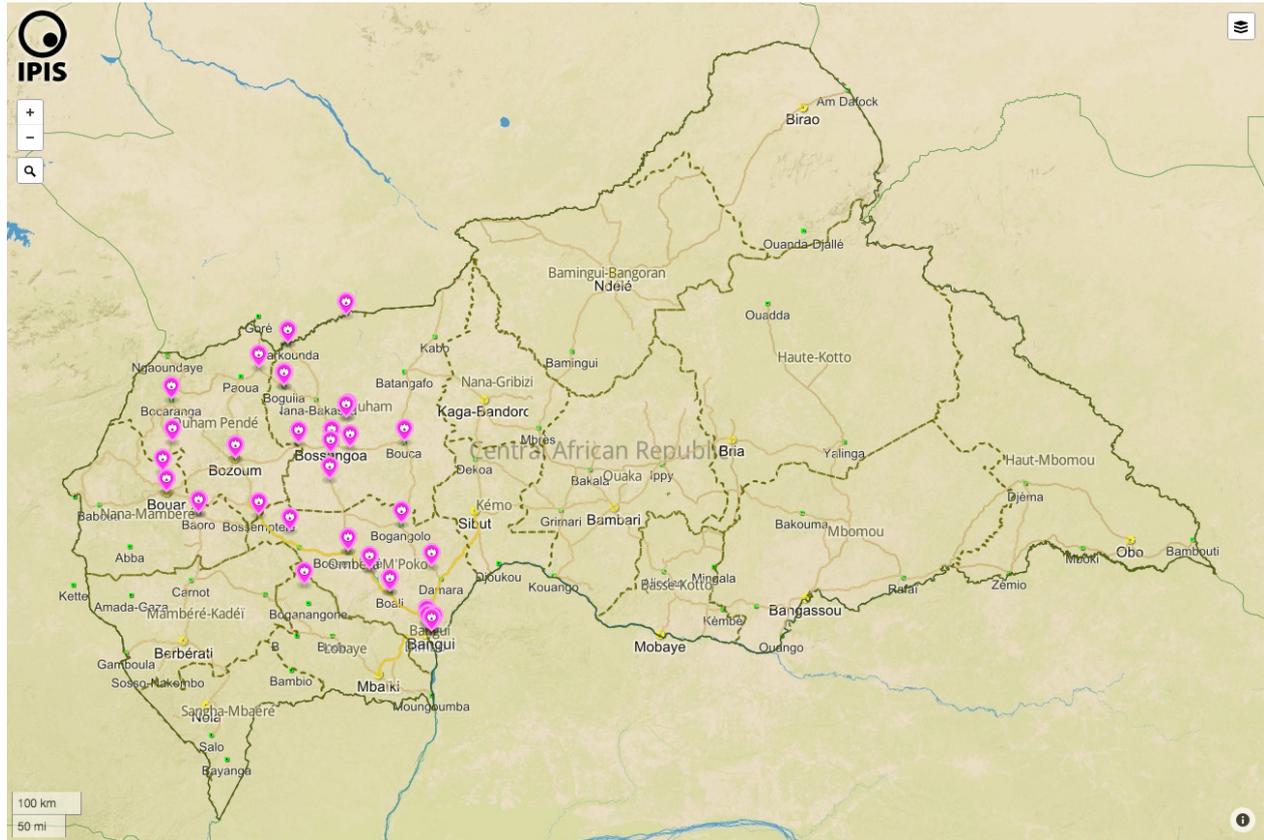
²¹³ Wenezoui is assisted by Ousmane Abakar, the spokesperson of the Muslims at PK5, and by Fleury Pabandji, the former President of the CAR Student Association and leader in the anti-balaka movement. The objective of MPA is to create social cohesion and national reconciliation through development projects for the youth. See: La Nouvelle Centrafrique, *Wenezoui crée une plateforme politique mixte chrétiens-musulmans*, 29 August 2014.

²¹⁴ Radio SIRIRI, *Sébastien Wenezoui veut transformer la rébellion anti-balaka en parti politique*, 25 September 2014.

²¹⁵ IRIN, *Who are the anti-balaka of CAR?*, 12 February 2014.

²¹⁶ Presidential Decree 14.292, *portant nomination de personnalités au cabinet de Samba-Panza*, 26 August 2014.

2.2.1 September 2013 – January 2014



Key incidents involving anti-balaka September 2013 - January 2014 - legend: p. 11

The anti-balaka conducted their first operations against the Seleka in late August/early September 2013 in and around Bossangoa, the fief of former President Bozizé and the capital of the ethnic Gbaya. Anti-balaka forces simultaneously attacked poorly manned Seleka posts, the Muslim community and nomadic cattle camps of the ethnic Peuhl Muslim community around the town.²¹⁷

On 5 December 2013, anti-balaka groups launched a major attack on Bangui. On the same day, other groups chased Seleka from much of Bossangoa, and the next day attacked Bozoum.²¹⁸ The attack on Bangui was well coordinated and prepared. Hundreds of fighters came to the capital from different directions, and went from door to door in the poorest neighbourhoods executing everyone they believed to be Seleka.²¹⁹ The 5 December attack on Bangui was a turning point in the conflict and triggered an infernal cycle of unprecedented violence throughout the country. Within three weeks this violence had caused over 1,000 deaths and countless casualties.²²⁰

Between late December 2013 and early January 2014, further clashes between the anti-balaka and Seleka were reported in Bangui, as well as in Bozoum (where at least 70 deaths were reported),²²¹ Bouar, Boyali, and Ndangala.²²²

²¹⁷ Human Rights Watch, *They came to kill*, December 2013, pp. 18-24.

²¹⁸ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic (S/2014/142), 3 March 2014.

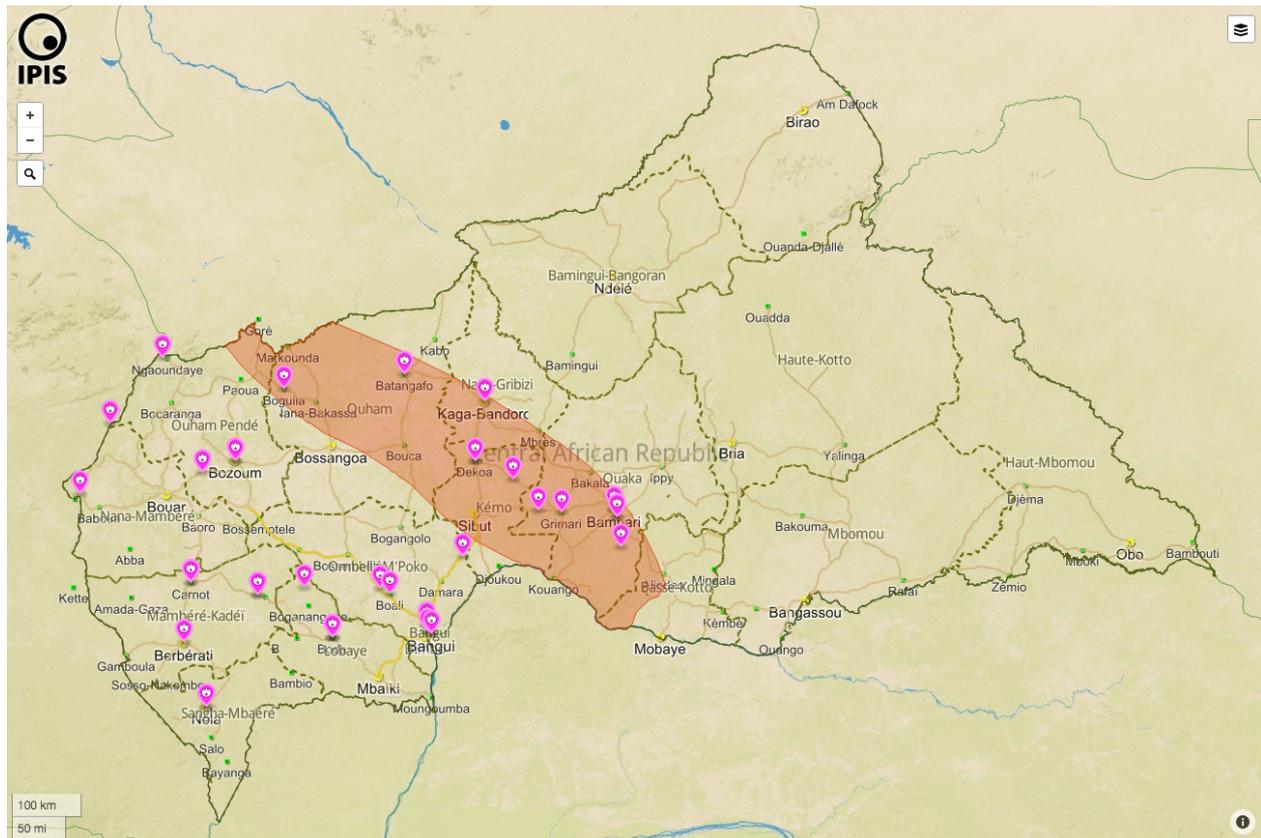
²¹⁹ FIDH, *They must all leave or die*, June 2014, p. 8.

²²⁰ *Ibid.*, pp. 57-63. Confidential UN reports, December 2013 and January 2014.

²²¹ Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l'Homme (RJDH-RCA): attacks on 23, 25, 31 December 2013 and 5 January 2014.

²²² Confidential UN reports, December 2013 and January 2014.

2.2.2 January 2014 – September 2014



Key incidents involving anti-balaka January - September 2014 - legend: p. 11

With the resignation of Interim President Djotodia on the 10th of January 2014, Seleka forces began to retreat from Bangui and areas in the west. After the Seleka left their posts, anti-balaka militias soon moved in to launch violent attacks against Muslim minority populations.

Between January and September 2014, anti-balaka have attacked Muslim and Peuhl communities in Bangui and all over the western half of the country, up to Bambari in the east.²²³ These attacks were often extremely brutal (see section 2.3.2). Anti-balaka even made incursions into refugee camps and villages on the Cameroon side of the border, either to steal or to intimidate.²²⁴ After the ceasefire was signed in Brazzaville on 23 July 2014, anti-balaka continued their attacks. At the end of July, for example, they reportedly attacked Seleka near Grimari and in Batangafo.

Numerous attacks on Muslims and violent clashes between anti-balaka and Muslims have also been reported in Bangui.²²⁵ Anti-balaka groups have fought each other as well, for instance in the Boy-Rabe neighbourhood in August, and in the 8th *arrondissement* in September 2014.

The movement has also clashed on numerous occasions with international forces. Anti-balaka have often fought with MISCA soldiers in Bangui, but also in Boali, Berbérati, Kaga-Bandoro, Carnot, Boali and Bozoum between March and September 2014.²²⁶ Clashes between anti-balaka and French Sangaris forces were reported in Bambari in June and July this year, and in Bossangoa in September.²²⁷

²²³ Amnesty International, *Ethnic cleansing and sectarian killings in the CAR*, February 2014, pp. 8-16; Confidential UN reports; Médecins Sans Frontières; Human Rights Watch, *Massacres in Remote Villages*, 3 April 2014; Reuters; RFI.

²²⁴ IPIS interview with UNHCR, Yaoundé, August 2014.

²²⁵ Confidential UN reports.

²²⁶ Confidential UN reports.

²²⁷ ACLED database on the CAR.

2.3 Analysis of motives

2.3.1 Self-defence and overthrow of the Seleka

In brief

Self-defence motivated anti-balaka groups to start fighting. However, pent-up resentment towards Muslims made the fighters act with extreme cruelty that went far beyond self-defence.

As the anti-balaka gained territory and the Seleka lost power, the self-defence motive became weaker over time.

According to anti-balaka leaders, self-defence was the initial motive to take up arms against the Seleka. This is especially true for self-defence groups that became active around September 2012. The former FACA and Presidential Guards who joined them added to this the specific objective of bringing Bozizé back into power. Before April 2014 the anti-balaka groups also fought to force Chadian troops within MISCA out of the country. These troops were suspected by the movement of having supported the Seleka fighters.²²⁸

Both Ngaïssona and Wenezoui justify the anti-balaka's existence by reference to self-defence and the aim of ending the Seleka regime. According to Wenezoui, the movement's goal is to save the country from Chadian and Sudanese forces that have taken the country hostage, and to defend the Christian population.²²⁹ Ngaïssona argues that the anti-balaka are composed of youths who are embittered by the Seleka violence and that the right to self-defence justifies their actions.²³⁰

The anti-balaka quickly achieved their goal of ending the Seleka regime, or – in the words of Ngaïssona – of releasing the people from “the murderous claws of the Seleka”.²³¹ On 1 February 2014, Ngaïssona stated that this “ultimate aim of the movement” was achieved.²³² Also a map analysis of the violence committed by both the Seleka and the anti-balaka shows that **the motive of self-defence has become weaker over time**. At the start, anti-balaka groups mainly attacked villages and towns where the Seleka was in control. **In the last six months the movement has fought the Seleka, for example to gain control over strategic towns such as Bambari, but remained principally active in the west, where Seleka are absent.**



This means that the movement has lost its main reason to fight. There are indeed indications that the movement's national coordination is advocating an end to the fighting. Firstly, the movement has repeatedly called for a DDR process. The demands of its leaders in Bangui include the integration of anti-balaka fighters into the army with appropriate ranks, demobilization packages, public work projects, and support to combatants who wish to reintegrate into the community.²³³ Anti-balaka leaders also affirmed that they wanted similar treatment to that received by Seleka rebels – that is, to be barracked and fed.²³⁴ Secondly, after February 2014, the national coordination has repeatedly called for peace and security, and publicly called upon anti-balaka chiefs to suspend hostilities to enable durable development.²³⁵

²²⁸ K. Agger, *Behind the Headlines*, Enough Project, May 2014; RFI, *RCA : le chef des anti-balaka appelle le gouvernement à dialoguer*, 1 April 2014.

²²⁹ IPIS interview with S. Wenezoui, Bangui, July 2014.

²³⁰ Anti-balaka, CLPC, *Déclaration des Combattants anti-balaka relative à la situation sécuritaire en République Centrafricaine*, 14 février 2014, Bangui (15/CLPC/13).

²³¹ Anti-balaka, CLPC, *Communiqué de presse n° 5*, 1 February 2014, Bangui (no. 7/CLPC/13).

²³² Anti-balaka, CLPC, *Communiqué de presse n° 5*, 1 February 2014, Bangui (no. 7/CLPC/13).

²³³ IRIN, *Who are the anti-balaka of CAR?*, 12 February 2014; RFI, *RCA : le chef des anti-balaka appelle le gouvernement à dialoguer*, 1 April 2014; IPIS interview with S. Wenezoui, Bangui, July 2014; Anti-balaka, CLPC, *Déclaration des Combattants anti-balaka relative à la situation sécuritaire en République Centrafricaine*, 14 February 2014, Bangui (15/CLPC/13).

²³⁴ Voice of America, *Who are the anti-balaka of the CAR?*, 18 February 2014.

²³⁵ Anti-balaka, CLPC, *Communiqué de presse n° 5*, 1 February 2014, Bangui (no. 7/CLPC/13), n° 6, 11 February 2014,

However, despite these calls, violence continues both inside and outside the capital.

2.3.2 Socio-economic and religious grievances

In brief

Violence committed by the anti-balaka went far beyond self-defence from the outset.

The dominant perception of Muslims among the mainly Christian population is to view them as foreigners, and often Chadian.

The Christian population has over the last decades developed a deep-rooted envy and resentment towards the Muslim population as the latter dominates the commerce and business sectors.

Even before 2012, frustrations towards the Muslim population have escalated into violence.

During the period in which the Seleka were in power, latent socio-economic tensions were catalysed.

The extremely cruel sectarian violence demonstrates the extent of hatred and the desire to force Muslims out of the country.

The violence between Muslims and Christians has however social and economic roots and is not related to religious ideology.

From the start, another important motive has been at play for the anti-balaka: deep-rooted socio-economic frustrations towards the Muslim population. Whereas self-defence became less relevant over time, this motive grew in importance.

From the outset anti-balaka actions were never limited to mere defence of oneself or the community. On the contrary: the crimes perpetrated were from the start extremely cruel, including for example mutilations. Moreover, **the anti-balaka targeted not only the Seleka, but also Muslim men and women of all ages and social backgrounds.** The only factor these victims had in common was their religious identity.²³⁶

That the violence committed by the anti-balaka went far beyond self-defence can be explained by two closely related perceptions. First of all, among an important part of the population **Muslims are seen as foreigners, often Chadian.**²³⁷ No matter how many generations a Muslim family may have lived in the CAR, a Muslim person is often still considered a foreigner.²³⁸ The predominantly Muslim Seleka were likewise perceived as a foreign, Chadian group. Hence, whilst the anti-balaka movement claimed to be fighting the Seleka, both its leaders and its fighters implicitly, and in some cases explicitly, understood this to mean fighting all 'foreigners' and all (civilian) Muslims.

Secondly, **over the last decades social and economic tensions have developed along religious lines.** Since independence, the Muslim population was seen to be in control of the commerce and business

Bangui (no 14/CLPC/13), n° 9, 4 April 2014, Bangui (no. 22/ATB/14), n° 13, 26 May 2014, Bangui (no. 47/ATB/CD.14), n° 14, 29 May 2014 (50/ATB/14); IPIS interview with Wenezoui, Bangui, July 2014; RJDH-RCA, *Bangui : Discorde entre les leaders des Anti-Balaka au sujet de la déclaration demandant aux éléments FACA des Anti-Balaka de regagner les rangs*, 2 August 2014; Radio SIRIRI, *Sébastien Wenezoui veut transformer la rébellion anti-balaka en parti politique*, 25 September 2014; AFP, *Les anti-balaka demandent à leurs représentants de quitter le gouvernement*, 6 October 2014.

²³⁶ Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (S/2014/373), 26 June 2014, pp. 21-22.

²³⁷ IPIS Interview with M. Ziguélé, Bangui, April 2014; US Department of State, *International Religious Freedom Report 2010, Central African Republic*, 17 November 2010.

²³⁸ Although according to the law, a child born from one Central African parent is a Central African citizen (Law 1961.212).

sectors, ranging from the diamond and gold trade to shop keeping.²³⁹ In the opinion of non-Muslim populations, who are often Christian, the Muslims/foreigners have taken over their business sectors, and are taking away their resources for self-enrichment to their detriment.²⁴⁰ Accordingly, Christian populations have built up envy towards the Muslim population.

Even before the current conflict, latent frustrations towards the Muslim population had escalated into violence. In May 2011, for instance, two young children were found dead in a vehicle owned by a man of Chadian origin. Following this incident, civilians attacked Muslims, mainly Chadians, and their shops in the Bangui neighbourhood around PK5. Eleven people were killed, dozens wounded and houses and mosques were burned down and pillaged.²⁴¹ The alleged criminal act of this Muslim man in whose car the children were found gave thus rise to an inordinate attack against the Muslims. In the media, this violence was explained as having been driven by frustrations towards foreigners/Muslims who controlled the businesses in the PK5 neighbourhood.²⁴²

Thus, although the Muslims and Christians generally lived in peaceful coexistence **before 2012, a certain degree of envy and resentment towards Muslims/foreigners had nevertheless become deep-rooted and had already led to violent clashes.** These frustrations became even stronger in the period in which the Seleka were in power. As has been the case in the past, latent socio-economic tensions were catalysed. Nevertheless, this time the scale of the incidents that gave cause to the local non-Muslim population for taking up arms was unprecedented. Equally unprecedented was the violent response of the Christian fighters who joined the anti-balaka.

However, **the national coordination of the anti-balaka has never made official statements against all Muslims in the country.** This being said, the reported discourse and language used during attacks by local anti-balaka chiefs is strong. Statements recounted by eyewitnesses include that they aim to kill all Muslims, or that all Muslims must leave the country.²⁴³

Besides the language being used, the often extremely cruel sectarian violence clearly shows the extent of hatred, and the will to force Muslims out of the country. Anti-balaka specifically destroyed religious buildings, such as the mosque in Bangui's Fohu neighbourhood they reduced to rubble. Other Muslim buildings have been defaced with offensive graffiti, ransacked or burned.²⁴⁴ Muslims have been attacked at their most vulnerable; the movement has for example frequently ambushed and attacked convoys with fleeing Muslims.²⁴⁵ On numerous occasions anti-balaka attacked Muslims in IDP camps.²⁴⁶ Muslim women have been raped.²⁴⁷ In some towns, entire Muslim communities are trapped.²⁴⁸ The anti-balaka have used gruesome methods to kill Muslims, for example by mutilating their bodies, with limbs severed and genitals cut off and stuffed into the victim's mouth.²⁴⁹

These cruel and extreme acts of violence have changed the public perception of the crisis in the CAR, and the media have often described the conflict as a religious conflict. In the case of the anti-balaka, this appears to be partly true. However, as discussed above, the violence between these groups of different religions has social and economic roots that are not related to religious ideology. **In short, religious differences did not cause the fighting but did deepen the fault line between the parties to the conflict.**

²³⁹ IPIS Interview with M. Ziguélé, Bangui, April 2014.

²⁴⁰ Afriqinfos/Xinhua, *Les dessous des récentes violences intercommunautaires à Bangui*, 7 June 2011.

²⁴¹ Africa N°1, *Bangui sous couvre-feu face aux violences visant des musulmans*, 1 June 2011.

²⁴² *Ibid.*

²⁴³ Human Rights Watch, *They came to kill*, December 2013, p. 17; Al Jazeera, *Trapped in a nightmare*, 11 April 2014; La Nouvelle Centrafrique, *Boda, le drame oublié*, 7 April 2014.

²⁴⁴ Amnesty International, *Ethnic cleansing and sectarian killings in the CAR*, February 2014, p. 10.

²⁴⁵ *Ibid.*; Confidential UN reports.

²⁴⁶ Confidential UN reports.

²⁴⁷ Although all major media have reported on widespread rape by Seleka rebels, there are very few public cases of rape by anti-balaka. This may be because women often do not report having been raped out of fear of being stigmatized by their community (See MSF, *le douloureux tabou du viol*, 31 October 2014). A few rape cases committed by anti-balaka were however reported in confidential UN reports.

²⁴⁸ For example in Boda and in the Bangui neighbourhood PK5.

²⁴⁹ Amnesty International, *Ethnic cleansing and sectarian killings in the CAR*, February 2014, p. 18.

Box 2.2: A long history of tensions between pastoralists and cultivators

Tensions between pastoralists and cultivators have socio-economic roots but are also manifested religiously as the majority of pastoralists are Muslims and local farming communities are in general Christian.

Armed confrontations between (foreign) pastoralist groups and sedentary Central Africans have occurred since the sudden growth of pastoralism in the CAR in the 1970s and 1980s.²⁵⁰ For example, in the sub-prefecture of Boda, cultivators systematically attacked pastoralists and their troops between 1978 and 2003. Similar incidents occurred in the prefectures of Lobaye, Ouham, Ombella-Mpoko and Ouham Pendé.²⁵¹

These tensions have remained significant during the current conflict. Anti-balaka militias have systematically attacked Peuhl pastoralists in the Mambere-Kadéï, Nana-Mambere, Ouham-Pendé and Ouham prefectures (see section 2.3.4).

2.3.3 Anti-balaka political agenda

In brief

Initially, parts of the anti-balaka movement were motivated by a desire to bring former president Bozizé back to the country to resume his role in national politics.

Bozizé was close to the anti-balaka through his command of former FACA officers, the Gendarmerie and the Presidential Guard, as well as his close link to Ngaïssona.

Bozizé's influence on the anti-balaka movement decreased over time.

Unlike the Seleka, there are no reports indicating that the anti-balaka supplanted the administration in the areas where they took control.

In the course of 2014, the power motive has become relevant again, as the current national coordination is aiming for national political representation.

A subject that clearly divided the anti-balaka movement at the start of its activities was the return of former president Bozizé to the country to play a role in national politics. It divided the different components of the anti-balaka in the interior of the country: on the one hand, self-defence groups who acted out of self-defence and revenge, on the other former FACA and Presidential Guards who acted in order to get Bozizé back into power. Also in Bangui this motive divided the movement: Ngaïssona's group sought to get Bozizé back to the country, an objective that was not shared by other leaders such as Wenezoui and Kokaté.

Former President Bozizé was close to the anti-balaka movement, through his command of former FACA officers, the Gendarmerie and the Presidential Guards, as well as through his close link to Ngaïssona. During the first months in which the anti-balaka were active, Bozizé attempted to coordinate the armed resistance against the Seleka, organising a meeting for that purpose with his son Francis, Lévy Yakité, Eric Danboy and others, before creating FROCCA in Paris.²⁵² The UN imposed sanctions on Bozizé for his

²⁵⁰ French Embassy in Bangui, *The farmer and the cowman never will be friends. Agricultural conflicts in the Central African Republic*, March 2004, pp. 20-21.

²⁵¹ *Ibid.*, pp. 33-34.

²⁵² IPIS interview with J. Kokaté, Bangui, May 2014.

alleged financial support to the anti-balaka, as well as for his supposed encouraging of the attack on Bangui of 5 December 2013, and for his alleged call to commit atrocities against the members of the Seleka regime and the Muslims.²⁵³

It seems however that Bozizé's influence on the anti-balaka movement has decreased over time. Bozizé has ceased to make public claims to power and he seems less active in his pursuit of this aim. Moreover, in an April 2014 interview Ngaißona denied his collaboration with Bozizé, calling the assumed link made by the media between him and the former president a major mistake.²⁵⁴

Over the initial period, besides seeking to bring Bozizé back to power, there were no other indications that the anti-balaka were actively pursuing the objective of acquiring political power themselves. Unlike the Seleka, there are no reports suggesting that the anti-balaka had supplanted the administration in areas over which they had taken control.

However, over the course of 2014, a power motive re-emerged, this time for the current national coordination who seeks national political representation. In August 2014, the anti-balaka proposed Jacob Désiré Ngaya²⁵⁵ as a Prime Ministerial candidate, showing their willingness to be represented in the government.²⁵⁶ Ngaißona said in an interview that the movement is preparing its transformation into a political party to compete in the 2015 elections.²⁵⁷ Accordingly, in September Wenezoui declared that the anti-balaka movement will be transformed in a political party, called MPA – I Kwé.²⁵⁸

2.3.4 Greed motives of anti-balaka groups

In brief

Muslim civilians have been systematically plundered by the movement, which is probably the main source of income for both fighters and their local chiefs.

Anti-balaka groups are active in the mining areas of the west, where they focus more on gold mining and trade than on diamonds.

At several gold mining sites anti-balaka forces receive money or a percentage of production for protecting the site. Some commanders have also become involved in buying and trafficking gold.

In diamond mining areas, anti-balaka earn money by racketeering artisanal miners or collectors, and positioning themselves as "protectors" of economic operators in mining towns. Some local commanders are also operating as collectors.

For both gold and diamonds, there are no indications of significant investment, even at sites where relatively small investments would yield large profits.

Anti-balaka groups control an illegal border post with Cameroon where they tax smuggled merchandise.

They have also set up numerous roadblocks and checkpoints where they demand illegal taxes on goods.

²⁵³ UN Security Council, *The List established and maintained by the Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic. Narrative summaries of reasons for listing: CFI.001. François Yangouvonda Bozizé*, 14 May 2014.

²⁵⁴ RFI, *RCA : le chef des anti-balaka appelle le gouvernement à dialoguer*, 1 April 2014.

²⁵⁵ Jacob Désiré Ngaya in August 2014 has become the Minister of Finance.

²⁵⁶ RFI, *Mahamat Kamoun désigné Premier ministre*, 10 August 2014.

²⁵⁷ Jeune Afrique, *Ngaißona et l'avenir politique des anti-balaka*, 5 August 2014.

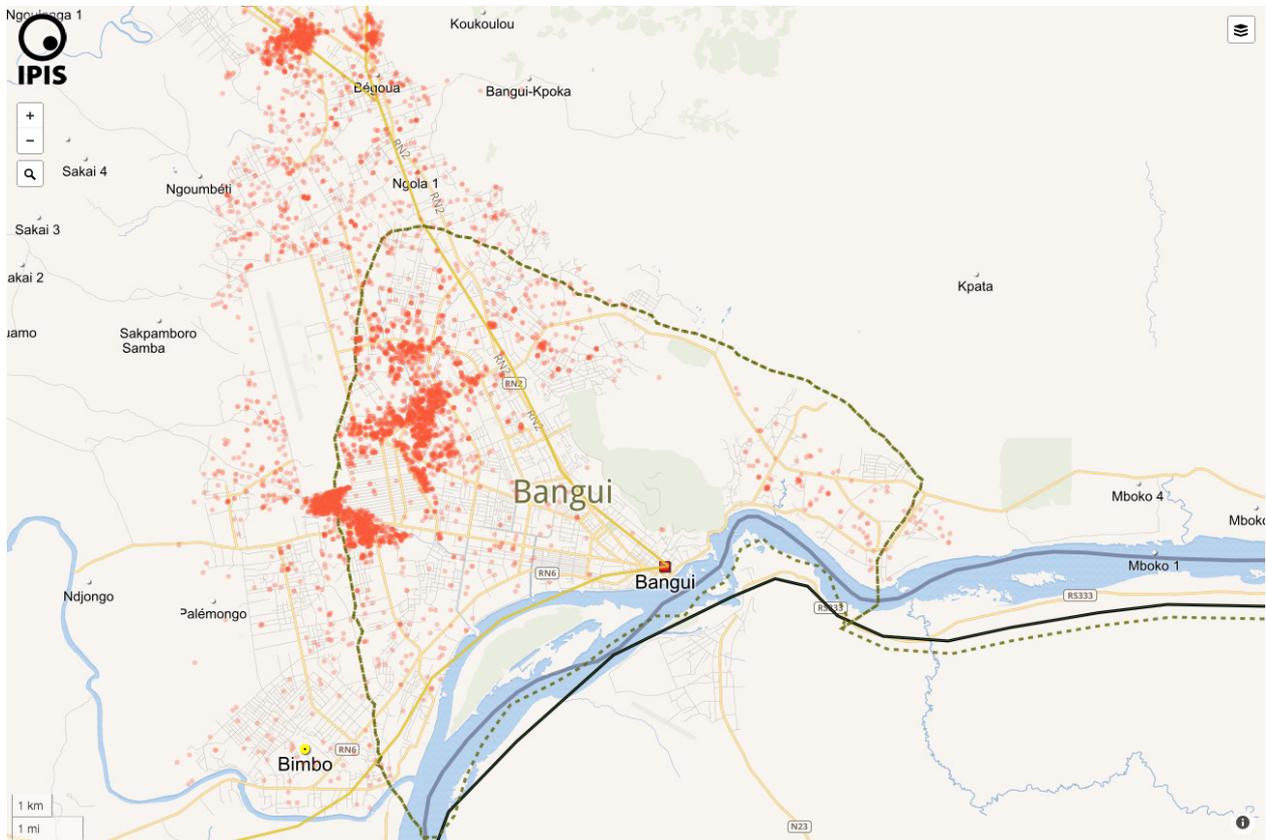
²⁵⁸ Radio SIRIRI, *Sébastien Wenezoui veut transformer la rébellion anti-balaka en parti politique*, 25 September 2014.

Looting

Plundering Muslim civilians is very common among anti-balaka fighters. It is the most prevalent crime committed by the movement, and probably the main source of income for both fighters and their local chiefs. Alongside greed as an obvious motivating factor, the aforementioned frustration directed at the Muslim community serves as an additional motive to target these communities for pillage. Among the rank-and-file of the anti-balaka fighters, some men have joined simply to seek profit and be compensated for what the Seleka took from them during 2012, and for what Muslims are alleged to have taken from them in the previous decades.

When the anti-balaka fighters attacked Bangui on 5 December 2012, all attacks against the Muslim community involved the looting of houses and shops. This looting was followed by the complete destruction of entire Muslim-inhabited neighbourhoods. In the months following these attacks, Christians erected new constructions on sites previously inhabited by Muslims.²⁵⁹ The forced displacement of the Muslim population has also been accompanied by the widespread pillaging of shops and houses.²⁶⁰ Anti-balaka have looted health centres and hospitals as well, and plundered international NGOs.²⁶¹

In recent months it seems that such looting has become less prominent, though it remains an important activity. In areas where the anti-balaka have been active since the start, such as Bangui, instances of plunder have dropped because there is not much left to steal in the Muslim neighbourhoods.



Damaged or destroyed buildings in Bangui (July 2014) - legend: p. 11

Two notable trends can be discerned in respect of anti-balaka looting: **firstly, most looting was committed in connection with violent attacks against the Muslim community and, secondly, violent attacks continue to this day despite the fact that there is nothing left to take.** This shows

²⁵⁹ Preliminary report of the International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic (S/2014/373), 26 June 2014, p. 23.

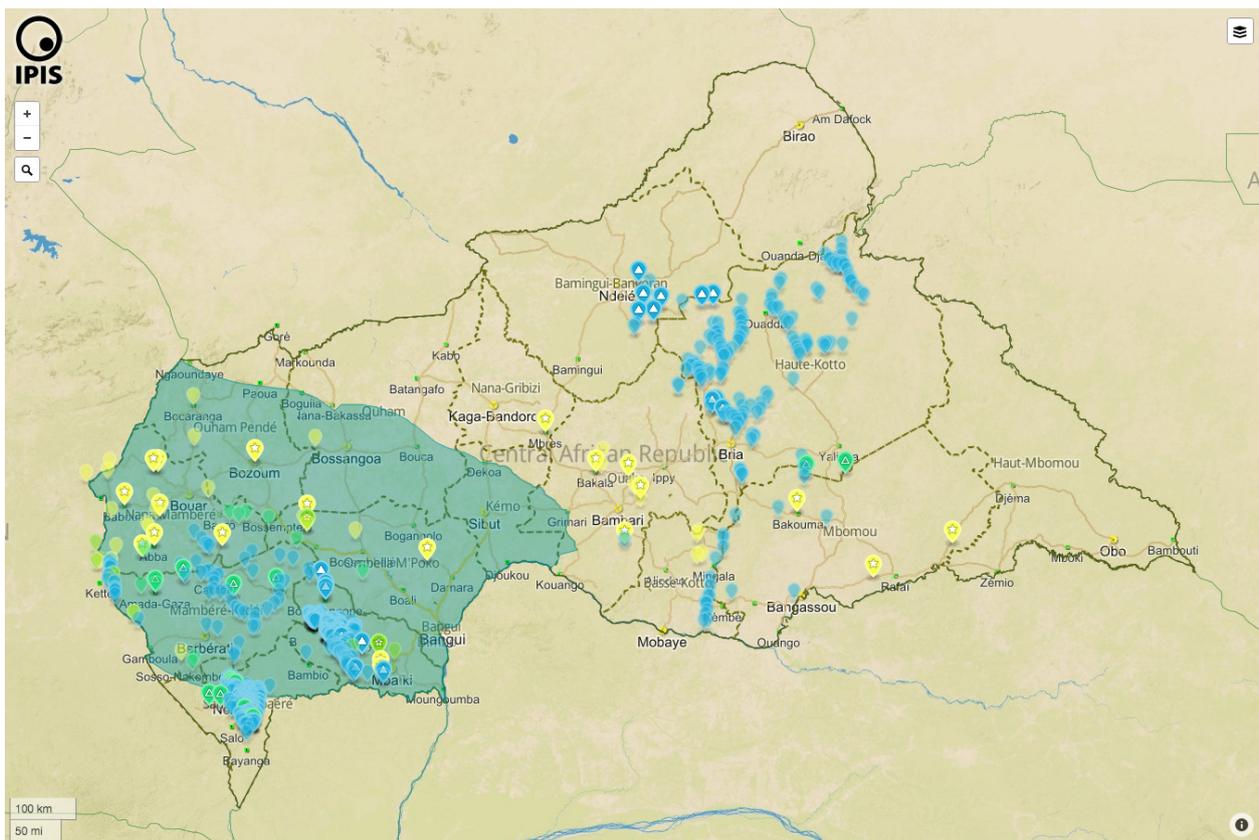
²⁶⁰ Confidential UN reports.

²⁶¹ Examples: 15-17 January 2014, in Bocaranga anti-balaka pillaged international NGOs like COOPI and DRC; 8 February, in Bocaranga anti-balaka plundered the NGO DRC; 14 February, in Bossangoa WFP was pillaged; 30 March, in Bangui 4th *arrondissement* anti-balaka robbed a vehicle from an INGO; 11 April, 3 WFP trucks were pillaged (Confidential UN reports).

the opportunistic nature of looting, and demonstrates that it has often not been the main motive for fighters.

A significant example of predatory behaviour aimed at short-term gain is the raiding of cattle in the Nana-Mambere prefecture. When anti-balaka emerged in the area in January 2014, they immediately started stealing entire herds from the mainly Peuhl pastoralists in the area. Unacquainted with cattle herding themselves, the anti-balaka started flooding the market with live cattle and meat. Throughout these months, cows, normally worth about 300,000 FCFA, were sold for a mere 15,000 to 20,000 FCFA.²⁶² All along the main roads, people were drying and selling meat. By March 2014, all remaining cattle had been killed, sold or taken across the border by refugees. As a result, cattle currently have to be imported from Cameroon.

Profit from artisanal mining



Artisanal diamond and gold mining sites and anti-balaka zone of influence - legend: p. 11

When the anti-balaka started their targeted attacks on the Muslim population in the west, they plundered mineral buying houses, mining sites and collectors. Since the collectors were predominantly Muslim businessmen, often from foreign countries,²⁶³ almost all of these collectors have now left the country. This caused a steep drop in demand as well as in new investments, as a result of which both production and prices have undergone a major decline (see box 1.5).

Hereafter, several Central African and foreign businessmen have sought to take the place of these collectors. However, they do not have the same buying power as the former Muslim collectors, who had access to the capital of the buying houses in Bangui. According to official national statistics, between January and May 2014, 13 people possessed collector's licenses in the west of the country, five of whom were foreigners.²⁶⁴

²⁶² 1 US Dollar = 526.32 FCFA (12 November 2014).

²⁶³ For example from Libya, Mali, Senegal, Mauritania, Nigeria.

²⁶⁴ Ministry of Mines/BECDOR, *Liste des collecteurs patentés de janvier à mai 2014*.

With Sodiam being the only buying office with an active branch in the west, in Berbérati, buyers on the market are scarce. The buying office Sud-Azur told IPIS that anti-balaka have frequently contacted them in Bangui to request that Sud-Azur return to the west to invest and buy diamonds.²⁶⁵

According to mining officials, the anti-balaka do not control the **diamond sites around Berbérati and Carnot**. However, anti-balaka elements are present in the mining areas as diggers and intermediary traders. They reportedly also **assault artisanal miners or collectors who are coming from the sites returning to town**.²⁶⁶ In the diamond sites around the town of **Boda**, armed men guard the mines, though it is unclear to what extent these men are linked to the movement.²⁶⁷ At the diamond mines in **Sangha-Mbaére**, there is no reported anti-balaka presence. This is related to the control exerted by the FACA over the area.²⁶⁸

The anti-balaka also earn money by positioning themselves as “protectors” of economic operators, especially collectors.²⁶⁹ Anti-balaka members in Carnot interviewed by the UN Panel of Experts, admitted that their section chief, who is part of Ngaissona’s command structure, had contacted collectors associated or formerly associated with buying houses to negotiate a protection arrangement.²⁷⁰ Some of the local anti-balaka commanders, such as Léonard Bakongo in **Guen** and Grégoire Moussa in **Sassele**, also operate as diamond collectors.²⁷¹

The anti-balaka have focused more on the exploitation of gold than diamonds. This is because gold is often easier to extract (especially in the short-term) without investments, and easier to sell without a network.²⁷²

Anti-balaka forces are present at several large gold mines. There is however variance in the type of control exerted over these sites. Anti-balaka forces led by Commander Ndale, a Muslim who led a local self-defence group before integrating into the anti-balaka, are present on the gold mining sites around **Niem**, including at Gbakana. According to the mining brigade, they **charge money to protect the sites**, but do not further interfere with mining activity. ‘Colonel’ Richard controls gold mines in the vicinity of **Yaloké**.²⁷³ There, most of the miners consider themselves to be anti-balaka and prevent the authorities from entering the site. **At the Ndolobo gold mine in Lobaye, elements under the command of Rombhot receive five percent of production.**²⁷⁴

In the gold mines around **Bozoum** production has gone down as buyers are scarce and artisanal workers have taken up arms to join the anti-balaka. Although these anti-balaka mainly focus on raiding villages in the neighbourhood, they continue to work at the mines. **With artisanal workers acting as anti-balaka, and preventing mining officials from entering the sites, the movement is in control of the mines.**²⁷⁵

Other commanders have become involved in buying and trafficking gold. The anti-balaka of ‘colonel’ Cyriaque control the site of **Gaga** and make money from selling gold produced in the area to buyers coming from Bangui.²⁷⁶ Anti-Balaka commander Belo, a former artisanal miner, heads one of the two

²⁶⁵ IPIS interview with Director General of Sud-Azur, Bangui, July 2014.

²⁶⁶ IPIS interview with mining officials, Bangui, July 2014 and September 2014; UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Final report*, S/2014/762, 29 October 2014, p. 33.

²⁶⁷ IPIS interview with Regional Director of Mines of Lobaye, Bangui, July 2014.

²⁶⁸ FACA who are not linked to the anti-balaka have remained in control in the Sangha-Mbaére prefecture since the coup d’état in March 2013.

²⁶⁹ According to the Chadian press, anti-balaka forces protect the house of the Lebanese diamond trader Ali Hassan Fawaz in Berbérati, and the businessman supposedly pays them an approximate 55 USD per day (Chad Actuel, *Le diamant est une fois de plus à la cause de la pérennisation d’un conflit en Afrique*, 29 May 2014).

²⁷⁰ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014, pp. 17-18.

²⁷¹ *Ibid.*, p. 17.

²⁷² IPIS interview with Regional Director of Mines of Lobaye, Bangui, July 2014.

²⁷³ IPIS phone interview with mine official in Yaloké, September 2014.

²⁷⁴ This currently amounts to approximately 100 US Dollar a day following a free-fall in production that occurred after Muslim buyers left with the equipment they had put at the disposal of the miners. Before, the site was highly productive, so revenues for these anti-balaka elements could potentially rise considerably; IPIS interview with mining supervisor at Ndolobo, Bangui, July 2014.

²⁷⁵ IPIS phone interview with mining official and IPIS phone interview with NGO actor in northwest CAR, September 2014.

²⁷⁶ Jeune Afrique, *Centrafrique : à la mine d’or de Gaga, on tue pour des paillettes*, 11 May 2014.

anti-balaka groups that originated in Nana-Mambere. He became wealthy from selling cattle stolen from Peuhl pastoralists around Bouar. With his newfound wealth, he started buying gold and has reportedly become the main 'collector' in the region around **Zotoa-Sanda-Yoro, in Nana-Mambere.**²⁷⁷

As mentioned, in many mining areas, such as around Boda and in the Abba sub-prefecture, armed men prevent mining officials and the local mining brigade from entering the sites. The links of these armed men to the anti-balaka differ. In some instances, they refer to themselves as anti-balaka, although it is unclear whether they respond to any chain of command or are merely local gangs. In others, these groups are reportedly self-defence groups created in response to the violence committed by anti-balaka militias.²⁷⁸

Much like the looting discussed above, the exploitation of natural resources demonstrates the anti-balaka's predatory behaviour, which focuses mainly on short-term gain. The strategies of control and rent seeking in the mining areas are less structured than those of the Seleka. There are no indications that anti-balaka groups have established an organized system of illegal taxes or parallel mining authorizations. Nor are there indications of widespread investments, even at sites where relatively small investments would yield large profits.

Control over border crossings and checkpoints

In January 2014, an anti-balaka faction consisting of former Presidential Guards and FACA soldiers took control of the important Béloko-Garoua Boulai border crossing into Cameroon. They started levying taxes on incoming trucks and plundered several vehicles.²⁷⁹ This anti-balaka faction controlled the border post until it was secured by Sangaris troops. Subsequently, they moved slightly south of the crossing, where they now control an illegal border post, taxing smuggled merchandise.²⁸⁰

Along the main roads in the west of the country, anti-balaka have set up numerous roadblocks and checkpoints where they demand illegal taxes on goods. Anti-balaka forces under commander Rombhot control road transport from Cameroon to Bangui over the last part of the south axis, taxing passing trucks between two to ten US dollars.²⁸¹ They also tax logging trucks coming from Bangui going to Pissa, Mbaïki and Boda in Lobaye prefecture and levy taxes on river transport on part of the Oubangui river. Rombhot personally collects part of the taxes, which amount to about 200 US dollars per barrier per week.²⁸²

2.3.5 Conclusion on anti-balaka motives

The anti-balaka are composed of different groups who follow the orders of their respective leaders. It is therefore hard to identify one motive applicable for all of these different groups, let alone for all individual fighters. A few trends in those motives identified are however relevant for the vast majority.

In the first six months that the Seleka were in power, the local population endured the hardships, though their long established socio-economic frustrations towards Muslims grew. When the first anti-balaka took up arms to fight the Seleka they were quickly followed by other groups in the country. Self-defence motivated anti-balaka groups to start fighting. But at the same time, pent-up resentment towards Muslims made the fighters act with extreme cruelty that went far beyond self-defence. Even the elements of anti-balaka that were motivated to regain power demonstrated in their violence a drive that went beyond political motives. Over time, self-defence and the aim of regaining power became less important, and the pent-up envy for Muslims that developed into hatred became an even more prominent driver of attacks.

²⁷⁷ IPIS interview with international NGO worker, Bouar, July 2014.

²⁷⁸ IPIS interview with local authorities from Bouar and Baboua and UN and INGO officials, Bouar, July 2014.

²⁷⁹ IPIS interview with UN and INGO officials, Bouar, July 2014; IPIS phone interview with customs authority in Garoua Boulai, September 2014.

²⁸⁰ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report, S/2014/452*, 1 July 2014, p. 45.

²⁸¹ *Ibid.*, p. 75.

²⁸² *Ibid.*, p. 50.

The attacks against the Muslim population, motivated by resentment, gave anti-balaka fighters the opportunity for another motive: greed. Although some groups of fighters were solely or mainly motivated by greed, for other groups greed seems to be closely related to the aforementioned socio-economic resentment. For these groups or individuals opportunities for theft arose while perpetrating violent acts motivated by hatred, and also the looting itself was driven by resentment. In their eyes, they could now take back what Muslims had taken from them over the last decades.

In comparison to the Seleka in the east, the anti-balaka show a more predatory behaviour and are mainly focused on short-term gain. For example in mining areas, there are no indications of widespread investments, even at sites where relatively small investments would yield large profits. The lack thereof, and thus the lack of access to capital, seems to be linked to the fact that anti-balaka militias in the west are more local in nature and lack elaborate chains of command. Moreover, the anti-balaka have, in contrast to the Seleka, no previous experience in commerce or business.

Whilst hatred towards the Muslim population has been a predominant driving motive for the anti-balaka, greed has always loomed in the background. In the majority of areas in the west, the initial self-defence motive has become increasingly irrelevant in light of the Seleka's absence from that part of the country, and hatred-motivated attacks are less dominant given that the majority of the Muslim population has left. **There is a risk that the evolution of the anti-balaka parallels that of armed groups in eastern DR Congo who have over time evolved from militias motivated by self-defence into criminal groups mainly driven by greed.**

3. Foreign influence and interests

In brief

The main long-standing priority for Chad is to maintain security in the border region and avoid that the CAR becomes a sanctuary for Chadian armed opposition groups.

Chadian President Déby distanced himself from Bozizé in late 2012 and started establishing ties with Seleka leaders.

In early 2013, Chadian authorities started providing conclusive support to the Seleka's leadership: the Chadian contingent within MISCA no longer prevented the Seleka advance, Chadian army officers provided support to the rebellion, the Seleka allegedly received supplies from N'Djamena, and Chadian officers had high-ranking positions in the Seleka leadership.

Between April and May 2014, the Chadian government stepped back from the CAR and the Seleka, withdrew its MISCA contingent and closed its southern border.

Besides security considerations, other grounds that influenced Chadian policy regarding the Seleka were to preserve the privileged position of Chadian business networks in the CAR and to secure the Chadian sphere of influence in the country.

Profitable opportunities for Chadian actors caused by the crisis in the CAR appear to be locally limited, spontaneous and opportunistic.

The influx of refugees and cattle into Chad generated unprecedented levels of competition over natural resources and triggered tension between the different communities.

Chadian neo-pastoralists acquire cattle at very low prices and hire armed Peuhl or elements of the National Army who stage incursions in the CAR to raid cattle and loot villages.

3.1 Chad

3.1.1 Chad's shifting support from Bozizé to the Seleka

The CAR and Chad are closely related on political, historical and anthropological levels. Their border area hosts communities sharing common languages and traditions. In addition, both territories are regularly linked by seasonal cattle migration routes connecting the Northern areas of Chad, the South of the country (often referred to as *le Tchad vert* – the green Chad) and the CAR.

This close relationship is also reflected politically. From the early 2000s onwards, Chad gained increasing leverage and influence over its southern neighbour. This was due to the weakness of the CAR on the one hand, and the relative empowerment of the Chadian regime (largely due to oil-generated revenues), on the other. In this respect, the support offered by President Déby to the CAR's former president Bozizé during and after the 2003 coup²⁸³ represented an important turning point. Not only did it create a balance of power close to "*vassalage*";²⁸⁴ but it also confirmed to the Chadian regime that, as long as filling the gap left by France was welcomed by Paris, room for possible manoeuvre in the region could increase.²⁸⁵

²⁸³ The success of Bozizé's campaign in 2003 was largely due to the support he received from the "liberation army" (*les libérateurs*), a contingent mainly composed of Chadian troops.

²⁸⁴ The word was used by one of the interviewees, a former senior officer of the Chadian government, posted in Bangui until March 2013 (IPIS interview, N'Djamena, September 2014).

²⁸⁵ Several interviewees underlined the fact that pressures by France on the N'Djamena regime were at the origin of Chadian support to Bozizé's coup d'état (IPIS interviews, N'Djamena, September 2014).

Déby's benevolence towards Bozizé slowly but progressively drained over the years, as the Central African leader failed to impose State authority over the national territory, which allowed instability to spread in the northern region. **Maintaining security in these border regions to prevent the establishment of rear-bases by armed groups fighting the Chadian regime represents the main long-standing priority for Déby.**

In late 2012, Déby finally distanced himself from Bozizé. In September 2012, he ordered the immediate withdrawal of Chadian army units posted in Bangui to provide Bozizé with personal security. This decision is regarded by many observers as the strike that definitively severed the link between Déby and Bozizé, forcing the latter to desperately look for alternative support and to finally request it from South Africa. This shift was firstly brought about by security concerns and the threat these could pose to the stability of the Chadian regime. It was further catalysed by three factors: Déby had strengthened his regional authority, while at the same time other regional leaders, such as Sassou Nguesso and Ali Bongo, were increasingly disgruntled by Bozizé's rule. Moreover, the Chadian president was most probably influenced by wealthy Chadian businessmen whose lucrative activities were threatened by growing instability in the CAR.

At the same time, President Déby started establishing ties with Seleka leaders, especially with Noureddine Adam and Mohammed Moussa Dhaffane, whom he liberated from house arrest in December 2012.²⁸⁶ The regime allegedly started providing limited support to the Seleka, by for instance dispatching military advisers whose role was also to keep a close eye on developments within the rebellion. On 18 December 2012, a week after the Seleka had started their advance, Chad sent some 350 troops into the CAR. Though this was readily interpreted as a support mission to help Bozizé fight the Seleka, the Chadian government soon declared its troops were merely going to interpose themselves, and not oppose the rebels, and at the same time announced negotiations between the Seleka and the CAR government in N'Djamena.²⁸⁷

During the last phase of Bozizé's regime, President Déby attempted to mediate between Bozizé and the opposition, as well as among the different opposition factions to facilitate their unification.²⁸⁸ President Déby reportedly pushed this agenda forward during his visit to Bangui in April 2012 and was especially instrumental in brokering the Libreville Political Agreement in January 2013.

When it became clear that Bozizé was not duly implementing the provisions of the January 2013 Libreville agreement and that the chances of his regime's survival had irreversibly collapsed, the Chadian authorities agreed to provide their conclusive support to Seleka's leadership. This decision was reportedly conditional upon, firstly, the Seleka's commitment to secure the CAR's northern areas; and secondly, to abstain from ideological radicalization.²⁸⁹ Moreover, the Chadian regime obtained several key positions for Chadian agents to keep a check on and control over the rebels' actions.²⁹⁰

Once the Seleka had accepted these bounds, they could take advantage of, firstly, the benevolence of the Chadian contingent within the MISCA peacekeeping mission at Damara, which no longer prevented the advance of rebel forces towards Bangui. They also reportedly received support provided by Chadian intelligence officers or military personnel.²⁹¹ **Interviewees, including Seleka officers, spoken to by**

²⁸⁶ IPIS interviews with Chadian and international analysts and observers, including former government officials, academics, researchers, diplomats, former rebel leaders and INGO workers, N'Djamena, September 2014.

²⁸⁷ Reuters, *Chad sends troops to back CAR army against rebels*, 18 December 2012; RFI, *RCA : les rebelles avancent, le Tchad en arbitre*, 19 December 2012.

²⁸⁸ The unification of different armed opposition factions was allegedly one of the preconditions for Chadian support to the Seleka. IPIS interviews with various Seleka members, Bambari, September 2014.

²⁸⁹ IPIS interviews with Chadian and international analysts and observers, including academics, researchers, diplomats and INGO workers, N'Djamena, September 2014.

²⁹⁰ IPIS interviews with a representative of a Chadian rebel movement and the leader of a Central African opposition movement, held separately in N'Djamena, September 2014. On the same subject, see also *Politique Africaine* (n°130), *Le Tchad entre deux guerres? Remarques sur un présumé complot*, 2013.

²⁹¹ Many of the interviewees considered that although it is impossible to quantify the exact number of Chadian elements that joined Seleka, their number was important and included several dozen, if not hundreds of fighters. Different hypotheses were gathered regarding the identity and status of these men, with references to *ex-libérateurs*, former Chadian Army elements recently demobilized, Chadian mercenaries, Chadian rebels previously deployed to the CAR-Chad-Sudan areas, Chadian intelligence officers and military personnel. IPIS

IPIS also repeatedly alleged that Chad supplied the Seleka directly and indirectly with military equipment. They added however that these arms deliveries were not large as Déby was wary of the final outcome of supporting the rebels on stability in the border region.

The extent and the type of supplies received from N'Djamena are difficult to determine.²⁹² Interviewees nevertheless suggested that the bulk of the equipment provided by Chad was derived from stockpiles that the Chadian security forces had previously seized at the border with Libya, where Chadian volunteers had fought in support of the Qaddafi regime in 2011.²⁹³ One senior officer of the Chadian Ministry of Interior and Public Security confirmed the presence, in Seleka arsenals, of equipment previously under the Libyan government's custody, although he did not explicitly elaborate on the mechanism that was used to transfer these weapons to the CAR.²⁹⁴

Allegations were also collected according to which the Chadian contingent deployed within MISCA facilitated recovery by Seleka of a significant share of the weapons and ammunition that had been previously seized from them by the peace-keeping force. According to one interviewee, in particular, weapons were returned to Seleka with additional boxes of ammunition in Batangafo, Kaga-Bandoro, Bambari and Sibut.²⁹⁵

The presence of Chadian officers within the Seleka's leadership can also be regarded as an additional indication of the direct relationship between the rebel coalition and the regime in N'Djamena. Particularly notable was Seleka's nomination of Brigadier General of the Chadian army, Mahamat Bahar, as Chief of military intelligence. Bahar finally left Bangui in April 2014, when the Chadian Minister of Foreign Affairs announced the withdrawal of the army's contingent from the MISCA force.²⁹⁶ Similarly, the reported presence of General Saleh Djiddi and Colonel Redouane, respectively director general and high-ranking officer in the Chadian intelligence service (*Agence nationale de sécurité*, ANS) during the Seleka May 2014 congress held in Ndélé can also be seen to suggest a direct relationship between the Seleka and N'Djamena.

According to some Seleka officers interviewed for this report, until the removal of Djotodia from the Presidential palace in Bangui, Chadian intelligence officers were effectively in charge of the Seleka's intelligence and operations, and holding a firm grip on the administration from March 2013 until January 2014.²⁹⁷

Officially, since the withdrawal of its MISCA contingent and the closure of its southern border between April and May 2014, the Chadian government has stepped back from the CAR, relinquishing its direct role in the country and devoting all its efforts to a political and negotiated resolution of the crisis.²⁹⁸

A number of observers interviewed in September 2014, however, claimed that despite official statements, Chad's influence and leverage over the CAR remains intact.²⁹⁹ This is anecdotally illustrated by the

interviews with diplomats, Chadian and international NGO staff, academics, Seleka elements and former Chadian rebels. Interviews were held in N'Djamena, Bangui and Bambari between August and September 2014.

²⁹² As there are no industrial facilities for weapons and ammunition manufacture in Chad, the equipment possibly supplied by Chad was inevitably manufactured elsewhere, strongly reducing the visibility of the chain of custody of the items before delivery in the CAR.

²⁹³ Chadian security forces (in particular the *Garde Nationale Nomade du Tchad* - GNNT) did seize military equipment at the Libyan border after the fall of the Qaddafi regime, although there is no precise data on the types and the volumes of weapons captured (Conflict Armament Research interviews, held in Chad in April 2013, with Chadian security officers and Military Attachés of Western embassies).

²⁹⁴ IPIS interview, N'Djamena, September 2014.

²⁹⁵ IPIS interview, N'Djamena, September 2014. Details on the source who provided these elements are withheld for source protection concerns. Similar, although less detailed, reports were also provided by Seleka elements interviewed in Bambari in September 2014, and by one diplomatic representative interviewed in N'Djamena in September 2014.

²⁹⁶ Africa Confidential, *Déby's enemies crowd in*, May 2014; IPIS interviews with a former leader of a Chadian rebel movement (interviewed in N'Djamena) and Seleka officers (interviewed in Bambari), September 2014.

²⁹⁷ IPIS interviews with a former leader of a Chadian rebel movement (interviewed in N'Djamena) and one of Seleka's spokespersons (interviewed in Bambari), September 2014.

²⁹⁸ On the diplomatic scene, Chad has been particularly active. During its presidency of the ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States), six extraordinary meetings on the CAR were held, and the support of the CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa) in sustaining the CAR's national budget endorsed. In addition, Chad is one of the members of the Contact Group on the CAR, as well as of the Brazzaville Forum on the CAR.

²⁹⁹ Some observers also suggested, although without being in a position to provide fact-based evidence, that

exclusion of the Central African Transitional President, Ms Samba-Panza, from the ECCAS Summit held in Malabo in 27 June 2014. Here, she was prevented from attending Head of State consultations upon the explicit request of Chadian President Déby.³⁰⁰ On 23 September 2014, Ms Samba-Panza requested president Déby to send a military unit to the CAR to serve as her Presidential Guard.³⁰¹

3.1.2 The rationale behind Chad's support

Security interests

As outlined above, N'Djamena reportedly decided to support the Seleka essentially in an attempt to secure its borders and to avoid the CAR becoming a sanctuary for Chadian armed opposition groups. While most of the interviewees read Déby's choice to abandon his former ally Bozizé and to support regime change in Bangui as the result of a variety of considerations and interests, all unanimously underline that internal stability is the central concern of the Chadian regime. Being surrounded by neighbouring countries challenged by volatile security environments and armed insurgencies, Chadian stability is crucially connected with the regime's capacity to prevent contagion from neighbouring conflicts and attacks from the neighbouring territories. Direct threats from the eastern border were largely reduced with the rapprochement between N'Djamena and Khartoum in 2010, and the desert presents an almost insurmountable defence along Chad's northern borders. Instability in the south is however still perceived to be a serious threat, justifying direct initiatives.

The gradual adjustment of Déby's relationships with and stances on the different actors involved in the CAR can appear contradictory at first glance. However, the position is relatively coherent when viewed from the central goal of maintaining a favourable balance of influence in the northern regions of the CAR. Support to Bozizé started when an anti-Patassé insurgency was threatening stability in northwestern CAR. Later, when the armed groups that would form the Seleka had progressively eroded Bangui's capacity to control its northeastern territory, a dangerous power vacuum favourable to Chadian rebel groups had once again been created. This caused the Chadian presidency to consider an adjustment of its alliances. **Decisive support to the Seleka was finally only given when the rebel coalition was believed to be the best ally to manage the CAR's northern border.** Repudiation of the Seleka's rule in January 2014, the subsequent withdrawal of the Chadian MISCA contingent and closure of Chad's southern border – although reactive decisions that show that N'Djamena's strategy had not functioned as planned – also respond to the same rationale.³⁰²

Although from December 2013 Chad had started experiencing the negative repercussions of the CAR's crisis within its own territory, Chadian support to Seleka had also provided some indirect benefits for Chad, including, for instance, employment opportunities for some several thousand military personnel demobilized from the Chadian national army.³⁰³

Economic interests

Inevitably, other considerations have also influenced Chadian policy on the Seleka and the crisis in the CAR. Among those frequently cited during interviews for this report, were, firstly, the necessity to preserve the privileged position of Chadian business networks in the CAR despite the regime change, and to keep instability as far away as possible from oil fields (mainly located in Southern Chad). Moreover, N'Djamena had an interest in maintaining the CAR in a state of latent instability to secure Chadian direct influence, which corresponds with the regime's intention to reinforce its regional authority.

some Chadian troops may still be (discretely) deployed in the CAR. IPIS interviews, September 2014.

³⁰⁰ AfriqueInfoNews, *Centrafrique : Samba-Panza humiliée par Déby à Malabo*, 30 June 2014.

³⁰¹ Jeune Afrique, *Centrafrique: des militaires tchadiens pour la sécurité de Catherine Samba-Panza?*, 30 September 2014.

³⁰² IPIS interviews with Chadian and international analysts and observers, including academics, researchers, diplomats, governmental representatives and INGO workers, N'Djamena, September 2014.

³⁰³ More than 15,000 men were demobilized from the Chadian National Army (ANT) since 2011. Some interviewees, including diplomats, representatives of the civil society and academics, considered that the involvement of the recently demobilized Chadian military in the CAR could be regarded, from the N'Djamena regime's perspective, as a positive factor, as it reduces the potential risk of them being involved in internal protests (IPIS interviews, September 2014).

While many observers and publications on the crisis in the CAR speculate about the possible correlation between Chad's support to the Seleka and exploitation of some Central African natural resources, including crude oil, timber, diamonds, gold and water, this research could not establish any precise causal relationship. Many interviewees regarded these as elements of secondary importance, referring to them as the fallout of the crisis rather than triggers of N'Djamena's policy towards Bozizé and the Seleka. **Recent peaks of instability in the CAR have certainly created new profitable opportunities for some Chadian actors (from racketeering at border posts to charcoal trading and pastoral activities), but these appear to be mainly localized, spontaneous** and related to the crisis only because the latter created an opportunity for them to emerge.

Box 3.1: Oil resources in the CAR/Chad border area

Chad's main oil reserves are located mainly in four sedimentary basins in the south of the country, bordering the CAR and Cameroon, and in a smaller basin to the north of Lake Chad. After the completion of the Chad-Cameroon pipeline, Chad began pumping its first oil in July 2003 in the southwestern Doba basin, where the exploited oil fields are located less than 100 km from the border with the CAR. Prospecting is still ongoing in the southern central Doseo basin, where it is at an advanced stage, and in the southeastern Salamat basin. The permits for the exploration of this last basin are held by the China National Petroleum Corporation (CNPC), which also holds rights to the contiguous oil blocks A and B in the CAR (see section 1.3.2).³⁰⁴

Some international and national observers in the CAR see Chad's support to the Seleka and against Bozizé as a way for Déby to prevent oil drilling and exploitation in the CAR, so as to avoid sharing the cross-border oil reservoirs.³⁰⁵ However, oil extraction in the CAR is inconceivable in the short-term without huge investments, while operations in Chad are much more advanced.

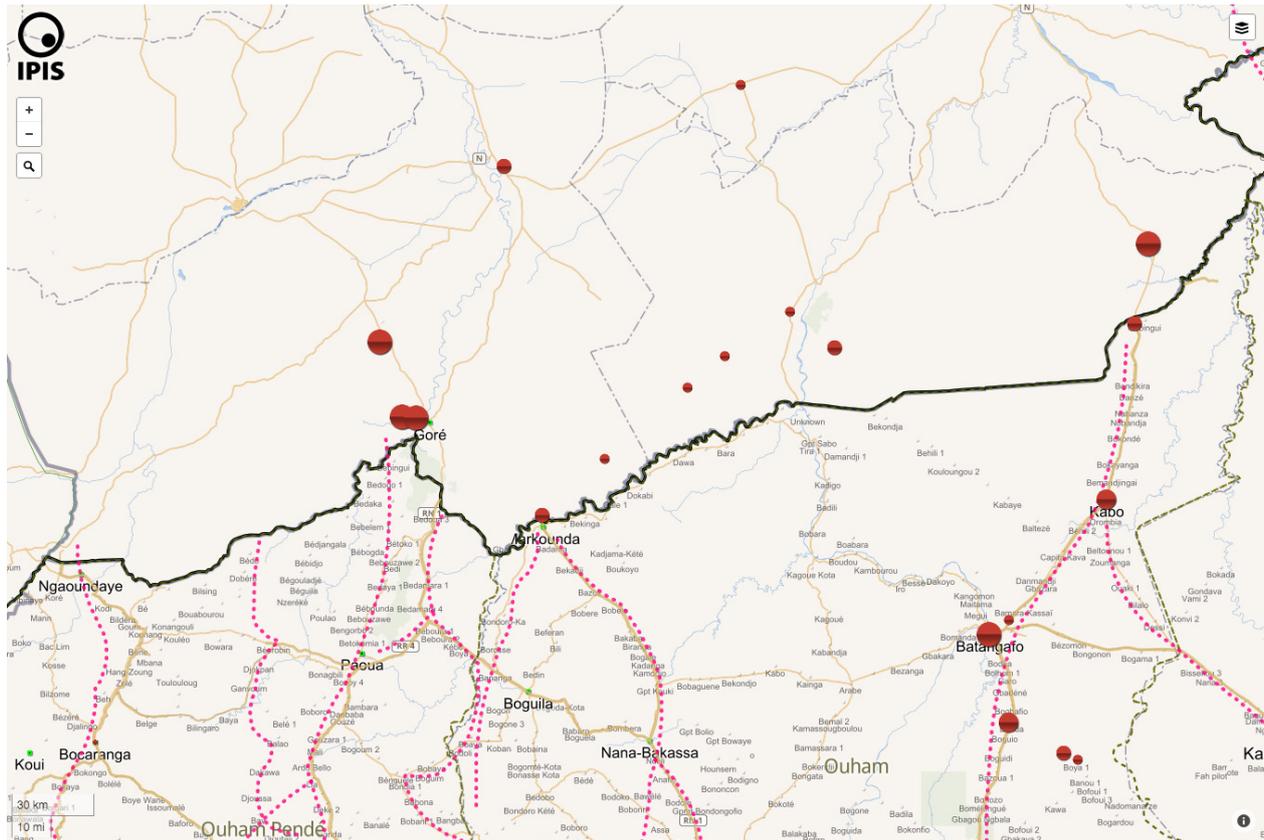
According to the interviewees, some Chadian interests over oil availability in the border areas exist, even if they are geared towards serving political and long-term objectives.³⁰⁶ Challenging the development of an oil industry by contributing to some degree of instability inside the CAR may in fact delay Bangui's emancipation from N'Djamena's supervision and interference. Moreover, and more importantly, the proximity of both Chad and the CAR oil reserves to their common border area is significant to Chadian strategy. Securing a stable and peaceful environment in Chad's southern regions and preventing contamination from conflict in the CAR is not only important to avoid the emergence of centres of protest and insubordination to the regime in N'Djamena, but is also a fundamental prerequisite for ensuring the continued flow of oil revenues' upon which the Chadian regime's survival crucially depends.

³⁰⁴ African Energy, n° 274, 27 March 2014, pp. 17-19. In July 2014, CNPC lost its "Bongor Est" permits for the Salamat basin due to a dispute over environmental damage caused in one of its sites in the Koudalwa region (Aljazeera, *Chad withdraws Chinese exploration permits*, 10 August 2014), but the permits were reinstated in October 2014 after a settlement (Reuters, *China's CNPC agrees to pay \$400 mln to settle Chad dispute – Chad Minister*, 27 October 2014.).

³⁰⁵ IPIS interviews in Bangui, May 2014; Africa Energy Intelligence, n° 692, 5 February 2013, p. 1.

³⁰⁶ According to some interviewees, the CAR oil reserves are more important to French interests than to Chadian ones. They also underlined that over-optimistic speculations on the importance of the CAR's reserves and the CAR's readiness to launch the extraction-phase were supported by Bozizé to gain popular support only. IPIS interviews in N'Djamena, September 2014.

Impact on pastoralism in the border region



IDP, refugee and returnee camps and cattle migration routes along border between northwestern CAR and Chad (September 2014) - legend: p. 11

Between December 2013 and September 2014, humanitarian agencies and organizations identified and registered approximately 150,000 displaced people from the CAR, including more than 100,000 Chadian returnees.³⁰⁷ Between 80,000 and 105,000 individuals were able to cross the border and to find shelter, mainly in Logone Oriental, Mandoul, Moyen Chari and Salamat regions.³⁰⁸ The combined effect of these waves of arrivals and disruption of traditional cattle migration into northern CAR because of the prevailing insecurity, have caused the number of cattle in the area to increase by 60 percent.³⁰⁹

These influxes of people and cattle thus generated unprecedented levels of competition over natural resources, pressure on the environment and a risk of livestock epidemics. This triggered tension between the different communities and created a serious risk of protracted instability in the region.

On their way to Chad, returnees and refugees lost over 90 per cent of their livestock.³¹⁰ They either had to leave their cattle behind when fleeing, or saw it raided by anti-balaka and *Révolution et Justice* militias or by Chadian soldiers when crossing the border. Moreover, disarmament operations conducted by the

³⁰⁷ IPIS interviews with governmental coordination commission for refugees and returnees (CNARR), UN agencies including UNHCR, OCHA and FAO, and local and international NGOs. All interviews were held in N'Djamena, in September 2014.

³⁰⁸ According to data provided by CNARR, five camps were settled in Logone Oriental (three), Moyen Chari (one) and Salamat (one), hosting a total population of more than 83,000 individuals. IPIS interview with CNARR officials, N'Djamena, 16 September.

³⁰⁹ In Southwestern Chad, an estimated 131,000 head of cattle are kept by semi-sedentary agro-pastoralists who traditionally do not venture into the CAR. As a result of the insecurity in the CAR, about 65,000 head of Chadian cattle were blocked in the area on their southward migration in search of pasture. Finally, the returnees and refugees arrived with an estimated 17,700 head of cattle (K. Passinring, *Diagnostic et propositions opérationnelles pour le soutien à l'élevage pastoral perturbé par la crise centrafricaine: mission d'étude au Logone Oriental, Mandoul/ Moyen Chari du 4 au 14 mars 2014*, AFD, FAO, COOPI, IRAM, Chadian government, March 2014, pp. 12-15).

³¹⁰ *Ibid.*, p. 15

Chadian National Army (ANT) in the areas where returnees and refugees have settled often result in cases of misappropriation of livestock by the military.³¹¹

Refugees (and returnees) further see themselves as obliged to sell part of their remaining and weakened livestock to improve the survival chances of their herd and to buy essential commodities. **This creates a favourable environment for so-called Chadian neo-pastoralists, wealthy officials of the military and civil administration, to acquire cattle at very low prices, which further impoverishes the refugees.** In this way, the Central African crisis acts as a catalyst for the rising power and influence of these neo-pastoralists, who often hire armed Peuhl to protect their herds. Enjoying de facto impunity, the latter destroy farming land in the border area, causing further hostility between pastoral and agricultural communities.³¹²

The herds of these neo-pastoralists are also often guarded by elements of the ANT. The pastoralists intrude into the north of Ouham-Pendé to let the cattle graze, which results in regular clashes with the local population and militias. Moreover, during the 2013-2014 dry season, **ANT soldiers were reported to increasingly collaborate with armed Peuhl, staging incursions across the border to raid cattle and loot villages.**³¹³

Although these dynamics can be considered a direct consequence of the prevailing, humanitarian and security crises, it is unclear to what extent they go beyond the opportunistic enrichment of local strongmen, and have systematically fuelled lucrative networks linked to the political and economic elite in the capital.

The current situation in the CAR raises a number of serious concerns for the Chadian regime. The inter-community tensions that have emerged in the CAR between Muslim and Christian groups could easily cross the border and contribute to destabilizing the southern part of Chad, where the social fabric is very similar. While Chad has thus far been a positive example of cohabitation between communities with different faiths and beliefs, the arrival of waves of refugees and returnees from the CAR into the southern regions of Chad could disrupt long-standing, peaceful and inter-community relationships. This could potentially threaten the stability of this strategically important oil producing region and turn southern Chad into an epicentre of new forms of protest against the regime, including through Islamist radicalization. **In this regard, the regime's decision to support the Seleka seems to have exacerbated the very risks it intended to minimize.**

³¹¹ IPIS interviews held in N'Djamena, in September 2014, with a leader of a former rebel movement and INGO staff providing assistance to pastoralist displaced communities.

³¹² In May 2014, the official website of the Presidency of Chad reported that Déby during a visit to Goré, in the border region with the CAR, announced he had arrested and removed from office nearly all military leaders of Goré, since they had become cattle breeders and continuously put their cattle in farmer's fields, destroying the crops; their cattle were reportedly seized, to serve as food for the soldiers. When asked about this measure, none of the top-ranking military interviewed at the Ministry of Defence in N'Djamena had knowledge of it, and believed it had never been taken. Site officiel de la Présidence de la République du Tchad, *Idriss Déby Itno au contact du Tchad profond : des officiers-éleveurs relevés de leur fonction à Goré*, 9 May 2014; IPIS interviews at Ministry of Defence, N'Djamena, September 2014.

³¹³ IPIS interviews with INGO workers in Bangui, July 2014; IPIS phone interview with NGO actor in northwest CAR, September 2014.

3.2 Sudan

In brief

Sudan's direct support to the Seleka was instrumental in the success of the Seleka's military campaign.

Sudan's support included logistical, political and direct military assistance through, for example, military hardware deliveries, facilitation of the recruitment of troops from pro-Khartoum paramilitary groups, and military training for Seleka fighters.

It is likely that Sudan's direct military support to the Seleka was put on hold after the regime change in the CAR.

Anti-LRA operations in the CAR, the risk of a possible rapprochement between Bangui and Juba, and the possibility of the CAR becoming a safe haven for Sudan's opposition groups were concerns for the Sudanese regime, and a reason to support the Seleka.

Other secondary reasons were the emergence of a new regional ally, the possibility of enlarging Sudan's sphere of direct influence in the region, and the opportunity of sharing the benefit from natural resources.

3.2.1 Sudan's role in supporting the Seleka

The majority of Seleka leaders interviewed between June and September 2014 recognized the direct support provided by the Sudanese regime to their movement. They considered such assistance from the outset to be an important factor in the success of their military campaign between 2012 and 2013. The friendly relationship between the regime in Khartoum and some of the Seleka's main leaders, in particular Michel Djotodia, is well known and dates back to the 1990s. In that period, Djotodia used to be based in Nyala, Southern Darfur, and reportedly established solid cooperation ties with the Sudanese national intelligence services (broadly known as NISS – National Intelligence and Security Services). After his departure from Sudan, Djotodia is said to have kept his relationship network active and could therefore readily rely on it when the Seleka coalition was formed in 2012.

Sudan's support to Djotodia's entourage was provided in different forms, including logistical assistance to travel, political support and facilitation of contacts with other friendly regimes (including in particular Egypt, Iran and Turkey). Moreover, the regime allegedly provided direct military support through the appointment of military advisers, arms deliveries, facilitation of the recruitment of troops from the ranks of pro-Khartoum paramilitary groups operating in Darfur (generally referred to as *Janjaweed*), military training for Seleka fighters (in particular when Djotodia was in charge of the State Presidency) and medical assistance for injured Seleka elements.³¹⁴ Of particular importance in this regard, is the presence in the Seleka leadership of General Moussa Assimeh, a high-ranking commander of the Janjaweed militias in Darfur, who was reportedly in charge of liaison with the Sudanese NISS and the Sudanese Embassy in Bangui, on behalf of Michel Djotodia.³¹⁵

Between 2012 and 2013, the Seleka could make use of various direct supplies of military hardware (mainly small/medium calibre infantry weapons, ammunition and vehicles) from Sudan. This equipment was supplied by Khartoum through air deliveries on at least two occasions (in August and

³¹⁴ IPIS interviews with several diplomats, MISCA military senior officers, Central African Gendarmerie officers, journalists (all interviews held separately in Bangui, in July 2014), Seleka officers (held separately in Bangui and Bambari, July, August and September 2014), an international researcher (interview in N'Djamena, September 2014), and a former Chadian rebel leader with troops in the Seleka ranks (interview in N'Djamena, September 2014).

³¹⁵ *Ibid.*

October 2013),³¹⁶ and through the weapons market located on the Sudanese side of the border in Am Dafaq, reportedly the main hub for weapons and ammunition in the sub-region. According to several interviewees, the Am Dafaq market, although officially clandestine, is in practice strictly monitored and controlled by the Sudanese intelligence services.³¹⁷ The fact that the Seleka could use it as their principle source of arms and ammunition supply should therefore be regarded as an explicit indication of the Sudanese authorities' support to the rebel coalition.

The above-mentioned allegations appear to be consistent with preliminary conclusions reached by Conflict Armament Research from their analysis of data collected during physical inspections of weapons and ammunition stockpiles obtained during Seleka disarmament operations conducted by MISCA. These stockpiles contain a relatively significant proportion of weapons and ammunition identical to those observed in Sudan (in particular over the period 2010-2014) and identified as originating from the Sudanese Armed Forces (SAF).³¹⁸ The mere presence of identical equipment under both Seleka and SAF custody cannot alone be considered conclusive evidence of Sudanese supply; some equipment may have been delivered by foreign manufacturing countries to both the CAR and the Republic of the Sudan.³¹⁹ Moreover, in the case of items domestically produced in Sudan, their presence in the CAR could be the result of illicit supply mechanisms. The presence of Sudanese manufactured small calibre ammunition of very recent manufacture in these stockpiles (particularly lots manufactured in 2011, 2012 and 2013) nevertheless suggests that the Sudanese authorities did directly supply the Central African rebel coalition. Indeed, the very short timescale within which the ammunition could have been supplied to actors other than the Seleka, deployed to the field, and then captured by or sold to the Seleka renders the hypothesis that they originate from non-direct supply from Sudan quite unlikely.

It would be inappropriate to consider that Sudan was the sole supplier of military assistance to the Seleka. Nevertheless, the overall majority of interviewees (including Seleka officers) agree on the fact that Khartoum's support to the group was highly instrumental in the success of its military campaign on Bangui, and to the consolidation of the Seleka's control over the country after they seized power. Similarly, they also underlined that, although the relationship between Seleka's leadership and the Sudanese intelligence services did not weaken after the removal of Djotodia from the Presidential palace in Bangui, it is likely that Sudan's direct military support to the rebel coalition was put on hold since this regime change.³²⁰

3.2.2 The rationale of Sudan's support

Security interests

Much like Chad, Sudan's reasons for supporting the Seleka emerge from a range of immediate to long-term interests. Although the issue appears to be considered less pressing than in N'Djamena, Khartoum was also concerned about the instability in its immediate neighbourhood. **Taking advantage of a friendly relationship with a regime other than Bozizé's represented one step towards Sudan's objectives.**

Firstly, Bozizé's support to Ugandan-led anti-LRA operations, involving US special forces, in the region (including in close proximity to Sudanese territory) represented a serious concern for

³¹⁶ Flight details and testimonies of individuals who witnessed the off-load of the aircrafts were provided by Conflict Armament Research.

³¹⁷ IPIS interviews with Seleka officers, Bangui, August and September 2014, and with 'General' Baba Laddé, leader of the FPR and prefect of the Grande Sido department, N'Djamena, September 2014.

³¹⁸ These items include 12.7mm ammunition (of Iranian manufacture), 82mm mortar bombs, 7.62x39mm and 7.39x54Rmm, Multiple-rockets launchers 107mm and 12.7mm machine-guns type A-80 (of Sudanese manufacture), and some specific lots of 7.62x54Rmm and 12.7x109mm ammunition (of Chinese manufacture). The presence of these items in different conflict theatres in Sudan and South Sudan has been consistently documented by the Human Security Baseline Assessment of the Small Arms Survey.

³¹⁹ In theory, this could well be the case, for instance, for the Chinese-manufactured ammunition.

³²⁰ IPIS interviews with several diplomats, MISCA military senior officers, Central African Gendarmerie officers, journalists (all interviews held separately in Bangui, July 2014), Seleka officers (held separately in Bangui and Bambari, July, August and September 2014), an international researcher (interview in N'Djamena, September 2014), and a former Chadian rebel leader with troops in the Seleka ranks (interview in N'Djamena, September 2014).

the Sudanese regime. This concern is parallel to the firm resistance of the regime in Khartoum to the presence in South Sudan of UPDF forces fighting alongside the SPLA (Sudan People's Liberation Army) of President Salva Kiir.³²¹ Some interviewees deemed Bozizé's attempt – launched in the last days of his presidency – to gain support from South Sudan as a potential additional incentive to support the Seleka's attempts to accelerate his fall.

Secondly, since the independence of South Sudan in July 2011, areas on the southwestern borders of Sudan (the zone between South Darfur, Western Bahr-el-Ghazal in South Sudan, and the prefecture of Haute-Kotto in the CAR) hosted several military camps of Sudanese armed groups (mainly Darfurian).³²²

Supporting Djotodia's troops may, for the regime in Khartoum, have represented the best guarantee of avoiding the use of CAR territory as safe havens by its opposition (similarly to what had already occurred in South Sudan after independence was proclaimed).

Other reasons, often described as secondary or indirect, were provided during the interviews held in Chad.³²³ Among the benefits cited are, firstly, the emergence of a new regional ally sharing common ideological grounds. Moreover, supporting the Seleka would have enlarged Sudan's sphere of direct influence in the region through a favourable and indebted partner. It would also have created the possibility of sharing the benefits of some natural resources (such as gold and diamonds), and facilitating the interests of other allies (for example, Chinese) in the CAR.

After the independence of South Sudan, Sudan lost approximately 75% of its oil revenues, leading to a 55% decrease in Sudan's fiscal earnings and a loss of two thirds of its foreign exchange reserves.³²⁴ In an attempt to counter the economic crisis and social upheaval thus engendered, Sudan developed a policy aimed at boosting domestic production and export of gold and oil.³²⁵ Acquiring access to these, and other, natural resources in the CAR might therefore have constituted an alluring prospect for the Sudanese regime. It has to be reiterated, however, that the research and interviews conducted for this report have not uncovered any direct evidence to suggest that these considerations were central to the Sudanese regime in their decision to support the Seleka.

³²¹ IPIS interviews with diplomats following South Sudan crisis (Addis Ababa, February 2014), and with a former senior government officer of Chad (N'Djamena, September 2014).

³²² For additional details on the presence of Darfurian armed groups in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal in 2011, see Small Arms Survey, *Forgotten Darfur: Old Tactics and New Players*, HSBA Working Paper 29, 2012.

³²³ IPIS interviews with a Chadian former senior governmental officer, a former rebel leader, a Central African opposition movement's officer, and observers such as diplomats, academics, UN and INGO staff, N'Djamena, September 2014.

³²⁴ International Monetary Fund, *Sudan: Article IV Consultation, IMF Country Report*, 13/317, October 2013, p. 4.

³²⁵ S. Spittaels & Y. Weyns, *Mapping Conflict Motives: the Sudan-South Sudan Border*, IPIS, 2014, p. 4.

3.3. Cameroon

In brief

The Cameroonian authorities have been trying to minimize hostilities spilling over the border, and to prevent rebels from using Cameroon as a rear base.

Cameroon is concerned that the CAR conflict might act as a further catalyst for insecurity in the far north and that former Seleka elements might join Boko Haram.

There is a long history of diamond and gold smuggling from the CAR into Cameroon.

Diamonds originating from Cameroon are virtually identical to those from western CAR, making it nearly impossible to determine where they were extracted.

Although diamond smuggling to Cameroon has considerably increased since 2013, the official diamond exports of Cameroon have decreased and remain far below estimated Cameroonian production capacity.

This implies that Central African diamonds easily find their way into the parallel market through Cameroon.

Also gold, produced in Cameroon or passing through it from the CAR, is smuggled out in large quantities.

3.3.1 Security interests

Since the outbreak of the conflict in December 2012, the Cameroonian authorities have been trying to minimize hostilities spilling over the border. The risk thereof was firstly caused by the presence of Seleka fighters, who staged several incursions in the eastern region of Cameroon, leading to the killing of Cameroonian soldiers and civilians.³²⁶ In some instances, these incursions were intended to loot. In others, they were aimed at refugee camps, where several former FACA soldiers and members of the Presidential Guard had found refuge.

The presence of these FACA soldiers constituted a second security risk for Cameroon. Not only had they crossed the border with their arms, but some were also organising themselves to launch an offensive against the Seleka (see section 2.1.1). In response, the Cameroonian armed forces (FAC) carried out several disarmament operations throughout April and May 2013 in refugee camps along the border, and dispatched a Rapid Intervention Battalion (BIR) to the eastern part of the country in early December 2013.

With the emergence of anti-balaka militias in western CAR and clashes between anti-balaka and Seleka throughout early 2014, the security risk for Cameroon increased. The decision by the Cameroonian authorities to expel former President Bozizé on 11 February 2014 has to be seen in light of these developments. **The BIR had to prevent anti-balaka and Seleka forces from using Cameroon as a rear base, and repel incursions by Seleka forces during their retreat from western CAR in early 2014. Anti-balaka elements pose a continuing security threat to Cameroon, taking hostages and looting.** In April 2014, for instance, an estimated 180 anti-balaka elements attacked the village of Ngaoui just across the border, coming from Gaigo in Ouham-Pendé, CAR.³²⁷



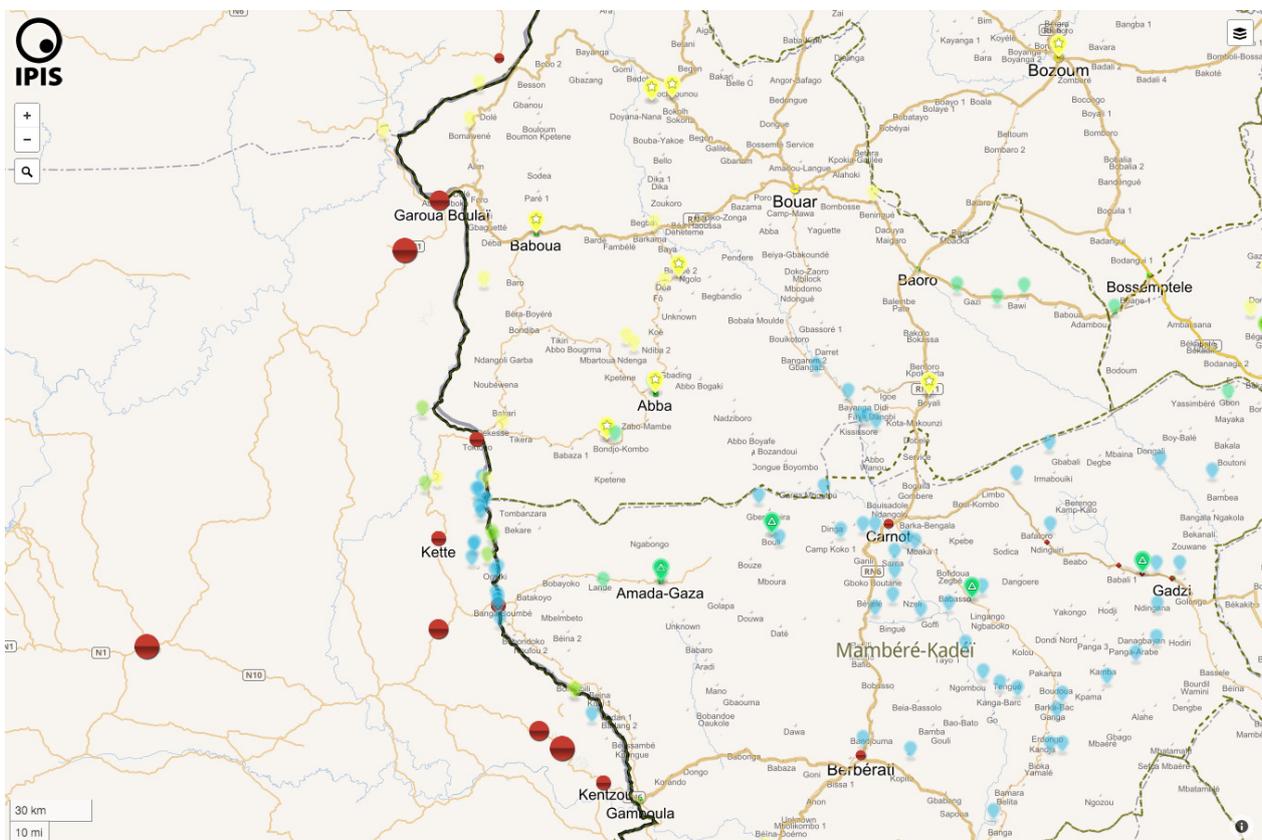
³²⁶ IPIS Editorial, Weekly briefing 15-21 August 2013.

³²⁷ Cameroon Info, *Insécurité transfrontalière: 180 Anti-Balaka attaquent Meiganga (sic)*, 22 April 2014.

out by IPIS could not verify these allegations. Moreover, following the arrest of Abdoulaye Miskine in Cameroon in September 2013, FDPC fighters staged several incursions into Cameroonian territory, taking civilian hostages in an effort to force the authorities into liberating their leader (see annex II 3.4). As such, the FDPC has since emerged as an additional threat to security and stability in eastern Cameroon.

Apart from the insecurity along its eastern border, Cameroon is plagued by Boko Haram incursions in the northern part of the country. On 27 July 2014, in an event that was prolifically covered by the media, Boko Haram kidnapped the wife of the Vice-Prime Minister and killed 15 people during an incursion in Kolofata. **The authorities are therefore extremely worried that the Central African conflict might act as a further catalyst for insecurity in the far north of the country. In particular, the authorities fear that former Seleka elements, especially of the FPR, might join Boko Haram.** Therefore, the Cameroonian authorities are reportedly advocating in N'Djamena that the Chadian authorities step up their efforts to reintegrate FPR fighters according to their 2012 agreement with Baba Laddé.³²⁸

3.3.2 Natural resources



Refugee sites and artisanal diamond and gold mining sites along the CAR-Cameroon border (September 2014) - legend: p. 11

Cameroon has both diamond and gold mines, the majority of which are located in the east of the country. Officials from both Cameroon and the CAR have reported a long history of diamond and gold smuggling from the CAR into Cameroon.³²⁹ Central African diamonds smuggled to Cameroon are generally sold just across the border, e.g. in Garoua Boulai, west of Bouar, or in Ketzou, west of Berbérati.

³²⁸ IPIS interview with rebel leader, N'Djamena, September 2014.

³²⁹ IPIS interviews with national and regional mining officials and with representatives of buying offices in Bangui, officials from the Mining Department and National Secretariat for the Kimberly Process in Yaoundé, July-August 2014. See also: Matthysen & Clarkson, *Gold and diamonds in the Central African Republic*, IPIS, February 2013, p. 19.

Especially now that buyers are scarce in the west of the CAR and prices depressed, traders pay their way past rebel checkpoints into the east of Cameroon.³³⁰ **According to the interviewees, since the start of the crisis in the CAR, and the subsequent suspension of the CAR from the Kimberley Process (KP), more diamonds have entered Cameroon.**³³¹

Cameroon joined the KP in August 2012. According to officials from the mining department, the country has a potential diamond production of 5,000 carats per year.³³² In 2013, official diamond production amounted to 2,723 carats, and export to 2,421 carats.³³³ This is very low compared to the CAR, where the official production, for example in 2012, was 365,917 carats.³³⁴

Most diamonds in Cameroon are extracted artisanally along the Kadeï river, which runs into Mambere-Kadeï in the CAR. **Consequently, diamonds originating from the Cameroonian side are virtually identical to those found in western CAR, making it nearly impossible to determine on which side of the border they were extracted.** Moreover, upstream, the origin of diamonds is determined on the spot at a buying office, based on the declaration of the finder.³³⁵ As a result, it is relatively easy to smuggle diamonds from the CAR border area into Cameroon, and declare the stones as Cameroonian. According to several interviewees, many Central African refugees who had previously been active in diamond and gold mining and trading, have started to carry out these activities in Cameroon.³³⁶ This has caused an increase in Cameroonian production of these resources as well.

It is therefore surprising to note that in spite of increased diamond smuggling and production since 2013, the official diamond exports of Cameroon have not risen. On the contrary, **export figures have decreased between 2013 and the first semester of 2014,³³⁷ and remain far below the estimated Cameroonian production capacity.** This implies that selling Central African diamonds on the parallel market is either easier, more lucrative, or both. Otherwise smugglers would have incentives to try declaring the CAR diamonds as Cameroonian, leading to a surge in official export figures.³³⁸

It is very difficult to estimate the volume of smuggled diamonds.³³⁹ Fake Cameroonian KP certificates presented abroad and detected by the Cameroonian authorities indicate however that the volume of illegal exports is significant. In 2013, the Kimberley Process Secretariat in Cameroon detected fake KP certificates for a total of 6,722 carats. With a potential production in Cameroon of only 5,000 carats, these almost certainly include diamonds from the CAR.³⁴⁰

The majority of Cameroon's gold mines, all of them artisanal, are also located in eastern Cameroon, often close to the CAR border.³⁴¹ Cameroon has an estimated annual production of 1,500 to 1,800 kg of gold.³⁴² There are roughly 100 operators exploiting gold, of which about 80% are Chinese. As is the case

³³⁰ Business Insider, *Gold and diamonds feed Central African religious violence*, August 2014.

³³¹ IPIS interview with Director General of *Cadre d'Appui et de Promotion de l'Artisanat Minier (CAPAM)*, Yaoundé, August 2014.

³³² IPIS interview with Director General of Mines and the National Secretariat for the Kimberly Process, Yaoundé, August 2014. The US Geological Survey estimates the annual capacity at 12,000 carats, and the actual production in 2012 at 5,000 (*2012 Minerals Yearbook – Cameroon and Cape Verde*, Tables 1 and 2).

³³³ KP Statistics for Cameroon (at www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/cameroon-0).

³³⁴ KP Statistics for the CAR (at www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/central-african-republic).

³³⁵ IPIS interviews with officials from the National Secretariat for the Kimberly Process, Yaoundé, July-August 2014.

³³⁶ This is the case, for instance, in the gold mines around Kentzou and Garoua Boulai (IPIS interview with Director of CAPAM, Yaoundé, August 2014). The integration of Central African refugees in eastern Cameroon has been facilitated by their common language and culture.

³³⁷ In 2013 the total export amounted to 2,421 carats, in the first semester of 2014 to 786 carats. This reduction is due to the halted exploration activities of the C&K Mining Company (National Secretariat of the Kimberly Process, Export statistics 2013 and 2014).

³³⁸ IPIS interview with Director General of Mines and Director of CAPAM, Yaoundé, August 2014.

³³⁹ IPIS interview with Director General of CAPAM, Director General of Mines and officials from the KP Secretariat, Yaoundé, August 2014.

³⁴⁰ One extreme past example of a fraudulent export through Cameroon of diamonds most likely coming from the CAR, was a parcel of 281,869 carats, with a certificate of origin from Cameroon as well as a fake KP certificate from the CAR, which left through Douala Airport at the end of 2009 (Certificate of Origin number: 0123, 09/11/09; Kimberly Process Certificate CAR number 010336; Shipment Airwaybill number 586756155).

³⁴¹ According to Cameroon legislation, gold exploitation with excavators and crushers is still considered to be artisanal.

³⁴² USGS, *2012 Minerals Yearbook – Cameroon and Cape Verde*, Table 1.

for the CAR, the official export figures for gold are very low, in 2013 being only 74 kg.³⁴³ **Gold produced in Cameroon or passing through it from the CAR is thus smuggled out in large quantities.**

Box 3.3: Export and transit of goods to the CAR

For the landlocked CAR, Cameroon has always been essential for the import and export of goods.³⁴⁴ The conflict in the CAR has had a negative impact on the export and transit of goods from Cameroon into the CAR. In 2013, the value of goods exported by Cameroon to the CAR decreased by 49% compared to 2012. In the first semester of 2014, the value of exported goods had though risen again to approximately the same level as in 2012.³⁴⁵ The crisis had a similar impact on the transit of goods from third countries through Cameroon to the CAR: the quantity of transit goods in tons decreased in 2013 by 33% compared to 2012.³⁴⁶

³⁴³ Official statistics for 2013 from the Director General of Mines, Yaoundé, August 2014.

³⁴⁴ IPIS interview with senior customs inspector, Yaoundé, August 2014.

³⁴⁵ The total value of exported goods in millions of FCFA, for 2010: 11,751; 2011: 11.653; 2012: 15.785; 2013: 8,064; first semester of 2014: 7,048 (Statistics of exports to the CAR 2010-2014, received by IPIS from Directorate General of Customs).

³⁴⁶ The total quantity of transit goods in tons, for 2010: 137,668; 2011: 152,801; 2012: 147,433; 2013: 98,516; first semester of 2014: 36,271 (Statistics of the export and transit of goods to the CAR 2010-2014, received by IPIS from Directorate General of Customs).

Conclusion

Between December 2012 and March 2013, the Seleka rebel coalition quickly advanced throughout the east. They occupied military bases and took control of regional capitals and central mining towns. The Seleka used their military weight to push for the departure of Bozizé and finally took power by means of a coup on 24 March 2014. These strategies indicate the Seleka's clear power motives.

However, as long as the Seleka were in power, they never launched any initiatives to tackle the grievances they had previously voiced regarding the socio-economic development of the northeast or good governance. In this respect it is notable that the Seleka only with the emergence of the anti-balaka started to express their grievances in religious terms.

The power objective of the Seleka therefore in practice turned out to be a means that served a clear end: greed. This motive played out at three levels. Firstly, the UFDR and CPJP constituents of the Seleka took control over the east and developed elaborate rent-seeking strategies in mining sites and administrative centers. Secondly, foreign fighters and other armed groups of the Seleka, such as fighters of the FPR, concentrated their presence in the west, where they claimed their spoils of war with a more short-time perspective. Thirdly, Seleka leaders used their positions in the government for large-scale personal enrichment, most notably within the mining administration.

Since the fall of the Seleka in January 2014, they retreated to the east of the country. The coalition became weaker and more divided, with commanders in the east growing increasingly distrustful of their representatives in the capital and of each other. One of the dividing factors has been the demand to split the country. In September 2014, these tensions resulted in a split within the Seleka movement: one group has been rebranded as the FPRC, the other as the FRC. The FPRC and the FRC still have the exclusive control over some areas in the east and these groups continue to profit from mining activities. Whereas the FPRC is more in control of the eastern diamond mining areas, the FRC's main zone of influence encompasses the main gold mining sites in the area.

From the start of their offensive, the Seleka relied heavily on support from foreign mercenaries and regimes. Sudan supported the Seleka logistically, politically and militarily from the onset. This support was instrumental in the success of the Seleka's initial military campaign. Although the Chadian authorities had been involved with the Seleka since late 2012, they stepped up their military and political support after the Libreville agreement in January 2013. Securing their respective border areas seems to have been the main motive of these regimes, besides political and economic considerations.

When the anti-balaka started fighting the Seleka in the second half of 2013, their initial motives were self-defence, and - for certain elements or groups - the return of ousted President Bozizé. Both motivations have however waned over time. The anti-balaka movement remains disparate: the leadership in Bangui is divided, and anti-balaka in the west of the country are a loose coalition of different armed groups who follow the orders of their respective leaders.

Anti-balaka violence quickly went beyond self-defence, and Muslim civilians became the prime target of ill-treatment, killing, and looting. Seleka's widespread human rights violations against the mainly non-Muslim population in Bangui and the west had served as a catalyst for longstanding socio-economic tensions along religious fault lines.

Partly due to a lack of chains of command, the behaviour of anti-balaka groups is, in comparison to the Seleka in the east, more predatory and mainly focused on short-term gain. This also goes for their doings at mining sites in the west of the country. After the initial plundering in these areas, anti-balaka have turned to other profitable mining activities, focusing more on gold than on diamonds. They control several gold mining sites, where they receive protection money and local commanders have become active as traders.

There is therefore a risk that the evolution of the anti-balaka parallels that of militia groups in eastern DR Congo, whose motives have shifted from self-defence to greed. The more local commanders have vested economic interests, the more elusive a political solution to the conflict risks to become.

Annex I: Other armed groups

1. Révolution et Justice (RJ)

The *Révolution et Justice* movement was created by Armel Sayo in late 2013 in northern Ouham-Pendé. He was a FACA officer under President Patassé and in charge of his security during the 2010 electoral campaign.³⁴⁷ He initially joined the Seleka under the UFR banner of Florian Ndjadder with whom he reportedly has close ties. Armel Sayo withdrew from the alliance in March 2013 and founded the *Comité national pour la restauration de la démocratie* (CNRD), based in Ouham-Pendé.



With this group he started loosely collaborating with Abdoulaye Miskine's FDPC and was reported to have sent reinforcements to the FDPC when it clashed with Seleka fighters in early April 2013. Although on 17 April 2013 the FDPC and CNRD agreed to enter into an alliance called the *Union des forces armées centrafricaines pour la restauration de la démocratie* (UFACARD), little has been heard of this alliance since.³⁴⁸

In the beginning of December 2013, Armel Sayo published two online video messages, announcing the creation of the *Révolution et Justice* movement with a view to fighting the Seleka 'terrorists'.³⁴⁹ He mainly recruited amongst former APRD fighters and the local youth around Paoua and Ngaoundaye. *Révolution et Justice* elements are currently estimated to number between 1,000 and 5,000.³⁵⁰

The group initially started fighting Seleka forces towards Boguila in Ouham. They also engaged in clashes in this locality with armed Peuhl and with FPR elements that arrived from Mamberé-Kadéï. In February 2014, they clashed with the FPR at Bang and took control over the border crossing. In June 2014, *Révolution et Justice* again fought for control over the lucrative crossing and the border area with Cameroon, this time with anti-balaka fighters. On 1 July 2014, they were finally forced out of Bang by MISCA.

Apart from illegal taxation at the border, the movement is also heavily involved in cattle raiding. These raids are often accompanied by abuses against the civilian population and lead to regular clashes between competing armed groups in the area.

Widely described by observers as an opportunist, Armel Sayo had clear political ambitions from the outset, which explains his shifting and sometimes conflicting alliances. Feeling too far removed and excluded from the political process in Bangui, he started a 'peaceful march' towards the capital with a couple of hundred fighters in the second week of July 2014. After having signed the Brazzaville ceasefire agreement a couple of weeks later, Armel Sayo announced the redeployment of his fighters back to Ouham-Pendé from Bossembélé.³⁵¹ On 22 August 2014, he became the Minister of Youth and Sport under the new government headed by Mahamat Kamoun.³⁵² Since, fighting has broken out between different factions within *Révolution et Justice* around Bocaranga over the command of the movement.³⁵³

³⁴⁷ Armel Sayo's mother married Patassé in 2010.

³⁴⁸ Accord "UFACARD" (FACA-CNRD-FDPC), Gamboula, 17 April 2013.

³⁴⁹ The videos can be accessed on: www.youtube.com/watch?v=imsDhkz7hR0.

³⁵⁰ IPIS interview with UN official, Bangui, July 2014; IPIS phone interview with NGO actor in Ouham-Pendé, September 2014.

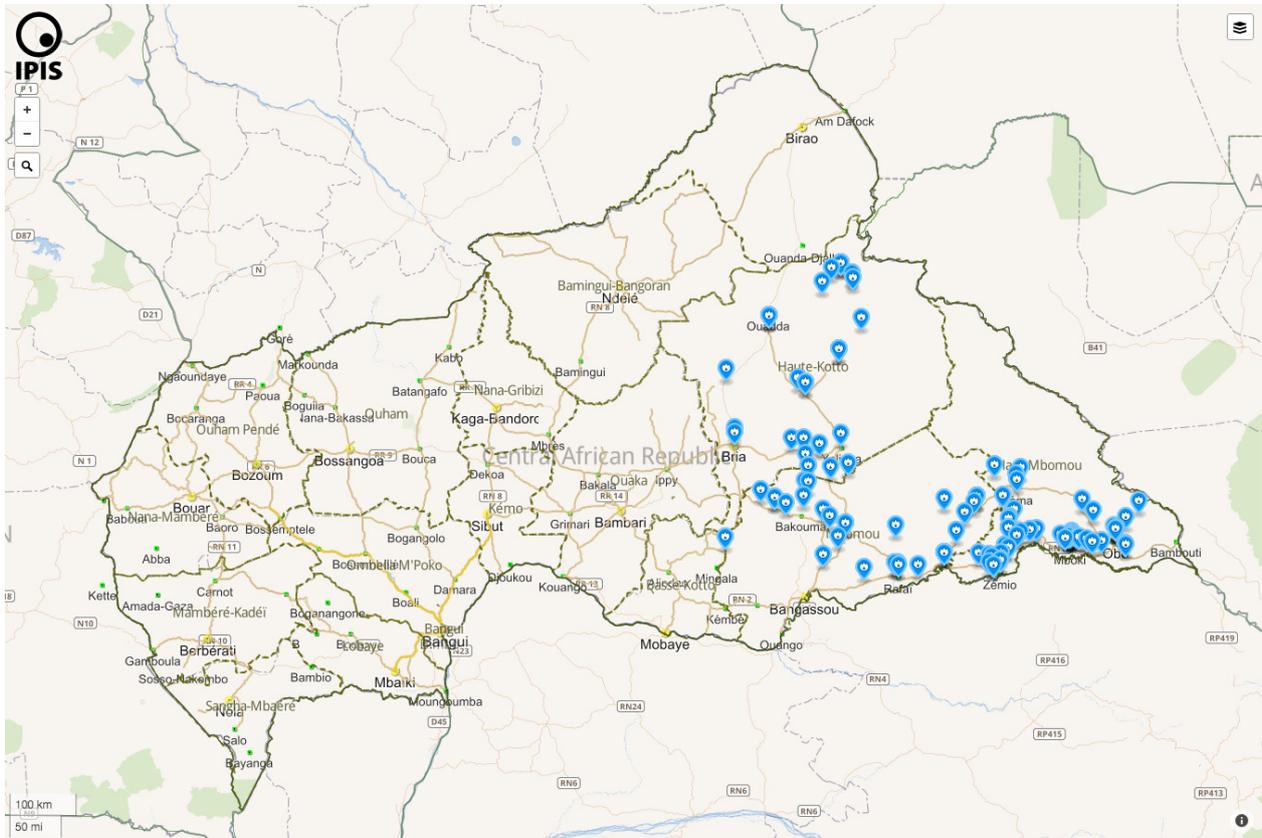
³⁵¹ RJDH-RCA, *Bangui: Le mouvement Révolution-Justice renonce à sa marche sur Bangui*, 1 August 2014.

³⁵² Afrique actualité, *RCA : le nouveau gouvernement enfin dévoilé*, 24 August 2014; IPIS phone interview with NGO actor in northwest CAR, September 2014; International NGO internal report, September 2014.

³⁵³ IPIS telephone interview with international NGO worker in Paoua, September 2014.

2. Lord's Resistance Army (LRA)

2.1 The LRA in the Central African Republic



Incidents involving LRA elements (September 2014) - legend: p. 11

The Lord's Resistance Army first emerged in northern Uganda in 1986. Over time, the LRA became a notorious and feared rebel group, infamous for the abduction and mutilation of civilians. Its first major raid in the CAR was in March 2008 in Haut-Mbomou prefecture. Over time and in response to African Union and Ugandan military presence, the LRA pushed further west and north, committing widespread attacks in the prefectures of Mbomou, Haute-Kotto, and Vakaga between 2009 and 2012.³⁵⁴

Throughout 2013 the LRA raided villages in Haute-Kotto, Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou. Senior LRA commanders, possibly including Joseph Kony himself, reportedly operated in Vakaga and northern Haute-Kotto and sought refuge across the border in the Kafia Kingi enclave, a disputed territory between Sudan and South Sudan.³⁵⁵ The Ugandan-led and US-supported AU Regional Task Force exercised some degree of control over Haut-Mbomou, with permanent bases in Dembia, Mboki, Djéma, and Obo. Areas north and east of Haut-Mbomou were however largely out of reach for counter-LRA forces.³⁵⁶

In the first half of 2014, the small and mobile LRA groups appear to have remained concentrated in the Haute-Kotto and Haut-Mbomou prefectures, while making incursions into the Haut-Uele and Bas-Uele districts of the DRC's Province Orientale.³⁵⁷ In this period LRA groups have maintained a low profile and focused on survival activities, such as pillaging for food and supplies. In August 2014, the number of LRA fighters carrying weapons was estimated at about 200, but each militia cell is accompanied by captives forced to work as porters, cooks and sex slaves.³⁵⁸

³⁵⁴ LRA Crisis Tracker, *Annual Security Brief January-December 2013*, February 2014.

³⁵⁵ P. Lancaster, & L. Cakaj, *Loosing Kony's grip*, The Resolve, July 2013. p. 12.

³⁵⁶ K. Agger, *Blind spots, Gaining access to where the LRA operates*, Enough Project, November 2013, p. 3.

³⁵⁷ UN, Reports of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas of 14 November 2013 (S/2013/671) and 6 May 2014 (S/2014/319).

³⁵⁸ AFP, *Kony's LRA still holding on in Central Africa*, 15 August 2014.

In order to survive in the CAR, LRA forces have received supplies such as food and ammunition from their LRA bases in DRC.³⁵⁹ Loot from the numerous raids has also sustained the LRA's day-to-day needs. During 2013 and 2014, targeted attacks on diamond and gold mining sites intensified, both in Haute-Kotto and Mbomou.³⁶⁰ On these sites, LRA fighters looted supplies and abducted people, although there are no specific reports of minerals being stolen.³⁶¹

While there are no indications of the LRA benefiting from minerals, it is possibly gaining from other natural resources in the CAR. In February 2013, a cache of ivory was discovered in the area of Djéma, near Ragada, prompting speculation about the group's possible engagement in poaching as a source of survival.³⁶² It is however still unclear to what extent the LRA is relying on trade in illicit goods to survive.³⁶³

2.2 Relation between the LRA and the Seleka

A week after the Seleka seized power, Djotodia announced that his regime would eradicate the LRA within three months.³⁶⁴ Although the Seleka regime obviously did not manage to eradicate the LRA, violent clashes were reported on several occasions between April and December 2013.³⁶⁵ In June 2013 the Seleka launched a two-week operation, led by General Damane amongst others, to fight the LRA in Haute-Kotto prefecture.³⁶⁶

It was also General Damane who was designated by Djotodia to lead negotiations to secure the surrender of the LRA. Djotodia authorized Damane to send food and other supplies to the LRA, reportedly in an attempt to build trust with the group and encourage their defection.³⁶⁷ According to eyewitnesses, Seleka troops even forced community members to procure food and deliver it to the LRA. Between September and November 2013 Seleka leaders announced on several occasions that the LRA group was planning to surrender. No LRA members defected though, while in the meantime the Seleka continued to provide the group with supplies.³⁶⁸

During the Seleka's time in power, their relationship with the AU Regional Task Force was complex: Seleka leaders in Bangui continuously expressed their support for the AU force, while some local Seleka commanders, for example around Bria and Nzako, were reluctant to cooperate and to share information.³⁶⁹

After the Seleka lost power in Bangui, the LRA and the Seleka continued their contacts, mainly through cooperation. Only one violent clash between the two groups was reported in the period between January and August 2014.³⁷⁰ According to a UN report, Seleka combatants are suspected of acting in collusion with the LRA and may be providing the group with information about AU Regional Task Force operations, as well as with supplies, including arms and ammunition.³⁷¹ In at least one case, the Seleka allegedly provided these supplies in exchange for labour in mining areas: in the mine of Banalé east of Nzako, LRA captives were reportedly forced to work as diggers for the Seleka.³⁷² The Ugandan army (UPDF) has accused the Seleka of forcing civilians to give food and medicine to the LRA, and of trading ivory and minerals with the group. After the UPDF clashed with the Seleka in July 2014, it declared

³⁵⁹ LRA Crisis Tracker, *Annual Security Brief January-December 2013*, February 2014.

³⁶⁰ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/470), 5 August 2013.

³⁶¹ Analysis of all the LRA incidents from the LRA Crisis Tracker between September 2012 and August 2014.

³⁶² UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/261), 3 May 2013.

³⁶³ P. Lancaster & L. Cakaj, *Loosing Kony's grip*, The Resolve, July 2013, p. 18.

³⁶⁴ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/261), 3 May 2013.

³⁶⁵ Analysis of all the LRA incidents from the LRA Crisis Tracker between September 2012 and August 2014.

³⁶⁶ RJDH, *Bria: La Séléka lance une opération de grande envergure contre la LRA*, 11 June 2013.

³⁶⁷ LRA Crisis Tracker, *Annual Security Brief January-December 2013*, February 2014.

³⁶⁸ P. Ronan, *The backstory on Kony's "surrender talks"*, The Resolve, 21 November 2013. According to some observers, the Seleka leadership's main motivation for their approach to the LRA, was the 5 million US Dollar award offered by the US State Department for the capture of the LRA's top leaders Joseph Kony, Okot Odhiambo, and Dominic Ongwen.

³⁶⁹ K. Agger, *Blind spots, Gaining access to where the LRA operates*, Enough Project, November 2013, p. 3.

³⁷⁰ Analysis of all the LRA incidents from the LRA Crisis Tracker between September 2012 and August 2014.

³⁷¹ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas (S/2014/319), 6 May 2014.

³⁷² IPIS interview with the coordinator of the US group Invisible Children, Bangui, July 2014; AFP, *Kony's LRA still holding on in Central Africa*, 15 August 2014.

that fighting the Seleka would now constitute part of its mission in light of the fact that the group was cooperating with the LRA.³⁷³

The Seleka and the LRA have been operating in the same geographical area and still seem to have regular and cooperative contact. According to one expert, one of the factors keeping the LRA alive is the support given to it by the Seleka.³⁷⁴ However, this support seems to be only opportunistic.³⁷⁵ The opportunistic relationship between Seleka and LRA is possible because both groups are dispersed and lack a clear ideology. This also implies though that if it is within their interests, this relationship could readily shift into a more hostile one.

³⁷³ Reuters, *Uganda says Seleka now its enemy as it hunts LRA in Central African Republic*, 1 July 2014.

³⁷⁴ AFP, *Kony's LRA still holding on in Central Africa*, 15 August 2014.

³⁷⁵ Daily Monitor, *Kony's collaboration with Seleka rebels sparks fresh fears – UN*, 10 August 2014.

Annex II: Genealogy of the armed groups that created Seleka or were associated with it

1. Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR)

In 2006, the *Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement* (UFDR) was created as a coalition of previously existing armed bands gathered around park rangers – or *pisteurs*, as they are locally known – and local self-defence groups. The arrival of ex-liberators, such as Abakar Sabone, and the involvement of political entrepreneurs, like Michel Djotodia, enabled these militias to organise as a proper ‘rebel group’ voicing political demands against the central authorities.

The *pisteurs* were militarily trained and equipped through the EU-funded ECOFAC project. They had become skilled combatants through regular confrontations with Sudanese poachers, as well as local men of influence through their access to money and power. Many current Seleka/UFDR military commanders have this anti-poaching background, one notable example being Joseph Zoundeko, the FPRC’s current Chief of Staff.³⁷⁶

Self-defence groups grew considerably when in May 2002, pastoralists from Southern Darfur were accused of killing Yaya Ramadan, a charismatic local Gula leader and *pisteur*.³⁷⁷ The assassination sparked a cycle of attacks and revenge attacks between local Gula, Runga and Kara ethnic groups on the one hand and Sudanese and Chadian groups on the other. Although local ethnic groups first fought together, they were increasingly pitted against each other as the Gula accused other groups of having provided support to their Sudanese and Chadian enemies.³⁷⁸

With the death of Yaya Ramadan, Zakaria Damane came to the fore as one of the main leaders of the self-defence groups. He had been active in Bria as a diamond miner and later as a diamond financier.³⁷⁹ In Bria, he came to know Michel Djotodia, who later married one of Damane’s nieces.³⁸⁰ When Yaya Ramadan was killed, Damane returned to Tiringoulou to help avenge his death and also became adviser to the mayor of Boromata, close to the Chadian border.³⁸¹

In this way, armed militias in the northeast first emerged as a result of local dynamics, and their struggle was not directed against the Central African authorities as such. However, such a national dimension was increasingly brought to the fore as a result of three factors. Firstly, in the second half of 2004, Abakar Sabone and other ex-liberators returned to northeastern CAR.³⁸² Disgruntled about having been sidelined by President Bozizé, whom they helped ascend to power in 2003, they started preparing a new military operation to once again change the regime in Bangui, and sought contact with local armed elements.³⁸³

This contact was facilitated by a second factor, namely increasing discontent amongst the Gula population with the Bozizé regime. In March 2003 a deal was concluded between Khartoum and Bangui, according to which the former would pay compensation to the Vakaga communities for wrongs inflicted with

³⁷⁶ Other notable examples include Arda Hakoum and Issa Isaka, IPIS interviews with park conservationists, Bangui, May and July 2014.

³⁷⁷ E. Berman, *La RCA et ses armes légères: une poudrière régionale*, Small Arms Survey, 2003, p. 33.

³⁷⁸ S. Spittaels & F. Hilgert, *Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic*, International Peace Information Service (IPIS), February 2009, p. 10; International Crisis Group, *Central African Republic: Anatomy of a Phantom State*, Africa Report No. 136, December 2007, pp. 25-26; L. Lombard, *Raiding Sovereignty in Central African Borderlands*, Dissertation Duke University, 2012, p. 304.

³⁷⁹ *Ibid.*, p. 328.; International Crisis Group, *La crise centrafricaine: de la prédation à la stabilisation*, Africa Report No. 219, June 2014, pp. 11-14.

³⁸⁰ L. Lombard, *President Michel Djotodia and the good little putschist’s tool box*, African Arguments, 2 April 2013.

³⁸¹ L. Lombard, *Raiding Sovereignty in Central African Borderlands*, Dissertation Duke University, 2012, p. 330.

³⁸² Abakar Sabone later quit the UFDR and started his own armed group, *Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice* (MLCJ), mainly linked with the ethnic Kara self-defence groups in the Vakaga prefecture; International Crisis Group, *Anatomy of a Phantom State*, 2007, p. 26.

³⁸³ *Ibid.*

and after the killing of Yaya Ramadan.³⁸⁴ When this deal was never implemented, the Gula accused the regime of misappropriation of funds and people increasingly mobilised against the central authorities.

Thirdly, in April 2006 the Presidential Guard razed villages around Tiringoulou and killed several people for allegedly aiding and abetting Chadian rebels. These attacks were a proximate cause of the creation of the UFDR as a rebel group. In September 2006, the UFDR started attacking towns in the Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran and Haute-Kotto prefectures.³⁸⁵

Meanwhile, Michel Djotodia emerged as its political leader. According to observers, he had a long history of pursuing political aspirations, with limited success. After his stay in Bria, Djotodia had first become the adjunct to the Central African consul in Nyala, South Darfur, and later became consul himself. There, he fostered relationships with politico-military entrepreneurs in the Chadian-Sudanese border region. Reportedly, he also kept in contact with Zakaria Damane, with whom he was implicated in diamond smuggling. At the time of the first attacks of the UFDR, he was in Cotonou, Benin, where he was arrested together with Abakar Sabone in November 2006.

On 21 June 2008, Zakaria Damane signed the Libreville peace agreement, together with the APRD of Jacques Demafouth and the FDPC of Abdoulaye Miskine. Allegedly, Zakaria Damane agreed to sign the deal following an arrangement made with the Bozizé regime putting him on the government's payroll and allowing him to keep controlling the diamond-rich area around Sam Ouandja.³⁸⁶

2. Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix (CPJP)

The *Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix* (CPJP) was established in the second half of 2008 in response to the exclusion of and aggression against the Runga ethnic group by Damane's UFDR. The UFDR had also tightened its grip on the diamond trade in the Bria area, pushing Runga traders out of business.³⁸⁷

Several of the CPJP commanders are experienced diamond traders. Abdoulaye Issène, the President of the CPJP, for instance, had been active as a *collecteur* in Bria and was himself the son of a diamond trader. Another commander, Mahamat Saleh, had also been a *collecteur*.³⁸⁸ Noteworthy in this respect is also the fact that Charles Massi, who had become a CPJP political leader to negotiate his rehabilitation by the Bozizé regime, had been Minister of Mines under former president Patassé.

The CPJP staged several attacks against the FACA and the UFDR in the northeastern prefectures, most of them throughout 2010 after the disappearance and suspected killing of Charles Massi in December 2009.³⁸⁹

In the second half of 2011, there was reason for cautious optimism. Abdoulaye Issène's CPJP and the Government had signed an agreement for the cessation of hostilities, thereby paving the way for a peace process including all national armed groups.³⁹⁰ Nevertheless, rumours about disagreement within the CPJP's ranks on opening the dialogue with the Bozizé regime persisted.³⁹¹ This eventually led to Mohammed Dhaffane and Nouredine Adam leaving the movement before the accession of Abdoulaye Issène's wing of the CPJP to the 2008 Libreville Peace Agreement on 25 August 2012 (see section 1.1.1).

³⁸⁴ *Ibid.*

³⁸⁵ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and the activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (S/2006/1034), 28 December 2006; Human Rights Watch, *State of Anarchy*, September 2007.

³⁸⁶ IPIS interview with diamond trader and foreign diplomat, April 2014, Bangui; International Crisis Group, *Anatomy of a Phantom State*, 2007.

³⁸⁷ RFI, *Des groupes rebelles s'affrontent dans le nord-est de la Centrafrique*, 13 September 2011.

³⁸⁸ Mahamat Saleh was reportedly killed in Bangui in December 2013 (see: Afrik.com, *Le général Mahamat Saleh tué*, 11 December 2013).

³⁸⁹ An example is the November 2010 attack on Birao, causing the FACA soldiers to withdraw and leaving the CPJP in control of the town. See: Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad, S/2010/611, 1 December 2010, p. 8.

³⁹⁰ AFP, *Central African rebels, government sign truce pact*, 12 June 2011.

³⁹¹ For instance, the faction of Mahamat Saleh signed the truce on 27 August 2011. See: BINUCA, *BINUCA Infos*, August 2011(17), p. 4.

In September 2011, CPJP and UFDR combatants clashed in the Haute-Kotto and Vakaga prefectures. The clashes mainly revolved around control over the diamond-rich areas around Bria. Several dozen combatants and civilians were reportedly killed during the hostilities.³⁹² On 8 October 2011, a ceasefire agreement between the CPJP and the UFDR was signed in Bangui.

3. Front populaire pour le redressement (FPR)

The *Front populaire pour le redressement* (FPR) of 'General' Baba Laddé³⁹³ originally fought against the regime of Chadian president Idriss Déby, claiming to protect the interests of Chadian Peuhl pastoralists.³⁹⁴ In 2008, the movement found refuge in the CAR's Nana-Grebizi prefecture after a Chadian government offensive. There, Baba Laddé declared overthrowing the Central African and Chadian regimes, and creating a Peuhl state from Sudan to Mauretania to be his ambitious politico-military goals.³⁹⁵ The FPR and its leader allegedly made substantial revenues from rustling cattle, forcing herders into selling their cattle at derisory prices and demanding protection money.

After a joint military operation conducted by Chad and the CAR against the group in January 2012, FPR combatants relocated to Ippy, Ouaka prefecture.³⁹⁶ In June 2012, Baba Laddé spent two months in the Boro Medina area in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal, South Sudan, reportedly upon the invitation of the SPLA. Here, he sought possible allies to fight against the Khartoum regime. The relationship with the South Sudanese authorities however proved to be less friendly than expected and the initial plan was never implemented.³⁹⁷ In September 2012, Baba Laddé returned to N'Djamena for negotiations with the Chadian government after a mediation mission led by Monseigneur Pomodimo.³⁹⁸

At that time, the group was officially comprised of 3,000 combatants, although this is probably an overestimate.³⁹⁹ One month after the departure of Baba Laddé for Chad, some 400 of his elements were regrouped in Dobaya, Moyen Chari, Chad.⁴⁰⁰ The rest of his fighters stayed around Ippy and Kaga-Bandoro, from where many joined the Seleka rebellion.

After the March 2013 coup, some of these fighters deployed to the Mambere-Kadeï prefecture, where Colonel Saad, a top FPR commander, became zone commander in Berbérati.⁴⁰¹ Saad is currently under arrest in Koro Toro in Chad.⁴⁰²

After the departure of Michel Djotodia from the Presidency and the rise of the anti-balaka militias in the west of the country, FPR elements present around Carnot and Berbérati started moving north towards Chad.⁴⁰³ Some of them reportedly joined Peuhl pastoralists who had sought refuge in the Abba region of Nana-Mambere. Others moved into Ouham-Pendé, where they allegedly committed widespread gender-based violence and killed dozens of civilians during attacks on villages and towns in the

³⁹² UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country, S/2011/739, 28 November 2011, p. 4; Reuters, *Fighting over CAR diamonds kills at least 21*, 19 September 2011; AFP, *Deep hardship in Central Africa's diamond capital: mediator*, 21 November 2011.

³⁹³ Baba Laddé's real name is Mahamat Abdelkadr. IPIS interview with Baba Laddé, N'Djamena, September 2014.

³⁹⁴ The movement was created by 'General' Baba Laddé in 1998. Arrested briefly after the creation of the FPR, Baba Laddé was released after eleven months of detention. He then moved to Cameroon, first, and Nigeria, from where he established the command chain of his army. IPIS interview with Baba Laddé, in N'Djamena, September 2014.

³⁹⁵ Jeune Afrique, *Laddé, l'homme qui veut "libérer" les Peuhls*, 23 December 2011.

³⁹⁶ UN, Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic and on the activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that country, S/2012/374, 29 May 2012; IPIS phone interview with former archbishop, September 2014.

³⁹⁷ Upon his arrival in Western Bahr-el-Ghazal with a protection unit of fifty men, Baba Laddé was disarmed, accidentally arrested and detained during three weeks, before being released by Mac Paul, at that time Deputy Director of the SPLA Military Intelligence. When the FPR unit decided to return to the CAR, the South Sudanese army refused to return them the weapons previously seized. IPIS interview with former FPR member, N'Djamena, September 2014.

³⁹⁸ RJDH-RCA, *Bangui: Baba-Laddé rapatrié au Tchad*, 5 September 2012.

³⁹⁹ IPIS phone interview with former mediator with FPR, September 2014.

⁴⁰⁰ Radio Ndeke Luka (RCA), *Le Tchad accueille 400 ex-rebelles du FPR en présence de Baba Laddé*, 10 December 2012.

⁴⁰¹ IPIS phone interview with former mediator with FPR and with NGO actor in northwest CAR, September 2014.

⁴⁰² IPIS phone interview with actor based in N'Djamena, October 2014.

⁴⁰³ IPIS interviews with UN official, local authorities and NGO workers, Bouar, July 2014.

northwest of the prefecture.⁴⁰⁴ At the end of January 2014, they also briefly took control of Bang, a town on the border with both Cameroon and Chad. Currently, the overall majority of Colonel Saad's troops have reportedly been integrated into the Chadian security forces.⁴⁰⁵ Others have crossed the border from where they stage incursions into northern Ouham-Pendé or have joined armed Peuhl pastoralists in the Markounda-Boguila area.⁴⁰⁶

Ali Darassa, the former second in command of the FPR became the (de facto) zone commander of the Bambari region. Tension between the latter and Joseph Zoundeko of UFDR signature arose in August around Bambari where violent clashes erupted. These tensions led Ali Darassa together with Mahamat Al Khatim to create their own Seleka faction, the FRC and later the UPC, with strongholds in respectively Kabo and Bambari (see section 1.1.3).

Meanwhile, Baba Laddé was being co-opted by the Chadian regime. First, in January 2013, he was appointed as adviser to the Prime Minister, and marked his intention to transform the FPR into a political party.⁴⁰⁷ Then, on 1 July 2014, he was appointed prefect of the Grande Sido department.⁴⁰⁸ The extent to which he still controls FPR elements in the CAR is therefore unclear.

4. Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC)

The *Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain* (FDPC) was created by Abdoulaye Miskine,⁴⁰⁹ a confidant of President Patassé and head of his presidential security service. In this capacity he fought against the combatants that brought Bozizé to power in 2003.

In 2008, the FDPC controlled a small stretch of territory between the town of Kabo, in Ouham prefecture, and the Chadian border. Its strength at the time was estimated to be less than 20 combatants.⁴¹⁰ A signatory to the 2008 Libreville peace agreement, in October 2009 Abdoulaye Miskine announced the FDPC's withdrawal from the peace process.⁴¹¹ On 30 November 2009, Miskine concluded an agreement with the CPJP to join forces, though this agreement did not seem to have been implemented at the time.⁴¹²

Following military operations by the FACA in April 2010, the FDPC started moving away from the border area with Chad. After briefly roaming around in the Ouham-Pendé prefecture, they found a safe haven in the Abba sub-prefecture in Nana-Mambere, an important gold producing area (see section 1.3.2). There, the FDPC staged robberies on roads between Abba and Toktoyo and Bouar and Garoua Boulai, on the border with Cameroon, as well as raids on mining sites, stealing money and gold.⁴¹³ According to estimates of the Mining Brigade in Bouar, the FDPC numbered around 250 combatants throughout that period.⁴¹⁴



The FDPC's alliance with the Seleka was brief. In a Seleka (UFDR-CPJP Fondamentale-CPSK) communiqué published on 12 December 2012 – two days after the start of their military offensive – the movement called upon Miskine to join. After an attack on Ndélé, the FDPC loosely integrated into the Seleka, for instance taking control of Kabo after the town was taken by Seleka combatants.⁴¹⁵ Shortly after the

⁴⁰⁴ International NGO internal report, June 2014.

⁴⁰⁵ IPIS phone interview with actor based in N'Djamena October 2014.

⁴⁰⁶ IPIS phone interview with NGO official in northwest CAR, September 2014.

⁴⁰⁷ Despite Baba Laddé's intention and several requests addressed to the Presidency and the Prime Minister, the Chadian regime has yet to formalize its recognition of the FPR as a political party. IPIS interview with Baba Laddé, in N'Djamena, September 2014.

⁴⁰⁸ Officially appointed pursuant a presidential Decree dated 19 July 2014, Baba Laddé came into office on 3 October 2014. IPIS phone interview with Baba Laddé, October 2014.

⁴⁰⁹ Abdoulaye Miskine's real name is Martin Koumta Madji.

⁴¹⁰ S. Spittaels & F. Hilgert, *Mapping Conflict Motives: Central African Republic*, IPIS report, February 2009, p. 13.

⁴¹¹ Centrafrique Press, *Le FDPC d'Abdoulaye Miskine déclare la caducité des accords de paix signés avec Bozizé*, 2 October 2009.

⁴¹² CPJP, *Communiqué de presse relatif à l'accord militaire entre la CPJP et le FDPC*, N° 003/CPJP /CS/P/11-009.

⁴¹³ IPIS interviews with UN official, local authorities and NGO workers, Bouar, July 2014.

⁴¹⁴ IPIS interview with mining brigade, Bouar, July 2014.

⁴¹⁵ Solidarités Internationales, *Evaluation de l'impact de la crise Séléka sur la sécurité alimentaire, les moyens d'existence, et la démographie à Kabo*, February 2013, p. 2; Afrique News Info, *Le FDPC d'Abdoulaye Miskine rejoint la coalition Séléka*, 19 December 2012.

March 2013 coup, Miskine broke all ties with the alliance, threatening to take up arms against the Seleka. Several clashes over control of the Abba sub-prefecture ensued, most notably in early April 2013, when Miskine was reportedly wounded and narrowly escaped Seleka-led attacks against his group near Bouar.⁴¹⁶ The FDPC and the Seleka also clashed in Kabo in June 2013.

Abdoulaye Miskine's change of heart in associating himself with the Seleka seems to have been caused by two factors. Firstly, he did not want to cede his lucrative control over the Abba sub-prefecture to other Seleka factions. Secondly, he reportedly feared retaliation by the ex-liberators amongst the Seleka, many of whom he had fought during the coup d'état staged by Bozizé in 2003. One of these ex-liberators, Adam Rakiss, led the Seleka offensive against his troops.⁴¹⁷

After having left the Seleka, Abdoulaye Miskine started a loose alliance with Armel Sayo.⁴¹⁸ In September 2013, Abdoulaye Miskine was arrested by the Cameroonian authorities and brought to Yaoundé. While in prison, he has remained the president of the FDPC. Ferdinand Mbokoto Madji is vice-president and acts on Miskine's behalf.⁴¹⁹ In an attempt to force the Cameroonian authorities to liberate their leader, FDPC elements took nine civilians hostage during an incursion close to Garoua Boulai on 21 September 2014.⁴²⁰

⁴¹⁶ Mail & Guardian, *Rebel leader flees on horseback from CAR fighters*, 10 June 2013.

⁴¹⁷ IPIS Interviews with Seleka leaders, Bangui, May and July 2014.

⁴¹⁸ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic, *Interim report*, S/2014/452, 1 July 2014, p. 40; Afrique News Info, *Armel Sayo parle aux Centrafricains*, 20 June 2013; Jeune Afrique, *La rébellion d'Abdoulaye Miskine a perdu "beaucoup d'hommes"*, 12 April 2013.

⁴¹⁹ FDPC, Communiqué de Presse, 15 July 2014.

⁴²⁰ They released one girl soon afterwards. A similar hostage taking incident had already taken place in January 2014 (Anadolu Agency, *L'armée camerounaise demande aux populations de quitter une région frontalière avec la Centrafrique*, 23 September 2014).

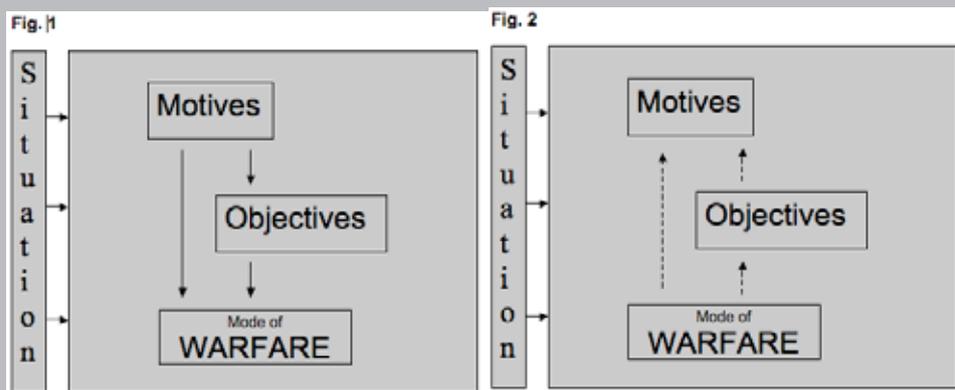
Annex III: The IPIS methodology behind the ‘mapping conflict motives’ research

The current report fits within a wider series of ‘mapping conflict motives’ reports, which IPIS began publishing in 2007. Apart from the Central African Republic, previous reports have discussed the DRC’s provinces of Katanga, North Kivu and Orientale, as well as the Sudan – South Sudan border region.⁴²¹ This series is characterised by a common methodology involving the use of map collection (presented online) as an evidence base to sustain the analysis of the motives of parties to an armed conflict (Box III.1).

Box III.1: Abridged methodology of the mapping conflict motives reports series

Our conflict-mapping is based on a simple and intuitive model. We understand armed conflict as a tool that is used to attain a goal or objective, such as secession from a State. Such objectives are driven by a motivation – for example people want to secede because they feel they are being discriminated against or oppressed.

Motivations and objectives are the drivers of war and, as such, they will influence the way(s) in which a war is being waged (Fig. 1). Revealing the drivers of warring parties requires investigating facts and events in the field. On the assumption that the motives and objectives of warring parties shape their mode of warfare, concrete military actions and/or diplomatic decisions are analysed and traced back to what provoked them (Fig. 2).



When applying its model, IPIS uses GIS data to produce two different sets of maps. The first set presents the location of parties to a conflict’s possible interests. The second shows conflict incidents, or the areas in which the warring parties concentrate their efforts.

During our analysis we overlay the two sets of maps to ascertain which targets are present on a territory where violent incidents occur, or tough negotiations are being held. From this comparison we endeavour to deduce the intentions of warring parties, accompanied by the consultation of a number of other sources. In addition, we compare the behaviour of the conflicting parties to the claims they make in their discourse. For example, does a map with combat incidents show that an ethnic militia is trying to protect its people?

The above approach is explained in detail in our methodological handbook published on the IPIS website (see: www.ipisresearch.be/maps/Handbook_Aug2008.pdf).

In collaboration with the Political Science Department of the University of Antwerp, IPIS is currently revising and updating its methodology, based on recent academic evolutions in the field of peace research and a cross-case analysis of its ‘mapping conflict motives’ publications.

⁴²¹ For the reports, see <http://www.ipisresearch.be/mapping.php>.

The Mapping Conflict Motives series originates from IPIS' conviction that a correct assessment of the motivations of armed groups is essential to conflict prevention and resolution. It is a crucial element in the formulation of appropriate strategies when dealing with armed groups in the context of peacekeeping, negotiations or stabilisation.

