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Central African region

Overview

During the period under review, the Security Council held three meetings and adopted two presidential statements in connection with the situation in the Central African region. The Council focused on the activities of the newly established United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA),¹ the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security, and the regional threat posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

19 March 2010: consideration of the impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security

On 19 March 2010, the Deputy Secretary-General stressed the importance of achieving a global arms trade treaty and of the implementation of community-based disarmament and confidence-building projects. She asserted that priority had to be given to stockpile management, the security of weapons and ammunition, and measures to control the import, export, transit and retransfer of weapons. Moreover, peace and security in Central Africa required a strong commitment by States in the subregion, together with State suppliers of weapons to eradicate weapons trafficking.² The Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) reported

¹ For more information on the mandate of UNOCA, see part X, sect. II, with regard to political and peacebuilding missions.

² [S/PV.6288](#), p. 3.

that the illegal arms trade was valued at an estimated \$200 to \$300 million annually, and noted that Africa was the most profitable market, which also suffered the greatest number of casualties resulting from this type of arms.³ The Secretary General of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) stated that security threats posed by small arms and light weapons (SALW) exceeded ECCAS' ability to counter them. With about 7 million SALW having been brought into Central Africa in the past 15 years, most of these remained in circulation, and were carried by all sectors of the population, including women and children. He said that ECCAS hoped to perfect a legal instrument on small arms and light weapons, with the active participation of national commissions and police cooperation.⁴ Speakers expressed grave concern over the wide-ranging humanitarian and socio-economic consequences of small arms proliferation, which fuelled armed conflict. This in turn, exacerbated the risk of gender-based violence and recruitment of child soldiers, in addition to seriously undermining peace, reconciliation, safety, security, stability and sustainable development. Most members noted that illicit arms trafficking was of global concern, and called for the adoption of global instruments to complement legal frameworks already in place.

Following the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement⁵ in which it underlined the vital importance of effective regulations and controls to prevent the diversion or re-export of arms, and called for a creation of a Central African subregional register of arms dealers, as well as a legally binding instrument to control small arms and light weapons, their ammunition and the equipment for their manufacture. The Council also called on the States of the subregion to strengthen efforts to establish mechanisms and regional networks for information-sharing to combat the illicit circulation of SALW, and requested the Secretary-General to take into account, as a follow up, the content of that presidential statement in his biennial report.

18 August 2011 to 14 November 2011: consideration of the activities of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa

³ Ibid., p. 4.

⁴ Ibid., pp. 6-8.

⁵ [S/PRST/2010/6](http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2010/10/S100606.html).

On 18 August 2011, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) reported that, in fulfilling its mandate to boost cooperation between States of the region, the United Nations country teams and other international partners in the region had visited Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Cameroon and the Central African Republic. Preliminary observations from discussions held confirmed the need for enhanced United Nations support in the subregion to assist Member States address security, peacebuilding and conflict-prevention challenges. He underlined the need to build capacity for tackling specific trans-border security challenges, such as piracy in the Gulf of Guinea and the threats posed by such rebel groups as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) and Baba Ladde in the Central African Republic had become a shared concern of the United Nations, the African Union and the subregion. The Special Representative expressed his intention to translate the mandate of UNOCA into cohesive subregional initiatives to facilitate coordination and information exchange between United Nations entities and other partners towards supporting such peacebuilding and preventive diplomacy initiatives in the subregion. As part of that effort, he noted, the Secretary-General had transferred the secretarial functions of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Issues in Central Africa (UNSAC) from the Office of Disarmament Affairs to the Department of Political Affairs, so they could be assumed by UNOCA.⁶

On 14 November 2011, the Special Representative introduced the first report of the Secretary-General on the activities of UNOCA.⁷ Regarding the issue of small arms and light weapons, he noted that Member States of the United Nations Standing Advisory Committee on Security Questions in Central Africa had signed in Brazzaville the Convention on the control of small arms and light weapons, their ammunition, parts and components that can be used for their manufacture, repair or assembly, known as the Kinshasa Convention. Hence, UNOCA would work closely with the United Nations

⁶ [S/PV.6601](#), pp. 2-4.

⁷ [S/2011/704](#).

Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Africa to promote the Convention's ratification. He stated that the issue of piracy and maritime security remained of great concern, as criminals were using the Gulf of Guinea as a hub for the trans-shipment of narcotics. Recognizing the importance of enhanced cross-border security in that area, the countries of the subregion had adopted the Framework to Secure the Gulf of Guinea and a protocol creating the Regional Coordination Centre for Maritime Security in Central Africa.⁸ Council members underlined the importance for UNOCA to promote cooperation among relevant actors, including ECCAS and the Africa Union as well as the United Nations missions and offices in the region, in tackling the challenges the sub-region faced. Among regional challenges, they expressed particular concern with the threats posed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), piracy in the Gulf of Guinea, proliferation of small arms and light weapons and organized crime.

Following the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement⁹ in which it encouraged UNOCA to work with the United Nations missions and the African Union to develop a regional strategy for international humanitarian, development and peacebuilding assistance in the LRA-affected area, enhanced cross-border mechanisms to improve civilian protection, early warning capacity, humanitarian access and response, and appropriate reintegration support for those returning from displacement, abductees and ex-combatants, as well as strengthening the overall capacity of affected States to extend their authority throughout their respective territories.

14 November 2011: consideration on the activities of the Lord's Resistance Army

On 14 November 2011, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for UNOCA introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas.¹⁰ In his briefing, the Special Representative reported that the LRA continued to perpetrate serious violations of humanitarian and human rights law with impunity, easily crossing the borders of the affected countries, especially impacting the

⁸ [S/PV.6657](#), p. 7.

⁹ [S/PRST/2011/21](#).

¹⁰ [S/2011/693](#).

Democratic Republic of the Congo. As indicated in the Secretary-General's report, the United Nations system was taking several actions to address the LRA problem in a more effective and coherent manner through its political, peacekeeping, human rights, humanitarian and development efforts, he said. In addition, the United Nations peacekeeping operations in the region were taking further steps to strengthen civilian protection within their mandates and capabilities in strategic locations in the LRA-affected areas to help deter attacks against civilians and to facilitate humanitarian operations.¹¹ While stressing that the LRA was of great concern to the African Union, the Permanent Observer of the African Union underlined that it had taken on an alarming regional dimension. He noted that countries affected by the armed group had been consulted by the African Union with the aim of appointing a Special Envoy for the LRA, and an integrated planning team had been established to conduct detailed operational planning.¹² The Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States underscored the need to bolster training of armed forces in the region with a view to the role they would play in a concerted effort to combat the LRA.¹³ Most members expressed concern over the increasing threat of the LRA and called on the international community to step up its pressure in order to put an end to LRA attacks against civilian population. At the same time, they commended the actions taken by the regional countries and the initiatives of the African Union in combating the LRA.

Following the debate, the Council adopted a presidential statement¹⁴ in which it inter alia, strongly condemned the ongoing attacks carried out by the LRA in parts of Central Africa, demanded an immediate end to all attacks by the LRA, particularly those on civilians, and commended the important efforts undertaken by the militaries of the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Republic of South Sudan and Uganda to address the threat posed by the LRA. Furthermore, the Council commended the enhanced engagement of the African Union through its regional cooperation initiative for the elimination of the LRA and its efforts to establish a regional intervention force, and

¹¹ [S/PV.6657](#), pp. 2-3.

¹² *Ibid.*, pp. 3-5.

¹³ *Ibid.*, p. 6.

¹⁴ [S/PRST/2011/21](#).

urged the prompt appointment of the proposed African Union Special Envoy for the LRA-affected areas.

Meetings: Central African region

<i>Meeting and date</i>	<i>Sub-item</i>	<i>Rule 37 invitations</i>	<i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>	<i>Speakers</i>	<i>Decision and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i>
6288 19 March 2010	Impact of illicit arms trafficking on peace and security Letter dated 15 March 2010 from the Permanent Representative of Gabon to the United Nations addressed to the Secretary-General (S/2010/143)	12 Member States ^a	Executive Director of the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime, High Representative for Disarmament Affairs, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Acting head of the European Union delegation to the United Nations	Deputy Secretary-General, all Council members and all invitees	S/PRST/2010/6
6601 18 August 2011			Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa	Special Representative of the Secretary-General	
6657 14 November 2011	Report of the Secretary-General on the Lord's Resistance Army-affected areas pursuant to Security Council press statement (S/2011/693) First report of the Secretary-General on the activities of the United Nations Office for Central Africa (S/2011/704)	Central African Republic and South Sudan	Special Representative of the Secretary-General, Permanent Observer of the African Union to the United Nations, Secretary-General of the Economic Community of Central African States	All Council members, all rule 39 invitees and Central African Republic	S/PRST/2011/21

^a Australia, Botswana, Central African Republic, Chad, Congo (Republic of the), Costa Rica, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Germany, Morocco, Republic of Korea, South Africa and Switzerland.