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Central Africa's Security Paradox: Active International Intervention amid Protracted Conflict

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Abstract. Despite its considerable potential and growth rates, the African continent has not yet overcome its main challenge: conflicts, which have become almost chronic in some countries. Given the tangible consequences of these conflicts for both African countries and the rest of the world, establishing and maintaining peace and security in Africa remains a priority for the international community. The Central African Republic (CAR), one of the world's poorest countries, landlocked but rich in natural resources, has experienced the full impact of endless coups, weak governance and conflict. Since the mid-1990s, more than a dozen peacekeeping operations have been conducted here. The CAR has become a kind of 'laboratory' for all possible types of intervention, including multidimensional stabilization operations, training, observation, advisory, military missions and peacekeeping and peacebuilding operations. The peacekeeping 'marathon' in the CAR involved a multitude of actors, including the United Nations (UN), the African Union (AU), the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) and the European Union (EU), as well as individual countries, such as France and, to some extent, Russia. Despite these interventions, the domestic political situation in the country remained unstable for a long time, representing the Central African security paradox. To study this issue, the dynamics of numerous peacekeeping operations since 1997 were examined, and three main stages of international intervention were identified based on qualitative changes in the security situation. The present study is based on a qualitative comparative analysis, which enables to identify stable combinations of factors that determine the effectiveness or ineffectiveness of international missions in protracted conflicts. The study reveals the main reasons for the limited effectiveness of international peacekeeping in the CAR.

Key words: Africa, CAR, UN, AU, EU, France, peacekeeping, international intervention, security providers

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Центральноафриканский парадокс безопасности: активное международное вмешательство на фоне затяжного конфликта

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Аннотация. Несмотря на внушительный потенциал и темпы роста, Африканский континент пока не смог преодолеть свою главную проблему — конфликты, которые в некоторых странах приобрели чуть ли не хронический характер. В силу ощутимых последствий этих конфликтов не только для самих африканских стран, но и для мира в целом установление и поддержание мира и безопасности в Африке остается приоритетной повесткой для международного сообщества. Центральноафриканская Республика (ЦАР) — одна из беднейших стран мира, без выхода к морю, но богатая природными ресурсами — в полной мере ощутила всю тяжесть последствий от нескончаемой череды переворотов, слабого управления и конфликтов. С середины 1990-х гг. здесь было проведено более десятка миротворческих операций. ЦАР стала своего рода «лабораторией» для всех возможных видов вмешательства — многомерных стабилизационных операций, учебных, наблюдательных, консультационных, военных миссий и операций по поддержанию мира и миростроительству. В миротворческом «марафоне» в ЦАР принимали участие не только Организация Объединенных Наций (ООН), но и различные региональные организации: Африканский союз (АС), Экономическое сообщество стран Центральной Африки (ЭКОЦАС), Экономическое и валютное сообщество Центральной Африки (СЕМАК), Общий рынок Восточной и Южной Африки (КОМЕСА), Европейский союз (ЕС), а также отдельные страны — Франция и, в некоторой степени, Россия. Несмотря на десятки международных вмешательств, внутриполитическая ситуация в стране долгое время оставалась нестабильной, что представляет собой центральноафриканский парадокс безопасности. С целью его изучения была рассмотрена динамика многочисленных миротворческих операций с 1997 г., при этом на основе произошедших качественных изменений ситуации с безопасностью выделены три основных этапа международного вмешательства. Методологической основой исследования выступает качественный сравнительный анализ, позволяющий выявить устойчивые комбинации факторов, определяющих эффективность или неэффективность международных миссий в условиях затяжных конфликтов. По итогам проведенного исследования выявлены основные причины невысокой эффективности международного миротворчества в ЦАР.

Ключевые слова: Африка, ЦАР, ООН, АС, ЕС, Франция, миротворчество, международное вмешательство, провайдеры безопасности

Заявление о конфликте интересов. Авторы заявляют об отсутствии конфликта интересов.

Вклад авторов. Кирикова Т.Н.: концептуализация, проведение полевых исследований, разработка методологии и теоретической рамки. Худайкулова А.В.: написание, редактирование и перевод текста. Оба автора ознакомлены с окончательной версией статьи и одобрили ее.

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Introduction

Despite the continent's abundance of natural resources, Africa is unable to use these riches to achieve independence and prosperity, remaining an “outsider in the global economy” (Abramova, 2018). The Central African Republic (CAR) serves as a prime illustration of this paradox. Despite its mineral resources, the country remains one of the poorest in the world, ranking 191st out of 193 on the Human Development Index.¹ For several decades, the CAR has been plagued by coups and conflicts cloaked in inter-ethnic and inter-religious tensions.

This has made the country highly vulnerable to external influence and ultimately led to a wide range of international interventions, including UN peacekeeping operations, European Union missions and unilateral military interventions by France, the former colonial power which still exerts influence over the country.

Despite dozens of successive peacekeeping operations (Figure 1), the domestic political situation in the country is still far from full normalization. This represents *the Central African security paradox*, the analysis of which is the subject of the present study.

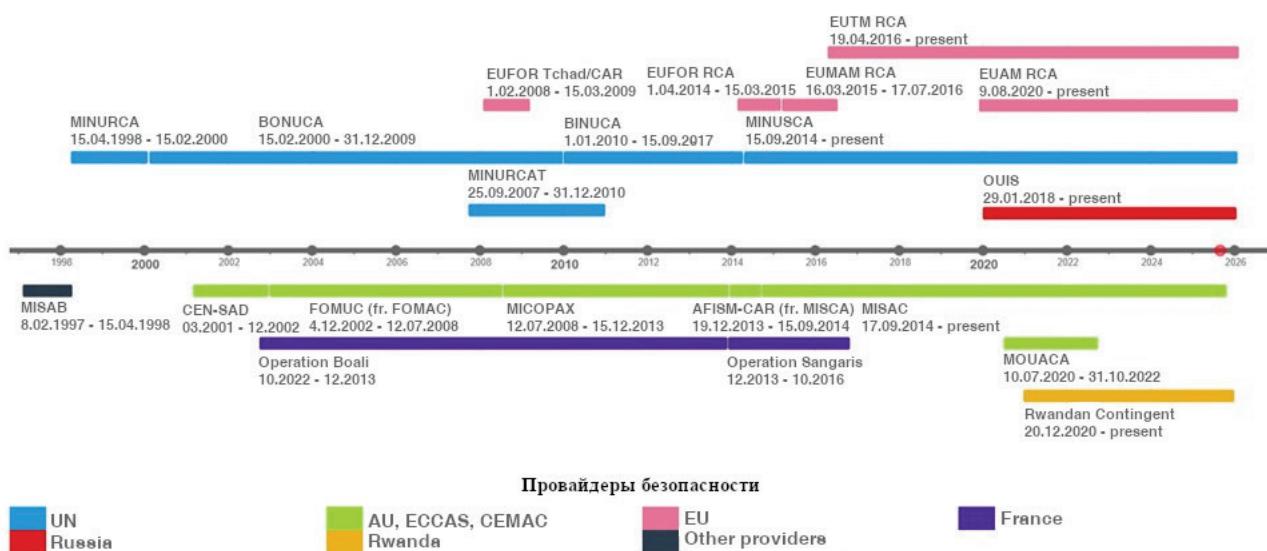


Figure 1. International Intervention in the CAR from 1996 to the Present

Source: compiled by T.N. Kirikova and A. V. Khudaykulova.

Research Methodology and Literature Review

To analyze international intervention in the CAR from 1996 to the present, the authors employ a historical-chronological approach, identifying three distinct stages:

1) 1996–2013: an increase in the peacekeeping presence,

2) 2013–2018: a deterioration in the security situation, and

3) 2018 — present: a new approach to resolving the situation, partly linked to the activities of Russian military instructors operating under the auspices of the Officers' Union for International Security (OUIS). These stages are defined by qualitative shifts in the country's security situation. For

¹ The 2025 Human Development Report // United Nations Development Programme. May 6, 2025. URL: <https://hdr.undp.org/system/files/documents/global-report-document/hdr2025reporten.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

each stage, the main cases of international intervention, their dynamics, challenges, and consequences are presented. A historical-genetic approach is also used to demonstrate the genesis of peacekeeping operations and their continuity.

The study's novelty lies in its comprehensive examination of the wide variety of cases of international intervention in the CAR over the past few decades. Based on the analysis, the results of the 'peacekeeping marathon' are summarized and final conclusions are drawn.

The existing English- and French-language literature on the research topic can be broadly categorized into several areas. A number of experts analyze the activities of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) (Gilder, 2021), while others focus on the influence of the local context on intervention planning (Piquard, 2022). Others examine the influence of external support and institutional factors on the combat effectiveness of armed groups (Duursma, 2022). The Special Criminal Court's role in peacebuilding is examined in a separate study (Pérez-León-Acevedo, 2021). The social consequences of the conflict are also explored in some works (Lombard & Picco, 2021).

There are also few Russian-language studies on the CAR. A fundamental collective monograph on peacekeeping (Bokeriya & Degterev, 2024) is noteworthy. A number of studies have been dedicated to the comparison of the effectiveness of MINUSCA and Russian military specialists (Bovdunov, 2023). Studies analyzing media images and perceptions of Russian involvement are also of interest (Issaev, Shishkina & Liokumovich, 2023; Khromov & Nakunne Yandoko, 2024). The CAR issue is also covered in studies devoted to the country's foreign policy positioning (Filippov, 2014), in more general works in the context of the *Françafrique* crisis

(Filippov, 2024), and in studies of the economics of war (Denisova & Kostelyanets, 2019).

The present study employs *Qualitative Comparative Analysis* (QCA), which was initially proposed by Charles Ragin (1987). Using QCA enables us to identify the stable combinations of factors that determine the effectiveness, or otherwise, of international missions in protracted conflicts. The study employs a *crisp-set QCA* approach, wherein each variable is assigned a binary value (1 for the presence of a feature and 0 for its absence). This analytical format enables us to generalize the institutional and political differences between missions while preserving their logical comparability.

In accordance with the QCA, six factors reflecting key mission parameters were operationalized: INSTIT — institutional continuity (coordination between mandates), LOCINV — degree of involvement of national actors, COORD — level of international coordination (UN, African Union (AU), European Union (EU), Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)), MILCOMP — presence of a military component, FINSTAB — financial sustainability of the mission, and LEGIT — level of public support for the mission.

The RESULT variable is dependent and indicates whether the mission was conditionally effective or ineffective. The assessment is based on four complementary criteria: the dynamics of violence, the preservation of political stability during the year following the end of the mandate, the institutional viability of state institutions, and the legitimacy of the mission, measured by public support and the absence of protests. Missions that meet three or more of these criteria are coded as RESULT = 1 (high or partial effectiveness), while the rest are coded as RESULT = 0 (low effectiveness).

Thus, the criteria measure the effectiveness of international intervention, while the factors

themselves explain which structural combinations of conditions ensured (or did not ensure) this effectiveness.

The study is based on an extensive array of data on peacekeeping missions and operations in the Central African Republic in 1997–2025. The information was collected from official documents of the UN, the African Union, ECCAS, the European Union, as well as analytical databases such as *ACLED (Armed Conflict Location & Event Data)*,² the *United Nations Development Programme (UNDP)*,³ and reports from international research centers (*International Crisis Group*,⁴ *ISS Africa*⁵).

The use of ACLED data (Figure 2) in this study stems from the need to establish a measurable and comparable criterion for assessing the dynamics of political violence in

the Central African Republic during the period under review. In the analysis, such quantitative data are not used as the sole source of truth, but rather as an empirical basis for coding the RESULT variable. The authors assume that even ‘objective’ databases have their methodological limitations (Bovdunov, 2023, pp. 484–485). The data they contain depend on open sources, among other things, which makes them sensitive to external factors. The increase in the number of recorded incidents in the CAR in recent years does not necessarily reflect an increase in actual violence. It is often associated with improvements in monitoring systems, an expanded presence of non-governmental organizations, the progression of mobile communications and data transmission networks, and greater transparency in conflict.

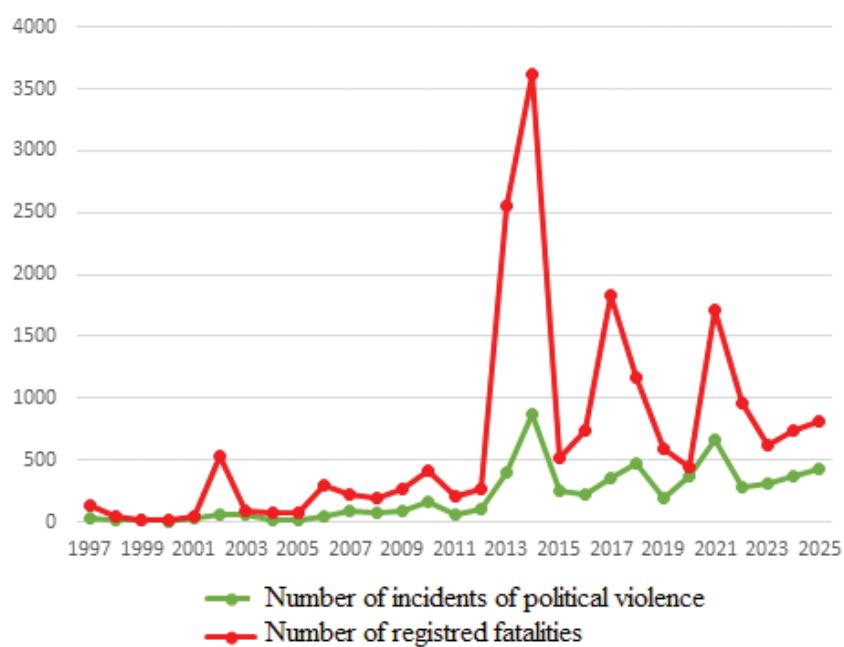


Figure 2. Dynamics of Political Violence and Number of Deaths in the CAR, 1997–2025

Source: compiled by T.N. Kirikova and A.V. Khudaykulova based on data from ACLED: Conflict Data // ACLED. 2025. URL: <https://acleddata.com/conflict-data> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

² Conflict Data // ACLED. 2025. URL: <https://acleddata.com/conflict-data> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

³ Human Development Data // United Nations Development Programme. 2025. URL: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

⁴ Central African Republic // International Crisis Group. 2025. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

⁵ Africa Report // Institutes for Security Studies. 2025. URL: <https://issafrica.org/research/africa-report> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

Using a qualitative comparative analysis to interpret ACLED data allows us to view effectiveness as a combination of de-escalation, institutional restoration and territorial consolidation, rather than as a one-dimensional concept of ‘peace.’ In this context, the RESULT variable does not directly measure the level of violence; rather, it is an indicator of the success of missions in achieving their objectives, depending on a combination of factors: INSTIT, LOCINV, COORD, MILCOMP, FINSTAB and LEGIT:

$$\text{RESULT} = f(\text{INSTIT}, \text{LOCINV}, \text{COORD}, \text{MILCOMP}, \text{FINSTAB}, \text{LEGIT}).$$

This combined coding reduces the impact of subjectivity and political circumstances by combining both ‘hard’ data (ACLED) and institutional effectiveness criteria into a single indicator.

This enables to identify logical configurations in which missions demonstrate positive outcomes and compare them with combinations that lead to failures. In other words, QCA is used for both assessment and detecting consistent patterns that determine the effectiveness of international operations in the CAR in 1997–2025 (Table 1).

By comparing the qualitative comparative analysis factors with performance (effective or not effective), it is possible to move on to a substantive comparison of the logics of the two types of peacemaking: liberal and realist. This comparison reveals why missions with identical mandates can lead to different outcomes, and demonstrates the influence of the institutional structure of intervention on the effectiveness of these missions.

Phase 1 (1996–2013): Expansion of the Peacekeeping Presence

The first phase of international intervention laid the foundation for the subsequent Central African security paradox,

thereby demonstrating that even regional initiatives were incapable of addressing the root causes of instability (Table 2). Each mission was, in fact, an attempt to “plug the gaps” in the security sphere, but it actually reproduced all the existing institutional and political constraints. The utilization of historical-genetic analysis in the examination of this period reveals three key problems: the CAR’s pathological dependence on its former metropolis, the chronic mismatch between mandates and available resources and the country’s current needs, and the lack of continuity and a cohesive political strategy for peacekeeping missions.

Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements (MISAB)

MISAB, the first African peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic, was established on January 25, 1997, at the request of President Antoine-François Patassé. At that time, it symbolized the desire of regional leaders, primarily those of Gabon and Chad, to demonstrate their independence by attempting to resolve the crisis without UN involvement. The proclaimed ‘Africanization’ of peacekeeping in the case of MISAB turned out to be merely formal. Behind this facade lay the traditional policy of *Françafrique*, whereby Paris maintained influence over vital sectors of the economy, the armed forces and the foreign policy of its former colonies (Filippov, 2017, p. 404). This was confirmed by the fact that MISAB’s material, technical and financial support came mainly from France (Olin, 2015, p. 198). The French authorities were looking for a way to withdraw their troops from the CAR without risking the complete destabilization of the situation in Bangui.

Table 1. Matrix of Qualitative Comparative Analysis of Missions in the CAR, 1997–2025

No.	Mission / operation	INSTIT	LOCINV	COORD	MILCOMP	FINSTAB	LEGIT	RESULT
1	MISAB	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
2	MINURCA	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
3	BONUCA	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
4	BINUCA	1	0	1	0	0	0	0
5	FOMUC	0	0	1	1	0	0	0
6	Operation 'Boali'	0	0	0	1	1	0	0
7	MICOPAX	0	1	1	1	0	1	0
8	EUFOR Tchad/CAR	0	0	1	1	1	0	0
9	MINURCAT	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
10	AFISM-CAR	1	0	1	1	0	0	0
11	Operation 'Sangaris'	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
12	MINUSCA	1	1	1	1	1	0	1
13	EUFOR RCA	1	0	1	1	1	0	0
14	EUMAM RCA	1	0	1	0	1	0	0
15	EUTM RCA	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
16	EUAM RCA	1	1	1	0	1	1	0
17	OUIS	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
18	Rwandan contingent	1	1	1	1	1	1	1
19	MOUACA	1	0	1	0	0	0	0

Notes. Explanation of abbreviations used in mission names: MISAB — Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements; MINURCA — United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic; BONUCA — United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic; BINUCA — United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic; FOMUC (FOMAC in French) — Multinational Force for Central Africa of the Economic Community of Central African States; MICOPAX — Mission for Peace Consolidation in the Central African Republic; EUFOR Tchad/CAR — European Union Military Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic; MINURCAT — United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad; AFISM-CAR (MISCA in French) — African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic; MINUSCA — United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic; EUFOR RCA — European Union Military Operation in the Central African Republic; EUMAM RCA — European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic; EUTM RCA — European Union Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic; EUAM RCA — European Union Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic; OUIS — Officers Union for International Security; MOUACA — African Union Military Observers Mission in Central African Republic.

Source: compiled and calculated by T.N. Kirikova and A.V. Khudaykulova based on official documents from the UN, African Union, ECCAS, European Union, as well as analytical databases from ACLED, UNDP, and reports from international research centers International Crisis Group and ISS Africa: Conflict Data // ACLED. 2025. URL: <https://acleddata.com/conflict-data> (accessed: 24.10.2025); Human Development Data // United Nations Development Programme. 2025. URL: <https://hdr.undp.org/data-center> (accessed: 24.10.2025); Central African Republic // International Crisis Group. 2025. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/fr/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic> (accessed: 24.10.2025); Africa Report // Institutes for Security Studies. 2025. URL: <https://issafrica.org/research/africa-report> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

Due to the deterioration of the political situation and the inadequacy of the legal framework for MISAB intervention, on July 7, 1997, Gabonese President A. Bongo sent a letter to the UN Secretary-General requesting the legitimization of the mission's actions under Chapter VII of the UN Charter. In response, on August 6, 1997, the UN Security Council approved Resolution 1125, which "authorized member states participating in MISAB and those states providing logistical support to ensure the security and freedom of movement of their personnel."⁶ However, the failure to reach a clear understanding of how to achieve these goals led to ambiguity surrounding the mission's legal status, which ultimately influenced its outcome.

The Security Council decided to terminate the mandate of MISAB and establish the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA) in accordance with paragraph 9 of resolution 1159 of March 27, 1998, which entered into force on April 15, 1998. While this step ensured the legitimacy of the intervention, it also cemented the region's dependence on external management of its security.

UN Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA)

In 1998, France persuaded the UN to set up the Mission in the Central African Republic (MINURCA).⁷ The mission's primary tasks were

to govern the region, monitor the presidential elections, and maintain security.

After A.-F. Patassé won in the 1999 elections, despite fierce protests from the opposition and the inability to fulfill all of the mission's tasks, the UN, seeking to dismantle MINURCA as quickly as possible, officially recognized the election results, declaring them generally free and fair.⁸ This opinion was supported by observers from the European Union and the International Organisation of the Francophonie (*Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie*, OIF).⁹

MINURCA withdrew on April 1, 2000, having achieved some success, but ultimately failing to significantly impact the political and economic situation in the country, as had its predecessor. This clearly demonstrated the limitations of formal peacekeeping, which is only capable of providing temporary stabilization without addressing deep-rooted systemic problems.

United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA)

On April 1, 2000, MINURCA was replaced by a peacebuilding mission, the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA).¹⁰ Initially established for a period of one year, its mandate was repeatedly extended and ultimately remained until

⁶ Resolution 1125 (1997) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 3808th Meeting, on 6 August 1997 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1125\(1997\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1125(1997)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁷ Resolution 1159 (1998) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 3867th Meeting, on 27 March 1998 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1159\(1998\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1159(1998)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁸ Ninth Report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Mission in The Central African Republic (MINURCA) // Security Council Report. January 14, 2000. URL: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAR%20S200024.pdf> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

⁹ Rapport de la Mission d'Observation des Elections Présidentielles du 19 Septembre 1999 // ACE Electoral Knowledge Network. URL: <https://aceproject.org/ero-en/regions/africa/CF/republique-centrafricaine-rapport-de-la-mission> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

¹⁰ Letter Dated 3 December 1999 from the Secretary-General Addressed to the President of the Security Council (S/1999/1235) // United Nations. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/1999/1235> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

December 31, 2009. BONUCA “was initially tasked with supporting the Government of the Central African Republic’s efforts to consolidate peace and national reconciliation, strengthening democratic institutions, and facilitating the mobilization of international political support and resources for national reconstruction and economic recovery.”¹¹

Unlike MINURCA, BONUCA lacked a military contingent, which negatively impacted the security situation. This ultimately resulted in a five-month opposition strike, which ended on May 27–28, 2001, with the first unsuccessful coup attempt by François Bozizé (Olin, 2015, p. 203). Ten days of clashes in Bangui effectively reversed the fragile progress in disarmament achieved under MISAB and MINURCA (Olin, 2015, p. 204).

Attempts to establish sustainable peace in the CAR have been hindered by a lack of political will on the part of local authorities, as well as the reluctance of external donors to fund long-term and costly stabilization programs. The combination of ambitious peacebuilding goals and virtual helplessness on the ground transformed the mission into an instrument of a symbolic UN presence rather than one of real crisis management.

Multinational Force for Central Africa of the Economic Community of Central African States (FOMUC)

The civil war in the CAR that followed the coup lasted from 2004 to 2007, leading to the mass displacement of the population

and a humanitarian crisis. Several regional peacekeeping forces operated in the country during this period. First and foremost, these were the Multinational Force in the Central African Republic (FOMUC), which was deployed by the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa with the support of the AU. In essence, its establishment can be seen as an attempt on the part of the regional countries to replace the defunct MINURCA with their own peacekeeping entity.

However, the mandate was revised after General F. Bozizé, the former army commander, staged a coup d'état on March 15, 2003, and overthrew the regime of A.-F. Patassé. The national security problems that were already present before the coup worsened further. In May 2008, following the arrival of additional troops from Cameroon, the number of peacekeepers was increased to 500.¹²

The UN Security Council’s decision to establish the mission and the European Commission’s funding once again institutionalized this format of subordinate participation, in which the African initiative effectively integrated into the architecture of external crisis management. The 300-strong French force that arrived the day after the coup was involved in securing Bangui Airport and evacuating foreign nationals.¹³ On July 12, 2008, the FOMUC mission was transformed into the Mission for Peace Consolidation in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) and placed under the control of ECCAS.

¹¹ Special Political Missions: Central African Republic. United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) // United Nations. Field Missions Dashboard. URL: <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/content/repertoire/political-missions-and-offices> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

¹² Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Central African Republic and on the Activities of the United Nations Peacebuilding Support Office in That Country (S/2008/410) // UN Security Council. June 23, 2008. URL: <https://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/CAR%20S%202008%20410.pdf> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

¹³ Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Central African Republic and Activities of the United Nations Peace-building Support Office in the Central African Republic (BONUCA) (S/2003/661) // United Nations. June 20, 2003. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2003/661> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

France's Boali Military Operation

In parallel with FOMUC, the French military mission 'Boali' operated in the CAR, which began in October 2002 and continued until December 2013.¹⁴ In terms of its objectives and functions, the operation proceeded in two phases: before and after the 2010 defense treaty review. Initially, the French armed forces played an important role in maintaining political stability in the CAR by supporting the regime of F. Bozizé. In essence, they trained and advised the CAR army and provided logistical support to other peacekeeping missions in the region. Under the French leadership, the government forces fought the opposition, namely the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (the future *Seleka*). France provided administrative and technical support and trained regular army units under a bilateral military cooperation agreement.¹⁵ During this period, therefore, the prevailing perception of national stability was perceived as maintaining the power of F. Bozizé, giving the mission a distinctly political character.

As the French military operation encountered increasing opposition within the country, Paris was forced to reduce its military presence, prompting F. Bozizé to conclude two secret agreements with South Africa in March 2007 (Smith, 2015, p. 40).

Following a review of the defense treaty between France and the Central African Republic in 2010, Paris's strategy changed. As French troops were no longer able to intervene directly in the event of a threat to the government, the focus shifted from supporting the regime to protecting European citizens in the CAR.¹⁶ Furthermore, this non-intervention can be explained by the Chadian government's support for the *Seleka*.¹⁷

European Union Military Mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Tchad/CAR)

The escalation of the conflict on the Chad-Sudan led to the establishment of the European Union military mission in Chad and the Central African Republic (EUFOR Tchad/CAR) on October 15, 2007.¹⁸ The operation was designed to protect some 450,000 Sudanese refugees and Chadian displaced persons in the region bordering Sudan and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid by improving security in the area, in accordance with the mandate set out in UN Security Council Resolution 1778 of September 25, 2007.¹⁹

¹⁴ Germain V., Rey N. 50 ans d'Opex en Afrique (1964–2014), Cahier du Retex // Centre de doctrine et d'enseignement du commandement. Septembre 2015. URL: https://ondesdechoc.wordpress.com/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/germain_50-ans-d-opex-afrigue_cdef_2015.pdf (accessed: 20.08.2025).

¹⁵ Loi n° 2011-426 du 20 avril 2011 autorisant l'approbation de l'accord entre le Gouvernement de la République française et le Gouvernement de la République centrafricaine instituant un partenariat de défense (1) // Légifrance. 21 avril 2011. URL: <https://www.legifrance.gouv.fr/jorf/id/JORFTEXT000023888307> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

¹⁶ Saint Victor F. de. 45 ans d'opérations militaires françaises en République centrafricaine // L'Union Nationale de l'Armée Blindée Cavalerie Chars. 9 décembre 2013. URL: <https://www.unabcc.org/app/download/8475376/45+ans+en+RCA.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

¹⁷ Chad has long been a French ally in the region. France has launched multiple stabilizing interventions since 1969 and Chad has become increasingly important in the fight against terrorism in the Sahel. See: Opérations en Afrique Centrale: Épervier et Boali // Cahier du Retex. Centre de doctrine et d'enseignement du commandement. 2009. P. 29.

¹⁸ Acts Adopted under Title V of the EU Treaty. Council Joint Action 2007/677/CFSP of 15 October 2007 on the European Union Military Operation in the Republic of Chad and in the Central African Republic // Official Journal of the European Union. October 23, 2007. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32007E0677&from=EN> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

¹⁹ Resolution 1778 (2007) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 5748th Meeting, on 25 September 2007 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1778\(2007\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1778(2007)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

The operation was conducted within the framework of the European Security and Defense Policy²⁰ (ESDP, now known as the Common Security and Defense Policy, CSDP) with the consent of the governments of Chad and the CAR. It was distinguished by its multinational composition: 14 EU member states were present on the ground, 19 in the theatre of operations, and 22 at the operation headquarters (OHQ) in Mont-Valérien (France). Paris, as the initiator of the mission, used the EU format to redistribute the financial and political burden without relinquishing control over operational management.

Despite its large-scale international involvement, EUFOR remained an instrument of deterrence rather than conflict resolution, replicating the same limited intervention model as previous French-led missions.

United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT)

The European Union military mission was a temporary measure, paving the way for the subsequent deployment on March 15, 2009, of the military component of the United Nations Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT),²¹ already operational in the CAR at that time. MINURCAT was mandated to provide security and protection, as well as to monitor and promote respect for human rights and the rule of law. It coordinated its activities with the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the CAR (BINUCA).

Although the new format formally marked a transition to a universal model of peacekeeping, it in fact reproduced the previous limitations. Due to the limitations of its mandate, MINURCAT was unable to achieve any significant political results. The main reason for this was the lack of real political influence over the CAR leadership, who were unwilling to make serious progress in the peacebuilding process (Olin, 2015, pp. 209–210). Furthermore, the quality of the mission was affected by understaffing and a lack of logistical support during the transition period.

MINURCAT completed its mandate on December 31, 2010, in accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 1923²² and at the insistence of the Government of Chad, which assumed full responsibility for the protection of its civilian population. Following the withdrawal of the mission, UN country office staff and BINUCA remained in Chad to continue working on issues related to the protection of the local population.

Mission for Peace Consolidation in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX)

On July 12, 2008, the Mission for Peace Consolidation in the Central African Republic (MICOPAX) was established, replacing FUMAC and coming under the control of ECCAS.²³ It lasted until 2013. MICOPAX comprised Congolese and Cameroonian soldiers. In connection with the *Seleka*

²⁰ European Security Strategy : A Secure Europe in a Better World // Council of the European Union. 2009. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/30823/qc7809568enc.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

²¹ Resolution 11861 (2009) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 6064th Meeting, on 14 January 2009 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1861\(2009\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1861(2009)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

²² Resolution 1923 (2010) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 6321st Meeting, on 25 May 2010 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1923\(2010\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/1923(2010)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

²³ Peace and Security Council 299th Meeting. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PSC/PR/COMM.(CCXCIX). Communiqué // African Union. November 22, 2011. URL: <https://africanlii.org/akn/aa-au/doc/communique/pseau/2011/299/eng@2011-11-22/source.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

uprising, 760 FOMAC soldiers joined them to protect the civilian population in Bangui. South Africa sent 400 soldiers to support President Bozizé.²⁴

It was the actions of MICOPAX peacekeepers that prevented the *Seleka* from capturing Bangui. However, the peacekeepers were unable to repel all attacks.

Following the peace talks held in Libreville within the framework of ECCAS on January 8–11, 2013,²⁵ two framework protocols (on a ceasefire and the opening of humanitarian corridors) and a third protocol providing further details were signed between the CAR government and the *Seleka* rebel coalition. The fourth protocol focused primarily on the political agenda. Together, these documents are known as the Libreville Agreements.²⁶ President Bozizé agreed not to run for president after his term ended in 2016, to dissolve parliament, to appoint a government of national unity including representatives of all five parties to the peace talks, and to organize new elections within a period of 12 months.²⁷

Clearly, ECCAS's strategy of 'micro-management' was insufficient to cope with the crisis alone, which increased the overall pressure on the AU to intervene in the CAR. Consequently, the African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR, MISCA in French)

was established under African leadership to replace and incorporate MICOPAX. This decision was approved by the UN Security Council in Resolution 2127 of December 5, 2013, authorizing the deployment of AFISM-CAR for a 12-month period, as well as the transfer of foreign peacekeeping forces stationed in the country.²⁸

Phase 2 (2013–2018): Deterioration of the Situation

The second phase began with the escalation of the conflict in the CAR to the level of a full-scale civil war and humanitarian catastrophe. This led to multi-level interventions by the African Union and the UN (Table 3). The fundamental paradox of this phase was that the internationalization of the conflict, which was intended to solve the problem, actually led to its institutionalization. The crisis turned into a gradual, externally governed process, wherein the peacekeeping structures themselves became an integral part of the political and economic landscape, but did not act as a catalyst for transformation. A historical and genetic analysis allows to identify three new systemic problems that have accumulated on top of the pre-existing ones: the replacement of a political strategy for resolving the crisis with peacekeeping administration, the criminalization of the presence of international forces in the CAR, and their integration into local power balances.

²⁴ South African Military to Protect CAR President // RT. January 6, 2013. (In Russian). URL: <https://russian.rt.com/article/2756> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

²⁵ Resolution 2088 (2013) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 6907th Meeting, on 24 January 2013 // United Nations. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/record/742710?ln=ru&v=pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

²⁶ Communiqué de presse la 350ème réunion du conseil de paix et de sécurité-RCA // African Union. January 16, 2013. URL: <https://www.peaceau.org/fr/article/communique-de-presse-la-350eme-reunion-du-conseil-de-paix-et-de-securite#:~:text=Le%20Conseil%20a%20salu%C3%A9%20l,conclus%20par%20les%20parties%20centrafricaines> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

²⁷ Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Central African Republic (S/2013/261) // United Nations. May 3, 2013. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2013/261> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

²⁸ Resolution 2127 (2013) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 7072nd Meeting, on 5 December 2013 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2127%20\(2013\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2127%20(2013)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

Table 2. Peacekeeping Missions in the CAR, 1996–2003

Mission	Composition/structure	Main goals and objectives	External support and funding	Key events and documents	Outcome/results	Reasons for limited effectiveness
MISAB	600 military personnel from 6 countries	Monitoring of the Bangui Agreements and stabilization	France (financial and logistical assistance)	UN Security Council Resolutions 1125 (1997), 1159 (1998)	Partial stabilization, transfer of mandate to the United Nations	Dependence on France, weak legal framework, lack of enforcement
MINURCA	1,350 military and police personnel	Maintaining security, monitoring elections	France, United Nations	The 1999 elections	Completed ahead of schedule	Politicization of the mandate, lack of security reforms
BONUCA	Civil mission	Peacebuilding, democratization	United Nations	Attempted coup by F. Bozizé (May 2001)	Increasing instability	Absence of a military component, inability to control the situation
FOMUC	380–500 military personnel	Presidential security, army reform	EU, France	F. Bozizé's coup (March 15, 2003), expansion of the contingent (2008)	Transformed into MICOPAX	Poor coordination, lack of resources
Operation Boali	200 military personnel	Support for the Bozizé regime, training of the army	France	Revision of the Defense Treaty (2010), secret agreements with South Africa (2007)	Reducing presence	Postcolonial dependence, internal resistance
EUFOR Tchad/CAR	14 participating countries	Humanitarian protection and security	EU	UN Security Council Resolution 1778 (2007)	Temporary stabilization	Limited mandate, lack of strategy
MINURCAT	2,396 of the 5,200 military personnel provided	Protection of the population, human rights monitoring	United Nations, EU	UN Security Council Resolutions 1778 (2007), 1923 (2010)		Understaffing (46% of the required contingent), 14 out of 18 general-purpose military helicopters and reconnaissance helicopters were missing, lack of influence
MICOPAX	400 + 360 FOMUC + 400 South Africa	Containing Seleka, maintaining security	ECCAS, AU	Libreville Accords (2013), Seleka rebellion	Transition to AFISM-CAR	ECOCAS's institutional weakness, lack of strategy

Source: compiled by T.N. Kirikova and A.V. Khudaykulova based on data from the UN Library, the Council of the EU and the African Union Peace and Security Council; United Nations Digital Library // United Nations. 2025. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/> (accessed: 29.10.2025); Document Register // Council of the European Union. 2025. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents/public-register/> (accessed: 29.10.2025); Peace and Security Council Documents Archives — Communiqués and Documents // African Union. 2025. URL: <https://www.peaceau.org/en/resource/90-organ-peace-security-council> (accessed: 29.10.2025).

African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (AFISM-CAR)

The AFISM-CAR was established to restore stability in the country following the coup d'état in March 2013. Led by the African Union and supported by the UN, the mission was launched on December 19, 2013 after a lengthy consultation and coordination period with ECCAS, culminating in an official handover ceremony. Given the position of ECCAS, the deployment of AFISM-CAR proceeded at a relatively slow pace.

The mission was positioned as a hybrid project, developed exclusively by African countries. However, the AU's mediating role was regarded with some prejudice due to the support provided to Bozizé by South Africa and President Jacob Zuma personally. The new mission was headed by Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, a general from the Republic of Congo and political opponent of the President of the Republic of Congo, Denis Sassou Nguesso.

It was assumed that AFISM-CAR would be deployed for an initial period of six months to address a range of tasks.²⁹ The core of AFISM-CAR was made up of MICOPAX contingents. However, the number of deployed forces was found to be insufficient. Despite its mandate, the African Union faced numerous difficulties that seriously complicated the

mission's progress. In 2013, an arms embargo was imposed on the CAR, with the exception of UN peacekeeping forces and their allies.³⁰

The peacekeepers were supported by French Sangaris units and EU forces, which deployed their first troops to the CAR in April 2014. Meanwhile, the Chadian government withdrew its 850-strong infantry battalion after accusations that it had opened fire on a crowd of Christians at a busy market in Bangui on March 29, 2014, resulting in the deaths of 30 civilians.³¹

France's Military Operation Sangaris

In an attempt to end the bloodshed that erupted after Muslim rebels of the *Seleka* seized power and the subsequent backlash from Christian militias, France began actively lobbying the UN Security Council to intervene in the CAR.

Although President Bozizé had requested French assistance before his removal from power, Operation Sangaris did not become operational until authorization was received from the UN Security Council in accordance with Resolution 2127.³²

France initiated preparations for Operation Sangaris in November 2013, launching it the following month.³³ Unlike AU or UN missions, Sangaris's mandate was limited to securing the capital's airport (Swed & Arduino, 2025).

²⁹ Publication: Communiqué of the 385th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council Held on 19 July 2013, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia // African Union. Paps Digital Repository. URL: <https://papsrepository.africanunion.org/entities/publication/71dd50b0-e6b4-4160-965e-fee2cabf32f0> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

³⁰ Security Council, Unanimously Adopting Resolution 2127 (2013), Mandates Mission in Central African Republic to Protect Civilians, Restore State Authority // United Nation. Meetings Coverage and Press Releases. December 5, 2013. URL: <https://press.un.org/en/2013/sc11200.doc.htm> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

³¹ Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Central African Republic (S/2014/562) // United Nations. August 1, 2014. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2014/562> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

³² Resolution 2127 (2013) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 7072nd Meeting, on 5 December 2013 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2127%20\(2013\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2127%20(2013)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

³³ France and Central African Republic // France Diplomacy. URL: <https://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/en/country-files/central-african-republic/france-and-central-african-republic/> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

The first contingent was deployed to the front lines at the height of the conflict between the former *Seleka* and the anti-Balaka armed groups. In cooperation with AFISM-CAR, they managed to drive the armed groups out of Bangui and support the restoration of the transitional government.

The replacement of AFISM-CAR by MINUSCA in September 2014 and the increase in the latter's strength allowed France to gradually change the format of its mission, which became a response force in support of MINUSCA.

In October 2016, France announced the termination of Operation Sangaris. The withdrawal of 2,000 French troops took place amid a new wave of killings in the CAR. Sangaris was the “final operation of the old type,” after which France finally shifted towards capacity building and support through the EU, rather than independent interventions (Swed & Arduino, 2025).

United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA)

Throughout 2013, the situation in the CAR remained unstable, leading to increased public pressure for more active international intervention. Six months later, AFISM-CAR was replaced by a larger UN-led mission — the Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).

The handover process proceeded smoothly, and a relatively constructive relationship developed between the heads of AFISM-CAR

and MINUSCA. The primary objective of the new mission was declared to be the protection of civilians. MINUSCA was also tasked with supporting the transition process, delivering humanitarian aid, promoting and protecting human rights, strengthening justice and the rule of law, and facilitating disarmament, demobilisation, reintegration and repatriation.

In accordance with UN Security Council Resolution 2149 adopted on April 10, 2014, MINUSCA was assigned a total of 10,000 military personnel and 1,800 police officers.³⁴ The transfer of authority was executed on September 15, 2014. The AFISM-CAR contingent was placed under the UN command, accounting for approximately a third of the total UN forces.

In its first two years, MINUSCA has achieved results with regard to the establishment of sustainable peace. For the first time since 2013, MINUSCA troops were deployed outside Bangui, together with the newly re-established Central African Armed Forces. In May 2015, a series of agreements were signed as part of a national dialogue known as the Bangui Forum, including the Agreement on Political Transition.³⁵ The government and armed groups committed to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration, and repatriation of combatants. In June 2015, a Special Criminal Court was established to investigate and prosecute individuals accused of war crimes and crimes against humanity.³⁶

After the withdrawal of the French Sangaris contingent, MINUSCA became the only entity performing military tasks, even though the multifaceted UN peacekeeping operations are not designed for such tasks.

³⁴ Resolution 2149 (2013) Adopted by the Security Council at Its 7153rd Meeting, on 10 April 2014 // United Nations. URL: [https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2149%20\(2014\)](https://docs.un.org/en/S/RES/2149%20(2014)) (accessed: 20.08.2025).

³⁵ Annex I to the Letter Dated 15 May 2015 from the Chargé d'affaires a.i. of the Permanent Mission of the Central African Republic to the United Nations Addressed to the President of the Security Council. Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction in the Central African Republic (S/2015/344) // United Nations. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/S/2015/344> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

³⁶ Ibid.

African Union Missions in Support of MINUSCA

Until July 2013, the African Union did not expand its involvement in the CAR, particularly given the challenges faced by MICOPAX under the ECCAS leadership. Ultimately, the AU merged MICOPAX with the International Support Mission to the AFISM-CAR, thereby expanding its military component.

However, the new AU peacekeeping mission faced a number of difficulties caused by insufficient institutional power and reliance on international support. In addition, the African Union also encountered serious opposition from ECCAS. The leaders of Chad and the Republic of Congo, I. Deby and D. Sassou-Nguesso, respectively, interpreted the AU's growing activity in the CAR as an attempt to obtain financial resources for its mission, rather than as a manifestation of genuine concern for the country. The situation was exacerbated after the appointment of General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, a political opponent of D. Sassou-Nguesso, was appointed head of AFISM-CAR. Sassou-Nguesso refused to support the transfer of power to the AU and took steps to prevent it (Carayannis & Fowlis, 2017, p. 225).

In 2014, following the merger of AFISM-CAR's military contingent with MINUSCA, the AU established the African Union Mission in the Central African Republic (MISAC).³⁷ The

MISAC mandate, which was approved by the AU Peace and Security Council, included the provision of support for the political transition, the organization of elections, the promotion of national reconciliation, the reform of the security sector, and the coordination with the Regional Initiative to Eliminate the Lord's Resistance Army.³⁸ However, expanding MISAC's mandate to cover the entire Central African Republic created a certain degree of uncertainty, as the AU lacked the capacity to adequately respond to the situation in the CAR, let alone the entire region.³⁹

European Union Missions in Support of MINUSCA

The European Union has always advocated a multilateral approach to peacekeeping, and its missions in the CAR were no exception. In February 2014, the EU authorized the deployment of the EUFOR RCA,⁴⁰ aimed at ensuring security in the Bangui area and creating conditions for the delivery of humanitarian aid. The mission was executed in close coordination with the French Sangaris operation, which allowed the latter to redeploy its forces outside the capital.⁴¹ However, despite the pronounced declarations, EUFOR RCA lasted only 11 months before being replaced by the military advisory mission EUMAM RCA.

³⁷ Peace and Security Council 458th Meeting. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PSC/PR/COMM(CDLVIII). Communiqué // African Union. September 17, 2014. URL: <http://www.peaceau.org/uploads/psc-com-458-car-17-09-2014.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

³⁸ Ibid.

³⁹ De Carvalho G., Lucey A. Fractured Peacebuilding in the Central African Republic // The Institute for Security Studies Policy Brief. 2016 (July). No. 87. URL: <https://issafrica.s3.amazonaws.com/site/uploads/policybrief87.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴⁰ Council Decision 2014/73/CFSP of 10 February 2014 on a European Union Military Operation in the Central African Republic (EUFOR RCA) // Official Journal of the European Union. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32014D0073&from=IT> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴¹ EU Military Operation in the Central African Republic Launched // Council of the European Union. April 1, 2014. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/media/23899/142049.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

Launched in March 2015, EUMAM RCA⁴² was a logical continuation of EUFOR RCA, with a focus on security sector reform. Under its mandate, EUMAM RCA provided training and professional development to the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and supported the development of modernized, ethnically balanced, and democratically accountable security forces. The mission operated mainly in the Bangui area, where most of the CAR's state institutions are located.

As with EUFOR, during the implementation of the EUMAM mission, there was a clear discrepancy between the desire of EU member states to act and their actual willingness to contribute resources. The humanitarian emergency in the CAR and France's calls for shared responsibility created a sense of "collective duty" among EU member states, prompting them to approve the deployment of EUFOR and EUMAM. However, as most member states had no direct strategic or economic interests in the CAR, their contribution to the overall effort was effectively nominal and symbolic (Nováky, 2016).

One of EUMAM RCA's key achievements was the training of several FACA battalions, which was intended to improve their professionalism and discipline. However, as experts note, the results of this work have been limited. Moreover, the trained units were frequently unable to effectively counter armed groups in rural areas, where violence remained at an extremely high level.⁴³

In April 2016, in response to a request from CAR President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, the EU established the Military Training Mission (EUTM RCA),⁴⁴ which became the successor to EUMAM RCA. The new mission expanded its activities to the Bouar region, continuing to train FACA's armed forces. Overall, as with previous EU missions in CAR, the EUTM RCA served more as a symbol of political will than as an effective stabilization instrument. Its contribution to the country's long-term recovery remains questionable.

Phase 3 (2018 — present): New Stage of Settlement

The third phase of international intervention in the CAR is characterized by a fundamental transformation of the peacekeeping paradigm. The period of dominance by Western multilateral institutions has given way to an era of geopolitical competition, in which alternative actors, primarily Russian private military companies (PMCs), have assumed an important role. The fundamental paradox of this phase is that these new partners have demonstrated effectiveness where traditional missions have operated for years without tangible results (Bovdunov, 2023). This phase is characterized by three interrelated processes: France's strategic retreat, Russia's emergence as an alternative power center, and the deepening crisis of legitimacy of traditional multilateral missions.

⁴² Décision (PESC) 2015/78 du conseil du 19 janvier 2015 relative à une mission de conseil militaire PSDC de l'Union européenne en République centrafricaine (EUMAM RCA) // Journal officiel de l'Union européenne. 20 janvier 2015. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/FR/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32015D0078&from=FR> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴³ Central African Republic: Avoiding an Electoral Flare-up // International Crisis Group. October 19, 2015. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-avoiding-electoral-flare> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴⁴ Council Decision (CFSP) 2016/610 of 19 April 2016 on a European Union CSDP Military Training Mission in the Central African Republic (EUTM RCA) // Official Journal of the European Union. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32016D0610> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

Table 3. Peacekeeping Missions in the CAR, 2013–2018

Mission	Composition/structure	Main goals and objectives	External support and funding	Key events and documents	Outcome/results	Reasons for limited effectiveness
AFISM-CAR	3,652 people: 3,500 military personnel and 152 civilians, after 2013–6,000 people	Stabilizing the situation after the coup, protecting civilians, and supporting the transitional government	Financing of the AS with the participation of the EU and France; material support from Paris	UN Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013); transfer of powers from ECCAS to the AU	Temporary stabilization of Bangui; preparation for the transfer of the mandate to the UN	Lack of resources, internal competition between the AU and ECCAS, dependence on external military forces
Operation Sangaris	3,000 military personnel, then reduced to 900	Supporting AFISM-CAR, ensuring security in Bangui, protecting civilians	Fully funded by France, coordinated with AFISM-CAR and MINUSCA	UN Security Council Resolution 2127 (2013), withdrawal of troops in October 2016	Containing violence in the capital, supporting the transition period	Limited mandate, local focus, political ambiguity of French participation
MINUSCA	Initially — 10,000 military personnel and 1,800 police officers, later — 14,400 military personnel and 3,020 police officers, civilian components	Population protection, transition support, DDRR, rule of law	UN funding, donor support (EU, USA, France)	UN Security Council Resolution 2149 (2014), extending the mandate until November 2025	National dialogue (Bangui Forum), establishment of a Special Criminal Court	Mandate overload, lack of control over territories, political fragmentation of elites
MISAC	A small civilian-military component under the auspices of the AU	Supporting the transition process, elections and security sector reform	Limited AU funding, EU external grants	Decision of the Peace and Security Council of the AU (2014)	Supporting the political dialogue, weak impact on security	Conflict of interest within the AC and ECCAS, lack of resources and coordination
EUFOR RCA / EUMAM RCA / EUTM RCA	– EUFOR: 700 military personnel – EUMAM: military advisers – EUTM: training contingent	– EUFOR: ensuring security in Bangui – EUMAM/EUTM: FACA training, security sector reform	EU funding; main burden on France and Germany	Decisions of the Council of the EU in 2014, 2015, and 2016.	Training of individual FACA units, improving the EU's image	Symbolic participation, limited resources, no strategic impact

Source: compiled by the authors based on data from the UN Library, the Council of the EU and the African Union Peace and Security Council: United Nations Digital Library // United Nations, 2025. URL: <https://digitallibrary.un.org/> (accessed: 29.10.2025); Document Register // Council of the European Union. 2025. URL: <https://www.consilium.europa.eu/en/documents/public-register/> (accessed: 29.10.2025); Peace and Security Council Documents Archives — Communiqués and Documents // African Union. 2025. URL: <https://www.peaceau.org/en/resource/90-organ-peace-security-council> (accessed: 29.10.2025).

The Officers' Union for International Security

The turning point came when the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, made an appeal to the President of the Russian Federation, Vladimir Putin, for assistance in restoring order to the country and reinforcing its sovereignty.⁴⁵ In the aftermath of the bilateral discussions between the two heads of state, Russian military specialists were deployed to the Republic in 2018,⁴⁶ supervised by the Officers' Union for International Security, headed by A.A. Ivanov (Bovdunov, 2023). A significant number of internal and border conflicts were ultimately resolved.

On February 6, 2019, in Khartoum, the government of the Central African Republic signed a historic Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR with all 14 armed groups, with Russia's assistance, in Khartoum.⁴⁷ Under this agreement, Russian

specialists, together with the CAR's regular army, are implementing a national program for disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration. In accordance with the provisions of this program, the Russian military engages in regular dialogue with the leaders of rebel groups on disarmament and establishing peaceful relations with the CAR government.⁴⁸

On September 16, 2021, the Luanda Roadmap, a joint roadmap for the peace process in the CAR,⁴⁹ was approved at the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region.⁵⁰ The document sets out the mechanisms and timelines for implementing the 2019 Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation.⁵¹

Another EU Mission: EUAM RCA

The European Union Civilian Advisory Mission to the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA)⁵² was established in December 2019 and

⁴⁵ On the Meeting of the Minister of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation S.V. Lavrov with the President of the Central African Republic F.-A. Touadera // Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Russian Federation. October 9, 2017. (In Russian). URL: https://mid.ru/ru/press_service/vizity-ministra/1554659/ (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴⁶ On the Sidelines of the St. Petersburg International Economic Forum, Vladimir Putin Met with the President of the Central African Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra // St. Petersburg International Economic Forum. May 23, 2025. (In Russian). URL: <https://forumspb.com/news/news/meeting-with-president-of-central-african-republic-faustin-archange-touadera> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴⁷ Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, February 2019 (S/2019/145) // OCHA. URL: <https://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/political-agreement-peace-and-reconciliation-central-african> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴⁸ Officers Union for International Security: Around 700 Militants Surrendered in the CAR in Less Than a Month // TASS. August 10, 2025. (In Russian). URL: <https://tass.ru/armiya-i-opk/24748515> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁴⁹ Final Communiqué: Mini-Summit of ICGLR on the Political and Security Situation in the Central African Republic // The International Conference on the Great Lakes Region — ICGLR. September 16, 2021. URL: https://icglr.org/images/PressReleases/ENG_Final_Communiq_3rd_Mini-Summit_ICGLR_-_16SET2021.pdf (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁵⁰ The Luanda Road Map for Peace in the Central African Republic, which was signed in September 2019 under the auspices of the African Union and ECCAS, was a comprehensive framework aimed at achieving a political settlement through the establishment of an inclusive government, the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration of armed groups, and the organization of elections.

⁵¹ See: Central African Republic. Report of the Secretary-General (S/2021/867) // United Nations. October 12, 2021 URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/s/2021/867> (accessed: 24.10.2025); RCA: revue stratégique de la feuille de route de Luanda et de l'accord de paix // Ndjoni Sango. 8 juin 2022. URL: <https://ndjonisango.com/2022/06/08/rca-revue-strategique-de-la-feuille-de-route-de-luanda-et-de-laccord-de-paix/> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁵² Council Decision (CFSP) 2019/2110 of 9 December 2019 on the European Union CSDP Advisory Mission in the Central African Republic (EUAM RCA) // Official Journal of the European Union. URL: <https://eur-lex.europa.eu/legal-content/EN/TXT/PDF/?uri=CELEX:32019D2110> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

officially launched in August 2020. This marked the next stage in the EU's efforts to stabilize the CAR. In contrast to the previous military missions, the EUAM RCA was designed as a civilian initiative, providing strategic advice and supporting security sector reform. Its mandate included providing expert assistance to the Ministry of the Interior and other CAR authorities, promoting the development of internal security forces (including the police and gendarmerie) and gender equality within these forces. The mission also had the ability to scale up its mandate. However, as with previous EU missions in the CAR, EUAM RCA faced a lack of funding, a limited number of experts, and an insufficient capacity to significantly impact local realities.

Another African Union Mission: MOUACA

In 2020, the AU made a further attempt to consolidate its position in the CAR by establishing the African Union Military Observers Mission in the Central African Republic (MOUACA)⁵³ to monitor the implementation of the 2019 Political Agreement on Peace and Reconciliation, including the establishment of a joint security force. However, the mission's deployment was hampered by the COVID-19 pandemic, resulting in delays and the partial completion of its tasks. By October 2020, only 14 of the planned 30 military observers had been

deployed. Funding for MOUACA was channeled through the European Peace Facility, highlighting the continuing logic of the 'Generation 3½' approach (Yaw Tchie, 2023), wherein the African Union assumes the role of an implementer rather than a strategic coordinator of peacekeeping. However, this was not enough to ensure the mission's effective operation. As a result, in October 2022, MOUACA was incorporated into MISAC,⁵⁴ thus illustrating the AU's limitations in implementing large-scale peacekeeping initiatives.⁵⁵

Rwandan Contingent

In December 2020, at the request of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, Rwandan President Paul Kagame promptly deployed an additional 1,000 troops to the Central African Republic (CAR) to ensure security for the presidential elections. The presidents attributed the additional deployment to the weakness of the MINUSCA mission. The Rwandan Minister of Defense also stated that the contingent of approximately 2,000 troops serves as reinforcement for the Rwandan peacekeepers in MINUSCA. Furthermore, Rwandan representatives have permanently taken key positions in the personal security of the CAR president, the army, and the gendarmerie.⁵⁶ In August 2021, an additional 300 Rwandan peacekeepers joined MINUSCA.⁵⁷

⁵³ Communiqué for the 936th Meeting of the PSC Held on 10 July 2020, on the Situation in the Central African Republic // African Union. August 3, 2020. URL: <https://www.peaceau.org/en/article/communique-for-the-936th-meeting-of-the-psc-held-on-10-july-2020-on-the-situation-in-the-central-african-republic> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁵⁴ Peace and Security Council 1116th Meeting. Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. PSC/PR/COMM.1116.1 // African Union. October 31, 2022. URL: <https://www.peaceau.org/uploads/1116.comm1-en.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁵⁵ Diatta M.D. Will This Week's AU Mission to CAR Deliver a Change in Strategy? // The Institute for Security Studies. June 30, 2021. URL: <https://issafrika.org/iss-today/will-this-weeks-au-mission-to-car-deliver-a-change-in-strategy> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁵⁶ Rwanda's Growing Role in the Central African Republic // International Crisis Group. 2023 (July 7). Briefing No. 191. URL: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic-rwanda/b191-rwandas-growing-role-central-african-republic> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁵⁷ MINUSCA Capacity Boosted by Arrival of Additional Rwandan Peacekeepers // MINUSCA — UN Missions. August 3, 2021. URL: <https://minusca.unmissions.org/en/minusca-capacity-boosted-arrival-additional-rwandan-peacekeepers> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

In May 2022, Rwanda opened an embassy in Bangui. Rwanda is also represented in key positions within the UN. For example, in June 2021, Christophe Bizimungu, a Rwandan police commissioner, assumed command of the MINUSCA police force. Then, in February 2022, Valentina Rugwabiza was appointed as the UN Secretary-General's Special Representative for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA. Meanwhile, Vedaste Kalima became the head of the Central African office of the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs.

MINUSKA: The Second Decade in the Central African Republic

MINUSCA is currently the largest of all active UN peacekeeping missions, with 17,420 personnel. Its budget has also increased in recent years, reaching USD 1,006,428,200 in 2020–21, USD 1,116,738,700 in 2021–22, and USD 1,283,314,000 in the 2024–25 period.⁵⁸

In accordance with Resolution 2759 (2024), the MINUSCA mandate was extended until 15 November 2025. While Russia expressed support for the French-drafted resolution on the mandate extension, it also articulated concerns that the current peacekeeping activities in the CAR do not align with the terms of the mandate.⁵⁹ Furthermore, it raised concerns that certain provisions of the resolution pose risks to the country's sovereignty, particularly in the context of the activities of the International Criminal Court (ICC).

The primary objective of MINUSCA has been to provide support in preparation for the

municipal, parliamentary and presidential elections scheduled for 28 December 2025. At a UN Security Council meeting in February 2025, the Head of Mission, Valentina Rugwabiza, presented a report on the subject of the preparations for the forthcoming elections. In this report, she highlighted the significant progress that had been made in this area, emphasizing MINUSCA's integrated support and close cooperation with UN programs and Western donors.⁶⁰

Despite the considerable presence of the MINUSCA mission, there has been a loss of trust on the part of the population. Research conducted in the CAR (particularly in Ndélé) demonstrates that peacekeepers are often perceived as merely filling an institutional void, rather than addressing the root causes of violence (Glawion, 2025). Residents expected a confrontation with armed groups, but when the peacekeepers limited themselves to patrols and administrative functions, they were accused of inaction and even collusion with the rebels. Consequently, the discrepancy between the mission's objective results (reduced casualties) and the population's subjective perceptions (a sense of insecurity and disillusionment) played a pivotal role in its delegitimization.

Peacekeeping 'Marathon' in the Central African Republic: Results

In recent decades, the Central African Republic has experienced almost two dozen military operations and peacekeeping

⁵⁸ Resolution Adopted by the General Assembly on 28 June 2024 (A/RES/78/298) // United Nations. URL: <https://docs.un.org/en/a/res/78/298> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁵⁹ Statement by Deputy Permanent Representative A.M. Evstigneeva on the rationale for voting on the draft UN Security Council Resolution on the extension of the mandate of MINUSCA // Permanent Mission of the Russian Federation to the UN. November 14, 2024. (In Russian). URL: <https://russiaun.ru/ru/news/14112024> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

⁶⁰ Central African Republic Faces Ongoing Challenges Ahead of Elections // United Nation Peacekeeping. February 25, 2025. URL: <https://peacekeeping.un.org/en/central-african-republic-faces-ongoing-challenges-ahead-of-elections> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

missions led by various actors, some of which exhibited competitive behaviour that contributed to the escalation of tensions rather than their resolution. Despite a consistent increase in the number of peacekeepers — whose numbers exceeded those of the CAR's national army by early 2014 — the situation steadily worsened. Despite the deployment of three peacekeeping forces (AU, EU and France), the number of troops was inadequate to deploy throughout the country and perform the full range of military, police and civilian tasks. Moreover, the composition and nature of the operations did not always align with the objectives outlined in their mandates. Ethnic and religious factors, as well as the Republic's national characteristics, were not taken into account. The crisis was exacerbated by bias among the peacekeeping forces.

Each new peacekeeping intervention — MICOPAX (under ECCAS leadership), AFISM-CAR (under AU leadership) and MINUSCA (under UN leadership) — was more of an addition to the previous operation than a new mission developed with a specific strategy in mind. Although the AU's peacekeeping missions took into account some of the specific characteristics and causes of the CAR conflicts, they were found to be comparatively deficient in terms of composition, capabilities and equipment when compared to those of the UN, the EU and France. Nevertheless, the AU aspired to obtain funding from various sources and continue its work despite the prevailing international scepticism regarding its potential to intervene in the CAR crisis.

Nevertheless, none of the missions succeeded in achieving long-term stabilization or lasting peace throughout the country. The majority of these measures was designed for short-term stabilization and only achieved a temporary reduction in violence. The restoration of order

was largely confined to the capital and major infrastructure facilities in the surrounding area. Peacekeepers actively promoted national dialogue, trying to establish disarmament processes, demobilization and the reintegration of former combatants with each new outbreak of violence. However, despite extensive efforts, none of the peacekeepers could identify or propose a 'peace formula' that addressed the underlying causes of the conflict: the ongoing disputes over identity, citizenship and belonging. Instead, the CAR actively promoted the liberal democratic agenda of the Western powers against a backdrop of weak state institutions.

To the local residents, the various missions appeared to merge as they succeeded one another in rapid succession, often with no changes to the personnel or local command structures. Each subsequent operation experienced an overlap with the previous one, inheriting all the problems and difficulties that the predecessor had failed to resolve. This triggered a cycle of operations whose mandates, troop contingents, logistics and leadership were not always consistent with the objectives.

Furthermore, the Russian approach and actions by the Officers' Union for International Security in addressing numerous security issues in the CAR have been far more effective than the efforts of other parties involved in the security process, including MINUSCA (Bovdunov, 2023; Swed & Arduino, 2025). On April 19, 2025, an agreement was signed in N'Djamena between the CAR government and the UPC and 3R factions with the mediation of the Officers' Union for International Security. On July 10, 2025, the leaders of these factions, Ali Darassa and Sembe Bobo, publicly announced the dissolution of their respective movements. By summer 2025, approximately 5,000 militants had laid down their arms, representing the most significant achievement of the peace

process since the 2019 Khartoum Agreement.⁶¹ Understanding the underlying causes of the conflict and implementing a hybrid peacekeeping model combining targeted military pressure on irreconcilable armed groups with successful mediation has proven to be an effective way of achieving real and sustainable peace.

By the end of summer 2025, MINUSCA had actually acknowledged its secondary role in supporting peace initiatives and conflict resolution. In practice, however, it was the national armed forces, supported by MINUSCA, who maintained order on the ground, while the UN was limited to observer and humanitarian functions. Western actors, perceiving MINUSCA's presence as a means of exerting influence and as a convenient pretext, are more interested in maintaining the mission in its current form. Nevertheless, appeals for the UN mission to be transformed or gradually phased out,⁶² with responsibility for security transferred to the country's own armed forces, which have now been considerably strengthened by the participation of the Russian Federation through the Officers' Union for International Security, are being made with increasing frequency in CAR electoral circles.

The return of internally displaced persons and refugees is undeniable evidence that the situation has stabilized and that confidence in the CAR government and its initiatives has been revived. According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), 64,700 people who had

previously been forced to flee their homes returned to their home villages and towns by 30 April 2025.⁶³

Conclusion

The analysis indicates that, irrespective of contingent affiliation and leadership, peacekeeping operations in the CAR lacked a clearly defined political strategy, a comprehensive understanding of the situation, a strong political will to address the root causes of conflicts, and a sustained peacekeeping presence. Despite the transition period, the reassignment of missions was not always adequately planned and was plagued by serious management problems, affecting the overall quality and effectiveness of operations.

The limited efficacy of peacekeeping efforts in the CAR can be attributed to numerous factors.

Firstly, the operations lacked a clearly defined political strategy and an in-depth understanding of the situation. All parties involved in the CAR peace process relied on narratives developed elsewhere and the same failed formula: a temporary reduction in violence, national dialogue, the promise of disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation of combatants, and elections as an exit strategy. However, this formula proved ineffective in securing peace, as it did not address the underlying causes of the conflict, including disputes over identity, citizenship and belonging. Nevertheless, it became the default strategy for

⁶¹ Romanov D. "They Acted Lawlessly": How the Wagner PMC Helped Disarm Militants in the Central African Republic and End a Bloody Civil War // Lenta.ru. August 27, 2025. (In Russian). URL: <https://lenta.ru/articles/2025/08/27/tsar/> (accessed: 27.08.2025).

⁶² President Touadéra Wants UN Peacekeepers to Leave Bangui // Africa Intelligence. June 11, 2024. URL: <https://www.africaintelligence.com/central-africa/2024/11/06/president-touadera-wants-un-peacekeepers-to-leave-bangui%2C110336047-eve> (accessed: 24.10.2025).

⁶³ Regional Trends: Forced Displacement in West and Central Africa in 2025 // UNHCR. June 11, 2025. URL: <https://www.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/2025-06/west-central-africa-regional-trends-forced-displacement-2025.pdf> (accessed: 20.08.2025).

both the UN and the AU in response to recurring cycles of violence.

Secondly, each new intervention overlapped the previous one, resulting in a “layer cake” of peacekeeping operations whose mandates, troop levels and leadership were not always adequate. This experience highlights the necessity for enhanced management of troops transitioning from regional to UN operations, and vividly illustrates the challenges the AU and the UN face in managing their relationships with regional organizations, which are often characterized by tensions and even competition.

The analysis revealed that only three of the 19 missions were effective: MINUSCA, the Officers’ Union for International Security and the Rwandan contingent. Each mission was effective in its own way. While MINUSCA demonstrated effectiveness at the outset of its mandate, its results were subsequently virtually nullified, as is the case with most international missions. The Rwandan contingent performed relatively well within its remit, providing substantial support

during the suppression of the 2020–21 rebellions. This contributed to a reduction in violence, strengthening state authority and establishing political stability. However, their mandate was limited and did not include peacekeeping or peacebuilding functions. Furthermore, as the Officers’ Union for International Security was operating in the CAR at the same time and is the only mission to meet all four performance criteria, MINUSCA and the Rwandan contingent automatically received a conditional assessment of their usefulness, as their specific contribution is difficult to separate from the OUIS’s overall effect.

It is evident that despite the individual successes achieved by MINUSCA and the Rwandan contingent, their high assessment is largely a priori. This is due to the synchronized and comprehensive actions of the OUIS, which fully met the criteria for effectiveness, thereby creating a generally favourable background against which the results of other missions were indistinguishable.

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