

Central Africa

A number of important political and security challenges confront countries in Central Africa, illustrated most vividly by the rapid emergence of a rebel coalition in the Central African Republic (CAR), which gained control of approximately one-third of the country by the end of 2012. Governance concerns, including the lack of inclusive governance, continue to present risks as both Burundi and the CAR prepare for elections in the coming years. In addition, despite important progress in addressing security issues, the region is threatened by the continued operations of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

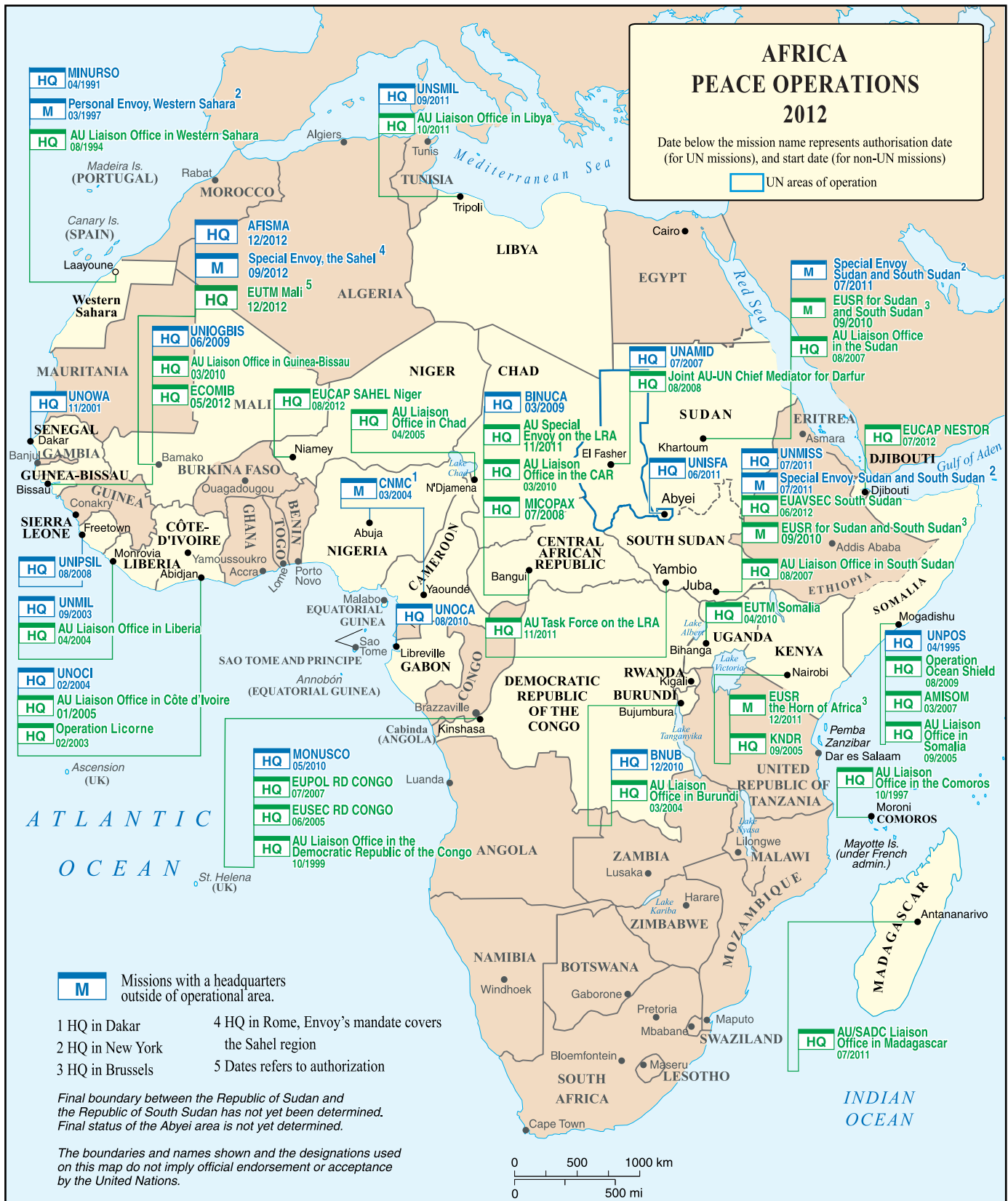
Background

While the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) is the region's only large-scale peacekeeping mission (see Mission Note 4.5), Central Africa hosts three UN political missions supporting peace processes at various stages. In addition to offices in the CAR and Burundi, the UN in 2011 established its Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) to strengthen regional conflict prevention mechanisms. Based in Libreville, Gabon, UNOCA covers the ten member states of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).¹ The office's main function is to promote a regional approach to conflict prevention and peacebuilding, in particular by carrying out good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General and assisting subregional organizations. After some recruitment delays, UNOCA is now fully staffed and has established partnerships with other UN actors as well as regional organizations in order to fill its gaps in

thematic expertise. However, despite the Security Council's strong support, it still lacks financial resources and sufficient staff strength to address the range of issues it is tasked to deal with, and is thus partly reliant on extra-budgetary funding.

The UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) was established in January 2010, replacing a prior peacebuilding office,² with the aim of strengthening the coordination of UN activities in the country. The mission is mandated to support implementation of the inclusive political dialogue held after the signing of the 2008 Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) between the government and all but one of the major rebel groups. The mission focuses on assisting the government in security sector reform (SSR), in particular the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) process, which is guided by a national DDR strategy developed in mid-2011. The mission also coordinates with the UN Peacebuilding Commission, which is currently redefining its working relationship with the CAR on the basis of its second poverty reduction strategy paper, adopted in February 2012.

Also in the CAR is the ECCAS Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central Africa (MICOPAX). Created in July 2008 to replace the Multinational Force in Central Africa (FOMUC), MICOPAX is mandated to assist in restructuring the country's security forces, accompany the transition process toward national reconciliation, and coordinate humanitarian aid. Despite this rather comprehensive mandate, its staff is almost entirely military. With a total staff of less than 700 personnel, who receive financial and logistical



support from the EU and France, the mission's capacities, and therefore its contributions, were limited for much of 2012. It has nonetheless worked to mitigate the risk of large-scale violence by acting as an intermediary between the rebel groups, the CAR army, and local authorities. Its escort missions have also had deterrent effects, but are insufficient to ensure the protection of civilians in the north.

The UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) was authorized in 2011 to replace the larger UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB). BNUB is expected to accompany the last phase of peace consolidation before the return to normalized UN engagement in Burundi. The mission is mandated, among other tasks, to support the government in strengthening national institutions, facilitate dialogue between national actors, support the establishment of transitional justice mechanisms, promote the protection of human rights, and ensure that all strategies and policies with respect to public finance and the economic sector have a focus on peacebuilding and equitable growth. The swift replacement of former head of BNUB Karin Landgren, who in April 2012 was appointed to lead the UN mission in Liberia, with Parfait Onanga-Anyanga, prevented a loss of mission momentum.

The Lord's Resistance Army remains a significant challenge for the region, and international attention on the group intensified in 2012 with the release of a controversial documentary on its leader, Joseph Kony. In November 2011 the African Union launched a regional initiative against the LRA. The UN also produced a regional strategy, in June 2012, aimed at enhancing cooperation between UN and regional actors against LRA activities (see the box "The African Union's Efforts Against the Lord's Resistance Army").

Regional Developments

Following a request by the Security Council in November 2011, UNOCA took the lead in coordinating the development of a UN regional

strategy for humanitarian, development, and peacebuilding assistance to LRA-affected areas, in close coordination with the African Union (in particular its Special Envoy for the LRA), UN missions and country teams in the affected areas, and Central African states. The strategy, endorsed by the Security Council in June 2012, focuses on five key objectives: implementation of the AU Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA, protection of civilians, strengthening of DDR activities, coordination of humanitarian assistance and child protection programs, and support to the affected countries in establishing state authority in their territories.³

UNOCA is also developing a regional antipiracy strategy in the Gulf of Guinea in cooperation with Central African and West African regional actors, such as the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA) and the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS). At the request of the Security Council, UNOCA is also involved in the design of a systemwide strategy to address the impact of the Libya crisis on the Sahel region, following the recommendations of a UN interagency assessment mission conducted in December 2011.

In keeping with its mandate to cooperate with subregional organizations, UNOCA adopted in May 2012 a framework cooperation agreement with ECCAS to strengthen the

UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)

- Authorization Date 11 December 2009 (SG Letter S/2009/697), 30 August 2010 (SG Letter S/2010/457)
- SRSO Abou Moussa (Chad)
- Budget \$4.4 million (1 January 2012–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 Military Experts on Mission: 1
International Civilian Staff: 19
National Civilian Staff: 6

For detailed mission information see p. 408

latter's conflict prevention and mediation support capabilities. The two organizations, together with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR), are also developing a counterterrorism initiative.

Also supporting peace consolidation efforts in the region are four AU liaison offices in Central Africa, based in Burundi, the CAR, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Their activities range from conflict prevention, management, and resolution to postconflict reconstruction. The liaison offices are particularly active in supporting the implementation of peace agreements, and in monitoring the implementation of AU Peace and Security Council decisions at the national level.

Central African Republic

Despite positive signs of progress earlier in the year, the emergence and rapid advance of the Seleka rebel alliance in December 2012 dealt a significant blow to peace consolidation efforts in the Central African Republic. Governance and security in the CAR have been weakened by repeated coups and ensuing conflict since the end of the 1990s. The January 2011 elections were held in a peaceful atmosphere, but the runoff elections two months later were boycotted by the opposition and thus did not serve to reduce the political tension between the ruling party and the opposition. However, the political process made significant progress in the second half of 2012. Consultations between the government and various political parties, supported

by BINUCA, the African Union, and the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie, led to the adoption by consensus of a new elections management body in September 2012, followed by the approval of a new draft electoral code. Despite this major political breakthrough, the continued restrictions on the rights of the opposition continue to pose a challenge to political stability.

On 25 August, the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) rebel group acceded to the CPA—the final rebel group to join the peace process. This development, together with the European Union's provision in May 2012 of 4 million euros,⁴ allowed for the extension of the DDR process in northeastern CAR, which also includes former combatants from other major rebel groups. With technical assistance from BINUCA and the UN Development Programme (UNDP), and in cooperation with the World Bank, the DDR process resumed in the northwestern and northern-central regions in mid-2012. Though the DDR exercise benefited from the relative improvement of security conditions in the country, its future implementation is uncertain due to security issues posed by the new rebellion, as well as funding gaps that reached a deficit of \$20 million in May.⁵

The surge in human rights violations reported by BINUCA throughout 2012 highlights the urgent need for progress on the SSR front, which still lacks a national strategy. A roadmap for the revival of the SSR process, developed with strong technical support from BINUCA, was adopted in February.⁶ The Security Council identified as a cause for "deep concern" the numerous cases of summary executions, torture, and arbitrary arrests perpetrated by security and defense forces, as well as the instances of harassment and extortion of the population in areas controlled by armed groups.⁷

These developments underscored the existing weaknesses of the security environment when on 10 December, the Seleka rebel alliance launched attacks in northeastern CAR, quickly capturing the city of Bria and

AU Liaison Office in Chad

• Authorization Date	25 April 2005
• Start Date	February 2006
• Head of Office	Ambassador Ki Doulaye Coentin (Burkina Faso)
• Strength as of 30 September 2012	International Civilian Staff: 3 National Civilian Staff: 5

extending to cover nearly one-third of the country. The alliance is made up of factions of three rebel groups united in their opposition to President Bozizé and his perceived failure to implement the 2008 peace agreement. In response, and at Bozizé's request, the government of Chad agreed to send 2,000 troops to halt the rebels' advance. The president also requested assistance from the United States and France, but neither country was willing to intervene. As a result of the violence, the UN temporarily evacuated nonessential staff and the United States closed its embassy in Bangui.

The ECCAS held a summit on 21 December where it put forth a roadmap to bring an end to the crisis, including a cease-fire and immediate negotiations, and agreed to further reinforce MICOPAX to turn it into an interposition force. The UN Secretary-General and Security Council both strongly condemned the rebels' activities and called for the implementation of the ECCAS roadmap. BINUCA engaged with both the government and rebels to establish a dialogue and cease-fire.

In late December, the Seleka alliance halted their advance and agreed to enter into peace talks with the government beginning in early January, following President Bozizé's pledge to form a coalition government including members of the rebel group. As negotiations began in January the security environment remained precarious.

In addition, the LRA continues its operations in the CAR, where its leader, Joseph Kony, is believed to be hiding, and the country saw a spike in attacks in the first half of 2012. In light of the growing threat of the Ugandan rebel group, in December 2011 the Security Council designated BINUCA as a focal point for LRA-related activities. In addition to its participation in the UN regional strategy against the LRA, BINUCA also contributes to the drafting of a national strategy on the issue, which has yet to be adopted by the government. It also supports activities to encourage the defection and reintegration of LRA combatants. In the framework of the AU

UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA)

- Authorization Date 3 March 2009 (UNSC Letter S/2009/128 [as BONUCA]), 7 April 2009 (UNSC Pres. Statement S/PRST/2009/5 [as BONUCA]), 21 December 2009 (UNSC Pres. Statement S/PRST/2009/35 [as BINUCA succeeding BONUCA])
- Start Date 1 January 2010
- SRSG Margaret Vogt (Nigeria)
- Budget \$20.9 million (1 January 2012–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 Military Experts on Mission: 2
Police: 2
International Civilian Staff: 67
National Civilian Staff: 84
UN Volunteers: 4

For detailed mission information see p. 238

AU Liaison Office in the Central African Republic

- Authorization Date March 2010 (date of effect)
- Head of Office Ambassador Hawa Ahmed Youssouf (Djibouti)
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 International Civilian Staff: 7
National Civilian Staff: 8

Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central Africa (MICOPAX)

- Authorization Date 2 October 2002 (Libreville Summit)
- Start Date December 2002
- Special Representative Ambassador Albert Akendengue (Gabon)
- Force Commander General Akaga (Gabon)
- Budget \$46.1 million (1 October 2011–30 September 2012)
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 Troops: 334
Civilian Police: 57
National Staff: 1

initiative against the LRA, BINUCA provides logistical support to the AU delegations traveling to the affected areas, and has recruited

two consultants based in Obo as part of the AU Joint Intelligence and Operations Center.

Burundi

Though BNUB is intended to be the final mission before a return to normalized UN Country Team engagement, it inherited a polarized political situation following a boycott of the 2010 elections by major opposition parties, some of whose leaders left the country. These elections marked the second polls since the signing of the Arusha Accords in 2000, which provided for a new constitution and a power-sharing agreement to mitigate interethnic conflict.

To facilitate dialogue between political actors ahead of the 2015 elections, BNUB provides technical support on topics such as civil

society development, electoral preparedness, and press freedom. The mission also conducts quiet political engagement with senior government and opposition leaders in Burundi and abroad. Meetings between ruling-party officials and extraparliamentary opposition members over the past year, together with the return from Belgium of opposition spokesman Pancrace Cimpaye in July, were positive steps. However, despite a modest decrease in 2012, the persistence of extrajudicial killings and cases of torture serve as reminders that political violence remains too frequent an alternative to dialogue. The strong language on extrajudicial killings and accountability for past human rights violations in Security Council Resolution 2027 applied helpful pressure.

Implementation of a transitional justice mechanism has slowed again since 2011, when the government, with significant support from BNUB, set up a technical committee to elaborate a draft law to establish a truth and reconciliation commission. Given the new delay, questions arise as to whether such a commission could complete its work before the beginning of the 2015 electoral campaign.

This issue also highlights the deficiencies in the justice sector, the strengthening of which is one of BNUB's main focuses. The mission, together with UNDP and the UN Country Team, is also providing technical and financial support and training to promote the accountability of magistrates and the independence of judicial institutions, including the national human rights commission and office of the ombudsman. However, progress in strengthening the rule of law is hampered by the mixed results of police reform, where human rights abuses and relative lack of popular confidence stand in contrast to the success of army integration and reform.

Progress has been more visible in the socioeconomic sphere, where the government adopted its second poverty reduction strategy paper in February 2012, with strong support from international partners. These developments have reopened the question of whether

UN Office in Burundi (BNUB)

- Authorization Date 25 October 2006 (UNSC Res. 1719 [as BINUB]), 16 December 2010 (UNSC Res. 1959 [as BNUB succeeding BINUB])
- Start Date 1 January 2011
- SRSG Parfait Onanga-Anyanga (Gabon)
- Budget \$17.5 million (1 January 2012–31 December 2012)
- Strength as of 31 October 2012 Military Experts on Mission: 1
Police: 1
International Civilian Staff: 52
National Civilian Staff: 67
UN Volunteers: 6

For detailed mission information see p. 243

AU Liaison Office in Burundi

- Authorization Date 25 March 2004 (PSC/PR/Comm.[III])
- Strength as of 30 September 2012 International Civilian Staff: 3
National Civilian Staff: 11

The African Union's Efforts Against the Lord's Resistance Army

In November 2011 the African Union, with support from the United Nations, United States, and European Union, launched a comprehensive approach to combat the notorious rebel group Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The AU Regional Cooperation Initiative for the Elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA) was authorized by the Peace and Security Council on 22 November and officially launched the following March in Juba. It is mandated to build the operational capacities of the countries affected by the LRA, to establish an environment conducive to the stabilization of the affected areas, and to facilitate the delivery of humanitarian assistance. The AU Special Envoy for the LRA issue, Francisco Caetano José Madeira, was appointed on 23 November 2011. He is tasked with coordinating and monitoring the implementation of the AU strategy against the LRA.

The RCI-LRA has three components. First, the Joint Coordination Mechanism is an ad hoc structure comprising the ministers of defense of the affected countries, chaired by the AU Commissioner for Peace and Security. Headquartered in Bangui, the mechanism is responsible for political and strategic coordination. Second, the Regional Intervention Force, also known as the Regional Task Force, is the military component, tasked with capturing LRA combatants. At full deployment, it will comprise 5,000 soldiers drawn from the Central African Republic (CAR), the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), South Sudan, and Uganda. It is headquartered in Yambio,

South Sudan, with three sector bases, in Dungu (DRC), Obo (CAR), and Nzara (South Sudan). Nearly 3,000 troops have been committed to date, though not all of these troops are operational due to logistical issues. Finally, the Joint Intelligence and Operations Center will undertake integrated planning and monitoring of the operations under the authority of the Regional Task Force. The center comprises a total of thirty officers seconded by the affected countries.¹

The AU initiative is supported by international partners, in particular the United States, which sent 100 military advisers to Uganda in October 2011, and the European Union, which pledged 9 million euros in humanitarian assistance

to LRA victims in March 2012.² The AU's efforts are also a key focus of the UN regional strategy against the LRA, which is centered on the UN system but designed in close cooperation with the AU. The AU Special Envoy accompanied the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the UN Office in Central Africa in his travels to affected countries, and participated in coordinating the drafting of the UN strategy, completed in June 2012.

The RCI-LRA entered its operational phase in the summer of 2012, but it is unclear whether it will overcome its lack of funding and coordinated leadership amid a climate of tensions between the national armies it brings together.

AU Special Envoy on the LRA

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| • Authorization and Start Date | 22 November 2011 (PSC/PR/Comm. [CCXCIX]) |
| • Special Envoy | Francisco Madeira (Mozambique) |

AU Task Force on the LRA

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| • Authorization Date | 22 November 2011 (PSC/PR/Comm. [CCXCIX]) |
| • Start Date | 24 March 2012 |
| • Force Commander | Colonel Dick Prit Olum (Uganda) |
| • Strength as of 30 September 2012 | 30 personnel at headquarters |

Notes: 1. AU Peace and Security Council, *Report of the Chairperson of the Commission on the Status of the Implementation of Communiqué PSC/PR/COMM: (CCXXCIX) of the 299th Meeting of the Peace and Security Council on the Lord's Resistance Army* (Addis Ababa: African Union, 2012).

2. Institute for Security Studies, "Peace and Security Council Report no. 34," 4 May 2012, <http://www.issafrica.org/pgcontent.php?UID=31476>.

Burundi, one of the first countries on the UN Peacebuilding Commission's agenda, should finally "graduate" from commission support, as suggested by its government.

The future transition back to regular UN Country Team engagement is also up for debate, to be informed by the benchmarks presented by the Secretary-General to the Security Council in May 2012, which measure progress toward accomplishing BNUB's mandate and broader peace consolidation in Burundi, including democratic process, transitional justice, institution building, and human rights. The Security Council, the government of Burundi, and the Secretary-General will need to reach a consensus on whether this transition should take place before the 2015 elections, as called for by the government, or after, as some Council members have already mooted.

Conclusion

The security environment has stabilized in important ways in Burundi and the wider region. However, critical security and political challenges remain, illustrated most dramatically by events in the CAR as the year came to a close. How governments choose to approach these issues will largely determine future stability in the region. Funding gaps affecting national efforts in security sector reform and interrelated efforts to mitigate threats posed by armed rebel groups operating across the region have also hampered progress in these areas. It remains to be seen whether the recent parallel initiatives launched by the AU and UN to combat the LRA will be effective in harnessing thinly spread resources, or will lead to a resource strain through duplication of efforts.

Notes

1. ECCAS members are Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Chad, Congo, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and São Tomé and Príncipe.
2. For further information, see Center on International Cooperation, *Review of Political Missions 2010* (New York, 2010).
3. Tasked to coordinate implementation of the strategy, UNOCA organized a first workshop of donors and the LRA focal points in Entebbe in July 2012, which adopted a set of priorities designed to form the basis of a programmatic document.
4. According to interviews with mission staff.
5. These funding gaps were partially ameliorated by the provision of \$2.4 million by the UN Peacebuilding Fund and the \$10 million pledged by ECCAS.
6. The roadmap envisages the elaboration of six subsectoral strategies to be consolidated into a three-year national SSR strategy. Among them, the substrategies on the armed forces and the gendarmerie, and on democratic oversight, have been finalized, and the design of the substrategy on the police is receiving additional support from the Security Sector Reform Unit of the UN Department of Peacekeeping Operations. The substrategies on the justice sector, decentralization, and environmental protection, and on public finance and customs, have yet to be drafted. See United Nations, *Report of the Secretary-General on the Situation in the Central African Republic and on the Activities of the United Nations Integrated Peacebuilding Office in that Country*, UN Doc. S/2012/374, 2012.
7. United Nations, Department of Public Information, *Security Council Press Statement on Central African Republic*, UN Doc. SC/10665-AFR/2400, 2012.