A widening war around Sudan

The proliferation of armed groups in the Central African Republic

On 30 October 2006, a hitherto unknown Central African rebel group calling itself the Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR) attacked and occupied the capital of Vakaga Prefecture in north-eastern Central African Republic (CAR). President François Bozizé immediately accused Sudan of aiding and training the rebels. Just two weeks earlier, Sudan-supported rebel forces had attacked the Chadian army in the capital N'Djamena. While Sudan's role in these events has not been officially confirmed, there is evidence that the activities of armed groups in Sudan, Chad, and CAR are increasingly interrelated.[1]

Armed rebel groups now proliferate in CAR. These groups are driven by political ambitions as well as underdevelopment and a manifest absence of viable employment opportunities. The availability of small arms and light weapons has greatly increased the threat rebel groups pose to domestic and regional security. Under these circumstances, the Central African Armed Forces (FACA[2]) and the Multinational Force of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (FOMUC[3]) are unable, even with French military support, to fully secure CAR's borders, exposing the country to incursions by armed elements from Sudan and Chad.

This *Issue Brief* examines the origins and diffusion of armed groups in northern CAR and emerging responses to instability in the border areas with Sudan and Chad. With the United Nations considering the deployment of a peacekeeping mission to both Chad and CAR to shore up the ineffectual Darfur Peace Agreement, a tentative regional approach is emerging.[4] But any large-scale UN deployment will take at least six months to reach the region, and CAR's present security needs are acute.
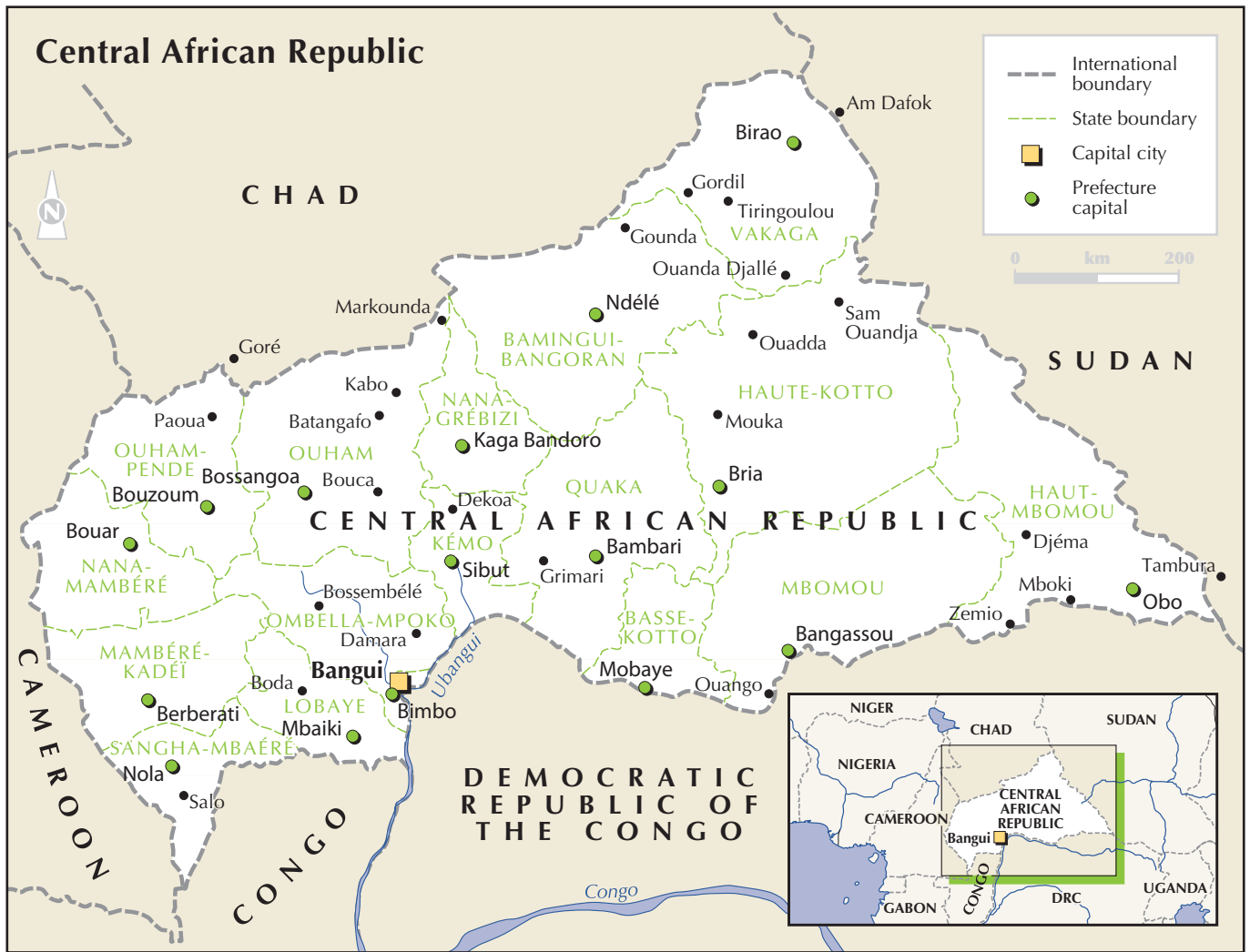
If the anticipated peacekeeping operation—whether single-country or regional in nature—is to achieve its objectives, care must be taken now to ensure that its mandate, the mobility of its staff, and the geographic distribution of its forces as well as the duration of their presence truly correspond to current needs and challenges. An inappropriate, ineffective, or delayed response is likely to further destabilize the region, encouraging continued support for armed groups by Sudan, additional internal displacement, and the escalation of refugee and IDP militarization. The success of any international mission will depend in large part on a clear and nuanced understanding of the dynamics of the region's unstable socio-political landscape.

CAR–Sudan relations

Armed violence in Sudan has had serious repercussions for CAR since well before the conflict in Darfur exploded into public view in 2003. CAR territory was an important staging ground during the second North–South Sudanese civil war (1983–2005). Thousands of soldiers with the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) allegedly crossed the Sudan–CAR border throughout the 1980s seeking food and safe haven during periods of drought or heavy military offensives. CAR served simultaneously as a base from which the Sudan Armed Forces launched attacks against the SPLA in western Bahr El-Ghazal in the 1990s.[5] These clashes generated massive refugee flows: by the early 1990s, approximately 36,000 Sudanese refugees were living in Mboki in south-eastern CAR. By some estimates, 50 per cent of these were combatants who brought with them more than 5,000 weapons.[6] As a result, by 2004, the SPLA was allegedly occupying towns as far as 200 km into CAR territory.[7]

In December 2002, the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was forced to close its Mboki offices because of the widespread availability of small arms and the agency's inability to protect its staff.[8] Progress in the Sudanese North–South peace process encouraged UNHCR to reopen the camp at Mboki in February 2004. Following the implementation of a new governance structure in the camp, arms availability allegedly dropped and violence subsided.[9] The situation reportedly improved further still with the withdrawal of the SPLA from CAR

> The activities of armed groups in Sudan, Chad, and CAR are increasingly interrelated.

Central African Republic

Legend:
- — — International boundary
- – – State boundary
- ▢ Capital city
- ● Prefecture capital

0 km 200

following the signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement in January 2005. The voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees is under way, with the last of the approximately **8,500** refugees scheduled to return home by April **2007**.[10]

Military activity originating in Sudan recently established transit routes through northern CAR. In early April **2006**, for example, the Darfur-based Chadian Front uni pour le changement démocratique rebels under leader Mahamat Nour crossed through north-eastern CAR en route to attack N'Djamena. President Bozizé responded

by closing the CAR border with Sudan, a political gesture of support for Chadian President Idriss Déby, given the lack of enforcement capacity behind it.[11] The transport of arms and armed fighters continued. On **25** and again on **26** April, an Antonov cargo plane crossed into CAR from Sudanese territory and landed at Tiringoulou in Vakaga Prefecture, unloading military equipment and approximately **50** uniformed men, who dispersed into the surrounding area.[12] At the end of June, FACA troops and FOMUC peacekeepers sent to the area clashed with armed men in nearby Gordil, generating at least

30 casualties.[13] The rebels allegedly sought to confiscate gasoline and other supplies but did not articulate political goals.

Despite this troubled history, official bilateral relations between Sudan and CAR have remained relatively civil. For example, Sudan contributed soldiers for the Community of Sahel–Saharan States (CEN–SAD)[14] peacekeeping force present in CAR in **2001–02**.[15] Though President Bozizé has repeatedly accused Sudan of supporting CAR-based UFDR rebels (see Table 2), he has not broken formal diplomatic relations. Indeed, Bozizé had planned to visit Khartoum in early December **2006**. He declined the invitation only at the last moment, when Déby threatened to withdraw the **150** non-FOMUC Chadian troops patrolling the CAR border region around Goré, as well as Bozizé's Chadian personal security unit, should Bozizé set foot in Sudan.[16]

> Recently, military activity originating in Sudan has established transit routes through northern CAR.

> In the north-west, rebel groups have exploited developments in the Chad–Darfur crisis to expand their areas of control.

The political context

CAR's internal instability and divisive ethnic policies have given rise to armed insurrections that, together with widespread armed criminality, threaten to intensify the humanitarian crisis in the regions bordering both Chad and Sudan. Moreover, the rise of CAR's armed groups has increasingly entangled the country in a sub-regional environment of violence.[17] In the north-east, Sudan is reportedly supporting Central African armed groups, while in the north-west, rebel groups have exploited developments in the Chad–Darfur crisis[18] in order to expand their own areas of control.

Over the past two decades, successive Central African leaders have sown unrest through policies strongly influenced by ethnic allegiances. In the 1980s President André Kolingba filled FACA with those belonging to his Yakoma ethnic group. His successor, Ange-Félix Patassé, went a step further by creating militias along ethnic lines, favouring the Sara, Kaba, and Gbaya groups of his home region. Ethnic tensions, the marginalization of FACA, and economic crises contributed to a spate of army mutinies and coup attempts begining in 1996. A series of peacekeeping operations have attempted, with various degrees of success, to introduce a measure of stability (see Table 1).

The current government gained control through armed violence. In March 2003 General François Bozizé toppled Patassé with active support from Déby. Bozizé's forces initially retreated to Chad, where they regrouped, trained, and were augmented by Chadians.[20] Chadian soldiers on patrol in Bangui together with FOMUC troops (which contained many Chadians) secured his early days in power, and he retains a personal Chadian security force.

The political aspirations of armed groups in CAR cannot be disentangled from the socio-economic context in which they emerged. Entrenched poverty, underdevelopment, and a lack of alternative livelihoods have combined in CAR to give rise to armed rebellions, some with articulated goals, as well as widespread armed criminality, notably embodied by *coupeurs de route* (highway bandits) and 'archers' (armed self-defence groups who perform summary executions[21]). See Box 1 for a description of the link between failed disarmament and the rise in such lawlessness. Despite the clear interrelationships between politically motivated, economically motivated, and opportunistic armed violence, there are significant differences in the motivations and operations of armed groups in the north-east and north-west of the country.

Armed groups in north-eastern CAR: Sudan's undisclosed role

Before dawn on 30 October 2006, 50–60 armed men seized Birao, the capital of the north-eastern CAR prefecture of Vakaga, as the 60 FACA troops posted there fled. The insurgents knew the layout of the town and the schedule of troop rotations, striking two weeks after fresh soldiers arrived. The combatants took nine vehicles that FACA had left behind, including two pick-ups mounted with 14.5 mm heavy machine guns. They also stole mortars, light machine

Table 1 **Peacekeeping missions in CAR**

Name	Organization	Dates deployed	Greatest strength	Summary of mandate
MISAB (Inter-African Mission to Monitor the Implementation of the Bangui Agreements[19])	Ad hoc coalition of the willing	February 1997–April 1998	820	To monitor the implementation of the Bangui Peace Accords.
MINURCA (UN Mission in the Central African Republic)	UN	April 1998–February 2000	1,350	To assist in maintaining security in Bangui; to protect key installations in Bangui; to supervise disarmament; to protect UN staff; to provide technical assistance to the national election bodies for the 1998 elections.
CEN–SAD (Community of Sahel-Saharan States)	CEN-SAD	December 2001–January 2003	300	To assist in the restoration and enforcement of peace in CAR.
FOMUC (CEMAC Multinational Force)	CEMAC (Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa)	January 2003–present	380	To promote security in the country; to help restructure the FACA; to fight rebels in the north-east.

Sources: AFP (2006); Berman (2004); France (2006); ISS (2005); UNSC (1998)

guns, and a large quantity of ammunition.[24] In the following weeks, the armed men, whose local spokesperson 'Cpt. Yao' identified them as the UFDR, took control of the towns of Ouanda Djallé and Sam Ouandja, and briefly occupied others, such as Ndélé. Their members, whose ranks are estimated at 150–200 men,[25] reached as far south as Mouka.

UFDR is now acknowledged as an umbrella for several armed groups, which contain Chadian, Sudanese, and Central African fighters (see Table 2). The UFDR is made up of three groups: the Groupe d'action patriotique pour la libération de Centrafrique; the Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice; and the Front démocratique centrafricain.[26] These three groups are currently based in the area around Gordil and Tiringoulou, a region whose many caves provide convenient hideouts. The Chadian rebel group Mouvement pour la paix, la reconstruction, et le développement is also believed to be based in this area.[27] While they have pillaged FACA's poorly protected stockpiles, their objectives and targets—whether N'Djamena or Bangui—remain unclear.

The most prominent leaders who are aiming to topple Bangui are themselves Chadian and have a history of armed involvement in CAR. Both the political leader Abakar Sabone, jailed in Cotonou, Benin, on 25 November 2006, and the military leader Faki Ahmat, aka 'Col. Marabout', reportedly in Khartoum, are Chadian 'ex-liberators'.[28] Michel Detodia, an unknown on the CAR political scene, claims to be the group's president; he has also been jailed in Cotonou.[29] 'Capt. Yao' and Damane Zakaria, a political associate of former President Patassé, have led military operations on the ground.[30]

Ascertaining the level of Sudanese support for the armed groups based in north-east CAR is difficult largely because they do not constitute a homogeneous entity. Some have received military training (in and out of Sudan) but others claim to have been forcibly recruited from their home villages in CAR.[31] The leaders had Thuraya satellite phones, and the troops carried small arms but few other armaments. Their operations have been directed at sites—such as FACA bases in Birao and Ouanda Djallé—with stockpiles they could capture. They also captured the small arms recuperated through an anti-poaching programme (predominantly AK-47s, with some FAL and G3 fully automatic rifles, MAT49 submachine guns, and MAS-36 bolt-action rifles).[32]

Armed groups in north-western CAR: the Chadian connection

Armed violence in the north-west of CAR, particularly near Poaua, escalated in the latter half of 2005. Because Poaua is Patassé's home area, Bozizé and Déby regard its people with intense suspicion. Déby posted soldiers along the border to quell any potential upris-

FOMUC soldiers patrol the streets in Birao, December 2006. © Francesco Fontemaggi/AFP/Getty Images

Table 2 **Armed groups in CAR, January 2007**

	Name	Leadership	Objectives and features	Location
North-east	Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement (UFDR), an umbrella group consisting of: • Groupe d'action patriotique pour la libération de Centrafrique • Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice • Front démocratique centrafricain	Political: Abakar Sabone, Michel Detodia Military: Faki Ahmat ('Col. Marabout') Operations: 'Capt. Yao', Damane Zakaria	Demand Bozizé step down or share power; claim that exclusionary, anti-Muslim practices and general corruption of Bozizé government forced them to take up arms.	Gordil and Tiringoulou
	Mouvement pour la paix, la reconstruction, et le développement (MPRD), Chadian rebel group in loose alliance with Mahamat Nouri's Union des forces pour la démocratie et le développment	Djibrine Dassert, former associate of Déby; accused of attack on military barracks outside N'Djamena in November 2005	To oust Déby.	Believed to be around Gordil
North-west	Armée populaire pour la restauration de la république et la démocratie (APRD)	Formerly Lt. Jean-Jacques 'Larma' Larmassoum, now Lt. Ndjadder Mounoumbaye; both ex-FACA	Demand Bozizé share power; claim to protect villages from exactions by state security forces; claim to enjoy support from Patassé; also engage in banditry.	Paoua region
	Union des forces républicaines (UFR)	Lt. Florian Ndjadder, defected from FACA in 2004	Claim to protect villages from exactions by state security forces; claim to enjoy support from Patassé; also engage in banditry.	Believed to be in the Paoua region
	Front démocratique du peuple centrafricain (FDPC)	Abdulaye Miskine, Chadian leader of a north-west-based militia under Patassé	Not believed to be a cohesive force at present; perhaps linked with APRD.	Unknown
	Mouvement patriotique pour la restauration de la république centrafricaine (MPRC)	Stève Gueret	No longer believed to be a cohesive force.	Previously the area around Bossangoa

Sources: HRW (2007); UNSC (2006a)

ings, but in mid-2005 he was forced to redeploy them to eastern Chad, where Sudan-supported rebels challenged his grip on power.[33] This move turned out to be decisive for CAR.

In the security vacuum created by the departing Chadian forces,[34] unknown CAR armed groups launched multiple attacks on border communities in September–December of that year. Some of the fighters claim to have ties to Patassé. FACA and Republican Guard soldiers sent to the region to calm the situation instead inflamed it by carrying out indiscriminate violent attacks on the civilian population, whom they accused of supporting the rebels. Rebels also targeted civilians whom they suspected of cooperating with state forces. In 2006, the fighting spread to include the Kaga Bandoro–Kabo corridor, 350 km north of Bangui.[35]

The UN Security Council identifies four main rebel groups in the region in its report of 27 June 2006; several of the leaders are defectors from FACA.[36] By the end of 2006, two groups appeared to represent the strongest presence on the ground: the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la république et la démocratie (APRD), whose spokesperson, Jean-Jacques 'Larma' Larmassoum (a long-time associate of Patassé), was arrested in Bangui and sentenced to life in prison on 18 August 2006; and the Union des forces républicaines, led by Lt. Florian Ndjadder, the son of

a general (now deceased) who was close to Patassé. These groups consist of a small core of fighters—one informed source placed their fixed strength at only 15 men each—who draw from local populations as required to carry out operations, while retaining ultimate control of weaponry, which includes grenades and automatic weapons. A group of 100 launched an attack on Paoua on 14 January 2007; fighting reportedly simmered for several days.[37]

The violence has resulted in massive civilian displacement. Residents of

The violence in north-western CAR has resulted in massive civilian displacement.

entire villages flee into the bush when they hear the sound of approaching vehicles, whether belonging to rebels or state forces.[38] By January 2007, UNHCR estimated that 50,000 people had fled to Chad, with 48,000 of those living in the Gondjé, Amboko, and Yaroungou camps near Goré in Chad. Another 20,000 live in Cameroon. Internal displacement is even greater: there are now 150,000 internally displaced persons, with 60,000 in the Paoua-area prefectures of Ouham and Ouham-Pende alone.[39] The threat of refugees and IDPs in the region becoming militarized—whether through harassment or active recruitment—remains real.

The international response

Though far from the international media's gaze, CAR has been the site of considerable international intervention over the years. Engagement has ranged from bilateral military cooperation to regional and international peacekeeping operations.

French military assistance has played a particularly decisive role in the Bozizé government's ability to suppress rebel violence. French military aircraft were used for reconnaissance beginning in January 2006. In the wake of the attack on Birao, France sent an additional 40 soldiers to supplement the 220 already in the country. Benefiting from Mirage aerial support, French

soldiers and FACA retook Birao on 27 November and other towns in the following days. French soldiers were also dispatched to larger towns in advance of the rebels' potential arrival, including to Bria and Ndélé.[40] French troops remain in Birao, partly to secure the area from armed group activity and also to continue to ensure that FACA troops not carry out reprisals against the civilian population.

After a long history of modest regional and UN peace operations, the Security Council is again considering a larger-scale regional deployment aimed at preventing the contagion of conflict from Darfur. Under UNSC Resolution 1706 of 31 August 2006 peacekeeping forces are proposed for both Chad and CAR. In his subsequent report the Secretary-General proposed two peacekeeping options. Both proposed operations would entail the deployment of a battalion to Birao, from where it would monitor cross-border armed group activity (see Box 2). Civilian police would accompany either option. The stronger option includes protection of the civilian population and requires additional logistical support. About 300 peacekeepers, 200 support staff, and 50–80 civilian protection and human rights officers are envisioned under this option. Bozizé has stated publicly that he would welcome any multinational presence.

UN peacekeepers in north-east CAR could usefully monitor and defend the

border with Sudan and deter predatory attacks on civilians from both state security forces and armed groups. If their mandate is geographically or logistically limited, however, the porous nature of the border will likely frustrate their efforts.

Though the deployment of regional peacekeeping forces offers important advantages, the fact remains that the primary focus of any future peacekeeping operations will be on Chad. The two-country operation in Chad and CAR would be conducted by one force, which makes peacekeeping in CAR dependent on an eventual deployment in Chad. Option B is now reportedly likely,[42] with the Security Council set to make a determination in February based on the final findings of a technical assistance mission. Preparations for deployment would then begin immediately.

One important unknown variable—the lack of a political framework for peace between the government and rebel groups—may now be emerging. On 25 January 2007, Bozizé met with Abdulaye Miskine in Sirte, Libya. It was the first time the two had met face to face, and the meeting may signal mutual readiness to work towards a ceasefire. Regardless of whether this is the start of a lasting peace process, opening dialogue greatly reduces the chances that peacekeepers will be regarded by rebels as pro-government.

Conclusion

With the alleged support of Sudanese forces, CAR's rebel groups have recently ramped up their attacks by exploiting security vacuums in Chad caused by the Darfur crisis. These developments threaten to draw CAR further into Sudan's volatile environment. The international peacekeeping operation under consideration for CAR and Chad focuses primarily on the latter, and may ultimately prove to be too modest to manage the instability in CAR.

The situation on the ground in CAR remains fluid and highly unstable. Rebels based in Gordil and Tiringoulou are well armed, well trained, and moti-

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Box 2 Security Council Resolution 1706 and proposed peacekeeping options

Resolution 1706 expanded the mandate of the UN Mission in Sudan (UNMIS) to include efforts:

To assist in addressing regional security issues in close liaison with international efforts to improve the security situation in the neighbouring regions along the borders between the Sudan and Chad and between the Sudan and the Central African Republic, including through the establishment of a multidimensional presence consisting of political, humanitarian, military and civilian police liaison officers in key locations in Chad, including in the internally displaced persons and refugee camps, and if necessary, in the Central African Republic, and to contribute to the implementation of the Agreement [not to host rebel groups] between the Sudan and Chad signed on 26 July 2006.

The UN assessment mission has proposed two options for a UN peacekeeping force in CAR:

(a) Option A—Monitoring mission: the mandate of a monitoring mission would be to observe the situation in the border areas. It would liaise with the parties, provide early warning and contribute to improving the security situation through confidence-building and preventive measures;

(b) Option B—Monitoring and protection mission: in addition to the above, a larger monitoring and protection mission would contribute to improving security in the border region by also providing protection, within its capabilities, to civilians under imminent threat.[41]

vated—though they still lack the capacity to mobilize nationally. Observers note that from Gordil, they could easily retake Ndélé, which would constitute a symbolic blow to Bangui. Moreover, in the absence of a robust peacekeeping force, the region may increasingly come under control of Sudan-supported armed groups intent on maintaining the area as a staging ground for attacks in Darfur and eastern Chad. In the north-west of CAR, the conflict has generated massive internal displacement, and the numbers of affected civilians continue to grow. The threat of refugee militarization—already under way in Chad—could add a further layer of insecurity.

Strengthening FOMUC and FACA is a potential alternative to sending in UN peacekeepers. However, FOMUC is locally regarded as a Chadian force,[43] and strengthening it could be construed as support for Déby unless specific attention is devoted to minimizing the perceived link between the Chadian conflict and CAR's insecurity. There is considerable evidence that Chadian forces in CAR—on their own and as part of multinational peace operations—use excessive force in their operations. This suggests that the promotion of law and order and the protection of human rights could be better served by others.

A viable option is to begin training and preparation for a major UN peacekeeping operation, even though it will take up to six months or longer. If this force arrives in CAR during the rainy season, rollout will undoubtedly be delayed. For these reasons, an initial, focused deployment of a smaller force to Vakaga in support of CEMAC, French, and FACA efforts is a reasonable first step. There is no need—nor is there time—to wait until troops are assembled for a larger deployment, or until training is completed along the Chad–Sudan border. ∎

Notes

This Sudan Issue Brief *is based on field research undertaken in December 2006 by Louisa N. Lombard.*

1   UNSC (2006b).
2   In French: Forces armées centrafricaines.
3   In French: Force multinationale de la Communauté Economique et Monétaire de l'Afrique Centrale (CEMAC). CEMAC, the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa, consists of six members: Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon, and the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville).
4   See HSBA *Issue Brief 4*.
5   *Africa Confidential* (2002).
6   Berman (2006, p. 36).
7   IRIN (2004).
8   Interview with UNHCR official, Bangui, December 2003.
9   Interview with Sudanese Refugee Committee official, Mboki, 15 December 2006.
10 Interview with UNHCR official in CAR, Bangui, 12 December 2006.
11 ICG (2006).
12 Interview with European Union official, Bangui, 18 December 2006.
13 IRIN (2006a).
14 CEN–SAD includes 23 member states, largely from the Sahel and Sahara regions but also from farther afield, as CAR testifies.
15 Berman (2004).
16 Interview with FBIS (Foreign Broadcast Information Service) reader, Bangui, 10 December 2006.
17 UNSC (2006b, para. 53).
18 Each government has accused the other of supporting their respective rebel groups; Darfur-related violence now occurs on both Sudanese and Chadian territory.
19 In French: Mission interafricaine de surveillance des accords de Bangui.
20 By the time the coup succeeded, one-third of these forces were Chadian. Interview with Marielle Debos, Ph.D. candidate in political science, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, New York, 10 January 2007.
21 Interview with World Food Programme official, Bangui, 18 December 2006.
22 Berman (2006, pp. 48–59).
23 Written correspondence with Marielle Debos, Ph.D. candidate in political science, Institut d'Etudes Politiques de Paris, 31 October 2006.
24 Interview with military sources, CAR, 12–13 December 2006.
25 Interview with military source, CAR, 13 December 2006.
26 IRIN (2006b).
27 *Africa Confidential* (2006).
28 The fighters who helped Bozizé seize power are collectively referred to as 'ex-liberators'. Many of the Chadian ex-liberators split with Bozizé after he failed to pay the full 10 million Central African francs (about USD 20,000) they claimed he had promised them as payment for their help in taking Bangui.
29 Reuters (2006).
30 Damane was killed during the French–FACA operations that retook the Central African towns from the rebels in late November and early December 2006, while Yao is believed to remain near Gordil.
31 Interview with UFDR member, Sangba, 22 December 2006.
32 These weapons were subsequently recuperated and returned to the government in Bangui.
33 ICG (2006).
34 In November 2006, Déby sent 150 soldiers back to the border town of Goré to support FACA's operations under the Tri-Partite Border Agreement of August 2005 between Chad, CAR, and Cameroon, which allows the soldiers of the three countries to cross into each other's territories in pursuit of armed groups or criminals.
35 UNSC (2006a).
36 UNSC (2006a).
37 AP (2007).
38 Interview with International Committee of the Red Cross official, Bangui, 14 December 2006.
39 UNHCR (2007).
40 Interview with military source, Bangui, 19 December 2006.
41 UNSC (2006b).
42 Interview with UN official, New York, 30 January 2006.
43 It is likely that, of the 350–80 troops in FOMUC, fewer than one-third are Chadian (the others are Gabonese and Congolese), but the widespread impression is that Chad takes the greatest operational role in the force.

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HSBA project summary

The Sudan Human Security Baseline Assessment (HSBA) is a two-year research programme (2005–07) administered by the Small Arms Survey, an independent research project of the Graduate Institute of International Studies in Geneva.

It has been developed in cooperation with the Canadian Ministry of Foreign Affairs, UNMIS, the UN Development Programme, and a wide array of international and Sudanese NGO partners. Through the active generation and dissemination of timely empirical research, the HSBA project works to support disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) programmes, security sector reform (SSR), and arms control interventions to promote security. The assessment is being carried out by a multidisciplinary team of regional, security, and public health specialists. It will review the distribution of armed violence throughout Sudan and offer policy-relevant advice to redress insecurity.

Sudan Issue Briefs are designed to provide periodic snapshots of baseline information. Future issues will focus on a variety of issues, including armed groups, the trade and transfer of small arms into and out of Sudan, and victimization rates. The HSBA also generates a series of timely and user-friendly working papers in English and Arabic, available at www.smallarmssurvey.org (click on Sudan).

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