

3.3 Mission Reviews

Central Africa

With 30 countries in Africa expected to hold elections in 2011, the year promises to be one of transition for the continent. Virtually all Central African states already have held or are scheduled to hold elections in the near future. Following Burundi's polls in June 2010, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Chad conducted their highly anticipated elections in early 2011. While international observers described the electoral processes in all three countries as chaotic and marred by irregularities – including boycotts by opposition parties, these occurrences were not severe enough to invalidate the results.

Notwithstanding the elections' shortcomings, their largely peaceful conduct and the general acceptance of results constitute significant achievements given the still recent history of democratic transition in the region. Countries in the sub-region continue to face considerable challenges that threaten peace and hinder social and economic development, however. These include widespread poverty, weak governments, endemic corruption and precarious security situations heightened by armed groups that use the countries porous borders to move freely and conduct acts of violence across the region.

In December 2010, the UN peacekeeping force in Chad, MINURCAT, ceased its operation at the request of the government, also ending the deployment of a small contingent of peacekeepers stationed in northeastern CAR. It remains to be seen the extent to which MINURCAT's withdrawal will affect the long-term stability not only in Chad and CAR, but across the region. Following



Former BINUCA SRSR Sahle-Work Zewde meets with members of the Armée populaire pour la restauration de la démocratie (APRD) in the Central Africa Republic, July 2010.

UN Photo/ BINUCA

the elections in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) scheduled for November this year, the government is likely to intensify its call for an end to MONUSCO's mandate – the last remaining large-scale peacekeeping operation in the region.¹ Given regional dynamics in the DRC conflict, scaling down the UN's political and military presence in the country could undermine regional stability in the absence of a broader political framework.

Currently there are three political missions present in Central Africa, the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA), the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB) and the newly established regional office, the UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) based in Gabon.

UN Integrated Peace-building Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA)

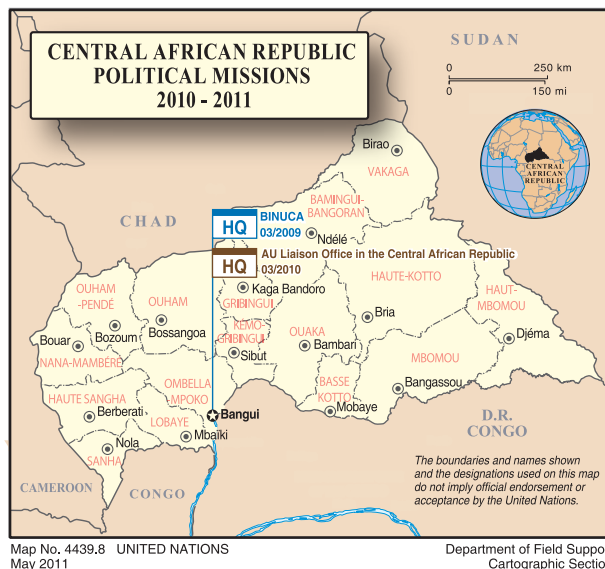
Authorization Date	3 March 2009 (UNSC Letter S/2009/128 (as BONUCA))
	7 April 2009 (UNSC Pres. Statement S/PRST/2009/5 (as BONUCA))
	21 December 2009 (UNSC Pres. Statement S/PRST/2009/35 (as BINUCA succeeding BONUCA))
Start Date	1 January 2010
SRS	Margaret Vogt (Nigeria)
Deputy SRS	Bo Schack (Denmark)
First SRS	Sahle-Work Zewde (Ethiopia)
Budget	\$19.7 million (1 January 2011-31 December 2011)
Strength as of 30 April 2011	International Civilian: 63 National Civilian: 66 Military Experts on Mission: 2 Police: 2 UN Volunteers: 4

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BINUCA

In 2000, the Security Council established the UN Peacebuilding Support Office in CAR, BONUCA, which set out its work amid severe civil-military tensions, punctuated by two attempted coups in 2001 and 2002. In March 2003, General François Bozizé overthrew the country's democratically elected president, Ange-Félix Patassé while he was abroad, sparking fighting between government forces and rebels. The ensuing conflict prompted up to 300,000 people to flee their homes and seek refuge across the border in Chad.

In 2005, BONUCA assisted in the holding of elections, which saw Bozizé emerge as the winner. The conflict, however, only ended in June 2008 when the government signed a Comprehensive Peace Agreement with all but one of the main rebel groups, followed by a broad-based dialogue in December the same year. The Inclusive Political Dialogue (IPD) made a number of recommendations, including: calling for the creation of a government of national unity; the holding of municipal, legislative and presidential elections; the creation of a truth and reconciliation commission;



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and the launch of a disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) program for former combatants.

Following a May 2008 request from the government, the UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) placed CAR on its agenda, with Belgium as the chair of the country specific configuration. The PBC adopted a Strategic Framework for CAR, consisting of three mutually reinforcing priorities, namely *i*) security sector reform (SSR) (including DDR); *ii*) governance and the rule of law; and *iii*) organizing the national economy around local development hubs.

In January 2010, BONUCA was succeeded by an integrated peacebuilding presence, BINUCA, with the aim to better coordinate the UN Country Team's (UNCT) activities in CAR. The mission's mandated tasks include assisting in implementing the outcomes of the IPD, focusing on governance reforms and electoral processes; supporting the DDR process and reform of security sector institutions; helping to restore state authority in the provinces; promoting respect for human rights, including child protection, the rule of law, justice and accountability; and assisting the PBC with the implementation of the Strategic Framework.² Following the appointment of BINUCA's SRS Sahle-Work Zewde as Director-General of the UN Office in Nairobi, the Secretary-General appointed Margaret Vogt, the Deputy Director of the Africa I Division in the UN Department of Political Affairs as the new SRS for BINUCA in May 2011.

African Regional Approaches to Conflict Management

On 8 November 2010, representatives from the African Union (AU) and the various Regional Economic Communities (RECs) adopted the AU/RECs “Roadmap for the Operationalization of the African Peace and Security Architecture.” Building on a 2008 memorandum of understanding between the AU and the RECs, which sought to enhance coordination and harmonize their strategic approaches, the roadmap not only examined the current status of cooperation between the various institutions, but also articulated the major priorities and gaps to be addressed moving forward.

The key components of the architecture include: Peace and Security Councils, the African Stand-By Force (ASF), the Continental Early-Warning System (CEWS) and the Peace Fund and Panels of the Wise.¹ While there is general coherence between efforts to create the ASF and CEWS, the rest of the system seems to be developing independently. In particular, Africa’s mediation capacity saw substantial growth in 2011, as many of the RECs began to build structures to better resolve their own regional conflicts.

The Economic Commission for West African States (ECOWAS) has a network of offices in West Africa as part of its Early Warning and Response Network as well as offices of Special Representatives of the President of the ECOWAS Commission that assist Member States in dealing with crisis situations, or provide support in post-conflict settings. In the East African Community (EAC), the drafting process for their “Conflict Prevention Management and Resolution” framework is nearing completion and will provide the guidance for the organization’s development in the peace and security realm.² Within this structure, a Negotiation, Mediation and Good Offices department will establish a Panel of Eminent Persons in order to facilitate regional solutions.³ The Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) in April 2011 announced that it will soon complete preparations for its own regional Mediation Support Unit. Based upon IGAD’s experiences fostering Sudan’s CPA and its current efforts at the Somalia Peace Facilitation Office, the Unit aims to further enhance IGAD’s mediation capacity and provide a link between the official representatives and civil society.⁴ Furthermore, COMESA (the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa) in June 2011 activated its Committee of Elders when a few members joined an AU assessment mission to Egypt to assist in the country’s political transition.⁵ In Central Africa, ECCAS’s (the Economic Community of Central African States) conflict prevention and mediation capacity receives additional support through the newly established UN Office for Central Africa.

These initiatives are positive developments, as they represent sincere attempts to improve the African peace and security architecture. As these new structures grow, it will be a central challenge of the regional bodies to overcome their institutional differences and inter-state rivalries, and support one another in their efforts to resolve conflict across the African continent.

1 Lt Gen (Rtd) Louis Matshenyego Fisher and Dr. Alhaji Sarjoh Bah, African Peace and Security Architecture: 2010 Assessment Study (8 November 2010) available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/RO%20African%20Peace%20and%20Security%20Architecture.pdf>.

2 East African Community, “EAC Workshop on Draft Policy Instruments Ends in Kigali,” (25 March 2011) available at <http://www.eac.int/component/k2/item/597-press-release-eac-workshop-on-draft-policy-instruments-ends-in-kigali.html>.

3 East African Community Secretariat, “The EAC Peace, Security, and Good Governance Initiatives and Strategies for a Sustainable Integration,” New York, 18 October 2010, available at http://www.un.org/africa/osaa/speeches/EAC_Presentation_18Oct2010.pdf.

4 Intergovernmental Authority on Development, “A Mediation Support Unit for IGAD in the Making,” 20 April 2011, available at http://igad.int/index.php?option=com_content&view=article&id=310:a-mediation-support-unit-for-igad-in-the-making&catid=45:peace-and-security&Itemid=128.

5 African Union, “Mission of the Panel of the Wise and Committee of Elders to Egypt,” 6 June 2011, available at <http://au.int/en/sites/default/files/Communique%20Panel%20of%20the%20Wise%20Mission%20to%20Egypt-1.pdf>.

The mission’s integrated structure enables the UN actors to work more closely together. The mission can rely on the UNCT’s programmatic capacity and expertise in several areas of cooperation, including electoral assistance, DDR, rule of law, human rights and child protection, while the UNCT can use

BINUCA’s political leverage to encourage government cooperation. A similar dynamic exists with the PBC, where the Chair of the country configuration contributes to the SRS’G’s political influence and can assist in reinforcing sensitive messages. The PBC has been an important mechanism for sustaining

AU Liaison Office in the Central African Republic

First Mandate	March 2010
Head of Office	Ambassador Hawa Ahmed Youssouf (Djibouti)
Budget	\$0.9 million (1 January 2011-31 December 2011)
	\$0.9 million (1 January 2012-31 December 2012)
Staff Strength	Professional: 5

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AU Liaison Office in Chad

First Mandate	25 April 2005
Start Date	February 2006
Head of Office	Ambassador Ki Doulaye Corentin (Burkina Faso)
Budget	\$0.8 million (1 January 2011-31 December 2011)
	\$0.8 million (1 January 2012-31 December 2012)
Staff Strength	Professional: 3

For detailed mission information see p. 308

AU Liaison Office in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

First Mandate	October 1999
Head of Office	Ambassador Emmanuel Mendoume Nze (Gabon)
Budget	\$1.0 million (1 January 2011-31 December 2011)
	\$1.1 million (1 January 2012-31 December 2012)
Staff Strength	17

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attention on CAR and for helping to raise resources to fill funding gaps, including for the elections. In June 2011, the PBC supported the government

in organizing a roundtable in Brussels to familiarize partners with the priority areas of CAR's new poverty reduction strategy, namely security, peace, governance, rule of law, economic revival, regional integration and essential social services.

Key Developments

BINUCA worked to support the preparations and holding of presidential and parliamentary elections initially slated for April 2010, a key recommendation of the IPD. However, the polls were postponed several times for technical, budgetary and political reasons, before the presidential and legislative elections took place in January 2011 with a second round of parliamentary elections in March. Although both rounds were conducted in a peaceful atmosphere, hopes that the elections would further national reconciliation were undermined by the opposition's allegations of fraud and its decision to boycott the second round of the parliamentary elections.

BINUCA assisted the electoral process and coordinated international support to the elections through co-chairing the Elections Steering Committee. Following the ruling party's victory in the first round of parliamentary elections and the opposition's boycott of the second round of parliamentary elections there was a tense political atmosphere in the country. These tensions were heightened when the government imposed travel restrictions on opposition leaders, including former president Ange-Félix Patassé, who was prevented from leaving the country to seek medical treatment. Patassé was eventually able to leave the country, partly as a result of pressure from the international community, but died in a hospital in Cameroon shortly after his evacuation.

The parliamentary elections in March took place in a calm atmosphere but – due to the opposition's call for a boycott – had a voter turnout of only 54 percent. Bozizé's party, the KNK, won the overall majority in parliament. The Constitutional Court subsequently cancelled the parliamentary elections' results in 13 districts and named alternative winning candidates in twelve further districts. Prime Minister Touadera was re-appointed to lead the government and while a small number of opposition

figures were appointed ministers, they were subsequently dismissed from their parties.

The contested outcome of the election seemed likely to further fuel CAR's precarious security situation, particularly in the country's northeast, where violent outbreaks between rebel groups and government forces occur frequently. In March and April, there were a series of escalating clashes between government forces supported by the UFDR politico-military movement and CPJP rebels – the only major rebel group that refused to sign a peace deal with Bozizé's government – reportedly leaving 27 dead.³ On 12 June, however, the CPJP entered into a ceasefire agreement with the government and agreed to enter into the DDR process once a peace agreement has been signed with the government.

CAR's stability remains fragile, particularly in light of MINURCAT's December 2010 withdrawal. Although CAR hosts a small contingent of 500 troops of the sub-regional peacekeeping force MICOPAX, it is the national armed forces that are in charge of providing security throughout the country. Under-equipped and insufficiently trained, these forces face multiple threats from domestic and foreign armed groups and criminal gangs, including heavily armed traffickers and poachers. The Lord's Resistance Army also maintains a significant presence in CAR, terrorizing the population with killing and looting sprees, often abducting civilians along the way.

BINUCA continues to highlight human rights violations and abuses by government forces and other domestic and foreign entities alike and works to enhance the protection of civilians. The mission also conducts regular trainings of the defense and security forces and its Security Institution Unit stands ready to support national authorities in SSR efforts. Meaningful progress in this area, however, depends on the government's willingness to resume implementation of the SSR program, which has stalled since early 2009.

Progress in DDR has been similarly slow. Since September 2010, when the verification of 5,992 combatants from two former rebel groups in the northwest led by UNDP and MICOPAX was concluded – albeit with the number of weapons registered far below the numbers known to exist – no major progress has been made in disarmament and

demobilization. In March 2011, UNDP drew down the program capacity of its Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Management Unit, only leaving in place the Unit's technical and financial capacity that would be reactivated to support the government if and when the authorities signal their readiness. The lack of progress in DDR processes partly comes from the unwillingness of local defense forces and rebel groups to give up their arms in the face of the prevailing security vacuum. But progress has thus far largely floundered due to the lack of political will by the government, as well as logistical and capacity challenges due to the limited availability of military personnel to support the process – a situation compounded by the expiration of the mandate of the 31 military observers of the Economic Community of Central African States in June.

There has been some progress on the development of a reintegration strategy for former combatants with the completion of a draft national strategy on reintegration in February, subsequently adopted by the DDR Steering Committee, chaired by the SRSG, in July 2011. By the end of June, the government announced that it has launched an operation to disarm 350 former fighters of the People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy, who will receive cash payments of 100,000 CFA francs (about 215 dollars), in the northwestern town of Bocaranga. Funded by the government, the disarmament operation is taking place outside the framework of a UN-supported DDR process.

Conclusion

With the UN's peacebuilding presence in CAR in its 11th year, the need for an exit strategy has become increasingly apparent. BINUCA's new SRSG, Margaret Vogt, has extensive experience in the UN as well as in various regional organizations in Africa, including the AU and ECOWAS, and is widely seen as an asset to the mission. The prevailing security environment, particularly in the eastern provinces underlines the urgent need to make progress on DDR and SSR programs, which are pivotal to the country's peace process. The recent ceasefire agreement with the CPJP rebel group and the governments' apparent readiness to begin the disarmament, demobilization and reintegration of

former rebels in earnest are important steps to move the processes forward.

BINUB/BNUB

Background

In January 2007, the UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) was established to assist the government with its efforts to consolidate peace and stability through the promotion of a coherent and coordinated response by the UN system. Under the leadership of the Executive Representative of the Secretary-General (ERSG), BINUB focused specifically on peace consolidation and democratic governance, DDR and SSR, the promotion and protection of human rights and measures to end impunity and the coordination of donor and UN agency activities. BINUB also worked closely with the PBC, which took on Burundi in 2006 as one of the first countries on its agenda.

BINUB began its operations in the midst of a tense political and security environment, marked by heavy fighting between the Palipehutu-FNL and the government of President Nkurunziza. In 2009, however, the government and the rebels resolved their differences and the FNL committed to the democratic mainstream, opening the way for the 2010 elections.

The political atmosphere in the period leading up to the elections nonetheless remained tense, and there were numerous violent incidents perpetrated by the competing parties. In late 2009, the government of Burundi requested the replacement of BINUB's ERSG Youssef Mahmoud, citing a routine request but publicly stating its view that the mission leadership had expressed too much criticism of the ruling party while not scrutinizing the opposition.

The polls took place in June 2010; despite scattered incidents of violence, the overall environment remained secure. After the opposition withdrew from the presidential race citing fraud, President Pierre Nkurunziza was reelected with 91 percent of the votes. The main opposition leaders – alarmed by several politically motivated arrests and other forms of rights violations ahead of the vote by security forces against opposition candidates, media and civil society organizations – left the country

UN Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB)

Authorization Date	25 October 2006 (UNSC Res. 1719)
Start Date	1 January 2007
First ERSG	Youssef Mahmoud (Tunisia)

UN Office in Burundi (BNUB)

Authorization Date	16 December 2010 (UNSC Res. 1959)
Start Date	1 January 2011
SRS	Karin Landgren (Sweden)
First SRS	Karin Landgren (Sweden)
Budget	\$23.1 million (1 January 2011-31 December 2011)
Strength as of 30 April 2011	International Civilian: 71 National Civilian: 219 Military Experts on Mission: 2 Police: 1 UN Volunteers: 25

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AU Liaison Office in Burundi

First Mandate	25 March 2004 (PSC/PR/Communiqué (II))
Head of Office	Vacant
Deputy Head of Office	Sebastiao da Silva Isata (Angola)
Budget	\$1.3 million (1 January 2011-31 December 2011)
	\$1.4 million (1 January 2012-31 December 2012)
Staff Strength	30

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soon after the elections, fearing incarcerations and prosecution.⁴ This included FNL leader Agathon Rwasa, who reportedly went underground in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo, where he is alleged to be rearming the former rebel group.⁵

Key Developments

In November 2010, one month before the expiration of BINUB's mandate, the newly elected government announced that it was looking forward

to a “normal development partnership with the UN” with an emphasis on consultation and cooperation rather than on monitoring and reporting.⁶ Citing continuing improvements in the country’s security situation, the government foresaw a new and significantly lighter UN presence.

There was a general consensus among Security Council members and the UN Secretariat on the need to concede to the request of the government and to find a new role for the UN in Burundi. The Security Council placed particular emphasis on a smooth transition process, due to the significant tensions that the 2006 drawdown of the peacekeeping presence in Burundi had created among national staff, some of whom, citing wrongful dismissal, continue to seek reparations and occasionally engage in violent acts, including attacks on UN staff and property, to lend force to their claims.

Consequently, in December, the Council adopted resolution 1959 that transformed BINUB into the new UN Office in Burundi (BNUB). BNUB is mandated to support the government in its efforts to strengthen key national institutions, in particular the judiciary and parliament; promote and facilitate dialogue between national actors; fight impunity and promote human rights; ensure a focus on peacebuilding and equitable growth in all national economic strategies and policies; advocate for resource mobilization; and to provide support to Burundi as Chair of the East African Community in 2011.

Starting its operations on 1 January 2011, the new office is headed by an SRSG, Karen Landgren of Sweden, instead of an ERSG, while Deputy SRSG Rosine Sori-Coulibaly of Burkina Faso took over the Resident Coordinator function. The mission has a significantly reduced number of staff relative to BINUB – from over 400 to 134. All BINUB staff contracts expired rather than being transferred to the new office, enabling BNUB to reconfigure its composition. BINUB’s staff was phased out through July 2011 to enable a smoother transition for its former personnel. The mission has also made efforts to provide job training and to help find employment opportunities for national staff in the private sector or with other UN entities in the region.

The political and security situation in Burundi since the election has seen a level of ongoing violent incidents, with concerns particularly over continued extra-judicial killings. The ruling party dominates the political landscape and, despite announcements

by the government that it would support national reconciliation through the establishment of an inclusive government, only four ministers in the National Assembly are from opposition parties. The Permanent Forum for Dialogue among Political Parties – a mechanism supported by BINUB – has lain idle since the elections. In July, after repeated encouragement from international actors, President Nkurunziza for the first time made an overture to opposition leaders in exile to return home to begin a political dialogue, but underlined that this would not include opening questions about the election results.

Some observers fear that the marginalization of the opposition may lead to a reversal of the democratic gains of the previous years and could lead to renewed rebellion. Indeed, there has been a reported rise in clashes between security forces and unidentified armed groups in the country’s north-west, which some sources have attributed to the re-emergence of a rebel movement.⁷ Extrajudicial killings, many politically motivated, are also reportedly on the rise, prompting increased international scrutiny and criticism of the government, including from key EU donor countries.⁸

In addition to its efforts to continue improving dialogue between the ruling party and the opposition, BNUB works with the government in strengthening its institutions, supports efforts to enhance the capacity of the security and defense forces and assists in the socio-economic reintegration of former ex-combatants. By mid-2011, the government has made some progress by establishing a National Independent Human Rights Commission, taking steps toward creating transitional justice mechanisms, including a truth and reconciliation commission planned for 2012, and by disbursing reintegration assistance to former fighters.

In April 2011, the PBC adopted the outcome document for the fifth and final review of the strategic framework for Burundi. The PBC, BNUB and the UNCT plan to align their engagement with the government’s second poverty reduction strategy paper, due later this year, with the aim of creating one overarching strategy for the country that would encourage sustainable development and trade.

In implementing its mandated tasks, BNUB’s leadership is taking a careful approach given both the government’s insistence on a reduced political role for the mission and the fate of former ERSG Youssef Mahmoud. BNUB’s ability to take an

UN Office for Central Africa (UNOCA)

Authorization Date	11 December 2009 (UNSC Letter S/2009/697) 30 August 2010 (UNSC Letter S/2010/457)
SRSG	Abou Moussa (Chad)
First SRSG	Abou Moussa (Chad)
Budget^a	\$3.5 million (1 January 2011-31 December 2011)
Strength as of 30 April 2011^b	International Civilian: 3

Notes:

- Resource requirements reflect the initial costs involved in the start-up phase and subsequent operational costs.*
- Figures reflect staffing requirements during the start-up phase of the mission. The proposed staffing complement for 2011 would comprise a substantive component of 14 positions and an administrative component of 12 positions (A/65/328/Add.3).*

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assertive stance may be further limited by the fact that the vast majority of the mission's staff – including the SRSG – have only recently joined the office, and thus will be focused on forging relationships with government officials. The significant reduction in staff poses a further challenge, restricting the mission's ability to share and disseminate its analytical output.

Conclusion

Notwithstanding the significant accomplishment achieved by Burundi in holding its first peaceful and democratic polls since the 16-year long civil war officially ended in 2009, the elections have thus far failed to bring the country closer to sustainable peace. The narrowing of democratic space, accompanying politically motivated violence, the risk of renewed armed insurgency, as well as an increasingly tenuous socioeconomic situation, marked by severe poverty, high unemployment and a rise in commodity prices, make for a difficult environment in which to build sustainable development. Due to its moderate resources and narrow mandate, BNUB has a limited ability to influence government reforms that might redress possible

sources of instability.

The government wants to see international engagement shift from post-conflict peacebuilding to development, and is keen to be the first country to “graduate” from the PBC's agenda. Yet, the UN has stated that Burundi still has “daunting” socio-economic challenges to overcome and has urged the international community to continue its support for peacebuilding measures.⁹ The PBC, which still has an important role to play in sustaining attention on Burundi and mobilizing resources has committed to assisting the government with broadening its donor base so that progress can continue. Indeed, the government relied on external funding for over 50 percent of its 2010 budget.¹⁰ It will need to demonstrate its commitment to improving the political and security climate if it is to maintain donor support.

UNOCA

Background

Plans for the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) have been in the making since 2002 when a Security Council debate on peace and security threats in Central Africa prompted a multidisciplinary assessment mission to the sub-region. In its final report, the mission recommended strengthening the international community's partnership with sub-regional organizations in order to better address transnational challenges and transmitted the request of the ten member states of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS)¹¹ for a UN political presence in the sub-region. After necessary clarification on the added value of such a political presence of the UN in the sub-region, the Security Council finally welcomed its establishment in 2010.

On 2 March 2011, UNOCA was formally inaugurated at its headquarters in Libreville, Gabon, with an initial two-year mandate. The Office is the UN's fourth presence with a regional focus next to the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the recently integrated UN Office to the African Union (UNOAU) and the Center for Preventive Diplomacy in Central Asia (UNRCCA).¹² The Office is headed by an SRSG, Abou Moussa, who is supported in his work by a relatively small staff of 27

UN Political Missions' Support to Women and Children

Political missions play an important role in helping to ensure the protection of women and children, and in advocating for their participation in peacebuilding efforts in post conflict countries. These activities are informed by the landmark UN Security Council Resolution 1325 (2000) on women and peace and security, in conjunction with additional resolutions on the protection of civilians in armed conflict,¹ including children.² Resolution 1325 emphasizes the importance of women's inclusion in peace processes as a right, and by helping to reflect the security and interests of all relevant parties, as a pillar of sustainable peace and security.

Political missions have launched initiatives to support the participation and representation of women in post conflict settings. The UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office in Sierra Leone (UNIPSIL), for example, helped to sponsor the creation of the All Political Parties Women Wings Association with the aim to achieve a 30 percent quota for women in all elected positions.

Missions also work to ensure the prevention of a relapse of conflict and all forms of violence, including sexual violence. The Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA) initiated a study on sexual and gender-based violence which resulted in the formation of a thematic gender-based violence and protection group tasked to review and update government bodies. BINUCA also addresses the protection of children through the implementation of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement and disarmament, demobilization and re-integration process.³

Yet, progress in securing the rights of women and children has been a challenge for political missions. Only four of the UN's 18 current political missions covered in this Review are specifically mandated to address women's issues, namely the UN Office in Burundi (BNUB), the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWA), the UN Assistance Mission in Afghanistan (UNAMA) and UNIPSIL, while BINUCA is the only mission with a mandate to protect children.⁴ Meanwhile, gender representation amongst political mission staff fails to reach the 50/50 goal laid out in the gender equality and strategic goals of DPA's gender mainstreaming framework.⁵ In 2010, women represented only around seventeen percent of all field mission staff.⁶

In an effort to further mainstream gender equality in political missions DPA has appointed gender advisors and gender focal points at UN headquarters and in the field to advocate for the inclusion of women issues in the mission planning and implementation stages. Similarly, child protection advisors are appointed to political missions to advance efforts on children's issues.

1 Most notably resolutions 1820 (2008), 1888 (2009), 1889 (2009) and 1960 (2010).

2 Most notably resolutions 1261 (1999), 1612 (2005), and 1882 (2009).

3 See UN Security Council Presidential Statement (S/PRST/2009/5), 7 April 2009.

4 BNUB S/RES/1719, UNOWA S/2007/753, UNAMA S/RES/1917 and UNIPSIL S/RES/1829.

5 Department of Political Affairs Policy Statement on Gender Equality and Strategic Goals of Gender Mainstreaming, 2006.

6 Center on International Cooperation, *Review of Political Missions 2010* (with the exception of the: Personal Envoy for Western Sahara, Special Adviser for Myanmar, Special Envoy for LRA affected areas, and UNIIIC).

personnel, including 14 substantive officers, and operates on a modest budget of US \$3.5 million for 2011. Because both the Africa I and Africa II Divisions of the UN Department of Political Affairs cover the various ECCAS member states, the two Divisions backstop UNOCA jointly.

UNOCA is mandated to assist the member states of ECCAS and sub-regional organizations, in consolidating peace and preventing new conflicts in the

sub-region. Among its key functions are good offices on behalf of the Secretary-General, particularly in the areas of conflict prevention and peacebuilding, promoting an integrated sub-regional approach and facilitating coordination and information exchange between the UN and other partners.

In carrying out its mandate, UNOCA will focus on a number of key priority areas, including mediation and the peaceful conduct of elections in the

sub-region as requested; facilitating cohesion and coordinate UN efforts on issues relating to good governance, human rights, transnational organized crime and small arms, including efforts in the region against armed groups, such as the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA); providing technical assistance to increase early warning and mediation capabilities; help build the capacity of ECCAS; encouraging the formulation of an integrated regional approach to resolve cross border insecurity and addressing maritime insecurity in the Gulf of Guinea.

Key Developments

In its first few months, UNOCA focused on its operational requirements for starting up. It has successfully expedited the process and has kept costs low by acquiring office equipment and vehicles from the liquidated UN peacekeeping mission in neighboring Chad. Staff recruitment, however, has been fairly slow, mainly due to delays inherent in the UN's recruitment system, which has proven particularly problematic for missions like UNOCA that strategically hire to fill posts with thematic experts.

Notwithstanding this shortcoming, the Office began pushing ahead in preparing its substantive work. One of the first areas of focus is to agree on a common strategic framework with its member states to identify priorities. This exercise is not without its challenges given the divergences among the states of the sub-region. To overcome this dynamic UNOCA plans to introduce confidence-building measures to enhance trust and cooperation among the sub-region's governments. The extent of this cooperation will also determine the Office's role in creating integrated regional frameworks on armed groups and other threats to peace and security, similar to initiatives in West Africa, such as the West African Coast Initiative (WACI) supported by UNOWA.

UNOCA has also begun to engage in close consultations with member states and the other UN presences in the sub-region to identify how the various entities can work effectively together. Here too, UNOCA has challenges to overcome, as there was initial resistance to and confusion among UNCTs about the Office's presence and role. It is to the mission's credit that it already has a strong working

relationship with the UN Resident Coordinator in Gabon on which it can build. Underlining the Office's regional role, its mandate leaves responsibility for country-specific efforts to the respective UNCTs on the ground. UNOCA is further reliant on country-level experts to implement any regional initiatives. Both of these facts should help overcome any lingering resistance to the role of UNOCA and facilitate coordination. An added value for the UNCTs is UNOCA's ability to highlight areas of concern for the sub-region within the Security Council, which can help with resource mobilization of donors.

In the long-term, UNOCA will focus on strengthening the capacity of ECCAS to take the lead in the sub-region on conflict prevention measures, including in election observation as well as human rights monitoring. This will also include increasing the visibility of ECCAS' activities in the sub-region and highlighting its work in the Security Council as to gain wider support for its efforts.

Conclusion

In setting up its operational structure, UNOCA has benefited from lessons learned from both UNOWA and UNRCCA. Nonetheless, mobilizing sufficient funds for the regional office to undertake extra budgetary activities, among them good office interventions that are a key component of its mandate, requires further attention. The Office and the UN as a whole may have to conduct fundraising efforts to cover the costs of quick impact projects in the sub-region.

There is significant pressure on the office to perform, both from its member states and from the Security Council. As the third regional office of the UN, UNOCA's success will likely be measured in comparison to the two, more established offices in West Africa and Central Asia. Pressure to deliver favorable results is also increased as the international community heightens its scrutiny of regional offices, which are considered by many as the optimal and most cost-effective way of future UN engagement in Africa and other regions. In moving forward the mission has to carefully manage expectations by its member states and the international community, while at the same time showing progress on its mandated task.

NOTES

- 1 See for example, Agence France Press, “DR Congo calls on UN to withdraw peacekeepers” 18 May 2011, available at <http://reliefweb.int/taxonomy/term/75>.
- 2 United Nations, Statement by the President of the Security Council, S/PRST/2009/5 (7 April 2009).
- 3 AlertNet, “CAR army clashes with rebels, 27 killed,” 12 April 2011, available at <http://www.trust.org/alertnet/news/car-army-clashes-with-rebels-27-killed/>.
- 4 United Nations, *Seventh Report of the Secretary General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi*, S/2010/608, (30 November 2011), para. 11; and Human Rights Watch, “World Report 2011: Burundi,” 2011, available at <http://www.hrw.org/en/world-report-2011/burundi>.
- 5 United Nations, *Letter dated 15 November 2010 from the Chair of the Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 1533 (2004) concerning the Democratic Republic of the Congo addressed to the President of the Security Council*, S/2010/596, (29 November 2010), para 115, available at http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/856C29158407076F492577EB001FD9D3-Full_Report.pdf.
- 6 Security Council Report, Monthly Forecast, Burundi, December 2010, available at <http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/site/pp.aspx?c=glKWLeMTIsG&b=6409477&printmode=1>.
- 7 United Nations, *Seventh report of the Secretary-General on the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi*, S/2010, 608, (30 November 2010), para. 19.
- 8 AFP, “Western Envoys raise concerns over Burundi killings,” Radio Netherlands Worldwide, 3 June 2011, available at <http://www.rnw.nl/africa/bulletin/western-envoys-raise-concerns-over-burundi-killings>.
- 9 United Nations, Press Release, “International Community should commit to matching Burundi’s peace-consolidation efforts”, 17 May 2011, available at <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2011/sc10254.doc.htm>.
- 10 Department for International Development “The closure of DFID’s aid programme in Burundi”, UK Parliament, 31 May 2010, available at <http://www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmintdev/writev/burundi/bu09.htm>.
- 11 ECCAS member states are Angola, Burundi, Cameroon, CAR, Chad, Congo, DRC, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Sao Tome and Principe.
- 12 The UN Office to the AU, which combines political and peacekeeping liaison duties, is not treated as a political mission in this Review, as its primary focus is inter-organizational relations.