State fragility in the Central African Republic: What prompted the 2013 coup?

Rapid literature review
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About this report

This rapid review provides a short synthesis of some of the most recent, high quality literature on the topic of state fragility, security and political processes in the Central African Republic. It aims to orient policymakers to the key debates and emerging issues, and draws on 13 days of desk-based research. It was prepared for the European Commission's Instrument for Stability, © European Union 2013. The views expressed in this report are those of the author, and do not necessarily reflect the opinions of GSDRC, its partner agencies or the European Commission.

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1. Overview

In March 2013 a coalition of rebel groups – *Séléka* – led a violent coup in the Central African Republic (CAR), ousting the former President François Bozizé from ten years in power and instating the new President Michel Djotodia. CAR is now in the midst of a deepening humanitarian and economic crisis, compounded by violence and widespread human rights violations.

This rapid literature review examines the internal and external political processes, dynamics and actors that have led to the collapse of the state in CAR over the period 2003 and 2013. In particular, it charts the events and impacts of the national dialogue processes and peace agreements, and the resulting political settlements. It then examines the impact, challenges and lessons to be learned from the major security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration programmes.

While this report focuses on the period 2003 to 2013, it is important to recognise the **legacy of coups and past conflict** in CAR as a key root cause of conflict in the country today. Since gaining independence from France in 1960, CAR has only had one peaceful transfer of power, in 1993. Arms have remained the key to political success.

Linked to this history of coups is the **weakness of state capacity and authority in many core state functions.** The CAR state frequently fails to ensure the security of the state from rebellion and coup. It also fails to protect the security and welfare of civilians from violence and poverty. Alongside this, **the recent emergence of 'rebel groups'** is both a consequence and a proximate cause of recent insecurity.

Internal problems have been compounded by the **destabilising effects of regional politics** – in particular the **complex relations with Chad and regional 'men in arms'**.[1] Given its history and geography (a landlocked country surrounded by several conflict-affected countries),[2] CAR is particularly vulnerable to fluctuating regional developments.

In order to understand the political processes of the past decade, this report follows the events of the **national dialogue processes of 2003 and 2008 and the peace agreements of 2008 and 2013**, and explores the resulting political settlements. Some key themes that emerge are:

- **Peace negotiations and processes are deeply political**, yet in CAR there is little political will to treat them as such. Instead, political and military actors have treated them as technocratic 'tick box' exercises, necessary to ensure profile in national affairs, and to secure funding (for example funding linked to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration initiatives);

- **Inclusion in dialogue processes does not correlate with effective power**. While significant efforts were made at both dialogue events to include a broad range of civil society actors, civil society organisations (CSOs) accuse the government of systematically excluding them from any actual decision-making. Again, the political will does not exist within the government to meaningfully include other actors in the political process in CAR.

- **The concessionary model of politics** in CAR means that Bozizé, like his predecessors, practises exclusionary politics, to the benefit of his group. The most important resource in CAR is the state and monopoly over its security.

- **The outcomes of dialogue and peace processes have been weak** – in terms of state and civilian security, power sharing, and reform. However, the processes, for the first time, have convened

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[1] This is a term used in the literature – although the majority of rebels and bandits are men, there are also women.
[2] Chad, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Sudan, and South Sudan.

and **led to a set of consensus decisions** on important issues of governance. A key outcome of the dialogue and peace processes is that **they have acted to legitimise** – within the country and externally – the former President Bozizé, and the rebel groups.

Analysis of security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) programmes in CAR reveals that these issues have moved from the periphery to the centre of policy discussions and programming over the past decade. A significant amount of the literature recognises that the peace agreement and dialogue meeting in 2008 marked a step forward in anchoring SSR in the political discourse on national development.

While various SSR and DDR interventions have been used by different actors, this report analyses four donor initiatives. SSR and DDR are sensitive interventions that are highly political. Therefore, while there is a substantial amount of academic, policy and NGO literature, there is a paucity of donor evaluation literature publically available. The evidence that is publically available reveals a spectrum of perspectives of the impact of SSR and DDR in CAR.

In regard to **SSR and DDR, the following challenges and lessons to be learned** were identified in the literature:

- **Elite capture of power**: While Bozizé signed up to various peace and SSR initiatives, he and his administration lacked the political will to implement the reforms, instead preferring to monopolise power through the security services. This has a historic precedent in CAR. The centralised form of governance meant that the security forces were not independent, and the inclusion of other actors (such as CSOs) in reform discussions has been accused as being tokenistic.

- **The non-ideal type state**: SSR and DDR programmes are largely based on ideas of the state and statebuilding that do not have local relevance in a country with limited presence or history of the state outside of the capital.

- **Rebel groups and ex-combatants**: Long delays, limited communication and unsubstantiated expectations meant that DDR did not meet many ex-combatants' expectations. Meanwhile, the monetary and training benefits of being an ex-combatant incentivised a wave of recruitment to the rebel groups. Illegitimate ex-combatants were allowed to benefit from the scheme, and the delinking of disarmament with collecting arms meant that many weapons were left in circulation. Finally, DDR does not at present take a regional approach, which would incorporate the significant number of regional fighters.

- **International institutions:** As yet, there is still little consensus in CAR as to what SSR reform should seek to change. Some criticise the DDR programmes as being out of touch with local perspectives.

2. Principal *internal* actors

In terms of internal actors, conflict and peace in CAR is very much dominated by the government – especially the president and the executive, rebel groups, and the state security services (led and dominated by the president). This section summarises the principal actors:[3]

2.1 Political groups and parties

Séléka led a violent coup over a period of months, and finally took power in March 2013. *Séléka* (meaning 'alliance' in Sango) is a loose coalition of rebel groups, and is not an official political party. It accused the now ousted President Bozizé of not complying with commitments from the 2007 bilateral peace agreement,[4] the 2008 Inclusive National Dialogue, or DDR programmes (ICG 2013).[5]

The *Séléka* coalition is reportedly fragile, with the leaders divided and apparently unable (or unwilling) to control their troops (ICG 2013; EIU 2013). *Séléka's* members are predominantly dissidents from two core groups from the north: UFDR and CPJP. Reports on the other coalition partners vary, and sometimes include the UFR and/or the A2R (see section 2.2 for details about each group) (ICG 2013).

The groups came together to form *Séléka* in 2012. Prior to this, they signed agreements with the government and had signed up to the national DDR programme. **Michel Djotodia** (from UFDR) is currently the leader of *Séléka,* and now is the self-proclaimed President of CAR.[6] He is the first leader to come from the largely Muslim north-east.[7] Djotodia accused the former government of 'exclusionist' policies favouring his own ethnic group, ostracising other ethnic and political groups and particularly Muslims (Mehler 2009).

Kwa Na Kwa (KNK) is the former ruling party ousted in 2013, which was led by former President **François Bozizé** for ten years. The party has now distanced itself from the ousted president (EIU 2013).

Other parties include: *Mouvement pour la libération du peuple centrafricain* (MLPC) (now split into two factions);[8] *Parti libéral démocrate* (PLD); *Rassemblement démocratique centrafricain* (RDC), *Alliance pour la démocratie et le progrès* (ADP), *Front patriotique pour le progrès* (FPP), *Mouvement pour la démocratie et le développement* (MDD) and *Forum démocratique pour la modernité* (Fodem) (EIU 2013). During the 2008 peace process and Inclusive National Dialogue, the major CAR opposition political parties grouped together under the name *Union des Forces Vives de la Nation* (UFVN).

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[3] For a more extensive overview of the key actors see: http://www.irinnews.org/report/84886/central-african-republic-who-s-who-with-guns

[4] A bilateral agreement made with the UFDR rebel group – see section 6.

[5] See section 7.

[6] Djotodia proclaimed himself president immediately after the coup. This was then confirmed in April 2013 by the National Council of the Transition, with the support of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and the international community.

[7] See: http://africanarguments.org/2013/04/02/central-african-republic-president-michel-djotodia-and-the-good-little-putchist%E2%80%99s-tool-box-by-louisa-lombard/

[8] The MLPC was the ruling party from 1993 to 2003, led by former president Ange-Felix Patassé. MLPC is currently divided into two factions: (1) a group made up of former supporters of the late Patassé (president from 1993-2003); and (2) a group supporting former prime minister Martin Ziguélé (in power from 1993-2003).

2.2 Principal rebel groups[9]

It is important to note that information about the rebel groups is limited and different sources report different facts (i.e. number of members, year of creation).

- **UFDR** (*l'Union des forces démocratiques pour le rassemblement*). Established in 2005, is an alliance between three groups from the north (ICG 2013). UFDR is better trained and armed than the other rebel groups. It has listed the following grievances: impassability of the roads in the region; lack of health care; lack of education; insufficient access to potable water; insecurity in the region; and the marginalisation of the region (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009).

- **APRD** (*Armée Populaire pour la Restauration de la République et la Démocratie*). Established in 2005, the APRD controls two areas in the north-west and north (ICG 2013). Spittaels & Hilgert (2009: 7) report it be an 'amateurish movement that seems sincere in its assertion that it fights for the security of the region'.

- **CPJP** (*Convention des patriotes pour la justice et la paix*). Established in 2006, the CPJP is present in the north-east (ICG 2013).

- **FDPC** (*Front Démocratique du Peuple Centrafricain*). Established in 2005, the FDPC controls a small part of the north, and was dormant until November 2008 until it signed up to the 2008 peace process (ICG 2013; Spittaels & Hilgert 2009).

- **Other groups** include l'*Union des forces républicaines* (UFR), and l'*Alliance pour la refondation* (A2R).

In 2010, the rebel groups were estimated at 10,300 people (6000 APRD, 2181 UFDR, and 2000-2500 for the other smaller groups) (Tomety 2010). Cumulatively, they have over double the total staff of the Central African Armed Forces. They also 'out-gun' government forces (Berman & Lombard 2008).

2.3 Principal national security forces[10]

The Central African Armed Forces (FACA) is a small army with around 5000 staff, 1500 of which are operational soldiers (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009). The majority of the soldiers – 1200 – are stationed in the CAR capital Bangui. FACA is under-resourced, under-armed, poorly trained, and has a weak control structure. In light of long overdue SSR reforms, in August 2012, a recruitment campaign was hastily organised, triggering a riot in Bangui (ICG 2013: 4). There are reports that Bozizé was concerned that the FACA was too strong and could organise a coup against him (ICG 2013).

The Presidential (or Republican) Guard is a force of about 1,200 soldiers supposed to be part of the FACA, but in practice under the direct authority of the President (via a senior officer) (N'Diaye 2009). Bozizé had a group of **personal guards** – from Chad – who accompanied him everywhere. The **Intelligence Services** of CAR are also under control of the presidency.

2.4 Civil society

Many CSOs emerged in 2003, spurred by the coup and the incapacity of the state to respond to the basic needs of the population in terms of agriculture and social services (Floridi, Corella & Koyandondri 2008: 61). This increase was also driven by the rise of humanitarian funding. National CSOs often provide consultancy services to international non-governmental agencies (NGOs) but little support has been

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[9] Also known as 'politico-military groups'.

[10] For in depth analysis of the national security forces see Berman & Lombard (2008).

offered in terms of capacity building (Floridi, Corella & Koyandondri 2008). The Bozizé regime was reluctant to include CSOs in political affairs, thus limiting their engagement in peace talks. [11]

3. Principal *external* actors

3.1 International and regional organisations

A wide range of actors have been deployed in CAR, including the UN (BINUCA, and other UN agencies), the African Union, and the ECCAS (Economic Community of Central African States).[12] The regional peacekeeping mission (Mission for the consolidation of peace in Central African Republic, MICOPAX) is, since July 2008, under the responsibility of the ECCAS. It has succeeded the FOMUC operation established in October 2002, following a decision of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central African Republic (CEMAC). It is a rather small operation (400 soldiers) composed of contingents coming from the ECCAS with operational support from France, and financial support through the EU's African Peace Facility (APF).[13]

3.2 Regional powers

Regional powers (Congo, Chad, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea) were involved in the brokering of the 2013 Libreville agreement, which was signed in January under the auspices of the ECCAS. However, ECCAS failed to monitor the implementation of the agreement (ICG 2013), and regional powers did not prevent the *Séléka* coalition from seizing power thereafter. This is attributed to Bozizé's reluctance to implement the agreement, and also to regional players losing confidence in Bozizé (Katpindé 2013). In addition to international and regional organisations, various regional armed factions have been involved in past conflicts as well as in the most recent political turmoil.[14]

3.3 France

Bozizé was supported by France, the former colonial power, when he staged his successful coup in 2003. Until 2013, French support for Bozizé was a major factor in his maintenance of power. France maintains some troops in Bangui as part of Operation Boali. While French forces on the ground do not officially engage the rebels, they did attack a CAR rebel coalition late 2006, allowing government forces to retake towns captured by rebels. In 2013, however, French troops did not intervene to stop *Séléka*, nor did they protect the French citizens inside the country. France's actions indicate that it is distancing itself significantly from CAR, unlike the role it is playing in other regional conflicts, for example in Mali.

3.4 South Africa

South Africa is increasingly becoming involved in Francophone Africa. Its presence in CAR is quite recent. South Africa deployed a military contingent to CAR in 2007, when a bilateral agreement providing training and personal protection to Bozizé was signed. South African National Defence Force (SANDF)'s presence in the country was seen by some analysts as a move to counter French military influence in the region.[15]

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[11] See: http://socs.civicus.org/?p=3484
[12] Also known as CEEAC for its French title
[13] See: http://ec.europa.eu/europeaid/where/acp/regional-cooperation/peace/peace-support-operations/micopax_en.htm
[14] See section 5
[15] See: http://www.irinnews.org/report/97194/south-africa-bolsters-its-troops-in-the-central-african-republic

It is worth noting that South African mining companies were contracted under Bozizé's rule. Besides South Africa's intention of supporting 'African solutions to African problems', economic interests are at stake.

4. Principal *internal* dynamics

Internal dynamics act as both root and proximate causes of conflict in CAR. While this report focuses on the period 2003 to 2013, it is important to understand the historic legacy of coups and conflict in CAR. Linked to this is the weakness of state capacity and authority in many core state functions. The CAR state is weakly institutionalised with poor security and high vulnerability to rebellion and coup. In this way, the state fails to protect the security and welfare of civilians from violence and poverty. The more recent emergence of 'rebel groups' can be understood as both a proximate cause and a consequence of recent insecurity.

4.1 The historic cycles of violent coups

Since gaining independence from France in 1960, CAR has only had one peaceful transfer of power, in 1993. Since 1960, seven presidents[16] have led CAR, four of whom have stayed in power for ten or more years. Arms have remained the key to political success. In 2007, HRW reported that the previous decade had seen at least ten coup attempts; there have been many more during the last six years. Coups have typically been supported by external powers – with Chad and France key countries playing active roles in supporting military coups in CAR.

4.2 Weak state, poverty, insecurity and systematic impunity

State authority is weak in many parts of CAR, and especially in the northern regions, and outside the capital Bangui. CAR is one of the poorest countries in the world. Civilians are often victims of violence from the government's own security service, from rebel groups, and from armed bandits. Bandits roam freely and come from within CAR, but also from Chad, Sudan, Uganda, Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria. The CAR state frequently fails to ensure the security of the state from rebellion and coup. It also fails to protect the security and welfare of civilians.

Bozizé is accused of fostering a system of impunity in CAR. While he may have officially agreed to make an inclusive government, to reform the security sector institutions, and to protect human rights, his actions suggest that he did not ever intend to carry out these reforms (N'Diaye 2009). Quite the contrary – Bozizé's actions perpetuated and worsened low standards of democracy, human rights and institutions in the security sector (HRW 2007). Bozizé came to power via a violent coup, and he only supported a few judicial reforms that were in his interest, such as an amnesty law to protect his troops against human rights prosecutions. His regime was also characterised by widespread clientelism. Since the beginning of his second mandate, Bozizé's relatives were appointed to crucial positions within the state apparatus (ICG 2013: 2-3).

State fragility in CAR has incentivised a 'winner-takes-all' political culture (ICG 2010). Exclusionary politics has accentuated group divisions, which correlate with regional and ethnic divisions. Meanwhile,

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[16] David Dacko (1960-66), Jean-Bédel Bokassa (1966-1979), David Dacko (1979-1981), André Kolingba (1981-1993), Ange Félix Patassé (1993-2003), François Bozizé (2003-2013) and Michel Djotodia (2013-present).

systematic impunity for human rights violators, especially those in the state security forces, means that citizen trust in the state is low.

4.3 The rebel groups phenomenon

The emergence of rebel groups in CAR is a more recent phenomenon. Most of CAR's rebel groups announced their status officially from 2005 onwards. There have been three distinct phases of recruitment to the rebel groups: (1) the formation of official groups like UFDR, in response to regional insecurity (2005-2007); (2) the increase in membership of groups, to benefit from DDR schemes (2008 - present); and (3) the increase in people latching on to the rebel groups, in response to wider-scale rebellion (December 2012 - present).

That is not to say rebel groups did not exist earlier. Chronic instability (especially outside of the capital and in the north) meant that some areas established self-defence groups. These groups gradually became aware – through better communication, and knowledge of conflicts in other areas – of the benefits associated with the label 'rebel group' (in terms of money for initiatives such as DDR, and international status) and defined themselves as rebel groups. Mehler (2009: 21) notes 'there have been few clear statements of what the various rebels stand for'. The recent rise of the groups has seen political parties lose out in the peace processes – as political parties are no longer seen to be the main actors by international mediators (Mehler 2009).

5. Principal *external* dynamics

While root causes of conflicts and political turmoil in CAR are to be found in internal problems specific to the country, these problems have been compounded by the destabilising effects of regional politics. Given its history and geographical location, CAR is particularly vulnerable to fluctuating regional developments, and a regional approach to the crisis is required. Attention needs to be paid both to inter-state relations on a regional level and to complex socio-political dynamics at grassroots levels.

5.1 Complex relations with Chad

Chad has been a key actor in CAR for decades and unresolved crises in Chad and CAR have allowed armed movements to endure and reorganize on the fringes of the region (Marchal 2009). In March 2003, Bozizé was supported by troops from Chad when he overthrew former CAR President Patassé. Following the coup, Chad maintained a contingent to provide security for President Bozizé. In April 2006, the Chadian coalition *Front uni pour le changement démocratique* fought its way across eastern Chad and through CAR to launch an attack on Chadian capital N'Djamena, illustrating again that CAR is vulnerable because its borders are porous.

In January 2013, Chad blocked the *Séléka* rebels at a town 70km from Bangui (considered the red line). However, a few months later, Chad supported the coalition which took over Bangui, despite Chadian President Idriss Déby's claim that Chad did not interfere in CAR's internal politics.[17] Chadian authorities are now more involved in CAR politics as they want to make sure that *Séléka* leaders and Chadian opponents do not become allies. According to Africa Confidential '*Séléka* leaders Michel AmNondokro Djotodia and the CPJP leader, "General" Noureddin Adam, promised Déby in Ndjamena to prevent any of

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[17] See: http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/04/14/idriss-debyo-je-pense-que-les-otages-francais-sont-vivants_3159576_3212.html

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the rebels of Chadian origin from challenging him'.[18] The Chadian rebel coalition recently announced that they had not given up the fight even though they no longer have the means (i.e. foreign support) to achieve their ambitions.[19]

It should be noted that Chad is now considered a regional power: its military intervention in Mali boosts Chadian President Déby's own image as a defender of stability in the Sahel and Sahara region. Chad's ambiguous politics in CAR contradicts this new image of Chad as a stabilising effect in the region.

5.2 Regional 'men in arms'

A regional approach to the crisis in CAR is all the more crucial considering that *Séléka* has recruited Chadian and Sudanese as well as Central Africans (mainly from the north). Many recruits from the tri-border zone have relatives in neighbouring states and are used to crossing borders. Thus, combatants who are considered 'Chadian' or 'Sudanese' have often been living in CAR for years. The cross-border activities and fluid loyalties of combatants in this zone have been a structural pattern of conflicts in Darfur, Chad and the Central African Republic, which has major implications both at the local and transnational levels (Debos 2008a).

In addition to the involvement of Chadian and Sudanese men with arms, the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is an important actor. LRA combatants have been present in the south east of the country since 2008. CAR hosts the African Union Regional Cooperation Initiative for the elimination of the LRA (RCI-LRA).[20]

Last but not least, transnational networks of road bandits, the infamous *'coupeurs de routes'* or *'zaraguinas',* have a long history in the sub-region (Issa 2010; Roitman 2005). Raiders, poachers, anti-poaching militiamen, road-blockers and pastoralists are particularly active in the north-eastern borderlands and partake in the governing of this area (Lombard 2012). They have been one source of great concern for the past few years. Widespread road banditry has led to the displacement of population in Northern CAR and to refugee flows from Northern CAR to refugee camps in the South of Chad. Pastoralists coming from Chad, Niger and Nigeria cross CAR each year with thousands of cattle and carry weapons to protect their livestock – this provides a source of tension with armed groups, local communities, and farmers (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009).

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[18] See: http://www.africa-confidential.com/article-preview/id/4908/D%C3%A9by%E2%80%99s_enemies_crowd_in
[19] On the proxy war between Chad and Sudan that ended with the signing of a peace agreement between the two countries in January 2010, see Tubiana (2011)
[20] See: http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/monthly-forecast/2013-05/unocalra_1.php

6. National dialogue processes, peace agreements and political settlements

This section explores how the events of the national dialogue processes of 2003 and 2008 and the peace agreements of 2008 and 2013 have been key factors shaping the changing political settlements in CAR over the past decade.

6.1 Bozizé's coup, 2003

Bozizé officially took power of CAR from Patassé in March 2003, supported militarily by his rebel troops (many of which were Chadian) and politically by the Chadian and French governments. Patassé was supported by a contingent of Libyan government forces as well as Congolese rebels.[21]

Rebel and government forces unleashed a wave of conflict across the country, with high incidences of human rights violations (Fédération Internationale des Ligues des Droits de l'Homme 2004). The conflict and coup precipitated a humanitarian and economic crisis, and increased CAR's already fragile dependence on the international community.

Bozizé formed a new cabinet (which included most opposition parties) and a National Transitional Council (also an all-party body) as a transitional legislative body, and announced that he would hold elections and formulate a new constitution by 2005. Meanwhile, the Chadian President Déby moved some of his troops to secure the borders between CAR and Chad against attacks from rebel groups. Chadian rebel forces used North CAR as a base. CEMAC was the first institution to recognise his government,[22] indicating the increasing external legitimacy of the new regime.

6.2 National Dialogue process, 2003

Following years of rebellion and coup attempts, and under international pressure, the CAR President at the time – Patassé – announced that he would hold a 'National Dialogue'[23] event with the aim of fostering national peace and reconciliation.[24] After taking power militarily, and in a climate of distrust, Bozizé was under pressure to win legitimacy to rule the country, both internally and externally (Mehler 2009). The National Dialogue process presented such an opportunity.

The National Dialogue was a six week conference held in September-October 2003, primarily financed by the President of Gabon. The content and logistics of the event was planned by a Preparatory Committee made up of 49 representatives from the government, from each political party, from each

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[21] Patassé and the leader of the Congolese rebels, Jean-Pierre Bemba, were later arrested for human rights violations carried out during this rebellion. Their arrest was instigated by Bozizé. Despite the widespread violence and human rights violations that have occurred in CAR, Bemba is the only person currently charged by the International Criminal Court.

[22] See:
http://www.cemac.int/Com_Presse/Declaration%20session%20extraordinaire%20CCE%20CEMAC%202_3%20juin%202003.pdf

[23] The National Dialogue website (http://dialogue.national.free.fr/dn.htm) contains useful information about the conference, including analysis of the causes of conflict in CAR
(http://dialogue.national.free.fr/dn_commissions_defsecu_diag1.htm) and suggested solutions
(http://dialogue.national.free.fr/dn_commissions_defsecu_recom_rfds.htm).

[24] Irin (2003). République Centrafricaine: Le budget pour le dialogue national estimé à 1,2 million de dollars. *Relief Web,* 4 February 2003. http://reliefweb.int/report/central-african-republic/r%C3%A9publique-centrafricaine-le-budget-pour-le-dialogue-national-estim%C3%A9

security sector agency, from CSOs,[25] from the regions of the country, and from the private sector (including sector representatives from agriculture, natural resources, financial).[26] The Preparatory Committee divided itself into six thematic commissions: truth and reconciliation; politics and diplomacy; defence and security; economic and financial; education, culture, youth and sport; organisation and logistics.

Around 350 participants attended the National Dialogue (242 named participants are available via the official delegate list).[27] Like the Preparatory Committee, this included individuals from the political parties, government, security sector agencies, CSOs, the regions, the private sector, and also included regional and international institutions and donors. Notably, former president Patassé and his former defence minister were not invited. The CAR president prior to Patassé was invited (Kolingba) (Mehler 2009).

It is interesting that there were **no representatives attending on behalf of armed rebel groups** – this is probably because many of today's rebel groups had not officially formed at the time of the conference. This highlights the new status of the groups. Of course, members of the current day rebel groups may well have attended the National Dialogue independently, or as members of other organisations.

The outcome of the National Dialogue was a final report[28] which made a long list of recommendations divided by the thematic commissions. Some of the key recommendations include: the establishment of a permanent truth and reconciliation commission; a new constitution; reform of the electoral code; restore security across the country; and create an autonomous committee to monitor the follow-up of the recommendations (called the *Comité de Suivi des Actes du Dialogue National* – CSADN). These recommendations were divided into two categories, short and long term, but otherwise were not prioritised. Various rebel groups have continued to criticise the government for not implementing the recommendations.

Reconciliation was a key discussion at the National Dialogue, and many prominent leaders made declarations of reconciliation and forgiveness for past violence (UN Security Council 2003). A report by the international NGO the International Federation for Human Rights (2004) argues that Bozizé used the National Dialogue as a way to absolve his troops of human rights violations without using judicial mechanisms. A permanent truth and reconciliation commission was never set up.

In terms of impact, **one of the main outcomes of the National Dialogue was the legitimising of Bozizé,** within the country and externally. A report from the UN Security Council (2003) published a few months after the event noted 'the overall situation in the Central African Republic is changing slowly. It is less troubled than it was before the national dialogue, when the atmosphere was often charged with suspicion and rumours – mostly unfounded – of the destabilization of the regime'. One year later, a multi-donor $13 million DDR project for CAR was approved (MDRP 2004). Mehler (2009: 16) notes that '2003 can still be termed fairly successful as **it led to a set of consensus decisions** regarding major fields of public life (particularly on the electoral process)'.

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[25] CSO groups include representatives from human rights bodies, religious groups, a women's organisation, a journalist union, the universities, the unions, cultural associations, and the diaspora, etc.

[26] A list of the Preparatory Committee's members is at http://dialogue.national.free.fr/dn_comiteprepa_membres.htm

[27] A list of the participants of the National Dialogue is at http://dialogue.national.free.fr/dn_delegues.htm

[28] For the final report from the national dialogue, see: http://www.cf.undp.org/p_ala_une.htm

6.3 Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement, 2008

From 2004 to 2008, CAR was dominated by a wave of conflict and attempted coups. Systematic violence against civilians was perpetrated by the state security forces, and by rebels and road bandits, particularly in the north-east (HRW 2007). In 2005, Bozizé stood in the presidential elections, but Patassé was excluded from standing. This triggered widespread discontent and rebellion among Patassé's followers. Some heavyweights of Patassé's political class were included in Bozizé's government, but the general Patassé camp remained excluded.

Following a period of sustained violence, **the Bozizé government decided to broker bilateral peace agreements** with the different rebel groups. First was an agreement with the FDPC (signed in Libya) in February 2007; second was with the UFDR (signed in CAR) in April 2007; and third with APRD (signed in Gabon) in May 2008. However, following concerted pressure from the international community and Gabon, the government agreed to negotiate a single peace agreement involving all groups together.

In June 2008, the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement was signed between the government and two of the rebel groups, APRD and UFDR, in Libreville Gabon.[29] The third most important group FDPC did not sign the agreement, and the agreement was rejected by parts of the exiled UFDR leadership (Mehler 2009). The President of Gabon acted as the mediator. The atmosphere between the groups was one of distrust – the APRD warned that if the forthcoming Inclusive Political Dialogue did not lead to significant change, it would return to using violence (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009).

The agreement made nine commitments including: a complete ceasefire, a general amnesty, the release of prisoners, the integration of rebels into the national army, and commitment to a new DDR programme supported by the international community. The UN Secretary-General commented on the agreement saying it was 'perhaps the most genuinely inclusive attempt to foster national reconciliation in CAR to date' (UN 2009).

However, fighting erupted just two months later in August 2008 and ended the peace process. ICG (2008) reports that the rebels broke the ceasefire due to the government's draft of the new amnesty law – the rebels argued that various clauses disadvantaged the rebels, compared to people in the security forces, and would make it impossible for many of the rebels to benefit from the amnesty.

6.4 The Inclusive Political Dialogue, 2008

A key objective of the 2008 Inclusive Political Dialogue (herein referred to as 'the Dialogue') was to **start a process and design a plan of action** to implement the 2008 peace agreement. The day before the Dialogue started in December 2008, another rebel group – the MLCJ30 – also signed the peace agreement, thereby officially joining the peace process. A few days later, another group – the UFR – also signed up. Interestingly, the UFR was not previously active in the conflict.

Negotiations were held between the government, the rebel groups and the mediator to decide on the composition of the Preparatory Committee, one year in advance.[31] The conference was more inclusive with rebel group members taking part in the Preparatory Committee, and as final participants. However, Mehler (2009) notes that rebels held only three of 23 positions in the Preparatory Committee, interesting

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[29] See the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement (2008):
http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/A18A0936ED8044A7852575D90078F063-Rapport_complet.pdf
[30] The MLCJ *(Le Mouvement des libérateurs centrafricains pour la justice)* was formerly a branch of the UFDR, and fought in the CAR Bush War. At the time, the MLCJ was led by Abakar Sabone, a formerly well-known army captain (Debos 2008a).
[31] Here is the final report:
http://www.hdcentre.org/fileadmin/user_upload/Our_work/Peacemaking/Central_African_Republic/Supporting_docume nts/RAPPORT-FINAL-DU-DIALOGUE-POLITIQUE-INCLUSIF-_PART-I_20-Dec-2008.pdf

when considering present day power dynamics. Patassé and his group, were also included, (unlike in 2003) and former president Kolimba attended. 200 participants attended the shorter two-week conference.[32]

During the Dialogue, Bozizé agreed to form an inclusive consensus government, hold free and transparent elections, install a follow up committee, and create a truth and reconciliation commission. The follow up committee was to be composed of the former and current presidents Patassé, Kolingba and Bozizé. Surprisingly, civilians and armed oppositions were not included in this committee (Mehler 2009; ICG 2008). This meant that former presidents who presided over the country during serious and systematic human rights violations would be in charge of following up on the implementation of the peace process.

ICG (2008) argues that Bozizé's intention was to **use the Dialogue and the amnesty agreed as part of the peace agreement to protect his allies, rather than to broker a peace deal** for the country. By committing to these processes, and a wider democratic programme, Bozizé maintained an image of legitimacy in the eyes of the international donors supporting the aid dependent country. Meanwhile, the main opposition was hoping that, through the Dialogue, the country would be able to remove Bozizé as president (ICG 2008). ICG (2008) also argue that the international community's support to the organisation of the *Etats généraux des forces armées* at the beginning of 2008 shifted the focus away from security, thus weakening the Dialogue, and shifted the focus to disarmament rather than reconciliation.

In terms of impact, the Dialogue was considered a major achievement by the CAR authorities, stakeholders and the international community (N'Diaye 2009). Consultations carried out by the International Dialogue for Statebuilding and Peacebuilding (2010) in CAR found that respondents consider the peace agreement and Dialogue cornerstones of the peacebuilding and statebuilding process in CAR (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding 2010). However, N'Diaye (2009) argues that attempts to bring stability through a dialogue process with a divided armed and political opposition have been ineffective.

Civil society. Respondents to the International Dialogue for Statebuilding and Peacebuilding (2010: 27) consultations also suggested the need for civil society participation to ensure the government understands and responds to people's expectations, to rebuild state-citizen trust. The report notes however, that 'meaningful participation is…difficult in a context where a culture of participation has never developed and where the presence of the state is still very weak. State-centric and capital-centric approaches to peacebuilding and statebuilding promoted by national and international partners do not help to create space for civil society actors' (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding 2010: 27).

6.5 *Séléka* rebellion, Libreville Peace Agreement, coup, 2012-2013

The period around the delayed 2011 elections saw more violence. NGO Amnesty claims that as much as two thirds of the country was beyond the control of the government, with thousands forced to flee due to armed attacks.[33]

Bozizé became increasingly isolated and 'paranoid' (ICG 2013), losing support from his allies, the population at large, and, significantly, from his two prime sources of support – the Chadian President

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[32] Some of the participants of the IPD are to be found on this external website:
http://lemlpc.net/ezwebin_site/Agir/Dialogue-Politique-Inclusif/Participants-au-DPI
[33] See: http://www.amnesty.org/en/region/central-african-republic/report-2011

Débe, and the international community. Chadian President Débe removed the Chadian protectors, who were part of FACA, from protecting Bozizé in September 2012. *Séléka* militarily took over twelve cities in the country, and then made formal demands to Bozizé asking him to comply with his commitments made as part of the 2008 peace agreement. These demands increased, and *Séléka* entered the negotiations for the 2013 peace agreement demanding that Bozizé step down as president (ICG 2013).

After just three days of negotiations with the majority party, *Séléka* coalition, opposition parties, non-active rebel groups and CSOs, the **2013 Libreville Peace Agreement was signed** in January. The negotiations were mediated by the ECCAS in Gabon. BINUCA (2013) reports that the presidents of ECCAS (Chad, Republic of Congo, Gabon and Equatorial Guinea) were highly involved in the process.[34] The speed with which the agreements were made indicates perhaps how unlikely the actors thought they would have to comply with the commitments.

The agreement included: a ceasefire, limiting Bozizé's term as President until the end of his mandate in 2016 without a possibility to be re-elected; the formation of a government of national union within twelve months (to include the majority party, opposition parties, non-active rebel movements, the *Séléka* coalition, and civil society); elections; reforms to defence, security, territorial administration, and the judicial system; a continued DDR and SSR process with the support of the international community; and various economic and social reforms (Binuca 2013: 21; Alphonse Zozime Tamekamta 2013).

One month later in February 2013, **Bozizé officially proposed by decree a new national government,** however the list of members[35] **was not welcomed** by the opposition party or *Séléka* (Binuca 2013: 3).[36] In an interview, *Séléka* coalition spokesman Eric Massi said 'the negotiations held in Libreville were very quick and left a bitter taste. The underlying problems have not been addressed… For more than a month after the signature of the Libreville agreement, Bozizé hasn't met his commitments, except for the appointment of the Prime Minister. Prisoners, who were supposed to be released, have not been released. The South African troops are still in the country. In addition, it has deployed elements of the Central and South African army in the city of Bangassou when he shouldn't be involved in defence affairs'[37].

In March 2013, *Séléka* **presented the government with a list of eleven demands**, and warned of military action were the government not to meet the demands within 72 hours (Ndéké Luka, 18 March 2013).[38] The list of demands included: the effective implementation of the 2013 peace agreement; the departure of the South African troops; review of the ministerial posts for *Séléka*; disarmament of the government's militias; and the integration of more than 2000 rebels into the FACA force.

Between 23 and 25 March 2013, *Séléka* **entered Bangui, took the presidency** and announced a new transition government with Djotodia as President.[39] The new transition government will hold elections in three years, and will be composed of 34 members including: nine ministers from *Séléka*, eight opposition parties, one former member of Bozizé's party, and 16 others from civil society or other political parties.

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[34] See: http://africanarguments.org/2013/03/15/central-african-republic-peace-talks-without-the-talks-%E2%80%93-by-kennedy-tumutegyereize-and-nicolas-tillon-conciliation-resources/
[35] See the list of members here: http://www.afrik.com/centrafrique-le-gouvernement-d-union-nationale-decrete-par-bozize
[36] See: http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20130203-rca-gouvernement-union-nationale-bozize-tiangaye-seleka)
[37] See : http://centrafrique.over-blog.com/article-eric-massi-seleka-est-toujours-prete-a-prendre-bangui-115059500.html
[38] See: http://www.radiondekeluka.org/securite/item/14603-ultimatum-de-72-heures-de-s%C3%A9l%C3%A9ka-%C3%A0-boziz%C3%A9-elle-retient-ses-5-ministres-%C3%A0-sibut-contre-l%E2%80%99application-de-l%E2%80%99accord-de-libreville.html
[39] See: http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/03/25/le-chef-de-la-seleka-se-proclame-president-de-la-republique_1853603_3212.html

An unknown blogger reports that *Séléka* **will have ministers in control of portfolios for oil, national security and defence, forests and water, and communication.**[40]

Since the coup, *Séléka's* factions are reported to be fragile and divided with disagreements, for example, over salaries for the troops that helped secure the coup. Meanwhile, a local CAR radio station reported that in May ECCAS approved the 18 month national transition programme, indicating the process of external legitimisation of the new regime.[41]

The similarities of the 2003 and the 2013 coups are stark. Both involved violent coups, unleashing humanitarian and economic crises and a wave of human rights violations. *Séléka* combatants were also involved in massive looting in Bangui as well as in most CAR cities. Both coups were supported militarily by Chadian forces and politically by ECCAS Presidents. One key difference is *Séléka's* announcement of the formation of a national unity government.

7. Security sector reform and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration

7.1 Background

Over the past two decades, security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) has moved from the periphery to the centre of policy discussions and programming in CAR (N'Diaye 2009; International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding 2010). This is reflected in its integration in development strategies such as the Poverty Reduction Strategy Papers, the UN's *Plan de Consolidation de la Paix* and the EU's Country Strategy Paper. DDR processes are often established within the context of peace processes.

CAR's history of instability means that multiple security, disarmament and demilitarisation interventions have been employed since independence –driven by both domestic and external actors (SSR Network 2008). However, the distinct language and conceptualisation of SSR and DDR were first articulated officially around the 2003 National Dialogue (N'Diaye 2009; Caramés & Sanz 2008). It is evident that various SSR and DDR interventions have been employed by different actors. This section gives examples of four types of donor initiatives to illustrate the different approaches that can be taken.

2004-2007: Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP) SSR/DDR
Following the 2003 National Dialogue, the new 'transition government' led by Bozizé wrote a 'DDR Policy Letter' requesting assistance from MDRP and the World Bank (MDRP 2004). One year later, a three year DDR project was approved – the Ex-Combatant Reintegration and Community Support Special Program[42] (known also by its French initials PRAC[43]). The PRAC was a Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Program (MDRP)[44] initiative, funded by the World Bank, UNDP and other donors, and implemented by the UNDP. It ran from 2004 to 2007, with a budget of USD $13 million (MDRP 2004).

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[40] See: http://centrafrique-presse.over-blog.com/article-centrafrique-nouveau-gouvernement-d-union-nationale-116699100.html

[41] See: http://www.radiondekeluka.org/politique/item/15458-la-ceeac-valide-la-feuille-de-route-de-transition-de-la-r%C3%A9publique-centrafricaine.html

[42] UNDP project summary: http://www.mdrp.org/PDFs/Country_PDFs/CARDoc_PRAC%20Prgrm.pdf

[43] PRAC = *Programme de réinsertion et d'appui aux communautés*

[44] The MDRP is a multi-agency effort that operated from 2002 to 2009 to support the demobilization and reintegration of ex-combatants in seven countries in the greater Great Lakes region of Central Africa. See: http://www.mdrp.org/index.htm.

2008 – present: UN Peacebuilding Commission SSR/DDR

The next phase of DDR was initiated by three key events: (1) the National Seminar on SSR (April 2008);[45] (2) the signing of the Libreville Comprehensive Peace Agreement (May 2008); and (3) the Inclusive Political Dialogue (December 2008) (N'Diaye 2009). CAR became eligible for UN Peacebuilding Commission (PBC) funding in June 2008, which includes SSR and DDR projects (UN 2009). [46] UNDP leads and implements these interventions, with funds from PBC, UNDP, CEMAC and ECCAS. The first tranche of funds ran from 2008 to 2010, with a budget allocation of USD $10 million. The second tranche of funds was approved in 2010, with a budget of USD $21 million.[47]

The 2008 draft 'Military Framework Law 2009-2013'

This EU led initiative[48] involved the drafting of the Military Framework Law 2009-2013 in 2009, which aimed to provide a five-year plan for the security sector, with a detailed staffing, equipment and budget forecasts (ICG 2008). The draft law was the result of two years of significant EU efforts, based on some years of work from France before that. The draft was presented to the National Assembly in August 2008, it would then be up to the CAR authorities to pass the law and implement it, with international assistance (ICG 2008).

The Transitional Demobilisation and Reintegration Programme (TDRP), 2011 [49]

This TDRP initiative covers three northern provinces, targeting youth, particularly youth at risk of violence. The project is innovative as it focuses on communities rather than individual ex-combatants; is implemented by international NGOs (not government); and will expand community support already provided (not creating new activities or structures). Four international NGOs will implement it, with a budget of USD $8.6 million.

Present day

In light of the current state of instability, it is uncertain if SSR and DDR initiatives will continue as currently designed under the PBA. However, according to UNICEF, an 'ad hoc' disarmament and demobilization process was launched in May 2013 in Bangui (ACAPS 2013: 2). In May 2013 the UN reported that Jean Jacques Demafouth, the Former Minister of Defence under Patassé and former leader of the rebel group APRD,has been dominated as national programme coordinator for SSR and DDR (OCHA 2013).

7.2 Impact of international support to SSR and DDR

SSR and DDR reforms in CAR have been significantly driven and financed by external actors. International pressure is credited in much of the literature as an important factor leading to the 2003 National Dialogue, the 2008 Peace Agreement and Inclusive Dialogue. All of the funding for DDR processes have been provided by external actors – predominantly multilateral donors, including some regional multilaterals.

Limited availability of impact evaluations of donor interventions

SSR and DDR are sensitive interventions that are highly political (for both beneficiary and donor) and operating in volatile environments. Therefore, while there is a substantial amount of academic, policy and NGO literature, there is not much donor evaluation literature that is publically available. This section

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[45] Presentation: http://www.hdptcar.net/docs/s%C3%A9minaire-national-sur-la-r%C3%A9forme-du-secteur-de-la-s%C3%A9curit%C3%A9-situation-du-ddr-presentation-avril

[46] Details of process: http://www.un.org/en/peacebuilding/cscs/car/key_docs/car_briefing_paper_090327.pdf

[47] See: http://www.unpbf.org/countries/central-african-republic/

[48] Known as *Projet de Loi de Programmation* 2009-2013,

[49] See: http://www.tdrp.net/en/news_050211.html

collates evidence presented in the literature reviewed, much of which is not comparable. This evidence does however illustrate the varied perspectives on the impact of SSR and DDR in CAR.

Outputs
In terms of actual outputs, in the first phase of SSR and DDR, the MDRP reported that it met its targets by provided reintegration support to 7,565 ex-combatants, by providing 'reintegration kits' and training for all beneficiaries (MDRP 2009). A final evaluation report by the MDRP, covering all its DDR programmes in Central Africa, notes that in CAR 'while the process had been disappointing, a majority of EXCs [ex-combatants] expressed satisfaction with the demobilization kit (MDRP 2009: 28). However, a PhD thesis by Lombard (2012: 379) questions whether the outputs were delivered to the participants noting cases where foodstuffs were not delivered or monitored.

In regards to community assistance initiatives, Lombard (2012: 378) notes that 'very few of these projects ever came to fruition' and 'the community component was by far an afterthought'. In an interview, Lombard discussed the TDRP as an interesting example for initiatives in this area. In a June 2013 policy briefing, the NGO ICG (2013: iii) recommends that the next phase of DDR in CAR should 'develop a second generation DDR program emphasising community and economic reintegration of demobilised combatants'. Meanwhile, the EU-led draft Military Framework Law 2009-2013 was never approved by the CAR authorities. Despite not containing any particularly controversial or political clauses, Lombard (2012) argues that there simply was not the political will to change things.

Implementation of SSR reforms
In a book chapter, N'Diaye (2009: 61) describes how the 'promising, although limited, progress' achieved by 2008 unravelled with the restarting of violence and human rights violations in February 2009. He strongly criticises the SSR and DDR policies, arguing that despite the paper commitments, little effort was made on the part of the Bozizé government to implement any SSR reforms. N'Diaye (2009: 62) argues that 'at the highest level of the executive branch there is a disturbing tendency to continue to view SSR in its most minimalist meaning', which, he notes, 'certainly does not include a genuine redistribution of power in the security area. As a consequence, at lower levels no efforts are made to implement even the most modest reforms.'

Contribution of SSR and DDR to peace
CAR has historically experienced coups and conflict, therefore assessing the contribution that SSR and DDR reforms had towards peace are clearly complex. An assessment of the CAR Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper (2008-2010) states that 'the main results of this assessment highlighted the fact that, although the circumstances were very constricting, the conflict resolution process led to the organisation of the Inclusive Political Dialogue in December 2008, safeguarding peace and social cohesion' (Central African Republic 2011: 15). A significant amount of the literature also recognises that the two meetings in 2008 marked a step forward in anchoring SSR in the political discourse on national development.

Lombard (2012) strongly questions the achievements of DDR. She criticises the definition of 'disarmament' in the 2004-7 CAR DDR reform, noting that despite the 7,556 ex-combatants, the programme only collected about 400 guns, and only half were in working condition (Clément et al. 2007 in Lombard 2012). Instead 'disarmament' has been redefined to mean people participating in the process – and according to this measure the MDRP did meet its targets (Lombard 2012; MDRP 2009).

The number of rebel groups and members has increased over this period. Since the beginning of the PRAC in 2004, various new active armed rebel groups have been established (APRD and UFDR), and other non-active groups have signed up to the 2008 peace agreement to take advantage of the process (MLCJ

and UFR) (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009; Lombard 2012). Meanwhile, Lombard (2009) advises that the number of UFDR rebels increased from 600 (during the preceding conflict period) to about 1,240 (during the 2008 Libreville negotiations), and again during the following period of DDR programming (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009).[50]

7.3 Challenges and lessons to be learned

The literature reviewed for this report uncovered a series of key challenges experienced and lessons to be learned in CAR in respect to SSR and DDR, which can be examined in four groups:

- Elite capture of power
- The non-ideal-type state
- Rebel groups and ex-combatants
- International agencies and aid

Elite capture of power

Lack of political will
N'Diaye (2009) recognises that instability in the country meant that Bozizé's government depended on the monopolisation of security to maintain its position of power. Each SSR reform involved a rebalancing of security – and therefore power – in favour of the population or other political or rebel groups; in this sense, SSR reforms were not in the interest of Bozizé or his regime, whose core objective was to stay in power (N'Diaye 2009). The monetary rewards for reform did not apparently outweigh the incentives to delay and eventually not concede to any reforms (N'Diaye 2009). Conversely, the money that elites could gain from DDR projects – through generous per diems, salaries or misdirected funds – produced strong incentives to negotiate, but never reach an agreement on DDR reforms (Lombard 2012).

Historic legacy
N'Diaye (2009: 56) discusses at length the 'largely failed' efforts to reform the FACA, gendarmerie, police, intelligence agencies and the Presidential Guard and argues that such an ambitious change agenda does not fit with the mind-set of the FACA officer, or indeed most post-colonial armies in francophone Africa, where conceptions of power frequently do not include scrutiny or accountability to citizens. In addition, formal institutions have never been strong in CAR. Regular forces are characterized by the partial control of military staff, a very feeble bureaucracy, and recourse to foreign fighters (mainly from Chad). A better understanding of the actual practices of the state in its military forms in both countries is required to craft meaningful interventions.

Centralised leadership, without a reform agenda
The Bozizé government was highly centralised around the presidency, with Bozizé's son appointed as defence minister. N'Diaye (2009) recognises that SSR has been considered as the 'business' of the presidency, with the National Assembly, legislature, civil society and the judiciary excluded from any effective role in security policy formulation, oversight or implementation. Security issues were dealt with by Bozizé's relatives as well as kin-ship based networks.

A statement by the main opposition parties' coalition group – UFVN – at the 2008 Inclusive National Dialogue, leaked via Wikileaks cables, argues that Bozizé's military recruitment strategy favours his ethnic group and clan, and as a result the national army has 'undisciplined, incompetent and corrupted and highly politicized troops'.[51] In addition, the recent ICG policy brief (2013) questions Bozizé's willingness to

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[50] Details on the final number of members are not provided
[51] See: http://www.cablegatesearch.net/cable.php?id=08BANGUI234

strengthen the FACA (ICG 2013: 5). The FACA were thus neither able to control the territory and to ensure CAR citizens' security nor able to protect Bozizé's regime.

Tokenistic inclusion of civil society

CSOs were included in the National Dialogue, and some played important roles chairing sessions and acting as *rapporteurs* (N'Diaye 2009). However, N'Diaye (2009: 51) reports that CSOs claim to have been 'systematically excluded from decision-making organs', with prior inclusion being a token for the international donors. In recommendations published in June 2013, the ICG (2013) argue that the next generation of DDR, should create a specific position for a security coordinator for the NGOs working in CAR.

The non-ideal-type state

Historically and in the present, CAR has exercised limited state-like functions outside of the capital, and impunity is still the normal mode for significant areas of the country. Lombard (2012) argues that DDR is based on a faulty assumption that if the state regains its monopoly on violence, it will secure peace in CAR. This is despite the fact that the state has never held such a monopoly in CAR (Lombard 2012). This security vacuum is even more dramatic in the north of the country.

In consultations carried out by the International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding (2010: 26), the need for peacebuilding and statebuilding efforts and benefits to reach beyond Bangui was highlighted as a priority. The consultations also recommended decentralising peacebuilding and statebuilding interventions, and broadening support to state institutions other than the executive (International Dialogue on Peacebuilding and Statebuilding 2010: 26). Notably however, 80% of aid goes to Bangui, and the significant majority of PRAC activities occurred in Bangui.

Rebel groups and ex-combatants

Unrealistic and unmet expectations

The promises made during the National Dialogues, the peace agreements and through the DDR project, raised the expectations of the rebel groups and of the population at large. President Bozizé's failure to comply with various aspects of the 2007 peace agreement is widely cited as a key factor supporting the most recent coup, as claimed by the group *Séléka* itself.[52] Lombard (2012) identifies unmet expectations as a key factor leading to the disengagement of many ex-combatants from the DDR process. The inefficient DDR steering committee was unable to reach agreements on the DDR reforms, and therefore the compensation and DDR projects that many ex-combatants were expecting, were repeatedly delayed (Lombard 2012). There was little communication about these delays, and meanwhile news about the payouts linked to other DDR processes in the region fostered unrealistic expectations (Lombard 2012).

Unintended consequences: incentivising recruitment to the rebel groups

The funding and international recognition associated with rebel groups is identified as a factor leading to an increase in self-identified 'rebel groups', and an increase in members (Lombard 2012; Spittaels & Hilgert 2009). Some rebel leaders also promoted and exaggerated this to attract more members (Lombard 2012). Lombard (2012) notes that many of the DDR participants were people with connections to the rebel groups or DDR staff, rather than actual ex-combatants. However, to benefit from the programme, these people would need to register to be members of the groups. It is unknown if these

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[52] See: http://africanarguments.org/2013/03/15/central-african-republic-peace-talks-without-the-talks-%E2%80%93-by-kennedy-tumutegyereize-and-nicolas-tillon-conciliation-resources/

people went on to participate as members of the groups of not, or if they are involved in the current violence.

Illegitimate ex-combatants

In CAR, Caramés and Sanz (2008) note that arms possession had become progressively less relevant for incorporation into a military group. Therefore, DDR programmes would not use this as a way of recognising ex-combatants. Other more qualitative methods would be used - including the verification of rebel leaders. This meant that as promises of DDR payments and benefits loomed, rebel leaders were able to recruit more people to pretend to be ex-combatants (Spittaels & Hilgert 2009; Lombard 2012).

It also facilitated corruption, and the actual ex-combatants were not necessarily those who benefited from the programme. Lombard (2012) reports that there was not a clear system of responsibility within the PRAC team, denoting who should check and verify ex-combatant identities – therefore no actor fulfilled this role. At the same time, the rebel leaders wanted their chosen beneficiaries to receive the benefits, and other actors did not complain for fear of offending the rebel leaders (Lombard 2012). Caramés and Sanz (2008) recognise that transparent eligibility criteria which are easy to understand and unambiguous are important to transverse this difficult situation. In addition, specific criteria should be designed to take into account children and youth associated with armed forces, as they were numerous (ICG 2013: 8). The available literature does not mention the presence of female combatants. The question should be investigated as literature on post-conflict and DDR programmes shows that they face specific reintegration challenges.

Limited disarmament leaves weapons in circulation

Third, DDR reduced the incentives for ex-combatants to give their weapons away, as these were not necessary for registration with the scheme, as had been the case in other countries. This means that the impact of DDR on the actual reduction of weapons in CAR has been limited (Lombard 2012). Importantly however, Berman and Lombard (2008) report that peacekeeping operations have not been a significant source of weapons.

Coping with regional fighters

As past experiences show, appraising the involvement of neighbouring states and combatants' vulnerability for re-recruitment is critical to foresee the fragility or reliability of future DDR (Debos 2009). Future DDR programmes should address two key questions: What was promised to Central African, Chadian, and Sudanese combatants (high bonuses; integration into regular forces)? How can demobilized combatants be prevented from pursuing their fighting careers on the other side of the border?

International institutions

Different visions of change

A key point noted in the literature is the divergence of views between the key actors on what SSR reform should be. Notably, these visions also diverge from the agreed vision detailed in the DDR programme documents. A UNDP evaluation recognised this limitation, noting that CAR had a low capacity to design the 2004-7 DDR program and to implement it. Therefore the need for external actors was significant. The UNDP evaluation also pointed out that initial capacity needs were not adequately provided for by the programme.

The International Dialogue on peacebuilding and statebuilding (2010) and the subsequent New Deal (2011) recognise the importance of the consultation process to help actors discover and agree on a common vision for change. In CAR consultations the following factors were highlighted as important areas to explore through consultation: (a) the lack of a shared understanding of the context; and (b) the

absence of an agreed theory of change over the long term (The International Dialogue on peacebuilding and statebuilding 2010).

Finally, Lombard (2012) strongly criticises the post-2007 DDR initiatives of suffering from '**institutional amnesia**'. Lombard (2012) argues that they did not pay adequate attention to the lessons learned from the PRAC final evaluation, of which Lombard was one of the authors.

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9. Appendix 1: Terms of reference

This rapid literature was prepared for the European Commission's Instrument for Stability.

Question: Why did the state collapse in Central African Republic (CAR) during the period 2003 to 2013?

Subcomponents: Review of the internal and external political processes and dynamics that have led to the collapse of the state in CAR during the decade between the two coups d'état of 2003 and 2013.

Analysis of the political processes in the CAR during the decade between the two coups d'état of 2003 and 2013, with particular focus on (a) national dialogue processes (including those supported by regional umbrella organisation ECCAS), (b) resulting political settlements, (c) the capacities of the CAR state, as well as on d) actors and dynamics contributing to peace and conflict in CAR. A particular feature to look at would be the impact of the international community's support to security sector reform (2007/08) and to disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration. What are the major lessons to be learnt from this experience? What was the involvement/participation of the international community and of civil society in these processes?