

## 5. The situation in the Central African Republic

During the period under review, the Council held five meetings and adopted two resolutions, both under Chapter VII of the Charter, in connection with the situation in the Central African Republic. Three meetings took the form of briefings and two were convened for the adoption of a resolution.<sup>149</sup> More information on the meetings, including on participants, speakers, and outcomes, is provided in the table below. In addition, the Council held one private meeting with countries contributing troops and police to the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA).<sup>150</sup> Council members also held informal consultations of the whole in connection with this item.<sup>151</sup>

In 2023, further to the reports of the Secretary-General, the Council heard three briefings on the Central African Republic by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of MINUSCA.<sup>152</sup> The Council also heard briefings by the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission, the Executive Director of the United Nations Entity for Gender Equality and the Empowerment of Women (UN-Women), the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security, and a civil society representative.<sup>153</sup> In addition to the briefings, the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission submitted the written advice of the Commissioner in advance of the Council's renewal of the mandate of MINUSCA.<sup>154</sup> Besides the Central African Republic, which was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad at the three briefings, the representatives of Angola, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Equatorial Guinea and Rwanda participated in meetings held under this item.<sup>155</sup>

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<sup>149</sup> For more information on format of meetings, see part II, sect. I.

<sup>150</sup> The private meeting was held on 19 October 2023 under the item entitled "Meeting of the Security Council with the troop- and police-contributing countries pursuant to resolution [1353 \(2001\)](#), annex II, sections A and B". See [S/PV.9447](#).

<sup>151</sup> Informal consultations were held on 19 October. See [A/78/2](#), part II, chap. 12.

<sup>152</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#), [S/PV.9352](#) and [S/PV.9454](#). See also [S/2023/108](#), [S/2023/442](#) and [S/2023/769](#).

<sup>153</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) and [S/PV.9352](#).

<sup>154</sup> See [S/2023/860](#).

<sup>155</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#), [S/PV.9352](#) and [S/PV.9454](#).

The briefings updated the Council on the status of the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic, signed by the authorities of the Central African Republic and 14 armed groups in Bangui on 6 February 2019, and of the Luanda joint road map for peace and reconciliation in the Central African Republic, adopted under the auspices of the President of Angola by the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region on 16 September 2021, including on progress in the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process, the decentralization of the peace process and the extension of State authority. They also focused on preparations for local elections, the constitutional referendum held on 30 July 2023, the participation of women in political processes, the worsening humanitarian situation and the activities of MINUSCA.

At the first meeting of 2023, held on 21 February, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General informed the Council that the peace and political process continued to advance based on the time frame adopted by the Government of the Central African Republic on 29 August 2022.<sup>156</sup> She noted that, in December 2022, four armed group signatories to the Political Agreement had dissolved and national authorities were making important efforts to integrate the ex-combatants into national security forces. She described the local elections scheduled for later that year as crucial to the political and peace process, but nevertheless noted there were many logistical, financial and security challenges related to their organization. Regarding the security situation, the Special Representative explained that armed group activities and attacks had increased after a relatively calm rainy season and that MINUSCA was closing 13 of its temporary bases to maximize effectiveness and mobility and continued to face operational challenges, including access constraints. She also reported that the humanitarian situation continued to worsen, and that the socioeconomic situation remained concerning, which she cautioned could undermine the modest gains made on the political and security fronts.

In his statement at the same meeting, the Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission reported on several positive developments in the country, including the political will demonstrated by the authorities for the revitalization and national ownership of the peace process, the demobilization of armed groups and regional efforts

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<sup>156</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#).

to advance the peace process. In that regard, he urged international partners to provide the necessary support, describing the lack of technical and financial capacities as one of the main challenges to peacebuilding and development. Moreover, while underscoring the importance of peacebuilding efforts as a tool for addressing root causes of instability, the Chair updated the Council on the peacebuilding priorities, namely the holding of local elections, the strengthening of rule of law and transitional justice, as well as socioeconomic recovery and development.

In her briefing on 20 June, the Special Representative reported on important progress in the implementation of the Political Agreement and the Luanda road map, noting in particular the beginning of the decentralization of the implementation of the peace process.<sup>157</sup> She further noted the dissolution of two additional armed-groups and the factions of three other signatories to the Political Agreement and appealed to partners of the Central African Republic to provide additional support to the disarmament, demobilization, repatriation and reintegration process. Furthermore, while highlighting the decision of the National Elections Authority to postpone preparations for the local elections following the announcement by President Faustin-Archange Touadéra of a referendum on a new constitution scheduled for 30 July, the Special Representative encouraged the Government to provide clarification on its new calendar and timetable for those elections. She added that, for elections to have the required impact, they had to be inclusive. Moreover, while the reporting period saw the extension of State authority to some of the most remote parts of the country, such as the area near the Sudan border, the Special Representative pointed to increasing tensions and rapidly deteriorating security conditions on the borders with Chad, the Sudan and South Sudan. The Special Representative stated that the humanitarian situation remained worrying and noted in particular the influx of refugees as a result of conflict in the Sudan and Chad. She also updated the Council on the decision of the United Nations to repatriate a unit of 60 military personnel from MINUSCA based on serious allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse by some of its members and stressed that the Mission would spare no effort in preventing new cases and ensuring that all uniformed and civilian personnel honour the zero-tolerance policy of the Secretary-General.

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<sup>157</sup> See [S/PV.9352](#).

The Executive Director of UN-Women focused her remarks on the participation of women in the constitutional referendum and the local elections. She commended the efforts of the Central African authorities and the Council on women and peace and security, while stressing that women continued to be extremely marginalized in decision-making and peace processes, owing to the inadequate implementation, enforcement and funding of plans and norms. The Executive Director provided details on the underrepresentation of women in various political forums, including the National Assembly, and pointed out that women candidates had frequently been victims of physical violence in the 2021 elections, while women voters had been refused entry into voting centers. She further noted that women in the Central African Republic were very active in peacebuilding and mediation, but were only engaged in the margins, with women reporting that civic space for them was shrinking. She added that gender-based violence was increasing and that it strongly correlated with arms proliferation. Describing the constitutional referendum and the local elections as a critical juncture for women's participation that could result in instability and violence, the Executive Director highlighted that addressing the extreme underrepresentation of women was one of the best hopes to break cycles of violence and instability.

In his statement at the same meeting, the African Union Commissioner for Political Affairs, Peace and Security expressed concern about the deterioration of the security situation that was exacerbated by the spillover of the conflict from neighboring countries, especially the Sudan, and emphasized that the political situation remained fragile. Nevertheless, he commended the Central African authorities for their strong commitment to implement the Political Agreement and the Luanda road map, as evidenced by the successful dismantling of armed groups. He emphasized the need to achieve synergies between the Political Agreement and the Luanda road map and for the Government and all political and social actors to ensure that local elections were held as scheduled and in a transparent, free, credible, inclusive and fair manner. The Commissioner further recalled the call of the African Union for the complete lifting of the arms embargo to enable the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic to effectively carry out their mandate of defending and protecting the country and its citizens. He also called on the Council to show strong support for the operations of MINUSCA and for the countries of the

region in their efforts to foster comprehensive peace, stability and prosperity in the Central African Republic.

The Head of Association of Jeunesse en Marche pour le Développement en Centrafrique recognized the importance of MINUSCA for the protection of civilians and for protecting and safeguarding peace. He requested the Council to renew and strengthen the mandate of MINUSCA to ensure the safety of the population and eliminate the presence of armed groups. He also called on the Council to ensure that the Mission's quick-impact projects would be reoriented towards income-generating activities for youths and that local actions to combat misinformation and hate speech would be considered in the Mission's rapid-impact project strategy.

At the meeting held on 26 October, the Special Representative reported that, following the holding of the referendum on 31 July, the seventh Republic of the Central African Republic and its new Constitution had been promulgated on 30 August.<sup>158</sup> She noted that national ownership over the peace process was illustrated by the convening of the second strategic review of the peace process on 23 October, which noted the dissolution of nine armed groups, or their branches, progress made on disarmament, demobilization and reintegration, security sector reform, the national policy on border management and the restoration of State authority. She added that it was essential to capitalize on that momentum to continue building confidence between all parties. Meanwhile, preparations for the local elections had resumed, the first round of voting being planned for October 2024. On security, the Special Representative highlighted the success of the first joint deployment of MINUSCA with Central African defense and security forces in Haut-Mbomou, as well as the voluntary repatriation of ex-combatants of the Lord's Resistance Army. The Special Representative drew attention to the gaps in the Mission's air capabilities, ground-transport capacities and supply chain and noted that its mobility was hampered by limited infrastructure.

Throughout 2023, discussions in the Council focused on the political and peace process, the local elections and constitutional referendum, the security and human rights situation, as well

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<sup>158</sup> See [S/PV.9454](#).

as the activities of MINUSCA. With regards to the political and peace process, most Council members welcomed the dissolution of armed signatory groups to the Political Agreement and underscored the importance of further progress on the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and repatriation process. They also took note of the efforts of the Central African Republic Government to decentralize the peace process and ensure national ownership. Council members highlighted efforts by regional actors in support of the peace process, with some welcoming strengthened cooperation and engagement between the Central African Republic and neighboring States.<sup>159</sup> They further stressed that it was critical to ensure the inclusion and participation of women and young people in the political processes.<sup>160</sup> Several Council members expressed concern about the constitutional reform and the resulting suspension and delay of the local elections.<sup>161</sup> Council members also urged the Government to ensure a transparent and inclusive constitutional reform process, including by engaging with diverse stakeholders, such as the opposition and civil society actors.<sup>162</sup> The representatives of China and the Russian Federation pointed out that issues such as constitutional reform were internal affairs and the sovereign prerogative of the Central African Republic.<sup>163</sup>

Concerning the security situation, most Council members addressed the continued activities of armed groups and their attacks against civilians, humanitarian workers, MINUSCA and the Armed Forces of the Central African Republic. In that context, some Council members called for a complete lifting of the arms embargo against the country.<sup>164</sup> Council members highlighted their concern regarding the illegal trafficking in small arms and light weapons and

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<sup>159</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (France, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Brazil and China); [S/PV.9352](#) (France, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Malta, China and Brazil); [S/PV.9454](#) (France, Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), United Arab Emirates and Japan).

<sup>160</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (France, Albania, United States, United Arab Emirates, Ecuador and Malta); [S/PV.9352](#) (Switzerland, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Malta, Ecuador and United Arab Emirates); [S/PV.9454](#) (United States, Albania and Ecuador).

<sup>161</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (Albania and Malta); [S/PV.9352](#) (Malta, United Kingdom, United States, and Albania).

<sup>162</sup> See [S/PV.9352](#) (France, Switzerland, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Ecuador, United States and Albania).

<sup>163</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (China); [S/PV.9352](#) (Russian Federation).

<sup>164</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), China and Russian Federation); [S/PV.9352](#) (Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), China and Russian Federation); [S/PV.9454](#) (Russian Federation and China).

natural resources, as well as the increased use of explosive devices by armed groups.<sup>165</sup> Most Council members further expressed concerns about spill-over effects from developments in the Sudan and Chad, including on the already worrisome humanitarian situation. Throughout the year, most Council members expressed concerns or apprehension regarding violations of international human rights and international humanitarian law, with some citing violations committed by the Wagner Group.<sup>166</sup> The representative of the Russian Federation stated that attempts to blame human rights violations on the Central African Armed Forces and bilateral partners were not supported by established facts.<sup>167</sup> Council members also addressed cases of sexual and gender-based violence,<sup>168</sup> as well as restrictions on the civic space, misinformation and hate speech.<sup>169</sup> Most Council members recognized and appreciated the strengthened cooperation and dialogue between MINUSCA and the Government, but some also addressed continued violations of the status-of-forces agreement and called for full freedom of movement for MINSUCA.<sup>170</sup> In addition, Council members expressed serious concern about the allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse committed by United Nations peacekeepers.<sup>171</sup>

Regarding decisions adopted under this item during the period under review, by resolution [2693 \(2023\)](#) of 27 July, acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council extended the arms embargo, asset freeze and travel ban concerning the Central African Republic until 31 July 2024.<sup>172</sup> Moreover, the Council decided that the arms embargo measures and the notification requirements set out in paragraph 1 of resolution [2648 \(2022\)](#), as well as the measures and provisions set out in paragraph 4 of resolution [2488 \(2019\)](#), would no longer apply to the supply, sale or transfer of arms and related materiel and the provision of assistance, advice

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<sup>165</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (Brazil and Ecuador); [S/PV.9352](#) (Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Brazil, and Ecuador); [S/PV.9454](#) (France, Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Malta, Albania, United Arab Emirates, Ecuador, Switzerland and Brazil).

<sup>166</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (France, Albania, United Kingdom, United States and Malta); [S/PV.9352](#) (France, United Kingdom, United States and Albania); [S/PV.9454](#) (France and United Kingdom).

<sup>167</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) and [S/PV.9352](#).

<sup>168</sup> See [S/PV.9454](#) (France, United Arab Emirates, Japan, Ecuador and Brazil).

<sup>169</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (France, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Switzerland, and United Arab Emirates); [S/PV.9454](#) (United Kingdom, United Arab Emirates and Switzerland).

<sup>170</sup> See [S/PV.9265](#) (Albania, United Kingdom, United States, and Malta).

<sup>171</sup> See [S/PV.9352](#) (Switzerland, Malta, United Kingdom, Japan and United States).

<sup>172</sup> Resolution [2693 \(2023\)](#), paras. 2-4. For more information on the sanctions measures concerning the Central African Republic, see part VII, sect. III.

and training to the Central African Republic security forces.<sup>173</sup> The Council also extended the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 31 August 2024 and expressed its intention to review the mandate and take appropriate action regarding its further extension no later than 31 July 2024.<sup>174</sup>

Resolution [2693 \(2023\)](#) was adopted with 13 votes in favor and abstentions by China and the Russian Federation.<sup>175</sup> In his statement after the vote, the representative of the Russian Federation pointed out that the Council had to respond to the requests of the Government of the Central African Republic to lift the arms embargo, which he argued was hindering the efforts of Bangui to combat illegal armed groups, while adding no value from the point of view of preventing the supply of arms to fighters. He further noted that the Russian Federation had proposed possible modalities in the draft resolution for assistance to the Central African Republic to ensure the security of its borders and to curb the smuggling of arms to fighters, as well as to correct elements of the sanctions regime that were no longer effective, namely, the arms embargo. He added that the Russian Federation was convinced that the Council should have taken a decision to remove any form of sanction on the efforts of a sovereign State to stabilize and ensure its national security. Similarly, the representative of China stated that the resolution failed to meet the wish of the Central African Republic and regional actors for a complete lifting of the sanctions and that the arms embargo no longer met the needs of the country and was impeding its efforts to enhance its security capacity and maintain national security. The representative added that the Council should adjust unnecessary sanctions until they were completely lifted. In contrast, the representative of the United States stated that the sanctions measures were crucial to promoting peace and stability in the Central African Republic, most importantly by keeping dangerous weapons and resources from reaching armed groups. While acknowledging the call by the Government of the Central African Republic to fully lift the arms embargo, the United States expressed concern about the security situation in the country and the disregard that some Council members and Central African Republic authorities had for the regime's notification requirements. He added that nothing in the current or

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<sup>173</sup> Resolution [2693 \(2023\)](#), paras. 1 and 3.

<sup>174</sup> Ibid., para. 6. For information on the Committee established pursuant to resolution [2127 \(2013\)](#) and the Panel of Experts, see part IX, sect. I.

<sup>175</sup> See [S/PV.9388](#).

previous sanctions regimes kept the Central African security forces from receiving any weapons or training they requested. Similarly, the representative of the United Kingdom stressed the importance of the notification requirement for monitoring the flow of weapons to armed groups and that notification processes did not inhibit governments from building the capacities needed to provide security. The representative of Ghana opined that the resolution represented a significant step towards satisfying the long-standing request of the Central African Republic for the complete removal of sanctions and met the calls of African Union and subregional organizations for the lifting of arms embargo in an important way. In that regard, she stressed that the arms embargo no longer applied to the Government of the Central African Republic, ensuring that the authorities were better equipped to curb armed groups and permitting partners to engage in the restoration of peace and security without hindrance. The representative of Brazil was of the view that the gradual approach to lifting the arms embargo constituted a good balance that respected differing views.

On 15 November, by resolution [2709 \(2023\)](#), acting under Chapter VII of the Charter, the Council extended the mandate of MINUSCA for a period of one year, until 15 November 2024, and re-classified the Mission's work in support of the extension of State authority as one of its priority tasks.<sup>176</sup> The Council further requested the Secretary-General to conduct and provide, no later than 15 August 2024, an independent strategic review of MINUSCA with detailed recommendations regarding the possible reconfiguration of the mission's mandate and on a possible transition plan and eventual drawdown when conditions were met.<sup>177</sup> By the resolution, the Council also urged the Central African Republic authorities and national stakeholders to ensure the preparations of inclusive, free and fair local elections in 2024 and 2025, carried out in a transparent, credible, peaceful and timely manner, in accordance with the Constitution of 30 August 2023, with the full, equal, meaningful and safe participation of women as voters and candidates.<sup>178</sup>

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<sup>176</sup> Resolution [2709 \(2023\)](#), paras. 30 and 36 (b). For more information on the mandate of MINUSCA, see part X, sect. I.

<sup>177</sup> Resolution [2709 \(2023\)](#), para. 58 (c).

<sup>178</sup> *Ibid.*, para. 8.

Resolution [2709 \(2023\)](#) was adopted with fourteen votes in favour and one abstention by the Russian Federation.<sup>179</sup> In her statement after the vote, the representative of the Russian Federation stressed that the resolution failed to mention the role of the Central African Republic's bilateral partners in the stabilization of the country. She also emphasized that Council resolutions could not be used to interfere in the internal affairs of States and that many objectives, including the demand of MINUSCA to conduct night flights, needed to be resolved in close cooperation with the host country. The representative of the United States stressed that the resolution acknowledged the role of MINUSCA in supporting the extension of State authority and welcomed the call on all parties to create an environment for the mission to operate free of obstruction or interference.

### **Meetings: the situation in the Central African Republic, 2023**

| <i>Meeting and date</i>                  | <i>Sub-item</i>  | <i>Other documents</i> | <i>Rule 37 invitations</i> | <i>Rule 39 and other invitations</i>   | <i>Speakers</i>  | <i>Decisions and vote (for-against-abstaining)</i> |
|--|--|------------------------|----------------------------|--|--|--|
| <a href="#">S/PV.9265</a><br>21 February | Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic ( <a href="#">S/2023/108</a> ) |                        | Central African Republic   | Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic and Head of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), Chair of the Central African Republic configuration of the Peacebuilding Commission | 13 Council members <sup>a</sup><br>all invitees <sup>b</sup> |  |

<sup>179</sup> See [S/PV.9476](#).

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|---------------------------|---|---|--|--|--|
| <a href="#">S/PV.9352</a> | Letter dated 26<br>20 June May 2023 from<br>the Secretary-<br>General<br>addressed to the<br>President of the<br>Security Council<br>( <a href="#">S/2023/383</a> )   |   | Angola,<br>Burundi,<br>Central African<br>Republic,<br>Democratic<br>Republic of the<br>Congo,<br>Republic of the<br>Congo,<br>Equatorial<br>Guinea,<br>Rwanda | Special Representative of<br>the Secretary-General,<br>Executive Director of the<br>United Nations Entity for<br>Gender Equality and the<br>Empowerment of Women<br>(UN-Women), African<br>Union Commissioner for<br>Political Affairs, Peace and<br>Security, Head of<br>Association, Jeunesse en<br>Marche pour le<br>Développement en<br>Centrafrique | 13 Council members, <sup>a</sup><br>all invitees <sup>c</sup>  |
| <a href="#">S/PV.9388</a> | Letter dated 18<br>27 July May 2023 from<br>the Panel of<br>Experts on the<br>Central African<br>Republic<br>extended<br>pursuant to<br>resolution <a href="#">2648</a><br>( <a href="#">2022</a> ) addressed<br>to the President<br>of the Security<br>Council<br>( <a href="#">S/2023/360</a> ) | Draft<br>resolution<br>submitted by<br>France<br>( <a href="#">S/2023/555</a> ) | Central African<br>Republic  |  | Six Council members <sup>d</sup><br>Central African<br>Republic <sup>e</sup><br><br>Resolution<br><a href="#">2693 (2023)</a><br>13-0-2 <sup>f</sup><br>(adopted under<br>Chapter VII)       |
| <a href="#">S/PV.9454</a> | Report of the<br>26 October Secretary-<br>General on the<br>Central African<br>Republic<br>( <a href="#">S/2023/769</a> )   |   | Angola,<br>Central African<br>Republic   | Special Representative of<br>the Secretary-General   | 13 Council members, <sup>g</sup><br>all invitees <sup>c</sup>  |
| <a href="#">S/PV.9476</a> | 15<br>November  | Draft<br>resolution<br>submitted by<br>France<br>( <a href="#">S/2023/863</a> ) | Central African<br>Republic  |  | Three Council Members<br>(China, Russian<br>Federation, United<br>States), invitee<br><br>Resolution<br><a href="#">2709 (2023)</a><br>14-0-1 <sup>h</sup><br>(adopted under<br>Chapter VII) |

<sup>a</sup> Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon (also on behalf of Ghana and Mozambique), Japan, Malta, Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>b</sup> Central African Republic was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad. The Special Representative of the Secretary-General for the Central African Republic participated in the meeting via videoconference.

<sup>c</sup> Central African Republic was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad. Angola was represented by its Secretary of State for External Relations. The African Union Commissioner and the Head of Association, Jeunesse en Marche pour le Développement en Centrafrique (AJEMADEC) participated in the meeting via videoconference.

<sup>d</sup> Brazil, China, Ghana, Russian Federation, United Kingdom and United States.

<sup>e</sup> Central African Republic was represented by its Minister for Foreign Affairs, Francophonie and Central Africans Abroad.

<sup>f</sup> For: Albania, Brazil, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom and United States; against: none; abstained: China and Russian Federation.

<sup>g</sup> Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Japan, Malta, Mozambique (also on behalf of Gabon and Ghana), Russian Federation, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States.

<sup>h</sup> *For*: Albania, Brazil, China, Ecuador, France, Gabon, Ghana, Japan, Malta, Mozambique, Switzerland, United Arab Emirates, United Kingdom, United States; *against*: none; *abstained*: Russian Federation.