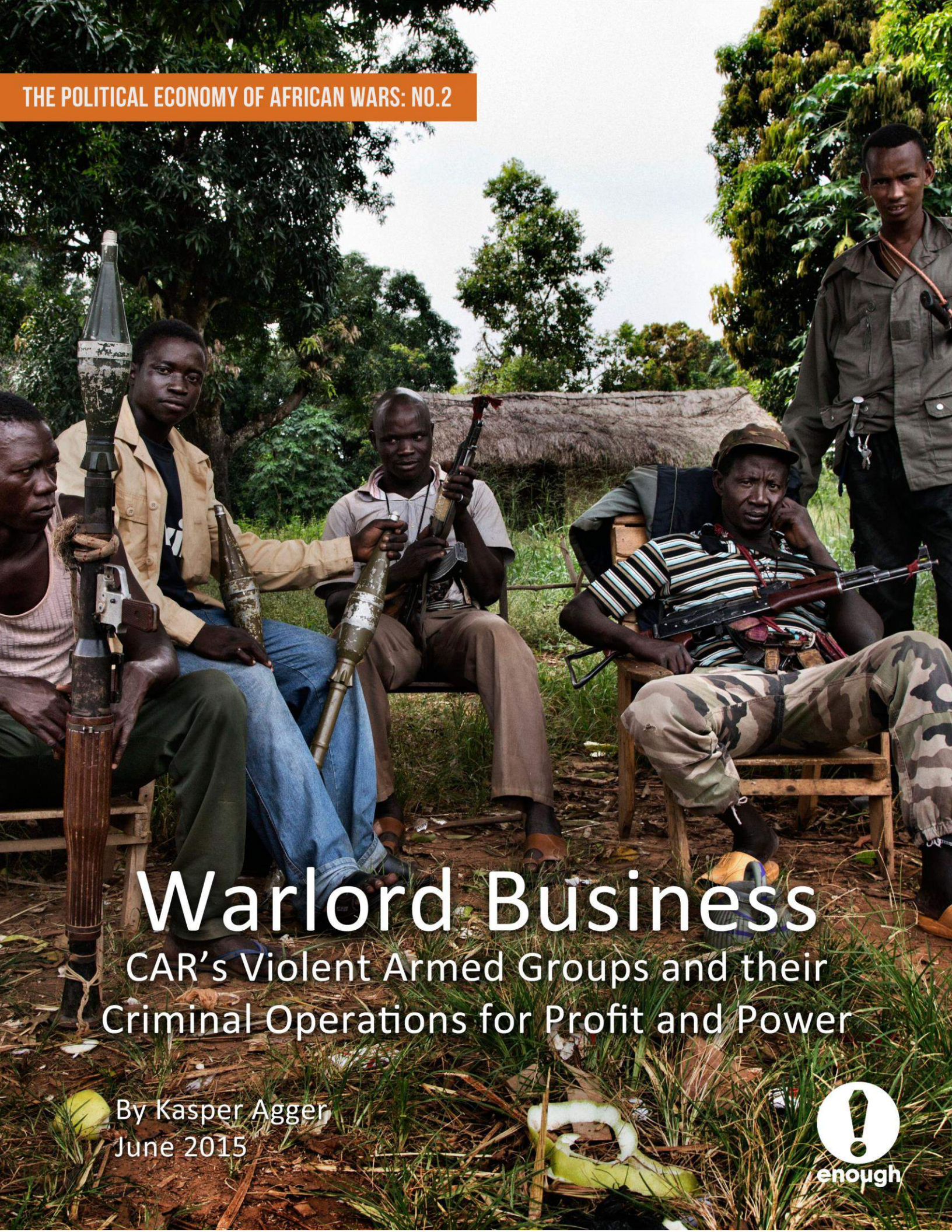


THE POLITICAL ECONOMY OF AFRICAN WARS: NO.2



Warlord Business

CAR's Violent Armed Groups and their
Criminal Operations for Profit and Power

By Kasper Agger
June 2015





Political Economy of African Wars Series

“Warlord Business” is the second in a new series of in-depth, field research-driven reports on the dynamics of profit and power fueling war in the Horn, East and Central Africa. Violent kleptocracies dominate the political landscape of this region, leading to protracted conflicts marked by the commission of mass atrocities by state and non-state actors. Enough’s Political Economy of African Wars series will focus on the key players in these conflicts, their motivations, how they benefit from the evolving war economies, and what policies might be most effective in changing the calculations of those orchestrating the violence—including both incentives and pressures for peace.



COVER PHOTO: Seleka fighters at a checkpoint on the road out of Bossangoa, Central African Republic. November 4, 2013. They regularly rob local residents who have to cross the checkpoint on their return into town after searching for food in the countryside. Photo and description by Marcus Bleasdale

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Executive Summary

The two main armed groups in the Central African Republic (CAR)—the ex-Séléka¹ and the Anti-Balaka, along with their multiple factions—make millions of dollars in profits from illicit activities, which support their operations and create wealth for ruthless warlords and business owners.² Killings, extortion, and other forms of violence are used to control areas with gold and diamonds throughout CAR, and the groups are deeply involved in this high-value trade in several ways. The two groups also generate income through illicit taxes and “protection money” from civilians, road travelers, businesses, local organizations, and state institutions.³

Ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups profit from a large illicit minerals trade. They do this directly by the mining and theft of diamonds and gold that they then sell to middlemen. They also profit indirectly by looting, extortion, and predatory taxation of miners and traders.⁴ Research presented in this report estimates the total current value of the illicit diamond trade and taxation by armed groups in CAR to be between \$3.87 and \$5.8 million dollars annually,⁵ a sufficient amount in CAR to fund widespread military

operations. The majority of the diamonds and the gold are smuggled out of CAR to neighboring countries—mainly Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and Sudan—and then on to international markets; a lesser amount is sold on the local market within CAR.⁶

Some of the diamonds sold locally are purchased by three Central African diamond buying houses that currently have a total stock of diamonds worth close to \$8 million.⁷ This domestic diamond trade is not prohibited by the Kimberley Process (KP) suspension of CAR's membership and the decision by KP members to refrain from sending or receiving diamond shipments from CAR that has been in effect since May 2013 and only restricts exports of rough Central African diamonds.⁸ Deliberations are, however, underway concerning the possibility of a partial lifting of the KP restrictions.⁹ There are concerns that the combination of an inadequate diamond tracing system in CAR and control by armed groups of diamond mines¹⁰ could result in conflict diamonds, which have provided financing for armed groups, entering the KP-approved diamond trade. To counter this danger, any lifting of CAR's KP diamond restrictions should be conditioned on the removal of all armed groups from mining sites, full control of diamond trading markets by U.N. peacekeepers or local gendarmes, and a credible tracing and due diligence system for diamonds bought and sold by Central African diamond companies, including those for export.

In addition to natural resource exploitation, ex-Séléka factions in particular have set up efficient tax collection practices. Conservative assessments estimate that different factions within the group collect \$1.5 to \$2 million annually from illicit road taxation throughout the areas they control in central and eastern CAR.¹¹ They gain an additional estimated \$210,000 to \$420,000 in taxation of cattle traders and \$200,000 to \$240,000 from taxation of coffee traders.¹² Meanwhile, Anti-Balaka groups that roam western CAR collect illicit road taxes, extort money from rural villages, and demand sums that range from \$600 to \$1,000 as a one-time payment for "protection."¹³ Additional research is needed to estimate the total annual profits collected by Anti-Balaka groups through road taxation, looting, and other abusive activities.

Armed groups in CAR have turned into profit-making entities through illicit sale of natural resources, taxation, extortion and the strategic use of killings and violence. The majority of these illicit funds go directly to boost the personal wealth of the senior commanders and their trade partners, while most lower-level soldiers have one daily meal or receive meager payments.¹⁴ Bringing an end to the crisis in CAR requires preventive strategies that seek to disrupt the sources of finance, combined with punitive measures and sanctions that target individual commanders and the companies and other actors that facilitate the trade.

Recommendations

The Enough Project recommends the following policies and strategies to help cut financing for armed groups in CAR:

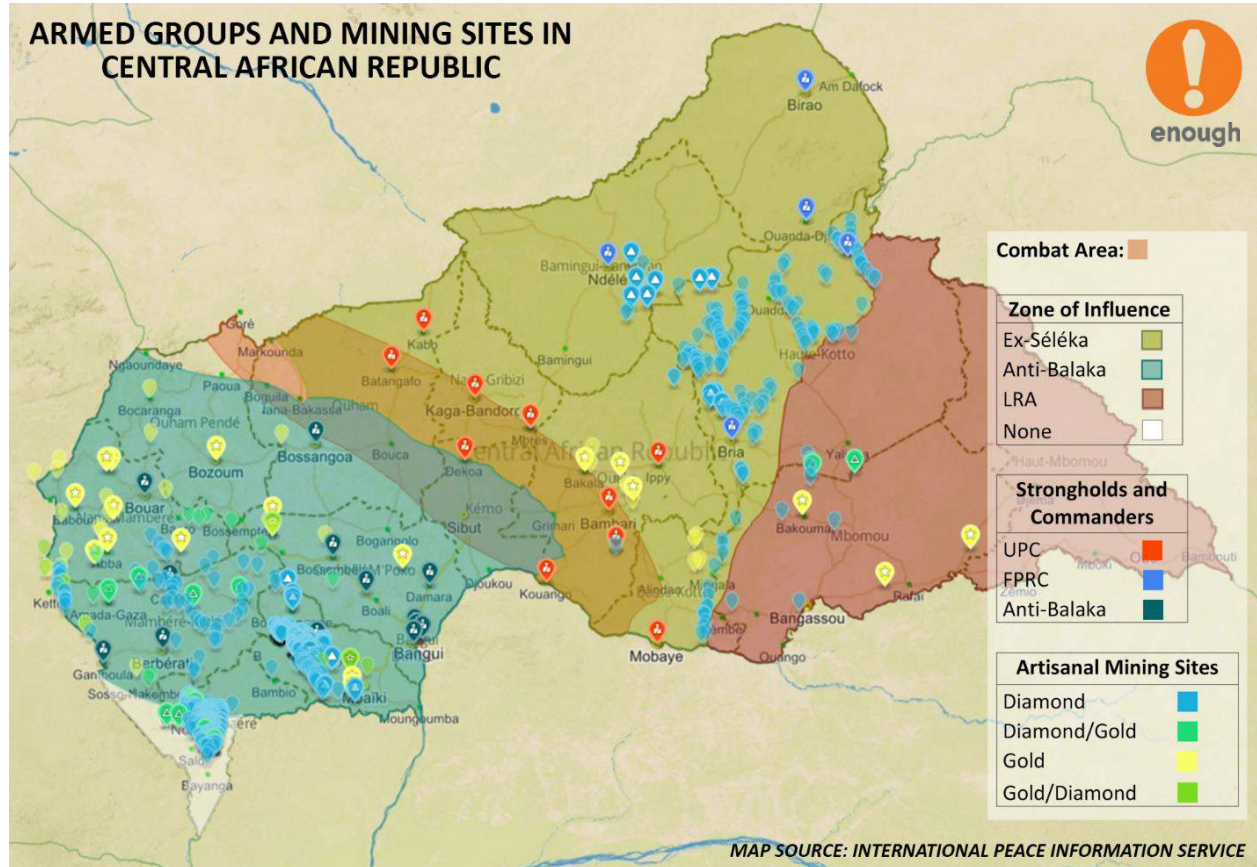
1. Expand targeted sanctions on the networks of actors that trade with and provide finance for armed groups in CAR. The United Nations and the United States should expand targeted sanctions on those individuals, companies, institutions, and other actors that participate in the illicit natural resource trade and carry out other activities that provide finance for armed groups in CAR. Particular efforts should be made to craft a systemic strategy that targets the entire network of atrocity financing in CAR over the less effective one-off sanctions on individual commanders of the armed groups or individual companies.

2. Increase support for the new Special Criminal Court in CAR. Ambassador Stephen Rapp, Ambassador Samantha Power, Special Envoy Stuart Symington and Bill Brownfield from the U.S. Department of State's Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement Affairs (INL) should support CAR's new Special Criminal Court (SCC) to bring an end to impunity for atrocity crimes in CAR. INL and European donors—particularly France, Belgium, and the European Union—should contribute financial and expert support to the SCC in this critical stage of development. Power, Rapp, and Symington should encourage Francophone African countries to send judges and prosecutors to serve in international roles. The SCC's investigators and prosecutors should have a dedicated strategy for investigating and prosecuting the pillage of natural resources, especially diamonds, alongside investigations of atrocity crimes.

3. Establish government control of gold and diamond mining sites. Central African gendarmes and peacekeeping troops from the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) should deploy robust missions to expand government control of mining areas and regional towns occupied by armed groups. Doing so would play an important role in countering parallel taxation and help to protect civilians from crimes like forced labor and rape in mining areas and the pillaging and trafficking of diamonds and gold that provide profit for armed groups.

4. Condition the lifting of Kimberley Process restrictions on CAR diamond exports on three commitments. The Kimberley Process should, before lifting restrictions, ensure three conditions are met that can safeguard against conflict diamonds entering the Kimberley Process. The U.S. and E.U. should provide support to enable CAR to establish the safeguards. First, the U.S. Geological Survey or similar agency should help establish baseline production statistics for the conflict-free diamond mines. Second, the Kimberley Process should establish a multi-stakeholder team to be based in CAR and monitor whether conflict diamonds are entering the conflict-free supply chain. Third, diamond companies buying from CAR or neighboring countries should commit to conducting strict due diligence on their purchases.

5. Counter parallel taxation and highway extortion by armed groups. Central African gendarmes and MINUSCA troops should increase individual and joint patrols and deployments to secure border crossings, in particular those with Cameroon, the DRC, the Republic of Congo and Sudan, where the majority of illicit smuggling takes place. Gendarmes and troops should also take control of key transportation roads and regional towns in order to counteract parallel taxation and extortion by armed ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka groups that defy state authority and enrich senior commanders.



Introduction: The Security and Political Landscape in CAR

The security situation in CAR has largely improved in the capital Bangui and in the western part of the country, with an overall reduction in killings and attacks compared to mid-2014.¹⁵ However, central and northern CAR near the border with Chad and Sudan are largely controlled by ex-Séléka factions and remain volatile.¹⁶ The country is under de-facto partition with the Anti-Balaka in the west and the ex-Séléka in the east and the north—with a frontline running through the central part of the country. Armed groups continue to attack and pillage communities and natural resources throughout the country, often with complete impunity.¹⁷ More than 426,000 people are internally displaced and at least 460,500 have fled CAR because of persistent violence.¹⁸ More than 5,000 people have been killed since the March 2013 military coup by the Séléka alliance,¹⁹ and 2.7 million people—more than half of the population—need humanitarian aid.²⁰

Despite persistent insecurity and 50,000 newly displaced people since January 2015,²¹ the European Union (EU) withdrew 750 peace support soldiers from CAR in March²² and France, the most powerful military force in the country with roughly 2,000 well-equipped soldiers, has announced it will gradually reduce its forces to 500 throughout 2015, because of “increased stability.”²³ The U.N. peacekeeping mission,

MINUSCA, with 8,305 soldiers—of a total troop level at 10,705—is also deployed to CAR,²⁴ and it is mainly charged with providing civilian protection and support for the transitional process.²⁵ Meanwhile, the humanitarian support for CAR is suffering from a massive economic shortfall, as the U.N. has only secured 24 percent of the funding it needs for the 2015 Humanitarian Response Plan, and it urgently requires \$467 million to meet dire needs across the country.²⁶ International diplomats, aid workers, and civil society leaders in CAR privately express deep frustration with the continued insecurity and lack of funding. One aid worker explained,

“We are not getting the right resources and capabilities to solve the core issues and protect civilians, when everyone just wants to say that CAR is stable and move on to the next crisis.” – Aid worker, Bangui²⁷

While the majority of the international community is seeking to fast-track elections and bring a speedy end to the transition,²⁸ the armed groups are also making efforts to strengthen their positions. These groups, which have formed alliances and rivalries and seen their influence rise and fall, have growing interests in the outcome of upcoming elections and possible power-sharing arrangements. Armed groups are using violence and kidnapping as political tools to gain influence and to remain part of the CAR political landscape.²⁹ Different Anti-Balaka groups were responsible for a string of short-term kidnappings of aid



Court hall in Kaga Bandoro looted and vandalized by Séléka forces when they captured the town in December 2013. Photo credit: Kasper Agger, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.

workers in Bangui and surrounding areas during January 2015, including the abduction of the Minister for Youth and Sports, Armel Ningatoloum Sayo, while he was traveling home from church one Sunday morning.³⁰ During the same period, members of the ex-Séléka in northern and central CAR obstructed local dialogues and kidnapped officials from Bangui who came to organize community dialogues as part of the nationwide “consultations à la base” leading to the Bangui Forum.³¹ Local dialogues eventually took place in ex-Séléka-controlled areas in March,³² but only after U.N. peacekeepers and French soldiers attacked ex-Séléka positions in Bria, a strategic mining town in central eastern CAR where ex-Séléka fighters had seized administrative control and occupied government buildings.³³ The kidnappings and generally heightened insecurity led to a period in

January and February of lockdown in Bangui and across the country. International aid workers were evacuated from the provinces, their movements on the major roads through the country were restricted, and several nongovernmental organizations pushed their curfews back from 10 p.m. to 6 p.m.³⁴ Aid workers and international observers told the Enough Project,

“The armed groups are still very much in control across the country. They can easily create chaos when they want to.” – Humanitarian coordinator, Bangui³⁵

CAR’s political transition is at a critical stage. The outcome of the May 4-11 Bangui Forum, which reached agreement on a disarmament process and strong support of a national justice process, carries both hope and risk.³⁶ There is hope because many different stakeholders had the opportunity to voice their opinions

and agree on a new future for CAR, but there is also great risk that agreements made will never be realized and that leaders of the 10 armed groups that signed the agreement do not have sufficient command and control to end the fighting and take part in the DDR process. Despite optimism following the Forum, there has been a growing discontent and hopelessness among civil society leaders, political representatives, and members of the armed groups who have been through national reconciliation and political peace processes several times during the past decade without seeing much change on the ground.³⁷ There have been multiple national meetings in Bangui with promises of a better future, but when it comes to real change and development, very little is happening. The real test for the Bangui Forum and the political transition is the implementation of agreements made on the ground, particularly in rural areas that remain disconnected from economic development and political inclusion. The population in CAR must experience a dividend from this latest peace process. Otherwise armed groups will dominate the security and political agendas, and headlines from CAR will continue to reflect sad reports of insecurity and human suffering.

Ex-Séléka: Command Structure and Sources of Finance

The Séléka alliance that captured Bangui and ousted President François Bozizé in a military coup on March 23, 2013 has undergone several changes since that time.³⁸ Séléka was formally dissolved on September 13, 2013 by Michel Djotodia, president of CAR and leader of Séléka at the time.³⁹ The alliance has since splintered into several groups with two main factions. Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique (FPRC) was established in July 2014,⁴⁰ and Unité pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC), which broke away from FPRC in September 2014, was established as its own entity in October 2014.⁴¹ Members of the ex-Séléka use terrible violence, conscript child soldiers, and are responsible for sexual abuse, which terrorize populations across CAR,⁴² and control profitable mining areas, imposing illicit taxes that provide finance for the group.⁴³

The traditional stronghold for FPRC is the town of Birao extending through Vakaga, Bamingui-Bangoran and Haute-Kotto prefectures in northeastern CAR. The group seeks to control regional towns in the central part of CAR and the surrounding areas of Bambari, N'délé, Sam Ouandja, and Bria which are regional trade hubs or rich with gold and diamonds.⁴⁴ The FPRC, led by Michel Djotodia and Nourredine Adam, has argued in favor of partitioning CAR⁴⁵ and denounced the outcome of the Bangui Forum.⁴⁶ Both men are under sanctions,⁴⁷ including asset freezes and travel bans because of their responsibility for acts of violence (including killings, summary executions, and torture) and threats to CAR's peace, security, and stability.⁴⁸ Nourredine travelled from CAR to Kenya during early 2015, despite sanctions, to take part in peace negotiations with Anti-Balaka leaders organized by Congolese President Denis Sassou-Nguesso.⁴⁹ Such clear violations of the travel ban on the request of the mediator are counterproductive and undermine the sanctions regime. Sources close to Nourredine told the Enough Project, "*Nourredine believes that the sanctions are symbolic and that they will not touch him.*"⁵⁰ Further efforts are needed to ensure the sanctions have impact; those who do not enforce the sanctions should also face consequences.

Though opposed to partitioning the country and led by individuals who are not currently facing sanctions, the UPC is also responsible for killings of civilians, attacks, and widespread pillage.⁵¹ The group is led primarily by Ali Darrassa and Mahamat Alkhatim with strongholds in Kabo, Kaga Bandoro, and Bambari in central CAR, where the group profits from taxation of cattle, coffee, and the Ndassima gold mine outside Bambari.⁵² The UPC in particular has created alliances with some groups of Peul cattle herders, and the

two groups operate alongside one another and on occasion conduct joint raids and attacks.⁵³ Relations are not one-sided, however, and some Peul herders also say that they have been attacked and looted by UPC fighters.⁵⁴ According to a member of ex-Séléka who is not affiliated with either of the factions, the UPC was created to “*divide the Séléka as a strategy to diminish the influence of Djotodia and Nourredine.*”⁵⁵

Relations between the two factions and the top commanders formerly united under Séléka are fluid and opportunistic. Commanders cross from one faction to the other and engage in violent infighting at certain times, often as a result of competition over leadership or control of natural resources and roads that allow for taxation of traders and travelers.⁵⁶ Each commander controls approximately 150 to 250 core soldiers.⁵⁷ This number can increase or decrease depending on the needs of the commander, as it is relatively easy to hire youth across CAR and along the border region with Chad and Sudan who are willing to join armed groups.⁵⁸ The total number of top commanders within the ex-Séléka is approximately 10 to 15, and these commanders oversee a total force of 1,500 to 3,750 soldiers.⁵⁹

Members of the FPRC and the UPC are involved with a range of illicit and often violent activities that generate income and resources to finance their operations and create profit for individual commanders.⁶⁰ These activities include:

- Direct trade in gold and diamonds
- Taxation of gold and diamond traders
- Taxation of road travelers
- Taxation of coffee, cattle, and other agricultural products
- Settling of disputes and issuing monetary fines against the feuding parties
- Pillage and extortion of civilians, local administrators, organizations, companies and others

Ex-Séléka trade with gold and diamonds and taxation of gold and diamond traders

Armed groups and powerful commanders that united under Séléka in 2012 have been involved with the diamond trade in northern and eastern CAR for more than a decade.⁶¹ Influential commanders in the FPRC, including Zakaria Damane and Oumar Younousse, also known as Oumar Sodiam, after the Central African diamond company Sodiam, are well known in CAR and the national diamond industry for their direct involvement with diamond trade in areas around Bria, Nzako, and Sam Ouandja.⁶² FPRC members mainly profit from the diamond trade in two ways, either by employing diggers—at times under force—to find diamonds directly, which they then sell to diamond collectors, or indirectly by taxing diamond miners, traders, and company employees.⁶³ Enough interviewed one diamond *patron*⁶⁴ who had been dealing in diamonds for more than six years and had employed between 70 and 100 miners along a river northeast of Bria until February 2015, where he had to flee the area because of threats on his life from FPRC commanders. The diamond *patron* told the Enough Project,

“Members from Séléka [FPRC faction] used to control the road from Bria to Nzako and some of the areas up to Sam Ouandja. You need their permission to travel on the road and to work with diamonds. If you don’t work with them, they will send people to kill you. You need to show them all the diamonds you get, and then they collect their tax.” – Diamond patron, Bambari⁶⁵

The diamond *patron* told Enough that members of the FPRC would monitor his operations closely by conducting regular visits to his diamond site; they would arrest his miners at times and often had people posted around his area along the river to monitor the flow of people and diamonds. The *patron* estimated



Diamond trader hold an illegal diamond sold without any official papers and collected for smuggling out of CAR. Photo credit: Toby Woodbridge, Bangui, February 2015.

that he would earn up to 100 million Central African CFA francs (\$200,000) during a typical dry season from November to June⁶⁶ and that he paid roughly 4-5 million CFA (\$8,000 – \$10,000) in taxes to FPRC members.⁶⁷ The actual tax collected often depended on the quality of the diamonds, which members or allies of FPRC would assess and then collect the appropriate tax. Once the tax had been paid, FPRC actors would usually leave him alone, and he was free to sell the diamonds to middlemen. During the past two years, he mainly sold the diamonds to buyers from the two Central African buying houses—Bureau d’achat de diamant de Centrafrique (Badica) and Société centrafricaine de diamants (Sodiam)—and occasionally to independent buyers.⁶⁸ He further estimated that at least 100 diamond *patrons* with diamond operations of similar size are currently based throughout the diamond areas surrounding Bria.⁶⁹ Several attempts were made by the author to meet with senior representatives from Badica and Sodiam in Bangui to discuss their involvement with the diamond trade. Representatives were not, however, willing to meet with the author, but they have provided other public interviews in which they denied diamond smuggling or support to ex-Séléka rebels.⁷⁰ Badica representatives have dismissed and denied ties to ex-Séléka members when contacted by the U.N. Panel of Experts in 2014.⁷¹ Sodiam representatives contacted by the U.N. Experts in 2014 described a policy of excluding purchases from military and armed actors, but noted the suppliers excluded by Sodiam could sell to traffickers outside CAR. U.N. Experts said in their October 2014 report that they believe “that Sodiam’s purchases have incidentally financed anti-balaka members, but that the risk of such financing is now being mitigated by the company with the implementation of due diligence procedures.”⁷²

Whereas the FPRC profits from control of diamond areas, the UPC has taken control of gold mines in Ouaka prefecture north of Bambari, according to gold traders in the area.⁷³ The exploitation of the Ndassima gold mine in particular has been well documented.⁷⁴ The U.N. Panel of Experts on CAR estimates that “former Séléka forces collect approximately \$150,000 in taxes per year from local gold production [from the Ndassima mine], which is estimated at 180 kg per year.”⁷⁵ Local gold traders in Bambari interviewed by the Enough Project said that members of the UPC under the command of



Some of the diamond stockpile held by the Central African diamond company Badica. Photo credit: Toby Woodbridge, Bangui, February 2015.

Ali Darrassa control the Ndassima gold mine and that the soldiers would “steal the gold from the diggers or force the diggers to work for very little money.”⁷⁶ Some gold would be sold to local buyers or go directly to the senior commanders of UPC, who would likely sell the gold at a later stage, either locally in CAR or

across the border in South Darfur, Chad, or elsewhere internationally.⁷⁷ Despite the deployment of U.N. peacekeepers to Bambari since September 2014, the gold trade continues and Congolese peacekeepers in the area say that they do not have orders to deploy to the mining areas, though they recognize that it would be good to push UPC out of the mines and to curb some of the income of the armed actors.⁷⁸ Protection of mining sites was not directly mentioned in the original mandate for MINUSCA.⁷⁹ MINUSCA’s extended mandate, however, effective since May 2015, includes authorization “To support the CAR authorities to develop a nationally-owned strategy to tackle the illicit exploitation and trafficking networks of natural resources which continue to fund and supply armed groups in the CAR” with the aim to extend state authority over the territory and resources.⁸⁰ The extended mandate further includes reference to MINUSCA providing transportation to support state authorities in “carrying out inspections and monitoring visits in key mining areas and sites.”⁸¹ Deployment of U.N. peacekeepers to mining sites could play an important role in helping to limit significant funding sources for armed groups across CAR.

Ex-Séléka taxation of road travelers

Both the UPC and the FPRC are also engaged with a range of illicit taxation activities, along with the pillage of personal property, attacks, and extortion, besides engaging in the gold and diamond trade. Both groups control multiple road barriers on the main roads leading south toward Bangui or north toward Sudan. The number of roadblocks varies, and the tax collected from road travelers also varies depending on the amount of cargo and the mood among the people managing the roadblocks.⁸²

The de-facto partitioning of CAR has turned regional capitals, like Bria, Bambari, and Kaga Bandoro—relatively close to the frontline—into regional trade hubs that benefit ex-Séléka groups in particular, because they largely control these areas.⁸³ Sudanese-registered trucks and Sudanese traders supply these hubs with non-perishable products like sugar, salt, soda water, flour, and soap. The products have been transported from Port Sudan through Khartoum to Nyala in South Darfur, where they cross into CAR.⁸⁴ Trucks from Bangui in turn deliver humanitarian aid and supplies to these regional capitals for nongovernmental organizations that operate in the area. These trucks bringing humanitarian aid to the central and eastern parts of CAR then often return to Bangui loaded with cattle and Sudanese products.⁸⁵ Both FPRC and UPC members profit greatly from this regional trade network. The FPRC controls roadblocks north of Bria, Bambari, and out of N’délé and Birao towards the Sudan border, and it controls the Sudan border crossing at Am-Dafok.⁸⁶



The total amount of revenue that the FPRC and the UPC collect through taxation of the regional trade is difficult to assess. Conservative estimates for the value of road taxes collected during the seven-month dry season (November to June), when road travel is possible, are the following:

- UPC: Taxation of road travelers going north from Kaga Bandoro: \$150,000 – \$200,000⁸⁷
- FPRC: Taxation of road travelers going north from Bambari: \$150,000 – \$200,000⁸⁸
- FPRC Taxation of road travelers going north from N'délé: \$150,000 – \$200,000⁸⁹

U.N. officials in CAR estimate that members of the ex-Séléka profit in the range of \$1.5 to \$2 million dollars in total annually, from all road taxation in the areas under their control.⁹⁰ The FPRC seems to take the largest share of road taxation and also controls a larger area than the UPC, but the actual amount collected by each group has not been established.⁹¹

Ex-Séléka administrative taxation within towns and looting and extortion

Within the areas they control, members of the ex-Séléka groups kill, threaten, and use other forms of violence to claim taxes from civilians, businesses, and public institutions. They also loot money and other resources for their own benefit. The UPC in particular profits from taxation of cattle traders going south to Bangui from Kaga Bandoro—a major cattle market in the central region of CAR that trades cattle mainly from Chad and in lesser numbers from CAR and Sudan. The UPC also taxes Sudanese coffee traders who buy coffee from the regional coffee market in Bambari and take it to Sudan.⁹² Senior members of the UPC, including Ali Darrassa, would sign and stamp official documents “Laissez Passer” (let pass) issued to cattle and coffee traders upon payment of appropriate tax.⁹³ Traders would not be allowed to leave town without such documents.⁹⁴ One employee from la Commercialisation du Contrôle du Conditionnement des Produits Agricole (ORCCPA), the public institution that collects taxes from coffee traders across CAR and also has an office in Bambari, explained to the Enough Project,

“Members of UPC came to the office by the end of each day to collect the [tax] money for the day. One day when the payment was [too low] they sent soldiers to the home of the civil servants who worked in the office and threatened to blow up their house with the grenades that they were holding in their hands... The staff fled to Bangui overnight.”⁹⁵

Conservative estimates for the value of cattle and coffee taxes collected during the seven-month dry season are:

- UPC: Taxation of cattle from Kaga Bandoro to Bangui: \$210,000 – \$420,000⁹⁶
- UPC: Taxation of coffee traders going from Bambari to Sudan: \$200,000 – \$240,000⁹⁷

In February 2015, U.N. peacekeepers and French soldiers attacked ex-Séléka positions in Bria.⁹⁸ The attack was carried out as part of a broader effort to restore and reinstall state authority to rebel-controlled areas in the northeast, which have seen little presence by state actors since Séléka took power.⁹⁹ Following the attacks were threats of additional attacks from international forces, which subsequently caused the ex-Séléka fighters to vacate government buildings that they had occupied in Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, N'délé, and Birao.¹⁰⁰ This is a promising development and could make it difficult for the ex-Séléka to maintain the same level of organized tax collection. They must now reorganize their positions in new locations, and it is difficult for them to monitor the trade closely when they do not control the regional trade towns. Ex-Séléka factions, however, still control areas just outside the regional towns, where they collect taxes.

There are indications that they have also increased the number of roadblocks between some of the major towns, shifting the tax collection away from the center of town to instead extract taxes along the road.¹⁰¹ Some senior commanders moved further north towards their traditional stronghold following the February attack, fearing arrest by international forces. Midlevel commanders and their soldiers, however, remain deployed throughout central and eastern CAR,¹⁰² and there are recent indications that some ex-Séléka members have relocated since February from the Bria positions to nearby mining areas.¹⁰³

The money collected by ex-Séléka members rarely remains with the direct perpetrators of the extortion and theft; the majority is remitted to individual top ex-Séléka commanders. The commanders pay the soldiers under their control a small amount of money and ensure the soldiers have food and arms, but otherwise all income generated by each faction within ex-Séléka goes to the top commander.¹⁰⁴ Most commanders have appointed mid-level commanders, also called “ComZones” (“commander of the zone”), who are responsible for the soldiers within their area and for tax collection activities. Moreover, the tight control with funds is increasingly creating friction within the ex-Séléka. Low-ranking soldiers told the Enough Project that they only eat once a day.¹⁰⁵ They live in burned-out houses and often sleep on the ground.¹⁰⁶ Some said they wanted to leave ex-Séléka but feared Anti-Balaka attacks or retribution for their violence and looting from local communities.¹⁰⁷ They therefore choose to stay with ex-Séléka, despite not benefiting much directly, out of fear and because the only real alternative that they see to ex-Séléka is to become a refugee who relies on humanitarian aid and lives in a makeshift camp. Being with the ex-Séléka provides a sense of belonging and access to at least some food and means, through occasional looting raids, to support their survival in remote areas with few other income opportunities.¹⁰⁸ Speedy implementation of a well-resourced Disarmament Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) program that includes reconciliation between armed groups and community members can play a crucial role paving the way for fighters to lay down their arms peacefully and gradually transition into civilian life. Large-scale employment and income opportunities for community members and former members of armed groups should be at the center of such a DDR program.

Anti-Balaka: Command Structure and Sources of Finance

The Anti-Balaka groups started to form in the western part of CAR during the second half of 2013 as armed community-based self-defense groups to counter the Séléka forces. The Anti-Balaka committed cruel violence against Muslim communities across CAR, including particularly brutal attacks in which they killed and maimed victims and set fire to many homes, in part to avenge Séléka abuses.¹⁰⁹ The Anti-Balaka groups launched a coordinated assault on Bangui on December 5, 2013, which largely pushed Séléka out of the capital in the weeks that followed.¹¹⁰ This attack was mainly led by commanders from the residential guard of the national Central African army, FACA,¹¹¹ and violence was committed by hundreds of untrained civilians, farmers, youth, and some child soldiers who had taken up arms against Séléka because of the group’s extensive killings, looting, and other abuses.¹¹² The 7human rights abuses against civilians, including killings and looting.¹¹³ Muslim communities and cattle herders in particular have been targeted by violent Anti-Balaka groups, and a U.N. Commission of Inquiry report released in December 2014 stated, “ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population by the anti-balaka constitutes a crime against humanity.”¹¹⁴ Thousands of Muslims remain trapped in enclaves across CAR and cannot leave these areas because of constant threats from violent Anti-Balaka groups.¹¹⁵ Although the overall level of violence in CAR has declined over the past 12 months, the security situation has not fully stabilized, and the risk of further escalation remains high unless leaders make progress on the political peace process, cut the sources of finance for the armed groups, and implement a strong DDR program.



SOURCES OF INCOME FOR ARMED GROUPS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

	ANTI-BALAKA	EX-SÉLÉKA
Looting and robbery of civilian property	\$\$\$	\$\$
Direct trade in gold and diamonds	\$	\$\$\$
Taxation of gold and diamond traders	\$	\$\$\$
Taxation of coffee and cattle traders	\$	\$\$
Taxation of road travelers	\$\$\$	\$\$
Cross-border trade and smuggling	\$\$	\$\$

Portion of group's total income (estimated):
\$\$\$ Major \$\$ Significant \$ Minor

Source: Enough research

Despite initial military success in pushing Séléka out of the capital and also away from the western part of CAR, the Anti-Balaka has struggled to form a united front, politically, militarily, and economically. Three clusters of armed groups identify with the Anti-Balaka or are associated with the group.¹¹⁶ One Anti-Balaka cluster is composed of self-defense groups, mainly young and middle-aged male farmers and civilians, who are usually well known by the people within the local area where

they operate. These groups can be mobilized easily, and their goal is simply to protect local communities against outside threats. They are generally armed with simple hunting rifles, knives, and machetes. Some of these groups enjoy popular support from local Christian populations who appreciate their protection, whereas other self-defense groups include borderline criminals who target both Christian and Muslim communities.¹¹⁷

A second Anti-Balaka cluster is composed of groups of purely criminals who masquerade as Anti-Balaka; these groups are called “fake” Anti-Balaka by some. These groups often include young, unemployed men who operate both within and outside their area of origin. They are armed with simple weapons and unite to pursue personal enrichment and status, but they do not have political goals separate from personal enrichment.¹¹⁸ A third Anti-Balaka cluster is composed of groups that are led by members of the national army—FACA—and in particular commanders from the presidential guard that remain closely associated with former president François Bozizé.¹¹⁹ These groups are relatively well coordinated. They are armed with both simple and automatic weapons, and some members have extensive military training and experience.¹²⁰ They are organized with roughly 20 ComZone leaders, each of whom commands an average group of between 50 and 150 members. They have strongholds around regional capitals in western CAR, including Boda, Berberati, Carnot, Bouar, Bossangoa, Damara, and Bosembelle.¹²¹

Some members of the Anti-Balaka claim that these groups are led by Bozizé, who communicates with loyal members within the presidential guard. Some believe that their unarticulated goal is to capture all of CAR and reinstate Bozizé.¹²² The Anti-Balaka groups that are primarily made up by FACA soldiers have continued to push east against the ex-Séléka. But as they get further away from Bangui and their strongholds in western CAR, they increasingly suffer from breakdowns in their supply lines.¹²³ Their ability to communicate across long distances is also limited.¹²⁴ The total number of Anti-Balaka groups and individual Anti-Balaka fighters is difficult to assess, but it could be between 100 and 150 groups, some connected loosely and others operating completely independently.¹²⁵ Reports estimate that the total size of the Anti-Balaka reached 7,300 by February 2015.¹²⁶

Different Central African leaders have sought to unify and lead the Anti-Balaka in an effort to boost their individual political ambitions. Most prominently, Patrice Edouard Ngaïssona emerged in 2013 as the national coordinator for Anti-Balaka based out of the Boy-Rabe district in Bangui. He used his political



Wounded ex-Séléka fighter recovering from injuries sustained during a recent fight with Anti-Balaka forces. By Kasper Agger, Kaga Bandoro, 2015

skills, association with Bozizé, and money to build a following. The international community looked to him as a rare interlocutor with the disorderly Anti-Balaka groups. A measure of international recognition strengthened his position for a short while, but during 2014, many realized that Ngaïssona is far from able to represent—much less lead and control—the myriad Anti-Balaka groups. Ngaïssona was not present at the negotiations in Nairobi, and Anti-Balaka groups have continuously sought distance from Ngaïssona since mid-2014. Ngaïssona has now formed his own political group: the Parti Centrafricain pour l’Unité et le Développement (PCUD).¹²⁷ Sébastien Wénézoui, a former “vice national coordinator” for the Anti-Balaka, likewise enjoyed short-term prominence as an interlocutor with the Anti-Balaka. Like Ngaïssona,

however, Wénézoui had little control over the group and ultimately formed his own political party as well: the Mouvance Patriotique pour l’Avenir (MPA).¹²⁸ Whereas leaders with explicit political ambitions have had limited success in controlling Anti-Balaka groups, military commanders and FACA members are emerging as stronger commanders of dispersed Anti-Balaka groups within the ComZone structure. Senior FACA commanders like Capt. Joachim Kokate, Lt. Maxime Mokom and Cpl. Alfred Yekatom from the presidential guard have used their military experience to take control of some Anti-Balaka groups.¹²⁹ Moreover, Capt. Kokate and Lt. Mokom both participated in the Nairobi negotiations between ex-Séléka and Anti-Balaka.¹³⁰

Anti-Balaka groups finance and equip their operations through different means:

- Looting of cattle and pillage of Muslim communities
- Alleged funds from outside sent by Bozizé
- Roadblocks outside Bangui and throughout western CAR
- Extortion and demands for “protection” money from rural villages
- Taxation of gold and diamond collectors
- Direct trade with gold and diamonds

Most Anti-Balaka groups, particularly the criminal and the self-defense groups, remain locally based, use their own weapons, rarely drive cars, and run low-cost operations. These Anti-Balaka groups do not need large amounts of funding or outside resources to sustain their activities. Most are able to obtain what they need through simple theft and roadside extortion. One international aid worker characterized these groups as “land pirates” saying,

“There is not a consolidated command structure in Anti-Balaka that someone can climb. This provides very little incentive to be the small guy or even the middle guy. So everyone wants to be the leader of his own small group and seek to dominate a small area for his personal benefit.” – International aid worker, Bangui¹³¹

Anti-Balaka looting of cattle herders and Muslim communities

Anti-Balaka groups earned income from cattle rustling and pillage of Muslim communities when they first took control of Bangui and western CAR.¹³² Violence against Muslim herders and livestock traders resulted in many cattle being taken out of CAR to Cameroon, Chad, and Sudan. Many Anti-Balaka groups also seized the cattle that remained, creating a short-term glut of cheap meat in the market and a long-term shortage of beef relative to the demand.¹³³ As Muslims fled CAR, the Anti-Balaka continued committing brutal violent attacks¹³⁴ and also started to look for other sources of finance and support.

Alleged Anti-Balaka funding from Bozizé

Some members of the Anti-Balaka and officers from FACA told the Enough Project that former president Bozizé also provides direct funding to support the Anti-Balaka groups that are associated with FACA.¹³⁵ Independent evidence of such support could not, however, be obtained by Enough, but senior U.N. officials also claimed that Bozizé did indeed provide monetary support for some Anti-Balaka groups.¹³⁶ Several people in CAR told the Enough Project that members of the Central African presidential guard received money from Bozizé during the initial formation of Anti-Balaka in mid-2013 and that Bozizé would send interlocutors or personally meet with allies in Douala and Yaoundé in Cameroon to hand over cash.¹³⁷ However, as Bozizé faced a travel ban and asset freeze with the U.N. and U.S. sanctions imposed in May 2014, and with his relocation to Entebbe in Uganda, it appears that his ability to provide direct finance to Anti-Balaka groups in CAR has been limited to some extent.¹³⁸ People close to the Anti-Balaka, however, claim that Bozizé has continued to send money to allies within the presidential guard.¹³⁹

Anti-Balaka roadblocks and extortion from villages

Anti-Balaka groups also manage roadblocks on the main road running north from Bangui through Damara and Sibut, and on the main roads running between the regional towns in the western part of CAR.¹⁴⁰ These groups are, however, increasingly limited to taxation of individual road travelers on motorbikes and in private vehicles, whereas the majority of the trucks on the busy highway between Bangui and Cameroon now travel in regular convoys protected by U.N. peacekeepers, which has made it difficult for Anti-Balaka groups to extort road taxes.¹⁴¹ The increased deployment of U.N. peacekeepers and the return of local administrators to regional capitals in western CAR have collectively made it difficult for Anti-Balaka groups to profit from taxation.¹⁴² Such positive outcomes should be considered in encouraging deployment of additional peacekeepers and local administrators to other areas that provide income and resources for armed groups, such as mining areas and major transport routes towards DRC and Sudan from Bangui. Unlike the Séléka, Anti-Balaka groups never had the capacity—or, at times, the intent—to take over local administration in their areas of control. The Anti-Balaka instead co-exist with local administrators in the major towns.¹⁴³ Humanitarian aid workers and local community leaders, however, report that Anti-Balaka groups continue to steal and extort “protection money” from rural villages. Such sums range from \$600 to \$1,000.¹⁴⁴ A community leader further explained to the Enough Project,

“Being Christian does not mean that the Anti-Balaka will not attack you. If you have something they want, they will come and take it from you. It’s basically a way of living for most of these groups. There are no other activities and no other ways for them to eat or make money.” – Community leader, Kaga Bandoro¹⁴⁵

Anti-Balaka direct trade and taxation of the gold and diamond trade

Muslim traders traditionally dominated the diamond trade in western CAR, but many were forced to flee the area when the Anti-Balaka took control during 2014 and violent attacks targeted many Muslims.¹⁴⁶ In addition to Muslim diamond traders, some Anti-Balaka members also traded gold and diamonds before the current crisis in CAR and have continued their involvement in the trade.¹⁴⁷ Some claim that allies close to Bozizé and his own family members have continued to profit from diamond mining around Berberati.¹⁴⁸ A civil servant that used to work within the diamond industry told the Enough Project,

“Anti-Balaka groups around Bossangoa are experienced diamond miners and traders that come from the same ethnic group as Bozizé’s clan, which had their hands in the diamond mining and trade when Bozizé was in power.” – Civil servant from the diamond industry, Bangui¹⁴⁹

Anti-Balaka groups involved in profiting from the trade in diamonds and gold are based around the diamond-rich areas of Boda, Carnot, and Berberati and the gold-rich areas of Bozoum, Mbaiki, and Niem, throughout western CAR. The U.N. Panel of Experts on CAR found that some Anti-Balaka commanders also operate as diamond collectors.¹⁵⁰ MINUSCA officers reported to the Enough Project that it is difficult for MINUSCA to access the diamond mines because of insecurity and limited resources. Extension of government control to mining areas has not been a priority for the mission thus far amid other urgent needs, but U.N officials are aware that members of Anti-Balaka are *“seeking to take over the diamond trade around Nola and Boda, but the extent of their involvement and the income made remains unclear.”*¹⁵¹

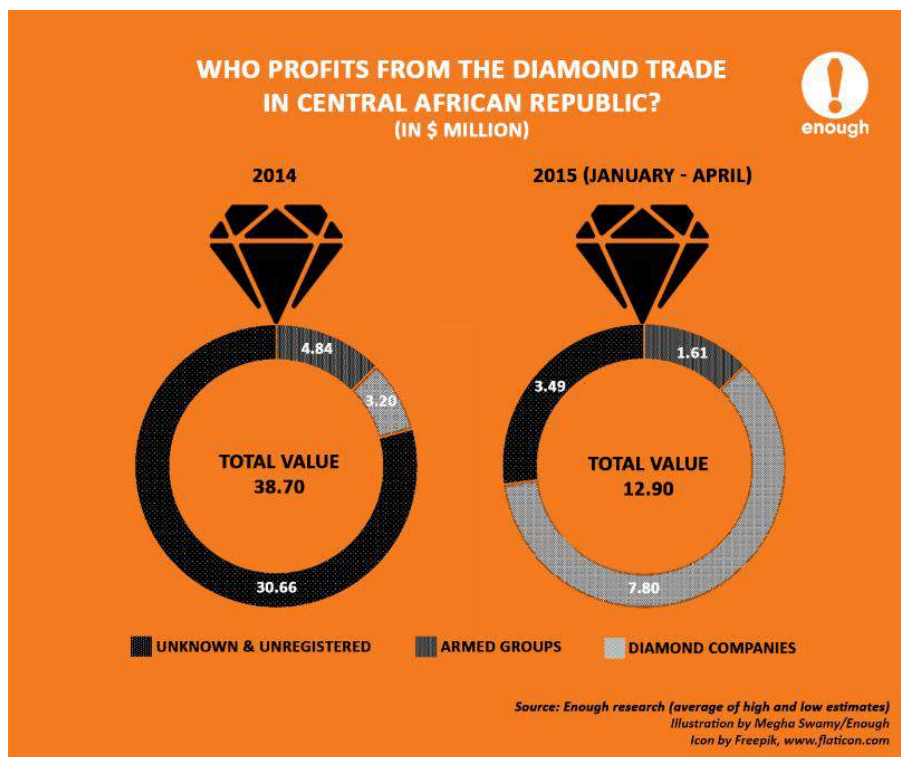
The fragmented and disorganized Anti-Balaka groups seem to struggle with the commercial and business activities needed to manage and profit significantly from the gold and diamond trade in western CAR.¹⁵² There is currently a severe shortage of skilled diamond collectors and appraisers in the wake of the earlier flight of Muslims, who made up the majority of diamond traders. Few people in the area have sufficient knowledge and experience to properly assess the value and price of the diamonds, a complicated process that requires years of experience or education.¹⁵³ Moreover, many of the current diamond collectors lack sufficient connections to bring the diamonds to market—either to local diamond buying houses within CAR or across the border to neighboring countries.¹⁵⁴

Anti-Balaka groups and leaders who seek to capture and control the market for diamonds and gold in western CAR, have not yet seized significant commercial opportunities and are limiting their involvement to less sophisticated means. International Peace Information Service (IPIS) researchers found that the Anti-Balaka groups do not pre-finance gold and diamond mines, *“even at sites where relatively small investments would yield large profits.”*¹⁵⁵ IPIS found that Anti-Balaka *“have focused more on the exploitation of gold than diamonds... because gold is often easier to extract (especially in the short-term) without investments, and easier to sell without a network.”*¹⁵⁶ IPIS findings align with those of Enough that indicate Anti-Balaka groups with fighters from Bangui, Bossangoa and Sibut specifically targeted Séléka positions around Bakala to take control of gold coming from the nearby Ndassima mine that is controlled by UPC fighters.¹⁵⁷

Status of the Diamond Trade in CAR and the Involvement of the Armed Groups

CAR's diamond trade

The diamond trade plays an important role in the national economy in CAR. Approximately one quarter of the population is directly or indirectly linked to the diamond industry.¹⁵⁸ Diamonds are the single largest source of export revenue for the country, with annual values for the diamonds that are officially produced and sold¹⁵⁹ in CAR that fluctuated between \$47.1 and \$62.1 million, averaging \$55.3 million, from 2004 to 2012, according to Kimberley Process rough diamond statistics.¹⁶⁰ The Central



African government levies a 12 percent export tax on diamonds.¹⁶¹ The official export of rough diamonds was, however, banned in May 2013 when the country was suspended¹⁶² from the Kimberley Process, an international certification scheme established in 2002 to prevent the international trade in conflict diamonds.¹⁶³ The diamond trade has continued within CAR despite the Kimberley Process restrictions, and armed groups are profiting from the diamond trade. Some diamonds are sold officially to diamond buying houses in CAR,¹⁶⁴ while other diamonds are smuggled across the borders to neighboring countries and eventually reach international diamond markets.¹⁶⁵ The Central African Ministry of Mines and diamond traders estimate that up to 30 to 40 percent of CAR's annual diamond production is currently smuggled out of the country,¹⁶⁶ and in 2014 the U.N. Panel of Experts estimated that a volume of diamonds worth \$24 million had been smuggled out of CAR since the Kimberley Process export ban.¹⁶⁷ Diamond collectors report that the majority of diamonds are smuggled through Cameroon and then on to international diamond markets. Some diamonds and a certain amount of gold passes through Sudan and the DRC before reaching international gold markets in Mumbai, Dubai, and other cities.¹⁶⁸

The Kimberley Process, however, only addresses the export of rough diamonds and does not prevent licensed companies within CAR from continuing to buy and stock diamonds, even when some of the diamonds could have provided funds for armed groups.¹⁶⁹ Documents from CAR's Bureau d'Évaluation et de Contrôle de Diamant et d'Or (Beccdor) indicate that Central African diamond companies currently hold 66,211 carats of diamond stock worth close to \$8 million.¹⁷⁰ This stock was purchased between May 2013 when the KP ban was instituted and April 2015—and companies are continuing to buy diamonds.¹⁷¹

The official total value of the diamonds purchased within CAR has dropped dramatically, as shown by the tables below, based on Becdor data. The value fell from \$62.1 million in 2012 to \$20.9 million in 2013 and further declined to just \$3.2 million in 2014 and then had risen to \$7.8 million as of April 2015.¹⁷² Diamond collectors report that the price per carat has dropped between 30 and 40 percent, and that there are currently far fewer active collectors on the market.¹⁷³ They also report that total diamond production has dropped roughly 30 percent since the ban took effect.¹⁷⁴ However, it should be noted that whereas production has gone down in some areas—particularly in the west—it has gone up in other areas, especially those in the northeast that are controlled by the ex-Séléka.¹⁷⁵ Armed groups continue to gain significant income from the diamond trade despite reduced prices and overall reduced national production. The Enough Project estimates the total value of the illicit diamond trade and taxation by armed groups to be between \$3.87 and \$5.8 million annually, which is 10 to 15 percent of the average estimated annual diamond production and sale value in CAR from the past years for which there is public official data.¹⁷⁶

Total annual value of diamond production per company¹⁷⁷

	BADICA	SODIAM	SUD AZUR	OTHER	Total value \$
2010	13,482,922.11	23,547,762.82		11,860,852.00	\$48,891,536.93
2011	17,586,244.47	24,694,848.84	2,027,978.72	16,584,563.67	\$60,893,635.71
2012	19,734,931.10	22,481,586.58	2,277,793.97	17,628,786.33	\$62,123,097.99
2013 (until July)	4,753,842.70	8,806,925.62	3,259,433.15	4,086,006.87	\$20,906,208.34
2014 (stock)	496,688.00	2,539,967.00	176,320.00	0.00	\$3,212,975.00
2015 (stock by April)	546,688.00	7,032,521.00	251,650.00	0.00	\$7,830,859.00

Diamond stock held by diamond buying companies in CAR as of April, 2015¹⁷⁸

	BADICA	SODIAM	SUD AZUR	Total
Carat weight	3,966.240	60,776.380	1,468.380	66,211.00
Price per carat CFA	68,918	57,856	85,690	59,136
Value in CFA	273,345,328	3,516,278,241	125,825,482	3,915,449,051
Value in \$	\$546,688	\$7,032,521	\$251,650	\$7,830,859

Kimberley Process engagement in CAR

The permanent secretariat to the Kimberley Process in CAR is currently working on a three-step plan that seeks to lift the KP ban from diamond mines in western CAR.¹⁷⁹ The plan includes: 1) re-deployment of mining administrators across western CAR, including Chef de Service Prefectural and the Gendarme de Mine, organized under the Unité Spécial Anti-Fraude (USAF); 2) establishment of diamond foot-printing to distinguish diamonds found in the west from those found in the east; 3) sensitization of local populations in diamond mining areas about the functions of the Kimberley Process.¹⁸⁰ The international Kimberley Process secretariat conducted a review mission to CAR in May 2015 to evaluate progress on the ground and the possibility of a partial lifting of the restrictions on trade for diamonds from western CAR.¹⁸¹ The final outcome is not yet public, but sources close to the mission tell the Enough Project that

the assessment is likely to recommend a partial lifting of the export ban from selected mines in western CAR.¹⁸² Those who support lifting the restrictions include influential French diplomats, senior employees in the Ministry of Mines, and the cash-strapped Central African transitional government, which sees the reinstatement of membership and lifting of restrictions as a sign of progress and an important means of government revenue.¹⁸³ Much-needed discussions about the need for reform of the sector to clean up the trade and strengthen the capacity of the ministry to implement the Kimberley Process requirements are, however, largely absent from the debate among the transitional government and senior mining officials in CAR.¹⁸⁴

The high stakes of removing the Kimberley Process suspension

While a lifting of the diamond ban would be economically advantageous for the transitional government, such a move should be considered with great care. Research presented in this report and by IPIS and the U.N. Panel of Experts on CAR clearly shows that armed groups are deeply involved with the industry and profit extensively from the diamond trade. Though Anti-Balaka groups have less control of diamond areas in the west than ex-Séléka groups have in the east, they are not absent from the trade. If the ban were to be lifted, the overall price per carat would likely increase, which would benefit ex-Séléka groups in eastern CAR and create incentives for Anti-Balaka groups to involve themselves further with the trade.¹⁸⁵ If the Central African government or U.N. peacekeepers do not fully control diamond mining sites and the areas between western and eastern CAR, diamonds can simply be transported from areas controlled by armed groups to areas where trade is permitted. Diamond foot-printing and tracing is not yet fully reliable in determining the exact mine where diamonds originated in CAR, according to several diamond experts interviewed by the Enough Project.¹⁸⁶ Members of the USAF interviewed by the Enough Project admitted that even before the arrival of Séléka, they were unable to prevent armed groups from involvement with the trade and illicit smuggling of diamonds. USAF's current capacity also does not allow it to guarantee a clean trade.¹⁸⁷

Conclusion

Multiple armed groups in CAR, including the ex-Séléka, the Anti-Balaka, and their different factions profit extensively from forceful taxation and illicit trade with gold and diamonds that are smuggled across international borders or sold to Central African diamond companies. Moreover, armed groups use violence, attacks, and threats to collect revenue from civilians, businesses, and public institutions and to conduct widespread looting. The majority of funds generated by the armed groups goes directly into the pockets of the senior leaders, leaving very little for lower-level soldiers and creating increased divisions and factions within the groups. U.N. peacekeepers and international partners like France, the European Union and the United States must take urgent and specific steps outlined in this report to disrupt the economy of the armed groups. The trade with gold and diamonds requires particular attention, and any lifting of Kimberley Process restrictions should be conditioned on full control of mining sites and main trading routes, combined with a comprehensive strategy to exclude conflict diamonds from diamond stocks held by Central African diamond companies in order to keep these diamonds from entering the formal trade once export restrictions are lifted.

Endnotes

¹ The Séléka group, an alliance of rebel leaders from the marginalized northeast region of CAR, first formed in late 2012. In March 2013, Séléka leader Michel Djotodia seized control of Bangui. He later officially disbanded the Séléka movement, which has since called itself the ex-Séléka. In many public sources the terms “Séléka” and “ex-Séléka” are used interchangeably to refer to this decentralized group which has fragmented several times since its formation. The Enough Project refers to the group as ex-Séléka because this is the official name used by members of the groups formerly united under Séléka. See also, Jeune Afrique, “Centrafrique: Michel Djotodia annonce la dissolution de la Séléka,” September 13, 2015, available at

<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20130913174824/-Centrafrique-S%C3%A9l%C3%A9ka-Michel-Djotodia-r%C3%A9bellion-centrafricaine-centrafrique-michel-djotodia-annonce-la-dissolution-de-la-s-l-ka.html>; Agence France-Presse, “CAR’s Djotodia dissolves Seleka rebel group,” France 24, September 14, 2013, available at <http://www.france24.com/en/20130913-central-african-republic-djotodia-dissolves-seleka-rebel-group>.

² The primary information for this report was gathered during one month of field research to the Central African Republic. The author visited Bangui, Kaga Bandoro, and Bambari, and conducted more than 60 interviews with stakeholders in the conflict.

³ Author interviews with U.N. officials, diamond traders, local aid workers, local journalists, local leaders, local traders, truck drivers, staff at la Commercialisation du Contrôle du Conditionnement des Produits Agricole (ORCCPA), Bangui, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015; U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Central African Republic: Situation Report No. 51 (as 1 April 2015),” available at <http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/OCHA%20CAR%20Situation%20Report%20No%2051.pdf>; Yannick Weyns, Lotte Hoex, Filip Hilgert, and Steven Spittaels, “Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic,” November 2014, available at <http://ipisresearch.be/wp-content/uploads/2014/11/IPIS-CAR-Conflict-Mapping-November-2014.pdf>; U.N. Security Council, “Final report of the Panel of Experts in accordance with paragraph 59(c) of resolution 2127 (2013),” S/2014/762, para. 31, Annex 5, October 29, 2014, available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/762.

⁴ Author interviews with U.N. officials, diamond traders, local aid workers, local journalists, local leaders, local traders, truck drivers, staff at la Commercialisation du Contrôle du Conditionnement des Produits Agricole (ORCCPA), Bangui, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015. See also Fiona Southward, Yannick Weyns, Lotte Hoex, and Filip Hilgert, “Diamonds in the Central African Republic,” pp. 7-10 (Antwerp: International Peace Information Service, December 2014), available at http://ipisresearch.be/wp-content/uploads/2014/12/20141222_Insight_diamonds1.pdf; Weyns, Hoex, Hilgert, and Spittaels, “Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic,” pp. 25, 28, 30-34, 56, 59-60; Global Witness, “Central African Republic Diamonds: not ready for sale,” November 11, 2014, available at <https://www.globalwitness.org/blog/central-african-republic-diamonds-not-ready-sale/>; U.N. Security Council, “Final report of the Panel of Experts in accordance with paragraph 59(c) of resolution 2127 (2013),” S/2014/762, paras. 123-127, 129-131, 137-138; 140-141; U.N. Security Council, “Interim report of the Panel of Experts in accordance with paragraph 59(c) of resolution 2127 (2013),” S/2014/452, para. 67, June 26, 2014, available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/452; Kimberley Process, “2013 Administrative Decision on Central African Republic,” May 23, 2013, available at <http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/2013-administrative-decision-central-african-republic-0>.

⁵ Kimberley Process statistics indicate CAR's overall annual diamond production value fluctuated between \$47.1 and \$62.1 million, averaging \$55.3 million, from 2004 to 2012. Diamond production in CAR has now declined by roughly 30 percent, putting the estimated value of the current total annual diamond production at approximately \$38.7 million. The Enough Project then estimates that armed groups take 10 to 15 percent of that total production value through illicit taxation and direct trade. This gives a spread of \$3.87 million as the lowest and \$5.8 million as the highest estimated value going to armed groups. The estimation that 10 to 15 percent is taken by armed groups is based on multiple interviews with diamond diggers, diamond collectors, and local and international diamond experts who have direct experience with the CAR diamond industry. For diamond production figures see Kimberley Process Rough Diamond Statistics, "Public Statistics Area," available at https://kimberleyprocessstatistics.org/public_statistics (last accessed June 2015).

⁶ Author interviews with diamond collectors, aid workers, and local journalists, Bangui, February 2015.

⁷ Numbers are provided by Bureau d'Évaluation et de Contrôle de Diamant et d'Or (Beccor).

⁸ Kimberley Process, "Administrative Decision on the Central African Republic [Temporary Suspension]," May 2013, available at <http://www.kimberleyprocess.com/en/2013-administrative-decision-car>.

⁹ Ilya Gridneff, "Embargo May Be Lifted on Gem Trade in Central African Republic," Bloomberg News, March 26, 2015, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-25/gem-trade-in-central-african-republic-may-have-suspension-lifted>.

¹⁰ Author interviews with senior civil servant, Beccor, Bangui, February 2015.

¹¹ Author interviews with U.N. officials.

¹² Author interviews with U.N. officials, local aid workers, local journalists, local leaders, local traders, truck drivers, staff at la Commercialisation du Contrôle du Conditionnement des Produits Agricole (ORCCPA), Bangui, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015. Estimation: 1 truck per day with 20 cattle, taxed at \$50 each = $(1 \times 20 \times 50) = \$1,000$ per day = \$30,000 per month = \$210,000 in total for the 7-month dry season when roads are passable for trade. The revenue doubles with the estimation of 2 trucks per day. The estimation of coffee tax is made by staff from ORCCPA who would hand over the daily tax directly to ex-Séléka members. Estimations are based on conversations with the above-cited people and with observations made by the author during eight days of research in Kaga Bandoro and Bambari.

¹³ Ibid.

¹⁴ Author interviews and camp visits with ex-Séléka ComZone commanders and soldiers, Bambari and Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.

¹⁵ Author interview with humanitarian coordinator, Bangui, February 2015; Nick Cumming-Bruce, "U.N. Issues New Warnings on Central African Republic," *The New York Times*, April 1, 2014, available at http://www.nytimes.com/2014/04/02/world/africa/united-nations-issues-new-warnings-on-central-african-republic.html?_r=0; Hubert-Mary Djamany, "U.N. chief says Central African Republic peacekeepers 'overwhelmed,'" Reuters, April 5, 2014, available at <http://uk.reuters.com/article/2014/04/05/uk-centralafrica-idUKBREA340J720140405>; Armed Conflict Location and Event Data project (ACLED), data available at <http://www.acleddata.com/> (last accessed June 2015).

¹⁶ Annette Maélaïne Malebingui, "La Minusca affirme avoir renforcée sa présence et ses opérations à l'ouest et au nord-ouest," Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l'Homme (RJDH), June 3, 2015, available at <http://www.rjdh-rca.net/actulites/actualite/centrafrique-la-minusca-affirme-avoir-renforcee-sa-presence-et-ses-operations-a-l-ouest-et-au-nord-ouest.html>; Daniel Nguereléssio, "Kaga-Bandoro: Les autorités réfléchissent sur la situation sécuritaire de la ville et de ses environnants," May 20, 2015, available at <http://www.rjdh-rca.net/actulites/actualite/centrafrique-kaga-bandoro-les-autorites-reflechissent-sur-la-situation-securitaire-de-la-ville-et-de-ses-environnants.html>; Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNet), "Situation sécuritaire toujours volatile surtout au centre et au centre nord du pays," May 2015, available at http://www.fews.net/sites/default/files/documents/reports/CAR_RMU_2015_5.pdf.

¹⁷ U.N. Security Council, "The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic: Final Report," S/2014/928, paras. 30-36, December 22, 2014, available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/928; Amnesty International, "Central African Republic: Impunity is fuelling violence," December 10, 2014, available at <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr19/011/2014/en/>.

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- ²⁰ U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, “Central African Republic: Situation Report No. 55.”
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³⁸ Sylvestre Krock, “Divisée, l'ex-rebellion Séléka sera ‘unie’ pour le dialogue national prévu en janvier,” Anadolu Agency, December 17, 2014, available at <http://www.aa.com.tr/fr/news/436669--divisee-lex-rebellion-seleka-sera-quot-unie-quot-pour-le-dialogue-national-centrafricain-prevu-en-janvier>; Weyns, Hoex, Hilgert, and Spittaels, “Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic,” pp. 13-19.

³⁹ Jeune Afrique, “Centrafrique: Michel Djotodia annonce la dissolution de la Séléka”; Agence France-Presse, “CAR’s Djotodia dissolves Seleka rebel group.”

⁴⁰ Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique, “Compte rendu de l’assemblée générale de FPRC Ex Séléka à Birao,” July 10, 2014, available at <https://centralafricanrepublicnews.wordpress.com/2014/07/18/centrafrique-compte-rendu-de-lassemblee-generale-de-fprc-ex-seleka-a-birao/>; Vianney Nbandi, “La Séléka se reconstitue en partie politique,” Centrafrique Libre, July 14, 2014, available at <http://www.centrafriquelibre.info/?p=12756>.

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⁴⁶ Naim-Kaélin Zamane, “Bangui: Le FPRC de Nourredine Adam dénonce l’Accord sur le DDRR,” Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l’Homme (RJDH), May 13, 2015, available at <http://www.rjdh-rca.net/actulites/actualite/centrafrique-bangui-le-fprc-de-nourredine-adam-denonce-l-accord-sur-le-ddrr.html>.

⁴⁷ Former president François Bozizé and FPRC leader Nourredine Adam are designated under U.N. sanctions. Bozizé and Nourredine, along with Michel Djotodia, Abdoulaye Miskine, and the late Levi Yakité are designated under U.S. sanctions. See U.N. Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, “Narrative summaries of reasons for listing [individuals],” available at http://www.un.org/sc/committees/2127/individuals_associated_with_CAR.shtml (last accessed June 2015); Executive Order no. 13,667, Code of Federal Regulations, title 3 (May 15, 2014), available at http://www.treasury.gov/resource-center/sanctions/Programs/Documents/car_eo.pdf.

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⁴⁹ Senior leaders from the Anti-Balaka and the ex-Séléka took part in Nairobi-hosted negotiations for several months. The negotiations were initiated by Congolese President Denis Sassou-Nguesso, and the two parties signed the “Declaration d’engagement de Nairobi” on April 9 (on file with the Enough Project). The agreement and the mediator came under strong international criticism, because the negotiations took place without the involvement of the transitional government and local civil society representatives. Africa Confidential, “The friendless mediator,” February 20, 2015, available by subscription at http://www.africa-confidential.com/article/id/6008/The_friendless_mediator; Vincent Duhem, “Tout savoir sur les négociations de Nairobi,” *Jeune Afrique*, April 15, 2015, available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/Article/ARTJAWEB20150415153008/fran-ois-boziz-uhuru-kenyatta-michel-djotodia-crise-centrafricaine-crise-centrafricaine-centrafrique-tout-savoir-sur-les-n-gociations-de-nairobi.html>. See also Al Jazeera and Reuters, “CAR rebel factions sign ceasefire agreement in Kenya,” April 9, 2015, available at <http://www.aljazeera.com/news/2015/04/car-rebels-ceasefire-agreement-150408171923689.html>; Ilya Gridneff and Jean-Louis Gondamoyen, “Central African Republic Peace Deal Meaningless, Groups Say,” Bloomberg News, April 9, 2015, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-04-09/central-african-republic-peace-deal-is-meaningless-groups-say>.

⁵⁰ Author interview with senior ex-Séléka commander, Bangui, February 2015.

⁵¹ Weyns, Hoex, Hilgert, and Spittaels, “Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic.”

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⁵³ Author interviews with local leader and eyewitness, Bambari, February 2015.

⁵⁴ Author interview with local Peul leader, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.

⁵⁵ Author interview with ex-Séléka member, Bangui, February 2015.

⁵⁶ Agence France-Presse, “Fighting between rival factions kills 17 in Central Africa,” August 26, 2014, available at <http://news.yahoo.com/fighting-between-rival-factions-kills-17-central-africa-131637264.html>; Thierry Messongo, “Les combats entre deux tendances de l’ex-Séléka paralysent la ville,” Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l’Homme (RJDH), August 26, 2014, available at <http://www.rjdh-rca.net/actulites/actualite/bambari-les-combats-entre-deux-tendances-de-l-ex-seleka-paralysent-la-ville.html>.

⁵⁷ Author interviews with senior ex-Séléka commander, aid workers who observed the ex-Séléka conference in Kaga Bandoro in September 2014. Author interviews conducted in Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.

⁵⁸ Author interviews with local civil society leaders, a youth leader, a Peul leader, a local imam, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.

⁵⁹ Confidential report, on file with author.

⁶⁰ Séléka groups established parallel administrations in the towns they occupied following the military coup in 2013, and they used force to demand a range of different taxes from local populations and businesses. The Séléka are also believed to have profited extensively during their official rule of capital Bangui with control of ministerial posts. Global Witness reports that a Central African lodging company, Société d’Exploitation Forestière Centrafricaine (SEFCA) paid €381,000 to the Séléka. See Global Witness, “Company accused of financing Central African war invited to EU logging conference,” March 17, 2015, available at <https://www.globalwitness.org/library/company-accused-financing-central-african-war-invited-eu-logging-conference>. The International Peace Information Service (IPIS) also found that several mining concessions were signed by Michel Djotodia, and they suspect that signing bonuses outside state regulations could have been paid. Weyns, Hoex, Hilgert, and Spittaels, “Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic,” pp. 30-33.

⁶¹ International Crisis Group, “Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic” (Brussels: December 2010), available at <http://www.crisisgroup.org/en/regions/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/167-dangerous-little-stones-diamonds-in-the-central-african-republic.aspx>; Southward, Weyns, Hoex, and Hilgert, “Diamonds in the Central African Republic,” p. 8.

⁶² International Crisis Group, “Dangerous Little Stones,” pp. 16-18; Southward, Weyns, Hoex, and Hilgert, “Diamonds in the Central African Republic,” pp. 7-8. Author interviews with diamond collectors, Bambari, Bangui, February 2015.

⁶³ Author interviews with diamond collectors, Bambari, Bangui; Weyns, Hoex, Hilgert, and Spittaels, “Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic,” p. 33; Southward, Weyns, Hoex, and Hilgert, “Diamonds in the Central African Republic.”

⁶⁴ A *patron* hires diggers to work at a mining site and then sells the diamonds to diamond collectors.

⁶⁵ Author interview with diamond *patron*, Bambari, February 2015; International Crisis Group, “Dangerous Little Stones.”

⁶⁶ Artisanal diamond mining can only take place during the dry season when the river is low, according to several diamond diggers and diamond collectors interviewed by the author for this report. For more on seasons and the farming and pastoral cycles in CAR see Famine Early Warning Systems Network (FEWSNet), “Central African Republic: Seasonal calendar, typical year,” December 2013, available at <http://www.fews.net/west-africa/central-african-republic> (last accessed June 2015).

⁶⁷ Author interview with diamond patron in Bambari.

⁶⁸ Ibid. This was confirmed by author interviews in February 2015 with several diamond collectors, diggers, and diamond *patrons* in Bambari and Bangui. They were also mainly selling their diamonds to Central African buying houses, Bureau d'achat de diamant de Centrafrique (Badica) and Société centrafricaine de diamants (Sodiam).

⁶⁹ Ibid.

⁷⁰ Ilya Gridneff, “Smugglers Defy Conflict-Diamonds Ban in Central African Republic,” Bloomberg News, March 23, 2015, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-22/smugglers-defy-conflict-diamonds-ban-in-central-african-republic>.

⁷¹ U.N. Security Council, “Final report of the Panel of Experts in accordance with paragraph 59(c) of resolution 2127 (2013),” S/2014/762, paras. 125-127.

⁷² U.N. Security Council, “Final report of the Panel of Experts in accordance with paragraph 59(c) of resolution 2127 (2013),” S/2014/762, para. 131.

⁷³ Author interviews with gold traders, Bambari, February 2015.

⁷⁴ Ilya Gridneff, “Blood Gold Flows Illegally From Central African Republic,” Bloomberg News, March 9, 2015, available at <http://www.bloomberg.com/news/articles/2015-03-08/blood-gold-exports-pour-illegally-from-central-african-republic>.

⁷⁵ U.N. Security Council, “Final report of the Panel of Experts in accordance with paragraph 59(c) of resolution 2127 (2013),” S/2014/762, p. 3.

⁷⁶ Author interviews with local gold traders, Bambari, February 2015; Global Center for the Responsibility to Protect, “Reinforcing the Responsibility to Protect in the Central African Republic,” March 9, 2015, available at <http://www.globalr2p.org/media/files/2015-march-car-brief.pdf>; U.N. Security Council, “Report of the Secretary-General on the situation in the Central African Republic,” S/2014/857, November 28, 2014, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2014/857.

⁷⁷ Author interviews with local gold traders, Bambari, February 2015.

⁷⁸ Author interview with MINUSCA soldier, Bambari, February 2015.

⁷⁹ U.N. Security Council, “Resolution 2149 (2014) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7153rd meeting, on 10 April 2014,” S/RES/2149, arts. 30-31, April 10, 2014, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2149%282014%29.

⁸⁰ U.N. Security Council, “Resolution 2217 (2015) Adopted by the Security Council at its 7434th meeting, on 28 April 2015,” S/RES/2217, art. 33c, April 28, 2015, available at http://www.un.org/en/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/RES/2217%282015%29.

⁸¹ Ibid., art. 34e.

⁸² Author interviews with local truck drivers, humanitarian workers, local leaders, U.N. officials, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro and Bangui, February 2015.

⁸³ Author interviews with humanitarian coordinator, aid workers, local journalists, Kaga Bandoro, Bambari, Bangui, February 2015.

⁸⁴ Author interviews with Sudanese truck drivers and traders, Kaga Bandoro, Bambari, February 2015.

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- ⁸⁵ Author observations and interviews with aid workers, local leaders, local journalist, Kaga Bandoro, Bambari, February 2015.
- ⁸⁶ Author interviews with U.N. officials, local aid workers, local journalists, local leaders, traders, truck drivers, Kaga Bandoro, Bambari, Bangui, February 2015.
- ⁸⁷ Ibid.
- ⁸⁸ Ibid.
- ⁸⁹ Ibid.
- ⁹⁰ Author interviews with U.N. officials, Bangui, February 2015.
- ⁹¹ Ibid. and author estimates.
- ⁹² Author interviews with la Commercialisation du Contrôle du Conditionnement des Produits Agricole (ORCCPA), Bangui, February 2015.
- ⁹³ U.N. Security Council, "Final report of the Panel of Experts in accordance with paragraph 59(c) of resolution 2127 (2013)," S/2014/762, Annex 43, p. 120.
- ⁹⁴ Author interviews with truck drivers, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.
- ⁹⁵ Author interviews with senior employees, la Commercialisation du Contrôle du Conditionnement des Produits Agricole (ORCCPA), Bangui, February 2015.
- ⁹⁶ Author interviews with U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) officer, aid workers, local leaders, truck drivers, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015. Estimation: 1 truck per day, with 20 cattle, each taxed at \$50 = (1x20x50) = \$1,000 per day = \$30,000 per month = \$210,000 in total for the 7-month dry season. The amount doubles with estimation of 2 trucks per day. Estimations are based on conversations with the above-cited people and with observations made by the author during five days of research in Kaga Bandoro.
- ⁹⁷ Author interviews with U.N. officials and employees with la Commercialisation du Contrôle du Conditionnement des Produits Agricole (ORCCPA), Bangui, February 2015.
- ⁹⁸ French Ministry of Defense, "Sangaris appuie la MINUSCA dans une opération à Bria," February 11, 2015, available at <http://www.defense.gouv.fr/operations/actualites/sangaris-appuie-la-minusca-dans-une-operation-a-bria>; U.N. News Centre, "Central African Republic: UN mission, French forces retake public spaces in Bria town," February 10, 2015, available at <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=50050#.VWxORM-qqkp>.
- ⁹⁹ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁰ Author Skype interviews with local aid workers in Kaga Bandoro and Bambari, April 2015; author Skype interview with humanitarian coordinator in Bangui, April 2015.
- ¹⁰¹ Japhet Béroféi "Des barrières illégales érigées par des présumés ex-Séléka," Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l'Homme (RJDH), April 2, 2015, available at <http://www.rjdh-rca.net/actulites/actualite/centrafrique-kabo-des-barrieres-illegales-erigees-par-des-presumes-ex-seleka.html>.
- ¹⁰² Author interviews with mid-level commanders and ex-Séléka soldiers, Bambari, Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.
- ¹⁰³ Narcisse Jaubert, "Bria: La présence des ex-Séléka sur les chantiers bloque les activités minières," Réseau des Journalistes pour les Droits de l'Homme (RJDH), May 21, 2015, available at <http://www.rjdh-rca.net/actulites/actualite/centrafrique-bria-la-presence-des-ex-seleka-sur-les-chantiers-bloque-les-activites-minieres.html>.
- ¹⁰⁴ Author camp visits and interviews with ex-Séléka ComZones and soldiers, Bambari and Kaga Bandoro, February 2015.
- ¹⁰⁵ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁶ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁷ Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁸ Ibid. The point here is not to generate sympathy for members of the ex-Séléka or make excuses for their actions but rather to understand the internal dynamics within the groups that make up the ex-Séléka.

¹⁰⁹ U.N. Security Council, “The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic: Final Report,” S/2014/928, paras. 280, 282, 292, 293-348, 354-442, 446-448, 463, 474-482, December 22, 2014; International Criminal Court Office of the Prosecutor, “Situation in the Central African Republic II: Article 53(1) Report,” paras. 117-126, 130-131, 188-215, 222; Peter Bouckaert, “Journey into fear,” in Human Rights Watch Magazine, pp. 25, 29-33, summer 2014; Amnesty International, Annual Report, “Central African Republic,” 2014/15; Human Rights Watch, “They came to kill,” December 19, 2013. Amnesty International, “Central African Republic: Impunity is fuelling violence.”

¹¹⁰ Weyns, Hoex, Hilgert, and Spittaels, “Mapping Conflict Motives: the Central African Republic,” p. 23.

¹¹¹ Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA). International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), “Central African Republic: They must all leave or die,” p. 8 (Paris: June 2014), available at https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/rapport_rca_2014-uk-04.pdf; U.N. Security Council Committee established pursuant to resolution 2127 (2013) concerning the Central African Republic, “Narrative summaries of reasons for listing: CFI: François Yangouvonda Bozizé,” May 9, 2014, available at <http://www.un.org/sc/committees/2127/CI.001.shtml>.

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¹¹⁸ Ibid.

¹¹⁹ Ibid.

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