



August 9, 2017

Honorable Rex Tillerson, Secretary of State

*Transmitted via electronic mail and facsimile*

Dear Secretary Tillerson:

As a coalition of nonprofit humanitarian, peacebuilding, faith-based and human rights organizations and individuals committed to advancing peace and pursuing stability, we are grateful for the engagement of the American people and their Government in helping alleviate suffering in the Central African Republic (CAR). American support during the early part of CAR's crisis saved lives, lessened suffering, upheld American values of democracy, supported human rights and prevented atrocities, culminating in relatively peaceful democratic elections last year.

Unfortunately, the momentum toward peace and stability created by the 2016 elections is quickly dissipating. Armed groups are consolidating control in large areas of the country and we are seeing levels of displacement and violence not experienced in several years. As humanitarian needs increase, Humanitarian access and funding to reach the most vulnerable are shrinking. Ethnic and sectarian tensions have spilled into violence and the risk of mass atrocities remains high. Without immediate action, the international community's and Central Africans' investments in their country could be lost.

The current situation is not yet hopeless. Amidst the crisis, Central Africans built a foundation for peace, establishing nearly a thousand peace committees in towns and villages across the country to stabilize their areas and uniting people of different backgrounds to strengthen their communities and prevent violence. Faith leaders articulated a clear vision of reconciliation and interfaith tolerance. Despite the hazards, thousands of Central African and international colleagues and youth work daily to provide relief, make peace, serve as peacekeepers, and support the transition to a brighter future.

The ultimate weight of preventing atrocities and ending cycles of violence will be borne by the Central African people. We write to ask you to deploy the resources at your disposal – diplomatic, political and financial – to halt the worsening situation and intensify support for CAR's efforts to reverse the regression and move towards recovery, breaking cycles of conflict. We ask that the U.S. play the strategic role that it has in the past, and work with its European, African and multilateral partners to:

1. **Reaffirm U.S. support for efforts to prevent and mitigate violence** by condemning human rights abuses and attacks on civilians, peacekeepers and humanitarian workers, supporting accountability measures including the Special Criminal Court, national and regional peace efforts, and efforts to counter trafficking, illicit arms flows, and pressuring those financially benefiting directly and indirectly from the conflict.

2. **Ensure that MINUSCA has sufficient capacity and resources to deliver on its mandate** to protect civilians amid the deteriorating situation, including by supporting requests from the United Nations for additional capacity to reinforce the mission, and to further ensure the UN mission is able to work in coordination with the CAR government and other actors to hand over capacity where appropriate.
3. **Ensure lifesaving assistance to the most vulnerable Central Africans** including adequate funding and access for humanitarian organizations, and support an eventual transition from emergency relief to building resiliency, and supporting development and recovery.
4. **Enable continued U.S. engagement with adequate staffing** by quickly nominating an Ambassador when the current appointment is concluded, ensuring adequate USAID personnel and engagement in the region, and ensuring that key sections of the State Department (including the Africa Bureau and the Bureau for Democracy, Human Rights and Labor) have the personnel and resources to sustain engagement.
5. **Work with other international partners** including the European Union, World Bank, and bilateral partners to ensure sustained and coordinated assistance following the 2016 Brussels Donors Conference.
6. **Prioritize support to sectors where the U.S. has a particular added value** including accountability and justice, Security Sector Reform, support to social cohesion, reconciliation and atrocities prevention, and with a particular focus on consolidating progress in areas affected by the end of U.S. and African Union military counter-LRA operations.
7. **Support the development of a natural resources sector conducive to growth and stability** by addressing the economy of war by countering illicit trafficking, strengthening technical assistance programs such as USAID's PRADD II programs and the Fish & Wildlife Service cooperation, and bolstering community-based stabilization around mining sites and farmer-herder issues.

The situation is at a pivotal point. Swift action now can prevent further deterioration. But deterioration will yield more civilian suffering and the destabilization of a country and a wider region. We count on U.S. action to trigger a wider international response and support the people of CAR in preventing additional violence and ultimately setting the country on the path to peace and prosperity.

Sincerely,

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| • 21 Wilberforce Initiative                  | • Invisible Children                   | • Search for Common Ground                                    |
| • Aegis Trust                                | • The International Rescue Committee   | • SEWA USA Central African Diaspora                           |
| • Better World Campaign                      | • Jewish Council for Public Affairs    | • STAND   |
| • CARE USA                                   | • Lutheran Partners in Global Ministry | --  |
| • Catholic Relief Services                   | • Mercy Corps                          | • Natalia Bowdoin <i>University of South Carolina Aiken</i>   |
| • Center for Civilians in Conflict           | • The Mentor Initiative                | • Rev. Elijah Brown, <i>North American Baptist Fellowship</i> |
| • Communities in Transition                  | • Norwegian Refugee Council USA        | • Ken Conca <i>American University</i>                        |
| • The Enough Project                         | • Peace Direct                         | • Steven Feldstein <i>Boise State University</i>              |
| • The Evangelical Lutheran Church in America | • Presbyterian Church USA              |   |
| • Friends Committee on National Legislation  | • Pax Christi International            |   |
| • Handicap International                     |  |   |

CC: Ambassador Nikki Haley  
 Ambassador Mark Green  
 General H.R. McMaster  
 Ambassador Jeff Hawkins

Senator Bob Corker  
 Senator Ben Cardin  
 Senator Jeff Flake  
 Senator Corey Booker

Honorable Ed Royce  
 Honorable Eliot Engel  
 Honorable Chris Smith  
 Honorable Karen Bass

