



## Supporting Security Services in the Central African Republic



**Quick interventions by the UN Peacebuilding Fund support police and gendarmerie as the country moves toward peace.**

The UN Peacebuilding Fund is sometimes called a rapid-response mechanism, a fund ready to quickly support programmes that aim at restoring the basic provision of security at a time of instability as fighting forces withdraw, development aid isn't yet ready and uncertainty over the future looms.

Far away from a potential crisis, in UN Headquarters in New York, the PBF maintains an agile framework that allows it to approve funding within a matter of days or even quicker.

Take the need for human rights observers in the Central African Republic. In December 2013, the UN Special Political Mission there needed more observers to prevent an escalation in human rights abuses. It turned to the PBF for urgent funding. In New York, the Fund approved the request within 24 hours. The Fund transferred \$900,000, extra observers were brought in and a deepening of the crisis was averted.

In this vein, the PBF stepped in repeatedly during the last years to help sustain a fragile peace in the Central African Republic. Decisions were made fast. Funding was channelled to have maximum impact.

When the General Assembly and the Security Council created the Fund, it was exactly to help fill that volatile vacuum between the end of violent conflict and the onset of a stable peaceful society.

With police and gendarmerie stations destroyed and looted during the 2013 crisis, the provision of security became extremely difficult for the transitional government. The Fund decided within 10 days to provide \$2.5 million to urgently rehabilitate and equip eight police and three gendarmerie stations, as well as pay for vehicles.

**"The police presence reassures me,"** said Gustave Djomo after the programme was implemented. He works near a police station. "I can peacefully make my tools now. There were several months I did not set foot outside. Today the police patrols allow me to move normally. My family and I have a bit more normal life now."

A larger crisis loomed later. Public servants, including police officers, had not been paid for a long time and resources to pay their salaries were limited. This risked fuelling an already fragile situation and the transitional government could lose its legitimacy vis-à-vis the population.

**"If police aren't on a proper payroll, the chances they will help to maintain law and order are very slim,"** said Aurélien Agbénonci, UNDP Resident Representative in the Central African Republic.

The PBF again acted fast and within three days from the request, decided to allocate \$4.6 million to CAR to pay for the salaries of 3,417 police and gendarmerie officers for five months. Due to the sensitive nature of police and gendarmerie services, the UN and World Bank agreed a division of labour with the Peacebuilding Fund taking responsibility for their funding and the World Bank paying civil service salaries for the same period of time.



The Bangui National Forum adopted the Republican Pact for Peace, National Reconciliation and Reconstruction. The PBF funded part of the preparations for the Forum.

Photo: UN Photo/Catianne Tijerina

The deployment helped to stop the violence and spurred follow-up projects that other groups quickly funded with \$15 million, underscoring how the Fund's involvement is often catalytic in terms of bringing in other, larger, donors.

Sustainable peace is impossible when a vacuum exists in government services and any semblance of law and order is missing. Over time, the Fund's involvement boosted basic security and increased human rights monitoring, both immediate needs while the country tried to get back on its feet after years of conflict that had killed and displaced thousands.

In March 2016, a new president took the oath of office, the first elected leader since the overthrow of the government three years earlier, initiating a new period, with the potential of establishing sustainable peace and development.

## ABOUT THE PBF IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The PBF has been supporting peacebuilding efforts in the CAR since 2008, financing a total amount of \$56 million. The fund coordinates its work with MINUSCA, UNDP, IOM and other entities. The activities were suspended in March 2013 following a coup d'etat. In December of the same year, the PBF re-engaged in an effort to support the transitional government.

Funded programmes include strengthening of human rights, voluntary relocation of former combatants and support in the area of reconciliation, including through the Bangui Forum and consultations held across the country in preparation for it.

Current support to CAR focuses on the extension of state authority, the reduction of community violence and support of local peace committees and networks of mediators.

## ABOUT THE UN PEACEBUILDING FUND

The Peacebuilding Fund has financed more than 400 projects in over 25 countries. Its funding provides United Nations and non-UN organizations with the tools to help sustain peace and prevent violent conflict. The PBF is risk-tolerant and innovative, can act quickly and works on behalf of the Secretary-General. Its funding often provides the impetus for others to follow suit.

