



## MAIN STORIES

Wagner

Complex Regional  
Relations

## HIGHLIGHTS

- On 26 January 2023, the United States (US) Department of the Treasury's Office of Foreign Assets Control (OFAC) designated the Wagner Group as a significant Transnational Criminal Organisation (TCO) and imposed more sanctions including on persons in the Central African Republic (CAR) and the United Arab Emirates (UAE) that are connected to the Wagner Group's operations in CAR.
- In early February, Wagner released its first bottle of beer called "Africa TI l'or," following a campaign and violent demonstrations against Brasserie Motte Cordonnier Afrique (Mocaf), France's Castel subsidiary in the CAR. The government condemned the violence against Mocaf.
- Following a visit to Chad on 29 January, the head of the Sudanese junta, general Abdel Fattah al-Burhan and General Mahamat Idriss Deby Itno discussed the need to operationalise the Sudan/CAR/Chad Tripartite Mixed Force created in 2005 in Khartoum for the fight against insecurity at the common borders of the three countries.
- Khartoum's de facto deputy leader, General Mohamed Hamdan Dagalo (aka Hemeti), Fattah al-Burhan's rival, who runs Sudan's notorious Rapid Support Forces (RSF) agreed with President Faustin Archange Touadéra to deploy his troops in the prefectures of Vakaga, Haute-Kotto and Bamingui-Bangoran to drive out rebels of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC).
- The Humanitarian Aid department of the European Commission (ECHO) said that since the summer 2022, almost no region was spared by violence. Prospects for the resumption of basic public services and income opportunities are slim.

# CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)



- Prime Minister Felix Moloua, the President of the National Elections Authority, Mathias Morouba and the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) head Valentine Rugwabiza signed the Integrated Plan for Securing the Renewed Local Elections (PISE) on 14 February 2023. Elections are due on 16 July 2023.
- The drafting of the new constitution has reportedly been completed. The special adviser to the president, Minister Counsellor Fidèle Gouandjika, said the new version of the constitution excludes all dual nationals from being presidential candidates and that the presidential term is no longer limited to two, but rather indefinite.
- According to the 2022 Mo Ibrahim Index on African Governance (IIAG), published in January 2023, CAR was placed 50th on overall governance out of 54 African countries (1=best; 54=worst), the same as in 2020. The IIAG is published every two years.
- The Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU's) 2022 Democracy Index ranks CAR 164 out of 165 countries (1=best; 165=worst) with a score of 1.35 (1=worst; 10=best), down from 1.43 in 2021, putting it in the category of an "Authoritarian Regime."
- According to the United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS), during the first six weeks of 2023, 14 incidents involving explosive devices - eight of which occurred in the first half of February alone - were recorded in the western zone of the country.
- The Democratic Movement for the Rally of the Central African People (MDRPC) is the name of a new politico-military group. The MDRPC, led by General Arda Hakouma, set up its executive office in Ndélé, Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture. The formation of the MDRPC brings to at least 17 the number of armed groups in the CAR.
- Following the alleged attack on the Wagner base in Ndélé by an armed drone on 23 January 2023, the army staff on 24 January published a circular prohibiting the overflight of the national territory by drones, including MINUSCA's.



## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (CAR)



- Clashes took place on 26 and 27 January 2023 in Gounda, Gordile and Ndongboloye, Vakaga Prefecture, between Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) rebels, FACA and Wagner. Wagner fighters were among the dozens of casualties, rebel sources claimed.
- On 14 February, approximately 800 heavily armed rebels of the CPC attacked army positions in the mining town of Ndah, Vakaga Prefecture. Sixteen soldiers were killed and 24 taken hostage.
- CAR is ranked 150 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2022 Corruption Perceptions Index (CPI: 1=clean; 180=highly corrupt). CAR was ranked 154 out of 180 countries in Transparency International's 2021 CPI.
- It is alleged that since Touadéra came to power in 2016, members of his Ngbakamandja ethnic group have been building a criminal network. For example, Ange Mercier, a 'brother' of Touadéra, is allegedly in charge of an organised criminal network within the custom services.
- The African Development Bank (AfDB) projects grow at 3.2% in 2023 and 3.9% in 2024.
- The Prime Minister of Portugal, António Luis Santos da Costa visited Bangui where he was asked to intercede in order to resume the European Union (EU's) training mission. The EU in December 2021 froze its military training missions due to Wagner's presence.
- The customs border post at Béloko on the border of Cameroon was reopened on 27 January 2023. After the rebels of the CPC attacked the border town of Béloko on 21 January, Cameroonian authorities decided unilaterally to close the border post.

