



“THE PERPETRATORS ARE STILL HERE”

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC'S SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT ON
BORROWED TIME, AS VICTIMS AWAIT JUSTICE.

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



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Cover photo credit: Ousman Yaouba (right) and Issa Sallet Adoum (left), tried alongside a third defendant for the killing of civilians in villages in north-western Central African Republic (CAR) in May 2019, stand before the judges as the verdict is delivered in a landmark and long-awaited trial before the Special Criminal Court in Bangui, 31 October 2022.

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GLOSSARY

TERM	DEFINITION
3R	Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation (armed group)
ICC	International Criminal Court
CPC / CPC-F	Coalition of Patriots for Change (coalition of armed groups, renamed CPC-Fondamentale in 2024)
SCC	Special Criminal Court
CVJRR	Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission
FACA	Central African Armed Forces
FPRC	Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (armed group)
MINUSCA	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UN	United Nations
EU	European Union
UPC	Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (armed group)

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report examines the work of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) in the Central African Republic (CAR). It analyses the Court's progress and shortcomings since the start of the first trial in 2022, the obstacles hindering its work, the budgetary crisis it is facing, and its prospects. It also reflects the victims' views on the fight against impunity and on the work of the SCC.

Amnesty International delegates visited Bangui (capital of the CAR) from 08 to 18 April 2026. There, they met with 63 individuals working in the justice sector (judges, prosecutors, lawyers, registrars, and other judicial or adjacent professionals), or victims and members of civil society engaged in issues of justice for conflict-related crimes. Amnesty International also reviewed numerous documentary sources (legal documents, reports, media articles, and others). This research is a continuation of the work that Amnesty International has been conducting into issues of justice for serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law in the CAR for over a decade.

The SCC is a hybrid court, composed of judges and staff from the CAR and abroad, integrated into the CAR justice system and supported by the United Nations. It has jurisdiction to investigate and prosecute serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law (including genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes) committed in the CAR since 01 January 2003. It carries out its mission in parallel with, and in complementarity with the work of the CAR's ordinary courts and the International Criminal Court, which also have jurisdiction over crimes under international law committed in the CAR over the same period. The SCC was established by a 2015 law and was inaugurated on 22 October 2018. It is a temporary court, with a five-year term that can be renewed as many times as necessary. At the time of publication of this report, the SCC has been operational for eight years, and its current mandate runs until October 2028.

The SCC carries out its activities in a precarious security environment. Since peaking in 2021, the intensity of the violence has decreased but armed groups remain active and continue to commit crimes against civilians in several parts of the country. According to the UN Secretary-General, the austerity measures imposed on the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR (MINUSCA), the UN peacekeeping mission, have created gaps in the protection of civilians, with the planned closure of 21 MINUSCA military bases in particular.

To date, the SCC has opened six trials in five cases: the “Paoua” case concerning attacks in May 2019 on three villages in the north-west of the country. The “Ndélé 1” and “Ndélé 2” cases concerning a series of attacks and reprisals between rival factions in March and April 2020 in Ndélé and several surrounding villages in the north-east. The “Guen” case concerning attacks in Guen and Djomo, in western CAR, carried out between February and March 2014. Finally, the trial in the “Bossembélé” case, which began on 16 June 2026. This relates to crimes committed between 2009 and 2013, particularly in detention facilities in Bossembélé, Bangui, and Bouar, and former President François Bozizé is among those accused. The first three cases have concluded at least at the first instance, resulting in the conviction of a total of 19 people for war crimes and crimes against humanity and the acquittal of one. In the Paoua case, the victims also received reparations, while the issue of reparations is currently being debated in the Ndélé cases. The verdict in the Guen case is expected on 15 December 2026, and the Bossembélé trial is ongoing.

These trials represent significant progress in the fight against impunity. However, the Central African population is still awaiting trials concerning the most significant periods and events of the conflicts in the country over two decades, and in relation to all those at the highest levels of responsibility. The crimes committed during the extremely bloody period of 2002-2003 remain unpunished: since the acquittal of Jean-Pierre Bemba (former leader of the armed group known as the Movement for the Liberation of Congo - MLC) by the ICC in 2018, there have been no further proceedings in CAR to determine who was responsible

for the mass campaigns of murder, rape and pillage committed, in particular, by the presidential security forces of Ange-Félix Patassé (former President of CAR) and allied MLC troops. The period between December 2012 and the end of 2014, marked by the conflict between the Séléka and the Anti-balaka and by numerous abuses against civilians, has, to date, resulted in only one trial before the SCC: the Guen case, which concerns attacks committed in February and March 2014 in the west of the country. No trials have yet taken place for the crimes committed by the Séléka when it was in power in 2013, and none of the highest-ranking political or military leaders from either side have been tried by the SCC. The ICC found Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Edouard Ngaïssona, Anti-balaka leaders, along with Mahamat Said Abdel Kani, Séléka commander, guilty of war crimes and/or crimes against humanity on 24 July 2025, and 23 September 2026, respectively. Central African civil society does, nonetheless, expect the SCC to hold high ranking armed group leaders, military as well as political leaders from this period to account.

Amnesty International is also concerned about the SCC's use of trials in absentia (trials that take place in the absence of the accused). In 2025, 10 people were sentenced in absentia to between 20 and 25 years' imprisonment in the "Ndélé 1" and "Ndélé 2" cases. At the time of writing, this represents exactly half of the total number of people who have been tried before the SCC. If these individuals subsequently present themselves to the SCC or are arrested, they can request a retrial, and their convictions will then be automatically quashed. According to victims of the conflicts and other members of civil society met by Amnesty International, opinions among the population are mixed on the issue of trials in absentia in the CAR. Some say they are pleased to see the names come out but others would like to see those accused on trial with their own eyes, or to know that they are serving time in prison. For some victims, these trials can only be described as a "masquerade". Furthermore, the SCC's use of in absentia trials is not compatible with the defendants' exercise of their right to be present at their trial and to participate in their defence, as recognized, in particular, by the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa.

A major obstacle to holding trials in the presence of the defendants, however, is the difficulty of arresting these individuals to bring them before the judges. The execution of arrest warrants issued by the SCC has, nevertheless, improved significantly over the past five years, with the Central African forces arresting certain suspects, including Abdoulaye Hissène, former military leader of the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (FPRC), arrested in 2023, and Edmond Beïna, former Anti-balaka leader, arrested in 2024. Despite this, dozens of people remain wanted, and significant barriers to their arrest remain. Hassan Bouba, a minister in the current government, arrested in November 2021 on an SCC warrant and released a week later by the CAR authorities, remains a symbol of a "two-tier justice" system for many Central Africans. This example raises questions about the existence of a political shield protecting certain individuals from prosecution. On the other hand, arrest warrants for individuals who have fled abroad remain unexecuted due to a lack of cooperation from the states concerned. Former President François Bozizé now resides in Guinea-Bissau, and at least a few suspects for whom arrest warrants have been issued are in Chad.

In addition to the issue of political interference by several states in the execution of arrest warrants, there is also interference by donors in the functioning of the Court. The Court's administrative and financial management has been entrusted to external actors – a Swiss non-governmental organization for the European Union's financial support, and the UN agency UNDP for that of the United Nations – which is contrary to the law establishing the SCC (Organic law No. 15.003) and the rules of the Court. This outsourced management was supposed to be a temporary arrangement at the time of the SCC's establishment, but it has persisted over time despite UNDP's promises of a gradual withdrawal in favour of empowering the Court's Registry. The European Union, for its part, considers that the use of external fiduciary support is a measure to safeguard the Court's management but supports the gradual internalization of critical functions within the Registry.

This has serious consequences for the independence of the Court, whose decisions (such as decisions on budget, recruitment, procurement, investigative operations) are subject to external validation, which can directly interfere with the proper conduct of judicial affairs. For its part, MINUSCA's mandate includes providing technical assistance to the SCC, which, according to over a dozen interlocutors, has in practice taken the form of very close involvement, including in the Court's prosecution strategy. One civil society member has concluded that: "It is the donors who control the SCC."

Finally, the SCC is currently facing a financial crisis of unprecedented and highly concerning proportions. The trigger for the recent crisis was the withdrawal of the United States in 2025, whose annual contribution amounted to approximately USD 1.9 million, or more than a quarter of the funds actually raised each year. The only direct funders remaining today are the United Nations and the European Union, and they are discussing a potential reduction or withdrawal of their support in the short to medium term. The

consequences of this financial crisis are already being felt. Between August and September 2025, the SCC had to lay off a quarter of its staff, in particular foreign experts, especially within the Registry's services, such as the Witness Protection Unit. This situation is jeopardizing victims' right to justice, as well as defendants' right to be tried within a reasonable time. Moreover, the Office of the Prosecutor is no longer opening investigations. A court established to combat impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity is thus gradually being prevented from exercising its mandate, at the risk of betraying the commitment made to the victims and the people of the CAR.

This budgetary crisis means that its closure at the end of its second term, in 2028, is a real possibility. This scenario raises the question of what will become of the cases still pending before the Court and of the other crimes it was supposed to investigate and prosecute. The ICC closed its investigations into the CAR in December 2022. And several dozens of people interviewed by Amnesty International, including those who reportedly support the closure of the SCC at the end of its second term, consider that the ordinary courts in the CAR currently lack the human and material resources, as well as the necessary independence to handle the cases before the SCC. The closure of the SCC would jeopardize the fight against impunity, particularly in the most complex or sensitive cases.

Amnesty International calls on the SCC to continue to investigate, prosecute, and judge crimes under international law committed by government forces and their allies, as well as by armed groups on the territory of CAR since 01 January 2003, including crimes committed by the highest-ranking officials between January and March 2003 and between December 2012 and December 2014. Amnesty International also calls on the CAR authorities, the United Nations, and all states current or future partners of the CAR to support, or continue to support, the SCC financially, and on the CAR authorities and the United Nations to renew its mandate for as long as the Court's track record demonstrates that its mission has not been fulfilled.

Finally, Amnesty International makes a series of other recommendations, including that the SCC cease trials in absentia, in line with the Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial in Africa, improve the effective participation of victims and the accused in the judicial proceedings, as well as improve the publicity and accessibility of its decisions and progress.

Amnesty International also recommends that the SCC's donors transfer the administrative and financial management of the Court to the Court Registry without delay and reinforce the Court's independence, including through refocusing MINUSCA's assistance on its essential support related to security for the Court and its personnel, logistics of the Court's operations and execution of arrests.

Amnesty International also urges the CAR, MINUSCA, and the states to which the suspects have fled, such as Chad and Guinea-Bissau, to take all necessary measures to facilitate the arrest and, where necessary, extradition of individuals subject to arrest warrants before the SCC. Peace agreements should also not include any amnesty or immunity clause.

Victims' rights to justice, truth, and reparation cannot depend on the changing priorities of donors. It is up to the CAR authorities and their international partners to ensure that these rights are upheld. The fight against impunity is underway; it must not be abandoned along the path.

2. METHODOLOGY

This report examines the work of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) in the Central African Republic (CAR). It analyzes the judicial progress made by the Court, the obstacles hindering its work, the budgetary crisis it is facing, and its prospects. It also reflects the views of the victims of crimes committed in the context of armed conflicts in the CAR regarding the fight against impunity and the work of the SCC.

This research builds on Amnesty International's work of several years on accountability for conflict-related crimes in the Central African Republic. It follows the reports published by the organization in December 2021,¹ October 2020², and January 2017³. It is part of Amnesty International's broader, ongoing call for respect for the right of victims and their loved ones to justice, truth, and reparation.

Amnesty International delegates visited Bangui (capital of the CAR) from 08 to 18 April 2026. They met with 63 people, including 25 women. All interviews were conducted in person. Interviewees included members of the Ministry of Justice, judges and staff members of the SCC, judges from ordinary courts, lawyers, UN staff members, NGO staff members, representatives of the National Human Rights and Fundamental Freedoms Commission, the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, human rights defenders, journalists, and victims of the conflicts. Most interviews were conducted in French and some were conducted in Sango, with the help of an interpreter. For security and confidentiality reasons, Amnesty International does not disclose the identities of most of the interviewees. The report refers to them by their role. Individuals who have expressly agreed to be named are identified as such. The conflict victims interviewed were identified through national associations that support people affected by crimes under the jurisdiction of the SCC. Amnesty International ensured that there were as many women as men. Their situations relate to several cases and concern various parts of the country. All were interviewed individually.

Some of the people interviewed were survivors of sexual violence. The interviews focused on their perception of the judicial process rather than on the events they have experienced, in order to avoid re-traumatization. Amnesty International explained to each interviewee the purpose of the research and how their testimony would be used and obtained their informed consent before the interview. No incentives were provided. The information gathered during the interviews was analysed, cross-checked, and verified. Amnesty International also reviewed numerous documentary sources. It analyzed court rulings, legal texts, reports from international organizations and donors, reports from non-governmental organizations, academic works, official statements, and press articles.

On 5 and 6 October 2026, Amnesty International sent letters to the Ministry of Justice, MINUSCA, UNDP and the European Union presenting the main findings of this report and requesting their feedback. The Delegation of the European Union to the Central African Republic responded on 16 October 2026⁴, and its

¹ Amnesty International, *Central African Republic: One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards. Justice in the Central African Republic* (Index: AFR 19/5038/2021), 08 December 2021, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr19/5038/2021/fr/> [hereinafter "Amnesty International's 2021 report *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards*"]

² Amnesty International, *Central African Republic: "On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes." The Central African Republic's Challenging Pursuit of Justice* (Index: AFR 19/3185/2020), 22 October 2020, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr19/3185/2020/fr/> [hereinafter "Amnesty International 2020 Report *On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes*"]

³ Amnesty International, *The Long Wait for Justice: Accountability* (Index: AFR19/5425/2017), 11 January 2017, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/documents/afr19/5425/2017/fr/> [hereinafter "Amnesty International's 2017 report *The Long Wait for Justice*"]

⁴ Letter from the Ambassador of the European Union, received on 16 October 2026, available in Amnesty International's archives.

observations have been taken into account in this report. As of 20 October 2026, the other recipients had not responded.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 CHANGES IN THE SECURITY CONTEXT SINCE 2021

On 17 December 2020, six armed groups joined forces to form the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) under the political coordination of former President François Bozizé, with the aim of opposing the electoral process leading up to the presidential election of 27 December 2020. The CPC thus brought together three groups from the Séléka⁵ (the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (FPRC) led by Nouredine Adam; the Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) led by Ali Darassa; and the Central African Patriotic Movement (MPC) led by Mahamat Al-Khatim), the Return, Reclamation and Rehabilitation (3R) group, and two armed groups from the Anti-balaka.⁶ CPC attacks began on 18 December 2020 in several cities across the country and culminated on 13 January 2021 in an attempted incursion into Bangui, which was repelled by the Central African Armed Forces, with the support of Rwandan Armed Forces deployed under a bilateral agreement, as well as personnel from the Russian private military company, Wagner.⁷ Against this backdrop, on 18 January 2021, the Constitutional Court announced the re-election of Faustin-Archange Touadéra as Head of State.⁸

This period saw numerous violations of international humanitarian law and human rights committed by all parties to the armed conflict, including summary executions, torture, pillaging, and sexual violence.⁹ The UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries contacted the Central African authorities as early as March 2021 regarding allegations that Wagner Group forces were being deployed alongside national forces¹⁰. A special commission of inquiry announced by the authorities in response to these allegations presented its findings orally in October 2021 but a written report has not been made public to date¹¹.

The coalition that led this offensive never proved to be cohesive. The UPC announced its withdrawal from the coalition as early as April 2021, citing the suffering of the population and reaffirming its commitment to the peace process¹², before rejoining it a few months later. The MPC, in turn, left the coalition in November 2023¹³ and finally rejoined the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in November 2025¹⁴. On 30 August 2024, a new rift affected what remained of the coalition. François Bozizé, who had tried to remove Ali Darassa from the military coordination after the latter called for a cessation of hostilities, was

⁵ The Séléka is a coalition of armed groups formed in August 2012. It overthrew President François Bozizé in March 2013 and brought its leader, Michel Djotodia, to power until January 2014. Officially dissolved by Michel Djotodia in September 2013, it fragmented from 2014 onwards into several so-called “ex-Séléka” groups.

⁶ The Anti-balaka are armed “self-defence” groups that emerged in the months following the Séléka coup in March 2013. They carried out large-scale reprisals against Muslim populations, particularly in Bangui and in the western part of the country.

⁷ Amnesty International 2021 Report: *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards*

⁸ France 24, “Centrafrique: la réélection du président Touadéra validée par la Cour constitutionnelle”, 18 January 2021, <https://www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20210118-centrafrique-la-r%C3%A9%C3%A9lection-du-pr%C3%A9sident-touad%C3%A9ra-valid%C3%A9-par-la-cour-constitutionnelle>

⁹ Amnesty International 2021 Report: *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards*

¹⁰ UN Working Group on the Use of Mercenaries, Communication AL CAF 1/2021, 26 March 2021.

<https://spcommreports.ohchr.org/TMResultsBase/DownloadPublicCommunicationFile?gld=26025>

¹¹ RFI, “RCA: le rapport de synthèse de la commission d’enquête spéciale laisse des questions en suspens”, October 2021, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20211002-rca-le-rapport-de-synth%C3%A8se-de-la-commission-d-enqu%C3%AAt-sp%C3%A9ciale-laisse-des-questions-en-suspens>

¹² Le Temps (AFP), “Centrafrique: le plus puissant groupe armé s’engage à quitter la coalition rebelle”, 06 April 2021, www.letemps.ch/monde/afrique/centrafrique-plus-puissant-groupe-arme-sengage-quitter-coalition-rebelle

¹³ Ndjoni Sango, “RCA: que cache le changement de posture de Mahamat Alkhatim du MPC?” 10 November 2023, <https://ndjonisango.com/2023/11/10/rca-que-cache-le-changement-de-posture-de-mahamat-alkhatim-du-mpc/>

¹⁴ United Nations (UN), Security Council, Report of the Secretary-General on the Central African Republic, Doc. S/2026/71, 13 February 2026, para. 2 [hereinafter “UN Report S/2026/71”]

removed from the general coordination by the other armed leaders, who reinstated Ali Darassa as chief of staff and renamed the movement CPC-Fondamentale¹⁵.

The intensity of violence in the context of the armed conflict has decreased since its peak in 2021 although this development does not reflect a change in the behaviour of the armed actors. A MINUSCA staff member interviewed by Amnesty International in April 2026 summed it up as follows: “In terms of human rights, we are seeing a decrease in the intensity of violations but this does not mean that armed groups are respecting human rights¹⁶.”

For example, in 2024, the United Nations Secretary General documented cases of rape, gang rape, forced marriage, and sexual slavery affecting 215 women, 191 girls, and 7 men, with the main perpetrators being the 3R group, various factions of the CPC, the newly formed CPC-Fondamentale, and the UPC. In Mbomou, members of the FPRC and the UPC raped and abducted women and girls, with the UPC targeting certain victims because of their alleged collaboration with the national defence forces. In Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou, the Wagner Ti Azandé, an armed group, were involved in numerous violations, including rape and gang rape, particularly targeting Muslim communities because of their perceived affiliation with the UPC. The UN report also identifies 104 victims of rape or gang rape by the national defence and security forces, including within military bases, and states that humanitarian actors have recorded 1,679 cases of sexual violence attributed to members of armed groups and 165 to the internal security forces¹⁷.

On 19 April 2025, an agreement was signed in N'Djamena, under Chadian mediation, between the Central African government, the UPC, and the 3R. On 10 July 2025, the leaders of the two armed groups announced their dissolution at an official ceremony in Bangui, and the disarmament, demobilization, and reintegration (DDR) operations for their fighters began the very next day in Ouaka Prefecture¹⁸. According to the United Nations, 1,202 fighters were disarmed and demobilized between July 2025 and February 2026 as part of this process, which was extended to dissidents from other groups¹⁹.

However, the dissolution of these two groups, among the oldest and most structured in the country, did not mean an end to the violence. The non-governmental organization (NGO) Human Rights Watch has noted that armed groups remain primarily responsible for human rights abuses in the country and that these have increased since 2024, according to UN sources²⁰. The fragmentation of the dissolved movements also carries its own risks. According to the aforementioned MINUSCA staff member, “Armed groups such as the UPC and the 3R have experienced numerous splits, with some cells finding themselves without leaders and in survival mode, resulting in thefts, robberies, and attacks on main thoroughfares. Some are being manipulated by local elected officials²¹.”

Noureddine Adam's FPRC remains the main armed group that has not joined any peace process. On the United Nations Security Council sanctions list since May 2014²², Noureddine Adam is also the subject of an arrest warrant from the International Criminal Court for crimes against humanity and war crimes, which was made public in July 2022²³. He continues to operate from the north of the country, with rear bases in Chad and Sudan. On 30 June 2026, MINUSCA condemned an attack carried out by elements affiliated with him near Am Dafock, on the Sudanese border, illustrating the growing entanglement between the Central African crisis and the Sudanese conflict²⁴.

The south-east of the country is another major source of concern. In March 2025, the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights and MINUSCA published a joint report on serious human rights violations and abuses committed from 01 to 07 October 2024 in Dembia and Rafai, Mbomou Prefecture by two armed

¹⁵Radio Ndeke Luka, “Centrafrique: François Bozizé écarté de la CPC”, 3 September 2024, www.radiondekeluka.org/73406-centrafrique-francois-bozize-ecarte-de-la-cpc; Jeune Afrique, “Que reste-t-il de François Bozizé, évincé de la coalition anti-Touadéra?” 11 September 2024, www.jeuneafrique.com/1607292/politique/que-reste-t-il-de-francois-bozize-evince-de-la-coalition-anti-touadera/

¹⁶Interview with a MINUSCA staff member, Bangui, 09 April 2026.

¹⁷ UN Security Council, Conflict-related sexual violence – Report of the Secretary-General, 15 July 2025, Doc. S/2025/389, para. 23. The content covers the period from January to December 2024.

¹⁸Alwihdainfo, “RCA: rencontre de paix à Bangui, dissolution des groupes armés de l'UPC et des 3R”, 10 July 2025, www.alwihdainfo.com/rca-rencontre-de-paix-a-bangui-dissolution-des-groupes-armes-de-l-upc-et-des-3r-a142462/

¹⁹“UN Report S/2026/71”, para. 15; see also African Union, Press Release of the Chairperson of the Commission, 18 July 2025, <https://au.int/en/pressreleases/20250718/auc-chairperson-welcomes-19-april-peace-agreement-central-african-republic>

²⁰Human Rights Watch, World Report 2026, “Central African Republic”, www.hrw.org/en/world-report/2026/country-chapters/central-african-republic

²¹Interview with a MINUSCA staff member, Bangui, 09 April 2026.

²²UN, Security Council, Central African Republic Sanctions Committee, Narrative Summary of Reasons for Listing, Noureddine Adam, 09 May 2014, <https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/2745/materials/summaries/individual/noureddine-adam>
<https://main.un.org/securitycouncil/en/sanctions/2745/materials/summaries/individual/noureddine-adam>

²³Jeune Afrique, “Centrafrique: la CPI rend public un mandat d'arrêt contre Noureddine Adam”, 28 July 2022, www.jeuneafrique.com/1365741/societe/centrafrique-la-cpi-rend-public-un-mandat-darret-contre-noureddine-adam/

²⁴MINUSCA, statement by the Special Representative of the Secretary-General, 30 June 2026

groups from the Zandé community: Wagner Ti Azandé and Azandé Ani Kpi Gbé²⁵. Neither of these groups is a party to the N'Djamena Agreement.

The role of Russian military actors has evolved over time. In August 2025, Russia replaced the Wagner Group with the Africa Corps, under the direct command of its Ministry of Defence, although Wagner continued to be involved in commercial activities and the demobilization of armed groups throughout the year²⁶.

It was in this context that, on 28 December 2025, presidential, legislative, regional, and municipal elections were held simultaneously, including the first regional elections in the country's history and the first municipal elections since 1988²⁷. These elections followed the 2023 constitutional reform, which removed the limit on number of presidential terms and extended their duration from five to seven years²⁸, at the end of a process marked by the compulsory retirement of the President of the Constitutional Court, who had opposed it²⁹.

The main opposition platform, the Republican Bloc for the Defence of the Constitution of 30 March 2016, which comprises 12 parties, including those of several former Prime Ministers, maintained its boycott of the election, denouncing legal shortcomings and the lack of dialogue with the opposition³⁰. The main opposition candidate, Anicet-Georges Dologuélé, had moreover been stripped of his Central African citizenship two months earlier, a decision he challenged before the UN Human Rights Committee³¹. On 19 January 2026, the Constitutional Council announced the final results and confirmed the re-election of Faustin-Archange Touadéra in the first round, with 77.90% of the vote and a turnout of 64.42%, rejecting the appeals that were filed³².

This relative stability is nonetheless based on fragile balances. MINUSCA's mandate was renewed in November 2025, to run until 15 November 2026 with an unchanged maximum strength of 14,046 military personnel and 2,999 police officers³³. Like all UN peacekeeping operations, however, the Mission is facing a liquidity crisis that limits its ability to act. As of 05 February 2026, the Mission had received only some 58.1% of the approved budget, and the measures taken in response were expected to result in a 15% reduction in its expenditure for the year³⁴. As a result, 21 military bases have been scheduled for closure. Four had already been closed in Kouï, Maloum, Ndim, and Ngoutéré by the beginning of February 2026³⁵. The civilian workforce is also declining³⁶. The Secretary-General indicates that these constraints have led to the reduction, postponement or suspension of mandate-related activities, including local mediation, efforts to combat explosive threats, cross-border mechanisms, and some initiatives to support the justice system, the prison administration, and security sector reform³⁷. The process has continued since then. On 10 June 2026, MINUSCA handed over seven bases to the CAR government³⁸. A MINUSCA staff member interviewed by Amnesty International highlighted the paradox: "MINUSCA's new mandate uses stronger language but this is accompanied by the closure of certain bases, particularly in Haut-Mbomou and in Bambouti. This poses a risk to the population. The FACA (Central African Armed Forces) do not currently have the capacity to fill this void³⁹."

This context is not merely background information to the Special Criminal Court. It determines its most concrete working conditions. The continued presence of armed groups in the north-east and south-east of the country, combined with the gradual closure of MINUSCA bases, limits investigators' access to areas

²⁵ MINUSCA and the UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, Rapport sur les violations et atteintes graves aux droits de l'homme commises par les Wagner Ti Azandé et les Azandé Ani Kpi Gbé du 1 au 7 octobre 2024 à Dembia et Rafaï, préfecture du Mbomou, March 2025, <https://www.un.org/sexualviolenceinconflict/wp-content/uploads/2025/03/report/auto-draft/20250304-minusca-ohchr-dembia-report.pdf>

²⁶ HRW, World Report 2026

²⁷ "UN Report S/2026/71", para. 2

²⁸ Constitution of the Central African Republic of 30 July 2023; France 24, "La Centrafrique a voté sur un projet de nouvelle Constitution pour allonger le mandat présidentiel", 30 July 2023, www.france24.com/fr/afrique/20230730-la-centrafrique-vote-sur-un-projet-de-nouvelle-constitution-pour-allonger-les-mandats-pr%C3%A9sidentiels

²⁹ Le Devoir (AFP), "Une nouvelle constitution en Centrafrique va permettre un troisième mandat de Touadéra", 21 August 2023, www.ledevoir.com/monde/afrique/795837/une-nouvelle-constitution-en-centrafrique-va-permettre-un-troisieme-mandat-de-touadera

³⁰ "UN Report S/2026/71", para. 4.

³¹ Jeune Afrique, "Présidentielle en Centrafrique: sept candidats retenus, dont le président Touadéra", 14 November 2025, www.jeuneafrique.com/1740357/politique/presidentielle-en-centrafrique-sept-candidats-retenus-dont-le-president-touadera/

³² "UN Report S/2026/71", para. 6.

³³ UN Security Council, Resolution 2800 (2025), 13 November 2025, Doc. S/RES/2800(2025), paras. 28 and 29

³⁴ "UN Report S/2026/71", para. 54 and 62.

³⁵ "UN Report S/2026/71", para. 55.

³⁶ "UN Report S/2026/71", para. 57. Between 01 November 2025 and 01 February 2026, 37 civilian staff members left the Mission, including 36 under an early departure programme.

³⁷ "UN Report S/2026/71", para. 55

³⁸ MINUSCA, "La MINUSCA transfère sept de ses bases au gouvernement pour consolider les acquis de la paix", 11 June 2026. Bases in Mbaïki, Bamingui, Dékoa, Dilapoko, Ippy, Kouango and Pombolo. minusca.unmissions.org/fr/news/la-minusca-transfere-sept-de-ses-bases-au-gouvernement-pour-consolider-les-acquis-de

³⁹ Interview with a MINUSCA staff member, Bangui, 09 April 2026.

where the crimes were committed and makes it more difficult to protect victims and witnesses who agree to testify.

3.2 THE SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT

The Special Criminal Court (SCC) was established by Organic Law No. 15-003 of 03 June 2015⁴⁰. It is a hybrid court, meaning that it is fully integrated into the Central African Republic's judicial system while receiving support from the United Nations. It is composed of judges, prosecutors, and national and international staff. The SCC's mandate covers serious human rights violations and serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the Central African Republic since 01 January 2003, including genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes. This period of its jurisdiction therefore covers almost all the cycles of violence that the country has experienced over more than 20 years⁴¹.

The SCC is a temporary court and, as such, its purpose is to contribute to Central African society's efforts to shed light on the serious violations and crimes under international law that occurred on its territory during the period specified, to provide justice and reparation to victims, and to offer guarantees of non-repetition of these crimes by removing the perpetrators of past crimes and deterring others from committing crimes in the future. It is part of a transitional process. It was established at the request of the Central African population and civil society, during popular consultations in 2015⁴².

The Court was officially inaugurated on 22 October 2018⁴³. It fulfils its mandate in accordance with the law establishing the SCC and its Rules of Procedure and Evidence⁴⁴. The Office of the Special Prosecutor opens and directs preliminary investigations. It published a prosecution strategy in December 2018⁴⁵. When the evidence gathered so justifies, the case is referred to the Investigating Chamber, which conducts the actual investigation and may indict the suspects. The Special Indictment Chamber then decides whether to refer the case to trial. The trial takes place before the Trial Chamber, whose decisions can be challenged before the Appeals Chamber⁴⁶. To date, one case has been definitively adjudicated up to the appeal stage, and several cases are currently before the various chambers or under investigation by the Office of the Special Prosecutor⁴⁷.

The Court's mandate, set at five years and renewable as many times as necessary⁴⁸, was renewed for the first time in 2023⁴⁹. The Court's mandate now runs until October 2028. At the time of publication of this report, the SCC had been operational for eight years.

3.3 ORDINARY COURTS, THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT, AND THE TRUTH, JUSTICE, REPARATION AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

ORDINARY COURTS AND THE INTERNATIONAL CRIMINAL COURT

Several courts are responsible for investigating, prosecuting, and trying individuals suspected of being responsible for crimes under international law committed in recent decades on CAR territory. As noted in the

⁴⁰ Central African Republic (CAR), Organic Law No. 15-003 on the creation, organization, and functioning of the Special Criminal Court, 03 June 2015 [hereinafter "Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC"]

⁴¹ "Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC", Art. 3.

⁴² Bangui Forum, Rapport du groupe thématique justice et réconciliation, March 2015, https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/th_justice_reconciliation.pdf

⁴³ United Nations press release, "L'inauguration de la Cour pénale spéciale marque la fin de l'impunité", 22 October 2018, news.un.org/fr/story/2018/10/1027272; RFI, "RCA: inauguration de la Cour pénale spéciale", 23 October 2018, www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20181023-rca-justice-lancement-cour-penale-speciale-bangui-cps

⁴⁴ CAR, Law No. 18-010 on the Rules of Procedure and Evidence before the Special Criminal Court of the Central African Republic, 02 July 2018 [hereinafter "RPE"]

⁴⁵ Special Criminal Court (SCC), *Stratégie d'enquêtes, de poursuites et d'instruction*, 04 December 2018, available in the archives of Amnesty International.

⁴⁶ RPE, Articles 12, 20-30, 34-40, 62-139.

⁴⁷ For more information see Section 4.1 of this report

⁴⁸ "Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC", Art. 70

⁴⁹ Central African Republic, Law No. 23-001 on the renewal of the SCC's mandate, 09 January 2023

previous section, the SCC is mandated to deal with “serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed on the territory of the CAR since 1 January 2003⁵⁰.” Alongside this hybrid court, the ordinary courts of the CAR and the International Criminal Court (ICC) also have the competence to deal with crimes under international law in the CAR.

First and foremost, the ordinary courts of the CAR and, more specifically, the Courts of Appeal, which organize criminal trial sessions, have jurisdiction over all crimes committed on the territory. This jurisdiction covers crimes under international law, which are incorporated into the CAR Penal Code⁵¹. Courts of Appeal are located in the cities of Bangui, Bouar, and Bambari. Since July 2025, four additional Courts of Appeal have been created on paper⁵²; they are to be established in Boali, Bossangoa, Bria, and Bangassou but they are not yet operational⁵³.

The Bangui Court of Appeal has already heard several cases concerning crimes committed in the context of the armed conflicts that have taken place in the country: notably, in 2018, the case against General Andjilo, and, in 2020, the “Bangassou crimes” case against Crépin Wakanam, alias Pino-Pino, et al, which was a landmark for Central African society as the first trial for crimes against humanity in the CAR⁵⁴. However, to Amnesty International’s knowledge, there have been no major trials concerning crimes under international law before the ordinary CAR courts since then.

Secondly, the ICC has also had jurisdiction over war crimes, crimes against humanity, and genocide committed on CAR territory or by CAR nationals since 2002⁵⁵. It opened two investigations in the CAR, at the request of the Central African state⁵⁶: the first covered crimes committed in 2002 and 2003, and the second crimes committed from 2012 onwards⁵⁷. Several trials have resulted from its investigations, including the trial against Jean-Pierre Bemba, who was acquitted on appeal in 2018⁵⁸ (see box below), the proceedings against Maxime Mokom, which were dropped by the Office of the Prosecutor in 2023⁵⁹, the trial against Alfred Yekatom and Patrice-Édouard Ngaïssona, who were found guilty in July 2025 of war crimes and crimes against humanity committed in Bangui and in the west of the country between September 2013 and February 2014⁶⁰, and the proceedings for which are on appeal at the time of writing and, finally, the trial against Mahamat Said Abdel Kani, who was found guilty on 23 September 2026 of crimes against humanity committed in Bangui between April and August 2013⁶¹.

However, in December 2022, the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC announced that it was closing its investigations in the CAR⁶². Since then, the ICC has stopped investigating past or present crimes committed in the CAR. The ICC remains engaged only in ongoing cases for which the Office of the Prosecutor has already gathered evidence and requested arrest warrants against individuals or initiated trials. As a result, Nouredine Adam remains wanted by the ICC⁶³.

⁵⁰ “Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC”, Article 3.

⁵¹ Central African Republic, Law No. 10,001 of 06 January 2010, on the Central African Penal Code [hereinafter the “Penal Code”], Title IV “Crimes against the Human Person”. At the time of writing this report, the Central African Penal Code is under review.

⁵² Presidential Decree No. 25-205 establishing and determining their seats, jurisdictions, and composition of the Courts of Appeal, 01 July 2025.

⁵³ These new courts of appeal do not yet have premises or staff. Interview with a former member of the Ministry of Justice, Bangui, 09 April 2026.

⁵⁴ Amnesty International 2020 Report “*On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes*”, Section 5.2, pp. 34 to 37

⁵⁵ The CAR ratified the Rome Statute on 03 October 2001. The country then referred the Central African situation to the ICC on its own initiative.

⁵⁶ The Central African State referred the situation in the CAR to the ICC for the first time in December 2004 in relation to the events of 2002-2003 and, for the second time, in May 2014 concerning events since 01 August 2012.

⁵⁷ ICC, “Prosecutor opens investigation in the Central African Republic”, 22 May 2007, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/prosecutor-opens-investigation-central-african-republic>; ICC, “Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, on opening a second investigation in the Central African Republic”, 24 September 2014, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/statement-prosecutor-international-criminal-court-fatou-bensouda-opening-second-investigation>.

⁵⁸ ICC, Appeals Chamber, Judgment on the appeal of Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo against Trial Chamber III’s “Judgment pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute”, 08 June 2018, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/05-01/08-3636-red>

⁵⁹ ICC, Pre-Trial Chamber, Order in Relation to the Prosecution’s ‘Notice of Withdrawal of the Charges against Maxime Jeoffroy Eli Mokom Gawaka’, 17 October 2023, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/14-01/22-276>; JusticeInfo.Net, “Mokom, le nouveau fiasco de la CPI”, 23 October 2023, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/123595-mokom-fiasco-cpi.html>; Human Rights Watch, “Mokom Case Falls Flat in Central African Republic”, 26 October 2023, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2023/10/26/mokom-case-falls-flat-central-african-republic>

⁶⁰ ICC, Trial Chamber V, Judgment, 24 July 2025, ICC-01/14-01/18. Both defendants were found guilty of several counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, including attacks on civilian populations, murder, forced displacement of populations, attacks on religious buildings, persecution on religious grounds, torture, and the recruitment of child soldiers.

⁶¹ ICC, Trial Chamber VI, Judgment, 23 September 2026, ICC-01/14-01/21. Said was found guilty of crimes against humanity consisting of charges of imprisonment, torture, persecution, and other inhumane acts, committed at the Central Office for the Suppression of Banditry.

⁶² ICC, “The Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Karim A.A. Khan KC, announces conclusion of the investigation phase in the Situation in the Central African Republic”, 16 December 2022, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/prosecutor-international-criminal-court-karim-aa-khan-kc-announces-conclusion-investigation-0>

⁶³ International Criminal Court, Situation in CAR II: ICC Pre-Trial Chamber II issues public redacted version of Arrest Warrant for Mahamat Nouradine Adam”, 28 July 2022, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/news/situation-car-ii-icc-pre-trial-chamber-ii-issues-public-redacted-version-arrest-warrant>

The ordinary courts of the CAR, the SCC, and the ICC are complementary⁶⁴. Given, in particular, the scale of the crimes, the state of the CAR justice system⁶⁵, and the limited number of cases that can be brought before the ICC, it was considered, at the time of its creation, that the SCC was needed to complement the efforts made through other jurisdictions at the national and international levels, and thus to meet the needs in terms of the fight against impunity.

In principle, the jurisdiction of the ICC takes precedence over that of the SCC, which in turn takes precedence over that of the ordinary courts of the CAR. However, the courts are able to work together harmoniously and transfer cases between each other⁶⁶. In 2025, ICC judges declared the case against Edmond Beina inadmissible before the ICC, as the proceedings before the SCC related to the same acts⁶⁷.

TRUTH, JUSTICE, REPARATION AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION

In addition to the work of the courts in prosecuting serious crimes committed in recent decades, other efforts are being made in the CAR to secure truth, justice, reparation, and guarantees of non-recurrence of massive human rights violations. In particular, the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR) was established in 2020, with a mandate “to investigate, establish the truth and assign responsibility for serious national events between 29 March 1959 and 31 December 2019”⁶⁸.

An initial team of commissioners was appointed in December 2020⁶⁹; however, this team was dismissed in May 2024⁷⁰ amid controversial allegations of embezzlement and internal conflicts. New commissioners were appointed in March 2025⁷¹, were sworn in on 10 April 2025⁷², and have since resumed the work from the start.

The CVJRR's mission is therefore to establish the truth and to shed light on the violations suffered by the population over a period covering almost 60 years. In the words of one civil society member, “We hope that the CVJRR will be able to write the true history and name those responsible⁷³.” The work of seeking truth and preserving memory is an essential and complementary element to the pursuit of justice⁷⁴. However, if not accompanied by satisfactory efforts in terms of prosecutions and reparations, the search for truth can also be viewed with scepticism, as evidenced by a member of a victims' association interviewed by Amnesty International: “Victims don't need the CVJRR; it's a distraction. Its aim is to placate people with promises but it's not even making any progress. Besides, Central Africans don't want apologies. Your house was looted, you were raped. Will an apology be enough for you? No. What we are asking for are prosecutions and genuine socio-economic support.”⁷⁵

Regardless of how people feel about it, the CVJRR is currently struggling to secure sufficient financial, material, and human resources to fulfill its mandate⁷⁶. At the time of writing, there is no operational CVJRR branch outside of the capital, and the collection of testimonies and the processing of the data collected has not yet begun. Some observers are highly sceptical as to its ability to fulfill its mandate, especially in just four

⁶⁴ Amnesty International's 2020 report ‘On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes’, Explanatory diagram p. 14

⁶⁵ For more information on the state of the Central African Republic's judicial system in 2015, see Amnesty International's 2017 report “*The Long Road to Justice*”, Chapter 2

⁶⁶ ICC, Pre-Trial Chamber II, Decision on the Central African Republic's challenge to the admissibility of the case against Edmond Beina, 12 September 2025, ICC-01/14

⁶⁷ ICC, Beina decision of 2025, para. 41. The Chamber recalled that, despite the primacy accorded by the Organic Law to the ICC over the SCC, admissibility must be examined in light of the principle of complementarity, the ICC being a court of last resort.

⁶⁸ Law No. 20,009 on the creation, organization and functioning of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR), Article 1.

⁶⁹ Presidential Decree No. 20.435 confirming the appointment of the members of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, 30 December 2020

⁷⁰ RFI, “Centrafrique: la dissolution de la Commission vérité, justice, réparation et réconciliation fait débat”, 10 May 2024, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20240510-centrafrique-dissolution-cvjrr-commission-v%C3%A9rit%C3%A9-justice-r%C3%A9paration-et-r%C3%A9conciliation-fait-d%C3%A9bat>; Radio Ndeke Luka, “Centrafrique: la CVJRR dissoute par le gouvernement pour ‘détournement et conflit interne’”, 14 May 2024, <https://www.radiondekeluka.org/68165-centrafrique-la-cvjrr-dissout-par-le-gouvernement-pour-detournement-et-conflit-interne>; JusticeInfo, “Centrafrique: Pourquoi la Commission vérité a été limogée”, 21 June 2024, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/133445-centrafrique-pourquoi-commission-verite-limogee.html>

⁷¹ Decree No. 25-083 approving the appointment of the members of the Truth, Justice, Reparation and Reconciliation Commission, 21 March 2025.

⁷² Radio Ndeke Luka, “Centrafrique: une nouvelle relance pour la Commission vérité”, 11 April 2025, <https://www.radiondekeluka.org/83722-centrafrique-une-nouvelle-relance-pour-la-commission-verite>

⁷³ Interview with a lawyer, Bangui, 13 April 2026

⁷⁴ On the complementarity of truth-seeking mechanisms and judicial prosecutions, see: UN, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, *Memorialization processes in the context of serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law*, 09 July 2020, A/HRC/45/45, paras. 20-21 and 102; African Union, Panel of the Wise, *Peace, Justice and Reconciliation in Africa, Opportunities and Challenges in the Fight against Impunity*, February 2013, page 38; UN, Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion of truth, justice, reparation and guarantees of non-recurrence, Pablo de Greiff, August 2012, A/HRC/21/46, paras. 21-25

⁷⁵ Interview with a representative of a victims' association, Bangui, 11 April 2026

⁷⁶ Interview with CVJRR commissioners, former CVJRR members, and external observers, Bangui, April 2026.

years⁷⁷. One member of Central African civil society summed it up as follows: “The CVJRR is an empty shell⁷⁸.”

CRIMES COMMITTED BETWEEN 2002-2003 REMAIN UNPUNISHED

Between October 2002, when François Bozizé attempted to overthrow then-President Ange-Félix Patassé, and March 2003, when François Bozizé finally seized power, the CAR experienced an extremely bloody period. The armed conflict pitted Patassé's government forces, including the Presidential Security Unit (USP) led by Martin Koumtamadji (a.k.a. Abdoulaye Miskine), supported by the troops of the armed Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC) led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, against Bozizé's rebel armed groups. Thousands of people were killed, raped, and internally displaced⁷⁹.

On 24 May 2008, Jean-Pierre Bemba was arrested in Belgium on an ICC arrest warrant. His trial began before the ICC on 22 November 2010. He is notably accused of crimes against humanity and war crimes for widespread campaigns of murder, rape, and pillage carried out by MLC troops. During his trial, Bemba and his lawyers bribed witnesses and solicited false testimony, for which they were convicted by the ICC⁸⁰. Bemba was nonetheless found guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes on 21 March 2016⁸¹. On 08 June 2018, the ICC acquitted him on appeal⁸².

A majority of the Appeals Chamber judges (in a 3-2 decision) held not that the MLC troops had not committed the crimes in question but that the evidence of Bemba's criminal responsibility for the crimes committed by his troops had not been established. Ten years after Bemba's arrest, this acquittal on appeal came as a shock⁸³. One lawyer summed it up as follows: “What hurts is that there was all the evidence [necessary for his conviction]. Bemba committed forgery and subornation of witnesses. He was caught for this and convicted! And yet... his cheating was vindicated because he was acquitted.”⁸⁴

Since this disappointment, for many in the CAR, no other trials have been held for the crimes committed in 2002-2003. With Bemba acquitted, no other MLC member suspected of being responsible has been prosecuted. Patassé has since died. Arrested in Chad in November 2019, Miskine was sentenced there on 09 September 2026 to 15 years' imprisonment, notably for torture and murder⁸⁵. According to press reports, this conviction concerns crimes committed between 2002 and 2003 in areas along the border between Chad and the Central African Republic.⁸⁶

There are no crimes without perpetrators and yet, more than 20 years on, it seems that the competent courts at the national or supranational level have abandoned the goal of delivering justice to the victims of the 2002-2003 conflict. To the best of Amnesty International's knowledge, there are no ongoing proceedings.

⁷⁷ Law No. 20.009 on the creation, organization, and functioning of the Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Reconciliation Commission (CVJRR), Article 4: The term of office of the CVJRR is four years from the date on which the commissioners are sworn in, i.e., 10 April 2025, for the current commissioners, and may be extended only once for a maximum of two years.

⁷⁸ Interview with a member of Central African civil society, Bangui, 15 April 2026

⁷⁹ International Federation for Human Rights (FIDH), *War Crimes in the Central African Republic: When the Elephants Fight, the Grass Suffers*, No. 355, 13 February 2003, http://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/FIDH_Report_WarCrimes_in_CAR_English_Feb2003.pdf; Amnesty International, *Central African Republic: Five months of war against women*, 10 November 2004, AFR 19/001/2004, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr19/001/2004/en/>

⁸⁰ ICC, Appeals Chamber, Judgment on the appeals filed by Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo, Aimé Kilolo Musamba, Jean-Jacques Mangenda Kabongo, Fidèle Babala Wandu, and Narcisse Aido against the decision of Trial Chamber VII entitled “Judgment pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute”, 8 March 2018, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/fr/court-record/icc-01/05-01/13-2275-red>

⁸¹ ICC, Trial Chamber III, Judgment pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute, 21 March 2016, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/05-01/08-3343>

⁸² ICC, Appeals Chamber, Judgment on the appeal of Mr. Jean-Pierre Bemba Gombo against Trial Chamber III's “Judgment pursuant to Article 74 of the Statute”, 08 June 2018, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/court-record/icc-01/05-01/08-3636-red>

⁸³ JeuneAfrique, “Acquittement de Jean-Pierre Bemba: les victimes centrafricaines entre colère et incompréhension”, 13 June 2018, <https://www.jeuneafrique.com/576983/societe/acquittement-de-jean-pierre-bemba-les-victimes-centrafricaines-entre-colere-et-incomprehension/>; FIDH, “Affaire Bemba: la CPI, en prise à de fortes critiques, doit maintenir la représentation légale des victimes pour la mise en place attendue de l'assistance aux victimes”, 01 October 2018, <https://www.fidh.org/fr/regions/afrique/republique-centrafricaine/affaire-bemba-la-cpi-en-prise-a-de-fortes-critiques-doit-maintenir-la>

⁸⁴ Interview with a lawyer, Bangui, 13 April 2026

⁸⁵ Jeune Afrique, “Centrafrique: Bangui réclame l'extradition du chef de guerre Abdoulaye Miskine, arrêté au Tchad”, November 2019, www.jeuneafrique.com/859394/societe/centrafrique-bangui-reclame-letradition-du-chef-de-guerre-abdoulaye-miskine-arrete-au-tchad/; Tchadinfos, “Abdoulaye Miskine condamné à 15 ans: le collectif d'avocats forme un pourvoi et interpelle le président Mahamat Idriss Déby”, 15 September 2026, <https://www.tchadinfos.com/2026/09/15/abdoulaye-miskine-condamne-a-15-ans-le-collectif-davocats-forme-un-pourvoi-et-interpelle-le-president-mahamat-idriss-deby/>

⁸⁶ RFI, Tchad: Abdoulaye Miskine condamné à 15 ans de prison ferme, 9 September 2026, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20260909-tchad-abdoulaye-miskine-condamne-a-15-ans-de-prison-ferme>, Amnesty International has not been able to obtain or review the judicial decision.

“THE PERPETRATORS ARE STILL HERE”

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC'S SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT ON BORROWED TIME, AS VICTIMS AWAIT JUSTICE

4. “THE SCC REMAINS A HISTORIC SOURCE OF PRIDE”

4.1 SIGNIFICANT PROGRESS OVERSHADOWED BY THE USE OF TRIALS *IN ABSENTIA*

4.1.1 CASES BEFORE THE SCC

The SCC has opened six trials since the start of its operations. The first trial and verdict took place in 2022; only one of the cases heard has now been definitively closed. This chapter reviews each of them, then presents the cases that are approaching trial.

The first case, known as the “Paoua” case, concerns the attacks carried out on 21 May 2019 by the 3R armed group in the villages of Lemouna, Koundjili, and Bohong, in the north-west of the country⁸⁷. The Appeals Chamber found that 14 people were killed in Koundjili and 23 in Lemouna. Six women, including two minors, were raped in Koundjili. Four residents of Lemouna survived the attacks, two of whom were seriously injured⁸⁸. On 31 October 2022, the Trial Chamber found Issa Sallet Adoum, alias Bozizé, commander of the 3R elements sent to the two villages, as well as Mahamat Tahir and Ousman Yaouba, guilty of several counts of war crimes and crimes against humanity, but acquitted them of the charges of torture. It sentenced Issa Sallet Adoum to life imprisonment and his two co-defendants to 20 years' imprisonment each⁸⁹. All three appealed. On 20 July 2023, the Appeals Chamber definitively convicted Issa Sallet Adoum of murders committed in Lemouna and Koundjili, constituting war crimes and crimes against humanity, as well as of inhumane acts and outrages upon personal dignity committed in Lemouna, constituting war crimes. It also held him responsible, in his capacity as military leader, for the rapes committed in Koundjili by his subordinates, as war crimes and crimes against humanity. Mahamat Tahir and Ousman Yaouba were convicted of the same crimes for the killings and inhumane acts committed in Lemouna. The Appeals Chamber reduced Issa Sallet Adoum's sentence from life imprisonment to 30 years and upheld the other two sentences⁹⁰.

With regard to reparations, the Trial Chamber initially awarded compensation to the victims and ordered collective reparations, including the construction of memorials and the drilling of wells in Lemouna and

⁸⁷ Human Rights Watch, “Central African Republic: Armed Group Kills 46 Civilians”, 18 July 2019, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2019/07/18/central-african-republic-armed-group-kills-46-civilians>

⁸⁸ SCC, Appeals Chamber, *Judgment No. 9 concerning appeals lodged against Judgment No. 003-2022 of 31 October 2022 of the First Trial Section*, 20 July 2023

⁸⁹ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Office of the Special Public Prosecutor v. Issa Sallet Adoum alias Bozizé, Ousman Yaouba and Mahamat Tahir, *Judgment No. 003-2022 on the Public Prosecution*, 31 October 2022

⁹⁰ SCC, Appeals Chamber, *Decision No. 9 concerning appeals against Judgment No. 003-2022 of 31 October 2022*, 20 July 2023

Koundjili⁹¹. Following an appeal, the Appeals Chamber reversed this decision on 23 October 2023⁹². It awarded individual compensation to the five victims and survivors of rape who were civil parties, the sixth having passed away during the appeal proceedings, compensation to the injured victims, and a symbolic sum to the families of each of the people killed in Koundjili and Lemouna, to a total amount of approximately XOF 17.3 million (some EUR 26,400). However, it rejected the drilling of wells, as no link had been established to the crimes, and it continued to consider the request for a memorial, as the project was not sufficiently documented. In a judgment dated 25 March 2024, issued after consulting the civil parties, it rejected this project, which did not have the support of the population of these villages⁹³. These reparatory actions were carried out on 30 August 2024. To date, the Paoua case is the only case heard by the Court that has been fully concluded, and its three convicted persons are the only individuals to have been definitively convicted by the Court.

The case known as “**Ndélé 1**” concerns the attacks carried out on 11 March and 29 April 2020 in Ndélé, in the north-east of the country, by members of the FPRC's Goula faction, against Rounga civilians and people considered to be close to this community. According to the Court, the attacks resulted in 27 and 30 people killed respectively, including three minors and a baby, as well as dozens of injured and thousands of displaced persons⁹⁴. The Trial Chamber divided the proceedings into two separate trials, depending on whether the defendants were present or on the run.

On 13 December 2024, it tried the four defendants present. It found them guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes namely murder and cruel treatment in the attack of 29 April 2020, but acquitted them of the charges of attacking the civilian population and pillage⁹⁵. Azor Kalite, who was found liable both as a co-perpetrator and as a military leader, was sentenced to 20 years in prison. Antar Hamat, Charfadine Moussa, and Wodjonodroba Oumar Oscar were each sentenced to 15 years as co-perpetrators. The four convicted individuals appealed. The Appeals Chamber considered their grounds for appeal at hearings held from 09 to 13 March 2026. It had not issued its decision at the time of writing.

On 28 July 2025, the Trial Chamber delivered its verdict in the *in absentia* part of the “Ndélé 1” case, which related to six absent defendants. It found them all guilty, as co-perpetrators, of crimes against humanity, murder, other inhumane acts, and persecution, as well as the war crimes of murder and cruel treatment, committed in Ndélé on 11 March and 29 April 2020⁹⁶. Younouss Kalam Yal was also found guilty, as the direct perpetrator, of the murder of Félicité Malick and her four-month-old baby, Mirabelle Grouss, who were killed at the central market on 29 April 2020. The six defendants were, however, acquitted of other war crimes charges: pillage and attacking the civilian population. The Trial Chamber sentenced “General” Ndjouma Fache and Fotor Sinine to 20 years in prison, and Younouss Kalam Yal, Atahir English, Abdel Kane Mahamat Salle, and Yousouf Moustapha, alias Badjadje, to 25 years each. At the time of writing, it is unclear whether one or more appeals are pending in this case⁹⁷.

The case known as “**Ndélé 2**” concerns a series of attacks carried out in March 2020 by members of the FPRC's Rounga faction against Goula civilians: an attack in Ndélé on 6 March, then, on 25, 26, and 27 March, attacks on the villages of Gozbeïda, Lemena/Kourbou, and Alihou, in retaliation for the attack carried out by the Goula faction in Ndélé on 11 March. The two Ndélé cases thus form part of the same cycle of attacks and reprisals between rival FPRC factions, resulting in more than 25 deaths, including minors and the elderly⁹⁸. On 19 June 2025, the Trial Chamber found six defendants guilty of crimes against humanity and war crimes including murder, attempted murder, other inhumane acts, and persecution⁹⁹. However, the judges acquitted them of the war crimes charges of pillaging, attacking the civilian population, and destroying an adversary's property. Of these six, it sentenced Abdramane Seleman, alias Ada, and Amat Abakar Issène, alias Amat Younouss, both present at the trial, to 20 and 18 years in prison, respectively. The

⁹¹ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Judgment No. 001-2023 on civil claims, 16 June 2023

⁹² SCC, Appeals Chamber, Judgment No. 13 relating to the appeal against Judgment No. 001-2023 of 16 June 2023, 23 October 2023 (hereinafter, Judgment No. 13 on reparations)

⁹³ SCC, Appeals Chamber, Judgment No. 13 on Reparations, paras. 50, 157, 227 and 230 to 233, and operative part, points 4 to 7; SCC, Appeals Chamber, Judgment No. 2 concerning a request for collective reparations in the form of a memorial project, 25 March 2024, paras. 14 to 16 and 24: out of 56 people consulted, only one was in favour of the project.

⁹⁴ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Office of the Special Prosecutor v. Kalite Azor et al., Judgment No. 38-2024 on the Public Prosecution, 13 December 2024, paras. 182 and 198 to 200.

⁹⁵ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Office of the Special Prosecutor v. Kalite Azor et al., Judgment No. 38-2024 on the Public Prosecution, 13 December 2024

⁹⁶ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Judgment No. 43-S1-2025 on the Public Prosecution, 28 July 2025

⁹⁷ The information was not shared publicly. No submissions from the parties to the proceedings are available on the SCC website; only judgments and a number of orders have been published.

⁹⁸ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Office of the Special Prosecutor v. Oumar Serge Abdoulaye Assan et al, Judgment No. 39-S1-2025 on the Public Prosecution, 19 June 2025, para. 213

⁹⁹ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Office of the Special Prosecutor v. Oumar Serge Abdoulaye Assan et al, Judgment No. 39-S1-2025 on the Public Prosecution, 19 June 2025; written judgment made public on 27 February 2026

other four were convicted *in absentia*. Hassane, also known as Assane Adam, and Haroun Gueye, also known as Haroun Gaye, were each sentenced to 25 years in prison, while Abakar Balamane and Zakaria Mahamat, also known as Zoulou, were each sentenced to 20 years. Oumar Serge Abdoulaye Assan was acquitted of all charges and immediately released. It is unclear whether one or more appeals are pending¹⁰⁰.

In both Ndélé cases, the victims are awaiting a decision on reparations. The Court's lack of resources¹⁰¹, and in particular of dedicated funds for reparations, risks undermining its ability to provide reparations in the Ndélé and subsequent cases¹⁰².

The trial in the **"Guen" case** began on 30 October 2025. It concerns attacks attributed to Anti-balaka elements against Muslim populations, perceived as being close to the Séléka, between February and March 2014 in Gadzi sub-prefecture, particularly in Guen and Djomo, in the west of the country. Six individuals were indicted before the Trial Chamber for crimes against humanity and war crimes, on charges of murder, rape, extermination, torture, forcible transfer of a population, and persecution¹⁰³. Although Mathurin Kombo died on 09 March 2026, proceedings are ongoing against the five remaining defendants: François Boybanda, alias Balere, Philémon Kahena, alias CB, Dieudonné Gomitoua, Edmond Beïna, and Jean Bahara, this latter not being present at his trial. The Trial Chamber closed the proceedings on 11 September 2026 and reserved judgment. A verdict is expected on 15 December 2026¹⁰⁴.

Finally, the trial in the **"Bossembélé" case** began on 16 June 2026¹⁰⁵. The case concerns crimes committed in Bangui, Bouar, and Bossembélé between February 2009 and March 2013, particularly in detention facilities. It targets four defendants: former President François Bozizé Yangouvonda, Eugène Barret Ngaikosset, Vianney Semndiro and Firmin Junior Danboy, all accused of murder, imprisonment, torture, enforced disappearance and other inhumane acts constituting crimes against humanity. François Bozizé, who is the subject of an international arrest warrant and is exiled in Guinea-Bissau, is being tried *in absentia*¹⁰⁶. At the time of writing, the hearings are ongoing.

Cases referred for trial	Acts in question	Status of the case	Judgment	Reparations
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¹⁰⁰ The SCC website does not contain the information, and the submissions of the parties to the proceedings have not been published.

¹⁰¹ See section 5.1 of this report

¹⁰² The reparations in the Paoua case were funded by a donation from the United States. However, at the time of writing, there were no more funds available to finance reparations in subsequent cases. This financial situation is likely to affect the judges' determination of reparations, as they appear to prioritize the feasibility of their orders over the assessment of victims' needs and rights.

¹⁰³ SCC, Press release, "Ouverture de l'audience publique du cinquième procès d'assises de la CPS", 27 October 2025, https://www.cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2025-10/communiqué-de-presse-cps-rca-sa-du-271025-affaire-guen_0.pdf

¹⁰⁴ SCC, Press release, "Cloture des débats dans l'affaire dite Guen", 11 September 2026, https://cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2026-09/communiqué-de-presse_cps_sa_affaire_guen_110926.pdf

¹⁰⁵ SCC, press release announcing the opening of the sixth trial in the "Bossembélé" case, 21 April 2026, https://www.cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2026-04/communiqué-de-presse_cps_sa_ouverture-proces_affaire-bossembele_210426.pdf

¹⁰⁶ SCC, Office of the President, Ordinance No. 009 on formalities prior to proceedings *in absentia*, <https://www.cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2026-04/ordonnance-009-portant-formalites-prealable-a-la-procedure-de-contumace-affaire-bossembele.pdf>

Paoua case	Attacks in Lemouna and Koundjili (north-western CAR) on 21 May 2019	closed	Final judgment on appeal by the SCC in July 2023	Final judgments of the Appeals Chamber of October 2023 and March 2024
Ndélé 1 case	Attacks in Ndélé (north-eastern CAR) on 11 March and 29 April 2020	under appeal	Non-final judgment at first instance in December 2024	hearing in progress
Ndélé 1 case in absentia	Attacks in Ndélé (north-eastern CAR) on 11 March and 29 April 2020	Under appeal or closed	Judgment at first instance in July 2025	hearing in progress
Ndélé 2 case	Attacks in Ndélé and the surrounding villages of Gozbeida, Lemena, Kourbou, and Alihou (north-eastern CAR) in March 2020	under appeal or closed	Judgment at first instance in June 2025	hearing in progress
Guen case	attacks between February and March 2014 in the Gadzi sub-prefecture (Guen, Djomo) (western CAR)	under consideration	pending	pending
Bossembélé Case	Murders, torture, and disappearances between February 2009 and March 2013 in Bossembélé, Bangui, and Bouar	hearing in progress	pending	pending

Three other cases have progressed beyond the investigation phase without yet being definitively committed for trial, as the indictment orders have been appealed.¹⁰⁷

The **“Fatima” case** refers to the attack carried out on 28 May 2014 by KM5 self-defense groups against the Church of Our Lady of Fatima in Bangui's third *arrondissement*, where 17 people¹⁰⁸ were killed, including Father Paul-Émile Nzalé. Nine people were charged in this case¹⁰⁹. In March 2026, four of the nine defendants were still at large¹¹⁰.

The **“Alindao” case** refers to the attack carried out, among others, by members of the UPC (Union for Peace in the Central African Republic) on 15 November 2018 against the site for displaced persons set up in the grounds of the Catholic Church in Alindao, in the south of the country. Between 70 and 100 people were killed in the attack, including children, the elderly, and people with disabilities¹¹¹. One of the defendants, Galawane Yacoub, arrested in Alindao on 12 April 2023, died in Bangui on 19 October 2024, thus terminating the proceedings against him¹¹². Proceedings are ongoing against the other defendants, whose exact number has not been made public¹¹³, and who have been charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity.

The **“Boyo” case** is about the attack carried out from 06 to 13 December 2021 against the village of Boyo, in Ouaka prefecture, by a militia composed of former Anti-balaka combatants. According to the UN, at least 20 civilians were killed, five women and girls were raped, some 547 houses were burned and pillaged, and over 1,000 villagers were forced to flee¹¹⁴. At least 12 people have been charged but the exact number of people in pre-trial detention or wanted is not public at this stage¹¹⁵.

¹⁰⁷SCC, Quarterly Newsletter No. 8, March 2026, https://www.cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2026-03/bulletin-n8-mars-2026_dv.pdf [hereinafter “March 2026 Newsletter”]

¹⁰⁸ UNHCR, “At least 17 killed and 27 missing after attack on Bangui church sheltering the displaced,” press briefing, 30 May 2014, www.unhcr.org/asia/news/briefing-notes/least-17-killed-and-27-missing-after-attack-bangui-church-sheltering-displaced

¹⁰⁹SCC, Press Release No. 240325, 24 March 2025, www.cpsrca.cf/actualites/290/communiqué-de-presse-de-la-cour-pénale-spéciale-ndeg240325; Justice Info, “Centrafrique: la CPS plaide le sursis”, 01 August 2025, www.justiceinfo.net/fr/148578-centrafrique-cps-plaide-sursis.html

¹¹⁰SCC, March 2026 Newsletter

¹¹¹ Amnesty International, “*Everything was in flames*”. *The attack on a displaced persons camp in Alindao* (Index: AFR 19/9573/2018), 14 December 2018, <https://www.amnesty.org/en/documents/afr19/9573/2018/en/>

¹¹²Special Criminal Court, Press Release No. 191024, “Décès de l'inculpé Gawane Yacoub”, 19 October 2024, www.cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2024-12/deces-de-l-inculpe-galawane-yacoub.pdf

¹¹³ SCC, March 2026 Newsletter: As of March 2026, five arrest warrants were still pending execution in this case. In addition, other arrest warrants may have been issued and executed, and it is likely that one or more defendants are in pre-trial detention in this case.

¹¹⁴UN Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights, “République centrafricaine: Des rapports de l'ONU exposent des violations graves, certaines pouvant être qualifiées de crimes de guerre et de crimes contre l'humanité”, 25 July 2022, <https://peacekeeping.un.org/fr/news/republique-centrafricaine-des-rapports-de-lonu-exposent-des-violations-graves>. The United Nations sees this as one of the first cases in which the government, together with members of private military companies, allegedly trained and armed young locally recruited people to form militias.

¹¹⁵SCC, March 2026 Newsletter: In March 2026, 12 arrest warrants remained pending execution in this case.

A ninth preliminary investigation, the so-called “Obo” case, ended with a dismissal in favour of Ali Mahamat Hamat¹¹⁶.

Other judicial investigations are still ongoing at the Office of the Special Prosecutor, some of which were opened following complaints made by the filing of a civil action.

Eleven years after its establishment and eight years after the start of its judicial activities, the Court has thus opened six trials in five cases, one of which is completely closed – the three individuals convicted in the Paoua case have been definitively sentenced, and the victims have received reparations.

The first three cases, which have already been tried at least at the first instance, related to recent events that took place after the 2019 peace agreement, in the north-west (Paoua) and the north-east (Ndélé 1 and 2). The trials underway in 2026, in the Guen and Bossembélé cases, are finally examining different periods and geographical areas. However, the Central African population is still awaiting trials concerning the deadliest periods, the most significant events of the conflicts in the country over the past 25 years, and all the highest-ranking perpetrators – which is why the SCC was established.

¹¹⁶SCC, March 2026 Newsletter



WHERE ARE THE LANDMARK CASES CONCERNING THE CRIMES OF 2012-2014?

Where are the 2013 cases? The violence was intense at that time. When are we going to address that through SCC? My children were killed... but, so far, I have been led to understand that the SCC has not considered these cases,¹¹⁷

complained one person interviewed by Amnesty International.

On 10 December 2012, an armed offensive launched by the Séléka marked the beginning of an armed conflict in the CAR that continues to this day. In March 2013, the Séléka overthrew then-President François Bozizé, and Michel Djotodia became President of the CAR. This coup ushered in an era of violence, the commission of numerous crimes under international law, and other serious human rights violations. Amnesty International has documented massacres, rapes, extrajudicial executions, cases of torture, the burning of houses and villages, and enforced disappearances committed by Séléka forces under the regime of Michel Djotodia¹¹⁸. In the months following the coup, the Anti-balaka, a group which comprises of armed “self-defense” groups made up mainly of animists and Christians, emerged. These groups carried out widespread reprisals against Muslim populations throughout the country, particularly in Bangui and in the West¹¹⁹. These grave abuses included mass killings, abductions, mutilations, the burning of homes and places of worship, and the destruction and pillaging of homes. In December 2013, nearly 1,000 civilians were killed in clashes between the Séléka and Anti-balaka in Bangui. This led to the resignation of President Michel Djotodia in January 2014 under strong pressure from the international community. However, crimes continued on both sides.

This period, from December 2012 to the end of 2014, left its mark on the Central African population due to the scale of the violence. Many hope that those responsible for the crimes committed during this period will not go unpunished. A member of a Central African association supporting victims explained: “Victims want justice [to be done]. When their perpetrators are brought to justice their hearts will be at peace, when they see them in prison.”¹²⁰

Several trials relating to this period have been held before the ICC, including the case against Yekatom and Ngaïssona concerning crimes committed by the Anti-balaka, and the case against Said concerning crimes committed by the Séléka, all of whom were found guilty at first instance¹²¹. Before the SCC, however, only one case relating to this period has reached the trial stage: the Guen case, concerning attacks by Anti-balaka elements against Muslim populations in February and March 2014. Other cases are awaiting trial or are under investigation, including the “Fatima” case, relating to the attack on 28 May 2014 on the Church of Our Lady of Fatima in Bangui, and the investigation into the discovery of 31 bodies on the Colline des Panthères in Bangui in December 2013. To Amnesty International's knowledge, no case concerning crimes committed by the Séléka while in power between March 2013 and January 2014 has yet been referred for trial before the SCC. The Bossembélé case, currently on trial, concerns crimes committed between 2009 and March 2013 in detention facilities under the regime of François Bozizé; it does not fall within the scope of the conflict between the Séléka and the Anti-balaka¹²².

A man who was injured during this period and lost several loved ones states: “The cases being tried before the SCC are not the cases we expected to see there. They're a distraction. It's the small fry who are being prosecuted. We are waiting for the files on the big fish, those who were in the government and the others...”¹²³. Another person added: “The Fatima case will not be enough, given the sheer scale of the crimes committed during this period.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁷ Interview with a survivor of the 2013 crimes, Bangui, 11 April 2026

4.1.2 THE ISSUE OF TRIALS *IN ABSENTIA*

The SCC allows for proceedings *in absentia* when the suspect has not been arrested and brought before the Court¹²⁵. However, if the accused subsequently appears before the SCC or is arrested, whether before or after the judgment *in absentia*, they have the right to request that a completely new trial be initiated¹²⁶. This last point is largely misunderstood within civil society or among Central African victim associations, many of whom believe that the sentence would be directly enforceable if the person convicted *in absentia* were to be arrested in the future¹²⁷.

Before commencing a trial in the absence of a defendant, the SCC must first attempt to notify the defendant. Its President orders the publicity measures provided for in Article 172 of the RPE. In the Ndélé 2 case, the SCC had a press release broadcast on Radio Centrafrique. It also had its order posted at the town hall in Ndélé and broadcast on the town's community radio station¹²⁸. The Trial Chamber then verifies that these steps have indeed been taken¹²⁹, after which it can open the proceedings in their absence.

Ten people were sentenced *in absentia* by the SCC in 2025. Six and four defendants, who were not present at their trials, were convicted *in absentia* of crimes against humanity and war crimes in the Ndélé 1 and Ndélé 2 cases, respectively¹³⁰. At the time of writing, this represents exactly half of the total number of people who have been tried before the SCC¹³¹. In addition, two other people are also currently on trial, in their absence, in the Guen and Bossembélé cases, including former President Bozizé.

In the Ndélé 1 case, it should be noted that the individuals present at their trial were sentenced to terms ranging from 15 to 20 years, while those tried *in absentia* received sentences ranging from 20 to 25 years for the same crimes. This is all the more puzzling when it can be seen that the only person found to have military command responsibility in addition to being a co-perpetrator of the crimes, Kalite Azor, was sentenced to 20 years, which is equivalent to or less than the sentences imposed on those tried *in absentia*, for the same acts and solely on the basis of co-perpetrator responsibility.

In the Ndélé 2 case, one defendant present at his trial was acquitted, two others present at their trials were sentenced to between 18 and 20 years, and the four tried *in absentia* were sentenced to between 20 and 25 years.

Opinions among the population are mixed on the issue of trials *in absentia* in the Central African Republic. Some say they are pleased to see the names come out but others would like to see those accused on trial with their own eyes, or to know that they are behind bars. A woman whose children were killed in December 2013 asked: "If people are tried in their absence, how will they serve their sentences? Are they living a good life out there, evading justice? They need to be brought back, to instil fear, to send a message¹³²." She believes that the trust placed in the SCC remains fragile.

Another victim from 2013, however, felt that "trials *in absentia* are a good thing if the perpetrators cannot be found. It is a way of condemning them in advance, and it brings relief to the victims. The important thing is that there is a court ruling, even if the accused is in a distant country."¹³³

¹²⁸ Amnesty International, *Central African Republic: Time for Accountability* (index: AFR 19/006/2014), 10 July 2014, pp. 26-32; Amnesty International, *Central African Republic: Human rights crisis spiraling out of control* (index: AFR 19/003/2013), October 2013.

¹²⁹ Amnesty International, *Central African Republic: Time for Accountability* (index: AFR 19/006/2014), 10 July 2014, pp. 15-25

¹³⁰ Interview with a person supporting victims, Bangui, 10 April 2026

¹²¹ ICC, "Central African Republic II" page, <https://www.icc-cpi.int/carII> (last accessed on 23 September 2026)

¹²² See Section 4.1.1 above

¹²³ Interview with a representative of victims' networks, Bangui, 11 April 2026

¹²⁴ Interview, Bangui, 10 April 2026

¹²⁵ RPE, Art. 119 (A) and Arts. 171 to 176. The SCC Rules of Procedure and Evidence (RPE) establish an obligation to make every effort to inform the accused of their upcoming trial. However, they also allow the SCC to proceed with a trial *in absentia* even if the defendant has not explicitly waived their right to be present at their trial, or even without confirmation that they have been informed of the trial, provided that all measures to inform them of the trial and its date have been taken.

¹²⁶ RPE, Articles 175 and 176

¹²⁷ Interviews, Bangui, April 2026

¹²⁸ SCC, Trial Chamber, Judgment No. 39-S1-2025 on the Public Prosecution, Case No. CPS/CHASS/ISA/24-001, *Office of the Special Public Prosecutor v. Oumar Serge Abdoulaye Assan et al.*, 19 June 2025, para. 66-67.

¹²⁹ RPE, Art. 173

¹³⁰ SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Judgment No. 43-S1-2025 on the Public Prosecution, Case No. CPS/CA/PSA/23-001 (In absentia), *Office of the Special Public Prosecutor v. General Fache et al.*, 28 July 2025, para. 1157 and operative part, pp. 393-396; SCC, Trial Chamber, First Trial Section, Judgment No. 39-S1-2025 on the Public Prosecution, Case No. SCC/CHASS/ISA/24-001, *Office of the Special Public Prosecutor v. Oumar Serge Abdoulaye Assan et al.*, 19 June 2025, para. 64 to 70 and operative part, p. 249
See Section 4.1.1 of this report for more information on these cases

¹³¹ Ten people were tried *in absentia* in the Ndélé 1 and 2 cases, and 10 people were tried in person in the Paoua, Ndélé 1, and Ndélé 2 cases, making a total of 20 people found guilty or acquitted by the SCC, at least at the first instance, at the time of writing.

¹³² Interview with a woman whose two children were killed in Bangui in December 2013, Bangui, 11 April 2026

¹³³ Interview with a man whose brothers were killed in Bangui in December 2013, Bangui, 17 April 2026

For his part, the President of the SCC believes¹³⁴ that these convictions can have a deterrent effect. According to him, the Court hands down convictions not only to punish the perpetrators themselves, but also to deter others from committing similar crimes.

A person from an organization that supports victims summed it up as follows: “For some victims, this is already enough. For others, however, trials *in absentia* are simply a mockery. It is incomprehensible to them that someone can be tried without being present¹³⁵.”

Amnesty International calls on SCC to cease its practice of trials *in absentia*, particularly given that the right of those convicted *in absentia* to a retrial in the event of their arrest is undermined by the time-limited nature of the SCC's existence¹³⁶. Amnesty International also calls on all competent entities, both in the CAR and in the countries to which suspects have fled, to make every effort possible to enable suspects to be arrested and, where applicable, extradited for the purpose of conducting trials in the presence of all defendants¹³⁷.

TRIALS *IN ABSENTIA* UNDER INTERNATIONAL LAW

A trial *in absentia*, also known as a trial by default, is a proceeding in which the accused is not present at the hearings, and the court decides their fate without observing the principle of adversarial proceedings.

Trials *in absentia* are generally excluded from the practice of international or hybrid courts. Indeed, the only cases are the International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, which convicted Martin Bormann in his absence, and the Special Tribunal for Lebanon (STL)¹³⁸, which conducted a trial *in absentia* in the *Ayyash case*, thereby convicting three individuals¹³⁹. In contrast, other international tribunals, such as the ICC¹⁴⁰, the Extraordinary Chambers in the Courts of Cambodia (ECCC), the Extraordinary African Chambers (EAC), the Special Court for Sierra Leone (SCSL), the International Criminal Tribunal for Rwanda (ICTR), and the International Criminal Tribunal for the Former Yugoslavia (ICTY), do not or did not allow trials to be conducted in the absence of the accused. These experiences at Nuremberg and STL, which are rare in the landscape of international justice, received mixed and controversial feedback¹⁴¹, particularly on the issue of protecting the right of defence.

Amnesty International considers that trials *in absentia* are not compatible with the right to a fair trial. Article 14 of the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights states that “everyone charged with a criminal offence shall have the right [...] to be tried in his presence, and to defend himself in person or through legal assistance of his own choosing.” The Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial in Africa also recognize the right to be present at one's own trial and not to be tried *in absentia*¹⁴².

¹³⁴ Interview with the President of the SCC, Bangui, 13 April 2026

¹³⁵ Interview with a victim support worker, Bangui, 10 April 2026

¹³⁶ See section 5.2 of this report

¹³⁷ See section 4.2 of this report

¹³⁸ The Special Tribunal for Lebanon is considered a hybrid court because it was established through an agreement between the UN and Lebanon, and it applies international law and Lebanese criminal law.

¹³⁹ International Military Tribunal at Nuremberg, Judgment of 01 October 1946; Special Tribunal for Lebanon, Trial Chamber, Decision to Hold Trial in Absentia, *The Prosecutor v. Ayyash et al.*, STL-11-01/ITC, 01 February 2012

¹⁴⁰ ICC, Appeals Chamber, Judgment on the appeal of Mr. Joseph Kony against the decision of PTC III of 29 October 2024 entitled ‘Decision on the criteria for holding confirmation of charges proceedings in absentia’, Case of The Prosecutor v. Joseph Kony, 03 June 2025, Doc. No. ICC-02/04-01/05, para. 76: The ICC authorized the holding of *in absentia* confirmation of charges hearings in the case against Joseph Kony. In contrast, the ICC Appeals Chamber pointed out that the Rome Statute does not authorize trials *in absentia* but rather only the confirmation of charges *in absentia*, and that Kony will have to appear before the Court if a trial is held to enable him to exercise all his rights in person, as recognized in Article 67 of the Rome Statute.

¹⁴¹ JusticeInfo, “Special Tribunal for Lebanon: Billion-dollar trial”, 07 July 2020, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/en/44825-special-tribunal-for-lebanon-billion-dollar-trial.html>; Christophe Paulussen & Tarik Gherbaoui, “Trials in Absentia of Foreign Fighters and their Families?”, International Centre for Counter-Terrorism (ICCT), 01 August 2022, <https://icct.nl/publication/trials-absentia-foreign-fighters-and-their-families>; Chris Jenks, “The STL, in Absentia trials and notice ‘otherwise given’”, 28 May 2010, <https://opiniojuris.org/2010/05/28/the-stl-in-absentia-trials-notice-otherwise-given/>; Quid Justitiae, “Le Tribunal spécial pour le Liban, cet éternumène judiciaire: Observations d’un expert avisé”, report on an interview with Philippe Larochelle, 04 October 2015, <https://www.quidjustitiae.ca/blogue/le-tribunal-special-pour-le-liban-cet-energumene-judiciaire-observations-dun-expert-avisé>; ICTJ, “Justice Served? The Special Tribunal for Lebanon Renders Its Long-Anticipated Judgment”, 20 August 2020, <https://www.ictj.org/latest-news/justice-served-special-tribunal-lebanon-renders-its-long-anticipated-judgment>; IBA, *Report on the ‘Experts’ Roundtable on Trials in Absentia in International Criminal Justice*, The Hague, 08 June 2016, p. 11, <https://www.ibanet.org/document?id=Experts-roundtable-trials-in-absentia>; N. Pons, “Some Remarks on in Absentia Proceedings before the Special Tribunal for Lebanon in Case of a State's Failure or Refusal to Hand over the Accused”, *Journal of International Criminal Justice*, vol. 8, 2010, pp. 1307-1321

¹⁴² African Commission on Human and Peoples’ Rights (ACHPR), Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial and Legal Assistance in Africa, Section N(6)(c): “In criminal proceedings, the accused has the right to be tried in his or her presence. 1. The accused has the right to appear in person before the judicial body. 2. The accused may not be tried *in absentia*. If an accused is tried *in absentia*, the accused shall have the right to petition for a reopening of the proceedings upon a showing that inadequate notice was given, that the notice was not personally served on the accused, or that his or her failure to appear was for exigent reasons beyond his or her control. If the

The jurisprudence of the African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, the European Court of Human Rights, the Inter-American Court of Human Rights, and the UN Human Rights Committee also recognized that trials *in absentia* can only be compatible with human rights under certain conditions, notably that the accused has been informed sufficiently in advance of the proceedings against them and that they have explicitly waived the right to appear¹⁴³.

This right to be present at one's own trial is essential to ensure the accused's right to defend themselves, including the opportunity to follow the hearings, cross-examine witnesses, present their defence, address the Court directly, etc. In a trial *in absentia*, civil party victims are also deprived of the opportunity to see the accused at the hearing and to address them. Finally, the prison sentences handed down are merely symbolic, as the defendants continue to live in freedom.

4.2 FAILURE TO EXECUTE ARREST WARRANTS AND POLITICAL INTERFERENCE

4.2.1 NUMEROUS ARRESTS OVER THE PAST FIVE YEARS

The execution of arrest warrants issued by the SCC has improved significantly since the Court's early years of operation; the list below (non-exhaustive) of individuals apprehended attests to this. The judicial police officers of the Central African Gendarmerie carry out most of the arrests on the ground.

In September and then in October 2022, two officers linked to the Bossembélé detention centre, Vianney Semndiro, former head of this military prison, and Firmin Junior Danboy, were arrested and charged with crimes against humanity in the same case¹⁴⁴. In that same year, Mathurin Kombo, leader of an Anti-balaka armed group implicated in the crimes committed in Guen in 2014, was arrested¹⁴⁵ – he has since died¹⁴⁶.

On 12 April 2023, Galawane Yacoub was arrested in Alindao and then charged with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in the "Alindao" case – but he also died before his trial had begun¹⁴⁷.

On 04 September 2023, Abdoulaye Hissène, former military leader of the FPRC, was arrested at his home in Bangui by national security forces and brought before the cabinet of the co-investigating judges three days later, who charged him with crimes against humanity and war crimes committed in 2017¹⁴⁸. He is awaiting trial.

petition is granted, the accused is entitled to a fresh determination of the merits of the charge. 3. The accused may voluntarily waive the right to appear at a hearing, but such a waiver shall be established in an unequivocal manner and preferably in writing."

¹⁴³ ACHPR, Communication 231/99, *Lawyers Without Borders v. Burundi*, para. 28; African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights, Judgment, *Alex Thomas v. Tanzania*, Case No. 005/2013, 20 November 2015, paras. 91-99; Inter-American Court of Human Rights, Case of Suarez-Rosero v. Ecuador, 12 November 1997, para. 82; European Court of Human Rights (ECtHR), Judgment, *Colozza v. Italy*, Application No. 9024/80, 12 February 1985, paras. 27 and 29; ECtHR, Judgment, *Krombach v. France*, Application No. 29731/96, 13 February 2001, para. 85; ECtHR, Judgment, *Sejdovic v. Italy*, Application No. 56581/00, 01 March 2006, para. 82; Human Rights Committee (HRC), Views of 25 March 1983, *Mbenge v. Zaire*, Communication No. 16/1977, para. 14.1; Human Rights Committee, Views of 15 July 1999, *Maleki v. Italy*, Communication No. 699/1996, paras. 9.3 to 9.5; Human Rights Committee, General Comment 32, Doc. CCPR/C/GC/32, 23 August 2007, para. 36

¹⁴⁴ RFI, "Centrafrique: la CPS inculpe un commandant de l'armée pour crimes contre l'humanité," 01 October 2022, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20220930-centrafrique-la-cps-inculpe-un-commandant-de-l-arm%C3%A9e-pour-crimes-contre-l-humanit%C3%A9>

¹⁴⁵ Human Rights Watch, "Central African Republic: Step Toward Accountability", 02 July 2024, <https://www.hrw.org/news/2024/07/02/central-african-republic-step-toward-accountability>

¹⁴⁶ SCC, X post, https://x.com/cour_penale/status/2031696150915428761?s=20

¹⁴⁷ SCC, "Décès de l'inculpé Gawane Yacoub", 19 October 2024, <https://www.cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2024-12/deces-de-l-inculpe-galawane-yacoub.pdf>

¹⁴⁸ SCC, press release, 07 September 2023, https://www.justiceinfo.net/wp-content/uploads/Centrafrique_Abdoulaye-Issene-communique-de-presse-070923_@CPS.pdf; See also Jeune Afrique, "En Centrafrique, un ancien chef rebelle inculpé de crimes contre l'humanité", 08 September 2023, www.jeuneafrique.com/1480781/politique/en-centrafrique-un-ancien-chef-rebelle-inculpe-de-crimes-contre-lhumanite/; RFI, "Centrafrique: arrêté à Bangui, l'ex-chef du FRPC Abdoulaye Hissène inculpé par la CPS", 08 September 2023, <https://www.rfi.fr/fr/afrique/20230907-centrafrique-arr%C3%AAt%C3%A9-%C3%A0-bangui-l-ex-chef-du-frpc-abdoulaye-hiss%C3%A8ne>

On 16 June 2024, Edmond Beïna, a former Anti-balaka leader subject to an SCC warrant dated 03 May 2022, and wanted by the ICC since 2018, was likewise arrested¹⁴⁹. He is currently on trial in the “Guen” case. In July 2024, three suspects – Yvon Nzelélé, Narcisse Christian Gomani Niakari, and Roger Linet – were arrested for crimes against humanity and war crimes allegedly committed in Mbomou in 2017¹⁵⁰. They are awaiting trial.

On 21 March 2025, Mohamed Ali Fadoul was arrested by judicial police officers and handed over to the SCC¹⁵¹. He is charged with crimes against humanity in the “Fatima” case and is awaiting trial.

On 29 April 2026, Ibrahim Radjab Guer-Guer, also known as Faki Ibrahim, was arrested. He is charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity as part of an ongoing SCC investigation into the discovery of 31 bodies on the Colline des Panthères in Bangui in December 2013¹⁵².

An SCC staff member interviewed by Amnesty International noted a “significant improvement” since 2023, explaining that the gendarmerie, police, and armed forces now support the execution of warrants throughout the national territory¹⁵³.

The available official data confirms this progress while highlighting how far there is still to go. In December 2021, of the 25 arrest warrants issued by the Court, only one had been executed, namely for Hassan Bouba, whose release is discussed below¹⁵⁴. In November 2022, according to a Court activity report cited by the press, more than 60 arrest warrants had been issued since 2018, of which only four had been executed¹⁵⁵. At the end of July 2025, the Court reported that 48 arrest warrants had been executed since 2018¹⁵⁶. However, in March 2026, the Court also noted that 46 individuals remain wanted by the SCC¹⁵⁷.

The number of people arrested in connection with proceedings before the SCC has increased significantly in recent years but, at the same time, progress in said proceedings is also increasing the number of people wanted. Each case that emerges from the investigation reveals further accused individuals whom the Court is unable to apprehend.

4.2.2 PERSISTENT OBSTACLES TO THE EXECUTION OF ARREST WARRANTS

When it comes to the non-execution of warrants, the most striking precedent remains that of Minister Hassan Bouba. He was initially arrested on 19 November 2021 in his office at the Ministry of Livestock, under a warrant issued by the SCC, and charged with war crimes and crimes against humanity¹⁵⁸ in connection with the Alindao case¹⁵⁹ concerning acts committed between 2014 and 2019¹⁶⁰, a period during which the UPC controlled part of Basse-Kotto. It was in this prefecture that UPC members attacked the Alindao camp for internally displaced persons on 15 November 2018, killing at least 112 civilians, including 44 women and 19 minors, according to investigations by MINUSCA’s Human Rights Division¹⁶¹.

inculp%C3%A9-par-la-cour-p%C3%A9nale-sp%C3%A9ciale; Justice Info, “Abdoulaye Hissène dans le filet de la Cour pénale spéciale”, 14 September 2023, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/121682-centrafrique-abdoulaye-hissene-filet-cour-penale-speciale.html>;

¹⁴⁹ SCC, “Arrestation du suspect Edmond BEÏNA”, 21 June 2024, <https://www.legal-tools.org/doc/s48xozta/pdf>; see also Radio Ndeke Luka, “Course-poursuite à Bangui”, 09 December 2024, <https://www.radiondekeluka.org/77871-course-poursuite-a-bangui>

¹⁵⁰ Radio Ndeke Luka, “Centrafrique: la Cour pénale spéciale étend son filet et annonce de nouvelles arrestations”, 12 September 2024, <https://www.radiondekeluka.org/73847-centrafrique-la-cour-penale-speciale-etend-son-filet-et-annonce-de-nouvelles-arrestations>

¹⁵¹ SCC, Press release, 24 March 2025, <https://www.cpsrca.cf/sites/default/files/2025-03/communique-de-presse-cps-rca-fatima-du-240325.pdf>

¹⁵² SCC, “Arrestation et inculpation de Monsieur Ibrahim Radjab Guer-Guer par la CPS”, 29 April 2026, <https://www.cpsrca.cf/documents/495/arrestation-et-inculpation-de-monsieur-ibrahim-radjab-guer-guer-par-la-cps>

¹⁵³ Interview with an SCC staff member, Bangui, 13 April 2026

¹⁵⁴ Amnesty International 2021 Report: *One Step Forward, Two Steps Backwards*

¹⁵⁵ Jeune Afrique, “Centrafrique: la Cour pénale spéciale, quatre années d’existence et si peu de résultats”, 03 November 2022, www.jeuneafrique.com/1389253/politique/centrafrique-la-cour-penale-speciale-quatre-annees-dexistence-et-si-peu-de-resultats

¹⁵⁶ SCC, “La CPS en chiffres”, www.cpsrca.cf/la-cour/103/la-cps-en-chiffres (accessed 23 September 2026) and Justice Info, “Centrafrique: la CPS plaide le sursis”, 01 August 2025, www.justiceinfo.net/fr/148578-centrafrique-cps-plaide-sursis.html

¹⁵⁷ SCC, March 2026 Newsletter

¹⁵⁸ Justice Info, “Hassan Bouba: un ministre rebelle devant la CPS”, 22 November 2021, www.justiceinfo.net/fr/84590-hassan-bouba-ministre-rebelle-devant-cps.html

¹⁵⁹ Ministry of State for Justice, the Promotion of Human Rights and Good Governance, press release concerning the Hassane Ali Bouba case, December 2021, reproduced by the Journal de Bangui, 07 December 2021, www.journaldebangui.com/rca-le-ministre-detat-a-la-justice-se-prononce-sur-laffaire-hassane-ali-bouba/

¹⁶⁰ Jeune Afrique, “Centrafrique: le ministre Hassan Bouba prêt à faire face à la justice”, 21 January 2022, www.jeuneafrique.com/1299614/politique/centrafrique-le-ministre-hassan-bouba-pret-a-faire-face-a-la-justice/

¹⁶¹ MINUSCA, Human Rights Division, Attack on the camp for internally displaced persons in Alindao, Basse-Kotto Prefecture, on 15 November 2018: Breaches of International Humanitarian Law and Atrocity Crimes Committed by the UPC and anti-Balaka associated militias, February 2019, www.ohchr.org/en/documents/country-reports/attack-displaced-persons-camp-alindao-basse-kotto-prefecture-15-november; Amnesty International, “Everything was in flames”: The attack on a displaced persons camp in Alindao (Index: AFR 19/9573/2018), 14 December 2018

Hassan Bouba was released a week after his arrest, on 26 November 2021. The SCC publicly denounced the obstruction of the proper functioning of justice in an act that undermined the authority of the Court and the independence of the judiciary¹⁶². In a statement issued on 05 December 2021, the Ministry of Justice justified this release on the grounds that the five-day validity period of the detention order had expired, while acknowledging that the SCC team responsible for his removal had been unable to access the detainee that day “due to the military and operational manoeuvres taking place at Camp de Roux.” In this statement, the State Minister of Justice lamented a lack of communication between the SCC and the Ministry of Justice, announced the opening of an administrative investigation to determine who was responsible, and gave assurances that the proceedings were neither suspended nor terminated¹⁶³. However, the SCC publicly disputed this account, stating that the deadline had not expired and that the Court’s team, despite being supported by MINUSCA peacekeepers, had been prevented from accessing Hassan Bouba by members of the Presidential Guard¹⁶⁴.

Despite the arrest warrant issued against him by the SCC, which was still in force at the time of writing, Hassan Bouba has not been arrested since. He has held ministerial positions without interruption, first in Livestock, and then, since the reshuffle of 21 May 2026, in Urban Planning, Land Reform, Cities, and Housing¹⁶⁵.

This case plays a significant role in how the public perceives the justice system. A man whose brothers were killed in Bangui in December 2013 told Amnesty International that he trusts the SCC precisely because, in his view, it is not subject to the pressures that weigh on the ordinary justice system, before describing how he felt about this case. “We deeply deplore the case of Hassan Bouba. Seeing him still working in the government is extremely shocking to us. He was arrested by the SCC, and then our authorities unilaterally decided to release him. It is exactly this kind of situation that destroys victims’ trust in the national justice system,” he said. He added: “When we learn that arrest warrants are not being executed, or when Minister Hassan Bouba was arrested and then released, we feel an immense sense of demotivation¹⁶⁶.” A civil society member interviewed in Bangui described it as a case that had become “the very symbol of a two-tier justice system”¹⁶⁷.

Warrants targeting people who have fled abroad, on the other hand, almost always remain without effect. The most emblematic case is that of former President François Bozizé, who has been the subject of an international arrest warrant since 27 February 2024 for crimes against humanity allegedly committed by his presidential guard and other internal security forces between February 2009 and March 2013, particularly in the civil prison and the military training centre in Bossembélé¹⁶⁸. Exiled in Guinea-Bissau since March 2023, he did not appear alongside his three co-defendants in custody, Eugène Ngaïkosset, Vianney Semndiro, and Firmin Junior Danboy, when his trial began *in absentia* on 16 June 2026¹⁶⁹.

On 01 May 2024, the President of Guinea-Bissau, Umaro Sissoco Embaló, stated that his country would not cooperate with the SCC due to the lack of an extradition law¹⁷⁰. He stated that Bozizé, who had arrived in the country at the invitation of the African Union and Central African leaders, had not caused any problems since his arrival and that his reception had been motivated by humanitarian considerations.

Other suspects for whom arrest warrants have been issued have found refuge in the territories of countries neighbouring the CAR, particularly Chad. According to members of the SCC, Chad has, to date, not acted on any requests for the arrest and extradition of individuals¹⁷¹. The lack of cooperation from countries where the individuals wanted by the SCC are located is therefore a major obstacle to arrests.

Other individuals wanted by the SCC may be in conflict zones and therefore difficult to apprehend¹⁷².

¹⁶² SCC, Press release, 26 November 2021, copy with Amnesty International

¹⁶³ Journal de Bangui, Ministry of Justice of the Central African Republic, Press Release, December 2021, <https://www.journaldebangui.com/rca-le-ministre-detat-a-la-justice-se-prononce-sur-laffaire-hassane-ali-bouba>

¹⁶⁴ Jeune Afrique, “Centrafrique: le ministre Hassan Bouba prêt ‘à faire face à la justice’”, 21 January 2022, www.jeuneafrique.com/1299614/politique/centrafrique-le-ministre-hassan-bouba-pret-a-faire-face-a-la-justice/

¹⁶⁵ Decree No. 26.146 of 21 May 2026 appointing members of the government

¹⁶⁶ Interview with a man whose two brothers were killed in Bangui in December 2013, Bangui, 17 April 2026

¹⁶⁷ Interview with a member of civil society, Bangui, 12 April 2026

¹⁶⁸ SCC, press release posted on the Court’s account on X, https://x.com/cour_penale/status/1785330572224532842 (accessed 23 September 2026)

¹⁶⁹ Amnesty International, “CAR: Long-awaited trial of former president Bozizé for crimes against humanity tarnished by his absence”, 16 June 2026, <https://www.amnesty.org/fr/latest/news/2026/06/car-bozize/>

¹⁷⁰ Senego, “Guinée-Bissau refuse l’extradition de l’ex-président centrafricain François Bozizé, invoquant l’absence de loi d’extradition”, 04 May 2024, www.senego.com/guinee-bissau-refuse-l extradition-de-l ex-president-centrafricain-francois-bozize-invoquant-l absence-de-loi-d extradition_1694189.html

¹⁷¹ Interview with a judge of the Special Criminal Court, Bangui, 09 April 2026

¹⁷² Interview with a MINUSCA official, Bangui, 13 April 2026

The obstacles to the execution of arrest warrants may thus be numerous, ranging from material or security-related difficulties to those linked to a lack of political will on the part of the CAR authorities or other states.

Alongside this, on 19 April 2025, the CAR government signed a cessation of hostilities agreement with the UPC and the 3R in N'Djamena, under Chadian mediation. The agreement provided for the dissolution of the two movements, the reintegration of their fighters, and the return of the signatories within the framework of the 2019 Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation¹⁷³. On 10 July 2025, during a ceremony presided over by the Head of State in Bangui, the leaders of the two groups, Ali Darassa and Abdel Kader Sembé Bobo, symbolically laid down their arms and announced the dissolution of their movements¹⁷⁴. Ali Darassa, founder and leader of the UPC, whose main second-in-command was Hassan Bouba, thus appeared publicly in the capital without being disturbed. At the time of publication, the text of the agreement of 19 April 2025 had not been made public. Although the officially announced terms of this agreement do not mention any provisions relating to justice, there is no certainty in this regard. According to media reports, an agreement reached with the MPC within the same framework in November 2025 includes an amnesty clause¹⁷⁵. Amnesty International has not been able to verify this information.

This sequence of events directly calls into question the SCC's ability to bring the highest-ranking alleged perpetrators to justice. The UPC is at the heart of several of the Court's cases, including that of the crimes committed in Alindao in 2018, finalized by the cabinet of the co-investigating judges in 2025,¹⁷⁶ with no SCC arrest warrant for Ali Darassa issued to date. However, the inclusion of armed group commanders in a peace and disarmament process automatically raises the political cost of any legal action against them, with the state becoming the guarantor of the future of those very individuals whom justice might seek to prosecute.

Under international¹⁷⁷ and Central African law¹⁷⁸, no peace agreement or amnesty measure can prevent prosecutions for genocide, crimes against humanity, or war crimes. As early as 2015, the Bangui Forum called for a formal ban on any amnesty for genocide, war crimes, and crimes against humanity. Successive peace agreements, particularly the 2019 Khartoum Agreement, have since fueled civil society's doubts as to the authorities' determination to fight impunity¹⁷⁹. This scepticism remains prevalent among the victims of conflicts interviewed by Amnesty International in 2026. "If it had been up to our government, they would have released others on the pretext that peace is priceless, even though these people committed atrocities and deserve to be tried," the brother of two victims killed in December 2013 told Amnesty International¹⁸⁰.

4.3 LACK OF FULL OPERATIONAL INDEPENDENCE ON THE PART OF THE COURT

The mandate of the SCC Registry includes, among other things, the administrative and financial management of the Court. Article 7 of the law establishing the SCC states that "the Special Criminal Court is assisted in the day-to-day performance of its duties by a Registry [...]"¹⁸¹. Article 42 of the SCC Rules of Procedure and Evidence also states: "[...] The Registry shall also comprise the administrative and judicial services that enable the bodies of the Court to exercise their responsibilities with impartiality, independence and efficiency¹⁸²." The SCC Rules also list the duties of the Chief Registrar and the Deputy Chief Registrar, including the general administration of the Court's services, human resources, logistics, the management of financial services, the management of security services, victim and witness protection, the smooth functioning of the Chambers, etc.¹⁸³ Finally, SCC rules state that the Registry is independent and that the

¹⁷³ Radio Ndeke Luka, "Centrafrique: encore un autre accord entre le gouvernement et les groupes armés 3R et UPC," 24 April 2025, www.radiondekeluka.org/84258-centrafrique-encore-un-autre-accord-entre-le-gouvernement-et-les-groupes-armes-3r-et-upc

¹⁷⁴ Jeune Afrique, "Centrafrique: le retour de l'UPC et des 3R dans l'APPR est un tournant pour la paix", 28 July 2025, www.jeuneafrique.com/1709685/politique/centrafrique-le-retour-de-lupc-et-des-3r-dans-lappr-est-un-tournant-pour-la-paix/

¹⁷⁵ Tchadinfos, "Le gouvernement centrafricain et un groupe rebelle signent un accord de paix à N'Djaména", 19 November 2025, tchadinfos.com/2025/11/19/le-gouvernement-centrafricain-et-un-groupe-rebelle-signent-un-accord-de-paix-a-ndjamena

¹⁷⁶ Interview with an SCC judge, Bangui, 13 April 2026

¹⁷⁷ Rome Statute, Preamble, paragraphs 4 to 6, and Articles 17 and 29

¹⁷⁸ Penal Code, Article 162; "Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC", Articles 3 and 56.

¹⁷⁹ Amnesty International 2020 Report 'On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes', pp. 15–17.

¹⁸⁰ Interview with a man whose two brothers were killed in Bangui in December 2013, Bangui, 17 April 2026

¹⁸¹ "Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC", Article 7

¹⁸² RPE, Article 42

¹⁸³ RPE, Articles 43 and 44

members of the Registry “are placed under the exclusive authority of the Court” and “may not be subject to any external restriction or influence”¹⁸⁴.

Despite these provisions, the SCC does not manage its own budget. The administrative and financial management of the Court has been partly entrusted to the UNDP. The European Union, which previously channeled its contributions through UNDP, now routes these through Coginta, a Swiss non-governmental organization responsible for the implementation of a project of support for the Court. “It is the donors who control the SCC. And it is the United Nations bodies that manage the SCC,” observed a member of civil society¹⁸⁵. This arrangement, in which expenditure authorized by the Registry is subject to validation by external managers, deprives the SCC of control over its own operations. No other international or hybrid court is administered in this way.

4.3.1 UNFULFILLED PROMISES OF ADMINISTRATIVE AND FINANCIAL AUTONOMY

Amnesty International was already raising the alarm in 2020 regarding violations of the SCC’s independence due to this outsourced administrative and financial management¹⁸⁶. At the time, UNDP was solely responsible for the Court’s administrative and financial management, and this outsourced management was justified by the gradual operationalization of the SCC, particularly the absence of a Deputy Chief Registrar to supervise the management of the Finance Department. However, a United Nations staff member told us: “UNDP is adopting a hands-off approach. The first phase was: ‘Establish, establish, establish’. The second phase is: ‘Withdraw, withdraw, withdraw’¹⁸⁷.”

The United Nations itself had commissioned an expert to analyze the functioning of the SCC from its inception. This expert noted that: “Few people seem to understand (or accept?) that the Chief Registrar is responsible for the administration of the Court, including its human and financial resources, as well as many judicial support functions. For the Registry to assume the responsibilities assigned to it by the Court’s constitutive instruments, it must be appropriately structured, staffed, and managed.”¹⁸⁸ According to the expert, “UNDP, UNODC and UNV staff are *de facto* performing some Registry functions while remaining external to the Registry and the Court. This is problematic for several reasons. The Court must have its own capacity to carry out its tasks independently. [...] Furthermore, staff hired by UN partners cannot perform functions on behalf of the Chief Registrar unless the latter is able to assume responsibility for the actions of said staff. This is not currently the case, as these staff members report primarily to UN supervisors (both administratively and technically) and are only nominally under the authority of the Chief Registrar. [...] The Court is consequently not currently operationally independent.”¹⁸⁹ This 2018 UN internal report made a series of recommendations, including the swift recruitment of all heads of Registry services and the gradual withdrawal of international support so that the Court could become increasingly independent over time.¹⁹⁰

These warnings, both internal and external, have had no effect on the organization of the Court’s management. The International Deputy Chief Registrar, whose duties include overseeing the SCC’s finances, was sworn in in November 2022¹⁹¹. Eight years after the inauguration of the Court, administrative and financial management has still not been internalized. The gradual withdrawal of UNDP announced in 2020 did not take place. The final evaluation of the joint project, submitted in February 2025, notes that the Court still lacks both a strategy for the Court’s self-sufficiency and a strategy for UNDP’s exit: the corresponding indicator in the results framework shows the target as “not achieved”¹⁹². The evaluation mission described this absence as a significant weakness and reported that all the judges interviewed considered the development of such a strategy to be imperative.

¹⁸⁴ RPE, Article 48

¹⁸⁵ Interview with a member of Central African civil society who works with the ordinary courts and the SCC, Bangui, 15 April 2026

¹⁸⁶ Amnesty International 2020 Report ‘On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes’, Section 6.1.2, pp. 41 to 44

¹⁸⁷ Amnesty International 2020 Report ‘On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes’, p. 43 and footnote 219.

¹⁸⁸ Martin Petrov, *Rapport d’évaluation des besoins et des services déjà en place au Greffe de la Cour pénale spéciale centrafricaine*, 2018 (hereinafter: Petrov Report), para. 4. Document on file with Amnesty International.

¹⁸⁹ Petrov Report, paras. 7-8.

¹⁹⁰ Petrov Report, pp. 57-58.

¹⁹¹ SCC, “Prestation de serment du greffier en chef adjoint international de la Cour pénale spéciale”, 22 November 2022, <https://www.cpsrca.cf/actualites/51/prestation-de-serment-du-greffier-en-chef-adjoint-international-de-la-cour-penale>

¹⁹² Stéphane Claude M’Bafou, Agora Consulting, *Évaluation finale du projet conjoint d’appui au fonctionnement de la Cour pénale spéciale (PAF-CPS). Rapport Final*, evaluation commissioned by UNDP, February 2025, Table 3, Indicator 3.2 (hereinafter: PAF-SCC evaluation, 2025).

4.3.2 CONSEQUENCES FOR THE SCC AND ITS WORK

For years, the administrative and financial management of the SCC was handled solely by the UNDP. It is now divided between two channels: the UNDP, which remains in charge of this management, through which the contributions of the United Nations (and other potential contributors) are received, and Coginta, through which the European Union now channels its contributions. The SCC does not therefore decide on its expenditure commitments alone. Any expenditure authorized by the Registrar must be approved by UNDP or Coginta, depending on the funding line concerned¹⁹³.

This means that the UNDP and Coginta have final decision-making authority over a number of areas of expenditure and, in particular, over staff cutbacks or reductions, over whether or not to carry out certain activities, over whether or not to purchase equipment, etc. The donors have thus taken over the functions of the two Chief Registrars, as recognized in Articles 43 and 44 of the Rules of Procedure and Evidence. This outsourced management is inefficient and represents daily encroachment into the Court's independence. This lack of independence can directly interfere with the proper conduct of judicial proceedings

In 2020, Amnesty International documented the fact that, for each field investigation mission, the Office of the Special Prosecutor had to submit a budget for UNDP's approval, so that the timetable and objectives of these missions were known to people outside the SCC¹⁹⁴.

Six years later, members of the SCC told Amnesty International that certain decisions were imposed on the Court without prior consultation with its officials. According to a number of testimonies, the Court's officials were not given the opportunity to decide on the allocation of budget cuts within the Court. When it came to workforce reductions implemented in 2025 following the withdrawal of U.S. funding, the Court was presented with pre-determined proposals identifying specific positions to be eliminated and was asked to endorse them, without having been involved beforehand in defining those cuts.¹⁹⁵

Furthermore, expenses requested by the SCC reportedly did not receive approval from the donor decisionmakers in time. For example, the presence of rats in the SCC premises had damaged cables and sockets, which was complicating the work of the Court's staff. The Court's registry approved the expense required for a fumigation operation. However, the UNDP did not consider that authorization and instead conducted its own assessment of the necessity of the expense over several weeks, thereby delaying the intervention.¹⁹⁶

Amnesty International raised these concerns with the UNDP¹⁹⁷ in a letter sent on 5 October 2026. As of 20 October 2026, the organization had not received any response from the UNDP.

4.3.3 PRETEXTS FOR KEEPING THE COURT UNDER ADMINISTRATIVE SUPERVISION

One of the reasons given¹⁹⁸ for maintaining this outsourced management is said to be a lack of capacity within the Registry. Although the Deputy Chief Registrar has been in post since 2022, he does not have a team that would enable him to handle the administrative and financial management of the SCC. This situation is the result of two distinct shortcomings. Article 17 of the¹⁹⁹ Organic Law establishing the SCC provides that: "Civil service officials from the civil administration and finance and treasury departments, assigned to administrative and management tasks, shall supplement the staff of the Registry of the Special Criminal Court." To date, these civil servants have not been assigned by the CAR authorities. At the same time, donors have not funded the establishment of an administrative and financial management team at the Registry. The Registry's Administration and Finance Department has lost one position, the only one that existed up until then, and several other units are operating with minimal staffing.²⁰⁰

¹⁹³ Interview with SCC staff, April 2026

¹⁹⁴ Amnesty International 2020 Report "On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes," p. 42

¹⁹⁵ Interviews in Bangui, April 2026

¹⁹⁶ A source within the SCC Registry, Bangui, April 2026.

¹⁹⁷ Letter from Amnesty International to the UNDP, 5 October 2026.

¹⁹⁸ Interviews with SCC and MINUSCA staff members, Bangui, April 2026

¹⁹⁹ Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC, Article 17

²⁰⁰ Interview with the Deputy Chief Registrar of the Special Criminal Court, Bangui, 16 April 2026

The result is a circular situation, described to Amnesty International by several people working at the SCC: management will not be transferred to the Registry until it has the necessary staff but such staff have neither been assigned by the State nor funded by the donors.²⁰¹ The SCC's donors thus use their own failure to justify the continuation of a system in which they take over the functions of the Registry, as provided for by law.

Yet, transferring this management to the Court would not entail any new financial resources. Day-to-day administrative and financial tasks are currently being carried out by staff employed by UNDP or Coginta, who are accountable to these institutions' senior management. The idea would be to entrust these same tasks to staff members attached to the Registry and placed under the authority of the Chief Registrar and their Deputy.

Whatever the reasons for this situation of administrative oversight, it is difficult to reconcile with the principles that the Court's partners otherwise promote. The United Nations and the European Union advocate for the independence of the judiciary and support programs to strengthen the rule of law in the Central African Republic, as they do elsewhere. However, the Special Criminal Court controls neither its budget nor its administration, and its judicial activity is subject to permanent external support. The obligation to guarantee the independence of this hybrid court, including its administrative and financial autonomy, lies with the Central African State and the United Nations. As long as external partners retain financial and administrative control over the Court, the SCC will not be able to fully exercise the independence guaranteed to it by the Organic Law.

In a letter responding to Amnesty International, dated 16 October 2026, the European Union described the use of "external fiduciary support" as "a measure intended to safeguard the Court's management and operations, rather than to undermine its autonomy," and stated that it is "compatible with Article 7 of the Organic Law." According to the European Union, this arrangement is based on a budget prepared by the Court itself and includes capacity-building for the Registry as well as "the gradual internalization of critical functions," in accordance with the recommendations of the Petrov Report.²⁰²

4.3.4 TECHNICAL ASSISTANCE FROM MINUSCA

MINUSCA's mandate also provides for technical assistance to the Central African government "to facilitate the full functioning of the SCC", in particular "in the areas of investigations, arrests, detention, criminal and forensic analysis, evidence collection and storage, recruitment and selection of personnel, court management, prosecution strategy and case development and the establishment of a legal aid system, as appropriate, as well as to provide security for judges, including at the premises and proceedings of the SCC, and take measures for the protection of victims and witnesses ²⁰³."

Several people told Amnesty International that the Mission's essential material and logistical support is sometimes overshadowed by interventions of a political nature through the Mission's Court Support Unit, with MINUSCA unilaterally reassessing the relevance of the SCC's actions, for example with regard to the selection of cases. As an illustration of this, a UN staff member told Amnesty International: "We [the United Nations] continue to talk about the Court as if it belonged to us, and that's dangerous²⁰⁴."

MINUSCA's mandate certainly allows for assistance in the areas of its prosecution strategy, but this remains within the scope of *technical assistance*. MINUSCA's intervention can be to support judicial personnel, prosecutors, and judges, while taking care not to assume decision-making authority or exert pressure on the judiciary, whose independence and impartiality must remain protected.

A different form of support is conceivable. In the opinion of all the people interviewed by Amnesty International, the Court could not function without the material and logistical support of MINUSCA. There would be nothing to prevent MINUSCA's support from being refocused on the functions that materially determine the Court's work and which the Court cannot perform on its own, including staff security, logistics for travel to the provinces, and support for the execution of arrest warrants.

MINUSCA's support activities would be carried out at the request of the Court, and not on the Mission's own initiative. Assistance with arrests, which is expressly provided for in its mandate, could be strengthened, as a failure to execute arrest warrants is one of the major obstacles to the Court's work²⁰⁵. It should be noted that

²⁰¹ Based on several interviews in Bangui, April 2026

²⁰² Letter from the European Union Delegation in the Central African Republic to Amnesty International, 16 October 2026.

²⁰³ UN, Security Council, Resolution 2800 (2025), 13 November 2025, Doc. S/RES/2800(2025), para. 34 (e) (iii) and (iv).

²⁰⁴ Interview with a MINUSCA staff member, Bangui, April 2026. This sentiment was confirmed during other interviews with United Nations staff and in the perception of several individuals encountered in the justice sector and in civil society.

²⁰⁵ See section 4.2 of this report

10 people were convicted *in absentia* by the Court in 2025 in the Ndélé 1 and Ndélé 2 cases, and nine arrest warrants remained pending execution in these two cases as of March 2026²⁰⁶. A number of other arrest warrants are also pending execution in ongoing cases or investigations.

²⁰⁶ SCC, March 2026 Newsletter; see Section 4.1.2 of this report.

5. “WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF THE COURT DISAPPEARS?”

5.1 THE BUDGETARY CRISIS AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

Since its establishment, the Special Criminal Court has had no guaranteed budget. Its organic law stipulates that its resources should come from contributions from the Central African State and international partners on the basis of “voluntary contributions”, thus guaranteeing it no long-term funding²⁰⁷. The consequences of this vulnerability became apparent from the very start. In 2018, the funding shortfall amounted to USD 5,100,104 out of an estimated budget of USD 10.7 million²⁰⁸. In 2023, out of a projected budget of USD 15 million, only around half was actually disbursed by the donors²⁰⁹. It was from 2025 onwards that this chronic precariousness turned into an open crisis, to the point of creating a real risk of the Court's closure²¹⁰. This crisis is not merely an issue of management. It directly affects the Court's ability to deliver justice to the victims of the most serious crimes committed in the Central African Republic since 2003, and thus the effectiveness of the fight against impunity, which is its *raison d'être*.

This section's title is from a quote is from an SCC staff member, April 2026

²⁰⁷2015 Law establishing the SCC, Articles 52 and 53

²⁰⁸Human Rights Watch, “‘Looking for Justice’: The Special Criminal Court, a New Opportunity for Victims in the Central African Republic”, 18 May 2018, “Funding” section, <https://www.hrw.org/report/2018/05/17/looking-justice/special-criminal-court-new-opportunity-victims-central-african>. Human Rights Watch cites an internal UN document, “The Special Criminal Court of the Central African Republic: Funding Requirements”, January 2018, archived by the organization and not published.

²⁰⁹Justice Info, “Centrafrique: la CPS plaide le sursis”, 01 August 2025, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/148578-centrafrique-cps-plaide-sursis.html>.

²¹⁰Amnesty International, “Central African Republic: Special Criminal Court at serious risk of closure in 2026 due to lack of funding”, 11 February 2026 (hereinafter “Amnesty International, press release of 11 February 2026”), <https://www.amnesty.org/en/latest/news/2026/02/car-special-criminal-court-2/>

5.1.1 THE WITHDRAWAL OF A MAJOR DONOR AND UNCERTAINTY REGARDING FUNDING

The trigger for the recent crisis has been the withdrawal of the United States. Their annual contribution amounted to approximately USD 1.9 million²¹¹. On 25 January 2025, UNDP received a letter from the US State Department notifying them of the suspension of funding for the SCC as of the previous day and requesting the cessation of all work on the project, resulting in more than USD 4.15 million in commitments remaining unpaid.²¹² The abruptness of this withdrawal becomes fully apparent when one considers the nature of the expenditure involved. These funds were being used to pay the monthly allowances of 94 Court judicial and support staff, from international judges to judicial police officers, as well as the rent of international judges, at a monthly cost of approximately USD 185,000. As early as February 2025, UNDP indicated that it would no longer be able to make these payments beyond April without additional resources.²¹³ In other words, the suspension of a single donor immediately threatened the remuneration of most of the Court's staff.

The only donors remaining today are the United Nations, through MINUSCA and UNDP, and the European Union.²¹⁴ The EU programme to support the SCC is endowed with EUR 4.2 million over 37 months, from October 2025 to October 2028 (which corresponds to the end of the SCC's second mandate), and is being implemented by the organisation Coginta.²¹⁵ According to the European Union, this support is part of a financing agreement concluded with the Central African Republic in August 2024 and is aimed at assisting the Court until the end of its current mandate in October 2028. The European Union also indicated that other Member States support the Court under the "Team Europe" initiative, namely by providing European personnel to the SCC, including three judges and the Deputy Chief Registrar.²¹⁶

Some other states are also considering the possibility of contributing to the operation of the SCC, without having committed to doing so at this stage, at least not publicly, at the time of writing.

The amount of MINUSCA's financial support to the SCC for the coming months and years is more uncertain. This is because the Mission's support for the Court is not funded through a dedicated budget line. It is drawn from MINUSCA's programmatic funds²¹⁷, which themselves depend on the peacekeeping budget approved each year by the UN General Assembly.

From 01 July 2025 to 30 June 2026, it approved a budget of nearly USD 1.3 billion for the Mission²¹⁸. A budget approved is not, however, a budget received. In early October 2025, due to the non-payment of their contributions by certain Member States, the Secretary-General activated a contingency plan requiring all peacekeeping operations, including MINUSCA, to reduce their spending by 15%, implemented through cuts to staff and certain activities, including financial support for the SCC.²¹⁹ For the period between June 2025 to June 2026, the amount that was ultimately allocated by MINUSCA to support the SCC is not known to Amnesty International.

On 30 June 2026, the General Assembly adopted a budget of USD 1.1 billion for MINUSCA's operations for the period between 01 July 2026 to 30 June 2027.²²⁰ Programmatic funds, which are discretionary by

²¹¹ Final Evaluation Report of the Joint Project to Support the Special Criminal Court (PAF-SCC), February 2025, para. 113 and United Nations, Peacebuilding Support Office, "Background Notes – Special Criminal Court," undated, www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/background_notes_special_criminal_court.pdf

²¹² UN Peacebuilding Support Office, "Background Notes – Special Criminal Court," undated [based on its content, written in February 2025] (hereinafter "UN Background Notes on the SCC"), https://www.un.org/peacebuilding/sites/www.un.org/peacebuilding/files/documents/background_notes_special_criminal_court.pdf.

²¹³ UN, Background Notes on the SCC. These funds were used to pay the monthly stipends of 94 judicial and support staff, as well as the rent for international judges; without additional resources, UNDP indicated that it would no longer be able to make these payments beyond April 2025.

²¹⁴ Interviews in Bangui, April 2026.

²¹⁵ See Section 4.3 of this report; as well as Coginta, "Project to Support the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic (ACPES)", project sheet, accessed July 2026, <https://coginta.org/en/projets/programme-dappui-a-la-cour-penale-speciale-en-republique-centrafricaine-acpes/>.

²¹⁶ Letter from the European Union Delegation in the Central African Republic to Amnesty International, 16 October 2026.

²¹⁷ "Programmatic funds" refer to the portion of MINUSCA's budget, approved each year by the UN General Assembly, that MINUSCA allocates to activities falling within its mandate and which it distributes with a margin of discretion. The remainder of the budget covers fixed expenses, including civilian staff salaries, reimbursements to troop-contributing countries, and facilities and logistics costs.

²¹⁸ UN, General Assembly, Resolution 79/302 of 30 June 2025, Financing of the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, Doc. A/RES/79/302, para. 13

²¹⁹ UN News, "En Centrafrique, la relance du processus de paix menacée par l'instabilité régionale", 28 October 2025, <https://news.un.org/fr/story/2025/10/1157754>; UN, Coverage of Security Council meetings, meeting of 28 October 2025, on the Central African Republic

²²⁰ UN General Assembly, Resolution 80/276, Financing of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic, Doc. A/RES/80/276, 30 June 2026

nature, are the first to be vulnerable to budget cuts. Support for the Court, the amount of which remains unknown for the same period, has thus been weakened by reductions in the total budget and the liquidity crises that MINUSCA is facing, regardless of any political commitment to justice.

Within MINUSCA, however, some of Amnesty International's interlocutors struck a reassuring tone. In April 2026, a Mission official considered that there was no risk of the Court closing in the short term, indicating that the Mission had a funding plan in place until the end of 2026 and that the preparation of the 2026-2027 budget was proceeding normally.

And yet the withdrawal of US funding, coupled with the uncertainty of the United Nations' financial commitments, places the SCC in an unprecedented and difficult situation for the implementation of its mandate until 2028 or beyond. In 2026, the funds raised will certainly not reach approximately USD 7 million that was, on average, difficult to mobilize in previous years, while the Court's operating needs are estimated at USD 14 million per year²²¹. Some members of the Court's staff seem forced to spend more time seeking funding for the institution than carrying out their duties²²².

As of September 2026, to the best of Amnesty International's knowledge, no state or organization had pledged future voluntary financial contributions to the SCC alongside the EU and the UN. Some states contribute by directly providing judges or other foreign personnel, such as Belgium, Burkina Faso, France, Germany, Madagascar, and Switzerland; however, new direct financial contributions remain crucial for the proper functioning of the Court.

5.1.2 CONSEQUENCES: AN INCOMPLETE PROSECUTOR'S OFFICE AND CHAMBERS, A DEPLETED REGISTRY, AND OBSTRUCTED PROCEDURES

The first tangible consequence of the crisis was human. Between August and September 2025, the SCC had to lay off a quarter of its staff, particularly its foreign experts.²²³ According to SCC staff members, this reduction was demanded by some of the donors, who, in spring 2026, appeared to be calling for further cuts.²²⁴ These cuts are affecting a court which, even before the crisis, was already operating below its intended capacity, and they are now compromising its very ability to investigate, prosecute, and try cases.

The SCC's judicial bodies provide the most direct illustration of this. In its eight years of existence, the SCC has never had more than one Trial Section within its Trial Chamber, instead of the three provided for²²⁵. This was not a problem in the first few years, when the Court was beginning its investigative work and no cases had yet reached the trial stage. However, when it saw an influx of cases ready to be sent to trial in late 2024 and early 2025, it wrote to MINUSCA and the Ministry of Justice to request the opening of a second section. The response was that no funding was available. The President of the SCC acknowledges that, in a press interview, with only one section, adjudicating all the cases already opened before the end of the term in 2028 will be "virtually impossible".²²⁶ Currently, only the existing section of the Trial Court is responsible for handling two cases simultaneously, the "Bossembélé" and "Guen" cases, while other cases which preliminary investigations have been completed are still awaiting trial.

The situation is no better further up the judicial chain. Due to a lack of resources, the Office of the Special Public Prosecutor is no longer opening new investigations²²⁷. The Special Prosecutor, Toussaint Muntazini, died on 25 March 2026; steps were reportedly underway to recruit a new Special Prosecutor, but at the time of publication of this report, no call for applications had been issued.²²⁸

As for the cabinets of the co-investigating judges, which should be three²²⁹, each comprising one national and one foreign judge, there are only two in operation. Delays in recruitment sometimes result in the same foreign judge being shared across several cabinets, further slowing down the investigation of cases.²³⁰ The

²²¹Justice Info, "La CPS, l'autre tribunal 'sans tête'", 17 April 2026, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/158070-cps-autre-tribunal-sans-tete.html>

²²²Interviews with several SCC and MINUSCA staff members, Bangui, April 2026

²²³Amnesty International, press release dated 11 February 2026.

²²⁴Interviews with several SCC staff members, Bangui, April 2026

²²⁵Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC, Article 13

²²⁶Justice Info, "La CPS, l'autre tribunal 'sans tête'", 17 April 2026, <https://www.justiceinfo.net/fr/158070-cps-autre-tribunal-sans-tete.html>

²²⁷Amnesty International interview with an SCC judge, Bangui, 2026.

²²⁸Email interview, October 2026.

²²⁹Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC, Article 11

²³⁰Rules of Procedure and Evidence, Article 20-A: The Investigating Chamber shall comprise three cabinets, each consisting of one national and one international judge. Amnesty International interviews with SCC judges, Bangui, 2026.

See also the 2020 Amnesty International report "*On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes*"

Special Indictment Chamber, which is called upon to rule, among other things, on matters of pre-trial detention, has only two judges instead of the three provided for²³¹. Each eliminated position thus translates, very concretely, into cases that are struggling to move forward and victims who are waiting. As a member of a victims' association put it, "The possibility that cases will be put on hold or simply dropped is no longer theoretical; it is a well-founded fear."²³²

The Registry, the administrative backbone of the Court²³³, has seen all its departments affected: the IT Unit now relies on a single person, the Victim Assistance and Advocacy Unit also relies on a single person, the Communications Unit on two people, and the Administration and Finance Department has lost the only position it had²³⁴. As of the Victim and Witness Protection Unit, has lost more than half its staff, a reduction that could limit the Court's ability to prevent reprisals against witnesses.

The budget allocated for travel to victims' homes, which enables lawyers, among other things, to speak with the people they are representing and the Court to gather views on reparations, has become very limited. This restricts travel, with a very limited number of days and staff being allocated, making it impossible to meet all the people concerned under suitable conditions²³⁵. This situation *de facto* limits the participation of victims in the proceedings, despite Article 6 of the Organic Law, which requires that the Court ensure that victims are able to assert their rights at all stages.

In addition, in some cases, releases are ordered due to an inability to rule on an appeal for release or because the pre-trial detention periods have been exceeded²³⁶, and their number is likely to increase in the coming months and years simply due to the shortage of judges to handle all cases within the established deadlines. Indeed, investigating judges may keep a person in pre-trial detention for a maximum of one year, renewable once, and then extendable by six months by order of the Special Indictment Chamber in exceptional circumstances.²³⁷ These safeguards reflect a fundamental requirement of international human rights law, which prohibits arbitrary detention and recognizes the right of all detainees to be tried within a reasonable time or be released.²³⁸ The understaffing described above, and particularly that of the Special Indictment Chamber, reduced to two judges, has directly compromised the Court's ability to conduct proceedings within the time limits for pre-trial detention or to rule on certain appeals. As a result, in order to ensure respect for the rights of detainees, and in particular the time limits for pre-trial detention, the Court has had to release suspects awaiting trial.

Respect for the rights of detainees requires that they not be held in detention indefinitely without being brought to trial. However, these releases can have significant consequences for the proceedings, including a "risk of intimidation of victims and witnesses".²³⁹ This fear is all the more justified given that the unit responsible for their protection has itself seen its resources cut by more than half, as explained above. These releases also entail a risk that individuals on provisional release will fail to appear at their trials and flee justice.

The budgetary crisis is having a knock-on effect here: it prevents timely trials, forces releases, re-exposes victims and witnesses, and undermines confidence in an institution born of the promise that the most serious crimes would not go unpunished. Ultimately, the SCC's underfunding is not merely a material constraint. It simultaneously undermines victims' right to an effective remedy and reparation, and the right of defendants to be tried within a reasonable time. A court established to combat impunity for war crimes and crimes against humanity is, due to a lack of resources, gradually being prevented from carrying out this mandate, with the risk of undermining the commitment made to the Central African population.

5.2 POSSIBLE TRANSFER OF CASES TO NATIONAL COURTS

The SCC's budget crisis raises the possibility of its closure in the near future, including as early as the end of its second term in 2028. If this scenario occurs, regardless of its actual date, it is unlikely that all the cases

²³¹ Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC, Article 12

²³² Amnesty International, press release dated 11 February 2026.

²³³ The list of services and functions of the Registry, as provided for by law, is included in Articles 43 to 47 of the RPE.

²³⁴ Interview with the Deputy Chief Registrar of the SCC, Bangui, 16 April 2026

²³⁵ Interview with lawyers and members of the SCC Registry, Bangui, April 2026

²³⁶ Interview with an SCC staff member, in Bangui, April 2026. In his opinion, the Court has had to release some 10 individuals because it was unable to rule on an appeal within the deadline.

²³⁷ RPE, Articles 97-F and 97-G

²³⁸ ICCPR, Articles 9(3) and 14; African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights, Articles 6 and 7

²³⁹ Interview with a MINUSCA official, 2026

before the SCC will be fully concluded, meaning definitively adjudicated but also completed in terms of providing reparations to victims and executing the sentences of those convicted. The question of what will happen to these cases is therefore crucial, regardless of the date of SCC's closure.

If the SCC closes, the future of its cases will have very different consequences depending on the stage they are at when they have to be transferred to another court. These cases could include, for example, cases at the investigative or preliminary investigative stage that need to be sent to trial, as well as cases that have already been tried but which will need to be tried again in their entirety when the individuals convicted *in absentia* are eventually arrested.

The Organic Law links the existence of the SCC to the handling of its cases. It stipulates that its five-year mandate is "renewable if necessary" and that the Court will be "automatically dissolved as soon as all the proceedings brought before it have been definitively adjudicated". It does not therefore envisage the closure of the Court before the completion of its proceedings and, apart from the question of archives, does not provide for any mechanism for transferring pending cases to other courts²⁴⁰. Proponents of an accelerated closure of the SCC, at the end of the current term in 2028 or earlier, argue that the cases could be transferred to the ordinary CAR courts in their current form or to a specialist court or division within the ordinary courts that could be created for this purpose.²⁴¹ Discussions on the most appropriate form and legislative framework to enable these transfers began in 2026, driven by donors.

THE LACK OF CAPACITY IN THE ORDINARY COURTS

Nonetheless, most of the people interviewed by Amnesty International, including some advocating for the closure of the SCC in the short term, are unanimous in their view that the ordinary courts currently lack the human and material resources to handle the cases before the SCC. One lawyer concluded: "It would be the worst-case scenario for the SCC to be replaced by the national courts²⁴²."

The functioning of the judicial system has, admittedly, improved significantly over the past decade. The three existing courts of appeal, in Bangui, Bambari, and Bouar, are once again operational and holding criminal sessions on a regular basis, in accordance with the provisions of Central African law²⁴³. Furthermore, the Court of Appeal in Bangui has previously handled cases of conflict-related crimes²⁴⁴.

However, it remains difficult for these courts to investigate and prosecute crimes committed in the CAR and to ensure fair judicial proceedings, especially with regard to large-scale or complex crimes, particularly when these crimes were committed in areas where armed conflict remains active. As far as Amnesty International is aware, no ordinary court has handled a case involving crimes under international law in the past five years.

The additional courts of appeal established in 2025 are not yet operational,²⁴⁵ and, according to several justice sector actors, a number of recently appointed judges do not have the skills required for their role²⁴⁶. "It is one thing to build courts and train judges; it is quite another to have judges capable of applying the law. Even if we were to transfer the national judges from the SCC to the ordinary courts, it would not be enough; there are only a handful of them,"²⁴⁷ says one person who has been working in the sector for many years.

According to some observers, there is also rampant corruption²⁴⁸. A member of civil society who works with the ordinary courts believes that the newly appointed judges have "already become involved in corruption"²⁴⁹. A Central African activist and journalist added: "People are truly hungry for justice. But corruption prevents trust from being restored between the state and the people. There is a divide between justice for the poor and justice for the rich."²⁵⁰ Finally, one lawyer summed up the situation as follows: "It's a two-tier justice system. There is corruption, even at the level of the Court of Cassation (...)"²⁵¹.

²⁴⁰ Law 2015-003 establishing the SCC, Articles 69 and 70 Article 69 states that the government is "obliged to ensure the preservation of all documents collected and all files after the end of the SCC's activities".

²⁴¹ Interview with staff from several SCC donors, Bangui, April 2026

²⁴² Interview, Bangui, 12 April 2026

²⁴³ Article 220 of the Code of Criminal Procedure stipulates that two criminal sessions must be held each year by each Court of Appeal. See also Inanga Consulting, *Evaluation finale de la politique sectorielle de la justice 2020-2024, Rapport Final*, August 2025, on file with Amnesty, section 5.2.10.

²⁴⁴ Section 3.3 of this report; Amnesty International report 2020 "On trial, these warlords lowered their eyes", pp. 34 to 37

²⁴⁵ See section 3.3 of this report

²⁴⁶ Interviews with several lawyers and MINUSCA staff members, Bangui, April 2026

²⁴⁷ Interview, Bangui, 14 April 2026

²⁴⁸ Inanga Consulting, *Evaluation finale de la politique sectorielle de la justice 2020-2024, Rapport final*, August 2025, document on file with Amnesty, Section 5.2.2: "Anti-corruption interventions have not been sufficiently extensive to create change and have an impact on corruption practices." Confirmed in several interviews, Bangui, April 2026.

²⁴⁹ Interview, Bangui, 15 April 2026

²⁵⁰ Interview, Bangui, 11 April 2026

²⁵¹ Interview, Bangui, 13 April 2026

Furthermore, judges are working under difficult conditions, without sufficient material resources and often without their safety being ensured. Judicial decisions are rarely published²⁵², hindering the transparency and accessibility of case law and the right of appeal of the parties to the proceedings. The legal aid provided by law is struggling to become operational²⁵³. During criminal sessions, defence lawyers do not always have the opportunity to cross-examine witnesses and do not always meet with their client before the start of a trial²⁵⁴. All these factors, along with others, result in criminal proceedings before ordinary courts that are not, at present, in line with international law and standards on a fair trial.

THE ORDINARY COURTS LACK INDEPENDENCE

Beyond the mere question of the capacity of ordinary courts, the lack of their guaranteed independence has led observers to doubt the ability of ordinary courts to handle SCC cases. According to one United Nations employee, ordinary courts do not have the capacity to take on cases that are too complex, especially if the case has not been sufficiently advanced by the SCC before being transferred, nor cases where there is political interference, which will be inevitable in some cases.²⁵⁵

Structurally, ordinary courts are dependent on political power, particularly for the budget and the organization of criminal sessions²⁵⁶. Prosecutors report to the Minister of Justice²⁵⁷, and judges are appointed by presidential decree.

When asked about the possibility of transferring cases, a representative of victims' networks was under no illusions: "If the cases are transferred to the national courts, it will mean that they will be before our judges, and their superiors will influence them. So, the cases will be blocked."²⁵⁸

Although the independence of the judiciary is recognized in the Constitution²⁵⁹, in practice, judges in ordinary courts are likely to face political pressure when working on sensitive cases. This will have consequences for the future of cases that the government might potentially not want to see prosecuted – especially if, for example, cases target people in the government²⁶⁰.

As one victim representative stated, the ordinary courts "do not have the freedom"²⁶¹ to handle cases originating from the SCC. An actor in the judicial system also explained this through examples: "The Abdoulaye Hissène and Hassan Boubba cases... nobody is going to touch them. So [transfer to the ordinary courts] would mean impunity."²⁶²

Amnesty International is calling for high-profile cases – involving those most responsible for the crimes suffered by the Central African population during the conflicts that have ravaged the CAR since 2002, and where the risk of political interference is too high – not to be transferred to the ordinary courts but to be prosecuted and tried before the SCC. These cases are the very reason why the SCC was established. It is essential to avoid any risk that victims' rights to truth, justice and reparation be sacrificed by a discontinuation of prosecutions on political or spurious grounds.

²⁵² Interview with a lawyer, 13 April 2026, Bangui. See also Inanga Consulting, *Evaluation finale de la politique sectorielle de la justice 2020-2024, Rapport final*, August 2025, document on file with Amnesty, section 5.2.7: Efforts have been made to compile legal texts but no development of a body of case law.

²⁵³ Inanga Consulting, *Evaluation finale de la politique sectorielle de la justice 2020-2024, Rapport final*, August 2025, document on file with Amnesty, Section 5.2.8: "Numerous activities have been carried out [with a view to providing quality and accessible legal aid], with real progress in the legal aid system provided for by law. However, [certain activities] are not sustainable and have had limited effects on legal aid and people's access to justice. [...] Despite the institutionalization of a legal framework, it is important to note that the budget line allocated to legal aid is decreasing, from 44 million in 2022 to 10.5 million in 2025."

²⁵⁴ Interview with several lawyers, Bangui, April 2026

²⁵⁵ Interview with a MINUSCA staff member, Bangui, 13 April 2026

²⁵⁶ Article 220 of the Code of Criminal Procedure states that the sessions of the criminal court "are set by decision of the Minister of Justice". The draft new Penal Code and Code of Criminal Procedure, which are under consideration by the Council of Ministers and Parliament at the time of writing of this report, provide for the establishment of a permanent chamber in each court of appeal, which would replace the system of organizing criminal sessions dependent upon the executive branch.

²⁵⁷ Articles 25 and 26 of the Code of Criminal Procedure

²⁵⁸ Interview, Bangui, 11 April 2026

²⁵⁹ Constitution of the CAR, Articles 124 to 126

²⁶⁰ This is an opinion shared by a large proportion of the people interviewed by Amnesty International, Bangui, April 2026

²⁶¹ Interview, Bangui, 11 April 2026

²⁶² Interview with an ICC staff member, Bangui, 16 April 2026

5.3 AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL'S ANALYSIS OF THE FUTURE OF THE SCC

At the time of writing, most of the people interviewed by Amnesty International were of the opinion that, from the perspective of the fight against impunity, it would be preferable for the SCC to continue its work for at least a few more years, probably beyond 2028. The current debate centres on the feasibility of this option. A number of people, particularly among the international partners, believe that the closure of the SCC is inevitable in the short to medium term, due to a lack of sufficient funding. A United Nations official summed it up as such: “The Central Africans seem to want to continue but if we don't have a new donor...”²⁶³

Justice must not be contingent on the interest or lack of interest of a few donors. The lifespan of this court should not depend on budgetary considerations but rather on an objective assessment of what has been achieved in prosecuting crimes under international law committed in the CAR since 2003.

The review of the SCC's work should include, in particular, (1) an analysis of the representativeness of the crimes prosecuted and tried before the SCC (whether the main types of crimes, affected areas, relevant time periods, and groups of suspected individuals have been prosecuted) and (2) a verification that cases against high-ranking officials who would be difficult to prosecute and try through the ordinary courts have already been prosecuted and tried before the SCC or the ICC. As one lawyer put it: “When the ICC withdrew, we were told it was because the SCC could handle it... and now they want to get rid of the SCC?”²⁶⁴

It would be extremely detrimental to close the SCC with its current track record. We cannot prejudge what the SCC's track record will be at the end of its second term in October 2028, but it is important to remember that legal proceedings take time and that the SCC is currently operating with very limited staff and resources²⁶⁵. The President of the SCC noted: “at the beginning of the Court's operations, there was great enthusiasm from the international community, reflected in the number of countries and international organisations providing financial support. Today, however, only a handful of partners continue to maintain their support. The initial support has faded, and the shortage of financial resources is reducing our capacity to prosecute international crimes.”²⁶⁶

When the time comes for the closure of the SCC, Central African civil society should feel that the objective for which this Court was created has been achieved, at least to some extent. We must avoid the risk that the prevailing view is that the fight against impunity began but was abandoned along the way after only a few cases that could be perceived as minor, involving a handful of individuals, some of whom did not even appear before the Court. As one member of the Court put it, “It would be a shame if this Court were to close without having dealt with the landmark cases.”²⁶⁷

Amnesty International is also calling for discussions on the transfer of cases from the SCC following its closure to be organized in such a way as to allow for consultation and genuine consideration of the concerns of all those affected, first and foremost, the judicial actors of the SCC, the ordinary courts and civil society, including victims' organizations and lawyers' associations. They should not be limited to discussions between CAR's financial and technical partners.

Nor should these discussions prejudge the date of the SCC's closure. They should not rule out the possibility of renewing the SCC's mandate or of gradually transferring cases during the SCC's existence. Preparing the SCC and the ordinary court for the handover is important but this preparation should not imply, explicitly or implicitly, that the decision to close the SCC within two years has been taken. Current donors should not decide the future of this judicial institution alone, especially since other states or international organizations might decide to contribute to the funding of the SCC in the short or medium term.

The current financial partners should continue to provide financial support to the SCC until its track record can be regarded as satisfactory in terms of the cases adjudicated. In addition, Amnesty International is calling for and hopes that other states or international organizations will join the UN and the EU in strengthening the financial support for the SCC, thus enabling the SCC to satisfactorily fulfill its mission of combating impunity for the most serious crimes committed since 2003.

²⁶³ Interview with a MINUSCA staff member, Bangui, 14 April 2026

²⁶⁴ Interview with a lawyer, Bangui, 13 April 2026

²⁶⁵ See section 5.1 of this report

²⁶⁶ Interview with the President of the SCC, Bangui, 13 April 2026

²⁶⁷ Interview with an SCC staff member, Bangui, 16 April 2026

6. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The SCC has been operational for eight years. Reforms are still needed, including the discontinuation of trials *in absentia* and the transfer of the Court's administrative and financial management to its Registry. Nevertheless, the SCC remains an essential institution in the fight against impunity in the CAR, especially since the ordinary courts still lack the necessary capacity and independence to try complex or sensitive cases, and since the Office of the Prosecutor of the ICC closed its investigations in the country in December 2022. The SCC must therefore be protected and supported, and its future determined on the basis of its track record rather than budgetary considerations. Victims' rights to justice, truth, and reparation cannot depend on the changing priorities of donors.

TO THE SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT

- Continue to investigate, prosecute, and try crimes under international law committed by government forces and their allies, as well as armed groups, on the territory of the CAR since 2003, as set out in the Court's mandate, including those responsible at the highest levels, for crimes committed between January and March 2003 and between December 2012 and December 2014, which were among the most violent periods. Cease the use of trials *in absentia*, in accordance with the *Principles and Guidelines on the Right to a Fair Trial in Africa*. Clearly inform victims, victims' associations, and the public of the right of any person already convicted *in absentia* to be retried if arrested or if they voluntarily hand themselves in;
- Ensure strict compliance with the pre-trial detention time limits set out in Article 97 of the Court's Rules. When individuals are released, take all necessary measures to protect victims and witnesses and ensure that the defendants appear in court;
- Guarantee the rights and effective participation of defendants and victims at all stages of the proceedings;
- Improve the publicity and accessibility of the Court's decisions and of the hearings in proceedings before the Court, through the Court's website and by means of appropriate media such as radio stations. Improve the regular sharing of up-to-date information on arrest warrants issued, arrests, the status of cases, and other relevant developments in the Court's work.

TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN AUTHORITIES

- Continue to support the work of the SCC, including by increasing the provision of staff from the Central African Republic's justice sector to the Registry and other SCC bodies, and by participating in the search for additional funding for the SCC's budget;
- Execute all SCC arrest warrants for individuals located within the territory of the Central African Republic without delay, including the warrant for Hassan Bouba. With regard to individuals located outside the territory of the Central African Republic, enter into mutual legal assistance and

extradition agreements with the states concerned, particularly Chad and Guinea-Bissau, in order to facilitate the arrest and surrender of individuals wanted by the SCC;

- Ensure that no peace agreement or amnesty measure impedes the prosecution of genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes, in accordance with international law. Make the texts of all peace agreements public, including the one signed in N'Djamena on 19 April 2025;
- Renew the SCC's mandate beyond October 2028 for as long as the Court's track record demonstrates that its mission has not been fulfilled;
- Develop, in consultation with the judicial actors of the SCC, the ordinary courts, victims' and lawyers' associations, and civil society, a framework governing the future of SCC cases after its closure. This framework must guarantee, in particular, the right of persons convicted *in absentia* to a retrial, the enforcement of sentences, the implementation of reparations, and the preservation of archives;
- Strengthen the independence, resources, and security of judges in ordinary courts. Guarantee effective access to legal aid, compliance with time limits for pre-trial detention, and the publication of court decisions;
- Ratify the Ljubljana–The Hague Convention on International Cooperation in the Investigation and Prosecution of Genocide, Crimes against Humanity, War Crimes and Other International Crimes;
- Ratify the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights on the Establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and authorize direct access for individuals and NGOs through a declaration under Article 34(6) of the Protocol.

TO THE UNITED NATIONS (MINUSCA AND UNDP) AND THE EUROPEAN UNION

- Continue to provide financial support for the SCC's work, particularly through sufficient multi-year funding, until the Court's mandate can be considered fulfilled;
- Transfer the administrative and financial management of the Court to the Registry of the SCC as soon as possible and according to a public and binding timetable, in accordance with Article 7 of the law establishing the SCC and Articles 42 to 48 of its Rules of Procedure and Evidence. In doing so, finance the establishment within the Registry of an administrative and financial management team under the exclusive authority of the Chief Registrars;
- Refocus MINUSCA's technical assistance on the material tasks essential to the proper functioning of the Court, including security, logistics, and support for the execution of arrest warrants;
- For the United Nations, in coordination with the CAR authorities, support the renewal of the SCC's mandate beyond October 2028 for as long as the Court's track record demonstrates that its mission has not been fulfilled.

TO THE UNITED NATIONS SECURITY COUNCIL

- When renewing MINUSCA's mandate, continue to include technical assistance to the CAR government for the operations of the SCC within this mandate, particularly in terms of security, logistics, and support for the execution of arrest warrants. Provide the Mission with the resources necessary to deliver this assistance.

TO ALL STATES AND INTERNATIONAL ORGANIZATIONS

- Urgently contribute to the funding of the SCC, preferably through multi-year commitments, alongside the United Nations and the European Union;
- Provide the SCC with qualified judges and staff;
- Cooperate fully with the SCC, including by enforcing its arrest warrants and surrendering wanted individuals when they are on the territory of the state in question, particularly Chad and Guinea-Bissau;

- Prosecute and try any person suspected of committing crimes under international law in the CAR under the principle of universal jurisdiction if that person is present on the territory of the state concerned and is not extradited or surrendered to the Central African authorities.

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“THE PERPETRATORS ARE STILL HERE”

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC'S SPECIAL CRIMINAL COURT ON BORROWED TIME, AS VICTIMS AWAIT JUSTICE

Founded in 2015 and inaugurated in 2018, the Special Criminal Court (SCC) was established at the request of the Central African population and civil society to ensure that crimes committed during two decades of conflict would not go unpunished. Over the past eight years, it has held its first trials, handed down convictions for war crimes and crimes against humanity, and awarded reparations to victims. For many, it remains a source of pride.

Based on interviews conducted in Bangui in April 2026 and an analysis of the Court's decisions, this report examines these achievements, the expectations they have generated, and the challenges that lie ahead. Victims are still waiting for trials for the deadliest periods of the conflict and those bearing the greatest responsibility. The arrest of wanted suspects remains a major challenge. Above all, the Court is facing a financial crisis that is currently affecting its operations and ongoing proceedings.

Amnesty International calls on the Central African authorities and their partners to support the Court and safeguard its independence, so that victims' rights to truth, justice and reparations do not depend on the shifting priorities of donors.