

MONITORING COMMITTEE OF THE BANGASSOU

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

PEACE AND RECONCILIATION AGREEMENT

UNITÉ – DIGNITÉ - TRAVAIL

### **RECORD OF THE ACTIVITIES OF THE MONITORING COMMITTEE OF THE PEACE AGREEMENT OF 09 APRIL 2018 IN BANGASSOU**

As part of its attempts to implement the recommendations of the peace agreement of **09 April 2018** in Bangassou, the monitoring committee carried out a mission from 18 to 23 February 2019 in **Gambo and Pombolo**, two sister municipalities that had clashed in these last military-political events.

The purpose of this mission was to communicate with the two communities of Gambo and Pombolo who, after the events of **May 17, 2017**, did not talk or interact with each other. The aim was to encourage peaceful cohabitation, social cohesion, and especially the free movement of goods and people on the axis which would otherwise prevent peace being established in the sub-prefecture of Gambo.

Arriving in Gambo at **10.30 am** after leaving Bangassou at **7.25 am**, the monitoring committee was composed of **twelve (12)** members and led by **Mr Richard Armaad Amos NOUIDEMONA**, Deputy Prefect of Bangassou, and Chairman of the monitoring committee. The members of the mission are the following gentlemen:

- **NDAGUIAMA Paul**, substitute deputy of Bangassou-2, representative of the deputies of Mbomou,
- **PASSIO-KETTE Timotheé**, president of the Mbomou platform,
- **MISSET Fred**, president of the sub-prefectoral youth council,
- **BALIPIO Jean**, correspondent for radio Ndéké Luka,
- **KOMAS BAKONGO Victor Léotard**, journalist, radio press RDJH,
- **ABROU Diendonné**, representative of the governors and the sages,
- **KOTALIMBORA José Christian**, Civil Society Coordinate.

As soon as it arrived, the monitoring committee organized series of separate sensitization meetings with Gambo women, Gambo youth, Gambo elders and sages, Gambo autodefense members, farmers, and displaced persons. In all these meetings, it preached the decision to put an end to all forms of violence, stop more weapons being in circulation, and dismantling barriers erected in the city of Gambo, with the view to facilitating the free movement of goods and people. All participants mentioned the growing problem of poverty in Gambo - there is no easy or quick way to help them take care of their families. They requested the implementation of the Community Violence Reduction Program (CVR) by MINUSCA in Gambo. It is also important to highlight the precariousness of the population's quality of life of the population, who do not have essential products of such as salt, sugar, soap. There is also a famine epidemic, as the fields and plantations were destroyed during the events. Houses were practically destroyed with all goods inside, such that women were forced to go to the bush to look for wild yams to feed the children.

There are even children and women without clothes. The school has resumed activities, but the pupils have very limited materials and not enough qualified teachers.

In terms of health, the population benefits from the health assistance of the MSF Belgium NGO based in Bangassou, which has set up a mobile clinic to help with diseases in those situations where help is difficult in Bangassou where there is limited qualified medical staff. Concerning the displaced in general, their living conditions are very precarious. Under the guidance of the monitoring committee for peaceful cohabitation, the displaced people of Pombolo in Gambo had decided to return to their respective villages in the Gambo-Pombolo area. The free movement of goods and people between Gambo and Pombolo has been reinstated after nearly two years of conflict between the two Christian and Peuhle communities that once lived in perfect harmony. Nearly five hundred (500) displaced from Pombolo to Gambo have already been welcomed back into Pombolo. The population has also requested the deployment of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) in Gambo to secure the displaced people. The follow-up committee also met with the few Gambo officials who work in national education to encourage them to make sacrifices to keep the school running, albeit under difficult conditions.

**Wednesday, February 20, 2019** in the afternoon, the monitoring committee set out for the **municipality of Pombolo** accompanied by the sub-prefect of Gambo, the mayor of Gambo, the mayor of Ngandou, the president of the Gambo youth, and the president of the local Gambo peace committee. Arriving in the evening, they were greeted by the local authorities. On **Thursday, February 21, 2019**, the monitoring committee conducted a series of meetings on the spot with the various social groups in the commune, starting with the village chiefs, the ardos, and councillors of Pombolo.

The aim of the sensitization meetings was to focus on peaceful coexistence and free movement between Gambo and Pombolo, because for two years the two communities did not travel this area. It was also to discuss reopening the Bangassou - Bambari path. All interventions from the locals of Pombolo rejected the war, as it did not profit anyone. They no longer want any division between Christians and Muslims. What had happened in our country is the sanction of God, now everyone has understood that it is no longer worth the trouble to fight each other for nothing. Once the water has been spilled it can no longer be recovered. This means that the war is over, all that was lost we cannot get back, so we must turn a new page. The entire population of Pombolo, upon hearing the news of the return of the displaced people to Pombolo, traveled more than eight (8) kilometers to receive them and bring them back to the city with mangoes and palm tree leaves, supervised by members of the UPC bases in Pombolo.

After the leaders, ardos, and councilors, the monitoring committee met the women of Pombolo, who were very numerous and enthusiastic about the presence of the Monitoring Committee. At a certain point they had felt abandoned, as no one was coming to visit them. They were very excited to meet with their fellow Christians who had fled the conflict for Gambo and who are now back in Pombolo. The women also ask for help from the humanitarian workers. In terms of health, pregnant women suffer a lot from malaria and many other diseases due to infections where there is no quality care. On the matter of school, their children are simply left to the parents - school is not functional as there is a lack of teachers.

In terms of the food, the need is urgent and increased, because all fields were destroyed during the events, cruel lack of food in the municipality of Pombolo.

After the women, the monitoring committee spoke with members of the UPC based in Pombolo. From this meeting emerged the General's commitment to guaranteeing peace, to stopping all hostilities and to implementing the process of social cohesion and cohabitation.

The UPC no longer intends to fight anyone. The path is clear to Bambari and to Bangui. The barriers in place are not to disturb the population. These barriers are ready to be dismantled. These barriers do not ask for money from people on the road. They no longer wish to see convoys escorted by MINUSCA, for if a convoy passes escorted by forces it implies that there is still some danger. Therefore, they want now that vehicles pass without escort of forces to demonstrate the free movement of goods and people on the Bangassou – Bambari path for Bangui. In addition, the general of the UPC made many recommendations for peace which he compared to an egg: if one does not hold this egg well, it can fall and break. And it was with a positive atmosphere of fraternity that the meeting with the members of the UPC in Pombolo ended.

After, the monitoring committee met the youth of Pombolo who complained a lot about the school and the hospital that were not functioning in Pombolo. The youth has become impoverished because of unnecessary conflict, and they no longer want war nor deception. They want peace and free movement in the Bangassou – Bambari corridor. They would also like to make peace instead of staying stuck in place with no winner.

On the same day, five hundred (500) IDPs returned to Pombolo without shelter, because the houses are all destroyed and burned. Some slept under the stars and others in wrecked houses.

To this end, the monitoring committee is launching a distress call to humanitarian aid to help the returning displaced, who have a total lack of food and non-food items. The situation is very worrying and alarming.

The monitoring committee pleads with MINUSCA- Bangassou to find a way to set up a Community Violence Reduction Program (CVR) for the communities of Gambo and Pombolo in order to try to solve the issue of unemployment of young people which leads to delinquency and acts of vandalism.

In addition, the monitoring committee continues to plead with MINUSCA Bangassou to find ways to rehabilitate the Bangassou-Bambari road, as this road is in a state of advanced degradation. If nothing is done by the rainy season the city of Bangassou could be cut off.

The monitoring committee wishes to organize a caravan for peace and reconciliation by the end of **March 2019** as part of the reopening of the Bangassou – Bambari road. To this end, it seeks the assistance of all - namely economic operators, humanitarian workers, the population of Mbomou, religious leaders, youth, women, and all sections of MINUSCA.

The monitoring committee of the Peace Agreement of April 09, 2018 sincerely thanks all those that supported it in the implementation of this peace agreement which appears to have been a 100% success.

The monitoring committee wishes to thank sincerely and warmly the Bangassou MINUSCA Head of Office, **Mr. ROSEVEL Pierre Louis**, the Political Affairs Officer **Mr. Cyril NGAPE**, the Civil Affairs Officer **Mr. Robert NGAGUE** and the DRRR/CVR-UNOPS Officer Mr **ABDOUL KADRIE YACOUBA**. It thanks them for having set up a functional support system for the monitoring committee in its activities, which has made it possible to achieve its objectives of peace, social cohesion and cohabitation.

Done in Bangassou, on **March 06, 2019**.

The chairman of the monitoring committee,

The deputy prefect of Bangassou,

[Stamped and signed]

**Richard Armand Amos Nouidemona**