



THE SENTRY

Fear, Inc.

War Profiteering in the
Central African Republic and the
Bloody Rise of Abdoulaye Hissène

By The Sentry

November 2018



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Cover photo: The body of a Muslim killed in a spree
of revenge killings in PK5 in Bangui, Central African Republic.
February 9, 2014. Photo: Marcus Bleasdale.



*“The country is under siege. As long as the criminals run free, there will be no peace. Violence is their source of income. They use it to pressure the government and instill fear in others. If they stayed calm, they **wouldn’t** carry much weight. Fear is necessary for their negotiations.”*

*Central African refugee in Cameroon
Muslim diamond trader
October 3, 2017*



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Executive Summary

Since 2013, the conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR) has repeatedly made international headlines, with alarms being raised over the escalating violence and even precursors to genocide in the country. Ethnic purges and other mass atrocities continue to take place on a near-daily basis against entire communities. A great, but unknown, number of civilians have died in the conflict and the instability has led to a major humanitarian crisis. In May 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) announced that an unprecedented 1.27 million people have been internally displaced or forced to flee the country.

Over the past 20 years, there have been a growing number of initiatives aimed at ending the CAR conflict, but these have had little impact. The country has seen a series of peace, disarmament and amnesty agreements; long-term UN peacekeeping missions and humanitarian assistance; foreign military operations; and elections. Billions of dollars have been spent in an attempt to restore stability and compensate for the lack of state control. Since 2014, the UN mission in CAR, also known as MINUSCA, has cost more than \$3.2 billion. The European Union, a long-term and major development partner in CAR, has also disbursed nearly \$200 million during the same period. Despite these efforts, the various mediation initiatives have failed to obtain a political compromise sufficient to manage the simple respect of a ceasefire. Today, there are multiple armed gangs, self-defense and politico-military groups that control or exercise influence across the entire national territory. Worse yet, the perpetrators of atrocities are recognized by regional and international actors as legitimate political interlocutors with whom dialogue is necessary and peace must be negotiated.

In August 2018 the African Union announced the end of a series of meetings with representatives of 14 armed groups to record their claims, even though some of the leaders have been placed under sanctions by the United Nations (UN) and the United-States (US). The African Union presented a list of more than 100 demands made by armed groups, including power sharing and amnesty. At the same time, a parallel dialogue was initiated by the Russian government, which invited to Khartoum the military leaders of the most violent armed groups active in the CAR conflict for almost a decade. Today, these so-called dialogues aimed at ending the deadly war have been captured by the agenda of perpetrators of mass atrocities who have shown no intention of making peace.

Between 2016 and 2018, The Sentry investigated one such armed group representative, Abdoulaye Hissène, a notorious warlord involved in **CAR's** conflict for almost a decade. Formerly a diamond and gold trader, and since 2009 the leader of various politico-military groups, Hissène has been recognized as being responsible for an attempted coup in late 2015 and for targeted violence against UN and humanitarian staff. Since 2017, the United States, then followed by the full UN Security Council, have decided to impose sanctions through an asset freeze and travel ban. Chad announced it had implemented these sanctions, and the CAR government issued an international arrest warrant for him in 2016. Despite these measures and several attempts to arrest him, he remains a free man.

The **Sentry's** investigation also reveals that Hissène has been successful building a profitable business and even since he has been under sanctions. He has amassed a fortune out of devastating sectarian violence. By inciting hatred and sowing divisions between ethnic and religious communities, he has gradually become a central player in the **country's** conflict. **Hissène's** rise has



been possible thanks to strong ties he has developed over time with national and regional heads of state, their close allies, and with foreign business partners. In 2014, amid the ethnic cleansing of the Muslim population in CAR, Hissène enjoyed diplomatic status and traveled abroad, notably to Cameroon, the Republic of Congo, Chad, Kenya, United Arab Emirates, Switzerland, and France. During these travels, he expanded his list of partners and created lucrative business opportunities. At the end of 2014, after being fired from office and formally joining the armed opposition movement, he declared to the Chadian and Congolese heads of state that **“what** we want is to destroy everything to rebuild the **country.**” He also convinced a Swiss oil company that he would be able to secure an oil contract with the Chadian national oil petroleum company. Acting as a **“minister”** and a leader of armed groups, and advertising his control of rich mining sites, Hissène has also developed an illicit trade in diamond and gold, particularly in Cameroon and in Kenya.

Hissène’s rise illustrates a violent system endemic in CAR, and similar to other countries in east and central Africa, that incentivizes conflict over peace. War profiteers and their allies hamper political and peace efforts, since conflict and state collapse are seen as lucrative business and smart politics. Sectarian violence is used as a political negotiation tool and actors who chose to pursue peace are largely kept out of negotiations. In this system, the greater the perpetrators of atrocities and their accomplices represent a threat to the central power, the more they will become essential political interlocutors and increase their financial gain. In 2015, the UN Security Council took a strong step when it decided to impose sanctions on a diamond company, Badica/Kardiam, accused of financing armed groups at the peak of the 2014 crisis. Despite this positive step, no other entities or businessmen faced any consequences for their role in the financing of the deadly conflict.

By focusing on Hissène to illustrate war profiteering, this report calls for an in-depth reassessment of the strategy to support the emergence of CAR from its crisis. As long as violence is profitable for those behind the atrocities and their business networks both inside and outside the country, long-term peace in CAR and the rest of the Central African region will remain an illusion. It is time to send a strong signal to war profiteers so that their crimes will be less lucrative and bear increasingly costly consequences.

Recommendations

The following recommendations are intended to provide policymakers with strategies that aim to end the incentives for violence and ultimately encourage accountability and leverage to create more sustainable peace processes. They aim to show that *another way of thinking* about peace is possible and that it is, in fact, necessary to moving the country out of its current system of violence and state collapse.

I. Peace at the heart of the political process

To the UN Security Council, EU, AU, ECCAS, France, the United States, China, Russia, Central African regional head of states and the CAR government:

- End the system that rewards violence and war profiteering:
 - Stop the legitimization of war criminals as political interlocutors;



- End the attribution of political, economic and financial benefits to actors or entities connected to the system of violence or to spoilers of peace that aim to obtain specific gains in the peace process (notably: political positions, diplomatic status, financial benefits).
- Promote a system that rewards peace and define a peace process that integrates a balanced, bottom-up and top-down approach:
 - Pre-condition participation in any peace efforts on agreement to a cease-fire and commitment to building peace;
 - Ensure the active participation of the legitimate fringes of the population, particularly women and youth, and build around the achievements and the exemplary model of inclusion made during the Bangui Forum in 2015;
 - Create and support mechanisms that incentivize peace efforts, particularly those focusing on the root causes of instability and violence.

II. Accountability, a central pillar to a lasting peace

To the UN Security Council, EU, AU, ECCAS, France, the United States, China, Russia, Central African regional head of states and the CAR government:

- Categorically deny amnesty for perpetrators of mass atrocities, spoilers of peace and war profiteers;
- Create consequences through the implementation of financial and other pressures that weaken networks of conflict financing, particularly by:

III. Imposing robust financial consequences on war profiteers

To the UN Security Council, EU, AU, ECCAS, France, the United States, China, Russia, Central African regional head of states and the CAR government:

- Deploy strong diplomatic efforts and mobilize resources for competent authorities in UN Member States to effectively enforce existing sanctions on named individuals and entities, including Hissène. These efforts should focus on effective enforcement by CAR, Central African countries, as well as Kenya and South Africa, and the EU, including Switzerland;
- Impose additional sanctions that target key spoilers and entities or individuals that support **CAR's** looting and mass violence. Such sanctions imposed by the UN, US, and EU should provide critical, strengthened financial pressure on those who are engaging in or providing support for acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of the CAR, or support for armed groups or criminal networks through the illicit exploitation or trade of natural resources, including diamonds and gold, as well as wildlife. The United States should also impose network sanctions on key targets and their business partners through the Global Magnitsky sanctions program;
- Employ anti-money laundering measures, including through the issuance of Advisories and other warnings by The United States, European countries, and other governments



to banks and others in the private sector, that highlight the significant money laundering risks emanating from the endemic corruption, the trafficking in gold and diamonds, and other issues related to war profiteering. These Advisories can help ensure that the private sector is acting against the transactions and accounts that fuel the ongoing pillaging of **CAR's** resources currently plaguing the country. These Advisories should refer to key publications of the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) focused on money laundering risks related to gold and to diamonds;

- Cancel all passports issued to individuals under sanctions or subject to arrest warrants, as well as any issued to foreign mercenaries or business partners connected to high profile criminals.

To the banks (regional and international):

- Close accounts and freeze assets of sanctioned persons or entities and investigate accounts held by Politically Exposed Persons, other high-risk clients, or individuals and entities subject to sanctions.

IV. Ensuring criminal accountability for perpetrators of atrocities, including their commercial actors

To the International Criminal Court (ICC) and the Special Criminal Court (SCC):

- Ensure that economic and financial crimes are part of charges against perpetrators of atrocities;
- Prioritize financial investigations, particularly related to the ill-gotten gains of high-level perpetrators of atrocities and their commercial partners;
- Create full investigative teams responsible for investigating networks of conflict financing, in particular business partners responsible for fueling violence and corruption;
- Prioritize **victims'** reparation and take steps to redirect seized funding towards peace and reconstruction.



Methodology

Between 2016 and 2018, The Sentry investigated systemic violence perpetrated by Abdoulaye Hissène, a notorious warlord involved in the deadly conflict and the looting of natural resources in the Central African Republic (CAR) since 2009. By conducting an in-depth investigation on a single individual and his business network, The Sentry seeks to draw attention to war profiteering. This violent system driven by endemic predation benefits criminal networks, with massive implications in the Central African region, as well as elsewhere on the African continent and beyond.

The investigators and researchers collected information and conducted interviews in CAR, Cameroon and Europe with experts and actors involved in the conflict or in conflict resolution. These interviewees included CAR government officials, lawmakers, members of the political opposition, civil society representatives, journalists, businessmen, political and military leaders, armed group members, self-defense group members and leaders, religious leaders, victims of violence, foreign diplomats, staff from international organizations and experts. Many of the individuals who spoke to The Sentry agreed to do so under the condition that their identities would remain confidential for fear of retribution. Accordingly, those persons are not identified in this report, although the report is based in part on information received from such sources who—based on this investigation—The Sentry deemed to be credible.

The Sentry investigative team also reviewed exclusive information revealed in hundreds of photographs and documents shared by some of these sources, which The Sentry was able to further investigate and verify. In addition, The Sentry analyzed extensive documentation on the conflict in the CAR, especially on conflict financing networks. These documents include public and confidential United Nations (UN) reports, academic research, reports by non-governmental organizations (NGOs) and think-tanks, as well as news articles published by national and international media.

Finally, The Sentry endeavored to contact every individual and entity discussed in this report and afford them an opportunity to address the information gathered during the course of our investigation prior to the **report's** completion. In most cases, these persons and entities did not respond to The **Sentry's** email or telephone requests that they speak with us and respond to our questions. Responses that were received have, however, been included in our analysis and are otherwise reflected in the report itself.

Abdoulaye Hissène factsheet	
a.k.a:	a) Abdoulaye Issène, b) Abdoulaye Hissein, c) Hissene Abdoulaye, d) Abdoulaye Issène Ramadane, e) Abdoulaye Issene Ramadan, f) Issene Abdoulaye
Nationality:	Central African Republic
Birth of year:	1967
Place of birth:	Ndélé, Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture, Central African Republic



Introduction

In March 2016, the authorities of the Central African Republic (CAR) only managed to arrest Abdoulaye Hissène, a diamond and gold trader turned warlord, for a few hours before he escaped thanks to heavily armed commandos.¹ Born in 1967, he has evaded several attempted arrests from both national and international security forces over the years. In July 2018, he was tried in absentia by a CAR national court in the capital, Bangui.² As a free man, he plays a key role in deadly violence still shaking Bangui, as well as central and eastern CAR.³ By inciting hatred and sowing divisions between ethnic and religious communities, he has gradually become a central player in perpetuating a conflict that bears all the hallmarks of civil war.

Since 2013, the CAR conflict has repeatedly made international headlines as France and the United Nations (UN) raised alarm over precursors of genocide in the country.⁴ Ethnic purges and other mass atrocities take place on a daily basis against civilians, despite not being universally described as such. Adama Dieng, the **UN's** special adviser for the prevention of genocide, recognized himself during an October 2017 visit to Bangui: “**Armed** groups manipulate and incite ethnic and religious hatred, while militias and politicians are complicit. By sowing division within communities, their aim is to control territory, mobilize fighters or expand a predatory instinct toward private property and the **country's** economic resources.”⁵ Since January 2018, the UN Security Council extended criteria for imposing targeted sanctions (asset freezes and travel bans) to apply to individuals and entities inciting violence, especially sectarian violence, recognized as a major threat to peace.⁶

The leaders of politico-military movements, who simultaneously represent private interests, regularly use threats to divide ethnic and religious communities. In February 2018, the head of an armed group tried to establish a law inspired by sharia in the area he controlled and occupied,⁷ which his spokesman later denied.⁸ Since 2013, some have also repeatedly threatened secession.⁹ Michel Djotodia, an armed opposition leader and ex-president, told a source in late 2016 that a conflict between populations from the north and south would justify his secessionist ambitions. In this exchange, a secret recording of which was reviewed by The Sentry, he declared that “**the** best solution would be a (UN Security Council) resolution to partition (the Central African Republic officially). If there is no resolution, we should be granted power again in order to have **peace**.”¹⁰

The civilian population is taken hostage in this war of interests. Often, it only has three choices: to flee, get killed or participate in internal armed conflict. A great but unknown number of civilians has died in the conflict, often in inhumane conditions. Political and security instability has also led to a major humanitarian crisis. In May 2018, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) said an unprecedented 1.27 million people have been displaced or become refugees.¹¹ In this climate of anarchy, humanitarian workers and UN peacekeepers have also become targets.¹² Since the UN stabilization mission in the country, MINUSCA, was deployed in September 2014, 25 UN peacekeepers have been killed in violent attacks over the course of three years alone,¹³ while humanitarian workers are often ransacked and sometimes killed. On July 31, 2018, three Russian journalists were killed as they investigated Russian interests in CAR.¹⁴ In addition to being one of the most unstable countries in the world, CAR also ranks near the bottom of nearly all human development indices.¹⁵ As a result, the population lives in poverty and fear, robbed of hopes for a better future.



There have been a growing number of initiatives to restore stability to CAR over the past 20 years, but this has largely been a fruitless effort. A series of peace, disarmament and amnesty agreements have been negotiated, long-term UN peacekeeping missions have been in place, foreign military operations have been regularly deployed, CAR armed and security forces have been trained repeatedly and elections have been held. But since 2014, the various mediation initiatives have failed to obtain a political compromise even to simply respect a ceasefire.¹⁶ Today, there are multiple armed gangs, self-defense groups and politico-military groups that control or exercise influence across the entire national territory.¹⁷ The proliferation and professionalization of these actors are two indicators of the failure of the response provided to a crisis that has become endemic.

Worse yet, the perpetrators of the atrocities, who have stoked the fire of systemic violence for the past 15 years, are seen as legitimate political interlocutors with whom dialogue is necessary and peace must be negotiated. In early April 2018, the African **Union's** panel of facilitators proudly announced the end of its second round of meetings with representatives of 14 armed groups to record their claims and presented around 100 demands, including an amnesty law and power-sharing,¹⁸ even though some of them have been placed under UN or US sanctions. Nourredine Adam, Haroun Gaye and Abdoulaye Hissène¹⁹ have all faced sanctions. Between June and July 2018, the facilitators also met with Michel Djotodia and François Bozizé, two former presidents forced into exile who are still active in the conflict. In March 2013, the African **Union's** Peace and Security Council imposed sanctions on seven individuals, including Djotodia and Adam. The Peace and Security Council called “**upon** all member states to take the necessary measures to completely isolate the perpetrators of the unconstitutional change in the CAR, to deny them any sanctuary and cooperation, as well as to facilitate the implementation of any other measures that would be taken by the **AU**.”²⁰ But those guidelines have not been followed.

Hissène thus progressively became one of the most influential war profiteers. The leader of politico-military groups since 2009, he has been recognized as guilty of an attempted coup in late 2015 and of targeted violence against UN and humanitarian staff.²¹ The Central African government first issued an arrest warrant in June 2016,²² barely three months after the election of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra. Since 2017, the UN Security Council and the United States have frozen his assets and imposed a travel ban,²³ measures neighboring Chad says specifically it has implemented.²⁴ But in the wake of renewed tensions and threats of destabilization, Touadéra declared in April 2018 that “**Abdoulaye** Hissène is engaging in irresponsible, war-like behavior with foreign **mercenaries**.”²⁵ Hissène has indeed managed to reinforce his military might and political influence in less than three years.²⁶

The **Sentry's** investigation reveals that despite these measures taken against him, this warlord with a pronounced taste for luxury cars, gold watches and three-piece suits has been able to amass a fortune in a country where most of the population lives in poverty. In addition to drawing a portrait of a man who has managed to make a profitable business out of sectarian violence, the investigation examines the largely unknown world of his business networks and sources of political and financial support. As he became a warlord and, at one point, a minister, he gradually surrounded himself with powerful political and economic actors, especially across Central African countries.

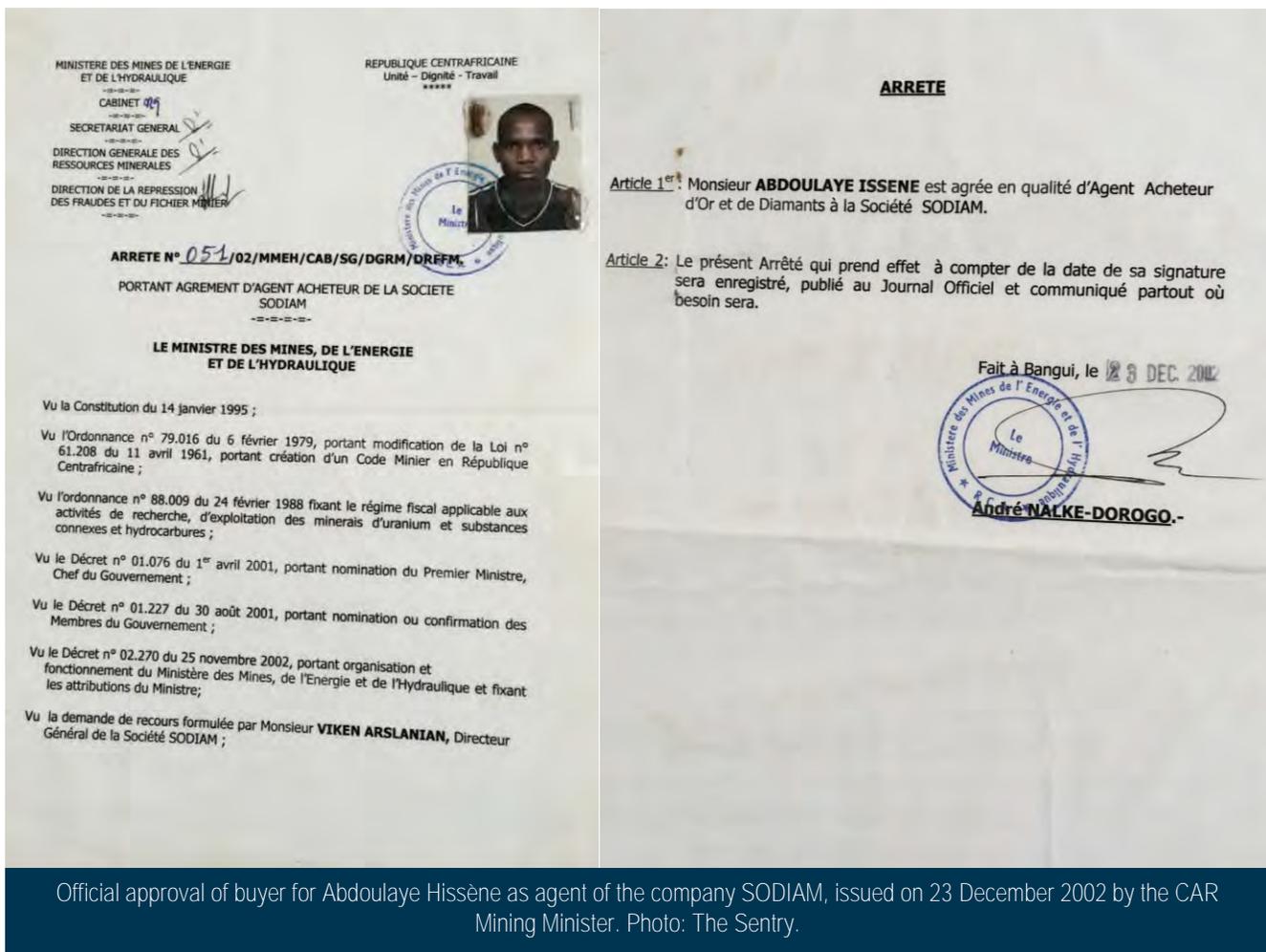


By focusing on Hissène to illustrate war profiteering, this report calls for an in-depth reassessment of the strategy to emerge from the crisis in CAR. As long as violence is profitable for those behind the atrocities and their business networks, long-term peace in CAR and the rest of the Central African region will remain an illusion. It is time to send a strong signal to war profiteers so that their crimes will be less lucrative and bear increasingly costly consequences.



Liberator or war profiteer?

An ambitious, astute strategist, Hissène is a “self-made man.” He was born in Akoursoulbak, a village in the isolated northeastern CAR prefecture of Bamingui-Bangoran, near the Chadian border. A Muslim, he is from the Runga ethnic group. His father was an environmental warden in the region’s protected zones.²⁷ He trained his children early on how to use weapons and hunt.²⁸ In the 1990s and 2000s, Hissène followed in his paternal uncle’s footsteps by pursuing a career in the mineral trade.²⁹ A gifted businessman, he led a successful career as a trader of diamonds and gold. He worked for the Central African merchant Sodiam.³⁰ He also developed knowledge of the mineral regions in eastern CAR, especially around Bria, Ndélé, Nzacko and Sam Ouandja.³¹ Riddled with debt in 2009, he fled to neighboring Chad to avoid reimbursing his creditors.³² In his 40s, he began doing business in the sale of luxury cars, which allowed him to develop a business relationship with the entourage of Chadian President Idriss Déby and several influential businessmen.³³



Official approval of buyer for Abdoulaye Hissène as agent of the company SODIAM, issued on 23 December 2002 by the CAR Mining Minister. Photo: The Sentry.



The rise of armed opposition groups in CAR

Starting in 2005, three politico-military groups emerge in CAR created by military leaders and opposition politicians disillusioned by the regime of François Bozizé, who came to power two years earlier via a coup.³⁴ The Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC) first takes hold in a northern-central part of the country,³⁵ while the People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD) forms in the northwest³⁶ and the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity seizes the northeast.³⁷ While the diamond trade was not the main cause for the emergence of rebellions, it quickly became the central issue and driving force of the conflict. What was first an armed rebellion against the central authority in Bangui grew to include conflicts between rival armed groups to control diamond sites in the east of the country.³⁸

Around this time, the regime chalked the rebellion up to crime. But as he faced threats to his own power, Bozizé began using financial rewards, political appointments and amnesty to buy back the loyalty of dissidents.³⁹ In 2007, Bozizé struck a deal with Zakaria Damane, a UFDR military chief from the Gula ethnic group, by nominating him as presidential advisor, paying him a salary, providing amnesty and an agreement to keep military control over diamond sites.⁴⁰ The Bangui regime thus delivered weapons and ammunition to him.⁴¹ This policy encouraged the growth of armed groups along ethnic lines⁴² to control mining revenues and the emergence of new leaders demanding the same advantages.⁴³ A fourth politico-military movement then appeared in 2008, the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), made up exclusively of Runga fighters. The CPJP was formed in reaction to the brutality of the UFDR, and its leaders quickly make the same political demands from the central government.

Described as courageous, Hissène is quick to claim he is afraid of nothing and no one.⁴⁴ He traded his three-piece suit for military garb starting in 2009 after seeing an opportunity in the creation of the CPJP, an armed group of Runga fighters.⁴⁵ At first serving as a military coordinator, he declared himself CPJP president in 2011.⁴⁶ Given the climate of anarchy that besets northern CAR,⁴⁷ Hissène then presented himself as a defender of the Runga ethnic group, Muslims who claim to be the heirs of the Senussi sultanate.⁴⁸



Several years later, France warned the international community that CAR is on the brink of genocide.⁴⁹ An alliance of several armed groups backed by Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries and dubbed the Séléka coalition overthrew the Bozizé regime. During their nine-month hold on power, the Séléka chiefs became known for their predatory practices⁵⁰ and serious human rights violations.⁵¹ As sectarian violence overwhelmed Bangui, France got the green light from the UN Security Council on December 5, 2013 to deploy a military intervention, dubbed Operation Sangaris.⁵² But the intervention failed to prevent mass murder. In the months that followed, tens of thousands of Muslim families fled toward Chad and Cameroon.⁵³ Christian and animist communities, forming anti-Balaka militias, led bloody reprisals. Fueled by their hatred and backed in part by Bozizé,⁵⁴ the anti-Balaka claimed Muslim populations were accomplices in the **Séléka's** crimes. Hissène progressively established himself as the ultimate protector of Muslim interests.⁵⁵

The **Sentry's** investigation reveals that far from being a defender of oppressed people, Hissène acts with an iron fist. Seemingly impossible to stop or control, he is also defined by his collaborators as a man ready to destroy his allies to defend his own private interests.⁵⁶ The investigation shows that he is driven not by religion, defending minorities or developing his native region, but instead uses ideological arguments to justify his crimes, prolong the state of war and serve his own financial interests.

The bloody gold and diamond rush

Hissène draws his strength from the astronomical sums he receives from his war and mining activities and the weapons he purchases. On March 27, 2018, he made a show of force during a meeting with African Union representatives. Dressed in a luxury suit, he traveled with eight brand new pickup trucks delivered from Sudan and armed men dressed in military garb.⁵⁷ He set up a high security residential and military base in Ndélé.⁵⁸ In late January 2018, he traveled to the northeastern



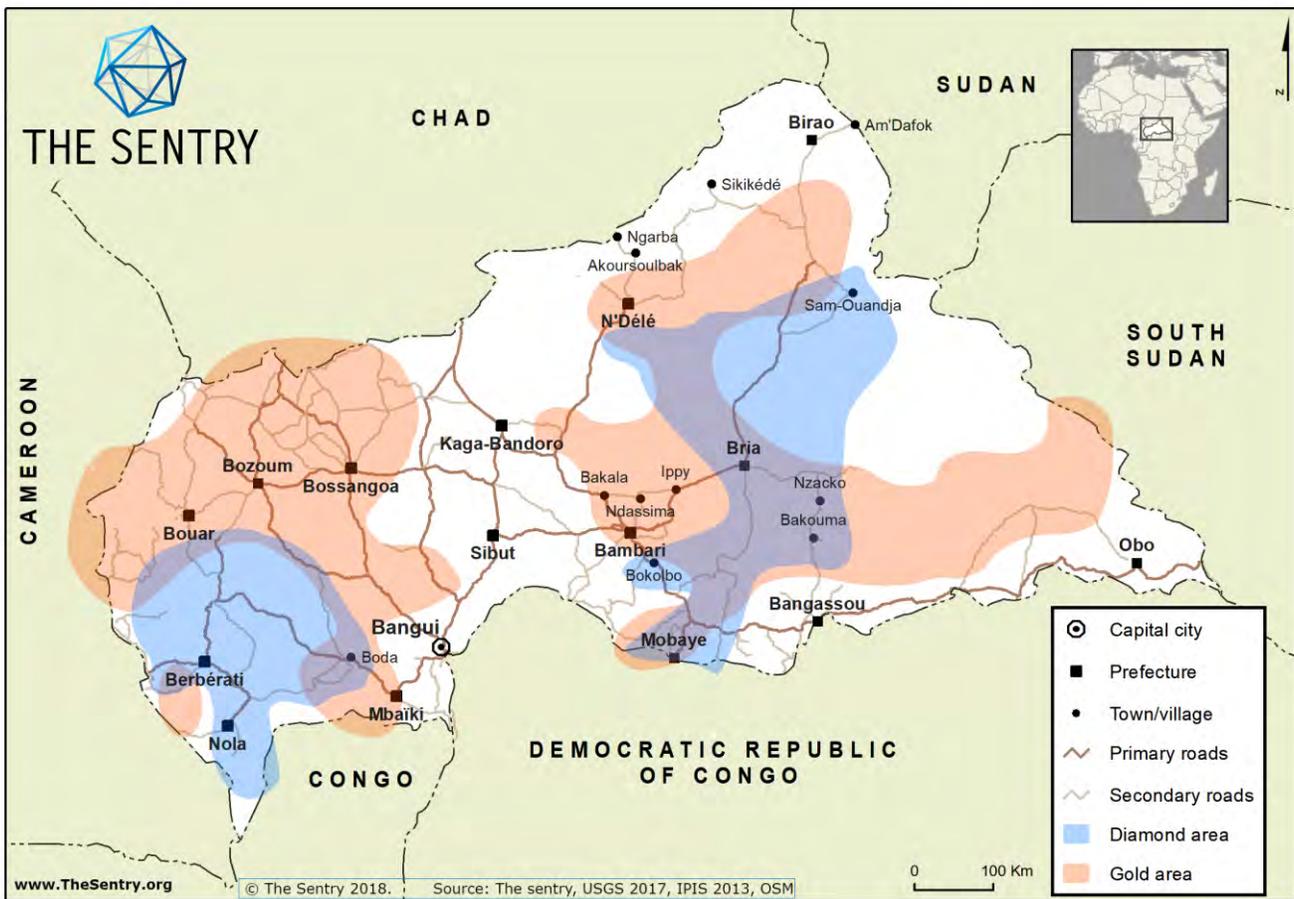
Left: Photo of Haroun Gaye – a sanctioned individual – with Abdoulaye **Hissène's** vehicles and his militias the day of the meeting in Ndélé with the panel of the African **union's** facilitators, March 27, 2018.
Right: Photo of Abdoulaye Hissene (dressed in blue suit) the day of the meeting in Ndélé with the panel of the African **union's** facilitators, March 27, 2018.

Photos: The Sentry.



mining region of Sam-Ouandja to pick up a shipment of war materiel and ammunitions from Sudan that he then brought to the diamond-rich city of Bria.⁵⁹

Since January 2018, a group of UN investigators has noted a significant increase in arms trafficking into CAR. The UN Panel of Experts found that war weapons are being ferried from Am Dafok (on the border with Sudan) and Sikikédé (northern CAR) toward the cities of Ndélé, Bria, Kaga-Bandoro and Bokolbo, areas all controlled in part by Hissène. A year earlier, the Panel of Experts found that Hissène had obtained a large stockpile of military equipment from Ngarba, a village on the border with Chad⁶⁰ and that he placed them in tents in Ndélé.⁶¹ These weapons were ultimately taken to Ippy, a village in central CAR where civilians are regularly massacred.⁶² These deadly confrontations are especially fueled by a fight for the control of the Ndassima gold mine and gold and diamond sites around Bambari, Bria, Nzacko, Bakala and Bakouma.



A gifted speaker, Hissène demands to be called “**excellency**” and delivers moralistic speeches. He presents himself as a great righter of wrongs wherever he exercises his authority. While based in a residential neighborhood of Bangui in 2016, he got involved in a family business that owns diamond company Badica/Kardiam. The UN imposed sanctions in August 2015 against this company based in CAR and Belgium for having financed armed groups in CAR at the peak of the crisis in 2014.⁶³ In



May 2016, Hissène did not react when militiamen under his orders attacked a member of the Badica family,⁶⁴ accusing it of acting against the **company's** interests.⁶⁵ He then called in the **company's** general manager, Abdoul Karim Dan Azoumi, who came to **Hissène's** home in Bangui. During a conversation, a recording of which The Sentry reviewed, Hissène told the general manager: “**the** day when someone puts their hand on your interests, call me. Your money belongs to us all, we will all die for your money.”⁶⁶ Sources close to the matter said Hissène was paid to make these threats, but The Sentry was unable to obtain proof of such a payment.⁶⁷

Diamonds, the driving force of Hissène's warlike aspirations with the CPJP (2009-2012)

Well-versed in the mining sites in eastern CAR, Hissène transformed the CPJP into a criminal enterprise. He dubs its armed elements “**human resources**”⁶⁸ that he also calls his “**children**.”⁶⁹ He recruited Runga youths as fighters or artisanal miners by exploiting ethnic solidarity.⁷⁰ In October 2008, Bozizé and his entourage — from the Gbaya ethnic group — pillaged diamond traders and buying offices.⁷¹ The operation was perceived as unjust by the Runga diamond traders, who in turn gave Hissène their financial support and he was also able to control mining sites in eastern CAR.⁷² Starting in December 2009, the CPJP became relatively well organized and equipped compared to other politico-military groups active in CAR⁷³ and diamonds quickly became the **group's** main source of revenue and a driving force of its very existence.⁷⁴ According to various sources, Hissène thus amassed a fortune between 2009 and 2012.⁷⁵

The CPJP used violence as a weapon of war, just like other armed groups. Under the command of Hissène, numerous acts of violence have been committed, including murders of civilians, hostage taking, systematic rape,⁷⁶ torture and looting, as well as recruiting child soldiers and violent foreign mercenaries.⁷⁷ These war crimes that have gone unpunished have been rewarded by the central government since Hissène obtained in August 2012 a ministerial post, the integration of his fighters in the army and amnesty.⁷⁸

Having ordered mass atrocities since 2009, Hissène continues today to bear heavy responsibility and play a central role in violations committed by a coalition of armed groups led by the Popular Front for the Renaissance of the Central African Republic (FPRC), a politico-military group led by Nourredine Adam.⁷⁹ Since October 2016, Hissène serves as president of the **coalition's** military branch, the National Defense and Security Council (CNDS).⁸⁰ Since he has taken on this role, his efforts have been focused on consolidating the **FPRC's** tax system in order to increase its revenues from the abundant gold and diamond sites in northern, central and eastern CAR.⁸¹ In order to reach these goals, Hissène once more incited hatred between the different ethnic communities.

In November 2016, after he fled Bangui and just a few weeks into setting up his base in Bria, violent clashes erupted in the city that left at least 85 people dead and forced more than 11,000 people to be displaced.⁸² A former Séléka chief confirmed that Hissène had dictated the military tactic for these confrontations. His approach was to mobilize a group of agitators who, while not falling under the orders of FPRC military chiefs, were to exclusively attack and kill Fula people, who are also



Muslims.⁸³ **Hissène's** goal was to retake control of the mining zones that had until then been administered by a former Séléka chief from the Fula ethnic group, Ali Darassa.⁸⁴

In order to gain popular support, Hissène encouraged ethnic tensions within the Union for Peace in the Central African Republic (UPC) that had become a group composed exclusively of Fula fighters under **Darassa's** command. Hissène convinced other armed groups, including anti-Balaka militias, that the Fula were “**foreigners**” and “**invaders**” that had to be chased out of the country⁸⁵ in order to “**liberate**” occupied territory.⁸⁶ On social media, Hissène is shown indoctrinating the local population in Bakala, an economically strategic town that experienced the massacre of civilians in December 2016 and February 2017.⁸⁷ In a video reviewed by The Sentry, Central African and Chadian armed fighters in Bakala declare they want to capture Darassa dead or alive.⁸⁸ Behind Hissène speeches about liberation lies a goal to control mining sites and seize herds of cows and bulls that belong to the Fula.⁸⁹ This war profiteering allows FPRC leaders and their associates to amass millions of dollars while also boosting their war efforts.

In the name of politico-economic interests, hundreds — and possibly thousands — of civilians — including women, children and the elderly — were burned alive and brutally slaughtered by armed leaders as Hissène presided over ethnic cleansing of the Fula people, according to The **Sentry's** video, photographs and interviews.⁹⁰ This tactic allowed him to reinforce the flow of money and weapons toward the FPRC coalition. A Bakala resident cited in a MINUSCA report said that: “**The** war between the UPC and the FPRC coalition is a war about interests. They fight in order to steal, to loot, to seize mining sites and strategic **positions**... All other reasons that they may give are nothing but **pretexts**.”⁹¹

After months of internal fighting between the FPRC and the UPC, Hissène and Darassa announced in October 2017 that they had reconciled and were creating a new, powerful military alliance between their respective groups. The Sentry reviewed photographs showing a triumphant reconciliation between the two strongmen.⁹² Since then, the UPC and the FPRC have shared control of mines and



coordinated the supply of weapons from Chad, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.⁹³ The new military alliances — and thus new interests — triggered fresh tensions between communities, especially around different religions (Christians vs Muslims) as had been the case at the height of the crisis in 2014.⁹⁴

The profits of sectarian violence

As warlord, Hissène became infamous for a sudden wave of deadly violence between different religious communities in Bangui in September 2015.⁹⁵ The Sentry conducted numerous interviews with victims, Muslim youth group and self-defense group leaders, anti-Balaka, Séléka chiefs and members of **Bozizé's** political party National Convergence "Kwa Na **Kwa**." The investigation revealed a sophisticated plot through which Hissène, allied with anti-Balaka pro-Bozizé militias, deliberately incited hatred between Christian or animist and Muslim communities to benefit individuals seeking power. More than 61 civilians died in the violence, most of them Christians or animists,⁹⁶ while hundreds of others were wounded, and thousands were displaced.⁹⁷ Through this investigation, The Sentry found that the instability Hissène created led to a lucrative that largely benefited him.

The Nairobists, an incongruous alliance between anti-Balaka pro-Bozizé militias and an armed faction from the core of the pro-Djotodia Séléka coalition

As the country grappled with its first inter-religious crisis of modern times in 2014, the transition led by Catherine Samba-Panza was tasked with creating favorable conditions to hold elections. In a race for power, the number of political parties and armed factions increased, and several leaders announced they were running for president. The clans of former presidents Djotodia and Bozizé gathered in Nairobi in 2015 in a meeting organized by the presidents of the Republic of Congo and Kenya. In April 2015, the Nairobists alliance emerged, making these two sworn enemies allies for the first time.

There were two main motives behind this opportunistic alliance:

- Under Samba-Panza's zero tolerance for impunity policy, most political and military leaders from the two clans were hit with judicial proceedings for war crimes and crimes against humanity committed since 2003,⁹⁸
- Transitional authorities (political leader in the Djotodia and Samba-Panza regimes as well as some from **Bozizé's** regime) were barred from running for office in the presidential and legislative elections according to the terms of the transitional charter adopted in 2013.⁹⁹ Many politicians protested and instead backed the political agenda of the Nairobists as they met at a meeting held in November 2015 by Hissène (representing **Djotodia's** clan the FPRC) and Maxime Mokom (anti-Balaka, pro-Bozizé faction) in Bangui.¹⁰⁰

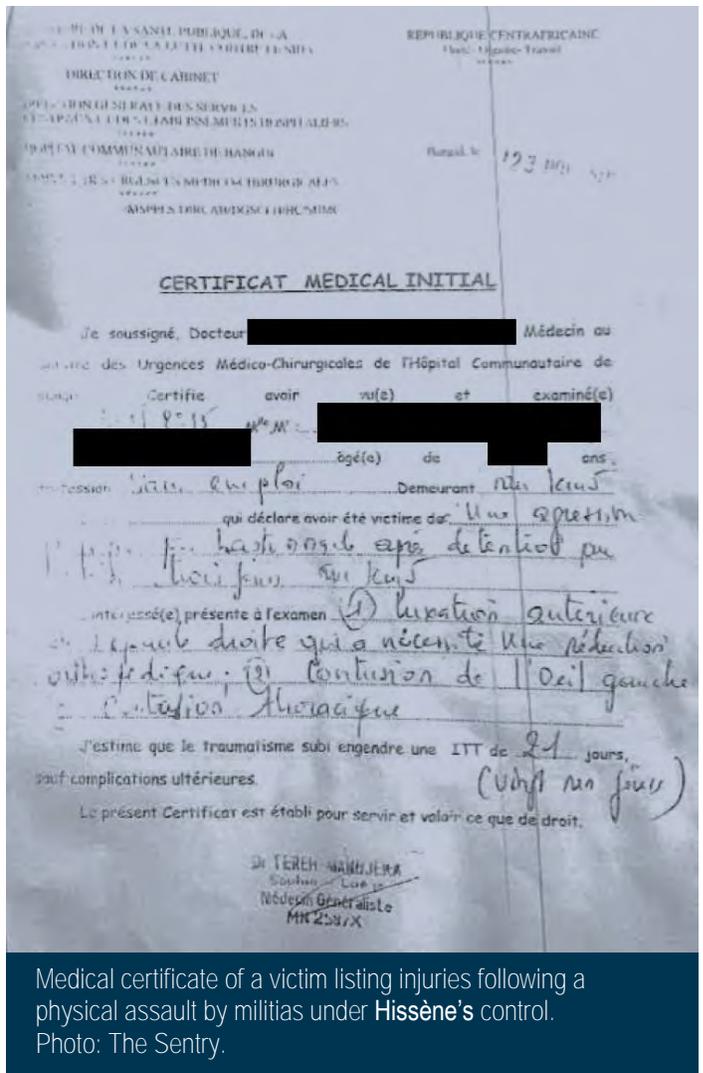
These different actors were hoping to return to the political arena even though the rules did not favor such a move. The Nairobi agreement called for the elections and a referendum on the new constitution to be canceled, revised rules in the transitional charter, general amnesty and the creation of a third transition in which they could exercise power.



Several close Hissène collaborators at the time confirmed that he ordered his militias to kill and decapitate a 17-year-old Muslim boy in Bangui in September 2015 and spread rumors that anti-Balaka militias had committed the killing.¹⁰¹ In fact, anti-Balaka militias affiliated with Maxime Mokom plotted this murder with Hissène to trigger violence in the capital.¹⁰² Hissène exploited the murder to incite the furor of Muslim youths as he delivered speeches inciting hatred against the Christian community. Around 200 liters (50 gallons) of oil were distributed the morning of September 26, 2015, with weapons, ammunition, grenades, military garb and tramadol, a narcotic that reduces fear and inhibition.¹⁰³ Even if the murders were largely committed by Muslim youths, anti-Balaka militias also participated in the killings, sometimes on the side of the Muslims and sometimes against them.¹⁰⁴ Armbands were distributed to the young Muslim fighters, who were unaware that anti-Balaka militias (who say they are Christian or animist) also wear the same insignia.¹⁰⁵

However, the operation ended without political upheaval because Hissène lacked the support of some ex-Séléka leaders. In a last attempt, Hissène ordered fighters to shoot at Muslims participating in the referendum on the new constitution on December 13, 2015.¹⁰⁶ At least five people were killed by heavy weapons.¹⁰⁷ In order to assert his power and quash any hopes of resistance, he created a climate of terror and suppression in the last Muslim majority neighborhood in Bangui, the PK5. A Muslim victim tortured by **Hissène's** militias described physical abuse he endured after trying to alert government authorities on **Hissène's** crimes in late 2015. The medical exam found he had a dislocated shoulder, contusions on his thorax and his eye, as well as a broken hand.¹⁰⁸ As the man received treatment, Hissène made other victims.¹⁰⁹

Acting as a true mercenary, Hissène seeks to satisfy several clients with varying interests. Some wanted to take power and oust the transition authorities, while others wanted to maintain the status quo by prolonging the **transition's** mandate.¹¹⁰ **Hissène's** strategy was simple: electoral agents and voters lack security and elections cannot happen when there is violence and instability.¹¹¹ Transitional president Catherine Samba-Panza condemned what she said was a coup attempt by those previously in power, especially Bozizé and Michel Djotodia.¹¹² On September 30, 2015, she declared: “**The** elections will likely have to be delayed after the last coup **attempt**”¹¹³ that sought to



Medical certificate of a victim listing injuries following a physical assault by militias under **Hissène's** control. Photo: The Sentry.



benefit certain types of actors. However, political pressure from the French and Chadian presidents, who called for an end to the transition and for the elections to be held as planned, forced Samba Panza to reverse course several days later.¹¹⁴

“All of this in the end was about **money**,” said a source who was a close collaborator of Hissène at the time.¹¹⁵ Indeed, several people have condemned a system of cash-stuffed envelopes provided to Hissène by **Bozizé’s** clan, Djotodia and some transitional authorities to finance the unrest. One source even goes so far as to claim to have witnessed the delivery of cases of ammunition by a minister at the time to **Hissène’s** residence in the Km5,¹¹⁶ an account confirmed by several other sources. In addition to his political clients and sponsors, Hissène has also organized the extortion of Muslims. He has received illicit taxes in cash at his request from merchants and carriers active in the Km5.¹¹⁷ In late 2015, the outburst of sectarian violence and increased hatred between communities placed this warlord at the center of the **conflict’s** politicization. He managed to make sectarian violence a highly lucrative system.

The fight for prestigious political titles

Hissène served as youth and sports minister under the Séléka regime (March 2013-January 2014),¹¹⁸ and as a minister and presidential adviser for youth under Samba-Panza (February-August 2014). Rather than focusing on improving the situation of Central African youth, he relished the prestige and advantages associated with his government functions, as well as the increased foreign business opportunities. While exercising his official ministerial functions, Hissène managed to obtain three passports between 2013 and 2014 that indicate his political status.¹¹⁹ In January 2014, as anti-Muslim and anti-Séléka discourse was on the rise, he also obtained five diplomatic passports for his children,¹²⁰ who he sent to France with one of his wives, a Christian from the Gbaya ethnic group.¹²¹

With a political title and official government travel documents, Hissène reached a critical point in his business dealings. In 2014 alone, photographs reviewed by The Sentry show a businessman



concerned with his appearance staying in four-star hotels. In nine months alone, he traveled to more than 10 countries: from Cameroon to Chad, Congo-Brazzaville, Kenya and France, Switzerland and the United Arab Emirates. These travels likely allowed him to identify future business partners and to reinforce his political and financial support outside the country (see section II of this report).

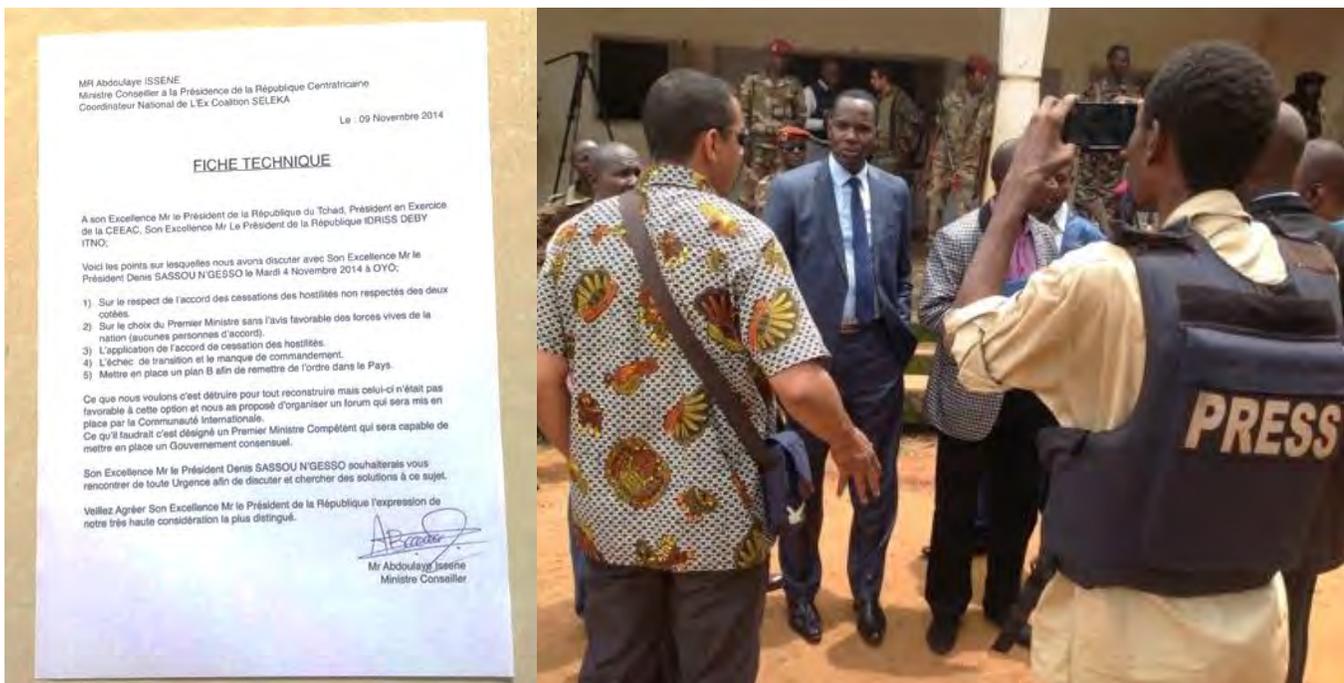
Hissène's business trips from March 2014 to January 2015

Date (I)	Country/City	Title	Date (II)	Country/City	Title
March 4-5, 2014 March 16, 2014	Central African Republic Bangui Bangui	Presidential advisor/minister	Oct. 21-30, 2014 Nov. 3, 2014	Republic of Congo Brazzaville Oyo	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator and first advisor of the FPRC
March 17-20, 2014 March 21, 2014 March 29, 2014	Cameroon Douala Yaoundé Douala	Presidential advisor/minister	Nov. 16, 2014 Nov. 23, 2014	Chad N'Djamena N'Djamena	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator and first advisor of the FPRC
April 4, 2014	Ethiopia (transit) Addis-Ababa airport	Presidential advisor/minister	Nov. 25, 2014	Switzerland Geneva	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator and first advisor of the FPRC
April 5-16, 2014	United Arab Emirates Dubai	Presidential advisor/minister	Nov. 30, 2014 Dec. 1-4, 2014	France Enghien-les-Bains, Loudéac Paris	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator and first advisor of the FPRC
April 22, 2014	Cameroon Douala	Presidential advisor/minister	Dec. 6-18, 2014 Jan. 1, 2015	Chad N'djamena N'djamena	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator and first advisor of the FPRC
April 27, 2014 May 3-8, 2014 May 9-11, 2014 May 17-18, 2014	Central African Republic Bangui Bangui Ndélé Bangui	Presidential advisor/minister & ex-Séléka coalition coordinator	Jan. 4-8, 2015 Jan. 18, 2015	Central African Republic Bangui Bangui	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator and first advisor of the FPRC
Sept. 30-Oct. 9, 2014 Oct. 14, 2014	Kenya Nairobi Nairobi	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator & first advisor of the FPRC	January 25-29, 2015	Chad N'Djamena	Ex-Séléka coalition coordinator and first advisor of the FPRC

Source: The Sentry¹²²



Starting in May 2014, during his waning days as minister and with his privileged status now in question,¹²³ Hissène decided to reform the Séléka movement. He participated in a large gathering of military and political leaders who had been part of the Séléka coalition. The meeting received logistical support (particularly air transport) from the French military operation in CAR, Sangaris.¹²⁴ In order to inspire confidence, Hissène readily boasted to his business partners that he had a privileged relationship with French officers.¹²⁵ During this event, he put on his best looks, wearing a deluxe business suit as he was named the **movement's** coordinator.¹²⁶ A month later, he was tapped as first counselor to the FPRC, a new ex-Séléka faction created from the core of the Séléka coalition and led by Adam.¹²⁷ During a business meeting in **N'djamena** in December 2014, he met Séléka leaders and together they decided to form a new entity.¹²⁸



Left: **Hissène's** letter to **Chadian's** president, Idriss Déby, dated November 9, 2014. In this letter, **Hissène's** report the details of his conversation with Congolese president, Denis Sassou Nguesso he met in Oyo on November 4, 2014. He declared: **"What we want is to destroy everything to rebuild everything again"**. Right: Interview of Hissene with journalists on the occasion of the ex-Séléka gathering in Ndélé, in May 2014. Photos: The Sentry.

When Samba-Panza named Mahamat Kamoun, a Runga Muslim from Ndélé, prime minister in August 2014 and he formed a new government, Hissène lost his ministerial status. Hissène strategized his next move by using his regional ties with the presidents of Chad and the Republic of Congo. In November 2014, he wrote a letter to Déby, a copy of which The Sentry reviewed, declaring: **"We** want to destroy the country in order to rebuild everything." He proposed to the two leaders to **"designate** a competent prime minister who can establish a consensus government"¹²⁹ in which he could very likely play a role. But the initiative failed. A year later, Hissène emerged as one of the most influential war profiteers in Bangui.



A perverse system to profit from violence

Hissène is not the only warlord who benefited from this system of profit-reaping violence. Since 2008, several ministerial posts have been handed out by the regimes of Bozizé, Djotodia and Samba-Panza. Rather than ending the conflict, these rewards have triggered internal divisions and the proliferation of politico-military leaders demanding the same. In cases such as Hissène's, these posts are an opportunity to make business and reap financial benefits and power (see section II on **Hissène's** business networks).

Although this approach has largely been fruitless, some of the most violent war profiteers benefited from **Touadéra's** ministerial reshuffle in October 2017, entering government and taking hold of strategic economic sectors, such as forestry and public works,¹³⁰ oil¹³¹ and special presidential advisor posts.¹³² Diplomatic passports were issued to these individuals, including to Hassan Bouba, the **UPC's** number two and **Darassa's** right-hand man.¹³³ In a video reviewed by The Sentry, Mahamat Oussouman Mahamat, a Séléka leader and Touadéra advisor, appears to show a large amount of diamonds to a potential foreign buyer.¹³⁴ By distributing these key political posts to the most ruthless armed groups, Touadéra consolidated the **warlords'** strategy.¹³⁵ These measures failed to tamper the conflict. On April 9, 2018, Hissène threatened to halt the peace process underway with the African Union¹³⁶ after the government and MINUSCA tried to arrest a notorious **gang's** leader in Bangui.¹³⁷ In December 2017, Adam threatened to “**march on Bangui,**” and to “**liberate the country**” while condemning the “**red line**” the president was about to cross.¹³⁸ And in early 2018, Hissène increased pressure on the government by deploying his forces between Kaga-Bandoro, Dékoua and Sibut with the stated aim to overthrow the Bangui government.¹³⁹

The struggle for amnesty

The CAR crisis is also dotted by a struggle for a general amnesty and the removal of international sanctions. As part of the **country's** system of violence, the leaders of armed groups destabilize security and the political scene with an aim to control the **country's** riches, halt the deployment of agents sent by **Bangui's** elites and demand political and economic benefits, as well as amnesty.¹⁴⁰ The greater the threat, the more severe the consequences. In September 2017, during a private telephone conversation — a recording of which The Sentry reviewed — Hissène spoke with someone he believes to be a minister in **Touadéra's** government. Concerned by the international initiatives underway seeking to end the climate of impunity, Hissène declared that “**people** are dead, some were mutilated. You and I are the first ones to be sent to face international **justice...** We need to merge our efforts, or everything will be blamed on **us.**”¹⁴¹ When contacted by The Sentry, the minister in question, who requested anonymity, said he had never been contacted by Hissène. The Sentry was able, however, to confirm the authenticity of **Hissène's** voice.¹⁴²



Amnesty for warlords, a recipe with no peace solution

Impunity is inextricably linked with **CAR's** history.¹⁴³ Violence and financial crimes are perpetually ignored. Worse yet, they are silenced. Four amnesty laws were passed in 1996, 1997, 2003 and 2008, and several former presidents have also obtained amnesty from presidential decrees by their successors. Each time, these decisions exonerated the clans in power and armed groups that have become structurally and militarily more powerful than the central government.¹⁴⁴ However, history has shown that amnesty has never successfully ended systemic violence.

Since the current crisis began in 2013, efforts have been made to end the climate of impunity that perpetuates a permanent climate of war. In 2015, the Bangui **Forum's** conclusions were unequivocal and there was popular demand for zero tolerance for impunity.¹⁴⁵ However, Chad, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) since 2017 have pointed to general amnesty as a condition for CAR to emerge from the crisis, which hampered the existing efforts to punish crimes. Those countries and regional groupings consider bringing the authors of violent crimes to justice as an impediment to dialogue and the peace process.¹⁴⁶ At the same time, however, the African Union and ECCAS have become leaders and facilitators of a political solution to the Central African crisis as part of a “**peace initiative.**” Even if these institutions do not overtly indicate that they favor general amnesty, Central Africans interviewed about the matter said it is in fact in place. Armed group representatives are invited to join the government while the African Union and the international community grants the perpetrators of mass atrocities a status as legitimate political actors with whom peace must be negotiated to emerge from the crisis.¹⁴⁷



Political support or powerful business networks?

All rebel leaders have “friends,” according to an ex-Séléka coalition leader.¹⁴⁸ In CAR and elsewhere in Central Africa, violence is big business, churning out hundreds of millions of dollars in profit. Through its investigation, The Sentry determined that networks of political and economic actors appear to be linked to those behind mass atrocities in CAR, making them likely accomplices of systemic violence in the name of private political and financial interests. This report shows that Hissène, a man who wears many hats, has created powerful business networks since 2009 that benefit his own personal financial interests.

A wheeling and dealing minister in Dubai during ethnic cleansing in CAR

In April 2014, during an official visit in Dubai while serving as a presidential advisor on youth, Hissène declared he was seeking financing for sports activities¹⁴⁹ and that he wanted to open a consulate.¹⁵⁰ Photos reviewed by The Sentry show that he appeared to stay at the Novotel, a four-star hotel in Dubai's business district.¹⁵¹ During his two-week stay, he visited luxury shopping centers as well as car dealerships.¹⁵² Documents reviewed by The Sentry show he purchased a 2013 4x4 Range Rover for \$125,000.¹⁵³ At the time, a ministerial salary was 1.1 million CFA francs (or \$1,870) per month. Hissène therefore likely had other sources of income or resources. In the months that followed, he enriched himself, through gold and diamond trading in neighboring countries. While Hissène made his purchases in Dubai and sought new business opportunities, hundreds of thousands of Muslims were fleeing CAR toward Cameroon and Chad, after being systematically hunted down and killed by militias convinced they were complicit in crimes committed by the Séléka.

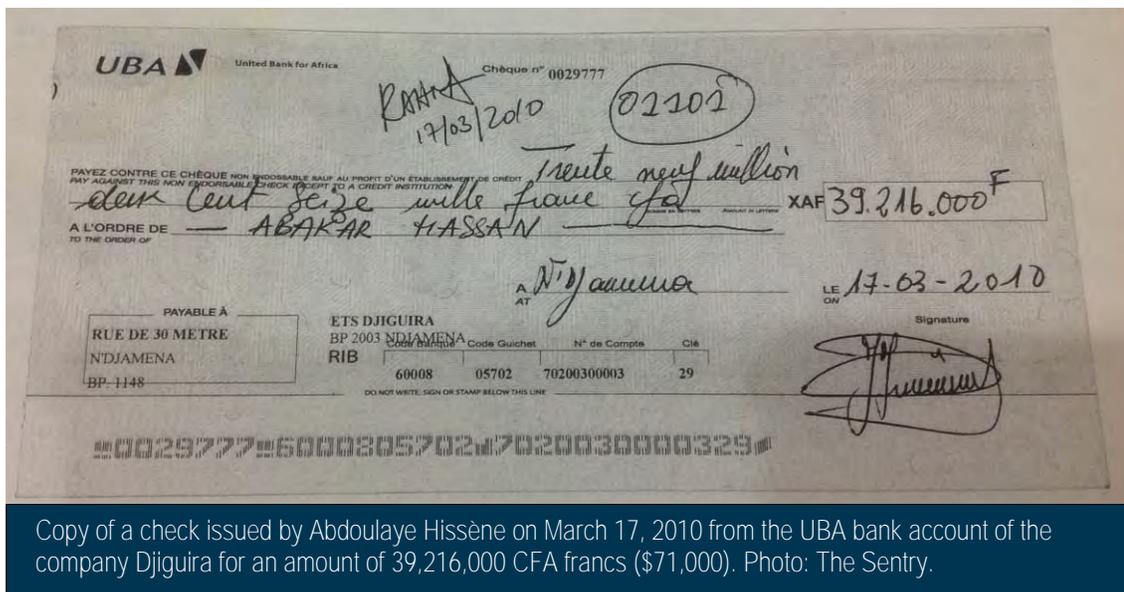


Left: Hissène posed with two white range rovers (model 2013) in a secondhand vehicle sale in Dubai on April 10, 2014. During that same period, Muslims were fleeing CAR due to targeted attacks. Right: Invoice for the purchase of a white range rover, model 2013. The document is dated April 4, 2014. Photos: The Sentry.



Business networks in Chad

A close collaborator of Hissène said he is placing his political bets on Chad.¹⁵⁴ Several sources also indicated that Hissène maintains ties with the entourage of Idriss Déby, the Chadian president.¹⁵⁵ Hissène wrote Déby a technical note in November 2014 detailing his personal meeting with the CAR crisis mediator at the time, Congolese president Denis Sassou Nguesso.¹⁵⁶ Hissène's trade ties with Chad began in 2009, when he declared himself a CAR "rebel leader"¹⁵⁷ and he controlled, at least in part, the trade of gold and diamond from mining zones in eastern and northern CAR. In 2009, he launched the Djiguira company in N'djamena specializing in luxury vehicle sales.¹⁵⁸ Using fake Chadian identification papers, he opened two commercial bank accounts that he used between 2009 and 2010,¹⁵⁹ one with Société Générale and the other at United Bank of Africa (UBA) in N'djamena.¹⁶⁰ Copies of checks he wrote in 2010 reviewed by The Sentry appear to show several transfers — one for \$71,000 and two others for about \$17,500 each. The UN Panel of Experts published a copy of one of those checks.¹⁶¹



On December 11, 2014, while he coordinated the ex-Séléka movement and served as the FPRC's first advisor, another company — Abi Tchad — was launched in N'djamena. According to Chadian authorities, Hissène was Abi Tchad's official financial advisor and one of its leaders.¹⁶² A document published by the UN Panel of Experts in 2017 shows that the company had a bank account at Société Générale and that 112 million CFA francs (\$198,000) were deposited there in January 2015.¹⁶³ Abi Tchad emerged as Hissène's Chadian oil interests grew and during the same period that he met with leaders of the Swiss oil firm Mezcor SA, which specializes in international trade of African oil. The company faced a vast corruption scandal in late 2015 in the Nigerian oil sector.¹⁶⁴ At the time of publication of this report, Mezcor was being liquidated.¹⁶⁵

This meeting apparently allowed Hissène to take in \$215,000 in less than three months. During this

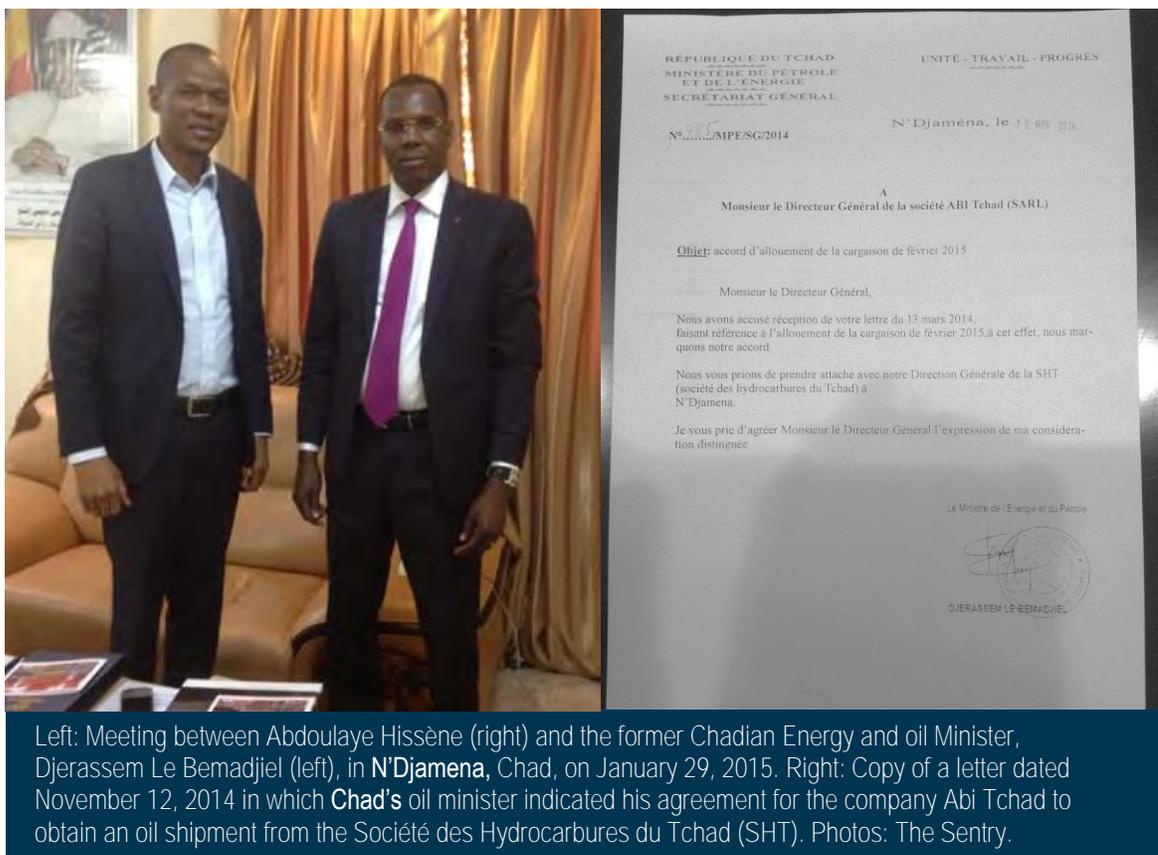


time, Mezcor covered all his travel expenses in Europe and Chad, despite being alerted as to his true identity.¹⁶⁶

See below for a breakdown of the evolution of **Hissène's** business dealings with Mezcor:

Stage 1:

During a visit in the hometown of the Congolese president, Oyo, in November 2014,¹⁶⁷ sources confirm that Hissène met Mezcor chief Daniel Roy Joanes.¹⁶⁸ During this meeting, Hissène falsely claimed to be a minister and boasts of his ties with Chadian political leaders.¹⁶⁹ He managed to convince the businessman that he could facilitate a sales agreement for Chadian oil.¹⁷⁰ And yet Mezcor was apparently aware that Swiss raw material trade giant Glencore had signed an agreement with Chad and state oil firm Société des hydrocarbures du Tchad (SHT) several months earlier that provided for a quasi-monopoly over oil exports in exchange for a loan.¹⁷¹



Left: Meeting between Abdoulaye Hissène (right) and the former Chadian Energy and oil Minister, Djerassem Le Bemadjjel (left), in **N'Djaména**, Chad, on January 29, 2015. Right: Copy of a letter dated November 12, 2014 in which **Chad's** oil minister indicated his agreement for the company Abi Tchad to obtain an oil shipment from the Société des Hydrocarbures du Tchad (SHT). Photos: The Sentry.

Stage 2:

Starting in 2014, Hissène was in direct contact with then Chadian energy and oil minister Djerassem Le Bemadjjel, the right-hand man of **Chad's** First Lady Hinda Déby Itno.¹⁷² Madame Déby Itno



controls with her husband¹⁷³ an oil industry that has earned more than \$13 billion for the presidential clan since 2003 in a country that is otherwise on the brink of ruin.¹⁷⁴ In a letter dated November 12, 2014, a copy of which The Sentry reviewed, **Chad's** oil minister indicated his agreement for the company Abi Tchad to obtain an oil shipment from SHT,¹⁷⁵ an entity controlled by the Déby regime and led by the oil minister.¹⁷⁶ With this document, Hissène appeared to convince Mezcors to move forward.

Stage 3:

Between November and December 2014, a series of three meetings took place between Mezcors directors and Hissène, along with Chadian and Congolese collaborators,¹⁷⁷ with documents showing that all travel expenses appearing to have been paid by the Swiss company:

November 25, 2014 in Geneva - Hissène traveled there to meet with Mezcors leaders.¹⁷⁸



Meeting in Paris between Abdoulaye Hissène (left), a Chadian partner representing Abi Tchad (right) and Mezcors's director, Daniel Roy Joanes (middle). Photo taken on December 1, 2014. Photo: The Sentry.

December 2, 2014 in Paris - He traveled to the French capital with Chadian collaborators.¹⁷⁹ There, they met Mezcors directors Daniel Roy Joanes and Richard Lee Levinson.¹⁸⁰ Even before Abi Tchad was officially created, documents show that they signed on December 2, 2014 a contract between the two companies,¹⁸¹ a copy of which The Sentry reviewed. The contract appeared to establish a partnership to purchase oil, oil derivatives and — in a surprising twist — precious metals, including gold. The benefits were to be divided as follows: 33.34% for Abi Tchad SARL and 66.66 % for Mezcors, which would provide 100% of the launch capital.

During these discussions, Hissène convinced Mezcors leaders that Abi Tchad must serve as an intermediary to purchase crude oil from the SHT, thus justifying the launch of a joint venture between the two entities.¹⁸² On December 10, a **“service agent contract”** was signed for a five-year partnership between the two companies.¹⁸³ **It's** only the following day, on December 11, that Abi Tchad was formally created, and Hissène became both one of its directors and a financial advisor. Mezcors reported that it was not informed at that stage in the negotiations about **Hissène's** identity. Hissène had presented himself as a minister, not as the incoming director of Abi Tchad or as a warlord. However, a source involved in the negotiations told The Sentry that Mezcors had, in fact, been told about **Hissène's** identity and yet, the negotiations granted him a share of the benefits.¹⁸⁴

On December 5, 2014, Mezcors wired \$17,819 to the UBA account of Soumaine Kotiga Assileck



Abakar, a Chadian citizen, to reimburse **Hissène's** travel costs, choosing to use an intermediary to disburse the funds.¹⁸⁵ The Sentry reviewed a copy of this transfer, which does not indicate the source of the funds.

December 15-16, 2014 in **N'djamena** – According to documents and photos reviewed by The Sentry, Richard Levinson, a Mezcors director¹⁸⁶ traveled to Chad for further negotiations and to meet Hissène and his Chadian partners.¹⁸⁷ They were to determine the distribution of a Doba Blend shipment from February 2015 that was authorized in writing by the oil minister.¹⁸⁸ The long-term goal was apparently to become a close SHT partner.¹⁸⁹ Documents show that the parties struck an agreement under which Abi Tchad would purchase Chadian crude directly and sell the shipment back to Mezcors, which would then trade the crude on international markets. The profits were to be divided up equally.¹⁹⁰



Left: Meeting in **N'Djamena**, Chad, between Abdoulaye Hissène, Chadian representatives of the company Abi Tchad and **Mezcors** Director, Richard Lee Levinson, to conclude an agreement between the two companies. Photo taken on December 15, 2014. Right: Copy of a power attorney dated January 7, 2015 by which Abdoulaye Hissène authorized Soumaine Kotiga Assileck Abakar, to represent him and serve as co-signer to withdraw 135,000,000 CFA francs (\$254,300).

Mezcors was due to fund Abi **Tchad's** operations in advance for one year.¹⁹¹ The Chadian collaborators provided a budget of more than \$250,000 that included office expenses, salaries and Prado-type vehicles.¹⁹² Sources confirmed to The Sentry that Mezcors transferred the funds to Abi Tchad, and the UN Panel of Experts also confirmed that \$198,000 was transferred to Abi **Tchad's** Société Générale account in January 2015.¹⁹³ Several days later, documents show that Hissène secured the funds. The Sentry reviewed a copy of a power of attorney signed by a Central African notary, Abraham Pierre **M'Bokani**, on January 7, 2015, where Hissène authorized Soumaine Kotiga Assileck Abakar to represent him and serve as co-signer to withdraw 135,000,000 CFA francs, or



\$254,300,¹⁹⁴ which is \$56,300 more than the January 2015 transfer. The Sentry was unable to independently confirm the origin of these funds.

Kenya, Congo and Cameroon

Hissène also developed political and business ties in Kenya, where he was searching for buyers of his gold bars.¹⁹⁵ The Sentry found that he traveled to Nairobi from September 30 to October 14, 2014.¹⁹⁶ Photographs reviewed by The Sentry appeared to show that he had been traveling with three small cases that each contain a significant amount of what could be gold extracted through artisanal mining.¹⁹⁷ The Sentry was unable to independently confirm whether this shipment belonged to him or whether he imported it from CAR. A month earlier, however, he had concluded a sales contract for 300 kilograms of gold with an unidentified Indian businessman, with delivery set to take place in Kenya in exchange for \$9.9 million (or \$33,000 per kilogram).¹⁹⁸ The Sentry was unable to obtain proof of a financial transaction; however, several sources confirmed that he had indeed sought to sell 300 kilograms of gold.¹⁹⁹ A close Hissène collaborator told The Sentry he has ties with Kenyan politicians.²⁰⁰ In October 2014, he also obtained a declaration from the Mines ministry confirming that seven grams of gold had been sampled and found to have 97.5% purity.²⁰¹ At the time, Hissène was a "rebel" leader without any export permits or permits to sell minerals.²⁰²



Left: Photo showing Abdoulaye Hissène with three cases of what could be gold bars taken on October 9, 2014. Right: Photo showing Congolese Minister of mines, Pierre Oba (left), and Abdoulaye Hissène (right) travelling in a private jet between Bangui and Brazzaville, Republic of Congo, on October 21, 2014. Photos: The Sentry.



The UN Panel of Experts also determined that there were several murky attempts to illegally sell gold in the Kenyan capital. By using a network of companies,²⁰³ according to the Panel, Hissène repeatedly sought to sell 300 kilograms of gold between 2014 and 2016. As part of these attempts, he falsely claimed to his potential buyers that he was the customs agent for Sovereign Freighters, a company that does not officially exist on paper.²⁰⁴ A source who witnessed a meeting between Hissène and potential foreign investors in 2014 told The Sentry that they were seeking to purchase 1,000 kilograms of gold, and Hissène guaranteed he could provide them 300 kilograms delivered to Angola, Cameroon, Kenya, Uganda or Sudan. In exchange, he was to receive military equipment and war weapons and ammunition, especially via the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) or Sudan.²⁰⁵ One of **Hissène's** close collaborators also confirmed the transaction, saying that "most diamonds that leave Bria cross the equator via the DRC and traffickers then deliver to Kenya. They take diamonds and gold in exchange for weapons and money."²⁰⁶

Hissène used Cameroon as a business platform the same way as Kenya and Chad. Several sources confirmed that he traveled regularly to Douala in 2014 to conduct business negotiations. One of the sources told The Sentry they witnessed transactions with foreign investors during which Hissène sold diamonds for 230 million CFA francs (\$450,000) and for 140 million CFA francs in another transaction (\$265,000).²⁰⁷ The Sentry also reviewed photographs related to an apparent sale of diamonds taken in Douala between March 17 and 29, 2014, while he served as minister-presidential advisor.²⁰⁸ In addition to diamond sales, Hissène also tried to invest in a company registered in Douala in 2014. The UN Panel of Experts published a document that found Hissène obtained a fifth of the shares of a recently created company, equivalent to some 125 million CFA francs (\$234,578).²⁰⁹

Hissène also developed close political ties in the Republic of Congo with Denis Sassou Nguesso²¹⁰ and highly controversial Mines Minister Pierre Oba. The Sentry determined that between October and November 2014 – while he was still leading the ex-Séléka opposition movement – Hissène traveled in a private jet from Bangui airport to Brazzaville and Oyo, the Congolese **president's** hometown.²¹¹ He was accompanied on the trip by Oba, who is also a former interior minister and Sassou **Nguesso's** right-hand man.²¹² Oba is under a European arrest warrant, sought by the authorities in France and Belgium for his responsibility in war crimes committed in Congo in 1997.²¹³



Criminal or legitimate political interlocutor?

Elusive

According to his collaborators and diplomats interviewed by The Sentry, Hissène has gathered increasing military and political influence. He is described as elusive and untamable,²¹⁴ and Touadéra himself says he is still waging conflict.²¹⁵ Ever since he returned to northeastern CAR and has faced an arrest warrant, asset freezes and a travel ban, he has been able to visit Chad and Sudan for political mediations. He still manages to travel very frequently and exclusively in convoys of heavily armed vehicles. He thus hardly goes unnoticed, traveling near UN troops deployed in those regions. Over the past three years, confidential UN reports reviewed by The Sentry have recorded his travels and whereabouts in the country.²¹⁶ In 2018, he travelled to Chad and Sudan to participate to talks in violation of the travel ban. And yet, despite knowledge of his whereabouts and his now well-established responsibility in perpetuating the Central African crisis, he is still a free man.

Since 2015, **MINUSCA's** mandate includes temporary emergency measures, such as arrests and detentions, to maintain public order and fight impunity.²¹⁷ However, these measures are only rarely implemented for warlords. A second attempted arrest of Hissène took place in July 2016 in Bangui, but it failed.²¹⁸ While he managed to escape, killing several civilians along the way,²¹⁹ 12 of his militiamen **didn't** have the same luck. Arrested in 2016 and tried in March 2018 by a Central African court, they were found guilty by association with a wrongdoer, of illegal possession of weapons of war, hampering national security and rebellion.²²⁰ While Hissène himself was found guilty of these same counts, he remains a free man, along with many other perpetrators of violence.

UN Deputy Special Representative and Deputy Head of MINUSCA Kenneth Gluck told The Sentry that arrests and prison time are regularly used against "second rank" perpetrators of violence but rarely for senior warlords such as Hissène. Gluck expressed reservations as concerns coercive measures, pressing instead for dialogue and a strategy of supporting the CAR government and its security and defense forces to enhance their effectiveness.²²¹

Despite the heated debate over amnesty, initiatives seeking to end the climate of impunity are ongoing. There have been recent positive signs in Central African justice. Among the encouraging measures are the arrest warrant against Hissène and recent criminal sessions targeting the authors of serious crimes. But the judicial system is known to face endemic challenges. The highly volatile security situation complicates efforts to arrest, securely detain and try a warlord such as Hissène. In addition to a chronic lack of resources, the politicization of the judicial system further prevents any such arrests.

Two judicial authorities thus remain to raise Central African hopes for justice:

- The International Criminal Court opened an investigation in CAR in 2014²²² over an "endless" list of atrocities that took places since December 2012,²²³ but the institution known for its slow pace has yet to issue arrest warrants and yield concrete efforts.



- The Special Criminal Court, a hybrid institution created in 2015 and made up of national and international magistrates is tasked with investigating and ruling on crimes committed since 2003. But this court has been slow to launch its investigations.

Critical questions remain, however, revealing the contradictions of the current strategy to emerge out of the crisis. How can those who committed war crimes and economic crimes face justice when they are also involved in political negotiations and a peace dialogue? There is a major risk that instead of being arrested, the most violent warlords will be spared the **court's** judgment, and instead lesser figures will face its wrath. How can the **magistrates'**, police and the **witnesses'** safety be guaranteed when those who ordered mass atrocities are traveling freely with growing military might? There has not been a response to these questions in the official national and international sphere.

A lucrative war

"People need to die, the blood must flow for people (like me) to become rich, " Hissène has declared, according to one of his close collaborators.²²⁴ Although the financial and economic facet of this conflict is known, very few efforts have been undertaken to combat the networks that finance the armed conflict, especially when it comes to illegal trafficking of natural resources and weapons. Financial sanctions and travel bans are the only tools that have been deployed to target several warlords between 2014 and 2017 (see table below), and a single diamond trading company, BADICA/KARDIAM.²²⁵

However, these mechanisms have not produced the desired results, as exemplified by Hissène. Major problems have been recorded in terms of their implementation, especially the **CAR government's** unwillingness to move forward with punitive measures²²⁶ and that of other states in the Central African region. **Chad's** decision, announced in June 2017, to freeze **Hissène's** financial assets was therefore met with surprise,²²⁷ with the target himself dubbing it a "joke."²²⁸ Although the decision was welcomed, its impact remains very limited. The identified accounts had already been inactive since 2016 and some banks refused to collaborate or provide additional information.²²⁹ In addition, numerous actors active in the conflict have not yet faced sanctions despite solid proof of their war crimes and economic crimes. These include, but are in no way limited to, Darassa, Djotodia, Mokom and Poly Technologies, the Chinese state company specializing in weapons and oil.²³⁰

War profiteers run free without consequences despite sanctions

In this bloody structural crisis, Hissène is far from being alone in being blamed for major war crimes, crimes against humanity and economic crimes, while remaining free. The United States and the UN Security Council have added to their sanctions list several individuals who have at least three points in common: despite the presence of sanctions, they are free to travel, they have enriched themselves through systemic violence and most are considered as major political interlocutors.



<p>François Bozizé <i>Sanctions: UN Security Council and United States (May 2014), international arrest warrant (2013)</i> Bozizé stands accused of having launched and supported anti-Balaka militias and of having ordered unrest that led to mass atrocities. In 2017, he traveled to Benin, Kenya, South Sudan and Uganda. He obtained a South Sudanese passport under the name of Samuel Peter Mudde the following year.</p>	<p>Nourredine Adam <i>Sanctions: UN Security Council and United States (May 2014), international arrest warrant (2014)</i> Considered the mastermind and deputy leader of the Séléka coalition, Adam has served as the FPRC's chief since 2014. He has a secessionist agenda and has repeatedly threatened to overthrow the Bangui government. Since late 2016, he travels freely in northeastern CAR and traveled to Angola, Chad and Sudan in 2018.</p>
<p>Eugène Barret Ngaïkosset aka "the butcher of Paoua" <i>Sanctions: UN Security Council (December 2015), international arrest warrant (2013)</i> Found guilty of causing unrest in late 2015 as an anti-Balaka leader. He also colluded with the FPRC led by Hissène in Bangui. In 2018, he remained an officer in the Central African army and received a salary.</p>	<p>Haroun Gaye <i>Sanctions: UN Security Council (December 2015), arrest warrant.</i> Gaye has ordered unrest since September 2015. He colluded with Hissène for the FPRC. Since late 2016, he has facilitated weapons transfers for Adam and Hissène from the borders with Chad and Sudan.</p>
<p>Alfred Yekatom aka "Rambhot" <i>Sanctions: UN Security Council (August 2015), arrest warrant.</i> This anti-Balaka leader has been found guilty of unrest and ransom. Elected as a lawmaker after having threatened local voters, he has received a government salary since May 2016. Free to travel in the capital, he has also created a private security firm.</p>	<p>Abib Soussou <i>Sanctions: UN Security Council (August 2015)</i> An anti-Balaka leader from a town in southwestern CAR, he has ordered mass atrocities. Since 2016, he has been receiving a salary as officer in the Central African army.</p>
<p>Abdoulaye Miskine <i>Sanctions: United States (May 2014)</i> Former head of the presidential guard under Ange-Félix Patassé and later an FDPC leader, Miskine has been found guilty of numerous crimes. While he lives in Brazzaville, in the Republic of Congo, his men are still committing atrocities in western CAR</p>	<p>Abdoulaye Hissène <i>Sanctions: United States (April 2017) and UN Security Council (May 2017), arrest warrant (August 2016).</i> He has been found guilty of an attempted coup in late 2015 and of targeted violence against UN and humanitarian staff. Today, he is one of the most influential and powerful politico-military leaders operating in the conflict.</p>
<p>Maxime Mokom <i>Sanctions: United States (April 2017)</i> The military leader of a branch of the anti-Balaka movement, Mokom has remained loyal to Bozizé. Since 2015, he has actively destabilized the capital Bangui, along with fighters from Hissène's ex-Séléka coalition.</p>	<p>Michel Djotodia <i>Sanctions: United States (May 2014)</i> This Séléka leader was president during the Séléka regime. At the head of the FPRC since 2014 and an advocate for returning the Séléka to power or partitioning the country, he lives in Benin and travels regularly around the world.</p>



Conclusion: Rethinking the peace process and disrupting war profiteering

War profiteers like Hissène are hampering the political process sought by the Touadéra regime, heads of state in the Central African region and the African Union, with UN Security Council backing — especially from France and the United States. They and their business networks see war as a lucrative business that must be perpetrated. As architects of systemic violence, they see the talks as a path toward salvation since the process makes them legitimate political actors on the international stage, no longer mere criminals. In addition, because the talks have not yet been conditioned toward a cessation of hostilities, sectarian violence still serves as a political negotiation tool.

Far from stabilizing the situation, the AU process threatens peace and the fight against impunity.

- Threats of arrest, legal proceedings and financial sanctions are weakened as a result, while amnesty is presented as a *sine qua non* condition to respect negotiated agreements;
- The status quo that sees criminal networks controlling territory benefits those behind the atrocities and their business networks. Indeed, those ordering the atrocities are pillaging the country, which allows them to boost their financial and military might and in turn carry more weight in negotiations;
- It provides political, economic and financial opportunities to armed group leaders and politicians who associate with them, giving them status and the advantages associated with their functions, instead of ending systemic violence. Far from reducing the activities of armed movements, they exert influence over the country to enrich themselves.

Over the course of 15 years, this system where violence yields financial benefits has been legitimized by the international community and created an environment that fosters the proliferation of armed groups and a growing number of political actors.

Peace is an attractive but largely utopian mirage for Central Africans. Indeed, the ongoing talks have significantly reduced the weight of the legitimate fringes of the population and of the armed **conflict's** main victims, especially women and children. Actors who chose to pursue peace are largely kept out of negotiations because they are no longer seen as a threat. As an anti-Balaka leader indicated: **“When I provoked hatred between religious communities, my pockets were full of bank notes and the big players (politicians and the international community) listened to me. Since I began refusing to wage war, I am just scraping by and have been bypassed in major discussions.”**²³¹

The talks also call into question the gains from the Bangui National Forum. Held in May 2015 by the transitional government at the time, it had allowed consultations with a large range of the population, identify values for building a common future and raise hopes of a sense of national pride. There was unanimous agreement that **“zero impunity”** was key. The constitution, adopted via referendum in 2015, included fundamental principles inspired by past experiences, including opposing any move



to sow division and encourage hatred²³² or to usurp power through violence.²³³ Despite these encouraging initiatives, systemic violence is gaining strength by the hour.

The international response to the Central African conflict has also largely focused on the symptoms of the crisis, by prioritizing humanitarian aid, civil protection and reconciliation initiatives that improve social cohesion. The root causes of the violence and mass atrocities, however, often receive far less attention. Local initiatives, while laudable, are more akin to local anesthesia, despite worsening hemorrhage as war profiteers gain ground. Sectarian violence, incitement to hatred and the hijacking of the debate on “**foreigners**” are intrinsically linked. So far, however, various strategies and efforts to weaken the military power — and thus the financial might — of these criminal networks are too weak and unambitious to make real impact. Political negotiations are likely to keep leaning in their favor.

Efforts have certainly been made to train the army and police forces, as well as to deploy state services in the country. **It's** a task of massive proportions backed by MINUSCA and allies, such as European Union countries, China, Russia, the United States and African allies to assist Central African authorities in taking control of their role and responsibilities. There have also been some positive, localized signs in the judicial sector. However, all external and national observers who were queried agreed that the nature of the current regime, especially the **president's** close entourage, have demonstrated strong interest in privatizing national assets, careful to protect their own interests and re-election in 2021.²³⁴ Over the course of his first 2.5 years in power alone, Touadéra has isolated himself from national, regional and international politics. Paranoid fear of a coup has taken hold, favoring concentration of power and clan-like management. In addition to having created numerous political enemies for itself, the current regime has favored political, economic, social and cultural isolation. The leaders of armed groups and politicians complicit with systemic violence then use these same arguments to justify their crimes, legitimize their political agenda and gain popular support.

Touadéra, whose power has waned, has chosen two major partners: Russia and China, world powers with which the presidential clan has placed all its hopes of survival. Since January 2018, an arms race is underway, along with preparations for battle, both on the government side and that of armed groups. The civilian population is extremely concerned that a private army will emerge to serve the presidential clan, while over-armed and over-trained militias appear to turn their weapons against innocent civilians. In this high-stake game of interests, the civilians have the most to lose, and the escalation of sectarian violence is a major threat to their future.

It is critical to completely reassess the exit strategy for CAR to emerge out of this crisis and end the stalemate.



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The Sentry follows the illicit money in order to create consequences for those benefiting from genocide or other mass atrocities in Africa, and to build leverage for peace and human rights.

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International Crisis Group. "**Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic.**" Report No. 167/Africa. December 16, 2010.

See also: Mail & Guardian. "CAR diamond feud sees ceasefire." October 9, 2011. Available at <https://mg.co.za/article/2011-10-09-car-diamond-feud-sees-ceasefireAZ>

³⁹ Interviews with several Séléka leaders, 2016.

Zahar, Marie-Joëlle. Mechoulan, Delphine. "Peace by pieces? Local mediations and sustainable peace in the Central African Republic." International Peace Institute. November 2017. Pg. 8.

Dalby, Ned. "A multifaceted business: Diamonds in the Central African Republic." In Carayannis, T., Lombard, L. "Making sense of Central African Republic." 2015. Pgs. 123-141.

⁴⁰ Zahar, Marie-Joëlle. Mechoulan, Delphine. "Peace by pieces? Local mediations and sustainable peace in the Central African Republic." International Peace Institute. November 2017. Pg. 8

Dalby, Ned. "A multifaceted business: Diamonds in the Central African Republic" in: Carayannis, T., Lombard, L. "Making sense of the Central African Republic." 2015. PP. 123-141; Vircoulon, Thierry. "A la recherche de la paix en Centrafrique: médiations communautaires, religieuses et politiques." Note de l'IFRI. June 2017. Available at

https://www.ifri.org/sites/default/files/atoms/files/vircoulon_recherche_paix_centrafrique_2017.pdf

⁴¹ *Idem.*

WikiLeaks. "Public library of US diplomacy: CPJP motivations for attack on Ndélé." December 22, 2009. Available at http://wikileaks.org/plusd/cables/09BANGUI273_a.html

⁴² The emergence of armed groups divided along ethnic lines is a deliberate policy of the Bangui regime, which considers them a real threat to the central government, according to several ex-Séléka leaders interviewed by The Sentry. By favoring opportunistic alliances with several military leaders, especially as concerns dividing up proceeds from the diamond trade, Bozizé was seeking to create conflict between various "rebel leaders." The UFDR, which began as a multiethnic group, became an exclusively Gula armed group following the 2007 "peace agreement" motivated by control of mining sites in eastern CAR. The Runga, an ethnic group traditionally active in the diamond trade in northern and eastern CAR, were then pushed out of mining sites by followers of Zakaria Damane. And in 2008, Operation Closing Gate – led by the Gbaya clan in power – pushed the Runga community to rally around a set of common objectives: fight the UFDR and the central government. However, CPJP leaders – at that time backed by the Runga – also used the group to defend private political and financial interests, and to obtain the same advantages as Damane.

⁴³ Interview with source close to the Séléka, 2017

WikiLeaks. "Public library of US diplomacy: CPJP motivations for attack on Ndélé." December 22, 2009.

⁴⁴ Interviews with several Muslim and Séléka leaders in Bangui, 2017.

Private conversation recorded in May 2016 between Hissène and the general manager of diamond firm BADICA. Recording reviewed by to The Sentry in 2017.

⁴⁵ Interview with an ex-Séléka leader, 2017.



- ⁴⁶ Centrafrique Presse. "Communiqué du commandant Abdoulaye Hissène de la CPJP." June 10, 2010. Available at <http://centrafrique-presse.over-blog.com/article-apres-paoua-bozize-et-sa-soldatesque-ont-aussi-brule-ndele-et-les-villages-environnants-52045723.html>
- International Crisis Group. "Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic." Report No. 167/Africa. December 16, 2010.
- ⁴⁷ Human Rights Watch. "State of Anarchy: Rebellion and Abuses against Civilians." September 14, 2007. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/report/2007/09/14/state-anarchy/rebellion-and-abuses-against-civilians>
- ⁴⁸ See: MaliActu. "Centrafrique: un ancien sultanat aux racines des revendications des régions du Nord." AFP newswire story. December 27, 2017. Available at <http://maliactu.net/centrafrique-un-ancien-sultanat-aux-racines-des-revendications-des-regions-du-nord/>
- ⁴⁹ Radio France Internationale. "La Centrafrique est-elle au bord du génocide?" November 22, 2013. Available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20131121-rca-centrafrique-seleka-djotodia-misca-fomac-genocide>
- ⁵⁰ International Crisis Group. "The Central African Crisis: From Predation to Stabilization." Report No. 219 Africa. June 17, 2014. Available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-crisis-predation-stabilisation>
- ⁵¹ The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic. "Final report." December 19, 2014. Available at http://www.securitycouncilreport.org/atf/cf/%7B65BFCF9B-6D27-4E9C-8CD3-CF6E4FF96FF9%7D/s_2014_928.pdf
- ⁵² Le Monde. "Le Conseil de sécurité de l'ONU autorise une intervention militaire de la France en République centrafricaine." December 5, 2013. Available at http://www.lemonde.fr/international/article/2013/12/05/le-conseil-de-securite-doit-ouvrir-la-porte-a-une-intervention-en-centrafrique_3525806_3210.html
- ⁵³ Libération. "Centrafrique : 1300 musulmans fuient Bangui." AFP newswire story. April 27, 2014. Available at http://www.liberation.fr/planete/2014/04/27/centrafrique-1300-musulmans-quittent-bangui_1005713
- ⁵⁴ See: Interpol notice. "Bozizé, François Yangounvonda." Available at <https://www.interpol.int/en/notice/search/un/5802796>
- ⁵⁵ Interviews with PK5 leaders in Bangui, 2016 and 2017; Recording between Hissène and the general manager of diamond firm Badica reviewed by The Sentry in 2017.
- United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018. Pg. 18.
- ⁵⁶ Interviews with Séléka coalition leaders, 2017.
- Interviews with Muslim PK5 leaders, 2017.
- ⁵⁷ Interview with source, 2018. Confirmed by diplomatic sources, 2018.
- United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018. Pgs. 2,18,19, 89, 91.
- ⁵⁸ Interview with source, 2018.
- ⁵⁹ Interview with source close to Hissène, 2018.
- ⁶⁰ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pg. 17. Available at <https://undocs.org/en/S/2017/639>
- ⁶¹ *Idem*. Pgs. 84 et 85.
- ⁶² Radio France Internationale. "Centrafrique: la localité d'Ippy secouée par de violents affrontements." December 8, 2012. Available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20171208-centrafrique-localite-ippy-secouee-violents-affrontements>
- Radio France Internationale. "Centrafrique: les civils d'Ippy se réfugient sur des sites de déplacés." December 17, 2018. Available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20171217-centrafrique-civils-ippy-refugient-sites-deplaces>
- United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018. Pg. 22.
- ⁶³ UN Central African Republic Sanctions Committee. "Résumé des motifs de sanctions du bureau d'achat de diamant BADICA." August 20, 2015. Available at <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/fr/sanctions/2127/materials/summaries/entity>
- ⁶⁴ Interview with source, 2017.
- Interview with a witness who said he too was tortured by Hissène loyalists, 2017. Photographs of the wounds were reviewed by The Sentry.
- Confidential report reviewed by The Sentry, 2017.
- ⁶⁵ *Idem*.
- ⁶⁶ Recording between Hissène and the general manager of diamond firm Badica reviewed by The Sentry in 2017.
- ⁶⁷ Interviews with two sources, 2017.



⁶⁸ Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme. "Centrafrique: Abdoulaye Hissène émet des réserves par rapport à la Cour pénale spéciale." June 30, 2017. Available at <http://rjdh.org/centrafrique-abdoulaye-hissene-emet-reserves-rapport-a-cour-penale-speciale/>

⁶⁹ Hissène has been recruiting child soldiers since 2009. Interviews with several Muslim leaders in Bangui, 2017.

See also: International Crisis Group. "Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic." Report No. 167/Africa. December 16, 2010.

United Nations. "Report of the mapping project documenting serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015." May 2017. Available at https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/2017_car_mapping_report_-_eng.pdf

Journal de Bangui. "Centrafrique: Vers la signature de l'Accord de paix global par la CPJP." July 10, 2012. Available at <http://www.journaldebangui.com/article.php?aid=2867>

⁷⁰ International Crisis Group. "Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic." Report No. 167/Africa. December 16, 2010.

⁷¹ On October 4, 2008, the Ministry of Mines announced on the radio that the licenses of eight purchasing offices were being revoked. On October 5, under the orders of Mines Minister Sylvain Ndoutingai and Bozizé, ministry representatives and officers of the Bangui mining brigade – most of them from the Gbaya ethnic group – traveled without warning to mining sites across the country, including in the cities of Berbérati, Carnot, Boda, Nola and Bria. They seized the diamonds, gold, vehicles, money, measuring tools and personal belongings such as telephones, television sets, clothing and other valuables from diamond dealers and buying offices. This national operation aimed to enrich the clan in power in the short term, establish a monopoly in the mining sector and grant privileges to traders close to the regime. The mining sector's economic operators complained about the sweeping seizures. Some of them later supported armed groups. Source: Interview with a Carnot diamond dealer, September 2016, and with a Séléka chief and former CPJP leader, September 2016. See: International Crisis Group. "Dangerous Little Stones: Diamonds in the Central African Republic." Report No. 167/Africa. December 16, 2010

United Nations. "Report of the mapping project documenting serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015." May 2017. Pg. 56.

⁷² WikiLeaks. "Public library of US diplomacy: CPJP motivations for attack on Ndélé." December 22, 2009.

⁷³ *Idem*.

⁷⁴ *Idem*.

⁷⁵ Interview with a close collaborator of Hissène, 2017. Interview with Séléka leader, 2017.

⁷⁶ The UN special representative for the human rights of displaced people found that the CPJP had systematically raped women from the Haoussa ethnic group, as well as girls as young as 12 who were unable to flee. From March to June 2010, while Hissène was the CPJP's military leader, some of the group's elements raped 20 women, including youths, in the villages of Goz Beida and Zoukoutouniala. See: UN. "Report of the mapping project documenting serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015." May 2017. Pg. 98.

⁷⁷ UN. "Report of the mapping project documenting serious violations of international human rights law and international humanitarian law committed within the territory of the Central African Republic between January 2003 and December 2015." May 2017. Pg. 100.

⁷⁸ BINUCA. "Adhésion de la CPJP à l'accord de paix global de Libreville." September 28, 2012. Available at

<https://binuca.unmissions.org/adh%C3%A9sion-de-la-cpjp-%C3%A0-l%E2%80%99accord-de-paix-global-de-libreville>

⁷⁹ Nourredine Adam was the deputy leader of the Séléka coalition and is considered the mastermind of the March 2013 coup.

See: Interpol. "Adam, Nourredine." May 9, 2014. Available at <https://www.interpol.int/en/notice/search/un/5802798>

⁸⁰ Summary of the general assembly held in Bria on October 22, 2016, published in: UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2262 (2016)." December 5, 2016. Pgs. 165-167. Available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/1032&Lang=E

⁸¹ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pg. 17

United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018. Pg. 2.



⁸² UN News. "Central African Republic: UN envoy calls for protecting civilians as scores killed in ethnic violence." November 25, 2016. Available at <https://news.un.org/en/story/2016/11/546322-central-african-republic-un-envoy-calls-protecting-civilians-scores-killed>

MINUSCA. "Violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by the FPRC coalition and the UPC in Haute-Kotto and Ouaka between 21 November 2016 and 21 February 2017." September 2017. Pg. 9. Available at https://minusca.unmissions.org/sites/default/files/fprc_upc_bria_bakala_report_16oct2017_copy.pdf

⁸³ Recording reviewed by The Sentry, 2017.

Confidential report shared with The Sentry by source, 2017.

Médecins sans frontières/Doctors Without Borders. "'S'ils nous trouvent dans la brousse, ils vont nous égorger' : Reprise des massacres dans l'Est de la République centrafricaine." 2017. Available at <https://msf2016.atavist.com/reprise-des-massacres-en-rca>

MINUSCA. "Violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by the FPRC coalition and the UPC in Haute-Kotto and Ouaka between 21 November 2016 and 21 February 2017." September 2017. Pg. 12.

⁸⁴ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pg. 17.

⁸⁵ *Idem*. Pg. 16.

⁸⁶ MINUSCA. "Violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by the FPRC coalition and the UPC in Haute-Kotto and Ouaka between 21 November 2016 and 21 February 2017." September 2017. Pg. 13.

⁸⁷ Source: See Haroun Gaye's Facebook account: <https://www.facebook.com/gueye.haroun/posts/1489435344419858>

MINUSCA. "Violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by the FPRC coalition and the UPC in Haute-Kotto and Ouaka between 21 November 2016 and 21 February 2017." September 2017. Pg. 10.

⁸⁸ Video reviewed by The Sentry, December 2017.

⁸⁹ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pg. 18.

⁹⁰ Photographs reviewed by The Sentry, 2017.

⁹¹ MINUSCA. "Violations and abuses of human rights and violations of international humanitarian law by the FPRC coalition and the UPC in Haute-Kotto and Ouaka between 21 November 2016 and 21 February 2017." September 2017. Pg. 10.

⁹² Photographs reviewed by The Sentry, 2017.

⁹³ Ali Darassa became vice president of the CNDS, with Hissène as president. Source: Copy of decree reviewed by The Sentry of the decision on the naming of key posts in the coalition of the National Defense and Security Council signed by FPRC vice president Nourredine Adam on October 15, 2017.

⁹⁴ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pg. 17.

UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017. http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2017/1023

United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018. Pg. 16.

⁹⁵ Le Monde. "En Centrafrique: une flambée de violences meurtrières." 26 septembre 2015. Available at http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2015/09/26/en-centrafrique-une-flambee-de-violences-meurtrieres_4773344_3212.html

⁹⁶ Human Rights Watch. "Central African Republic: New Spate of Senseless Deaths." October 22, 2015. Available at <https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/10/22/central-african-republic-new-spate-senseless-deaths>

⁹⁷ Jeune Afrique. "Centrafrique : les violences de Bangui ont fait 61 morts et plus de 300 blessés." October 5, 2015. Available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/269740/politique/centrafrique-violences-de-bangui-ont-61-morts-plus-de-300-blesses/>

⁹⁸ On May 30, 2014, the transition government headed by Catherine Samba-Panza International Criminal Court to open an investigation into alleged crimes committed since August 1, 2012 in CAR. In September 2014, the ICC prosecutor followed suit. See: International Criminal Court. "Statement of the Prosecutor of the International Criminal Court, Fatou Bensouda, on opening a second investigation in the Central African Republic." Press release. September 24, 2014. Available at <https://www.icc-cpi.int/Pages/item.aspx?name=pr1043>.

See also: ICP. "Situation in the Central African Republic II: Article 53(1) Report: Executive summary." September 24, 2014. Available at <https://www.icc-cpi.int/iccdocs/otp/SAS-CARII-Art53-1-Executive-Summary-24Sept2014-Eng.pdf>

On June 3, 2015, Samba-Panza enacted a law created **CAR's** special criminal court. Article 3 indicates that the court is competent to investigate, weigh the evidence and rule on grave human rights and international humanitarian rights violations



committed in CAR since January 1, 2003. The **court's** mandate includes crimes committed during **Bozizé's** regime (2003-2013), the Séléka regime (2013) and beyond.

See: Law No 15.003 on the special criminal court adopted by the national transition council. Copy of the law available on the international human rights federation (**FIDH's** website):

https://www.fidh.org/IMG/pdf/loi_organique_portant_creation_organisation_et_fonctionnement_de_la_cps.pdf

⁹⁹ A series of three agreements was adopted to limit the participation of the transition authorities in the elections. 1) The January 11, 2013 Libreville agreement foresaw Bozizé, the prime minister and members of the government barred from participating in the 2016 elections. See: "Accord politique de Libreville sur la résolution de la crise politico-sécuritaire en RCA." January 11, 2013. Available at http://peacemaker.un.org/sites/peacemaker.un.org/files/CF_130111_AccordPolitiqueDeLibreville.pdf

2) The CELAC meeting in **N'djamena** on April 18, foresaw Djotodia, head of the Séléka coalition, leading the transition for 18 months. Beyond that period, the elections would be held without **Djotodia's** candidacy, his prime minister or members of the transition government. See: "Sommet CEEAC à N'Djaména du 18 avril 2013." Available at <http://centrafrique-presse.over-blog.com/documents-sommet-ceeac-n-djam%C3%A9na-du-18-avril-2013>

3) The transition charter adopted by Djotodia on July 18, 2013 planned for even more restrictions since the president of the transition, the prime minister, government officials, the bureau of the national transition council, constitutional court judges and members of the high communications court were barred from becoming presidential or legislative candidates (article 106).

¹⁰⁰ Copy of the "non-aggression pact" between the anti-Balaka and the ex-Séléka signed November 13, 2017 à Bangui between Maxime Mokom and Hissène, a copy of which was reviewed by The Sentry in 2017.

Video of the meeting during which Hissène and Mokom signed the accord. See "Mboli président" Facebook page

<https://www.facebook.com/mbolipresident/videos/889888594423259/>

¹⁰¹ Interviews with sources close to Hissène at the time of the events, 2017.

¹⁰² Interview with a PK5 Muslim leader close to Hissène at the time of the attack, 2017.

Interview with anti-Balaka pro-Bozizé fighter, 2016.

Interview with KNK youth member, 2016.

¹⁰³ Interviews with several sources present when the events occurred, 2017.

¹⁰⁴ Human Rights Watch. "Central African Republic: New Spate of Senseless Deaths." October 22, 2015. Available at

<https://www.hrw.org/news/2015/10/22/central-african-republic-new-spate-senseless-deaths>

¹⁰⁵ Interview with source close to Hissène, 2017.

¹⁰⁶ Interviews with PK5 residents, 2017.

¹⁰⁷ Radio France Internationale. "RCA: un référendum sur fond de violences meurtrières." December 13, 2015. Available at

<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20151213-referendum-constitutionnel-centrafrique-tirs-bangui-PK5>

¹⁰⁸ Interview with the victim, 2017.

Copy of the medical certificate reviewed by The Sentry in 2017, dated November 23, 2015. The ensuing trauma caused the victim to be hospitalized for a month at his own cost.

Letter to the national authorities reviewed by The Sentry.

¹⁰⁹ Interview with victim, 2017.

¹¹⁰ Interview with KNK pro-Bozizé member, 2016.

Interview with an anti-Balaka pro-Bozizé fighter, 2016.

Interviews with PK5 Muslim leaders, 2016 and 2017.

¹¹¹ Interview with an anti-Balaka pro-Bozizé fighter and a KNK member.

¹¹² Radio France Internationale. "RCA: Samba-Panza dénonce une tentative de coup d'États." October 1, 2015. Available at

<http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20150930-rca-bangui-transition-catherine-samba-panza-violences-politique>

France 24. "Violences en Centrafrique: la présidente Samba-Panza rentre précipitamment à Bangui." September 29, 2015.

Available at <http://www.france24.com/fr/20150929-centrafrique-presidente-samba-panza-rentre-bangui-violences-quitte-new-york-onu>

¹¹³ Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme (**journalists'** network for human rights). "Centrafrique: Catherine Samba-Panza de retour à Bangui déclare 'qu'il faut aller au désarmement sans discrimination des milices armées.'" September 30, 2015. Available at <http://rjdh.org/centrafrique-catherine-samba-panza-de-retour-a-bangui/>

¹¹⁴ Jeune Afrique. "Le président tchadien, Idriss Déby Itno, estime que la transition doit **s'arrêter**." October 5, 2015. Available at

<http://www.jeuneafrique.com/269792/politique/centrafrique-president-tchadien-idriss-deby-itno-estime-transition-sarreter/>

¹¹⁵ Interview with PK5 Muslim youth leader, 2017.

¹¹⁶ Interview with source, 2017.

¹¹⁷ Interviews with sources, 2017.



¹¹⁸ Centrafrique Libre. "Liste des membres du Gouvernement d'union nationale du Gouvernement Tiangaye 2." Available at <http://archive.is/ErNwJ>

¹¹⁹ While serving as minister, Hissène obtained several passports. Document reviewed by The Sentry.

¹²⁰ Interviews with sources, 2017.

¹²¹ *Idem*.

¹²² Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

¹²³ Interview with source, 2017.

¹²⁴ Interview with source, 2018.

Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

¹²⁵ Photographs reviewed by The Sentry appeared to show he received French logistical support. Business partners and close collaborators also confirmed that Hissène boasts of his ties with French military officers, and the photographs shows him accompanied by French officers.

¹²⁶ Copy of the minutes of a meeting of ex-Séléka political officers on May 11, 2014 in Ndélé, reviewed by The Sentry.

¹²⁷ Summary note of the FPRC general assembly. See: UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2262 (2016)." December 5, 2016. Available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/1032&Lang=E

¹²⁸ Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

¹²⁹ Memo addressed to Chadian President Idriss Déby dated November 9, 2014 reviewed by The Sentry

¹³⁰ Lambert Moukove-Lissane, a close ally of Nourredine Adam, was named forestry minister. As the **state's** main source of revenue, **it's** also the only industrial field with a dozen foreign companies in southwestern CAR. Ahmed Senoussi, a close ally of Abdoulaye Hissène from the Runga ethnic group, was tapped as minister of public works. See:

<https://www.fidh.org/fr/regions/afrique/republique-centrafricaine/remaniement-ministeriel-en-centrafrique-une-ouverture-politique-qui>

¹³¹ The high-stakes post of oil minister (energy and hydraulic resources) was given to Djono Ahaba, a nephew of Michel Djotodia who was president of the Patriotic Rally for the Renewal of the Central African Republic (RPRC), a post that he had previously held in 2013 during the Séléka regime. Even though oil mining has not yet begun in CAR, several companies are in the exploration phase, which makes this field a highly strategic one.

¹³² Decree No. 17.336 naming individuals to the presidency. Published by Media Plus No. 1771. October 11, 2017. The post of special advisor to the head of state went to Mahamat Ousmane Mahamat, a political leader who emerged from an ex-Séléka armed group, the Central African Patriotic Movement (MPC), a member of the FPRC coalition. A UPC representative, Hassan Bouba (UPC deputy chief and Ali **Darass's** right-hand man), was tapped as special advisor to the head of state.

¹³³ Hassan **Bouba's** diplomatic passport, copy reviewed by The Sentry.

¹³⁴ Video reviewed by The Sentry, 2018.

¹³⁵ Interviews with two sources, 2017.

A major celebration took place in Maloum town over the nominations and at the **UPC's** move to join the FPRC. Some 24 heads of cattle worth around 14 million CFA francs (\$27,000) were slaughtered.

¹³⁶ Press statement No. 001 dated April 8, 2018 and signed by Hissène.

¹³⁷ MINUSCA. "Central African forces and MINUSCA launch a disarmament and arrest against armed criminals in **Bangui's** PK5 neighborhood." Press release. April 8, 2018. Available at <https://minusca.unmissions.org/en/central-african-forces-and-minusca-launch-disarmament-and-arrest-operation-against-armed-criminals>

¹³⁸ Jeune Afrique/AFP. "Centrafrique: le chef de guerre Nourredine Adam menace de '**marcher sur Bangui.**'" December 26, 2017. Available at <http://www.jeuneafrique.com/depeches/505250/politique/centrafrique-le-chef-de-guerre-noureddine-adam-menace-de-marcher-sur-bangui/>

¹³⁹ United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018. Pg. 12.

¹⁴⁰ In April 2015, the clans of former presidents François Bozizé and Michel Djotodia signed the Nairobi accord, which provided for general amnesty to ensure a return to peace. In December 2016, negotiations took place in Angola between armed group representatives. An initial version of the agreement provided for general amnesty and special treatment for ex-presidents. During negotiations on the San Egidio agreement, amnesty was not explicitly included, although it was not excluded. However, it included the lifting of international sanctions.

See also: United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018. Pg. 12.

¹⁴¹ Recording reviewed by The Sentry, September 2017.



¹⁴² Interviews with sources, 2017 and 2018.

¹⁴³ Observatoire Pharos. "Victimes, impunité, justice et réconciliation: Mission de veille, **d'étude** et de réflexion prospective sur la reconstruction et les enjeux de justice." October 2016. Available at <https://www.observatoirepharos.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/20161031-Rapport-Pharos-Justice-ok.pdf>

¹⁴⁴ The International Commission of Inquiry on the Central African Republic. "Final report." December 22, 2014. Pg. 15. Available at <http://undocs.org/S/2014/928>

International Crisis Group. "Avoiding the worst in Central African Republic." Report No. 253. September 28, 2017.

¹⁴⁵ Radio France Internationale. "Procès en RCA: la population espère un recul de **l'impunité**." March 1, 2018. Available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20180301-proces-rca-population-recul-impunite-seleka-balaka-andilo>

¹⁴⁶ UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017.

¹⁴⁷ Interview with a foreign diplomat, 2018.

¹⁴⁸ Interview with an ex-Séléka coalition political leader, 2017.

¹⁴⁹ Summary of the general assembly held in Bria on October 22, 2016, published in: UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended purs." December 5, 2016. Pg. 20.

¹⁵⁰ Interview with source, 2017.

¹⁵¹ Information reviewed by The Sentry.

¹⁵² *Idem*.

¹⁵³ Invoices reviewed by The Sentry. They appear to show that Hissène purchased a 2013 Range Rover for \$125,000 at Al Faris Used Cars and accessories for \$950 at Dubai International Auto Spare Parts LLC.

¹⁵⁴ Interview with source, 2017.

¹⁵⁵ Interviews with sources, 2018.

¹⁵⁶ Technical summary written by Hissène and addressed to Déby, dated November 9, 2014. Reviewed by The Sentry.

¹⁵⁷ Interviews with sources, 2017.

¹⁵⁸ Interview with an ex-Séléka coalition leader, 2017.

See: UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017. Pg. 12.

¹⁵⁹ UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017. Pg. 12.

¹⁶⁰ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pgs. 69-70.

¹⁶¹ According to information published by the UN Panel of Experts on CAR and other data reviewed by The Sentry, Hissène appeared to issue three checks in the name of Djiguira:

1) On August 20, 2009 for 9,156,958 Central African francs (\$16,480) to SHO. SHO Tchad is a car dealership in **N'djamena**,

2) On March 10, 2010 for 9,216,000 CFA Francs (\$16,600) to Adoum Abakar Ismail, representing 20% of the value of a luxury V8 vehicle,

3) On March 17, 2010, a check of 39,216,000 CFA francs (\$71,000) was issued to Abakar Hassan.

¹⁶² UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017. Pg. 13.

¹⁶³ *Idem*.

¹⁶⁴ Sahara Reporters. "How **Nigeria's** ex-Minister of Petroleum Madueke laundered Looted money, her accomplices revealed." October 2015. Available at <http://saharareporters.com/2015/10/05/how-nigeria%E2%80%99s-ex-minister-petroleum-madueke-laundered-looted-money-her-accomplices>

¹⁶⁵ See the status of Mezcors SA as undergoing major restructuring. Available at <https://www.moneyhouse.ch/en/company/mezcors-sa-21452464601/management>

¹⁶⁶ A source close to the matter confirmed that Mezcors SA leaders knew **Hissène's** nationality and identity but still chose to pursue the negotiations. Interview, 2018.

¹⁶⁷ Information reviewed by The Sentry.

Interview with an associate, 2018.

¹⁶⁸ Interview with an associate, 2018.

Mezcors SA is a Swiss company founded in 2010 by Daniel Roy Joanes and Richard Levinson, who also manage two other Swiss firms, Lynear SA and Tridax SA. All three companies specialize in international oil trade and other commodities, especially abroad. See: Commerce registry for –



Mezcor SA :

https://www.moneyhouse.ch/pay/pay_show_product.htm?4a230fd=7ac56e577ee8ab80b744423b69a68b22&productID=VH

Tridax SA :

https://www.moneyhouse.ch/pay/pay_show_product.htm?4a230fd=5162181880b6691e31250a42bfd7c20c&productID=VH

Lynear SA : <https://www.moneyhouse.ch/pay/index.htm?productRef=CH66019200111&productID=VH&pop=true&lang=fr>

¹⁶⁹ Interview with a Hissène associate, 2018.

¹⁷⁰ Interview with a source close to the matter, 2018.

¹⁷¹ Interview with a Hissène associate, 2018.

Radio France Internationale. "Tchad: le ministre du pétrole **s'explique** sur une polémique." June 25, 2014. Available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20140625-tchad-le-ministre-petrole-s-explique-une-polemique>

¹⁷² In a photograph reviewed by The Sentry, Hissène met the oil minister in **N'djamena** on January 29, 2015.

Africa Intelligence. "Comment Hinda Déby Itno contrôle les leviers pétroliers du pays." October 30, 2015. Available at <https://www.africaintelligence.fr/aif/insiders/tchad/2015/10/30/comment-hinda-deby-itno-controle-les-leviers-petroliers-du-pays/108108419-be1>

¹⁷³ Confidential report reviewed by The Sentry in 2017.

Interview with a foreign investor in African oil, 2018.

Joncas, Hugo. "Pétrole, contrats publics et condos à Montréal." Journal de Montréal. Available at

<http://www.journaldemontreal.com/2017/06/03/petrole-contrats-publics-et-condos-a-montreal>

¹⁷⁴ International Crisis Group. " Chad: Between Ambition and Fragility." Report No. 233 Africa. March 30, 2016. Available at <https://www.crisisgroup.org/afrika/central-afrika/chad/chad-between-ambition-and-fragility>

Le Monde. "Privé de sa rente pétrolière, le Tchad **s'enfoncé** dans la crise." May 26, 2017. Available at

http://www.lemonde.fr/economie/article/2017/05/26/privé-de-sa-rente-petroliere-le-tchad-s-enfoncé-dans-la-crise_5134099_3234.html

¹⁷⁵ Letter reviewed by The Sentry, November 12, 2014. It appears to indicate a separate letter was sent March 13, 2014, when Hissène was minister/presidential advisor. The letter speaks of his "agreement to allocate the February 2015 shipment" to Abi Tchad.

¹⁷⁶ Confidential report reviewed by The Sentry, 2018.

¹⁷⁷ Interview with an associate, 2018.

Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

¹⁷⁸ Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

Interview with two sources close to the matter, 2018.

¹⁷⁹ Idem.

¹⁸⁰ Idem.

¹⁸¹ Copy reviewed by The Sentry, 2018.

See: UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Annex 4.5.

¹⁸² Interviews with two sources close to the matter, 2018.

¹⁸³ Copy of the contract reviewed by The Sentry, 2018.

¹⁸⁴ Interviews with two sources close to the matter, 2018.

¹⁸⁵ Interview with source, 2018.

Copy of the transfer reviewed by the Sentry, 2018.

UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017. Pg. 13.

¹⁸⁶ Copy of passport reviewed by The Sentry, 2018; Richard Lee Levinson first worked at the US Department of State as a political advisor to the American embassy in Rome in the 1990s. In December 2003, he joined a private security company in Iraq, Custer Battles. It was the first company to benefit from a contract linked to **Iraq's** reconstruction after the fall of Saddam Hussein. It was also one of the first to be sentenced for corruption with the collaboration of Iraqi officials. Levinson then bought Custer Battles and launched Danubia Global, a company registered in Tortola (in the British Virgin Islands, a tax haven). In 2010, he became legal director in Geneva for Mezcor SA, Lynear SA and Tridax SA, three companies specializing in international trade of oil products. Sources: Berne Declaration. "Swiss **traders'** opaque deals in Nigeria." 2013. Available at <https://www.publiceye.ch/fileadmin/files/documents/Rohstoffe/BD-Nigeria-EN-20131101.pdf>

Sahara Reporters. "How **Nigeria's** Ex-Minister of Petroleum Madueke Laundered Looted Money, Her Accomplices Revealed." October 5, 2015.



¹⁸⁷ Interview with source close to the matter, 2018.
Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

¹⁸⁸ Copy of the letter reviewed by The Sentry.

¹⁸⁹ Interview with two associates close to the matter, 2018.

¹⁹⁰ Interview with two business partners close to the matter, 2018.
UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pgs. 71-73.

¹⁹¹ Interview with two business partners close to the matter, 2018.

¹⁹² *Idem*.

¹⁹³ UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017. Pg. 13.

¹⁹⁴ The copy of the power of attorney, reviewed by The Sentry, is dated January 7, 2015 and was issued by a Central African notary, Abraham Pierre **M'Bokani**. Interview with **M'Bokani**, 2017.

¹⁹⁵ Interview with an FPRC leader close to Hissène, 2018.
Interview with an associate, 2018.

¹⁹⁶ Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

¹⁹⁷ *Idem*.

¹⁹⁸ Summary of the general assembly held in Bria on October 22, 2016, published in: UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2262 (2016)." December 5, 2016. Available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/1032&Lang=E

¹⁹⁹ *Idem*.
Interview with source, 2017.

²⁰⁰ Interview with a close collaborator of Hissène, 2017.

²⁰¹ Summary of the general assembly held in Bria on October 22, 2016, published in: UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2262 (2016)." December 5, 2016. Pgs. 165-167. Available at http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/1032&Lang=E

²⁰² *Idem*.

²⁰³ UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pg. 17.

²⁰⁴ *Idem*.

²⁰⁵ Interview with source, 2017.

²⁰⁶ Interview with a close collaborator of Hissène, 2017.

²⁰⁷ Interview with source, 2017.

²⁰⁸ Photographs reviewed by The Sentry.

²⁰⁹ Interview with source close to the matter, 2018.
UN Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." July 26, 2017. Pgs. 77-78.

²¹⁰ Interview with source, 2018.
Letter address to Idriss Déby summarizing his meeting with Denis Sassou Nguesso. Document reviewed by The Sentry.

²¹¹ *Idem*.

²¹² *Idem*.

²¹³ Radio France Internationale. "Affaire Oba: l'avocat des parties civiles s'étonne des rates de la procédure." December 14, 2016. Available at <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20161214-affaire-pierre-oba-congo-brazzaville-avocat-rates-procedure-ministre-mines>
Trial International. "Pierre Oba." January 10, 2017. Available at <https://trialinternational.org/latest-post/pierre-oba/>

²¹⁴ Interview with sources, 2017 and 2018.

²¹⁵ Ndéké Luka. "Abdoulaye Hissène responsable des opérations de Kaça Bandoro selon Touadéra." April 20, 2018. Available at <https://www.radiondekeluka.org/actualites/securite/31548-abdoulaye-hiss%C3%A8ne-responsable-des-op%C3%A9rations-de-kaça-bandoro-selon-touad%C3%A9ra.html>

²¹⁶ Confidential reports reviewed by The Sentry, 2017.

²¹⁷ UN Security Council. "Resolution 2217(2015)." April 28, 2015. See: f) temporary emergency measures. Available at [http://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2217\(2015\)](http://undocs.org/en/S/RES/2217(2015))

²¹⁸ Summary of the general assembly held in Bria on October 22, 2016, published in: UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended **purs.**" December 5, 2016. Pg. 20.



²¹⁹ *Idem*.

²²⁰ Radio France Internationale. "Centrafrique: onze ex-Séléka condamnés aux travaux forcés à perpétuité." February 28, 2018. Available at: <http://www.rfi.fr/afrique/20180228-centrafrique-onze-ex-seleka-condamnes-travaux-forces-perpetuite>

²²¹ Interview, 29 mars 2018.

²²² International Criminal Court. "Central African Republic II." September 2014. Available at <https://www.icc-cpi.int/carll>

²²³ Le Monde. "Centrafrique: la CPI ouvre une enquête sur une 'liste interminable d'atrocités.'" September 24, 2014. Available at http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2014/09/24/centrafrique-la-cpi-ouvre-une-enquete-sur-une-liste-interminable-d-atrocites_4493616_3212.html

²²⁴ Interview with a close collaborator, 2018.

²²⁵ UN Central African Republic Sanctions Committee. "Narrative summaries of reasons for listing: BADICA/KARDIAM." August 20, 2015. Available at <https://www.un.org/sc/suborg/en/sanctions/2127/materials/summaries/entity/bureau-d%27achat-de-diamant-en-centrafrique/kardiam>

²²⁶ United Nations Security Council. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2399 (2018)." July 23, 2018.

²²⁷ Agence France-Presse. "Centrafrique: gel des avoirs au Tchad d'un chef de guerre centrafricain." **N'djamena**. June 24, 2017.

²²⁸ Réseau des journalistes pour les droits de l'homme (network of journalists for human rights). "Centrafrique: Abdoulaye Hissène émet des réserves par rapport à la cour pénale spéciale." June 30, 2017.

²²⁹ UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Final report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2339 (2017)." December 6, 2017. Pg. 13.

²³⁰ Enough Project. "UN Investigative Report Alleges that an Oil Company Finances Criminal Enterprise in the Central African Republic." August 29, 2016. Available at <https://enoughproject.org/blog/un-investigative-report-alleges-oil-company-finances-criminal-enterprise-central-african-repub>

UN Panel of Experts on CAR. "Midterm report of the Panel of Experts on the Central African Republic extended pursuant to Security Council resolution 2262 (2016)." August 11, 2016. Available at

http://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=S/2016/694&Lang=E

²³¹ Interview with anti-Balaka leader, 2018.

²³² Included in the preamble to the Central African constitution adopted by referendum on December 13, 2015.

²³³ Article 28 of the Central African constitution adopted by referendum on December 13, 2015.

²³⁴ Zahar, Marie-Joëlle. Mechoulan, Delphine. "Peace by pieces? Local mediations and sustainable peace in the Central African Republic." International Peace Institute. November 2017.

