



The United Nations Security Council has authorized an African-led and French-backed peacekeeping force to quell the [spiralling violence](#) in the Central African Republic. The conflict, often called the "world's worst forgotten crisis", took another turn for worse when sectarian violence escalated, threatening to divide the country along religious and ethnic lines and potentially "spiral into an uncontrollable situation."

With the deteriorating situation in the CAR "characterized by a total breakdown of law and order" and widespread human rights abuses, notably by former Séléka rebels and militia groups, the Council unanimously adopted a resolution authorizing the International Support Mission, an African Union (AU) peacekeeping force known by its French acronym MISCA, as well as the deployment of French troops to assist it.

Authorizing the expanded force for an initial 12-month period, the wide-ranging text requests Secretary General Ban Ki-moon to set up a trust fund to support MISCA and for him to support, in coordination with the European Union, the holding of a donors conference that would be organized by the AU.

The resolution authorizes the deployment of an African Union-led force for a year with a mandate to use "appropriate measures" to protect civilians and restore security. The AU force, known as MISCA, is expected to increase its troop strength from about 2,500 to 3,500.

The resolution also authorizes French forces, for a temporary period, "to take all necessary measures" to support MISCA.

French President Francois Hollande said Thursday the 600 French troops now in the Central African Republic will be doubled "within a few days, even a few hours."

Action by the Council comes as the violence in CAR has [ratcheted up](#) in recent weeks and days. The fighting raged on today and was the focus of a joint statement read out at a press conference in Bangui by Babacar Gaye, the Secretary-General's Special Representative also on behalf of the country representatives of the UN, AU, European Union and France.

The country witnessed a resumption of violence last December when the Séléka rebel coalition launched a series of attacks, culminating in March when President François Bozizé was forced to flee. Armed clashes in the north-east have increased since August, and the country is facing a dire humanitarian situation that affects virtually the entire population of 4.6 million.

Briefing the Council last Monday, Deputy Secretary-General Jan Eliasson deplored mounting human rights abuses, sexual violence and other "horrors," and urged the international community to take immediate action to halt the rapidly deteriorating situation, which, he said was "descending into complete chaos before our eyes."