

THE GEOPOLITICS OF INTERVENTION: RUSSIA'S INFLUENCE IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC AND ITS IMPACT ON UN PEACEKEEPING

Mobin Ahmad^{*1}, Prof Dr Sajjad Ali²

^{*1}Mphil Scholar at Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan Dept of International Relation

²Chairman Dept of International Relation Abdul Wali Khan University Mardan

^{*1}mubeenahmadsheer@gmail.com, ²sajjadali@awkum.edu.pk

DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5281/zenodo.21233243>

Keywords

Article History

Received: 25 April 2026

Accepted: 07 June 2026

Published: 22 June 2026

Copyright @Author

Corresponding Author: *

Mobin Ahmad

Abstract

The Central African Republic (CAR) has long been a location of chaos in Central Africa, identified by poor governance, periodic armed disputes, and unwavering humanitarian crises. Since 2018, Russia has copped up as a crucial external actor, providing military assistance, political support, and economic engagement, often negotiated through the Wagner group. This intervention has firmed key urban centers and strengthened government forces but has simultaneously complicated the tasks of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). This paper extremely examines Russia's geopolitical strategy in Central African Republic (CAR), evaluating its impact on UN peacekeeping, civilian protection, and state sovereignty. Drawing on numerous sources, it argues that Russia's engagement represents a new model of unilateral intervention that trials traditional multilateral peacekeeping frameworks while moving forward strategic and resource-based interests.

1. INTRODUCTION

The Central African Republic represents a typical case of persistent state vulnerability, where decades of political instability, armed resistance, and institutional weakness have compromised social cohesion and national development. The 2012 Seleka rebellion, followed by counter attacks by anti Balak militias, declined the nation into widespread brutality, relocating hundreds of thousands and leaving the government unable to declare effective control (Mehler A, 2019). In reaction the United Nation detailed the Multidimensional integrated stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in 2014 to rebuild the security, secure the civilians, and encourage governance reforms (United Nations, 2014).

However, the Multidimensional integrated stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) struggles, while important, where limited by operational restrictions, resource deficiencies, and complex local dynamics. In this gap, president Faustin Archange Touadera pursued strategic partnerships exceeding traditional Western actors. Russia's entry into Central African Republic (CAR) indicates not only the country's pursuit of immediate security but also the broader dispute of influence in Africa, symbolizing a new frontier for multipolar intervention strategies (International Crises group, 2021).

2. Historical Legacies and the Political Economy of Conflict Dynamics

Central African Republic (CAR) uncertainty is emerged in a combination of historical, structural, and political factors. Colonial legacies, weak institutional framework, and unbalanced economic development generated conditions for relentless armed contestation. From the 1960s and onward, Central African Republic (CAR) accomplished cycles of coups, authoritarian rule, and localized rebellions that established germanace vaccums and intensified cultural and religious factions. The 2012-2013 Seleka rebellion marked a crucial intensification, overthrowing the government in Bangui and prompting retaliatory violence from anti-Balaka militias. By 2014, large zones of Central African Republic (CAR) were governed by armed factions, leaving civilians unweild to widespread exploits. Although Multidimensional integrated stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) established urban centers and diminished large-scale violence, the mission contended to stabilize lasting security in rular areas controlled by insergents (Mehler A, 2019). This complex environment rooted an opportunity for external actors, especially for Russia, to intervene with intended military and political support.

3. Russia's Strategic Involment

3.1 Military Assistance

Russia's involment in Central African Republic (CAR) commenced in 2018 following official agreements with the Central African Republic (CAR) government, permitting the deployment of combat mentors and arms supplies. The intervention was designed as bilateral cooperation aimed at augmenting the operational capacity of the Forces Armees Centrafricanies (FACA). Russian engagement during the 2020-2021 electoral crisis was essential in securing Bangui against insurgents campaigns, illustrating a low-cast but high-impact military strategy (International Crises group, 2021).

Beyond typical training, Russians spies integrated into strategic planning and security coordination, reflecting an intentional approach to long-term impact rather than spontaneous military support.

3.2 Role Of The Wagner Group

The Wagner group, a private military company with close connections to the Russian state, has appeared as the key part of Russia's intervention. Its operationsin Central African Republic (CAR) incorporate military operations against rebel forces,to safeguard government officials, training activities for local troops, and protecting key economic venues, espacially mining operations. However effective in strengthening the government's immediate security stance, Wagner's engagement has been associated with critical human rights violations, comprising extrajudicial killings, torture, and forced displacement (Human Rights Watch, 2023). These actions demonstrate the tension between strategic success and stantard compliance, raising serious ethical and legitimate concerns for international observers.

3.3 Governance and political control

Russia's interventions stretches beyond military support,including political and diplomatic dimensions. Russia advisors grab influential positions in government institutions, forming policy and strategic decision-making. Moscow has also offered electoral support and engaged in media and public diplomacy initiatives to boost Central African Republic (CAR) perception of Russia as a strengthening partner (Pichon Eric, 2020). This political entry has reinforced the government authority but jointly raised questions about Central African Republic (CAR) sovereignty and the credibility of foreign intervention in domestic affairs.

3.4 Economic Interest and Resource Strategy

Central African Republic (CAR) natural resources espacially gold and dimonds play a key role in Russi's involvement. Security assistance is commonly tied to access to mining compromises, creating a transectional relationship between military support and economic advantage (Nataliya Kharitonova, 2019). This dual strategy of security providing and resource withdrawl strengthninig Russia's influence while encouraging economic dependency, reflecting paterens of historical resource-driven interventions in Africa.

4. Security and stability consequences

Russia's existence has donated to short term stabilization. Government forces have recovered territory, rebel activity has been limited, and urban centers have seen augmented security. However, long-term state building remains risky. Institutional capacity is fragile, corruption perseveres, and the centralization of power around foreign backed elites sabotages domestic governance. Furthermore, the dependency on external actors generates structural vulnerability that may compromise long term peace.

5. Impression on UN Peacekeeping (MINUSCA)

5.1 Operational Coordination Challenges

Multidimensional integrated stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) competences is restricted by the parallel presence of Russian forces. Operational misalignments, lack of intelligence sharing, and challenging security priorities have generated an environment of duplication and inefficiency (ReliefWeb, 2023). Highlights that Wagner independent operations sabotage Multidimensional integrated stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) mandate, decreasing the United Nation (UN) mission's ability to safeguard civilians effectively.

5.2 Civilian Protection and Humanitarian vulnerabilities

Human rights abuses affiliated with Russian backed forces complicate Multidimensional integrated stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) protection mandate. The United Nation (UN) cannot utilize authority over non United Nation (UN) actors, poineering to gaps in civilian security. The co-existence of various armed actors with distinct objectives increses the risk of hurt to vulnerable populations.

5.3 Authenticity and Multilateral Dynamics

Central African Republic (CAR) trust on Russia has shifted local perspectives of authority, at times compromising the legitimacy of Multidimensional integrated stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). This vibrant

exemplifies the challenges faced by multilateral peacekeeping missions in environments progressively characterized by unilateral, state backed interferences.

6. Informative and Influential Operations

Russia's strategic engagement in Central African Republic (CAR) is enhanced by refined information operations. Propaganda campaigns and media influence assist to shape public perspective, authorize government authority, and counter western interpretations. These operations represent a hybrid approach, combining soft power with military and economic influence to gain strategic goals without obvious large scale deployment (Pichon Eric, 2020).

7. Regional and Global Geopolitical Implications

Russia's engagement in Central African Republic (CAR) is part of a wider African strategy, comprising military, political, and economic engagement across the continent. This involment demonstrates a multipolar shift in world governance, where conventional western actors, such as France and European Union, face contest from emerging powers utilizing unilateral interventions.

The Central African Republic (CAR) instance exemplifies the progressing nature of intervention, where private military companies, economic exploit, and information operations unite to challenge tradetional multilateral peacekeeping paradigms.

8. Emerging Challenges and policy Recommendations

I firmly recommend to sustain peace and stability in Central African Republic (CAR) the following things may requires:

- Enhancing governance institutions
- Guaranteeing accountability for human rights violates
- Reinforcing coordination between international actors
- Minimising long-term dependency on foreign military forces

Failure to address these challenges may sustain cycles of instability, demoralize United Nation (UN) missions, and embed external influence at the cost of sovereignty.

9. Conclusion

Russia's intervention in the Central African Republic demonstrates a new model of strategic involvement in flimsy states. While the intervention has conveyed short term security and political objectives, it has also generated physical and conventional challenges for United Nation (UN) peacekeeping, civilian protection, where multipolar competition, hybrid strategies, and resource driven programs congregate, demanding flexible approaches to international peace and security.

References

1. Carnegie Endowment for international peace. (2026). Russia's role in Africa: Wagner, Africa Corps, and geopolitical strategy.
2. Human Rights Watch. (2023). Central African Republic: Abuses by Russian-linked forces.
3. International Crises Group. (2021). Russia's influence in the Central African Republic.
4. Kharitonova, N. (2019). Russia in the Central African Republic : Exploitation under the guise of intervention.
5. Mehler, A. (2019). Central African Republic: The long road to stabilization. *African Affairs*, 118(471), 507-520.
6. Pichin, E. (2020). Russia's activities in the Central African Republic. European Parliamentary Research Service.
7. ReliefWeb. (2023). The Wagner Group poses challenges to UN peacekeeping operations.
8. United Nations. (2014). Resolution 2149: Establishment of MINUSCA.
9. United Nation Panel of Experts. (2022). Final report on the Central African Republic.
10. International federation for human Rights. (2022). Human rights violations in CAR.

