

Committee: Disarmament and International Security Committee

Issue: Demilitarizing the central African region

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Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Gina Pagkoutsou and it is my utmost honor to serve as a Co-Chair in the Disarmament and International Security Committee (GA1) of this year's forthcoming ACGMUN conference. I am 17 years old and currently an IB1 student at Doukas School. My official MUN experience started in the 9th grade, and since then my love for the MUN has truly grown. In total I have attended six conferences, and this will be my first time chairing in one, thus I am very excited to meet you all and determined to make your experience enjoyable and worthwhile in this MUN conference.

The following study guide is a guide upon the issue of demilitarizing the central African region, which is a very intricate and demanding topic that is currently pleading central Africa. The armed conflicts taking place in the region are need of immediate resolution and the population is in great need of humanitarian assistance. This study guide will provide you with the appropriate understanding of the topic however you are prompted to do further research based on your country's policy. You are expected to be able to defend your country, debate upon the topic and collaborate with others to provide feasible solutions to resolve the issue at hand. Should you have any questions on the topic or need any clarifications do not hesitate to contact me at ginapagkoutsou@icloud.com.

I look forward to seeing you in the conference!

Best Regards,

Gina Pagkoutsou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

The central African region has been one of the most heated areas in Africa for decades. With the central African countries struggling to deal with internal conflicts between armed groups, instability and political transitions continue in the region. The countries involved tend to come to clashes with each other, and thus both external and internal displacement keeps rising through coups, armed conflicts, generalized violence, human rights violations and bloodshed.

Middle Africa or formally known as the Central African Region is a sub-region of Africa's continent comprised between various states. These countries include, by the definition of the African Development Bank, Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), The Republic of Congo, Equatorial Guinea, The Central African Republic (CAR) and Gabon, as well as Angola and São Tomé and Príncipe according to the UN.

After the end of the colonial period in central Africa in 1960, and the last being Angola in 1975, the region was left on its own fate to deal with their issues. The countries forming the region collapsed economically and with the political instability that was present in the region, many rebel groups were formed such as the Séléka in the Central African Republic (CAR). As a result of these issues, the major countries involved were led to a total widespread of attacks and armed conflicts, especially the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR), Cameroon, South Sudan and Angola. At the same time, other countries were facing similar issues such as murders, rapes, killing of civilians and destruction of entire villages almost to the point of genocide in many of these central countries.

With no authority taking action to stop the attacks and no restrictions put upon the military and the rebel groups, national security forces started attacking civilians thus intensifying the chaos in the region. Another cause for these conflicts was the border crisis that still exists between certain central African countries, and with no outside help from external parties, the region has become a militarized zone, with criminal activities at their peak.

The military coups that have taken place in the region have contributed even more the conflicts, and with increased xenophobia and suspicion between countries and communities the clashes have increased over the years. With countries seeking payment for their military assistance to one another other issues have occurred between minorities over religion and rebellions. The absence of effective authority in each country continues to plead the region, thus the disputes in central Africa continue to result to violence and accusations of genocide.



Figure 1: Map showing the countries from which the central African region is comprised

The UN has tried to deploy peacekeepers to the region, in cooperation with Amnesty International, the Human Rights Watch (HRW) and more international partners that have tried to control the situation. However, as a result of those ongoing conflicts peaks of violence are still being observed, turning the situation into an uncontrollable domino effect of violence. At this moment more than 610,000 people have been displaced and 2.9 million are in need of immediate humanitarian assistance in each country.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

African Development Bank Group (AfDB)

“The African Development Bank Group is a development financial institution, founded in 1964. The AfDB is comprised of three sectors: The African Development Bank, The African Development Fund and the Nigerian Trust Fund. Its mission is to create sustainable economic development in Africa and thus reduce poverty by mobilizing and allocating resources to Regional Member Countries (RMCs) and providing policy advice to support their efforts.”¹

Military Coup

“A coup or “coup d'état” is the removal of an existing government from power, usually via the use of violent means. Specifically, it is the unconstitutional seizure of power from the military, the paramilitary or an opposing political faction through the use of illegal weapons while conducting criminal activities.”²

Genocide

“The term genocide, meaning killing of a race or tribe. The specific definition of the crime of genocide according to the Convention of the Prevention and Punishment of the crime of Genocide includes killing many members of a race or particular group, causing bodily or mental harm, forcibly transferring children from those groups and imposing measures to prevent births for children from those specific groups.”³

Xenophobia

“Xenophobia is the term describing an extreme dislike or fear towards a specific person or group of people that are foreign. It is usually the hatred towards their customs and religious beliefs.”⁴

Amnesty International

“Amnesty International is a global Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) which was founded in 1961 in Britain and its main goals have become to uphold the whole spectrum of human rights. Its work covers the abolishment of the death penalty, the protection of birth rights, while also tackling discrimination and other issues concerning human rights.”⁵

¹ Group, African Development Bank. “Mission & Strategy.” African Development Bank - Building Today, a Better Africa Tomorrow, African Development Bank Group, 10 July 2018, www.afdb.org/en/about/mission-strategy.

² “Coup D'etat.” Wikipedia, Wikimedia Foundation, 13 Aug. 2018, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Coup_d%27etat.

³ “United Nations Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect.” United Nations, United Nations, www.un.org/en/genocideprevention/genocide.shtml.

⁴ “Xenophobia.” Cambridge Dictionary, www.dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/xenophobia.

⁵ “Who We Are.” Amnesty International, www.amnesty.org/en/who-we-are/.

Human Rights Watch (HRW)

“The Human Rights Watch (HRW) is a Non-Governmental Organization (NGO) that conducts research and reports issues of abuse while also advocating for human rights.”⁶

Separatist

“Separatist is a term referring to a person that believes that certain groups of people should leave separately from a larger group of people. Usually they are members of a minority group wishing to protect themselves.”⁷



Figure 2: Image showing the African Development Bank Group (AfDB) logo

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Decolonization of Central Africa

In central Africa, colonialism had been one of the main objectives towards expanding businesses and economies of the European powers since the beginning of the 15th century. At the same time, there were also some native Africans who started forming local heavily armed groups that would raid the countryside, take in captives and sell them to European sailors. The French, the Portuguese, the Belgians and the Dutch specifically had taken over the area and eventually created a large free market of slave – trade between international powers until the 20th century.

However 1960 saw the end of the colonial period in central Africa. Several reports had surfaced, announcing the death of more than a million Africans in each central country, as a consequence of exploitation and diseases. Thus the people in central Africa started to seek for their own right to self – determination. That movement signaled the necessity of change in central Africa to the European powers, and thus new constitutions and parliaments were drafted, however Europe did not offer any more help to the countries comprising the region. The countries were left unguided

⁶ Roth, Ken. “About Us.” Human Rights Watch, 2 Dec. 2020, www.hrw.org/about/about-us.

⁷ “Separatist - Dictionary Definition.” Vocabulary.com, www.vocabulary.com/dictionary/separatist.

and thus several conflicts started taking place in the region, especially in the Central African Republic (CAR) where armed groups started attacking civilians while Congo and Sudan which struggled to deal with internal conflicts between guerilla groups and the government.⁸

The issues in Central Africa between 1990 and 2003

Since the central African countries were now left on their own to establish their own governments and adopt entirely new policies, they collapsed economically due to the minimal support that they had received from the UN and that's when the disputes between certain groups started taking place. The population was unsatisfied with the governments and the way that they were handling this situation, thus initial disagreements between opposing parties led to the formation of rebel groups with the sole purpose to overthrow the government. Specifically in the Central African Republic (CAR), opposing party leaders tried to overthrow the government via several military coups in cooperation with rebel groups, as well as in Congo rebel groups were attacking civilians in an attempt to take over the area.

Central African Republic (CAR) Conflict

In the Central African Republic (CAR) in 1993, the new government lost its credibility and ability to provide social services to its citizens. Thus the CAR became dependent on external aid, specifically from Sudan and Chad who backed the Central African Republic in many military coups against the rebel groups. However as the tensions increased, the CAR had no way to pay back Sudan and Chad for their assistance, thus the Sudanese and Chadian forces started extracting payments through a widespread looting of civilians. At the same time the Presidential Guard (GP) who were set up to help fight the rebel groups, lost control of the situation and started committing extensive acts of violence to the point of genocide resulting to the displacement of more than 100.000 people in 1993.⁹

The Congo Civil Wars

Other countries from the region faced similar problems, such as the Civil War that took place in Congo in 1993 – 1994. What sparked the civil war was the Rwandan genocide of 1994, where it was estimated that more than 800.000 people from the Tutsi minority group had been killed by the Hutu power groups. As a response the Tutsi Rwandan Patriotic Front (RPF) overthrew the Hutu government and more than 2 million refugees were sent to the Congo western border. The refugee camps were set as de facto armed bases where the Hutu were sent to exile, thus the Hutu started terrorizing and robbing the locals with impunity until 1996. The Tutsi led an uprising to force the Hutu out of Congo and thus the Rwandan and Ugandan (Hutu) armies invaded Congo by 1997 and overthrew the government in Kinshasa, establishing the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

Even though the First Congo War had come to an end, eastern Congo still remained an unstable warzone. Therefore in 1998 president Kabila allowed Hutu armies to regroup in eastern Congo. However, the Hutu took advantage of that fact and made a joint invasion in 1998. As a result of that invasion, Congo was led to

⁸ "Central Africa." Central Africa - New World Encyclopedia, www.newworldencyclopedia.org/entry/Central_Africa.

⁹ International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT). "Central African Republic Background Note." International Security Sector Advisory Team (ISSAT), www.issat.dcaf.ch/Learn/Resource-Library/Country-Profiles/Central-African-Republic-Background-Note#kd.

another civil war that lasted five years, between the Kabila government forces that were backed by Angola, Namibia and Zimbabwe to counter rebels and soldiers backed by Rwanda and Uganda. To stop the situation, the UN in July 1999 sent 5,000 peacekeepers to monitor the situation. In 2001 president Kabila was assassinated and thus the Rwandans and Ugandans left Congo, and signed new agreements that were finalized in 2003. However, the political crisis in the DRC continued, with armed groups attacking civilians, and heightened tensions in the DRC and the Republic of Congo borders.¹⁰

Civil Wars in Sudan, Angola and Cameroon

In other countries, such as Sudan however, the situation had escalated into a devastating open conflict. After the First Sudanese War (1955 – 1972), the government failed to address all the issues stated by the southern Sudan. Thus the breakdown of the initial appeasement led to the outbreak of the second war between the north and south Sudanese area around 1990. In Cameroon, the tensions between the Anglophone minority and the rest of the population of Cameroon had increased. Religious differences of the two groups created tensions, thus creating to the separatist movement of the Anglophone minority. Angola was experiencing its last decade of the Angolan civil war, further intensifying the fighting in the central African region.

Recent Years in Central Africa

In more recent years, clashes continued to take place in the central African region, despite the attempts of the governments to stabilize the situation and the deployment of peacekeepers by the United Nations. The situation had taken different bigger dimensions and none of the countries of the region had any means to resolve their conflicts.

The Second Sudanese War

In Sudan, the Second Sudanese War lasted 22 years between the central government of Khartoum and the guerilla group known as the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) of South Sudan. Even though the war started in southern Sudan, it became a huge event, as a consequence of the violations of the Addis Ababa Agreement of 1972 from the previous war. These violation included the abolishment of the Christian Southern Sudan Autonomous Region, which is what motivated the creation of the SPLA, and sparked the war in Sudan.

After numerous clashes between the Sudanese government and the SPLA army of South Sudan, the SPLA and the government of Khartoum in cooperation with the Democratic Unionist Party (DUP) of Sudan, a ceasefire was proposed. In 2005, the SPLA and the government finally reached an agreement, called the Comprehensive Peace Agreement, which allowed for the autonomy of South Sudan for six years, followed by a referendum from which came the independence of South Sudan in 2011. However, clashes between armed groups were still taking place, specifically in the borders between Sudan and South Sudan and between armed groups in South Sudan.

Armed conflicts in the Central African Republic (CAR)

The Central African Republic (CAR) was now at the verge of total economic and political collapse. After the military coup of opposing party leader Bozize, that

¹⁰ "Civil Wars and Lootings in the Congo." ACCORD, 1 June 2018, www.accord.org.za/ajcr-issues/%EF%BF%BC%EF%BF%BCcivil-wars-and-lootings-in-the-congo/.

overthrew the previous government, he was determined to bring economic prosperity to the nation. However, by 2012 a Muslim – led rebel group known as the Seleka launched a military campaign and in 2013, they successfully overthrew Bozize.

Their leader Michel Djotodia declared himself president of the CAR, which prompted the national security forces (FACA) to flee. The immediate flee of the FACA triggered the complete collapse of the security sector, and the CAR was led to a widespread of attacks. These included rapes, murders, and destruction of entire villages to the point of genocide especially in the Christian – northern areas of the CAR. As a response to these attacks came the creation of a Christian – led militia known as the Anti – Balaka that started targeting Muslim communities. This brought additional religious and intercommunal dimensions to the conflict.

Separatism and War in Cameroon

In Cameroon, the tensions increased greatly between the government and the separatists from the Anglophone minority in the area. By 2016, the separatists' movement had gained large support in the Anglophone regions, resulting to protests around sectorial demands that degenerated into the political crisis of Cameroon. These protests undermined the power of the government and therefore Cameroon was led to a widespread of attacks by both sides, killing over 3,000 civilians and displacing over 600,000 in 2016.

At the same time the government had to also deal with the Boko Haram terrorist organization that was operating in northern Cameroon, a situation that was followed by an open conflict between the group and the government. During the years of 2017-2018 the Boko Haram war cost the lives of 2,000 Cameroonians and the displacement of another 250,000, leading to the rise of self – defense groups within Cameroon operating against the Boko Haram.¹¹

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

South Sudan

South Sudan is one of the countries most affected from this issue. The fighting between the two main parties of the country has declined from when a “revitalized” peace agreement was signed in 2018. However, it has been observed that several clashes between the army and certain armed groups still continue in South Sudan, resulting to indiscriminate attacks against civilians, killings, looting and destruction of properties. Since 2013, just after the Second Sudanese War, more than 4 million people have fled their homes and 2.1 million people have taken refuge in neighboring countries. Seven million people are in need of humanitarian assistance in the area, while the government has shown little interest in the people living in South Sudan, by restricting the access to the UN, ceasefire monitors and aid workers.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from the beginning of its creation has had issues dealing with armed groups and a corrupt governmental system. Specifically, throughout 2018, government officials and security forces carried out massive attacks towards civilians and opposing political supporters resulting to major human rights violations. In the central and eastern areas, armed rebel groups and national security forces have been attacking civilians, specifically due to the border

¹¹ “Cameroon's Anglophone Crisis at the Crossroads.” Crisis Group, 6 Nov. 2017, www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/cameroon/250-camerouns-anglophone-crisis-crossroads.

crisis that remains to exist between the DRC and the Republic of Congo. Between 2018 and 2019, as a result of these attacks, more than 4.5 million people had been displaced from their homes, while the government denied any humanitarian assistance and refused to attend any international donor conference, to help the people of Congo.

In 2018, more than 140 rebel groups were active in the southern and eastern Congo provinces, and many continued the attacks on civilians such as the Rwandan Democratic Forces of the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) and the Congolese Nyatura Groups. According to the Kivu Security Tracker, in 2018, assailants including the national security forces, killed more than 883 civilians, and abducted more than 1,400 others. The assaults have intensified, in western Congo and ethnic violence has broken out, while government forces and armed groups intimidate and harass voters of opposing parties.

Central African Republic (CAR)

The Central African Republic (CAR) is another country that is majorly affected by the issue. Armed groups continue to plead the area, committing serious human rights violations and abuses, while their control has expanded to 70% of the country. The clashes between the Seleka rebels and the anti – Balaka militias have forced thousands to flee their homes especially in 2018, while access to justice for the victims of the armed groups activities remain unreachable. Armed groups continue their unrestricted attacks even after the African Union and the UN proposed a political dialogue to end the fighting in the CAR. Armed groups continue killing civilians, sexually assaulting women and children, attacking displacement camps and burning villages.

Angola

Angola has not been greatly affected by the issues in the central African region. The country has noted significant progress on various sectors from 2018, however the authorities still continue to evict people by force without the necessary protections or the appropriate compensation.

Cameroon

Cameroon is another very important party in the issue. Armed groups and government forces continued to commit several human rights violations, especially in 2019. The Islamic armed group Boko Haram still to carries out massive attacks towards civilians, killing and displacing thousands of Cameroonians, leading to the rise of self – defense groups. In the Anglophone regions, violence has intensified with armed groups committing serious crimes from 2014 and armed separatists as well as national security forces violently break up peaceful protests, kill or assault civilians and even take hostages.



Figure 3: Image showing the protests that took place in Cameroon from the separatists of the English-speaking minorities.

Russian Federation

The Russian Federation, even though it is not part of the region, has played an important role in the fighting taking place in central Africa. More importantly in recent years, Russian activities in the region have increased, raising several concerns for Russia's growing influence in both central and west Africa, particularly by the increase of arms sales and security agreements. Russia has continued to deploy mercenaries and political advisers especially to the Central African Republic (CAR). Russian officials have also expressed their interest in enhancing their naval logistics in central Africa as it has been argued that Russian advisers in the CAR are selling mining rights as a fraction to buy arms for Moscow. It has also been reported that other than selling arms for their own economic benefit, Russia as well as China have not been engaged in tackling the armed forces in central Africa.

United States of America

The United States of America have been alarmed by Russian and Chinese activities in the region in more recent years. Even though the US or any other European country has not taken direct action to tackle the issue, the US has been observing the increasing influence and activities of Russia in central Africa, especially in the Central African Republic (CAR) where Russian troops have been established as the national security guard. Furthermore, the US by questioning Russia's motives continues to deploy its own forces in the region to "serve as a check" as mentioned by the Senate and in order to maintain checks and balances in the region as a whole.

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) or also known as the UN Refugee Agency, is an organization dedicated to the salvation of human lives, protecting the rights of people and creating a better future for refugees or displaced communities in the world. The UNHCR has stated that the situation in each of the countries that comprise the region is crucial and that humanitarian access to the displaced communities is limited especially for those that are just outside with large military presence.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of Events
1960	Much of the former French and British colonies in Central Africa gain their independence.
1975	DRC is created, others colonies are released, Portugal finally leaves Angola and Sao Tome after a military coup.
1998 - 2003	The Great War of central Africa
2001	Cross border – crimes, terrorist attacks (Cameroon, Chad) increase, the organization of the African Unity is disbanded in favor of the African Union.
2009	Rebel group attacks increase in Central Africa.
2011	South Sudan becomes an independent state after years of fighting.
2012 - 2013	The Seleka / Anti – Balaka conflict in the CAR begins.
2013 - 2014	The UN approves the deployment of peacekeeping forces in Central Africa.
2016 - Today	Central Africa despite the UN's tries, remains a militarized zone, with clashes of armed groups.

RELEVANT RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

UN Security Council Resolution 2127

On December 5th 2013, the United Nations Security Council adopted resolution 2127, on the Central African Republic (CAR). By this resolution the signatories aimed to a general armed embargo and to impose targeted sanctions to the CAR. The Security Council authorized for the deployment of a support mission in the CAR in 2013 – 2014, which was integrated into the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) by a following resolution aiming to extend the targeted sanctions.

International Criminal Court (ICC) Conviction of politician of the Democratic Republic of the Congo

The International Criminal Court (ICC) set a conviction of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) former – vice president Pierre Bemba, accusing him of various war – crimes and an 18 – year sentence in 2018. Bemba had been previously sentenced in 2016 for war – crimes and crimes against humanity for financing a militia in the Central African Republic (CAR). Prosecutors had accused him of conducting sexual assault against women and children, killing unarmed civilians, pillaging of properties and allowing his militia to continue to commit several atrocities. However, the court found that trial judges had made several legal mistakes and that they could not prosecute Bemba. The Hague investigators made notable efforts in tracking down his fortune and award case damages to the victims however, the court overall failed to sentence Bemba again.

The establishment of the African Union (AU)

The African Union (AU) is a continental organization that was established in 2002, consisting of 55 states of the African continent. It was specifically launched by a consensus of many African leaders that wished to pursue the fight for decolonization

and as well as to drive Africa's economic and social development. The AU is comprised of various bodies such as the Special Representatives Committee (SRC), the Peace and Security Council and the African Union Commission. The main mission of the AU is to achieve unity and solidarity between African countries, promote cooperation and protect human rights as well as protect the sovereignty of its Member states.

PREVIOUS ATTEMPTS TO SOLVE THE ISSUE

UN Security Sector Reform Plans (SSR)

The United Nations Peacekeeping forces decided in 2014 to implement security sector reforms in central Africa in order to achieve peace, development settings, political and economic stability in the region. In accordance to the Security Council resolution 2151 (2014) and the 2012 Integrated Technical Note on Security Sector Reform, the Security Sector Reforms (SSR) were and still are considered to be very important element in achieving prevention agendas and prosperity in various sectors. Specifically the SSR noted that its main goals were to support the government and the signatory armed groups in implementing defense and security provisions, provide strategic advice and aid in the advance of ceasefire agreements. However, many armed groups have not cooperated with the governments and thus armed conflicts continue in the region, with the UN trying to stop the fighting.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

Even though there were some previous attempts to solve the certain disputes in the central African region, and the SSR mentioned above could have been successful, the overall failure of governments to work collectively with the armed groups to establish peace brought devastating consequences to the region, and the fighting still takes place. Thus, more effective measures, as the ones mentioned below, are mandatory to be implemented and the UN needs to take immediate action towards tackling the issue by drafting an effective resolution which shall include solutions for all aspects of the issue at hand.

International Cooperation and Ceasefire Agreements

The committee could call for the international cooperation between the major countries and organizations involved with the issue and reach new agreements between member states. Countries should call for immediate ceasefires to take place on all sides and cooperate with each other and maybe even a neutral party, to bring an end to the fighting in the region. The outcome of this collaboration should be the political stability, and ultimately the decrease of military and criminal activities in the central African region. The delegates should decide who will be in charge of overseeing such agreements as well as the possibility of taking direct military action towards resolving the issue.

Signing New Treaties

Signing new treaties could be a very effective solution on the issue in the central African region. Since there are no treaties that are directly concerned with the issue these treaties shall be could be drafted between the countries in the region to finalize the situation in the region and cease the fighting between member states. Specifically, new borders if necessary should be established, as well as agreements between armed groups should be signed. However, while this solution might result

certain conflicts and disarm such rebel groups, it might threaten the territorial sovereignty of member states. The situation in the most involved countries and parties, South Sudan, Cameroon, the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) should be discussed in cooperation with the UN so as to ultimately determine the status of the region as safe.

Integration of Armed Forces into National Security Systems

The integration of armed forces into national security systems could be another very effective way in dealing with the issue. The inclusiveness of different groups in political matters should be established by the implementation of new policies, without threatening the government's political system and structure. The creation of new national security forces should take place, by including members of armed groups so as to reinforce the country against attacks from external forces. However, all member states should call for armed forces to abide by the international law and the military standards of conduct, and violations of such must be prosecuted effectively. This solution should aim for peace in the region as well as the reinforcement of the countries security in cooperation with neutral UN bodies.

Humanitarian Aid

As previously mentioned, humanitarian aid should be one of the primary aims of member states in the central African region. Member states should work collectively with other UN bodies so as to offer help such as shelter to the displaced population in the region via several means. The delegates should also emphasize on economic aid as well, or funding by organizations for the betterment of the economic situation and the economic development of the countries in central Africa. Delegates should also take into consideration the placement of such facilities in more rural areas as well as other ways to help the population recover in the region.

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