



# General Assembly

Distr.: General  
2 July 2019

Original: English

---

## Human Rights Council

Forty-second session

9–27 September 2019

Agenda item 3

**Promotion and protection of all human rights, civil,  
political, economic, social and cultural rights,  
including the right to development**

### Visit to Chad\*

#### **Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination**

##### *Summary*

The Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination visited Chad from 16 to 23 April 2018. The Working Group assessed the impact of mercenarism and foreign fighters on human rights, particularly in the context of the armed conflicts that have affected Chad over the past years. The report is focused largely on the conflict in the Lake Chad region, where Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) has caused grave human rights violations, resulting in a complex and protracted humanitarian crisis that has displaced more than 2 million people, half of whom are children.

---

\* The summary of the report is being circulated in all official languages. The report itself, which is annexed to the summary, is being circulated in the language of submission and French only.



## **Annex**

# **Report of the Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination on its mission to Chad**

## **I. Introduction**

1. The Working Group on the use of mercenaries as a means of violating human rights and impeding the exercise of the right of peoples to self-determination visited Chad from 16 to 23 April 2018 at the invitation of the Government. The delegation comprised two members of the Working Group, Patricia Arias and Saeed Mokbil. They were accompanied by staff of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights.

2. In accordance with Commission on Human Rights resolution 2005/2 and Human Rights Council resolution 33/4, the Working Group is mandated to study and identify sources, causes, manifestations and trends with regard to mercenaries and mercenary-related activities, and their impact on human rights, particularly on the right to self-determination. The Working Group is also mandated to monitor the activities of private military and security companies and their effects on human rights.

3. Since 2014, the Working Group has explored the linkages between the phenomena of foreign fighters and of mercenaries, and their impact on human rights. It has undertaken visits to several countries to assess these phenomena and has since issued reports in which foreign fighters were identified as mercenary-related actors, where the motivation to engage in armed conflict was for financial or material gain.

4. The delegation held meetings in N'Djamena and was able to visit refugees and returnees in the Gaoui camp. Meetings were also held with various government authorities, including the minister responsible for justice and human rights, the minister responsible for foreign affairs, the minister responsible for defence, the minister for the interior, the minister responsible for women, the family and national solidarity and the minister in charge of reforms. The Working Group also met with members of the diplomatic corps, representatives of United Nations offices, civil society organizations, lawyers and prosecutors, and victims of human rights violations. The delegation sincerely thanks all the interlocutors it met during the visit.

5. The Working Group reiterates its gratitude to the Government for the invitation to visit the country. It is also grateful to colleagues at the United Nations Development Programme and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Human Rights in Chad for their valuable support during the organization and conduct of the visit.

### **A. Definition and scope**

6. A mercenary is defined in the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries as someone who is specially recruited locally or abroad in order to fight in an armed conflict, is motivated essentially to take part in hostilities by a desire for private gain, and is promised, by or on behalf of a party to the conflict, material compensation substantially in excess of that promised or paid to combatants of similar rank and functions in the armed forces of that party. A mercenary is neither a national of a party to the conflict, nor a resident of the territory controlled by a party to the conflict, is not a member of the armed forces of a party to the conflict, and has not been sent by a State which is not a party to the conflict on official duty as a member of its armed forces.

7. There is no international legal definition for foreign fighters, nor any specific legal regime governing them. The Working Group has noted that the term "foreign fighters" is generally understood to refer to individuals who leave their country of origin or habitual

residence to engage in violence as part of an insurgency or a non-State armed group in an armed conflict (A/70/330, para. 13).

8. Both mercenaries and foreign fighters are external actors who intervene in an armed conflict. Mercenaries are neither nationals of a party to the conflict nor residents of a territory controlled by a party to the conflict. Similarly, foreign fighters, while they may or may not be nationals of a party to the conflict, do not reside in the State affected by the conflict and have travelled from abroad to join the insurgency. Both mercenaries and foreign fighters may be recruited abroad or locally (*ibid.*, para. 14).

9. The right to self-determination, in its contemporary manifestation, encompasses political struggles for greater democracy and human rights. This right is referred to in Article 1 (2) of the Charter of the United Nations as a fundamental principle necessary for the purpose of strengthening universal peace. In its general comment No. 12 (1984) on the right to self-determination, the Human Rights Committee recognized this right as an essential condition for the effective guarantee and observance of individual human rights, and for the promotion and strengthening of those rights. This right is also broadly understood as the right of peoples to determine their own political and economic system, including by participatory political processes.

10. The Working Group defines a private military or security company as a corporate entity that provides, on a compensatory basis, military and/or security services by physical persons and/or legal entities.

## **B. Background**

11. Chad is a landlocked country that borders Cameroon, the Central African Republic, Libya, the Niger, Nigeria and the Sudan. It hosts a population of around 14.9 million people, half of whom are under 18 years old and who are mostly unemployed. Chad experienced a short period of increased wealth in the early 2000s through oil trade, but the dropping price of oil has led to austerity measures, affecting the economic situation and leading to increased poverty. Around 70 per cent of the country's economy depends on oil-based resources.

12. Chad is located in the Sahel region, an arid strip of land that is severely affected by environmental and climate-related changes that have resulted in soil erosion, desertification and droughts, which have in turn caused serious food shortages and life-threatening malnutrition among the local population.

13. In 2017, Chad was ranked 186 out of 189 countries in the human development index, making it one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Households are mainly dependent on farming and livestock for their livelihood, and around 87 per cent of its mainly rural population lives below the poverty line.<sup>1</sup> Life expectancy is around 50 years of age. The poverty rate is expected to rise due to drastic climate change and ongoing armed conflicts.

14. Chad has over 100 ethnic groups. Groups that live near the borders with neighbouring countries often share ethnic or tribal connections, cultural practices and languages across those administrative borders. Around 53 per cent of Chadians are Muslims, 34 per cent are Christians and 7 per cent are animists or believers of traditional religions, while the remainder practice other beliefs. Much of the Muslim population is known to reside in the northern and eastern part of the country, bordering Libya and the Sudan, while Christians and animists largely reside in the southern region.

### **History of armed conflicts**

15. One interlocutor referred to Chad as an "island in an ocean of wars". The country has endured a difficult history of armed conflicts, military coups and political instability since its independence from France in 1960. Civil wars took place in three phases, from 1965 to 1979,

<sup>1</sup> World Food Programme, "Chad". Available at [www1.wfp.org/countries/chad](http://www1.wfp.org/countries/chad).

from 1979 to 1986 and from 2005 to 2010. These conflicts have severely hampered the development of State institutions and the economy.

16. Armed factions were formed in the course of these insurgencies, many in defiance of the current Government, and continue to be serious threats to the country's stability. The most recent civil war was also greatly affected by the armed conflict in Darfur, which resulted in thousands of refugees fleeing to Chad. Both Chad and the Sudan have since made efforts to end hostilities, once with an accord in 2008 that was signed in Senegal, and again in 2010 through peace talks in Khartoum. They have also deployed their national forces to monitor the situation along their borders, in the hope of curbing further insurgencies.

17. The armed conflicts in the Central African Republic in 2003 and 2013 also led to an influx of thousands of refugees into Chad, some of whom met the delegation of the Working Group at the Gaoui camp.

18. The spread of armed groups in Libya and the volatile security situation there, ongoing since 2011, resulted in the Government of Chad having to close its borders with Libya, in the hope of mitigating the adverse effect on its home territory. Chadians have reportedly travelled in numbers to Libya to engage in the conflict there, and to be recruited as mercenaries. The recruitment of mercenaries reportedly dates back to the regime of the former Libyan leader Muammar Gaddafi, who had hired Chadians to bolster his military operations.

19. In the Lake Chad region, bordering Cameroon, the Niger and Nigeria, Jama'atu Ahlis Sunna Lidda'Awati Wal-Jihad (Boko Haram) has instigated violent attacks, including in lake communities in Chadian territory, that have resulted in grievous human rights violations, mass displacement and a growing refugee population. Currently, Chad hosts one of the largest populations of refugees in the region.

20. The region is known to have particularly high levels of poverty and unemployment and dire levels of malnutrition, which have been exacerbated by Boko Haram's attacks and killings.

21. For Chad, with its struggling economy, the cumulative impact of these conflicts has been severely debilitating. The Government has had to place urgent priority, including through budgetary allocations, on security measures and on combating insurgencies and armed rebellions. The socioeconomic challenges have been further compounded by the humanitarian crises caused by these conflicts.

22. The Working Group notes that these complex and asymmetrical conflicts create fertile ground for mercenarism to thrive. In discussions with the delegation, government representatives and other interlocutors expressed a belief that mercenaries and foreign fighters were interspersed among the armed actors affecting Chad. The Working Group notes the importance of understanding the profiles of those actors, and the root causes that have prompted them to join or engage in the conflicts.

### **C. Legal and institutional framework**

23. Chad has made various changes to its national laws to strengthen the legal framework to protect human rights. The Constitution prioritizes international conventions that have been ratified over domestic laws (art. 221 of the version in force at the time of the visit). If an international instrument contains a clause deemed contrary to the Constitution, the Constitution must be amended before ratification can be authorized.

24. Chad has ratified or acceded to, inter alia, the Geneva Conventions of 12 August 1949 and Additional Protocols I and II thereto, the Convention on the Rights of the Child, the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Convention related to the Status of Refugees and the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment. It has also ratified the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime.

25. In 2006, Chad ratified the Rome Statute of the International Criminal Court, thus accepting the duty to cooperate under the mandate of the Court for the investigation of crimes of genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes. On a regional level, it has ratified the

African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights and the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons. Chad has ratified the Organization of African Unity Convention for the elimination of mercenarism in Africa, but has yet to ratify the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries.

26. In 2017, a specific provision was introduced into the Penal Code, criminalizing mercenarism and making the offence punishable by 20 to 30 years of imprisonment. The definition of mercenary included in the Code is similar to the international definition outlined in paragraph 6 above. It outlines that a mercenary takes part in hostilities in order to obtain a personal advantage or material remuneration, promised by a party to the conflict. The Code also criminalizes the financing, equipping, training, promotion and supporting of mercenary groups.

27. Other laws that have a bearing in this area include a new anti-terrorism law, adopted in 2015, which defined terrorist attacks in broad terms and ended the moratorium on the death penalty that had been in place. The law also extended the duration of pretrial detention from 48 hours to 30 days. Also relevant is new legislation aimed at reforming and strengthening the independence of the National Human Rights Commission, in line with the principles relating to the status of national institutions for the promotion and protection of human rights (the Paris Principles). Chad also adopted a law on civil status to provide certain legal guarantees for persons born or living in Chad, including foreign nationals and refugees.

28. The Government and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) signed, in 2011, a plan of action for children associated with armed groups, providing for exchanges of information and for joint action to combat the recruitment of children in armed conflicts.

29. Chad adopted a national development plan for the period 2017 to 2021, with the objective of addressing human rights concerns in the country, promoting development and reducing poverty. The plan is part of a wider initiative known as Vision 2030: The Chad We Want, aimed at accelerating progress and development for Chad, with targets linked to the Sustainable Development Goals.

30. Regarding private military and security companies, Decree No. 637 of 1996 on the regulation of the activities of private security companies does not permit company personnel to carry arms. Chadian law does not refer specifically to private military companies.

## II. Key findings

31. The Working Group often faces difficulty in determining whether a person should be considered as a mercenary under the criteria set out in international law. This is due to a number of factors, including the recurrent challenge of obtaining specific, concrete and verified data on the profile and motivations of such actors. In the absence of sufficient data, the Working Group often refers to such individuals as "mercenary-related actors" or "foreign fighters" where available information shows it probable that such actors engaged in armed conflicts due to a variety of motivations, including, but not exclusively, for financial gain or material incentives.

32. The characteristics of foreign fighters and mercenaries are multifaceted and share commonalities, including links to terrorism and participation in armed conflicts that may negatively impact human rights, and to other criminal activities, including organized crime and smuggling (A/70/330, para. 15).

33. The multiple conflicts affecting Chad involve a complex mix of armed actors from various countries. Some interlocutors referred to mercenaries, jihadists and terrorists interchangeably. Others spoke of mercenaries as distinct from terrorists, and referred to individuals who travelled to nearby conflicts primarily for payment or financial reward, such as those who went to Libya (see para. 18 above). Thus in Chad, armed groups can be composed of mercenaries that clearly fit the international definition as well as foreign fighters, rebels, terrorists, members of militias, insurgents and members of other criminal groups.

34. Much information from interlocutors related to Boko Haram and the Lake Chad crisis, which involved what many referred to as jihadists or terrorist fighters. Other interlocutors, however, mentioned that foreign armed actors were also engaged in Boko Haram. The Working Group noted those as mercenary-related actors.

35. Outside of the Boko Haram discussions, references were made to Chadians who had been hired abroad to fight as mercenaries in foreign conflicts, for example in Mali, in the Central African Republic and elsewhere in the region. The Working Group had noted the activities of mercenaries from Chad in the report on its visit to the Central African Republic (A/HRC/36/47/Add.1).

#### **Determination of “foreigner”**

36. It is difficult to determine the identities of fighters and which fighters are foreigners. The Chadian authorities also confirmed that it was challenging to determine whether someone was a mercenary or simply a foreigner engaged in armed conflict. Like those of many countries in Africa, the borders of Chad are extremely porous. As such, an ethnic tribe or community can be based in an area that spans countries, with members separated by an artificial border. Determining who is a “foreigner” is thus further complicated. For instance, in the Lake Chad region, many inhabitants share close ethnic ties with the Buduma, Kanuri and Hausa tribes, although they may be nationals of either Nigeria or Chad. This is also the case with communities on the borders shared with the Central African Republic, Libya and the Sudan. Nationalities may differ, but individuals can share a common ethnicity and language. The determination of whether one is a foreign fighter or a mercenary is often premised on nationality, hence this issue is an important determinant when profiling fighters.

37. Determining true nationality, however, can be difficult. The delegation was informed that obtaining a national identity card in Chad can be expensive, costing up to around CFAF 10,000. People have been known to engage in unlawful practices to obtain a national identification card or passport through individuals who sell falsified birth certificates. This appeared to be more of a challenge in rural areas than in the capital. Through such means, individuals can obtain multiple identification cards with false nationalities from various countries in the border region, making it difficult to know a person’s true nationality.

#### **Mercenarism and foreign fighters**

38. The recurrent violent conflicts affecting Chad continue to be fuelled by a myriad of armed actors. The delegation was told of a number of rebel groups operating in the country, composed of former military personnel, local armed elements and individuals from neighbouring countries who have launched attacks in Chad aimed at undermining the current Government. As a result of insurgencies in the east, around 3,000 Chadian soldiers were deployed to join forces with the Sudan and to assist in securing the border in that area. Chad deployed a further 3,000 soldiers to the Niger in the context of the Multinational Joint Task Force, as well as to Nigeria, also to assist in maintaining security.

39. The delegation was informed by authorities that 15,000 soldiers had also been deployed to the north to monitor the border with Libya. The presence of Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL), also known as Daesh, The Organization of Al-Qaida in the Islamic Maghreb (AQMI) and other armed groups in Libya is one of the most serious security threats to Chad and the region. The travel of Chadians to Libya to engage as mercenaries in the crisis there has heightened these concerns. Persons of other nationalities were also reportedly recruited as mercenaries by ISIL in Libya. An alliance between ISIL and Boko Haram in 2015 has worsened the security situation, as these groups appear to have an interest in protracting the armed conflicts affecting various States. A split occurred within Boko Haram, with the faction aligned to ISIL emerging as the “Islamic State’s West African Province”.

40. The delegation was informed that foreigners had been recruited into Boko Haram; most were from Nigeria, but they also included nationals from Cameroon, the Niger and the Sudan. Some interlocutors also alleged that foreign individuals who were not from the region were also involved. These individuals had allegedly been recruited to assist with training, logistics and advice on conflict strategies, particularly at the beginning of the Boko Haram operations.

41. On questions about past and current allegations of mercenarism related to Chad, the Government openly acknowledged that the challenges of mercenary activities were ongoing, but also reiterated that they did not endorse the mercenary activities associated with Chadians abroad and were working towards curbing the phenomenon. In the Government's view, mercenaries were often rogue individuals who were looking for opportunities to destabilize the country and overthrow the current Government while benefiting personally from illegal activities within the region. The Government also referred to specific individuals, some of whom were former Chadian military personnel, who had left to join armed groups, lured by financial gain. The Chadian authorities further stated that the challenges of mercenarism had led to the adoption of the new provision on mercenarism in the Penal Code in 2017.

### III. Motivational factors and recruitment

42. The primary motivation of mercenaries is financial gain, while foreign fighters can be motivated by a range of factors that include, in addition to financial gain, religious and ideological beliefs. Motivational factors are important not only in assessing the presence of mercenaries and mercenary-related actors, but also in understanding the root causes or drivers that prompt individuals to engage in armed groups.

#### Financial motivation

43. Poverty, lack of financial opportunities and the severe economic situation in Chad has contributed significantly to the motivation of its nationals to join armed groups as mercenaries. Unemployment, lack of education, marginalization and exclusion affect a large part of the population in Chad, thus creating an environment wherein many of those who come into contact with armed groups are willingly recruited. These include individuals who join Boko Haram, ISIL, AQMI and other armed factions whose violent operations have destabilized the region. The delegation was informed that many Chadians who had gone to Libya had benefited from direct payments, while others had joined armed groups to enrich themselves through illicit activities such as pillaging, trafficking of arms, drugs and persons and the occupation of territories where they could access and exploit rich natural resources.

44. A number of interlocutors highlighted that, with the pervasive conflicts affecting various provinces in Chad, there were very few options for many people who were in dire poverty, which further enticed individuals to join armed groups. For example, it was said that some had joined Boko Haram not for direct payment, but just to receive a motorcycle, which was a valuable asset and could assist in an individual's own business activities. Some individuals had reportedly joined the group for CFAF 50 (less than \$1). Although there were references to payment of recruited individuals, the delegation was not aware of precise figures for wages, as such data was difficult to obtain and verify. The lack of social support available to people in the conflict-ridden areas also made joining armed groups attractive, even for the promise of food and shelter.

45. Many young men reportedly travelled to join Boko Haram with the expectation of being paid or benefiting from illegal activities, as the group attacked, raided and robbed villages along its path. However, a great number of members had been abducted and forcefully recruited during the raids and attacks on various villages.

46. The Working Group was also aware of reports that highlighted Chadian and Sudanese armed groups that had gone to Libya to pursue profit, after having being defeated by the military in their countries of origin (see S/2018/812 and Corr.1). Other reports have indicated that Chadian and Sudanese armed groups had taken advantage of deteriorating infrastructure and the widespread insecurity to loot and pillage for profit. This has further destabilized Libya and neighbouring countries. The presence of those mercenaries also pose threats to their countries of origin, highlighting the need for a concerted effort to address this phenomenon.

47. The Working Group noted that alleged Chadian mercenaries had engaged in the conflict in the Central African Republic, having mostly joined the ex-Séléka faction, along with mercenaries from other countries in the region. Those mercenaries, along with anti-balaka groups, committed gross human rights violations against the local population. During

the 2003 conflict, a former leader, François Bozizé, had recruited Chadian mercenaries and fighters to depose the President, Ange-Félix Patassé, with the promise of financial compensation. According to some sources, some mercenaries, not receiving the payment they had been promised, became disgruntled and remained in the country, where they continued to engage in criminal activities and armed violence. In retaliation, President Patassé reportedly engaged the services of mercenaries from the Democratic Republic of the Congo under the command of Jean-Pierre Bemba. He is also said to have engaged Abdoulaye Miskine, a Chadian heading an armed group. Chadian nationals were also reportedly among the members of the Lord's Resistance Army in the remote south-eastern parts of the Central African Republic (A/HRC/36/47/Add.1, paras. 32, 38 and 43).

48. The Working Group was informed that Chad had initially provided military assistance to mitigate conflict, but many of the deployed men had subsequently defected and joined the armed groups in the Central African Republic. They had engaged as mercenaries and in various illegal activities, with the intention of self-enrichment and obtaining wealth, including through illegal taxation, arms trafficking and the exploitation of natural resources such as gold and diamonds.

### **Religious and ideological motivation**

49. Many reports have highlighted a religious or ideological motivation among individuals joining Boko Haram, including foreigners. The religious origin of Boko Haram, founded in the early 2000s by Mohammed Yusuf in Nigeria, who preached and espoused what many referred to as a dangerous and erroneous form of Islam, has attracted members. The preachings were also disseminated in Chad, which led to people being radicalized and joining Boko Haram. When Mohammed Yusuf was killed in 2009, activities by Boko Haram became more violent and gruesome, under the leadership of Abubakar Shekau. The group moved from Maidaguri in northern Nigeria and expanded its attacks into various countries in the Lake Chad region.

50. The Working Group was informed that among the religious schools in the Maidaguri area, and elsewhere in this region, were Koranic schools where children, many from various bordering countries, became radicalized and were easy targets for recruitment into Boko Haram. Children from Chad were allegedly taken to these schools and left there with a minder. Some parents allowed their children to go, some in the hope of better opportunities, others for religious reasons. Some of the children were left stranded by their minders, and there were reports that some had to be reunited with their families.

51. The information received highlighted the strong linkage between poverty and the high vulnerability to radicalization among individuals who were socioeconomically disadvantaged. Many young individuals, mostly men, were drawn out of a life that seemed meaningless and hopeless in terms of opportunities and ambition. They viewed joining groups like Boko Haram as a means to achieving a promised "paradise" with a multitude of wives and prosperity. In many ways, even when motivations to join an armed group appeared to stem from ideological or religious roots, there was always a sense that the ultimate goal was to escape the poverty and dire situation that many Chadians have been experiencing.

### **Women**

52. Like men, some women reportedly joined armed groups for ideological reasons or to escape extreme poverty. However, it should be noted that the majority of women in those groups were abducted and forced against their will to become wives of fighters and victims of sexual slavery; in recent years, women and girls have been increasingly used as suicide bombers. One case relayed to the delegation involved a woman who joined Boko Haram for \$1 and was forced to be a suicide bomber.

53. Women also reportedly associated with Boko Haram by following a husband or partner who had willingly joined the group. Those women had few alternatives, given their economic dependence on and relationship with their husband or partner. Many women who reportedly joined for ideological reasons later tried to escape, having been subjected to violence and abuse. Those who escaped faced stigmatization and social exclusion in their communities, as well as constant suspicion that they were still connected to Boko Haram.

Reintegration in the community was thus either extremely difficult or impossible. Reports of women joining armed groups or Boko Haram as active combatants were rare, but not unheard of. The tactic of Boko Haram of abducting women and girls from schools to exploit and abuse them is well known, strongly indicating that the majority of the women associated with the group were forcefully recruited.

### Children

54. Chad has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child, its Optional Protocol on the involvement of children in armed conflict, and the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child. And yet, the number of children and young people affected by the conflicts in Chad is staggering. Children in the crisis region of Lake Chad constitute around 60 per cent of those affected by armed conflict, and are at greater risk of violence and exploitation. They have also been particularly vulnerable to recruitment into groups and forcefully used as child soldiers. Since 2007, the Government has taken steps to demobilize child soldiers and reintegrate children into society. An estimated 7,000–10,000 children were in various armed groups, according to estimates provided to the Working Group. Many children have been abducted and forcibly recruited while others joined the army or armed groups to pillage and escape poverty due to lack of opportunities and education. Some children have been used to lure other children to join armed groups with the promise of money, reportedly offering between \$20 and \$500.<sup>2</sup> In some villages, local residents have been forced to give up children for recruitment into armed groups as a way of protecting themselves and their village from further violence.

55. One of Boko Haram's main objectives is to destroy schools and abduct children – mainly girls for forced marriage and rape. The use of children as suicide bombers is on the rise, and Boko Haram has been known to recruit children to make bombs and engage in combat and in supporting roles. Like many who manage to return to their villages, children also face suspicion and can be stigmatized. They risk being rejected and abandoned and face severe trauma that stays with them permanently, especially without appropriate medical and psychosocial care.

56. Some said that many children became fighters because of a lack of other alternatives and due to extreme poverty. Food shortages and the prevailing humanitarian crisis in certain parts of the country continue to threaten livelihoods. With groups like Boko Haram operating in those places, children continue to be at risk of recruitment.

57. The delegation was also informed of ex-Séléka militants from the Central African Republic attempting to recruit young people in Chad to engage in their home conflict. Young people were also susceptible to recruitment into rebel groups, and some travelled abroad, such as to Libya, to join mercenary activities.

58. The Working Group notes that considerable efforts have been made to demobilize child soldiers and reintegrate them into society. Agencies such as UNICEF have played a significant role in returning children who had engaged in armed conflict to their communities. The Working Group also notes the importance of ensuring that the reintegration of children associated with armed groups is carried out in accordance with international standards.

## IV. Human rights concerns

59. Enjoyment of the most basic fundamental human rights, such as the rights to work, to an adequate standard of living, including adequate food, clothing and housing, to safe drinking water and sanitation, and to a life of dignity, has not been possible for thousands of people affected by armed actors, including mercenaries and foreign fighters in Chad. The Working Group also met with people who had escaped inexplicable horrors in neighbouring countries. They had lost many of their loved ones and had left behind everything in order to find safety in Chad. Many of those people had also suffered atrocities at the hands of

<sup>2</sup> Amnesty International, *A Compromised Future: Children Recruited by Armed Forces and Groups in Eastern Chad* (2011, London).

mercenaries and armed groups and now find themselves in prolonged situations of poverty and neglect. Reportedly, mercenaries are involved in human rights violations involving trafficking in persons, weapons and drugs. It is difficult to effectively control and address trafficking, given the vast desert landscapes that the routes pass through.

60. As a result of the civil wars in Chad, and the devastation caused by surrounding conflicts and armed group activities, Chad today hosts over 400,000 refugees and asylum seekers from neighbouring countries, including the Central African Republic, the Niger, Nigeria and the Sudan. Around 70,000 Chadian returnees have also re-entered the country in search of safe refuge.

61. Some of the most basic needs of those who live in conflict-affected parts of the country's 23 regions are not being met. Health-care and education facilities are virtually absent. In addition, they face recurring violence and deteriorating climate conditions, and often face a lack of food supply or even famine. Poor agricultural investment, market forces, difficult access to arable land and a lack of technical support to farmers are some of the causes of food scarcity in Chad.<sup>3</sup>

62. Those fleeing violence from abroad have found the situation in Chad to be extremely challenging. The scale of human suffering is significant, and the delegation noted the difficulty faced by the Government in addressing these issues, given its own economic and resource constraints.

63. The efforts of Chad in this respect have included its participation in the Multinational Joint Task Force, helping to counter the armed group activities that are affecting Cameroon, the Niger and Nigeria.

64. Despite those efforts, in 2015, Boko Haram instigated a series of violent attacks against villages, camps for internally displaced persons and military operations in Chad, heightening security concerns more than ever. They included three suicide attacks on 15 June, which killed around 33 people. On 27 June, a police raid resulted in the deaths of six members of Boko Haram and several policemen. The following month, a suicide bomber killed around 15 people in the main market in N'Djamena. In November that year, suicide bombers killed and injured several people in the Lake Chad region, after military troops were withdrawn.

65. The Boko Haram insurgencies have resulted in countless human rights abuses. These include the killing of over 30,000 people, torture, abductions and repeated attacks that have resulted in irreparable damage to communities. In the Lake Chad region, around 2 million people have been internally displaced and around 10 million people are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.

66. People continue to flee the escalating violence in the Lake Chad area, disrupting agriculture, trade and fishing, with serious economic and social consequences. The volatile security situation continues to exacerbate food insecurity.<sup>4</sup> Outbreaks of cholera and measles are frequent, while malaria is the leading cause of infant mortality and is prevalent in many of the country's regions. Maternal mortality is among the world's highest. Lack of sufficient health facilities is an obstacle to proper health care. Access to primary health care is impeded by structural weaknesses such as a lack of personnel, equipment and coordination.

67. Transhumant movement of cattle, which had been a major source of livelihood for many in the country, was also severely hindered by the closure of areas and limitations on movement imposed in the Lake Chad region. What had been a bustling, vibrant economic centre for decades, serving the Lake Chad region as a whole, is now a monitored zone controlled by security forces, which has adversely affected the livelihoods of the local population.

<sup>3</sup> See Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, "Sahel - Overview of humanitarian needs and requirements" (December 2016). Available at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/nigeria/2017-sahel-overview-humanitarian-needs-and-requirements>.

<sup>4</sup> *Amnesty International Report 2016/17: The State of the World's Human Rights* (2017, London), p. 116.

68. Although the delegation was told that Chad had closed its borders, transborder crime, including trafficking of drugs, weapons and persons, continued. Beyond the Lake Chad region, the vast and distant parts of the country known as “no man’s land” have provided routes for criminal activities. The magnitude of these activities is not easily determined, but their occurrence is reportedly due to the conflicts in bordering States.

69. Limited access to basic services and sources of livelihood, as well as high unemployment and poverty, have taken an additional toll on people in affected areas. Much of the national budget and aid have gone into security and to tackling armed actors. The financial crisis of the Government of Chad has made it difficult to address socioeconomic needs. Over \$400 million has been spent on defence and security, reportedly more than what has been spent on humanitarian aid.

70. The Working Group notes that Vision 2030 and the national development plan for Chad focus, inter alia, on improving security as a development factor. The national development plan acknowledges that the mass influx of people fleeing security crises in countries bordering Chad continues to be a threat to peace and social cohesion and contributes to the contagion of conflict in the subregion.

### **Sexual and gender-based violence**

71. As mentioned above, women and girls who were forcibly taken captive had been subjected to sexual and gender-based violence, including rape, torture, sexual slavery and killings, particularly in the Lake Chad region. Many women were said to have followed spouses or children who had been abducted, and ended up being held captive by Boko Haram. Some managed to escape; those who made unsuccessful attempts were beaten or attacked. An aid worker who had been in contact with a group of girls who had been abducted by Boko Haram described the severely traumatized state the girls were in. He stated that even with hospital care and support from aid agencies, some of the girls were not able to speak or communicate. It has been difficult to provide the psychosocial care required given the magnitude of the trauma suffered by so many due to the conflict-related violence and abuse. Furthermore, many have said that in refugee and internally displaced camps women and girls continue to be victims of sexual and gender-based violence, and there was a need to strengthen protection for victims even in those settings. The Working Group also notes with concern the difficulties faced by refugees and displaced persons living in camps, particularly women, with respect to gaining access to justice.

72. As a result of men being abducted or recruited into armed groups, women have been increasingly taking the role of head of household. Homes that are headed by women are vulnerable to being destabilized by sexual and gender-based violence. Children born of sexual violence face stigmatization and are often not able to be registered to obtain birth certificates.

73. The Working Group emphasized the important role of women in preventing conflict and in peacebuilding and the need for the Government to take into account gender issues in all aspects of its measures.

### **Gaoui camp**

74. The Working Group met with refugees and returnees at the Gaoui camp. At the time of the visit, the majority of persons in the camp were returnees of Chadian origin who had fled the conflict in the Central African Republic. Since 2014, the number of the people in the camp has grown to about 5,000, and most are women and children. Many of the women have been widowed, and children orphaned, due to the conflict. Several of the individuals who spoke with the delegation were from Bangui, Bambari and Bossangoa, in the Central African Republic. There had been around nine unaccompanied children in the camp, but UNICEF and the International Organization for Migration had helped them find their families. Support has been provided by various donors for the reintegration of returnees. Some residents in the camp had support from income-generating activities.

75. It was clear that the situation was extremely difficult for residents in the camp, and that they required sustained support, as did thousands of others in similar cases around the country. There is a clear need for employment and the means to make a living. The delegation

noted that the living conditions were extremely difficult, particularly for persons with disabilities and older persons. Health services and other basic essential services were difficult to obtain. When a resident falls ill, others in the camp pool money to help. In one case, a woman was in labour and there was no transport to take her to the hospital. She reportedly died. Reportedly, over 200 people in the camp have died due to illnesses. There is also a challenge in finding a place to bury the dead. Some residents spoke of being discriminated against due to their Central African Republic origin, which was evident in the Sango language they spoke. This made getting employment more challenging.

76. Many referred to the conflict in the Central African Republic and the violence they had witnessed against family members who had been killed by Séléka and anti-balaka group members. Some spoke about family members who had been tortured. The suffering of those in Gaoui was directly linked not only to local armed groups but also to mercenaries, who deprived people of not only their families, but of their means to live and survive.

### **Repentance and surrender**

77. The Working Group was informed of the situation of persons associated with Boko Haram who, having repented their actions or surrendered, had returned to their communities. It notes the challenges those individuals face, and emphasizes the need to vet such individuals, to see who can be rehabilitated and reintegrated into their communities, as many had been forcibly abducted or recruited. The Working Group further notes that it will be necessary to assess and treat some of these individuals as victims, particularly those who have been severely traumatized and need appropriate psychological and medical care.

78. Men and women who have been released or escaped from Boko Haram are treated with suspicion, yet women who have returned are more likely to face stigmatization. Husbands have shunned them and they have been left to fend for themselves in communities that did not support them. Their situations have been further compounded by poor living conditions and poor access to basic and essential services, leaving them without the support they need for integration. Where security can be ensured, there is a need to rebuild and establish mechanisms to help people create new homes and have access to income opportunities. There is a need to re-establish social services and rebuild relations and trust. Consequently, there is an urgent need for a scaled-up development response to help people to retake control of their lives.

79. There are also concerns that many of those who have surrendered have been detained without due process or placed in preventive detention for excessively long periods of time in prisons such as Koro Toro. Many of those individuals were charged with acts of terrorism, which, under the anti-terrorist law of 2015, can lead to the death penalty. The Working Group is thus concerned about potential human rights abuses in relation to the processing of those who have surrendered and other detainees in Koro Toro and urges the authorities to ensure that fair trial guarantees are respected in relation to detainees and prisoners. Due process guarantees must be respected in accordance with international human rights law. Employing human rights measures in the treatment of persons associated with terrorist acts can also minimize the possibility of them being radicalized or drawn back into violent extremism.

### **Vigilante groups**

80. The Working Group was informed that, in response to the attacks of armed groups such as Boko Haram, vigilante groups had formed within local communities to patrol the area and enforce law and order, as means of protection against further attacks. These groups are sometimes referred to as committees, and are composed of volunteers, usually farmers and fishers, and will act as informers for military security forces and traditional leaders. They often arrest suspects and take them to the security forces in the area. There were reports of vigilante groups causing tension among community members, particularly where the groups themselves were affiliated with Boko Haram or where they made it difficult for returnees or former members of armed groups who had surrendered to integrate. While understanding the need to strengthen the resilience of communities and their defence against armed groups, the Working Group is concerned that this phenomenon could develop into counter-insurgency or militia groups that could further fuel violence and conflict.

### Right to self-determination

81. The Working Group stresses that the presence of mercenaries and foreign fighters and the range of armed actors in conflicts affecting Chad continue to undermine the right of Chadians to self-determination. Mercenaries and foreign fighters are likely to reframe and radicalize the overall aims of the insurgencies and contribute to their fragmentation and duration.<sup>5</sup> They are thus able to influence domestic insurgencies in ways that may ultimately undermine the right of self-determination. These foreign armed actors often bring in new, radical and unlawful tactics that encourage greater violence towards the civilian population.<sup>6</sup> States that are threatened by the activities of these foreign actors are required to be vigilant in guarding their territories and need also to rely on the effective collaboration of other States whose citizens are engaged in such activities. This, in turn, may complicate mediation and negotiations to end the conflict.

## V. Measures

82. The heightened security concerns and the potential threat of armed conflict gripping Chad, along with the myriad of armed actors involved, have been a priority focus for the Government. New laws have been adopted to address these threats and policies have been put in place to strengthen security and foster development.

83. While human rights violations have been committed by several armed groups, mercenaries and foreign fighters, prosecutions have mainly focused on Boko Haram insurgents. There were no prosecutions concerning mercenaries and there were no concrete data on perpetrators who were mercenaries. Most foreign armed elements who were prosecuted were affiliated with Boko Haram and most of those were prosecuted under the 2015 anti-terrorism law. Many of the prosecutions also involved perpetrators linked to the 2015 attacks in N'Djamena. It is clear that still more needs to be done to investigate and bring to justice mercenary-related actors.

84. The authorities informed the Working Group that it was difficult to gather evidence on cases related to mercenaries, and there was a need to train and upskill professionals in the law enforcement and criminal justice sectors. There is a shortage of experts and professionals overall, including for dealing with terrorism and transnational crimes relating to mercenarism and foreign fighters. Although there is a special judicial pool for dealing with terrorist crimes, there is still a lack of skilled lawyers and judicial officers to address the backlog of cases involving armed actors. There is also an insufficient number of skilled personnel in the field of forensic medicine and psychosocial care, who are often required to fully assess cases involving armed actors.

85. The Working Group notes, however, important measures that the Government has adopted in order to address the security threats and challenges related to armed groups. At the regional level, Chad joined the Joint Force of the Group of Five for the Sahel, an initiative also involving Burkina Faso, Mali, Mauritania and the Niger, with the objective of coordinating and collaborating on a strategy to counter terrorism and armed groups and combat human trafficking and transnational organized crime. The Joint Force provides support in different capacities, including military support through Operation Barkhane. It is headquartered in Chad, with a deployment of several thousand military personnel to member States. In its resolution 2359 (2017), the Security Council underlined the primary responsibility of the Group of Five for the Sahel States to ensure the protection of civilians in their respective territories in accordance with their obligations under international law, and the need for the operations of the Joint Force to be conducted in full compliance with

<sup>5</sup> See Kristin M. Bakke, "Help wanted? The mixed record of foreign fighters in domestic insurgencies", *International Security*, vol. 38, No. 4 (2014); and Ben Rich and Dara Conduit, "The impact of Jihadist foreign fighters on indigenous secular-nationalist causes: contrasting Chechnya and Syria", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 38, No. 2 (2014).

<sup>6</sup> See Jeni Mitchell, "The contradictory effects of ideology on Jihadist war fighting: the Bosnian precedent", *Studies in Conflict & Terrorism*, vol. 31, No. 9 (2015).

international law, including international humanitarian law, human rights law and refugee law.

86. The Multinational Joint Task Force continued to focus on the conflict around the Lake Chad region. With around 10,000 uniformed personnel, the Task Force continues to play a key role in counter-attacks against Boko Haram. The Task Force has a human rights unit in its civilian component that has been employed to deal with human rights issues within the operations in which it has been involved. In addition to the general headquarters in Chad, the Task Force has sectoral headquarters in Mora, Cameroon; Bagasola, Chad; Diffa, Niger; and Baga, Nigeria.

87. Both the Group of Five for the Sahel and the Multinational Joint Task Force rely heavily on financial contributions from member States to keep them fully operational, and this could be a challenge. The African Union-led Nouakchott Process, of which Chad is a part, focuses on enhanced cooperation among member States' security apparatuses. Chad has also joined the international counter-ISIL coalition.

88. In terms of prosecutions and combating impunity, Chad has ratified the Convention on Extradition and Mutual Legal Assistance in Counter-terrorism. On May 2017, Chad, Mali and the Niger signed a tripartite agreement to strengthen judicial cooperation, enabling each of the countries to arrest and prosecute nationals from any of the signatory countries. The implementation of these initiatives can go a long way in supporting investigations and prosecutions for transnational and cross-border crimes, including those involving mercenaries and foreign fighters. The agreement facilitates, inter alia, requests for mutual legal assistance. The Working Group is not aware of the extent to which the agreement has been applied in relation to cases involving foreign armed actors in Chad. The Penal Code provides for extradition of accused persons or criminals. These frameworks are important to ensuring the necessary cooperation and exchange of information relating to the investigation of mercenary or foreign fighter activities.

89. The Government has also devoted resources to border management. It increased screenings at border crossings to try to prevent infiltration by members of Boko Haram and by militias from the Central African Republic, as well as the transit of illegal arms, drugs, weapons and other contraband into the country. A biometric system was introduced by Chad in 2013 for screening at selected entry points, such as airports. However, the Working Group was informed that much more still needed to be done to counter the transborder movements of arms, drugs and persons and the infiltration of mercenaries and foreign armed elements. The vast, remote desert areas continue to provide potential routes for these criminal activities, as effective border management is difficult to implement in those territories.

90. Chad has a police force of around 12,000 officers to cover its 23 regions. There are also around 7,000 nomadic guards who assist with national security. Many have noted that this is not sufficient in the long term to protect against threats of armed groups and attacks, hence the dependence on regional and international military deployments to maintain security. The Working Group was informed of the threats against transhumant pastoralists moving through Chadian territory in search of water and grazing ground for herds. Intercommunal violence and tension and competition for natural resources have affected relationships between farmers and pastoralists, resulting in violent clashes. Pastoralists are now arming themselves and have also been known to deliberately engage in violence against local communities, and vice versa.

### **Countering violent extremism**

91. In 2017 the Government adopted a national strategy and action plan to counter violent extremism and radicalization. Its Vision 2030 plan also noted the need to address those issues in order to strengthen national cohesion. The Office of Religious and Traditional Leaders, within the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Local Governance, was created by the Government to initiate efforts to counter violent extremism. However, the Office has yet to effectively drive the necessary programmes, and more support from international partners is needed. Interlocutors consistently identified the primary driver of violent extremism as lack of economic opportunity, which was exploited by violent extremists who targeted vulnerable populations.

92. The delegation also met with the interfaith platform of religious leaders and commended the work they were doing with their members and the public, including young people, to prevent violent extremism, radicalization and the association of young people with armed groups.

93. A new centre on countering violent extremism was established and is run by a non-governmental entity. It focuses on education and awareness-raising among local communities about radicalization. Staff from the centre conducted a visit to Baga Sola to assess the situation there, particularly focusing on persons associated with armed groups who had repented or surrendered. They met with over 200 individuals (men, women and children), several of whom had been abducted by Boko Haram and who had escaped back to their communities.

94. The Working Group is aware that often those who have escaped from armed groups, particularly young girls, have been placed in transitional and orientation centres to receive care and to be supported in reintegrating into their communities. It notes that care and support should also be provided even after these individuals are sent back to their communities. Traditional leaders and a support network of family and friends play an important role in ensuring that these individuals are successfully reintegrated.

95. Deradicalization requires multisectoral engagements and collaboration at the community level and at the policy level. More work needs to be done, including through a training curriculum that provides counter-narratives to violent extremist ideologies. Capacity-building for and early identification of those likely to be radicalized is important. The delegation notes that those who have been associated with armed groups urgently need psychosocial support and peer-to-peer support to eliminate stigmatization and social exclusion, which can place these individuals at further risk of being radicalized. Addressing the marginalization of groups that are vulnerable to radicalized thinking can also be preventative. Livelihood and employment opportunities, and training in entrepreneurial skills with clear economic benefits, will help individuals avoid being lured to obtain wealth through illicit means, including through engagement with armed groups. The Working Group also observed the critical importance of the members of the interfaith platform of religious leaders working together and with their communities, particularly young people.

96. The Government and the interfaith platform of religious leaders have engaged in activities that have brought adherents of the main three faiths together to observe a national prayer day and to discuss ways in which they can strengthen social cohesion and ensure against their members falling victim to violent extremism. The platform has also engaged with similar initiatives in neighbouring countries, to learn from each other's experiences and better understand how to engage the local communities. Some of the religious leaders admitted that there was a generational gap and disconnect with the young people of Chad today, who make up almost half of the national population. That generation needed to feel empowered, to be provided with employment and economic opportunities to develop their country, in order to safeguard them from being drawn into violent extremist groups or mercenarism and criminal activities.

97. Among other steps taken to prevent violent extremism, the Government has revoked the legal charters of what it identified as extremist-leaning associations and religious organizations. Robust, nationwide media campaigns would assist in publicizing counter-narratives to violent extremism. Since the Internet is not widely available in Chad, the Government should also hold regular nationwide discussions and implement programmes to counter violent extremism. Such initiatives need to be easily accessible to the public, taking into account that much of the population is illiterate and poor.

#### **Prioritizing the human rights approach**

98. The Working Group recognizes that Chad is at an important crossroads, having made enormous strides to strengthen national security and adopt new legislation that strengthens the legal framework to safeguard against human rights violations. Much of the discussions held during the visit focused on security measures and the armed conflict situations affecting the country. The Working Group is fully aware that the humanitarian crisis in Chad still requires robust international support, by way of technical assistance and through much-

needed financial support to ensure the long-term sustainability of programmes that are helping those most affected and vulnerable in the country.

99. The Working Group, however, notes that although security measures are necessary to address the threats of mercenaries, foreign fighters and groups such as Boko Haram and ISIL, a human rights approach must also be employed. To do otherwise will risk having a predominantly securitized approach to dealing with these threats, which will not necessarily eliminate the root causes that drive individuals to become mercenaries and foreign fighters. A great deal of research is needed to understand such root causes and collating data systematically on these causes will help better inform the measures to counter mercenarism and related actors.

100. Operations such as the Multinational Joint Task Force and national military and security personnel have a significant impact on the lives of local populations. Protection of civilians and ensuring that operations are in line with international human rights standards are crucial to safeguarding against abuses by security forces themselves. Having human rights monitoring functions within these deployments is necessary and requires ongoing strengthening and support.

101. Effectively addressing poverty that is pervasive in the country will also eliminate many of the root causes of mercenarism and affiliation with armed groups. This requires dealing with the most vulnerable groups throughout all of the country's regions and building strong relationships with ethnic, tribal and religious groups to better understand the socioeconomic needs that the Government needs to address. Having a national development plan that prioritizes the areas covered by the Sustainable Development Goals is critical, and all initiatives focused on the improvement of education, social support and employment opportunities should be implemented for the benefit of the millions of Chadians who are struggling to earn a living. These endeavours must be prioritized as much as the security measures that have absorbed a great deal of the financial aid to the country. In this regard, financial support and aid towards the development and human rights agenda in the country should be encouraged.

102. Having a strong human rights framework in the country and ensuring an environment conducive for effective human rights work is also fundamental. The Working Group notes the important contribution that human rights defenders, civil society organizations and non-government entities make in reporting human rights violations and ensuring accountability, not only for the State but also for armed actors such as mercenaries and foreign fighters.

103. The Working Group also recognizes the dire situation of the people caught in the humanitarian crisis in the Lake Chad region and in other severely impoverished areas in the country, and reiterates that resolutions to those crises will be conducive to building a country that is more resilient against armed groups and mercenarism.

## **VI. Private military and security companies**

104. The Working Group did not receive sufficient information regarding private security companies in the country. It notes that Decree No. 637 of 1996 regulates the private security industry and prohibits private security personnel from carrying arms. The law is silent on private military companies and the delegation was informed that there were no particular issues concerning these types of operations. The Working Group, however, was informed of important reserves of oil and other natural resources in the country, particularly close to the border with the Central African Republic. It notes the need to strengthen regulations on resource management and the role of private security companies in this context. This would help address any potential human rights violations, particularly in light of the challenges seen in some parts of the region where mercenaries and private security companies have exploited valuable natural resources to fund their illegal activities.

## VII. Conclusions and recommendations

105. The Working Group remains concerned about the ongoing activities of armed actors affecting the country, including mercenaries and foreign fighters. Unless the conflicts in the region and neighbouring countries are resolved, the risk of destabilization in Chad will always exist. Furthermore, the combination of weak State institutions, dire poverty and transborder criminal activities provides fertile ground for mercenarism and foreign fighter activities to thrive. In that regard, the Working Group makes the following recommendations, intended to complement the important initiatives mentioned throughout the present report.

106. The Working Group recommends that the Government of Chad:

(a) Accede to the International Convention against the Recruitment, Use, Financing and Training of Mercenaries, as this makes participation in mercenary activities an offence of mandatory universal jurisdiction, which means that an offender must, unless extradited, be tried by any State in which he or she is found;

(b) Accede to the Optional Protocol to the Convention against Torture and Other Cruel, Inhuman or Degrading Treatment or Punishment;

(c) Strengthen efforts under existing international regional frameworks to assist with investigations, exchange of information and mutual legal assistance in the investigation and prosecution of mercenaries, foreign fighters and armed elements;

(d) Enforce robust border management with neighbouring countries and develop stronger cooperation to combat transnational criminal activities, including those carried out by mercenaries, foreign fighters and armed groups and the trafficking of illicit drugs, arms and other weapons and persons.

(e) Prioritize and strengthen the protection of civilians in conflict areas, such as the Lake Chad region, and where insurgencies are occurring;

(f) Strengthen protection for communities at risk of violence from communal clashes with pastoralists;

(g) Strengthen protection in internally displaced camps and refugee camps against the recruitment of individuals to armed groups and against sexual and gender-based violence and human rights violations against residents;

(h) Continue efforts to eliminate the recruitment of children into armed groups and to reintegrate them into society and to identify, rehabilitate and reintegrate children who were recruited to or associated with armed groups;

(i) Provide support to strengthen rehabilitation, psychosocial support and integration measures for victims of armed elements, including those who were associated with armed groups but who have surrendered or repented;

(j) Develop policies to combat sexual and gender-based violence wherever it exists, and provide the necessary support and care for victims, particularly women and girls;

(k) Bring perpetrators of human rights violations, including mercenaries and foreign fighters, to justice and set up remedy and reparation mechanisms for victims;

(l) Train and build the capacity of the judiciary and judicial officers, including in the area of human rights, in order to combat impunity for human rights violations;

(m) Ensure that suspects who are alleged to be terrorists or armed actors are tried in accordance with international human rights standards. Due process and fair trial guarantees must be respected;

(n) Ensure that human rights violations are properly recorded in documentation that can be used for the prosecution of perpetrators;

- (o) Amend the anti-terrorist law and reinstate the moratorium on the use of the death penalty, with a view to abolishing the death penalty;
- (p) Conduct research and collect data that could contribute to a better understanding of root causes of armed conflicts and the motivational factors for armed actors, including mercenaries and foreign fighters, and that could assist in mapping the way forward in policies to safeguard against further armed conflicts;
- (q) Prioritize the elimination of poverty and ensure that a human rights approach underpins all development initiatives, including Vision 2030;
- (r) Provide investment and other support to strengthen the resilience of individuals, communities and institutions and to make the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development a reality for them;
- (s) Redouble efforts and implement policies and initiatives that provide employment and livelihoods for the local population, particularly young people, who represent a large percentage of the unemployed;
- (t) Strengthen efforts to tackle widespread illiteracy, and encourage education initiatives that are accessible to and affordable for the local population;
- (u) Ensure inclusive participation of all sectors of society, including civil society organizations and human rights defenders, which are indispensable to nation-building and peacebuilding efforts;
- (v) Provide support for community-based initiatives, including faith-based initiatives that are aimed at countering violent extremism;
- (w) Provide support to the platform of religious leaders, which has been valuable in providing counter-narratives to violent extremism and carrying out dialogue with the local communities with the aim of building social cohesion and preventing radicalization among young people;
- (x) Allocate sufficient human and financial resources in the Government budget to the new national human rights institution and ensure an environment that is conducive to human rights work, including strong protection for human rights defenders and their work;
- (y) Provide training on human rights and respect for diversity for government officials and members of the civil service, national security forces, local media, civil society organizations and local communities;
- (z) Include human rights training in local education curricula;
- (aa) Establish a system for natural resource management to safeguard against potential exploitation and abuse by private military and security companies and armed elements, including mercenaries and foreign fighters;
- (bb) Implement the recommendations addressed to Chad under the mandates of United Nations human rights mechanisms, including special procedures, treaty bodies and the universal periodic review;

107. The Working Group also calls on the support of the international community to provide Chad with the assistance needed to implement the recommendations contained in the present report.