

PRESS RELEASE



United Nations Development Programme

CAR launches historic security sector reform process

Seminar aims to be the largest of its kind in Africa

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The government of the Central African Republic (CAR) will launch an historic, four-day seminar on security sector reform on Monday (14 April 2008), demonstrating the country's willingness to move beyond its tumultuous past and advance the development objectives set out in its Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper.

This national seminar, initiated by the CAR government with UNDP support, will review the security sector challenges facing the country, discuss concrete measures for reform and establish short- and medium-term timelines for their implementation. The seminar has been prepared by a national Security Sector Reform Committee comprised of representatives of CAR's security and justice services, government officials and members of civil society. It will discuss individual and cross-cutting approaches to reform, chiefly in relation to the following actors in CAR:

- National army (*Forces armées centrafricaines*);
- National and other police forces;
- Justice and penitentiary systems;
- Intelligence services;
- Private security firms.

CAR President François Bozizé will open the seminar on Monday and deliver its closing remarks on Thursday, accompanied by Prime Minister Faustin Touadéra. UNDP Resident Representative Toby Lanzer will also address the seminar on Monday.

Devastated by a series of political and military crises between 1996 and 2003, CAR has achieved relative stability since elections in 2005, despite the consequences of conflicts in neighbouring countries. However, pockets of violence and impunity persist – particularly in the north-east and north-west, where rebels, bandits and government troops have all been accused of atrocities. An on-going humanitarian crisis in these areas has hampered development efforts, indicating the need for a broad-based approach to security sector reform that will contribute to greater stabilization in the country as a whole.

The government identified security sector reform as a key pillar in its 2008-2010 Poverty Reduction Strategy Paper, which sets out national development priorities. Daily progress updates will be released after each session of the four-day seminar on <http://hdptcar.net/blog/ssr> (English) and www.cf.undp.org (French).

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