

II

(Non-legislative acts)

REGULATIONS

COUNCIL IMPLEMENTING REGULATION (EU) 2021/628

of 16 April 2021

implementing Article 17(3) of Regulation (EU) No 224/2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in the Central African Republic

THE COUNCIL OF THE EUROPEAN UNION,

Having regard to the Treaty on the Functioning of the European Union,

Having regard to Council Regulation (EU) No 224/2014 of 10 March 2014 concerning restrictive measures in view of the situation in the Central African Republic ⁽¹⁾, and in particular Article 17(3) thereof,

Having regard to the proposal from the High Representative of the Union for Foreign Affairs and Security Policy,

Whereas:

- (1) On 10 March 2014, the Council adopted Regulation (EU) No 224/2014.
- (2) On 22 February 2021, the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Committee established pursuant to UNSC Resolution 2127 (2013) updated the information relating to one person subject to restrictive measures.
- (3) Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 224/2014 should therefore be amended accordingly,

HAS ADOPTED THIS REGULATION:

Article 1

Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 224/2014 is hereby amended as set out in the Annex to this Regulation.

Article 2

This Regulation shall enter into force on the date of its publication in the *Official Journal of the European Union*.

This Regulation shall be binding in its entirety and directly applicable in all Member States.

Done at Brussels, 16 April 2021.

For the Council
The President
A. P. ZACARIAS

⁽¹⁾ OJ L 70, 11.3.2014, p. 1.

ANNEX

In the list set out in Part A (Persons) of Annex I to Regulation (EU) No 224/2014, entry 14 is replaced by the following entry:

‘14. Bi Sidi SOULEMAN (alias: a) Sidiki b) “General” Sidiki c) Sidiki Abbas d) Souleymane Bi Sidi e) Bi Sidi Soulemane)

Designation: President and self-proclaimed “general” of the Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R)

Date of Birth: 20 July 1962

Place of Birth: Bocaranga, Central African Republic

Nationality: Central African Republic

Passport No: Laissez-passer No N°235/MISPAT/DIRCAB/DGPC/DGAEI/SI/SP, issued on 15 March 2019 (issued by the Minister of Interior of the Central African Republic)

Address: Kouï, Ouham-Pendé prefecture, Central African Republic

Date of UN designation: 5 August 2020

Other information:

Bi Sidi Souleman leads the Central African Republic (CAR)-based militia group Retour, Réclamation, Réhabilitation (3R) which has killed, tortured, raped, and displaced civilians and engaged in arms trafficking, illegal taxation activities, and warfare with other militias since its creation in 2015. Bi Sidi Souleman himself has also participated in torture. On 6 February 2019, 3R signed the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the CAR but has engaged in acts violating the Agreement and remains a threat to the peace, stability and security of the CAR. For instance, on 21 May 2019, 3R killed 34 unarmed civilians in three villages, summarily executing adult males. Bi Sidi Souleman openly confirmed to a UN Entity that he had ordered 3R elements to the villages on the date of the attacks, but did not admit to giving the orders for 3R to kill. In December 2020, after having joined a coalition of armed groups established to disrupt the electoral process, Bi Sidi Souleman was reportedly killed during fighting.

Information from the narrative summary of reasons for listing provided by the Sanctions Committee:

Bi Sidi Souleman was listed on 5 August 2020 pursuant to paragraph 20 and paragraph 21 (b) of resolution 2399 (2018), extended by paragraph 5 of resolution 2507 (2020), for engaging in or providing support for acts that undermine the peace, stability or security of the Central African Republic, including acts that threaten or impede the stabilization and reconciliation process or that fuel violence; and being involved in planning, directing, or committing acts in the Central African Republic that violate international human rights law or international humanitarian law, as applicable, or that constitute human rights abuses or violations, including those involving targeting of civilians, ethnic- or religious-based attacks, attacks on civilian objects, including administrative centres, courthouses, schools and hospitals, and abduction and forced displacement.

Additional information

President and self-proclaimed “general” of the Retour, Réclamation et Réhabilitation (3R) armed group, Bi Sidi Souleman has engaged in acts threatening the peace, stability and security of the CAR and, in particular, threatening the implementation of the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR signed on 6 February 2019 in Bangui.

He and fighters under his command have committed acts that constitute serious violations of international human rights law or international humanitarian law. On 21 May 2019, 3R killed 34 unarmed civilians in three villages (Koundjili, Lemouna and Bohong), summarily executing adult males.

Under his leadership, 3R elements committed acts involving sexual and gender-based violence. In September 2017, during an attack against Bocaranga, 3R elements raped several women and girls. Between March and April 2020, 3R elements were involved in seven cases of sexual violence in three villages in the Ouham-Pendé prefecture.

Under his leadership, 3R continued to impede the restoration of state authority in its areas of operation by maintaining illegal taxation systems, especially on transhumance activities and on travelers, and has been involved in the illegal exploitation of gold in the Mambéré-Kadéï and Nana-Mambéré prefectures.

In 2019, under his leadership, 3R committed its first violations of the Peace Agreement. Bi Sidi Souleman initially refused to start the disarmament and the demobilization of the 3R fighters supposed to participate in the first special mixed security unit in the west of the CAR and 3R also continued to expand its control over territories forcing MINUSCA into launching an operation in the Ouham-Pendé, Nana-Mambéré, and Mambéré-Kadéï prefectures in September 2019, as well as in arms trafficking in order to build up its military capabilities and in the recruitment of fighters from abroad.

In 2020, under his leadership, 3R continued and to commit violations of the Peace agreement and to expand its control over territories in the West. In May 2020, 3R elements occupied the gendarmerie of Besson in the Nana-Mambéré prefecture and former 3R elements deserted the Bouar USMS. On 5 June 2020, Bi Sidi Souleman announced the suspension of the participation of 3R in the Agreement's follow-up mechanisms until further notice. On 9 June 2020, presumed 3R elements attacked the training camp of the Bouar USMS as well as a joint MINUSCA and national forces checkpoint in Pougol. On 21 June 2020, 3R elements attacked a joint MINUSCA and national forces patrol near Besson resulting in the death of three Central African soldiers.'
