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SITUATION OVERVIEW

Presidential and parliamentary elections in Carana have been delayed by three years due to concerns around continued instability in the Leppko region, as well as calls from the government to postpone them due to its lack of capacity and resources. Elections are now set to take place in three months' time. Leading up to the elections, the United Nations Assistance Mission in Carana (UNAC) and the UN country team have been providing electoral assistance in line with their mandates.

The Mouvement Patriotique de Carana (MPC) continues to enjoy growing support in western Carana—where it traditionally dominates—but there nevertheless remains little countrywide opposition to the ruling Parti Démocratique de Carana (PDC). PDC presidential candidate Pierre Barineaux is the former minister of finance. Due to corruption allegations, he does not have the support enjoyed by his fellow party member and current prime minister in the Government of National Reconciliation (GNR) Lucien Langata. Barineaux is nonetheless projected to win.

The only serious opposition to the PDC is François Maki. During the civil war, he served as a general in the MPC, which was the main opposition to the government during the civil war. Though he enjoys support across the west and throughout Kori communities, allegations of human rights violations under his command have weakened his support in other ethnic communities throughout the country.

The Combattants Indépendants du Sud Carana (CISC) has remained a collection of splinter groups and has not developed a political party or platform in the last three years. CISC adherents have repeatedly announced that they will not support either candidate. Reports from the joint mission analysis center (JMAC) and UNAC's civil affairs component confirm that this announcement echoes concerns among the Tatsis and other minorities that neither the PDC nor the MPC represents their interests. Communities in the south, particularly the Tatsis, are generally disengaged from the presidential elections. Some southerners, however, are supporting individuals from small local parties standing for the parliamentary elections, which they view as their only opportunity to be represented in the government (however limited that representation may be).

Despite skepticism about candidates and weak opposition to the PDC, there is general support for and trust in the National Electoral Commission (NEC). UNAC supported the creation of the NEC and successfully prioritized a membership that is inclusive and representative in terms both ethnicity and gender. UNAC also worked with political parties to build capacity and develop platforms to create political space within which opposition groups can operate.

Though not widespread, there have been reports of voter intimidation against women in certain areas of Leppko. The government, in partnership with civil society organizations that focus on support for women, is currently working to educate voters—particularly women—and monitor the security situation.

However, voter registration remains a concern. Large areas of the country have been difficult to access due to insecurity, particularly in the south. Destruction of key roads in the south and west during the rainy season has compounded this problem; national registration teams have had particular difficulty registering citizens there despite extensive (and highly visible) logistical and technical support from UNAC. These setbacks have created the perception in some communities that UNAC and the NEC are not interested in registering people who are expected to vote against the PDC. They have also called into question the independence of the NEC from government influence. Public confidence in the process has been further eroded by the government's issuance of a decree that requires voters to cast their votes in their home province. This has been received particularly badly by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in Galasi, who are unable to return to their homes and will therefore be unable to vote in the parliamentary elections.

There are ten IDP camps throughout the country, and three of these are within or near the capital of Galasi. Two of the three camps in the capital are administrated by Oxfam and the third by Mercy Corps. Security in the camps is generally poor, putting IDPs at risk. In all, 55,500 people populate the three camps. They belong mostly to the Kori and Tatsi ethnic groups.

2 TASK

The Mission Leadership Team (MLT) is tasked with developing a political and security strategy that encompasses a threat assessments and covers the three months leading up to the election.

3 DISCUSSION QUESTIONS

1. What are the political implications that need to be considered in the overall political strategy?
2. What are the main threats to a credible election? What groups are most likely to be involved?
3. What immediate actions should be taken and which partners should be engaged to mitigate risks?
4. Based on the risks identified, are there any immediate security actions that should be taken?
5. What, how, and when do we communicate, and to whom?

Inject 1

The JMAC has informed the MLT that IDPs from the three camps around Galasi are planning a peaceful protest on election day. They will be marching on the capital to protest their exclusion from the elections, which they view as a deliberate attempt by the GNR to exclude them.

Though the JMAC confirms that the intention of the protest appears to be peaceful, there are concerns about how PDC supporters within the city might react. They may perceive the protest as explicitly anti-PDC, especially since the majority of the protesters will belong to ethnic groups associated with the MPC.

It is also unclear what CISC members' positions on the protest will be on election day, as many have repeatedly claimed that the election will not meet the requirements of the peace agreement, which would nullify the Kalahari Peace Agreement (KPA). A portion of the IDP population participating in the protests will likely be ethnically Tatsi, and it is possible that CISC members will come to the aid of members of their ethnic group if there are clashes.

1. What role should the MLT play in the build-up to and on election day in light of these reports?

Inject 2

Reports are now coming in from the capital that youth gangs have begun entering the IDP camps and attacking civilians. The violence is spreading rapidly, and there have been allegations on Twitter and other social media that the youth gangs are acting on the orders of PDC officials, some of whom are currently serving in the GNR. The reports allege that these attacks are retaliation to the planned protests.

PDC members and the presidential candidate have released statements saying that they are not involved in the attacks. Instead, they are claiming that this is an internal dispute between Tatsi and Kori IDPs and has nothing to do with the planned protests on election day.

1. What immediate actions should the MLT take to address the violence in the IDP camps?
2. How might the GNR's possible participation in the attacks change the MLT's strategy and engagement?
3. What will be the implications if the claims by the PDC are true?

Inject 3

A week has passed since the violence in the IDP camps. Due to continued engagement between the special representative of the secretary-general (SRSG) and the GNR, the GNR has decided to revoke the decree stating that people must vote in their home province. This has quelled much of the tension with the IDPs, but there are still rumors that the government instigated the recent violence.

The deadline for officially registering as a presidential candidate was three weeks ago. This morning, the NEC ruled that the lead candidate of the MPC, François Maki, is ineligible to run. The NEC released an official statement claiming that Maki was responsible for the violence in the IDP camps and was therefore in violation of the peace agreement that states that all parties will participate in the “cessation of hostilities... as well as all acts of sabotage and incitement of ethnic hatred.”

There is little evidence that Maki was involved in the violence in the IDP camps, and the announcement was met with strong resistance from supporters of the MPC. *Le Monde Galasi* has released an article featuring an interview with Maki, stating that he believes the GNR is interfering with the NEC to eliminate the strongest opposition candidate from the election.

1. What actions should the MLT take in response to the NEC barring an opposition candidate from the election process?