EXPLANATORY MEMORANDUM TO

THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC (SANCTIONS) (EU EXIT) (AMENDMENT) REGULATIONS 2025

2025 No. 1327

1. Introduction

1.1 This Explanatory Memorandum has been prepared by the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office and is laid before Parliament by Command of His Majesty.

1.2 This memorandum contains information for the Joint Committee on Statutory Instruments.

2. Declaration

2.1 Stephen Doughty MP, Minister of State for Europe, North America and Overseas Territories at the Foreign Commonwealth and Development Office, confirms that this Explanatory Memorandum meets the required standard.

2.2 Abigail Culank, Deputy for Sanctions at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office, confirms that this Explanatory Memorandum meets the required standard.

3. Contact

3.1 The Sanctions Directorate at the Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office can be contacted by email at the following address with any queries regarding the instrument: fcdo.correspondence@fcdo.gov.uk. Alternatively, the department can be contacted by telephone: 0207 008 8553.

Part One: Explanation, and context, of the Instrument

4. Overview of the Instrument

What does the legislation do?

4.1 The legislation makes a series of modifications to the Central African Republic (Sanctions) (EU Exit) Regulations 2020 (S.I. 2020/616) ("the 2020 Regulations") to give full effect in domestic law to the UK's international obligations conferred by United Nations Security Council Resolution ("UNSCR") 2745 (2024). The legislation also updates referencing to include all relevant UNSCRs.

Where does the legislation extend to, and apply?

4.2 The territorial extent of this instrument is the whole of the UK.

4.3 The territorial application of this instrument is also the same as the territorial application of the instrument that it amends. That is, it applies to the whole of the UK.

4.4 This instrument also applies to conduct by UK persons where that conduct is wholly or partly outside the UK, and some parts of it also apply to conduct by any person in the territorial sea adjacent to the UK. "UK person" is defined in section 21(2) of the Sanctions and Anti-Money Laundering Act 2018 ("Sanctions Act").

5. Policy Context

What is being done and why?

5.1 The Central African Republic is making progress toward stability. While security challenges persist in the eastern and western region, the centre of the country has seen marked improvement following the disarmament and demobilisation of two major armed groups: Retour, réclamation et réhabilitation (3R) and the Unité pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC). Concurrently, the national economy has maintained a moderate growth trajectory. According to the UN Secretary-General's latest report, this growth is expected to be driven by increased energy consumption, the resumption of mining activities, and infrastructure development, facilitated by the improved security situation in a large part of the country. The United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic's (MINUSCA's) work remains vital for consolidating peace and security. Its recent mandate extension for an additional twelve months is a key step toward ensuring long-term stability and sustainable development.

5.2 The 2020 Regulations were made with the purpose of bringing the UK in compliance with its UN obligations regarding sanctions in respect of the Central African Republic. UNSCR 2127 (2013) imposed an arms embargo on Central African Republic whilst UNSCR 2134 (2014) had imposed targeted sanctions measures in Central African Republic.

5.3 There was a shift in focus on 30 July 2024 with the adoption of UNSCR 2745 which found that, given the change in context in the Central African Republic, the territorial arms embargo should be removed to allow the Government of the Central African Republic freedom to procure arms for security whilst retaining measures to prevent other armed groups in the Central African Republic from accessing weapons and ammunition. These Regulations reflect the shift in focus and context of the Central African Republic's security threat, and updates references to relevant UNSCRs.

What was the previous policy, how is this different?

5.4 The 2020 Regulations imposed an arms embargo aimed at preventing the proliferation of illegal arms trafficking particularly on the border of neighbouring countries, which could have led to regional contagion.

5.5 The legislation makes technical changes to the 2020 Regulations to update them in line with most recent UNSCRs, in particular UNSCR 2745, which lifts the arms embargo on the Government of the Central African Republic to allow freedom to procure arms for security whilst retaining measures to prevent other armed groups in the Central African Republic from accessing weapons and ammunition.

6. Legislative and Legal Context

How has the law changed?

6.1 This instrument is made in exercise of powers conferred by section 1 of the Sanctions Act. Section 1 enables sanctions regulations to be made for various purposes, including compliance with UN obligations. These Regulations are made under section 1(1)(a) of the Sanctions Act in accordance with procedure specified in section 55(6) of the Sanctions Act. When this instrument comes into force, it will give full effect in domestic law to the UK's UN obligations in respect of UNSCR 2745, which was adopted by the UN Security Council on 30 July 2024 and amended the arms embargo

applying to the Central African Republic. UNSCR 2745 was extended by UNSCR 2789, which was adopted by the UN Security Council on 29 July 2025.

Why was this approach taken to change the law?

6.2 Amending the 2020 Regulations under the legal framework provided by the Sanctions Act is considered to be the most effective and appropriate way to change the law, to reflect the UK's UN obligations in domestic law.

7. Consultation

Summary of consultation outcome and methodology

7.1 No consultation has been carried out on this instrument. His Majesty's Government ran a public consultation on the Sanctions Act which was open for nine weeks. The main areas of concern raised in consultation responses were around the legal threshold for sanctions designations, the rights of designated persons to challenge their designations, and licensing procedures. All these concerns were considered in the drafting of the Sanctions Act.

7.2 There is neither a requirement in the Sanctions Act for public consultation on instruments made under the Act, nor is there any other legal obligation to consult in respect of this instrument. The Government will continue engagement with stakeholders on the implementation of UK sanctions.

8. Applicable Guidance

8.1 In accordance with section 43 of the Sanctions Act, guidance will be published on gov.uk in relation to the prohibitions and requirements under this instrument.

Part Two: Impact and the Better Regulation Framework

9. Impact Assessment

9.1 A full Impact Assessment has not been prepared for this instrument as no, or no significant, impact on the private, voluntary or public sector is foreseen.

Impact on businesses, charities and voluntary bodies

9.2 There is no, or no significant, impact on business, charities or voluntary bodies as this is an update to existing legislation.

9.3 The legislation does not impact small or micro businesses.

9.4 There is no, or no significant, impact on the public sector as this is an update to existing legislation.

10. Monitoring and review

What is the approach to monitoring and reviewing this legislation?

10.1 If His Majesty's Government determined that it was no longer appropriate to maintain the Central African Republic sanctions regime or modified it, the 2020 Regulations would be amended accordingly. As such, the Minister does not consider that a review clause in this instrument is appropriate.

Part Three: Statements and Matters of Particular Interest to Parliament

11. Matters of special interest to Parliament

11.1 This instrument contains UN regulations as defined in section 55(7) of the Sanctions Act which means that in accordance with section 55(6), it is subject to the negative resolution procedure in Parliament. It is laid before Parliament on 16th December and comes into force on 6th January 2026.

12. European Convention on Human Rights

12.1 As the instrument is subject to the negative resolution procedure and does not amend primary legislation, no statement is required.

13. The Relevant European Union Acts

13.1 This instrument is not made under the European Union (Withdrawal) Act 2018, the European Union (Future Relationship) Act 2020 or the Retained EU Law (Revocation and Reform) Act 2023.