



Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Central African Republic

*Press Release: For immediate release***CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC RISKS SLIDING BACK INTO MAJOR CRISIS**

(Geneva, 1 June 2017): The international community must urgently rally behind the humanitarian community striving to assist thousands of civilians in the Central African Republic, the Humanitarian Coordinator in the country warned today during a briefing to UN Member States in Geneva.

“The frequency and brutality of attacks in Bangassou, Bria, Alindao and other localities have reached levels not seen since August 2014,” said Najat Rochdi, the Humanitarian Coordinator and UN Resident Coordinator in the Central African Republic. “There are deeply worrying signs of manipulation of religion as driver behind the latest wave of attacks. The window of opportunity to prevent the crisis from further escalation risks being shut very soon.”

New hotspots of violence have emerged across the country, and atrocious intra-communal crimes are shattering communities. Over the past two weeks alone, more than 100,000 people have been newly displaced. In the central town of Bria, violence erupting in mid-May has uprooted more than 40,000 people. By attacking south-eastern Bangassou, where peaceful coexistence had withstood all previous violent episodes, armed groups targeted a symbol of social cohesion. The fighting killed more than 100 people and forced thousands to flee their homes.

“Communities displaced by the renewed violence have sought safety in areas we can hardly reach. Aid actors are facing logistical and security challenges compounded by funding shortfalls,” Ms. Rochdi said. “Unless humanitarian actors are given sufficient means, tens of thousands of the most vulnerable people will be cut off from aid, many of them will be killed, and entire areas of the country abandoned.”

The upsurge in violence has driven internal displacement to over 500,000 people for the first time since 2014. Almost as many continue to live as refugees in the neighbouring countries. More than one in five Central African families has been uprooted from their home.

“This new escalation comes at a time when communities in the Central African Republic are in dire need of recovery and reconstruction. Addressing the escalating crisis requires a strong engagement by all partners,” said Ms. Rochdi. “This is not the time to let the people of the Central African Republic down. This is not the time to give up on peace.”

The new emergencies escalate the already immense needs for sustained humanitarian assistance which stem from a four-year long crisis compounded by the lack of infrastructure and development across the country.

In the Central African Republic today, nearly one in two depends on humanitarian aid to survive, a proportion amongst the highest in the world. Almost half of the population is facing food insecurity. The US\$399.5 million humanitarian response plan for 2017 has so far received only 25 per cent of the funds.

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