

25 November 2016

Note to Correspondents: Statement by Adama Dieng, UN Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide on the situation in the Central African Republic

(New York, 25 November 2016) The United Nations Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide, Adama Dieng expressed deep concern over a new outbreak of violence in the Central African Republic, in which civilians are being targeted based on their ethnicity or religion. Since 21 November 2016, some 85 civilians have reportedly been killed, 76 wounded and nearly 11,000 persons have been displaced from the town of Bria, Haute Kotto prefecture, as a result of clashes between two armed groups, the Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de la Centrafrique (FPRC) and the Union pour la paix en Centrafrique (UPC).

The FPRC reportedly singled out ethnic Fulani in the town of Bria, carrying out house-to-house searches, killing, looting and abducting residents. The FPRC also occupied hospital buildings, preventing wounded Fulani from receiving medical treatment.

Peacekeepers deployed by the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to Bria later took control of the hospital and reinforced measures to protect civilians. The United Nations Secretary-General's Representative in the Central African Republic travelled to Bria on 24 November with representatives of the United Nations Country Team, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States and called for an immediate end to the violence.

Clashes between opposing factions of the ex-Seleka armed group were also reported in Bambari, Ouaka prefecture. The Secretary-General's Deputy Representative in the Central African Republic, who went to Bambari on 25 November with the United States and the African Union ambassadors, called an immediate cessation of hostilities.

The Special Adviser condemned this new outbreak of violence and the risk that it could result in reprisal attacks and rapidly escalate. "Given the country's recent history, this kind of targeted violence is extremely dangerous and must be stopped", he said.

The Special Adviser reminds the Government of the Central African Republic of its responsibility to protect its populations, whatever their ethnicity or political affiliation. He called for an immediate end to the hostilities and urged the national authorities to take urgent measures to protect the population from further violence.

Stressing the importance of the fight against impunity in the Central African Republic, Special Adviser Dieng calls for full investigations into these allegations of targeted killings to ensure that those responsible are held accountable. He stressed that "If carried out in a widespread or systematic manner, such acts could constitute crimes under international law that can be prosecuted before national or international courts."

The Special Adviser welcomes progress towards the establishment of the Special Criminal Court in the Central African Republic, which will investigate serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the Central African Republic, including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity since 2003.

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For media queries please contact:

Martine Nouma

Office on Genocide Prevention and the Responsibility to Protect

<http://www.un.org/en/preventgenocide/adviser/>

Phone: +1 917-367-4961 Email: nouma@un.org