

UN, international organizations condemn attacks on civilians in parts of Central African Republic

19 February 2017 – Voicing deep concern over the security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR), in particular in the Ouaka and Haute-Kotto prefectures, the United Nations together with the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), the African Union (AU), the Organization of La Francophonie (IOF) and the European Union (EU) have commended the acts of violence that have exasperated an already alarming humanitarian situation.

According to a joint statement issued by the five organizations, violence perpetrated by the *Front populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique* and its allies, as well as *Mouvement pour l'Unité et la Paix en Centrafrique* caused heavy civilian casualties as well as significant population displacement, adding to the humanitarian woes in the region.

Demanding that the belligerents cease the hostilities immediately, the organizations emphasized that all attacks against the civilian population, UN and humanitarian personnel may be subject to judicial prosecution, in line with the [national] legislation and international law.

They also expressed their deep appreciation for robust action undertaken by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the CAR, popularly known by its French acronym MINUSCA to protect civilians and help put an end to violence in the areas threatened by the belligerents and encouraged the mission to continue its efforts.

REALTED: Central African Republic: UN mission reinforces presence in restive Bambari

In the joint statement, the organizations also welcomed the measures put in place for the operationalization of the Special Criminal Court.

They also underlined that only dialogue, in strict adherence with the constitutional and democratic order, will allow the concerned Central African actors to find the appropriate and sustainable responses to their legitimate grievances.

In this regard, they reiterate the importance of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation led by the AU, ECCAS and the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) and supported by Angola, the Republic of Congo and Chad, noted the joint statement.

In addition, expressing their commitment to work together for the success of the Initiative, in support of the efforts of President Faustin-Archange Touadéra aimed at sustainably promoting reconciliation and inclusive

governance in line with the conclusions of the Bangui Forum, the five partner organizations underscored that those armed groups that engage in new violent acts run the risk of excluding themselves from the African Initiative and expose themselves to additional international sanctions.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013. Despite significant progress and successful elections, CAR has remained in the grip of instability and sporadic unrest.

[At Munich Security Conference, UN chief Guterres highlights need for ‘a surge in diplomacy for peace’](#)

18 February 2017 – Highlighting the complex and interlinked challenges confronting the global community that also compound the suffering of the most vulnerable, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres called for a boost in preventive diplomacy and mediation efforts, as well as for a strategy to address root causes of such conflicts in the world.

“There are things that are obvious: the alignment of the sustainable and inclusive development with the sustaining peace agenda,” said Mr. Guterres in his remarks to the Munich Security Conference, noting also their importance in preventing conflicts.

He also drew attention to the need to address the fragility of states and to support states, institutions and civil societies to become stronger and more resilient to diminish the tendency for states to be involved in conflict situations.

Noting the centrality of climate change and strain on resources in increasing the probability of conflicts and dramatic humanitarian crises, Secretary-General Guterres called on the international community to rally behind the Paris Agreement on climate change as well as to focus attention on population growth, especially in Africa.

“And for me, a key condition to address it is the combination of education and the empowerment of women and girls,” he said, noting: “This is probably the best way to be able to address the problems of excessive population growth that is impacting dramatically in some parts of the world.”

Further in his remarks, the UN chief noted the need for strengthened global multilateralism and the need for responsive reform to enhance confidence and

capacity of multilateral institutions to better respond to global challenges and to meet the expectations of the world's peoples.

In the case of the UN, the Secretary-General noted that the organization has been engaged in reforms to its peace and security strategy, operational setup and architecture; its development system; and its management.

RELATED: UN chief Guterres announces steps towards reforming Organization's peace and security architecture

Also in his address, Mr. Guterres noted that while the world prepares for responding to the crises it faces today, it is equally important to consider that the problems of peace and security in the future will have new dimensions for which we need to be prepared.

Noting the already existing challenges related to cyberspace and lack of instruments to address those, Mr. Guterres highlighted that developing a capacity of analysis, discussion, and to be able to think about models of governance for new areas of scientific and technological development, such as artificial and intelligence genetic engineering will be crucial in the near future.

"I believe that when people will meet herein 10 or 20 years' time in Munich, we will probably be discussing other things in relation to the priorities of today, but I hope we don't get to those discussions too late and [having done] too little," he said.

Iraq: UN aid agencies preparing for 'all scenarios' as western Mosul military operations set to begin

18 February 2017 – With military operations to retake western Mosul starting, United Nations humanitarian agencies in Iraq are rushing to prepare for the humanitarian impact of the fighting amid grave concerns that tens of thousands of families are at extreme risks.

According to the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the country, food and fuel supplies are dwindling, markets and shops have closed, running water is scarce and electricity in many neighborhoods is either intermittent or cut off.

"The situation is distressing. People, right now, are in trouble. We are hearing reports of parents struggling to feed their children and to heat their homes," said Lise Grande, Humanitarian Coordinator for Iraq.

According to estimates, between 750,000 and 800,000 civilians reside in the western section of Mosul.

However, few if any commercial supplies have reached the city in the past three months since the main road to Syria was cut-off.

Sources in the city also reported that nearly half of all food shops have closed and bakeries throughout the area have run out of fuel and many can no longer afford to purchase costly flour.

RELATED: UN fears new wave of displacement as fighting escalates in Mosul and Hawiga

Prices of fuel such as kerosene and cooking gas have skyrocketed and many of the most destitute families are burning wood, furniture, plastic or garbage for cooking and heating.

Families, children face critical shortage of drinking water, do not have enough to eat

According to the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) and the UN World Food Programme (WFP) there are critical shortages of food and safe drinking water.

Three out of five people now depend on untreated water
UNICEF Representative in Iraq Peter Hawkins

"Three out of five people now depend on untreated water from wells for cooking and drinking as water systems and treatment plants have been damaged by fighting or run out of chlorine," said Peter Hawkins, UNICEF Representative in Iraq.

"Food prices in western Mosul are almost double than in eastern Mosul," added Sally Haydock, the WFP Representative in the country, noting that many families do not have enough to eat.

Preparing to aid as many as 400,000 fleeing civilians

According to OCHA, UN and humanitarian partners are rushing to prepare for the humanitarian impact of the military operation.

"We don't know what will happen during the military campaign but we have to be ready for all scenarios. Tens of thousands of people may flee or be forced to leave the city. Hundreds of thousands of civilians might be trapped – maybe for weeks, maybe for months," said Ms. Grande.

Emergency sites are being constructed south of the city and stocks of life-saving supplies are being pre-positioned for the 250,000-400,000 civilians who may flee.

"Protecting civilians is the highest priority in a situation like this – nothing is more important [...] The battle hasn't started but already there is a humanitarian crisis," the UN humanitarian official added.

Germany is symbol of tolerance and hospitality for those in need of protection – UN chief Guterres

17 February 2017 – Speaking to the media in Munich, United Nations Secretary-General António Guterres hailed the important role Germany has played at a number of multilateral institutions, including the European Union and the United Nations.

“Germany has been extremely active in all aspects in which the international community needs to come together to face the dramatic challenges that are threatening our daily lives,” said Mr. Guterres at a press encounter alongside German Chancellor Angela Merkel.

He further noted that in a world where diversity is perceived as a threat and not a richness and where so many populist, xenophobic demonstrations exist, Germany and Chancellor Merkel had been a symbol of “tolerance” and “hospitality” for people displaced from their homes and who are in need of protection.

“A symbol I would like to see followed in many, many other parts of the world in order for us to be able to respond to the dramatic suffering that we are witnessing because of the terrible conflicts that have spread around the world,” the UN chief added.

“So, in this moment, I would like to say that I am sure that the cooperation that, as Secretary-General, I will have with Germany and its Government will be as solid, as positive, as deep and as successful as the cooperation we had when, as High Commissioner for Refugees, I could be fully in support of the German policy for the protection of refugees.”

In his remarks, Mr. Guterres also underlined the need for global responses to global challenges such as complex and interlinked conflicts, rising terrorism, impact of climate change and enormous movements of people and migration.

He further emphasized the importance of multilateralism and for countries to come together and to use multilateral institutions, in a spirit of solidarity, to overcome the obstacles of today’s world.

Iraq: UN condemns car bomb attack in Baghdad

17 February 2017 – The United Nations today condemned the deadly terrorist attack in the Iraqi capital, Baghdad, for which the Islamic State of Iraq and the Levant (ISIL/Da'esh) has claimed responsibility.

“We condemn the terrorist attack in the south of Baghdad [...] This week has seen a series of such atrocious crimes in the Iraqi capital,” said the statement issued by the spokesperson for UN Secretary-General António Guterres.

“The United Nations will continue to stand by the Government and people of Iraq in their efforts to fight terrorism and violent extremism, notably by building trust and mutual understanding through peaceful and inclusive,” the statement added.

Meanwhile, the UN envoy in Iraq also strongly condemned yesterday's car bomb attack in the Bayaa district of Baghdad, which, according to news reports, left more than 50 people dead.

“Yet again, the terrorists are continuing with their carnage against innocent civilians. This is totally unacceptable,” said the Secretary-General's Special Representative for Iraq, Ján Kubiš.

“The Iraqi people have shown their courage and determination in the fight against terrorism, and these desperate tactics by the terrorists will only increase the resolve of Iraqis, who want to live in peace and tranquility to terminate the so-called ISIL throughout the country,” Mr. Kubiš added.