

UN refugee agency 'extremely worried' about renewed violence in Central African Republic

30 June 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency has voiced concern over a flow of people fleeing renewed violence in some parts of the Central African Republic, a country that has already seen a half million people internally displaced and another half million taking refuge in neighbouring countries.

The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)) is extremely worried over the resurgence of violence being seen in parts of the Central African Republic, [said](#) UNHCR spokesperson Andrej Mahecic at today's press briefing in Geneva.

He said renewed violence has erupted in the towns of Zemio, Bria and Kaga Bandaro in southern and northern CAR as clashes are reported between self-defence groups and other armed groups. Civilians and humanitarian workers are also being targeted.

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. Violence in CAR has uprooted some 503,600 people inside the country, including more than 100,000 in 2017, and more than 484,000 have been registered as refugees in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Chad and the Republic of Congo.

Mr. Mahecic noted that in Zemio, close to the border with the DRC, UNHCR workers have reported intense heavy weapons fire since Tuesday. Some houses close to UNHCR's office were burnt down. Over 1,000 people have fled their homes. Many are seeking refuge in a Catholic church in the town, while some 66 people have sought safety in the UNHCR compound among them terrified women and children in fear of their lives, he added.

In the town of Bria, several hundred kilometres northeast of the capital, Bangui, clashes were reported on June 20 that continued for three consecutive days, he said.

Reports suggest a camp hosting some 2,400 internally displaced people in the Ndourou IV district is now completely empty with its whole population having fled the recent attacks.

Indiscriminate attacks in Bria have left some 136 people dead and 36 wounded, with 600 houses burned and an additional 180 looted.

In a separate incident, unidentified armed men tried to break into UNHCR accommodation in Kaga Bandaro in the north of the country on Wednesday night with the intention of attacking staff and looting belongings. The attack was thwarted by the UN peacekeeping forces there.

UNHCR teams were able to distribute relief items including plastic sheets, blankets, mats, mosquito nets, kitchen sets, buckets and soap to more than 5000 households in accessible parts of Bria over the past three weeks – despite the fragile security situation.

UNHCR renews its call on all parties to the conflict in the area to immediately end attacks against civilians and aid workers. UNHCR is also seeking immediate and unhindered humanitarian access to assist those affected by the recent wave of violence, Mr. Mahecic said.