

**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: 170,000 PEOPLE DISPLACED
BY ARMED VIOLENCE IN THE NORTH-WEST**

(Bossangoa/Bangui, 24 September 2013): More than 170,000 people, half of them children, have fled from their homes over the past two weeks in Ouham province in northwest Central African Republic following clashes between former Séléka rebels, self-defense groups and unidentified armed groups.

The clashes began on 7 September in Bossangoa town and have since spread throughout the province. Villages across the province have been emptied of people and several have been razed to the ground by armed groups.

Over 36,000 of the newly displaced have sought refuge inside the compound of the Bossangoa Catholic Church and at a local school. Others have sought refuge in the bush and are in urgent need of humanitarian relief.

On 19-21 September, a UN-led humanitarian mission visited Bossangoa for the first time since March to assess the situation and the needs of the internally displaced people (IDPs).

“The clashes have instilled a deeply rooted fear and mistrust among the entire population. Since our arrival in Bossangoa, we have had incidents of violence reported every day, including the loss of life,” said Amy Martin, Head of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in CAR.

“Civilians are caught in the middle of the fighting and are at the mercy of anyone with a gun. All armed actors should cease hostilities and respect the rights of the civilian population. They must also create conditions for the prompt delivery of humanitarian assistance,” Ms. Martin said.

The UN will maintain a presence in Bossangoa, providing support to people who are urgently in need of clean water, shelter and household items, as well as food. UN agencies left Bossangoa because of insecurity in March 2013, when Séléka rebels seized the town

Since the beginning of the Séléka offensive in December 2012, people throughout CAR have fled their homes for safety. The entire population of 4.6 million, half of them children, is affected by this crisis. As of 24 September, there were 394,900 IDPs in CAR and nearly 61,000 Central Africans have sought refuge in neighbouring countries. NGOs have provided life-saving assistance to the population throughout the crisis in CAR.

Only 37 per cent of the US\$195 million requested by the humanitarian appeal for CAR has been raised and additional funding is urgently needed.

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