

HUMANITARIAN ACCESS ENDANGERED IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Bangui, 4 May 2017 – The outbreak of violence that characterized the first quarter of the year 2017 in the Central African Republic is directly affecting humanitarian actors. During the first quarter of the year, 33 incidents targeting humanitarians were recorded across the country. This figure places the Central African Republic among the high-risk countries for humanitarian aid.

Moreover, since March 2017, solely in the Prefecture of Ouham, Northern CAR, 16 attacks against humanitarians have been reported. Faced with this targeted violence, four major humanitarian organizations have decided to temporarily suspend their activities in areas where threats imposed to them have reached a climax. Their staff will be redeployed to Bangui until their security and safety is assured. At the same time, other organizations have decided to strictly reduce their presence to life-saving activities. They do not, however, exclude withdrawing completely if attacks against them were to persist.

Violence against humanitarians is worrisome in several aspects. The very temporary suspension of humanitarian activities will certainly have a negative impact on the living conditions of those who depend on this aid. In the same vein, permanent withdrawal would increase the vulnerability of those whose survival depends exclusively on humanitarian aid. "This withdrawal constitutes a setback in humanitarian access for the Central African Republic, as it places in the disarray of people who have already repeatedly suffered violence and have experienced successive displacements," said the Humanitarian Coordinator, ai, Michel Yao. "I condemn these acts with in the strongest terms, reminding that in the CAR half of the population is dependent on humanitarian aid, given the difficulty of restoring vital basic services. Suspending this aid would jeopardize social stability and threaten the fragile resilience of the communities", he said.

Michel Yao also recalled that the Central African Republic is still going through a humanitarian crisis. The activities of armed groups should not in any way prevent humanitarian partners from accessing vulnerable populations and vice versa.

These attacks occur in a context marked by acute underfunding of humanitarian action. The humanitarian community alongside the Central African authorities have undertaken intense advocacy to alert donors to the growing needs while resources remain meager. To date, the Humanitarian Response Plan of \$ 399.5 million is only funded at 11%.

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