

PRESS RELEASE

THE HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR CONDEMNS THE INTRUSION OF ARMED GROUPS INTO BAMBARI HOSPITAL

Bangui, 9 June 2018 – The Humanitarian Coordinator in the Central African Republic, Najat Rochdi, condemns with utmost gravity the intrusion of armed groups elements into the Regional Hospital of Bambari premises (in the center of the country) as well as threats made against the medical staff and patients on June 7th. The Humanitarian Coordinator recalls that “in accordance with the principle of humanity and impartiality, health care is granted to all patients regardless of their social, economic, religious or ethnic background. Stigma and threatening patients according to these characteristics is inhuman and unworthy”.

“These acts constitute an outrageous violation of international humanitarian law (IHL), which establishes the protection of civilian hospitals,” said Najat Rochdi. Indeed, “civilian hospitals organized to give care to the wounded and sick, the infirm and maternity cases, may in no circumstances be the object of attack but shall at all times be respected and protected by the Parties to the conflict”.

“I hold these armed groups directly responsible for this intrusion for any medical complications and life-threatening conditions of patients. I call upon the perpetrators of these acts to put the interest of the population above their differences”, emphasized Najat Rochdi. According to preliminary estimates, since this incident, some 30 vulnerable patients have been removed from their hospital beds by their relatives, depriving them of medical care. “I also invite the perpetrators to respect IHL and to ensure their elements comply with it,” she added.

This new incident constitutes an additional challenge for humanitarian action in Bambari, particularly for medical assistance. The looting of nine humanitarian organizations as well as the National Refugee Commission (CNR) during the month of May, has significantly reduced humanitarian activities in the city. “The population is once again ‘held hostage’ by the impact of clashes between armed groups since May 14. Populations are being cut off from the assistance they are so much need in for” deplored the Humanitarian Coordinator.

Najat Rochdi expresses “her deep concern over the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic and the threats to humanitarian actors as well as their properties and facilities”. These acts of violence must end.

For more information, please contact OCHA CAR
Joseph Inganji, Head of Office, +236 70738730, inganji@un.org
Yaye Nabo Sène, Chief, Public Information + 236 70 08 75 65, seney@un.org
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