

**HUMANITARIAN COORDINATOR IN CAR ABDOU DIENG CALLS FOR URGENT
SCALE UP OF SECURITY OF MUSLIMS TRAPPED IN BANGUI,**

Bangui, 21 February 2014: The Humanitarian Coordinator in the Central African Republic, Mr. Abdou Dieng, visited the PK 12 neighborhood of the capital Bangui today and urged for an immediate scale up of security measures in order provide better protection to some 3,000 members of the Muslim community who have been trapped there for two months.

Fleeing attacks by anti-Balaka militias, this community, a majority of old people and children, have settled in the open air along the main road north of Bangui. “Their situation is appalling. People are being killed purposefully, targeted for their religious beliefs. Every night brings more violence and deaths amongst this community”, says Mr. Dieng. We need to do much more to protect them if we don’t want to have the deaths of these men, women and children on our conscience.”

International troops are present at the site, but are insufficient in number to ensure the safety of the trapped population; Anti-Balaka groups have used human shields to prevent the African Union Force from intervening on several occasions. On average, two people are admitted every day to the community hospital to be treated for bullet or other wounds.

Sanitary conditions have deteriorated significantly and food is running low as people are too afraid to leave the enclave to go to the market nearby. Health and nutrition needs are also acute. Family members have been separated when trying to climb on trucks leaving for Chad in a desperate attempt to leave PK12, with the result that children have been left behind without their parents.

« These people want to leave this place they call « hell », added the Humanitarian Coordinator who spoke with the elders as well as the Imam of the community. We need to evacuate them as soon as possible to a safe location where families can be reunited and live without fearing for their lives. »

On 20 February, the Chadian Government announced the end of the repatriation of its nationals and Muslim Central Africans. More than 72,000 people have fled to Chad since violence erupted on 5 December. In the past week the last convoys leaving CAR have been attacked along the route to the border. At least 40 people have died and many more have been wounded.

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