



Civil Society Calls for a way out of the crisis in the Central African Republic

On the occasion of the high level meeting on CAR which is occurring in the wings of the UN General Assembly this Wednesday 25th of September, a CAR Civil Society delegation present in New York has called for all of the Heads of State and governments and in particular the UN Security Council members as well as the UN Secretary General (see the call below).

During its advocacy mission in New York (September 23rd -26th, 2013), the delegation managed to meet the diplomatic missions of the US, France, Rwanda, Australia, among others, along with some EU representatives, UN agencies and NGOs. The delegation is supported by CCFD-Terre Solidaire, Secours Catholique-Caritas France and ACORD. The delegation has been accompanied by Zobel Behalal, the Peace and Conflict Advocacy Officer of CCFD-Terre Solidaire and Joseph Donnelly, Head of CARITAS Internationalis delegation to the United Nations.

Here is the text of the call:

A Call for a way out of the crises in CAR

Fortunately the current crisis in Central Africa Republic (CAR) is receiving more and more attention from the international community. In addition to many security challenges, the humanitarian challenges have to be resolved as soon as possible in order to preserve the country and all its regions from implosion. As actors within the civil society and religious community, we are calling the States and governments gathered this week in New York to adopt the recommendations below:

1. On the security issue

The current mechanisms in place to restore safety have shown their limits. For multiple reasons, Central Africa security forces have not succeeded in ensuring that civil society has been protected from abuses and atrocities committed by the *Séléka* group. Therefore, we need:

- To reinforce the mandate of the MISCA/AFISM-CAR by allowing it to be moved to Chapter VII of the UN chart;
- To provide logistical and financial support for the deployment of MISCA/AFISM-CAR all over the territory;
- To work on the enlargement of the MISCA/AFISM-CAR by the participation of military forces from other African countries;
- To develop a Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) concerted policy to repatriate foreign mercenaries in CAR territories and to assist with reinsertion nationals in the socioeconomic fabric;
- To implement a strategy for meaningful security reform.

2. On human rights and the fight against impunity

Over the last 10 years, the situation of human rights has not improved and has in fact, worsened considerably. The authors of abuses and atrocities who are made up of the different protagonists in the conflict cannot stay unpunished if we want to bring peace. Therefore, we ask for:

- The implementation of an international commission of inquiry to establish the responsibilities in the violations of human rights from 2003 to 2013;
- The reinforcement of the joint commission of inquiry by giving logistical resources and technical assistance;
- The reinforcement of the rule of law.

3. On the humanitarian issue

The intensification of the crisis the last past months has worsen the humanitarian situation. The number of displaced people continues to increase. In constant fear for their lives, humanitarian staff have also departed the country. We request:

- Securing measures for the humanitarian corridors and staff;
- Return assistance for displaced persons and refugees;

- Particular attention to the reconstitution of the populations' production tools especially in the agropastoral arena.

4. On the economical issue of the conflict

Séléka rebels control the diamond exploration sites as well as other natural resources. They have used the trade income from these resources to fund the last coup. We therefore need to go further than the basic CAR suspension of the Kimberley processes by:

- Facilitating a detailed cartography of the rebel groups' presence within and adjacent to the sites of known natural resources (diamonds, gold, etc.);
- Empowering MISCA/AFISM-CAR to secure the natural resources sites, as necessary;
- Facilitating sub-regional cooperation in order to prevent the natural resources which fund these acts of violence from reaching international markets.

5. On the Involvement of civil society

Over the past few months, we have noticed worrying signs, which indicate that the risk of a confrontation between Christian and Muslim communities is escalating. The civil society and religious leaders are particularly active in the preservation of the *"live together"* concept, which is becoming increasingly threatened in CAR. Therefore, we ask that:

- These agencies are recognized and reinforced in their capacities to engender peaceful coexistence
- They are assisted with the processes of reconciliation and reconstruction

It is hard to see how the return to sustainable peace in CAR will be achieved without the participation of civil society. There would be danger in consulting only with political and military forces without the participation of peaceful and non-aligned organisations.

Written in New York, on 24th September, 2013

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