

AGENDA ITEM 10

THE SITUATION IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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ORGANISATION: JUBILEE CAMPAIGN

Thank you Mr President.

Jubilee Campaign together with Christian Solidarity Worldwide welcomes the Independent Expert's report and her work in highlighting human rights development in the CAR over the last 12 months.

While the CAR has returned to democratic rule with relatively few incidents of violence, the security situation remains problematic.

The situation outside of the capital remains volatile, with the Seleka militia controlling significant parts of the north and the anti-Balaka militias, the south-west. On 16 September there were reports of an anti-Balaka attack on a Seleka stronghold in Kaga Bandoro, 350km north of Bangui. Ten people were reportedly killed in the fighting – the majority of whom were civilians.¹ The Seleka moved from house to house, looting and damaging property. The premises of humanitarian organisations were destroyed along with one Bible school in the area, forcing students to flee. The attack led to the mass displacement of villagers and sparked violence in other parts of the country.

¹ Email briefing 18 September 2016

We are also concerned by the targeting of religious communities. The Seleka continues to severely restrict freedom of movement in areas under its control. Civilians are required to pay taxes in order to move freely. While the requirement is applied equally to all citizens, Christian and animist communities are predominantly affected as they often lack the financial resources to pay the exploitative taxes. We are concerned about the disproportionate impact on these communities and its potential to further undermine relations between religious groups. These reports underscore the importance of the government re-establishing control in every area of the country.

We commend the work of the three religious leaders who established the interfaith peace platform, and of all other religious and community leaders who support their work. While we welcome the work of the international community in support of local peace building projects, we emphasise the need to establish the Special Criminal Court and complementary justice mechanisms to hold perpetrators of human rights violations to account. We call on the Independent Expert to pay particular attention to religiously-motivated discrimination or acts of violence committed against any of the country's religious groups, and to make specific recommendations to the government of CAR and the international community for addressing them.

Thank you Mr President.

