Joint Statement on the Central African Republic

by Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos, and European Union Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response Kristalina Georgieva

(New York/Brussels, 18 July 2014) We are deeply concerned about reports of alarming levels of violence in Bambari and elsewhere in the Central African Republic, including several cases in which armed groups deliberately targeted camps sheltering people who have fled their homes.

In one recent incident, armed groups attacked a religious site hosting 10,000 displaced people in Bambari on 7 July, killing at least 26 people and injuring 35. This followed weeks of escalating violence in and around Bambari. Hospitals in the area were overwhelmed with people who need treatment for gunshot and machete wounds.

We call on all parties to the conflict, and on those who may have influence over them, to end attacks on civilians, schools, hospitals, religious sites and humanitarian aid workers. These attacks are intolerable violations of international law and the perpetrators must be held accountable.

International forces from the African Union-led MISCA, the French Sangaris operation and the European EUFOR are playing an indispensable role in protecting civilians, where those forces are deployed. Insecurity continues seriously to hinder the deployment of humanitarian aid workers from UN agencies and NGOs and the delivery of assistance, depriving hundreds of thousands of people of lifesaving relief.

Some 2.5 million Central Africans need assistance. More than half a million people, mainly women and children, have fled their homes and are living in temporary shelters, sometimes deep in the forest or in sites where they are at risk of attack. Waves of hungry, sick and exhausted refugees and returnees are arriving in neighbouring countries, putting a strain on host communities and creating a regional crisis.

Much has been done, but it is not nearly enough. We ask all EU and UN Member States to maintain and step up their efforts, both on the security side and by finding new funding streams for humanitarian operations inside CAR and in neighbouring countries. Central Africans are surviving without the most vital necessities including food, medicines and clean water, and many are living in fear for their lives. We must stand with them and show them they are not alone.

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