

Catherine Ashton

High Representative of the Union for
Foreign Affairs and Security Policy
Vice President of the European Commission

**AMNESTY
INTERNATIONAL**



European Institutions Office

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EU MUST ACT TO END GRAVE HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS IN CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Dear Baroness Ashton,

Today, the European Union is challenged to respond to the grave human rights crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR). Already ongoing for several decades, this humanitarian and human rights crisis has further degenerated since the Seleka offensive in December 2012. The EU has demonstrated sustained engagement in crisis response in CAR, including Commissioner Georgieva's two visits in 2013, a €10 million stabilisation programme under the Instrument for Stability, €20 million in humanitarian aid and support to the peace operation MICOPAX. The EU has a key role to play in CAR and must urgently step up its response to the ongoing crisis.

Amnesty International's latest report, [*Central African Republic: Human Rights Crisis Spiralling Out of Control*](#), documents widespread human rights violations including summary executions, torture, indiscriminate shelling, rape, and forced conscription of children. Recent human rights violations have been characterised by religious divisions, while Human Rights Defenders (HRDs) and humanitarian workers have increasingly been attacked.

This volatile situation has exacerbated a humanitarian crisis. Hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced and more than 60,000 have fled to neighbouring countries. CAR's conflict risks spilling over to neighbouring countries, most of which are already unstable and affected by their own human rights crises.

The Foreign Affairs Council's conclusions of 21 October, the European Parliament resolution of 12 September, and your previous statements on the CAR crisis have already highlighted the urgency of the human rights and humanitarian situation. **We urge the EU and EU member states to reinforce their ongoing engagement in CAR and to use their influence to ensure all parties fulfil their obligations under international human rights and humanitarian law by:**

- Working in coordination with the United Nations, the African Union and the Economic Community of Central African States toward immediate, concrete measures to end abuses and establish law and order. Amnesty International strongly recommends that a CAR crisis coordination office be set up in country.
- Urging the CAR authorities to respect and promote human rights, investigating and prosecuting human rights violations, including extra-judicial executions, sexual violence, torture, and the use of child soldiers.
- Calling on all armed groups to respect civilian populations and to enable humanitarian access, in line with EU guidelines on International Humanitarian Law.
- Reinforcing support to local civil society in its work to prevent human rights violations and providing adequate resources for care of those affected by abuses such as sexual violence or child recruitment, until they can attain full recovery. The EU has a key role to protect and support HRDs and should ensure capacity building and strong political backing for Central African civil society in line with EU guidelines on HRDs.

We look forward to your response and stand ready to provide any further information you may require.

Yours sincerely,

Dr Nicolas J. Beger
Director

Cc:

Nicolas Westcott, Managing Director for Africa, EEAS

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Thomas Wiersing, Head of Division, Central and Horn of Africa, EEAS

Jean-Pierre Reymondet-Commoy, Head of EU Delegation in the Central African Republic, EEAS

Kristalina Georgieva, European Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response

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