

Human Rights Council – 25th session (3-28 March 2014)

Statement by Ireland during Interactive Dialogue with the Special Rapporteur on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic

26 March 2014

Mr. President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union.

Ireland welcomes the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic, Ms. Keita Bocoum, and thanks her for her presentation today.

Ireland, along with our EU partners, remains gravely concerned by the appalling levels of violence in the Central African Republic. We are deeply alarmed by the report of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights Navi Pillay following her visit to CAR earlier this month which highlighted ongoing horrifying levels of inter-communal hatred manifested in gross human rights violations including summary executions, acts of torture, sexual violence, mutilations and enforced disappearances. Ireland condemns these large-scale human rights violations, in particular those perpetrated against children. We call on all parties to refrain from the deplorable practice of recruiting and using children in armed groups.

The humanitarian situation throughout CAR continues to be critical with reports of only 20 percent of humanitarian requirements met so far. As outlined by the High Commissioner, the international response to the crisis has been far from commensurate with needs. As a result, many areas of the country remain inaccessible to humanitarian agencies to provide the urgent life-saving assistance needed and to human rights organisations which have been courageously attempting to document human rights violations.

Ireland is longstanding donor to the Central African Republic, having provided €14 million to UN-administered Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF) for CAR since 2008, including €2 million provided last month. We call on the

international community to strengthen its commitment to ensuring provision of the vital humanitarian assistance needed. We further call on all parties to the conflict to ensure immediate, safe and unhindered access to humanitarian and human rights organisations. This is essential to ensure that those affected or displaced by this conflict can vindicate their basic human rights: to food, to shelter, to water and sanitation, and to health.

The commitment of the international community must also extend beyond addressing its immediate emergency needs however. We must address the urgent need to restore law and order and assist in enabling the people of CAR to address the underlying causes of the crisis.

Immediate action is also required to tackle the culture of impunity and to prevent any further deterioration of human rights. Bringing those responsible to justice is a vital step towards reconciling the communities and encouraging internally displaced citizens to return to their homes

As highlighted by the recent report of the High Commissioner, there is a fundamental need to restore law and order in CAR. We would therefore like to ask the Independent Expert her views on the next steps required by actors in CAR and by the international community to restore law and order and bring about reconciliation between the religious groups?