

Human Rights Council – 26th session

Statement by Ireland during interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in the Central African Republic

24 June 2014

Ireland welcomes the Independent Expert, Ms. Keita Bocoum, and thanks her for her presentation today.

Ireland fully aligns itself with the statement of the European Union. Ireland remains extremely concerned by the terrible violence in the Central African Republic and shares the Independent Expert's concerns that, although the number of fatalities has fallen, extreme violence continues to devastate communities.

Ireland would like to highlight the dangerously divisive effect that this extreme and ongoing violence is having upon the social fabric of the country. We are deeply concerned about the plight of the most vulnerable communities and the ongoing attacks on former 'safe havens', such as places of worship and hospital facilities. We note that communities are unable to freely access basic provisions without fear of attacks. Furthermore, Ms Bocoum's report that those seeking refuge in bordering countries are often unable to leave the Central African Republic safely is deeply troubling.

Ireland notes with concern the continued effect of the violence on children and the situation of those children separated from their families as a result of the conflict. The worsening situation across the country, including in Bangui, is forcing increasing numbers of people to leave their homes. There are now more than half a million internally displaced persons, at least half of whom are

children. Another 347,000 people – two thirds of them children – have fled the country and now live as refugees. It is imperative that all parties refrain from the deplorable practice of recruiting and using children in armed groups and that negotiations intensify to secure their immediate release and to reintegrate them within their communities when possible.

Ireland also condemns in the strongest possible terms recent attacks on humanitarian personnel as they seek to deliver crucial assistance to the most vulnerable populations. It is vital that all parties respect International Humanitarian Law and that humanitarian access is provided to UN agencies and civil society working in CAR.

We support the Independent Expert's findings that weakness of the judicial system is an obstacle to justice, accountability and the fight against impunity. We call on the international community to work closely with the transitional authorities to restore the impartiality and independence of the judiciary, including through the provision of further technical assistance to the police and the courts.

We would like to ask the Independent Expert her views on how the international community can best support the transitional authorities in effectively fighting against impunity? We note with interest the references in the report to the development of local initiatives to support intercommunity reconciliation in Bangassou and the third district of Bangui – to what extent do these local initiatives offer a model which could be replicated elsewhere in the country?