

ICC Prosecutor voices concern about ongoing serious crimes in Central African Republic
By UN News Centre
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A burnt village on the road to Bocaranga, northwest CAR. Photo: UK Department for International Development (DFID)/Simon Davis

7 August 2013 – The prosecutor of the world’s first permanent court set up to try those accused of genocide and war crimes today voiced her deep concern about the worsening security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) and reports of serious crimes being committed there.

“My office will do its part in investigating and prosecuting those most responsible for the commission of serious crimes, if necessary,” Fatou Bensouda, Prosecutor for the International Criminal Court ([ICC](#)), said in a [statement](#).

The CAR – which has been marked by decades of instability and fighting – witnessed a resumption of violence last December when the Séléka rebel coalition launched a series of attacks. A peace agreement was reached in January, but the rebels again seized the capital, Bangui, in March, forcing President François Bozizé to flee.

The recent fighting has further eroded even the most basic services in the country and exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation that UN humanitarian officials have said affects the entire population of 4.6 million people, half of whom are children.

“My office calls upon the international community to assist the Government of CAR in improving the security situation and in protecting civilians in Bangui and throughout the country,” Ms. Bensouda stated.

She noted that the findings of a recent mission carried out by the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights ([OHCHR](#)) “seem to confirm that crimes that may fall under the jurisdiction of the

International Criminal Court continue to be committed in CAR, including attacks against civilians, murder, rape, and recruitment of child soldiers.”

Assistant Secretary-General for Human Rights Ivan Ā imonovic said last week, at the end of his visit to the country, that “there is no police, no justice system and no social services” beyond Bangui. “Security is virtually non-existent and people live in constant fear,” he added.

Ms. Bensouda said the upcoming meeting of the Security Council, scheduled for 14 August, is an occasion for governments to show support and demonstrate that CAR has not been forgotten by the international community.

Located in The Hague, in the Netherlands, the ICC tries persons accused of the most serious crimes of international concern – namely genocide, crimes against humanity and war crimes – if national authorities with jurisdiction are unwilling or unable to do so genuinely.

The CAR is one of eight situations currently under investigation by the ICC. The others are the Darfur region of Sudan, Côte d’Ivoire, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Kenya, Libya, Mali and northern Uganda.

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