

# **AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL MEDIA ADVISORY**

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## **Urgent need for increase in peacekeeping troops as CAR President steps down**

The resignation of the Central African Republic's interim President, Michel Djotodia, risks exacerbating the risk to civilian lives, and indicates the urgent need for increased peacekeeping forces in the country, Amnesty International said today.

The African Union's failure to fulfil its promise to deploy a full contingent of peacekeeping forces to the country means the size of the peacekeeping force is insufficient to protect a highly vulnerable population.

"More than a month after the UN vote there are still fewer than 4,000 African Union troops, in addition to the 1,200 French troops. In the meantime more than a thousand lives have been lost and hundreds of thousands are still trapped in camps for displaced people, too afraid to go home," said Joanne Mariner, Amnesty International's Senior Crisis Response Advisor.

"Tensions are going to be particularly high in the Central African Republic in the wake of the interim President's resignation, highlighting the desperate need for increased protection for the civilian population."

"Today's resignation by Djotodia could easily trigger revenge attacks by the anti-balaka Christian militias against the Muslim community. The Muslim ex-Seleka forces are also heavily armed, creating a real risk of the violence escalating even further. The safety and protection of civilians have to be paramount."

"As inter-communal hatred and mistrust deepens across the country, there has to be clear information, widely communicated to the population, as to what security measures will be put in place next."

"This unremitting violence has gone on for far too long. Now is the time for more concrete action by the international community for calm and security to return to the country."