

## **Human Rights Council – 30<sup>th</sup> session**

### **Interactive dialogue with the Independent Expert on the human rights situation in the Central African Republic**

#### **Statement by Ireland**

**30 September 2015**

Mr President,

Ireland aligns itself with the statement of the European Union and thanks the Independent Expert for her report. We would like to add the following:

Ireland remains deeply concerned about the security situation in the Central African Republic, which presents a serious challenge to the promotion and protection of human rights in the country. Inter-communal tensions remain high, as evidenced in the sudden eruption of violence in recent days. We strongly urge the Government to take urgent measures to facilitate peaceful coexistence between the communities, particularly in the context of the upcoming electoral cycle. A significant concern stems from this most recent surge in violence and the consequential humanitarian repercussions and implications. This violence has resulted in an increase in the number of internally displaced people, and further impacts upon their already limited access to basic services. Furthermore, the restrictions on humanitarian space and targeting of humanitarian actors by armed groups further impedes the capacity to provide assistance and support to those in need. It is vital that all parties respect international humanitarian law, and Ireland would urge all stakeholders to continue to reaffirm this necessary commitment.

Ireland welcomes the considerable efforts of the Transitional Government to address the human rights situation in the country, particularly the law establishing a Special Criminal Court to investigate serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in the Central African Republic since 2003. We strongly urge the transitional authorities to establish the Special Criminal Court without delay.

We also echo the Independent Expert's call to the transitional authorities to formulate a national strategy for combating impunity, in order to ensure that the perpetrators of serious human rights violations, including sexual violence, are held accountable. *We would like to ask the Independent Expert to elaborate on*

*how such a national strategy could complement the investigations of the new Special Criminal Court.*

We welcome the progress in the demobilisation of child soldiers since 2014. To further support these efforts, we strongly encourage the transitional authorities to implement the Independent Expert's recommendations in relation to establishing a programme of disarmament, demobilisation and registration adapted to children, as well as providing support programmes to combat post-traumatic stress disorder in children.

Ireland is appalled by the recent allegations of sexual exploitation and abuse, often involving children, committed by peacekeepers charged with protecting vulnerable populations in the Central African Republic. We note the establishment by the UN Secretary General of an external independent review to examine the UN system's handling of these allegations, as well as other measures to strengthen prevention. When protectors become oppressors, we strongly underline that the primary concern must be ensuring such violations stop as soon as possible, that those responsible are brought to justice and that reparations are provided to the victims. This is fundamental to the credibility and integrity of the United Nations, but more importantly; to the protection of the victims.

Thank you.