PRESS RELEASE

International Contact Group on the Central African Republic meets in Addis Ababa

Addis Ababa, 7 July 2014: The Fifth meeting of the International Contact Group on the Central African Republic (ICG-CAR) was opened this morning by key speakers from the African Union, United Nations, the Government of the Central African Republic (CAR) and the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS).

The Contact Group has been meeting since May last year to discuss coordinated regional, continental and international action to enable CAR to find a lasting solution to the political, security and humanitarian situation of the country.

In his opening remarks the African Union Commissioner for Peace and Security, Ambassador Smail Chergui, strongly appreciated the efforts of MISCA, (the African-led International Support Mission to CAR), in carrying out its mandate. Paying tribute the troop and police contributing countries, he said “We bow to the memory of the soldiers and police officers who have made the ultimate sacrifice to bring peace to CAR”. Nine weeks before the transfer of authority from MISCA to MINUSCA (the United Nations Mission to CAR), Ambassador Chergui said this transfer will open a new chapter. “In close cooperation with ECCAS and in the spirit of partnership with the United Nations, the transfer will support the ongoing process of reconciliation, elections and the reform of the defence sector and security,” he added.

The United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, Herve Ladsous, said that “since March, there has been some improvement in the security situation as a result of the hard work of MISCA, the French led Operation Sangaris and the European force, EUFOR-RCA”. But he said the task remains daunting, and that there is a real urgency for political dialogue to consolidate progress made by the CAR Transitional Authority. “The coming months will be critical”, said Mr Ladsous, “and Central Africans will need to re-double their efforts to address the challenges ahead. The region and international community also have an important role to play”.

Further speakers included the ECCAS Secretary General, Ahmad Allam-Mi, who said that in order put and end to CAR’s violence “we need a consensual political framework which is strong and could be shared by all CAR stakeholders.”
The Prime Minister of CAR, Andre Nzapayeke, commented that “To make peace and to move forward to positive action is for the brave, so that lasting peace can prevail in CAR. I appeal to the groups carrying out violence to join the brave.”

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