



22 February 2014 - Time is of the essence if the international community does not want to fail the people of the Central African Republic (CAR), top United Nations officials have warned.

Over the past year, Central African Republic has [witnessed](#), in quick succession, the violent overthrow of the Government, the collapse of State institutions and a descent into lawlessness and sectarian brutality.

“The crisis that continues to unfold in the Central African Republic poses a test for the entire international community,” Secretary-General Ban Ki-moon said in his [remarks](#) to the Security Council.

Mr Ban proposed a six-point initiative to address the greatest risks being faced by the people of CAR, beginning with a call for the rapid reinforcement of the AU and French troops now on the ground with additional deployments of at least 3,000 more troops and police.

With whole populations being moved, Mr. Ban said “a creeping de facto partition of the country” is setting in, with Muslims in one part and Christians in another. “This separation is laying the seeds of conflict and instability for years, maybe generations, to come.” [Attempts](#) by religious leaders to calm the population have not succeeded.

The UN’s Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator,

Valerie Amos, who wrapped up a visit to CAR on Thursday, said she was “shocked” by burned homes and people so scared by violence that they sleep in the bush at night. She noted that tensions between communities are high, and stressed the need for more troops on the ground to provide security and protection across the country.

The African Union and France have deployed troops to CAR to help stem the violence, and Mr. Ban voiced his gratitude to them for saving many lives and providing protection where they can.

“The human family must not shy away from what is happening today in the Central African Republic, or from our responsibilities – both yours and mine – under the United Nations Charter,” Mr Ban stressed. “Events in the CAR have implications across the region, and summon us to defend universal values as well. This complex security, humanitarian, human rights and political crisis demands a comprehensive and integrated response.”

“The people of the Central African Republic do not have months to wait. The international community must act decisively now to prevent any further worsening of the situation and to respond to the dire needs of the country’s people”, Mr Ban said. “We have the power to stop the killing and save the Central African Republic from its current nightmare.”

The conflict erupted when mainly Muslim Séléka rebels launched attacks in December 2012 and has taken on increasingly sectarian overtones as mainly Christian militias known as anti-Balaka (anti-machete) have [taken up arms](#) .

The crisis has already claimed thousands of lives, uprooted almost [one million people](#) and left more than 2.5 million people in need of immediate humanitarian assistance.

*UNRIC's related links:*

*Library backgrounder on CAR* <http://archive.unric.org/en/unric-library/28899>

*Sexual violence in the CAR conflict* <http://unric.org/en/latest-un-buzz/29030-fighting-rape-as-weapon-of-war>

*Interview with UN Deputy Special Representative in CAR, Kaarina Immonen* <http://unric.org/en/un-newsletter/28967-interview-of-the-month-kaarina-immonen>