



PRESS RELEASE

THE AU SPECIAL REPRESENTATIVE IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC HOLDS DISCUSSIONS WITH THE IMAM AND THE ARCHBISHOP OF BANGUI

Bangui, 21 December 2013: The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union (AU) and Head of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), General Jean-Marie Michel Mokoko, today held a meeting with Bishop Dieudonné Nzapalainga, Archbishop of Bangui, and Imam Umar Kobine Layama, President of the Central African Islamic Community, to discuss the situation in the CAR and to consider how best to effectively respond to the recent developments on the ground. During the meeting, the three personalities deplored the heavy losses of human lives recorded in the past few weeks, the hatred that has gradually emerged among communities, as well as the growing number of displaced people in the town of Bangui and in some of the provinces of the country.

The Special Representative welcomed the efforts made by the two religious leaders and the work they accomplished long before the recent deterioration of the political and security situation, and which they continue to pursue despite misunderstandings within their respective communities. The Special Representative recalled the mandate of MISCA, as adopted by the AU Peace and Security Council (PSC) and endorsed by the UN Security Council, in particular the restoration of security, the protection of civilians and the return to constitutional legality through the holding of free and transparent elections. He emphasized the role that the two religious leaders are expected to play in facilitating the implementation of MISCA's mandate.

On their part, the religious leaders expressed satisfaction at the deployment of MISCA and assured the Special Representative of their readiness to support the implementation of the Mission's mandate. In this regard, they stressed the need to accelerate the encampment and disarmament of all armed groups without exception and to deploy elements of the multinational force in the suburbs of Bangui, in order to reassure the people and to facilitate their return to their areas of residence.

The Special Representative informed the religious leaders of the ongoing reorganization of the various components of MISCA, in order to address the security challenges in Bangui and in the provinces affected by the ongoing violence. He also reiterated his firm commitment to work towards the robust implementation of MISCA's mandate.