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MISSION INTERNATIONALE DE SOUTIEN A LA CENTRAFRIQUE SOUS CONDUITE AFRICAINE (MISCA)
African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic

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PRESS RELEASE

MISCA Deplores the use of Civilians as Human Shields in the CAR

Bangui, 31 March 2014 -- The Force Commander of the African-led International Support Mission in the Central African Republic (MISCA), Brigadier General Martin Tumenta, has deplored the use of civilians as human shields in the most recent eruption of violence in the Central African Republic (CAR). Referring to the incident on Saturday, 29 March 2014, in which a convoy of MISCA peacekeepers was fired upon in the Bangui suburb of PK12, the Force Commander said ***"It is unacceptable for any group or individuals to open fire on international peacekeepers."***

The convoy was returning to MISCA Force Headquarters in M'Poko, Bangui, with arms seized from militia groups in and around the Northern town of Kanga-Bandoro, when it got into an ambush by unidentified armed men at PK12. Without provocation or warning, the assailants opened fire on the peacekeepers wounding two MISCA soldiers from the Chad contingent. The injured peacekeepers are currently receiving treatment at the MISCA hospital in Bangui. The ambushed peacekeepers returned fire in legitimate self-defense. According to the Red Cross, four bodies were collected from the scene of the incident and twenty one persons who were injured in the crossfire are currently being treated at the Community Hospital in Bangui.

This incident comes less than a week after several MISCA positions and vehicles were attacked by armed militia, killing a peacekeeper from the Republic of Congo and injuring nine others: four from the Republic of Congo, two from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), two from Rwanda and one from Cameroon.

The Special Representative of the Chairperson of the AU Commission and Head of MISCA, General Jean Marie Michel Mokoko, firmly condemns these attacks and strongly warns their perpetrators that they will be held accountable for their actions. He conveys the sincere condolences of the Chairperson of the AU Commission, Dr. Nkosazana Dlamini Zuma, to the bereaved families and wishes a speedy and complete recovery to the injured peacekeepers and civilians.

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