

**Special Session of the Human Rights Council on the Central African
Republic, 20 January 2014**

**Statement by Ambassador Patricia O'Brien,
Permanent Representative of Ireland**

Thank you, Mr. President.

Ireland aligns itself with the statement delivered by Greece on behalf of the European Union.

Ireland welcomes this Special Session which represents an important opportunity for the international community to demonstrate its commitment to, and solidarity with, the people of the Central African Republic.

We are deeply alarmed by the preliminary findings of the report of the OHCHR Human Rights Team. The report documents harrowing accounts of deliberate targeting of the civilian population and disturbing reports of inter-communal violence in a country that until recently had been relatively free of ethnic strife. The findings of widespread human rights violations, including extrajudicial killings, sexual violence, mutilations and enforced disappearances, with victims targeted on the basis of their religion, are truly shocking. The targeting of children, as documented in the report, is completely unacceptable and requires immediate action.

Ireland echoes the calls of the African Union for the authorities of the Central African Republic to live up to their responsibilities, in particular with respect to the protection of the civilian population, and the promotion of peaceful and harmonious co-existence among all sections of society in the Central African Republic. Ireland also commends the leadership role undertaken by the African

Union, with support from France, in responding to the crisis and ensuring the protection of the civilian population through a peace-keeping operation.

It is imperative that accountability forms part of the response to this crisis. We call on all parties to cooperate fully with the Commission of Inquiry established by UN Security Council Resolution 2127, the mandate of which will play a crucial role in ensuring such accountability. In addition, we underline the importance of the ICC in ensuring that those most responsible for grave violations of international humanitarian law and other crimes provided for in the Rome Statute are brought to justice.

Meanwhile, the humanitarian situation throughout CAR has become critical, with half the population in need of humanitarian assistance. We call on all parties to provide immediate, safe and unhindered humanitarian access. This access is vital to ensure that those affected or displaced by this conflict can vindicate their basic human rights: to food, to shelter, to water and sanitation, and to health.

The commitment of the international community must extend beyond addressing its emergency needs. We must look at ways to ensure that we can enable the people of CAR to address the underlying causes of the crisis. In this regard, Ireland welcomes the intention to appoint an Independent Expert on the situation of human rights in Central African Republic, and we call on all parties to allow access to perform this crucial role.

Thank you Mr. President.