



For Immediate Release

Central African Republic: Make Justice a Priority

New Government Should Quickly Establish Special Court

(April 21, 2016) – 21 Central African and international human rights organizations issued [a statement](#) today calling on the new president of the Central African Republic, Faustin-Archange Touadéra, to make justice for grave international crimes a top priority for his government. President Touadéra was sworn in on March 30, 2016, and his new government took office on April 11.

“The people of the Central African Republic have suffered unspeakable abuses and have made clear that they want to turn the page on a past where impunity ruled,” the human rights groups said. “President Touadéra should demonstrate leadership and take concrete steps to advance justice for grave international crimes, notably through the swift establishment of the Special Criminal Court and continued cooperation with the International Criminal Court.”

Cyclical episodes of violence in the Central African Republic over the past 13 years have been marked by grave international crimes. During the last crisis, which engulfed the country in 2012, armed groups known as Seleka and anti-Balaka committed widespread abuses against civilians, including killings, sexual violence, and the destruction of private, public and religious properties, causing mass population displacement. Those responsible for these crimes have not yet been brought to justice.

The transition government, which led the country between 2013 and 2016, paved the way toward accountability for grave international crimes, by referring the situation in the Central African Republic to the International Criminal Court and passing a law establishing a Special Criminal Court within the national justice system. President Touadéra and his government should build on these efforts and take them further, including by taking the necessary steps to make the Special Criminal Court a reality, so that justice can finally be delivered, the human rights groups said.

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