

Central Africa: the UN deeply concerned by the activities of Boko Haram in the sub-region

New York (USA), 12 May 2014 - The UN Secretary-General, Mr. Ban Ki-moon, has once again expressed his deep concern about "the impact of fighting between the Nigerian army and Boko Haram, which has now resulted in the displacement of tens of thousands of Nigerian refugees and returning immigrants to northern Cameroon and Chad". This concern is contained in the Sixth Report on the activities of the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and the areas affected by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) presented on 12 May at the Security Council by his outgoing Special Representative, Mr. Abou Moussa.

The 19-page report, which provides an overall view of socio-political, economic and security situation in the sub-region, warns particularly about the activities of Boko Haram in some States, including kidnappings and deadly bomb attacks. The document recalls some recent developments in this dark note, underlining, inter alia, the rapt of two Italian priests and a Canadian nun in the northern part of Cameroon in April 2014. "On 13 April, Cameroonian security forces shot and killed three suspected Boko Haram militants in Amchide near the Nigerian border. On the same day, two security officers at a Cameroonian checkpoint were wounded", said the Report, which is discussed at the time when the international opinion is shocked by the unacceptable tragedy of more than 200 girls kidnapped, since one month, by the extremist group in a school in Nigeria.

"I welcome ongoing efforts to strengthen border cooperation and encourage countries concerned in Central Africa to work in concert with Nigeria to urgently bring to an end the violent activities of armed and extremist groups which continue to threaten regional peace and stability", mentioned Mr. Ban Ki-moon. He also welcomed the commitment of Governments in the region to work out an integrated counter-terrorism and small arms and light weapons control strategy for the Central African subregion. In January (Libreville, Gabon) and April (Bujumbura, Burundi), UNOCA helped organize two technical meetings on the development of this anti-terrorist road map.

Apart from humanitarian and security consequences of the activities of Boko Haram in some countries in the sub-region, the Secretary-General's report highlights the collateral effects of the Central African Republic (CAR) crisis on Chad, Cameroon, Congo and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). It also provides information on progress made in the fight against elephant poaching and the piracy in the Gulf of Guinea. In addition, long developments are devoted to the efforts being made to stop the atrocities of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). The Report notes that the LRA "continues to be a serious threat", despite its weakening or the gradual reduction of its workforce. According to the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), 65 presumed attacks by the LRA were reported during the first quarter of 2014 in the Central African Republic and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, resulting in 93 abductions and two deaths. In general, the number of displaced persons has decreased from 420,000 in March 2013 to 160,000 in March 2014.

The Security Council encourages UNOCA and other UN entities to continue to support the regional cooperation initiative of the African Union for the elimination of the LRA and all other actions related to the promotion of peace and preventive diplomacy in Central Africa. He paid tribute to the outgoing Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for Central Africa and Head of UNOCA, Abou Moussa, for his leadership in these areas and for important achievements that have marked his tenure during the past three years.

The Security Council, which is chaired this month of May by Mr. Oh Joon, Permanent Representative of the Republic of Korea to the UN, also welcomed the appointment of Professor Abdoulaye Bathily as new SRSG and Head of UNOCA.