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## **Statement by Ms. Alice Wairimu Nderitu Special Adviser on the Prevention of Genocide and Ms. Karen Smith Special Adviser on the Responsibility to Protect on the situation in the Central African Republic**

(New York, 14 January 2021) The United Nations Special Advisers on the Prevention of Genocide and the Responsibility to Protect, Alice Wairimu Nderitu and Karen Smith, expressed deep concern over the escalation of violence in the Central African Republic and recent attacks by unidentified armed elements on Government forces and United Nations peacekeepers.

The Special Advisers stressed that such attacks may constitute war crimes that can be prosecuted before national or international courts and calls for full investigations into these attacks to ensure that those responsible are held accountable.

In the past two weeks, four UN peacekeepers have been killed. The attacks have also led to forced displacement of the civilian population. “We strongly remind those behind these attacks that their acts constitute atrocity crimes, and those with highest responsibility, including political actors will be held accountable” The two officials stated.

They also reminded the Government of the Central African Republic of its primary responsibility to protect its populations against genocide, war crimes, ethnic cleansing and crimes against humanity and urged national authorities, with the support of the international community including MINUSCA, to take urgent measures to address the current insecurity and ensure the protection of its civilian population.

Special Advisers Nderitu and Smith noted with concern that the current climate of impunity is a major factor fuelling the violence and insecurity in the country and encouraged national authorities to speed up the operationalisation of the Special Criminal Court. The Court is tasked with investigating serious violations of international humanitarian law committed in the territory of the Central African Republic since 2003, including genocide, war crimes and crimes against humanity.

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