

Increased Violence in CAR Ahead of President's Inauguration



Bangui, January 24 (RHC)-- Reports from the Central African Republic reveal extensive looting and violence against Muslims just hours ahead of the inauguration of the country's new interim president. Witnesses said shops and properties belonging to Muslims have been targeted around the capital city of Bangui.

The violence follows an overnight outbreak of sectarian clashes in the city that claimed the lives of 10 people. Catherine Samba-Panza, the former mayor of Bangui, will be sworn in and try to lead the transitional government in the impoverished African nation which is home to some 4.6 million people.

The CAR spiraled into chaos following a coup by the Muslim-majority Seleka rebels which ousted the country's former Christian president, Francois Bozizé, in March 2013. The country, however, plunged into deadly violence when Christian militias launched coordinated attacks on the mostly Muslim Seleka group last month.

Additionally, France invaded its former colony on December 5, 2013, after the UN Security Council adopted a resolution giving the African Union and France the go-ahead to send troops to the country.

Paris has deployed 1,600 troops to the country, but the UN-backed intervention force, which includes over 4,000 African Union peacekeepers, has so far failed to restore security in the Central African Republic.

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