

Central African Republic: Four UN peacekeepers wounded in ambush by armed group

22 February 2017 – The United Nations peacekeeping mission in the Central African Republic has reported that its troops on patrol were ambushed yesterday outside of Ippy in Ouaka prefecture.

During the exchange of fire with the FPRC's (*Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique*) coalition, four peacekeepers were wounded, including one severely, according to the Office of Spokesperson for the UN Secretary-General, which added that the attackers fled the scene after the incident.

Clashes between the mainly Muslim Séléka rebel coalition and anti-Balaka militia, which are mostly Christian, plunged the country of 4.5 million people into civil conflict in 2013.

In a news release issued earlier this month, the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission (MINUSCA) had stressed that two factions of the ex-Séléka armed group, namely the FPRC coalition and UPC *Mouvement pour l'Unité et la Paix en Centrafrique*, represent a threat for civilian populations and that UN peacekeepers will respond in case of violence.

The spokesperson's office said that peacekeepers prevented a hostile crowd – including members of the FPRC – from entering a camp for internally displaced persons in Ippy, which is some 70 miles from the city of Bambari, earlier yesterday. Some people in the crowd fired at peacekeepers, who returned fire, killing two FPRC members.

MINUSCA reiterated its resolve to use force to protect civilians in accordance with its mandate and calls on all armed groups to immediately cease hostilities and to resolve any dispute through dialogue within the framework of the African Initiative for Peace and Reconciliation, the office added.

Meanwhile, the UPC leader, Ali Darassa, left Bambari yesterday following the Mission's calls for him to leave the town, the office said. The Mission has reinforced its police presence in Bambari.