

# CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

## HUMAN RIGHTS MANIFESTO FOR THE PRESIDENTIAL ELECTION CANDIDATES

The Central African Republic (CAR) has suffered waves of violence and armed conflicts since 2002, with numerous crimes under international law and other serious violations and abuses being committed with impunity. Thousands of civilians were killed, raped, abducted, mutilated, wounded, displaced or had their homes burned. These war crimes and crimes against humanity were committed especially in 2002-2003 conflict which led to the coup against former President Ange-Félix Patassé, and since 2012 when the armed group Seleka then led by Michel Djotodia took power and clashes between Seleka and anti-balaka armed groups.

Despite the presence of UN peacekeeping forces since 2013 and successive negotiations to end violence, including the February 2019 peace agreement, violence continues to this day, with regular attacks against civilian populations, killings and other crimes and violations at the hands of the ex-Seleka and the anti-Balaka armed groups.

Political authorities have on many occasions committed to fight impunity for these horrendous crimes. Efforts have been done regarding this purpose, but they remain insufficient. These recent years, a few judicial proceedings are ongoing before ordinary criminal courts and the UN-backed hybrid court, the Special Criminal Court (SCC). There is still much to do in the upcoming months and years to ensure the main responsible are held accountable in fair trials and justice is done for victims of all serious crimes perpetrated in the context of armed conflicts.

Moreover, identified members of armed groups responsible for international law crimes continued to hold important political responsibilities, especially in the governments of 2017 and 2019.

On the 27 December 2020, Central African voters will go to poll for presidential elections. It is the opportunity for candidates to strongly reaffirm their commitment to end impunity so victims of crimes under international law and other serious breaches to human rights committed since 2002 obtain justice and reparation.



**By signing this manifesto, I pledge, from the start of my mandate, if I am elected, to protect and promote human rights and especially to:**

- Suspend any individual subject to investigation or prosecution for international law crimes or other human rights violation from his official capacity in the army, in the government or in any other state body;
- Ensure that the Ministry of Justice draft and adopt a prosecutorial strategy for ordinary criminal courts, which would include addressing crimes under international law committed since 2002, including sexual and gender-based crimes;
- Ensure that the Ministry of Justice improves the capacity and quality of the criminal justice system and fair trial guarantees through the effective implementation of the new justice sector policy;
- Endow the Ministry of Justice with sufficient means to carry out its mission, including budget for a minimum of 6 criminal sessions per year as required under CAR criminal procedure code;
- Have the death penalty abolished for all crimes in accordance with the recommendations accepted by the CAR during its last two universal periodic exams;
- Have the national criminal legislation revised to ensure that it conforms with international standards, and the definitions of war crimes, crimes against humanity and genocide in the Penal code;
- Ensure that the military justice code is amended, in particular article 21, to ensure that the jurisdiction of military courts is limited to purely military offenses committed by military personnel and explicitly excludes jurisdiction over crimes committed against civilians, in particular crimes under international law.
- Ensure that a legislation which enshrines the obligation of national courts to guarantee the safety, physical and psychological well-being and privacy of victims and witnesses without discrimination is developed;
- Ratify the Protocol to the ACHPR on the establishment of an African Court on Human and Peoples' Rights and make the special declaration allowing individuals and NGOs to directly submit cases to the Court.

