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## **Central African Republic: Civilians need to be protected**

Civilians in the Central African Republic, including members of President Bozizé's government still in the country, must be protected, Amnesty International said after rebels seized the capital, Bangui.

Seleka, a loose coalition of five rebel groups, stormed the presidential palace, claiming Bozizé had failed to honour a power-sharing peace agreement in January. Bozizé has since fled the country.

The latest phase of the rebellion began on Thursday and escalated over the weekend, when 13 South African soldiers were shot dead trying to protect the capital.

Amid reports of looting by armed gangs, Amnesty International called for the Seleka coalition to ensure the protection and respect of human rights in the country.

"We are extremely concerned by the insecurity in the Central African Republic right now," said Paule Rigaud, Africa program Deputy Director, "and we fear that human rights abuses are being committed in Bangui. The Seleka leadership must make it clear to its forces that human rights violations will not be tolerated and that perpetrators will be brought to justice."

Several armed groups, currently part of the Seleka coalition, have, in the past, been responsible for killings, abduction, torture and rape of civilians as well as looting, as detailed in our report [Central African Republic - Action needed to end decades of abuse](#).