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## **Central African Republic: Escalating bloodshed and reported revenge killings**

Revenge killings are being reported across Bangui and other parts of the Central African Republic today in the aftermath of the military clashes that happened in the early hours of the morning, Amnesty International said today.

“There is a consistent pattern of reprisal attacks after military incursions in the Central African Republic which leaves civilians exposed and in great danger,” said Christian Mukosa, Amnesty International’s Central Africa expert.

“This underscores the urgent need for a credible and effective international peacekeeping force which can take action to protect those most at risk as crisis engulfs the country.”

According to credible sources, many of those involved in today’s fighting are believed to be child soldiers, some reportedly armed with machetes, iron bars and other basic weaponry.

Reports have been received that more than 50 bodies have been brought to a mosque in PK5, one of the Muslim areas of Bangui. Many of the deceased had been killed by machetes or similar weapons.

Dead and wounded people are being brought to hospitals across the city, although a final death toll has yet to be confirmed.

Amnesty International has spoken to doctors from a number of different hospitals who have talked about the challenges faced and provided details about those who have needed urgent treatment.

“Bangui is effectively in shutdown,” says Christian Mukosa, who is currently in Bangui. “Doctors are telling us that they are desperate to get to the hospitals to reach people in need of life-saving surgery, but they cannot do so, due to the insecurity that has swept the city”.

The presidential decision to enforce a curfew from 18.00 to 06.00 is expected to jeopardise the level of treatment available in hospitals, preventing medical staff from reaching the sick and wounded.

“Hospital staff are being overwhelmed by the current crisis. One small paediatric hospital I spoke to this afternoon reported the arrival of 18 people injured in today’s events, including 10 children and eight women, all suffering from shrapnel injuries from mortar attacks. Other medical professionals told me about their frustration at not having enough staff or the right expertise to treat the sick and wounded.”

People in Bangui are also reported to be leaving their homes to seek refuge in locations across the city. Amnesty International has received reports of more than 1,000 people who have fled to the Saint Bernard Catholic Church in Mandaba in Boy Rabbé.

