

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

The massacre of more than 110 people, mostly Christians – including two priests and a pastor – at a Church-run displacement camp¹ highlighted the scale of the internal conflict afflicting the country. The attack in late 2018 was one of many acts of violence by ex-Séléka militia, which carried out attacks along sectarian lines. Muslim communities had also suffered, with reports of a “violent wave of ethnic cleansing”² in the west of the country. Anti-balaka militia groups, formed to fight the ex-Séléka, were themselves implicated in civilian attacks. Bishop Juan José Aguirre Muñoz of Bangassou told ACN that foreign mercenaries entering CAR to raid its natural resources had further destabilized the situation.³ A February 2019 peace deal between the government and 14 armed groups has already come under strain – with one former Séléka faction pulling out in March.⁴

MAY 2018

At least 19 people including Father Albert Baba were killed and about 120 injured in an attack during Mass on May 1st at Our Lady of Fatima’s Church, Bangui. Parish priest Father Moses Oti said attackers “outnumbered the police and the police retreated. Then the attackers started shooting at the church and throwing hand grenades at the people.”⁵

NOVEMBER 2018

101 Christians and 11 Muslims were killed when an ex-Séléka group called the Union for Peace attacked a Church-run IDP camp in Alindao. Among those killed in the massacre on the November 15th were Pastor Gabriel Singa and two priests, Father Mada Blaise and Father Célestin Ngoumango. The camp, which sheltered over 26,000 people, was totally destroyed. Bishop Cyr-Nestor Yapaupa of Alindao said: “The old people and the handicapped were simply burned alive, if they were not already shot dead or beheaded. . . The attackers simply fired indiscriminately on the people.” UN troops allegedly colluded with militants.⁶

MAY 2019

The body of 77-year-old Sister Ines Nieves Sancho was found beheaded and mutilated in Nola, south-west CAR near the border with Chad. During the night of May 19th-20th, assailants entered her home and, dragging her to the workshop where she held sewing lessons for local girls, slit her throat. Ex-Séléka militants, calling themselves 3R, were blamed for the attack.⁷

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3. *Aid to the Church in Need (International)*, April 10, 2019, <https://acninternational.org/country/central-african-republic/> (accessed July 22, 2019).
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