



Faith based humanitarian organisations welcome Pope Francis to the Central African Republic

Bangui, 27 November 2015 – Together with the hundreds of thousands of displaced and vulnerable children and families who we strive to serve, we salute your visit to the Central African Republic (CAR) as a sign of hope and courage. The moment is critical as the country and the dire humanitarian circumstances are once again at risk of being forgotten amidst other crises taking place in the world.

This trip demonstrates your desire as a respected leader to bring the attention of the world to those who are suffering. In spite of the recent security concerns and upsurge of violence which has taken hundreds of lives and left thousands newly displaced, your presence in the country demonstrates even more your commitment to peace.

The people of CAR, including more than one million overall who have been forced to flee their homes to live in very harsh conditions either within CAR or in neighboring countries, have been enduring the consequences of conflict and continued violence for too long. The country is in a critical period of transition which will hopefully yield a peaceful solution. We hope your message encourages those engaged in such a process, especially national leaders and commanders of armed groups –regardless of their ethnicity or religious affiliation– to take responsibility, show honest leadership and work for peace and social cohesion.

As faith-based humanitarian organisations, we strive to provide assistance and protection to the most vulnerable on the basis of internationally recognised humanitarian principles, in particular of impartiality and independence. Too often, insecurity and armed militias prevent or present obstacles to our humanitarian work. We would welcome your call to lawmakers and other stakeholders who exercise control or have influence over those forces to ensure that humanitarian organisations enjoy unhindered and free access to those in urgent need of assistance.

Finally, we hope you will inspire all donors and people of good will to increase their support to help us efficiently provide humanitarian assistance to 2.7 of the 4.7 million people living in CAR who lack access to water, food, health, education or protection.

Your visit, dear Pope Francis, is a sign of solidarity, love and care for humanity. We express our deepest heartfelt thanks, and assure you of our continuous prayers and good wishes to accompany your difficult and welcomed mission.