

**Central African Republic: Erased Identity: Muslims in Ethnically-cleansed areas of the Central African Republic**

Amnesty International

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"In the aftermath of the violent wave of ethnic cleansing that swept the western third of the Central African Republic in early 2014, small Muslim communities have quietly returned to their home towns and villages. Because the armed anti-balaka militia that violently expelled tens of thousands of Muslims from the country last year continue to hold significant power, the cost of survival for Muslims in these areas is high. In some places, anti-balaka militia have forcibly converted Muslims to Christianity, or have put Muslims under intense pressure to convert. Elsewhere, except for areas actively protected by UN peacekeeping forces, Muslim are unable to practice or manifest their religion in public. To the extent that their presence in these areas is tolerated at all by anti-balaka militia, it is based on the understanding that they cannot publicly assert their Muslim identity or belief in Islam. This means that they cannot pray (except in secret); they cannot wear traditional Muslim clothing, and they cannot rebuild their mosques. Although members of the larger community may be aware that they are Muslim, their religion has been made invisible."

(...)

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