

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC SITUATION

UNHCR REGIONAL UPDATE 67

1 – 30 April 2016

HIGHLIGHTS

- UNHCR assessed the needs of newly displaced populations following the recent violence in Kouï and Bocaranga, in the northwest of the **Central African Republic**, forcing more than 14,000 people to flee their homes;
- In **Chad**, UNHCR and WFP conducted a joint assessment mission to evaluate food and nutrition security conditions of CAR refugees in camps;
- In **Cameroon**, UNHCR's return intention survey shows that 73 per cent of refugees do not intend to return to CAR under current conditions;
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, the biometric registration continues with more than 18,800 refugees enrolled in UNHCR's new Biometric Identity Management System;
- In the **Republic of the Congo**, the water and sanitation response is being strengthened amidst challenges regarding water availability.

901,061 persons of concern

IDPs in CAR **418,638**

Refugees in Cameroon (incl. urban) **274,090**

Refugees in DRC **112,785**

Refugees in Chad **66,909**

Refugees in Congo **28,639**

KEY FIGURES

482,423

Central African refugees in
Cameroon, Chad, DRC and Congo

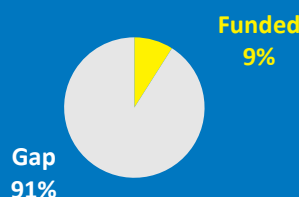
28%

IDPs in CAR living in the capital,
Bangui (sites and host families)

FUNDING

USD 225.5 million

required for the situation in 2016



PRIORITIES

- CAR:** Establish the working group on Return and Durable Solutions; sensitize authorities in Nana Mambéré and Mambéré Kadei Prefectures on return and related issues (housing, land and property rights; social cohesion)
- Cameroon:** Continue biometric registration in the East region; strengthen the WASH response in all refugee sites.
- Chad:** Pursue advocacy efforts to improve refugees' access to arable land; promote and strengthen refugees' self-reliance; continue the search for durable solutions through and resettlement programming
- DRC:** Continue the biometric registration in camps as well as shelter construction and distribution of solar lamps.
- RoC:** Ensure registration and documentation of all CAR refugees; strengthen education assistance, including secondary education and vocational



Iris scans are quickly and easily recorded during Biometric enrolment of CAR refugee in the site of Borgop, Cameroon ©UNHCR/D. Mbaïorem

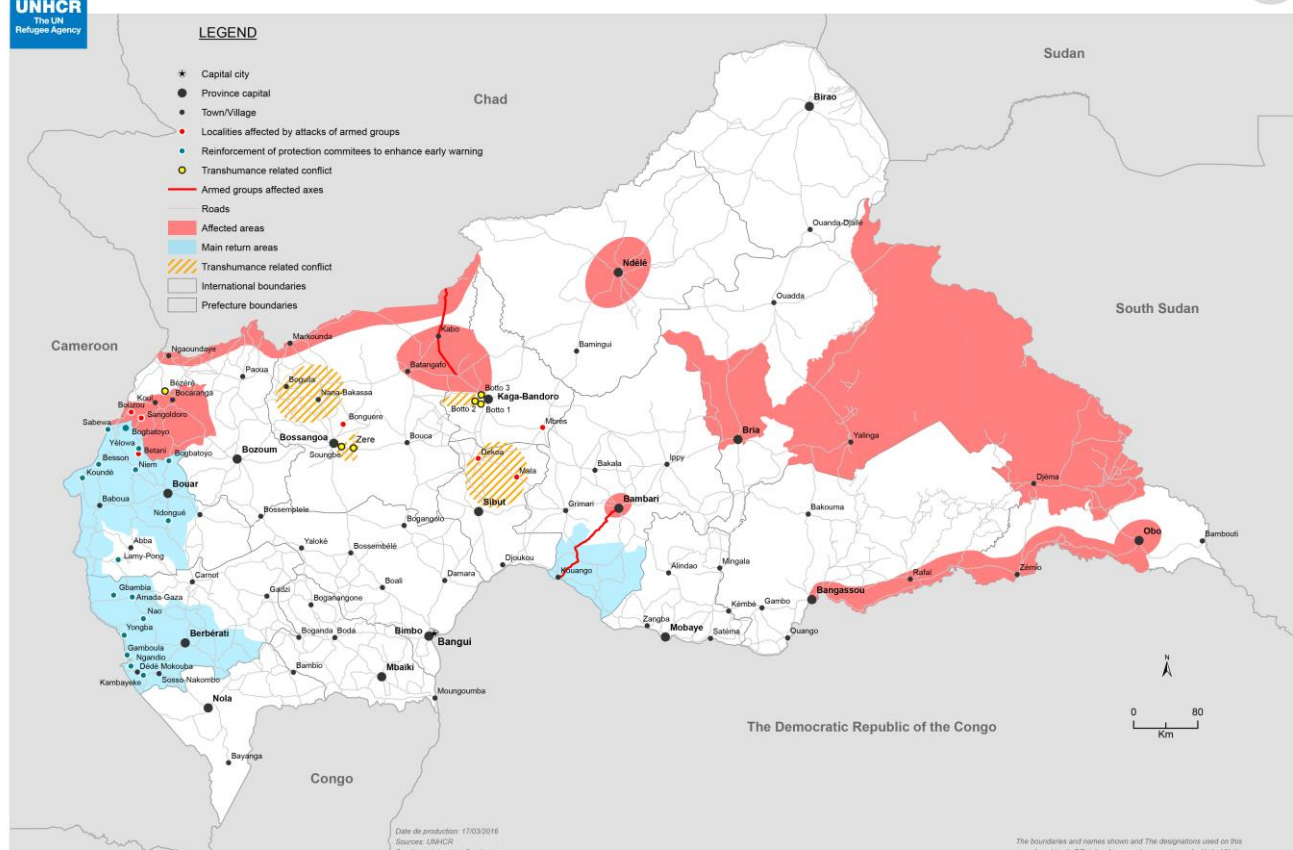
RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Operational Context

- In the **Central African Republic (CAR)**, following clashes between armed groups, new displacements of population have been reported since mid-April in the Sub-Prefectures of Kouï and Bocaranga (Ouham Pendé Prefecture). According to local authorities, more than 14,000 displaced people have fled to Kouï, Bocaranga, Bouar and also to Cameroon (about 800 asylum seekers according to local authorities). In Kouï, the verification and registration of internally displaced people (IDPs) is underway. In Bouar, IDPs are hosted within families and already receiving humanitarian assistance. Provisional assessments reported the death of dozens of civilians in the localities of Bouzou and Dock, where clashes started, as well as over a hundred of burned houses. In addition, on April 26, a violent storm hit the city of Kouï causing damage and destruction to almost 100 houses, some of them hosting IDP families. This episode of violent clashes between rival armed groups – including attacks against civilians – is a reminder that the security situation remains fragile and unpredictable (*see map*) despite improvement in security conditions observed in some areas. Repeated security incidents, some involving (directly or indirectly) humanitarian workers, might have an impact on access in certain areas.
- On 26 April, the United Nations Security Council extended the mandate of the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) until 31 July, 2016, stating that the situation in the country constitutes a threat to international peace and security. The Council also requested that the Secretary-General conduct a strategic review of MINUSCA to ensure proper configuration and adaptation of its future mandate to a post-transition stabilization environment. Furthermore, France announced that the Sangaris military operation, ongoing since December 2013, would close down by the end of 2016 and that its mandate would be taken over by the European military training mission as part of a decision approved by the European Council on 19 April.
- Since the end of the month, the new government of President Touadera has been initiating consultations with a view to help restore stability by disarming, demobilising and reintegrating thousands of members of armed groups who fought in the more than two year-long sectarian war. While some sections of the ex-Seleka movement have denounced the new Government, other rebel factions have been regrouping in parts of the country (Bria, Paoua, Kaga Bandoro, Bambari) for peace talks.



Hotspots in the Central African Republic as of April 2016



- In countries of asylum, the security situation along the *Cameroon-CAR* border strip remains of concern due to the presence of criminal groups; north of the Adamaoua region and the eastern part of the northern regions are also areas on high security watch. In *Chad*, Presidential elections were held on 10 April. The situation in the country remained relatively stable during the

electoral campaign, the vote and at the time of the release of the preliminary results confirming the current President in his position, although the opposition denounced several irregularities throughout the country and reported limited instances of electoral violence. In the *Republic of the Congo*, following the President's confirmation as elected candidate by the Constitutional Court on 4 April, heavy fighting erupted in southern Brazzaville districts between ruling party members and the opposition. The army was deployed and thousands of residents fled their homes. Despite heavy security arrangements throughout the country, UNHCR activities were not disrupted. In addition, the start of the rainy season has created some access difficulties in the area of Bétou – where 60 per cent of CAR refugees are hosted – challenging the delivery of humanitarian supplies.



CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Achievements and Impact

- In response to the new displacement in the areas of Kouï and Bocaranga, UNHCR and OCHA conducted a joint mission to the town of Degaulle, the capital of Kouï Sub-Prefecture. Recommendations of the mission include the distribution of food and non-food items (NFIs) to newly displaced people and the pre-positioning of food and NFIs in Bocaranga as further clashes are expected. UNHCR and members of the Protection Cluster are closely monitoring the situation in Kouï and Bocaranga areas, while also strongly advocating for the strengthening of the presence of MINUSCA to enhance the protection of civilians and further secure transhumance corridors.
- As part of a programme that started in 2015 to support IDP and refugee returnees, UNHCR has scaled up its engagement with the NGO Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) to raise awareness of local authorities on housing, land and property rights. This important programme includes increasing the capacities of local authorities and law enforcement bodies to create enhanced mechanisms at community level to fight against illegal land and house occupation and support property restitution to returnees. The programme covers Bangui and the Prefectures of Nana Mambéré, Mambéré Kadeï, Ouham Pendé, Ouham, and Nana Gribizi identified as the main return areas of IDPs and CAR refugees. In Nana Mambéré Prefecture, given the high number of spontaneous returns already registered (1,741 in April in the areas of Bouar and Baboua), UNHCR and NRC assisted local authorities in the reactivation of the provincial committee on housing, land and property. The main objective of the committee, which is led by the Prefect, is to carry out an identification exercise of occupied houses. A meeting was organized on 20 April to plan the census.
- A protection mission conducted by UNHCR from 13 to 16 April in Mambéré-Kadéï Prefecture revealed that, since December 2015, some 320 refugees have spontaneously returned from Cameroon and Chad to Berberati, a city known to host a 'community at risk,' composed predominantly of Muslims. Returnees reported that they have no access to their properties and are unable to resume work or their activities. The mission also visited the city of Carnot in which discussions with local authorities showed that despite the implementation of several initiatives to foster social cohesion, the continuous presence of anti-Balaka elements in Carnot prevents the return of the community at risk, estimated to be around 540 individuals, to their areas of origin. This situation is further exacerbated by the absence of detention centers, jeopardizing the resumption of judicial authority and fostering an atmosphere of impunity. Both in Berberati and in Carnot, UNHCR continued to advocate with MINUSCA to strengthen the protection of civilians in both cities and surrounding areas and further investigate human rights violations reported by the communities at risk.
- On 19 April, the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) endorsed a guidance note developed by the UNHCR-led Protection Cluster to ensure that the civil and humanitarian character of IDP sites in CAR is maintained. This guidance note establishes standards and recommendations for the HCT and security actors in the country, to ensure the civil and humanitarian character of IDP sites and surroundings, and to reach a holistic agreement to better protect IDPs. There are currently over 420,000 IDPs in CAR, of whom 185,000 live in one hundred sites throughout the country. The safety of these IDPs is often threatened by the infiltration and regular presence of armed groups in the sites.

CAMEROON

Achievements and Impact

- UNHCR's return intention survey, conducted in refugee sites and villages hosting refugees in the East, Adamaoua and North regions, showed that 73 per cent of refugees do not intend to return to CAR while 27 per cent intend to return. 16 per cent of those in favor of returning wish to return in 2016. Refugees reported that the main reasons impeding return are, in order of importance, the lack of security, property destruction, lack of trust in the capacity of the government to protect them, fear of relapse of conflict, lack of opportunities to earn a living and restart their lives. The survey was conducted among 10 per cent of the 68,000 CAR refugee households living in various settlements in Cameroon.
- Following negotiations undertaken by UNHCR with the government in Yaoundé, the latter committed to strengthen the staffing of social centers supported by UNHCR and study the possibility of opening social center units within refugee sites. An action plan is being developed and both parties will work on a joint agreement detailing the different components of assistance to refugees, including psychosocial support, identification of and support to vulnerable people and community mobilization.
- During the month, some 800 new arrivals were registered in the border town of Yamba (Adamawa region). Asylum seekers said they fled their villages in the sub-prefectures of Kouï and Bocaranga in Ouham Pendé because of clashes between rebel groups and warnings received from armed groups to leave the villages. The registration of refugees wishing to settle in the

Ngam site was initiated and is still ongoing. Border monitoring activities have allowed UNHCR to ensure that borders with CAR remain open and that new asylum seekers have free access to the Cameroonian territory.

CHAD

- **Achievements and Impact.** In April, 36 protection cases were reported, the majority of which are related to domestic violence. Various cases of sexual and gender-based violence, early marriage and sexual abuse were also reported. In response, appropriate and personalized psychological, judicial and medical assistance was provided. In addition, 40 cases of 'children at risk' were identified and the best interest determination (BID) procedures were utilized as part of the follow up process. BID describes the formal process with strict procedural safeguards designed to determine the child's best interests for particularly important decisions affecting the child.
- **Identified needs and remaining gaps.** Significant funding shortfalls limit the implementation of the BID for separated or non-accompanied children to only 50 per cent against the 80 per cent planned, while the needs of other categories of children at risk will be only partially covered. Lack of resources also means that 15 per cent of children aged 3 to 5 years will be able to attend Child Friendly Spaces out of a target of 100 per cent.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** The biometric registration was completed in Inke camp and continued in Boyabu camp, home to nearly 20,400 refugees. Thus far, 10,536 refugees have been registered in the UNHCR database. The registration will be pursued also in Mole and Bili refugee camps during the month of May. The main objective of this exercise is to verify the physical presence of refugees and update their information in the system. In 2013, UNHCR developed a new global Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) with final field testing conducted in January 2015. The new system permits the much faster and accurate verification of identities than the manual search for records in UNHCR's database that was previously required. This allows UNHCR to assist large volumes of refugees and others of concern more quickly and efficiently.



A refugee family living at Boyabu camp, near Libenge, Sud Ubangi Province, DRC, © UNHCR/F. Salvi

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** From 15 to 22 April, UNHCR and the *Comité national d'assistance aux réfugiés* (CNAR) conducted a joint monitoring mission in localities bordering CAR where some 3,000 refugees are currently hosted. Interviews with the refugees revealed that some of them face challenges in registering the birth of their child and also restrictions on their movements imposed by immigration authorities. Departmental authorities were consulted on these issues.

Education

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** Since the start of the integration process of refugee students in local public schools in 2014, UNHCR recruited 60 teachers. A total of 3,268 CAR refugees, including 1,604 girls, are currently enrolled in primary public schools in Bétou and Ikpengbé. UNHCR built and equipped 23 classrooms in 11 school buildings to accommodate refugee students.
- **Identified needs and remaining gaps.** Some classrooms are overcrowded with a current ratio of 102 students per classroom and per teacher, whereas UNESCO's standards recommend 45 students per class and teacher.

Health

CAMEROON

- **Achievements and Impact.** An assessment conducted by the Regional Delegations for Health in the East and Adamawa regions, with support from the World Health Organization, on the functioning of health facilities shows that gaps remain persistent despite improvements made by the government and its partners. Of the 40 health facilities surveyed, 40 per cent had partial damage to the building, 15 per cent do not have a laboratory, 28 per cent lack a cold chain to keep medications chilled, 80 per cent do not have PEP kits (used to protect individuals exposed to the HIV virus) and only 4 per cent of health care workers have the ability to provide medical care for the treatment of rape cases. In addition, only 1.8 per cent of health

care staff are trained to deal with mental health problems and provide adequate psychosocial support. These results will be used as part of the current discussions on the effective integration of refugees into national health systems. While no legal barriers exist, the capacity of the current health system in the East region is limited and insufficient to include the 150,000 CAR refugees who have arrived since 2014. Despite the support given by UNHCR and partners in the health sector, challenges remain significant.



Water and Sanitation

CHAD

- **Achievements and Impact.** Refugees have access to potable water in sufficient quantity and quality with an average of 47 liters per person per day in camps and 23 liters per person per day in host villages – both indicators are above UNHCR standard of 20 liters per person per day. Furthermore, UNHCR and its government partner the *Commission nationale d'accueil, de réinsertion des réfugiés et des rapatriés* (CNARR) assisted the refugee committee in Amboko camp to open a bank account in order to manage and utilize the funds recovered from the cost of water. A protocol has been established to ensure transparency and accountability in the management of the funds. The refugee committee in Gondjé camp opened a similar bank account in March.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.** Since January 2016, no hygiene kits have been distributed in Bili camp because of lack of funds, affecting the well-being and overall health conditions of refugees, especially the 5,000 refugee women living in the camp who are among the most vulnerable. In Mole camp, there is a gap of 7,000 hygiene kits due to funding shortfalls and women of childbearing age have not received any assistance in this regard.

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** Several works have been carried out to improve the water and sanitation response in Betou and Ikpebele, the main refugee hosting areas near the CAR border. In Ikpebele, 4 wells were constructed, allowing an increase in the average water access from 9 to 13 liters per person per day. In the 15 Avril site, 18 wells were built, including 11 with manual pumps and 7 open wells, with an average provision of 11 liters per person per day. In addition, in the 15 Avril site, 322 refugee adults and 153 refugee children were sensitized to sanitation and food hygiene standards.
- **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.** Refugees have been facing water issues as a lack of funds has not allowed regular maintenance on wells. Also, the decrease of the water level in the Oubangui River has affected water tables with the resurgence of diseases related to water consumption. As a result, with lower water levels in the wells, refugees tend to rely on the water from the river as drinking water which has increased the number of cases of diarrhea, representing 12 per cent of medical appointments in the last two weeks.



Food Security and Nutrition

CAMEROON

- **Achievements and Impact.** The April general food distribution, targeting some 132,600 CAR refugees in refugee sites (Borgop, Ngam, Timangolo, Mbile, Lolo and Ngarissingo) and refugee hosting villages started on 25 April and continued in May. During the month, WFP launched its first cash assistance programmes, using electronic mobile transfers. This activity will initially target 23,000 CAR refugees in the Gado camp in the East region and will be further expanded when required structures are put in place.

CHAD

- **Achievements and Impact.** A UNHCR-WFP joint assessment mission (JAM) was conducted in four CAR refugee camps in southern and south-eastern Chad (Dosseye, Gondje, Belom and Moyo) to analyze the food and nutrition situation of refugees. The purpose of the mission was to assess the current food security and nutrition situation, appraise the impact and appropriateness of assistance programmes and develop a joint plan of action. The JAM relied on interviews with focus groups and assessed basic social



Focus Group discussion with the CAR refugee women's group at Dosseye camp (Gore) during the joint assessment mission led by UNHCR and WFP © UNHCR/M. Sati.

service provision including health, education, water, sanitation & hygiene (WASH) as well as community services facilities. Results are currently being analysed and shall be made available next month.

- **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.** Due to funding shortfalls, WFP announced new cuts in food rations for CAR refugees, to be effective as of May 2016. Henceforth, WFP will provide food rations every two months instead of every month. This decision will have detrimental consequences on refugees' health and nutritional status as the majority of them (74 per cent) fall within the 'Very Poor' and 'Poor' categories. Refugees will most likely resort to negative coping strategies to cover their basic food needs, in particular by incurring debts and selling some of their assets which have compounded overtime.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** In mid-April, WFP provided cash-based transfers to more than 53,000 CAR refugees in three camps: Boyabu in Libenge, Inke in Gbadolite and Mole in Zongo. In-kind food assistance was provided to more than 8,000 CAR refugees in Bili camp in the Bosobolo territory. Distributions will continue until June 2016 following which they may have to be suspended as resources will be exhausted if no new contributions are received in the interim.



Shelter and Camp Coordination & Camp Management (CCCM)

CHAD

- **Achievements and Impact.** In partnership with the *Association pour le développement économique et social (ADES)*, UNHCR continued shelter rehabilitation works for persons living with special needs in the five camps (Amboko, Belom, Doholo, Dosseye and Gondje). To date, 914 shelters have been rehabilitated out of a total of 1,150 shelters planned, representing 79 per cent of the target. In addition, 335 selected households were assisted with various construction kits to help them build semi-durable shelters.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Achievements and Impact.** In Inke camp, 100 emergency shelters were constructed in response to the damage caused by adverse weather conditions witnessed last month. Thanks to fresh donor funding received last month from UN Pooled Funds, 80 new shelters were built in April and 56 additional shelters are planned. In Boyabu camp, new latrines and family showers were built for 400 refugees while the construction of 111 emergency shelters was completed. Furthermore, following the donation of some 340 solar lamps by the Japanese company Panasonic to CAR refugees, distribution started in Inke and Boyabu camp and will also take place in Bili camp in May. These lamps will be mostly used in common spaces as well as in the Transit Center.
- **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.** In Mole camp, since January 2016, some 1,000 refugee shelters were destroyed by heavy rains and some 6,500 CAR refugees (32 per cent of the camp population) still live in overcrowded shelters because of adverse weather conditions and because of the poor state of some old shelters never replaced since 2013.



Community Empowerment & Self-Reliance

CHAD

- **Achievements and Impact.** UNHCR continued to advocate with local authorities to secure and expand refugees' access to arable land. Acknowledging that there is a legal vacuum in Chad on this issue, local authorities will consult other stakeholders, including traditional leaders in host communities. About half of the CAR refugee population currently has access to arable land.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- **Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps.** Despite the involvement of 26 per cent of refugees in income-generating activities, assessments conducted in April showed that refugees' livelihood needs are increasing while available resources are limited to provide adequate support in this area. The



Two Central African refugees working in the gardens at Bili camp, Nord Ubangi Province, DRC © UNHCR/F. Salvi

arrival of CAR refugees has increased competition for farmland and the search for food, leading to tensions between host communities and refugees.



Durable Solutions

CHAD

- **Achievement and impact.** Since 2015, UNHCR has been working to increase the number of cases submitted for resettlement in Chad. During the month, upon receipt of referrals of cases potentially in need of resettlement, UNHCR prepared a resettlement submission, including the completion of Resettlement Registration Forms (RRFs) for 10 households that were sent to UNHCR Regional Resettlement Unit in Dakar, Senegal, for consideration. At the same time, based on a thorough review of documentation, RRFs for 16 households were submitted to resettlement countries. In addition, two families in Dosseye and Gondje camps received their departure notifications for Denmark and Canada, scheduled for May.
- **Identified needs and gaps.** Despite an increase resettlement cases submitted, the actual number of submissions remains significantly low in comparison to the number of individuals in need of resettlement. In Gore, in 2015, 44 cases out of 4,427 cases, or 1 per cent, in need of resettlement were submitted to resettlement countries. In order to ensure access to durable solutions to a higher number of CAR refugees, group resettlement may be envisaged as an alternative option.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

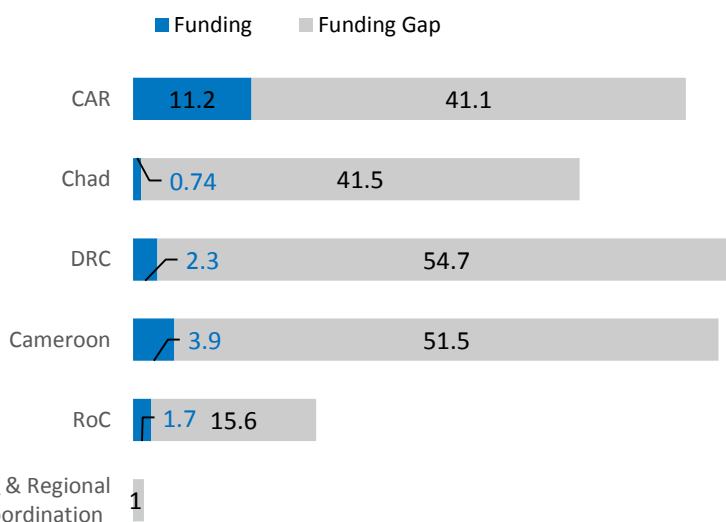
UNHCR's total financial requirements for the Central African Republic Situation, involving operations in CAR and neighbouring countries (Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo) amount to **USD 225.5 million from January to December 2016**, including USD 189.5 million for the response in asylum countries. As at the end of March 2016, **the overall funding gap is USD 205.2 million (91 per cent).**

Donors who have contributed to the situation in 2016 include:

- DRC Pooled Fund
- European Union
- Finland
- France
- Germany
- Holy See
- Japan
- Private donors (Australia, Sweden, Switzerland, Italy)
- UN Development Programme
- United States of America
- Spain
- Sweden
- Switzerland

Funding (USD million):

A total of **USD 20.3 million** has been funded



Contacts:

Alan Mouton, Associate External Relations Officer (Geneva) mouton@unhcr.org +41 (0)22 739 8830
 Wendy Rappeport, Senior External Relations Officer (Geneva) rappepor@unhcr.org +41 (0)22 739 8993
 Annette Rehrl, Senior External Relations Officer (Dakar) rehrl@unhcr.org +221 33 867 2150

Links: [UNHCR Webportal](#) | [UNHCR Stories of Refugees and Aid Workers](#) | [UNHCR Voices of Refugees in West and Central Africa](#)