

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

UNHCR OPERATIONAL UPDATE

1-31 January 2015

KEY FIGURES

442,495

Internally Displaced Persons in 100 sites in CAR of which

50,281

In 34 sites in Bangui

8,103

Refugees in CAR mostly from DRC, Chad and Sudan

269,730

Internally Displaced Persons in 53,946 households benefitted from NFIs distribution in 2014

9

out of the 10 conflict affected prefectures in CAR covered by UNHCR protection monitoring and response activities through 4 INGOs

FUNDING

Required in 2014: **USD 72.9 million**

Funded in 2014: **USD 27 million**

PRIORITIES

- Registration of IDPs in Mpoko site for the search for durable solutions
- Close monitoring of the situation of communities at risk in Carnot and Yaloke
- Emergency assistance to new IDP influxes in Batangafo
- Continuous search for durable solutions for refugees in CAR



UNHCR's Bambari distributed NFIs to 1177 IDP households that settle in spontaneous sites around the airfield¹ in Bambari/by Dalia AL Achi

- New influx of 7081 IDPs/986 households in Batangafo from 12 to 31 January 2015:** IDPs are from villages on the Bouca-Batangafo and west Batangafo axis reportedly burnt down by armed elements. Transhumance related conflicts are at the heart of this recent upsurge of violence in axis north and west of Batangafo.
- Yaloke community at risk:** The issue of the relocation of the IDP community at risk in Yaloke has been brought back as a major issue of concern to UNHCR after 44 people died in the enclave from April to end of December 2014. UNHCR continues its advocacy role at high levels for the respect of the freedom of movement of this nomadic group and for the relocation of those who wish to relocate (92%).
- Mpoko relocation:** Following months of discussions, the CAR transitional government expressed its decision to close the Mpoko airport site and has identified an alternative site. In order to allow the majority of these IDPs to return to their districts, UNHCR participates in a task force on Mpoko site in order to find tailored durable solutions. A strong commitment of both CAR government and donor countries will be needed to achieve the set goals.

Population of concern

A total of **450,598** people of concern

IDPs assisted by UNHCR

442,495

Refugees and Asylum Seekers assisted by UNHCR

8,103

¹ Where the Sangaris base is located

HIGHLIGHTS

- On local Consultations ahead of the Bangui Reconciliation Forum:** The local consultations are under way in CAR and have already started in neighboring countries hosting CAR refugees. The participation of CAR refugees is crucial in order to ensure the inclusiveness of the process. UNHCR CAR has therefore met with CAR government (Minister for the Public Service) Ambassadors of Cameroon, Republic of Congo and Democratic Republic of Congo in addition to substantial sections of MINUSCA in order to discuss the options and timeframe of the various forthcoming missions in asylum countries. UNHCR provided information about the number of refugees and their locations in each neighboring country and raised the need to be given advanced notice in order to sensitize the refugees about these consultations.
- On Refugees and IDPs elections:** The UN Security Council Resolution 2149 calls on transitional authorities to take action towards an inclusive electoral process with the participation of refugees and IDPs. UNHCR has not been officially requested by the CAR Transitional Government to facilitate protection related aspects of refugees' vote. On 30 January, UNHCR met with a Representative of the National Electoral Authority (ANE) and MINUSCA's Electoral Division to discuss CAR refugees' vote. UNHCR stressed (i) the need to consider refugee cards for voter registration as the majority of refugees in neighboring countries do not have their CAR national IDs and (ii) the need to review a number of articles in the electoral code that are restricting/impeding refugees' and IDPs' vote. Furthermore, UNHCR CAR, along with other UN agencies actively participates in the UN task force on elections led by MINUSCA.
- On National IDP Law:** CAR signed and ratified the African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention) on 20 December 2010. UNHCR CAR, with the support of the Global Protection Cluster, deployed in July 2014 a Consultant in CAR who held consultations with national and local authorities, religious leaders, humanitarian actors and IDPs around a National IDP Law. The Consultant produced a draft bill and an analysis of aspects of the convention pertinent to CAR context. She has also set up a working group led by the Ministry of Social Affairs and co-led by the CAR Protection Cluster. From August to December 2014, the working group has not been operational due to the ministerial reshuffling which completely changes the structures of relevant ministries and focal points. A new government focal point has been designated in January 2015.
- On Displacement:** More than 10,000 people were forced to flee and were internally displaced throughout the month of January. They fled to Batangafo, Ngakobo, Bambari and Botto areas in Ouham, Ouaka and Nana Gribizi prefectures due to clashes between Peul herders and armed groups coupled with acts of retaliation on civilians. Moreover, UNHCR in the DR Congo have so far registered 19,000 CAR refugees (out of 30,000 reported by DRC's Immigration office). These refugees are originally from Kouango sub-prefecture and have sought refuge in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) fleeing an upsurge of violence caused by armed groups in the area. Due to prevailing insecurity and limited escort services, no fact finding mission has been carried out to assess the situation in Kouango.
- On Return:** Despite continuous waves of displacement inside and outside of the CAR, over 1,812 households/10,000 returned IDPs and refugees have been registered in the Ouham Pende prefecture since the beginning of the border monitoring activities in July 2014 by UNHCR's partner IEDA Relief which operates in 4 of the 5 prefectures bordering Chad and Cameroon. In order to complement the border monitoring findings, the CAR National Commission for Refugees, UNHCR's governmental partner, will be deployed in the course of 2015 to the major return areas (Bouar, Berberati, Paoua and Carnot) in order to document and assess the needs of the returning persons for adequate assistance.

UPDATE ON ACHIEVEMENTS

Achievements

Protection for internally displaced people

CAR Protection Cluster

- The Protection Cluster is led by UNHCR and co-led by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC)
- The *Commission Mouvement de Populations* (CMP) endorsed following figures as of 3 February: 442,495 IDPs in CAR of which 50,281 in 34 sites of Bangui.

Communities-at-risk: 7 communities at risk as of January 2015 with over 36,000 persons.

Enclave location	Bangui	Boda	Bouar	Yaloke	Carnot	Berberati	Dekoa
Number of IDPs	24,000	9,000	1,600	474	589	456 ²	70

- The Protection Cluster's incident Matrix is operational since October 2014. The matrix aims at reinforcing the advocacy of the Protection Cluster Lead and the Humanitarian Coordination in its interactions with the Senior Management Group for Protection (SMG-P) with regard to the protection of civilians, including the internally displaced. The Protection Cluster matrix feeds into the MINUSCA Flash Point matrix which provides on a weekly basis, the update on protection hotspots, accompanied by recommendations on necessary actions.
- In order to reinforce the quality of data at the sub prefecture level, local Commissions on Population Movement (CPM) are being set in the prefectures. There are 2 operational CPM in Bossangoa and Kaga Bando facilitated by UNHCR staff members. The CPM in Bambari and Paoua are being set and UNHCR will be carrying out missions to these localities to reinforce the local CPM.
- The key areas of interventions of the Protection cluster in 2015 include: Advocacy for the protection of affected populations by the conflict; emergency response to protection needs (including GBV and Child Protection) for affected populations and particularly IDPs; response to the displacement movements; response to medium and long term protection needs of affected people; strengthening of community protection and the Protection Cluster early warning mechanisms; social cohesion and inter communal dialogue; strengthening of awareness initiatives and pollution control for weapons and explosives; psychosocial programs targeting mainly vulnerable persons; strengthening of protection mechanisms for durable solutions including the return and reintegration of displaced persons.

Achievements and Impact by UNHCR and Partners

- **Monitoring missions in enclaves:** From November 2014 to January 2015, UNHCR Bangui carried out 12 protection monitoring missions to Yaloke, Carnot, Berberati, Boda, Boganangone and Ngotto (6 of the former 9 enclaves). These missions allowed the CAR Protection Cluster to update the protection situation of the communities at risk/enclaves now standing at 7 and to assess the protection situation of people in enclaves (Ngotto and Boganangone are not anymore considered as enclaves as populations are moving freely in the localities).
 - Berberati and Carnot: A joint UNHCR-National Commission for Refugees mission was held from 16 to 21 January in Berberati, Carnot and Gamboula areas in order to assess the protection situation in 2 of the 7 enclaves namely Berberati and Carnot. Recommendations include the reinforcement of security measures in Berberati, Carnot and along the axis, the need to request MINUSCA's assistance for the relocation of more than 100 Peuls herders stuck in localities surrounding Gadzi who would like to reach the enclave in Carnot for their safety.
- INTERSOS, UNHCR partner for protection monitoring in nana Gribizi and Kemo, reported critical protection issues after visiting 54 villages representing 90% of the overall number of villages in addition to the 3 main towns.

² Of which 378 Peul and 78 Congolese migrants

Situation in the 3 main towns: It is worth to note the total absence of public services in Kaga Bandoro to date. The last attempt to restore state authority last December has failed with a refusal of the ex-seleka elements who occupy public buildings for 2 years now. The situation in Dekoa is less critical as political and administrative authorities can now be felt in people's daily life and the return of 7000 people to the town also shows a relative stability. In Sibut, one can note the presence of the CAR police and gendarmerie supported by the international forces, however there are no Muslim people in the town.

Situation in the 54 villages, armed groups are ruling the villages and its traditional leaders (present at 87%) with the near absence of state/local authorities. Traditional leaders complained about the interference of armed groups in conflict resolutions and social affairs. Apart from the almost non-existent state administrative and political personnel, only a small number of policemen are present in 2 villages only. 15% of over 7,000 returnees in Dekoa are in need of housing as their houses were either burnt or damaged during the crisis. The monitoring missions identified 241 minors living alone for different reasons including for schooling purposes as some children seek secondary schools in other villages, however many are unaccompanied or separated minors. 623 women heads of households were identified; this phenomenon is mostly due to family separation and death of spouses during conflict. The mission reports that more than 50% of schools are still closed in the two prefectures of Kemo (36 out of 82) and Nana Gribizi (24 out of 54) and parents refrained from sending their children to schools located near the bases used by armed groups

Response: As part of INTERSOS's response to these identified protection issues, 2 cases of sexual violence were referred to health centers in Kaga Bandoro, Dekoa and Sibut for adequate care. 10 unaccompanied minors were referred to ICRC and filed for family tracing and 47 returned children were referred to health structures under World Health Organization's funding in Naganya, Bozamba, Bwanga 1 et 2 villages. 144 displaced women at risk of engaging in survival sex (heads of households) in Sibut (90) and Dekoa (54) were financially assisted.



Shelter and NFIs for internally displaced people

Shelter and NFIs Cluster

- The Shelter/NFI cluster is led by UNHCR and co-led by ACTED
- One of the 3 strategic objectives of the Shelter Cluster (SC) is to support shelter reconstruction for any of the 3 durable solutions for IDPs: return, local integration or relocation. This support to owner-driven reconstruction is complementary to the resilience capacities noticed among households in CAR especially those with female heads of households. The owner-driven shelter reconstruction should be implemented in collaboration with all concerned clusters, national and local authorities and in complementarity with programmes aiming to restore basic services in areas of return. Water and sanitation were identified as the most critical needs to meet and the cluster collaborates with all stakeholders to achieve this goal.
- The Shelter/NFI cluster lead submitted a request to merge Shelter/NFI and CCCM clusters as the current dynamics in CAR are favoring return in some parts of CAR despite new internal and external displacements registered. The merger of the 2 clusters aims at reinforcing reconstruction initiatives (including support to shelter reconstruction but not only) as surveys in IDP sites show that the second reason why IDPs willing to return cannot do so is the loss of their houses formerly owned or rented. UNHCR is waiting for the endorsement of the proposal by the Humanitarian Coordinator.

Achievements and Impact by UNHCR and partners

- UNHCR, through its partnership with ACTED, the Catholic Relief Service, DRC in Ouham, Ouham Pende and Ombella Mpoko prefectures supported 4,526 owner-driven shelter reconstructions with over 29,000 returning IDPs assisted in 2014. UNHCR remains the second main contributor in terms of support to owner driven reconstruction projects after the Common Humanitarian Fund with approximately 6,000.

- Through the provision of plastic sheeting, 9 IDP sites in Bangui (including 1 former site offering night shelters to returning IDPs in the 5th District) and 6 IDP sites up country were set throughout 2014 to provide IDPs with emergency shelters. 269,730 Internally Displaced Persons in 53,946 households were assisted with Non Food Items of the overall 148,392 households assisted in 2014.



Camp Coordination and Camp Management

Camp Coordination Camp Management Cluster

- The CCCM cluster in Central Africa Republic is led by UNHCR and co-led by IOM
- **As of 3 February 2015**, there are **442,495 IDPs in CAR of which 50,281 in 34 sites of Bangui**. 73 sites identified outside of Bangui are hosting 128,202 (over 225,009 IDPs are in host families and 39,003 live in the bush). In Bangui, the 5 biggest sites currently host 37,464 IDPs and 7 sites host less than 100 IDPs each.
- In line with the Durable Solutions Strategy in Bangui, the CCCM cluster works closely with other clusters to adjust the minimum assistance in sites to increasing assistance in the neighborhoods meant to support voluntary return. The cluster supports return intentions surveys (IOM and DRC) and disseminates the results to the humanitarian community for targeted interventions.

Achievements and Impact by UNHCR and partners

- Through its partnership with the Danish Refugee Council and Premiere Urgence-Aide Medicale Internationale, UNHCR ensures the management of 8 sites in Bangui hosting 80% of the total 50,281 IDPs in Bangui. The 8 sites are Mpoko, Grand Séminaire Saint Marc de Bimbo, Saint Joseph de Mukassa, Mission Carmel, Don Bosco, Saint Carles de Luanga, Eglise des frères Castor and Saint Jacques de Kpetene. The site managers/coordinators are responsible for the dissemination of information pertaining to IDPs areas of return, and of conducting “go and see” visits and ‘come and tell’ sessions to and from districts of return. In January, there have been 3 visits conducted with 32 IDPs from Mpoko site.



Multi Sectoral assistance to Refugees

Zemio camp (Congolese refugees) in Zemio, Haut Mbomou prefecture and Pladama Ouaka camp (Sudanese Refugees) in Bambari, Ouaka prefecture

UNHCR and its partners currently assist 8,103 refugees mostly from the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad and Sudan through protection and multi-sectorial assistance in Bangui, Bambari and Zemio camps. Refugees have also been directly affected by the CAR crisis either economically or in their physical integrity which request emergency measures such as: fast track repatriation for voluntary candidates (over 6984 refugees returns facilitated since April 2014), continued advocacy for urgent fast track resettlement of 1,801 Sudanese refugees trapped between two belligerent forces in Bambari, tailored Income Generating activities targeting 79 cooperatives in the 2 camps/1100 members. Despite the highly challenging logistics ahead, UNHCR is currently preparing necessary procedures for the voluntary repatriation of over 500 refugees in Zemio camp who would like to return to DRC after 6 years of exile. These refugees had originally fled the Lord Resistance Army’s activism in DRC’s Province Orientale.

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to this operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

CERF// France//Holy See // Japan // Luxembourg // Private donors from Canada, Australia, and United Kingdom // Republic of Korea // Spain//UN Development Programme // United Kingdom // United States of America//

UNHCR Offices in CAR: 07 offices in Bangui, Bossangoa, Zemio, Bambari, Bouar, Paoua and Kaga Bandoro

UNHCR Staff in CAR: 92 national staff, **25** international staff, **2** IUNV, **1** Consultant

Further information/Maps/Dashboards/Stories on UNHCR CAR can be found on <http://data.unhcr.org/car/regional>

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