



# Central African Republic

ECHO FACTSHEET

## Facts & Figures

**Number of internally displaced (UNHCR):** more than 415 000, including about 48 000 in the capital Bangui

**Number of Central African refugees (UNHCR):** about 471 000 in neighbouring countries

**2.7 million** people are in need of humanitarian assistance

Around **1.5 million** people are food insecure

**2.4 million** Children are affected by the crisis (UNICEF)

## Other data

Population: 4.6 million people

HDI ranking: 185 of 187 countries (UNDP)

## European Commission humanitarian aid since December 2013:

EUR 83,5million (in addition to EUR 21,3 million for CAR refugees in neighbouring countries)

## EU humanitarian assistance (European Commission and EU Member States) in 2014/15:

Over EUR 222 million

About 415 000 people internally displaced due to conflict



About 471 000 Central African refugees in Cameroon, Chad, DR Congo and Republic of Congo



EU\* humanitarian funding in 2014/2015



## EU's work



protection



health care



food assistance and nutrition



drinking water



sanitation



logistics

Source: UNHCR, ECHO/EDRIS - \* European Commission and EU Member States

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## Key messages

- The situation in the Central African Republic remains fragile and tense in view of the upcoming electoral cycle, and has been further aggravated by the late September events.
- Renewed fighting broke out on 26 September between rival groups in the capital Bangui, leading to over 75 killed, more than 400 injured and over 20 000 newly displaced.
- The premises of several aid agencies have been attacked and looted. The EU has called for an immediate stop of all attacks on the civilian population and of the targeting of humanitarian workers.
- Fighting and roadblocks have worsened an already dire humanitarian situation, preventing partners to gain access to thousands of internally displaced people. Non-essential humanitarian staff has been temporarily relocated out of the country for security reasons.
- There are immediate needs in the emergency shelter, health care, water and sanitation sectors. Protection needs are acute.
- With over €222 million provided since 2014, the European Union is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to CAR, where more than half of the population is in need of aid. The European Commission alone has provided €83,5 million (in addition to over €21 million for CAR refugees in neighbouring countries) in humanitarian aid since December 2013.

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# Humanitarian situation and needs

## Background

The Central African Republic (CAR) is one of the poorest countries in the world, facing the worst humanitarian crisis since its independence in 1960. After a regime change in March 2014 and the deployment of international armed forces, the country has struggled to restore stability and order. The greater part of the CAR is affected by the presence of numerous armed groups and widespread criminality. Local populations are regularly falling victim to abuses and arbitrary violence. In spite of relentless efforts to avoid it, ethno-religious tensions remain strong.

Over 415 000 people are still internally displaced (IDPs) after one year. The Muslim population in Bangui has dramatically decreased (Source: UN). New unrest which broke out on 26 September resulted in over 20 000 new displacements in Bangui, bringing the total number of IDPs in the capital to over 48 000.

The ongoing insecurity has more than halved food production. The level of chronic malnutrition has increased and is currently among the highest in the world (around 40% of the under 5-year old population according to UNICEF).

## Major challenges

Over half of the 4.6 million population of the country is in immediate need of humanitarian assistance. The situation of the IDPs is of particular concern. There is no national capacity to assist those affected, and relief efforts are taking place under very challenging conditions.



**The national health system has collapsed** due to widespread violence, destruction of public infrastructure and looting. Humanitarian organisations on the ground are helping to provide basic services and medicines, but the overall situation remains alarming with less than half of the Central Africans having effective access to health.



**Protection of civilians has to be reinforced.** Summary executions of men are being reported, violence against women is rampant. Between 6 000 and 10 000 of boys and girls have been forcibly recruited by armed groups. These children must be freed following an agreement reached at the Bangui Forum in May 2015.



**Around 1.5 million people are food insecure.** Communities' stocks are empty and livelihoods have been severely affected by the fighting and looting provoking substantial increases in food prices and substantial decrease in household income.



**Safe drinking water is scarce.** Less than 35% of the population has access to safe drinking water and adequate sanitation facilities. In most of the displacement sites access to water remains an issue in spite of significant improvement after more than one year of humanitarian intervention. Sanitation is posing serious problems because of the lack of latrines and proper waste management, due to the congested situation of IDP camps across the country.



**Emergency shelter and basic construction materials and tools remain a priority.** Tarpaulins must be changed after one year of use in harsh weather conditions. In order to assist people to return to their place of origin, support in the form of construction materials and tools is required.



## The European Union's response

**The European Union – Commission and Member States – is the largest provider of relief assistance to the Central African Republic**, with support of over €222 million since 2014 to help those in need throughout the country. A team of ECHO experts based in Bangui is closely monitoring the situation, assessing the needs and overseeing the use of funds by partner organisations. Following the latest violence, the EU and its international partners have appealed for calm so that the victims can be assisted.

**Humanitarian assistance** from the European Commission to the Central African Republic amounted to €39 million in 2013, making the European Commission the country's main donor. Since the escalation of violence in December, the Commission has committed €83,5 million of humanitarian aid (from which almost €21 million have been allocated to cover the essential needs of refugees in neighbouring countries). Relief assistance is focused on displaced people both inside and outside IDP camps.

The EU is committed to comprehensively address the CAR crisis in all its dimensions: humanitarian, security, development and political. One example of this approach is the first multi-donor EU Trust Fund – EUTF – called **Békou** ("hope" in Sango language), established in July 2014 by the European Union and three Member States: France, Germany and the Netherlands, joined in 2015 by Italy and Switzerland. It aims at promoting the stabilisation and reconstruction of the CAR and has been established for a maximum duration of 60 months in order to provide a medium-term response. The EC contribution stands at €75 million (€72 million from development funds and €3 million in humanitarian funds devoted to LRRD activities – Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development - out of a total EUTF "Bekou" budget of €103 million).

The EU has previously organised **repeated airlifts of life-saving items and aid personnel** into the CAR to help those affected by the conflict. In 2015, the European Commission is also supporting UN humanitarian air services (UNHAS) in order to facilitate the transport of humanitarian personnel to remote locations throughout CAR, which would otherwise remain inaccessible due to insecurity and very poor infrastructure.

The European Commission is funding humanitarian projects to enable free access to primary **health services** through mobile clinics, with a main focus on life-saving interventions and the control of epidemic-prone infectious diseases. Projects seeking to improve the **protection of civilians** are also being supported, including tracking of incidents, advocacy, medical, psychosocial and legal support to victims as well as actions offering a protective environment for children through the Children of Peace initiative. **Food assistance** is a priority, so as to prevent a nationwide crisis. Relief efforts aim at combining food aid and cash transfer initiatives once the commercial activities return to normal. Moreover, the European Commission is supporting integrated actions to provide safe drinking **water**, re-establish decent **sanitation** facilities and promote better **hygiene** practices (WASH). **Emergency shelter and non-food items** such as blankets and mosquito nets have been made available too. Over 20 000 pieces of plastic sheeting were shipped to Bangui to protect 100 000 displaced people in 2014. **Logistics and coordination of assistance** are of key importance to an effective and efficient delivery of aid as well as humanitarian air service and adequate safety management. A common hub at disposal of NGOs has already been set up. Particular attention is being given to humanitarian air services and close cooperation with relevant stakeholders.

The European Commission has provided over **€21 million to help Central African refugees in neighbouring countries since December 2013**. Almost half of the funding is spent in Cameroon, which was facing the biggest influx of people fleeing the CAR at the beginning of the crisis; €7.8 million has been allocated for Chad, and €3 million for the DRC and the Republic of Congo. The humanitarian assistance addresses the basic needs of refugees such as **shelter, food, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene**. The funds are implemented through the European Commission's partners such as UN agencies, International NGOs, and international organisations like the International Committee of the Red Cross and the International Federation of the Red Cross and the Red Crescent Societies.



## Examples of ECHO funded relief projects

Funding from the European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department (ECHO) allows two main partners, **ACTED** and **DRC**, to focus on reducing the vulnerabilities of displaced people. It helps with providing housing reconstruction, and with securing livelihood in Bangui, Bimbo and Begoua. DRC focuses on improving social coexistence and protection monitoring, while ACTED focuses more on cash-for-work programmes and housing reconstruction support. © EU/ECHO



Funded by the European Commission, **UNICEF** is implementing a project to urgently respond to new displacements of populations, the Rapid-Response Mechanism. As of July 2015, 24 multi-sectorial needs assessment and 14 emergency interventions have already been conducted. This brought relief to the urgent needs of newly displaced populations (51 508 people received Non-Food Item kits and 13 513 people urgent WASH assistance). © EU/ECHO

Households in the worst-hit conflict-affected areas are struggling to cope with the decreasing availability of food and income. Harvest theft, non-operational markets and extreme poverty pose additional challenges, which could trigger a country-wide food and nutrition crisis. The European Commission is funding **the UN Organization for Food and Agriculture (FAO)** to assist women and vulnerable groups, including households which lost their means of existence. © FAO



Under the **EU Children of Peace** initiative, the European Commission is funding a project implemented by **Save the Children**. It supports a total of 14 069 children affected by the conflict: 6 334 of them are in Bangui and 7 735 in Ouaka. Thanks to the implementation of this action, thousands of children gain access to education. Thanks to ECHO funding, Save the Children also provides assistance to children suffering from traumas: the partner is both doing a screening, and providing affected children with healthcare. © Save the Children

The Central African Republic is a landlocked country with poorly developed infrastructures. Therefore, the European Commission is funding **UNHAS** (United Nations Humanitarian Air Service) for a country wide operation. The service is provided to 60 humanitarian partner organisations and helps avoid long and dangerous travel on land routes.



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