

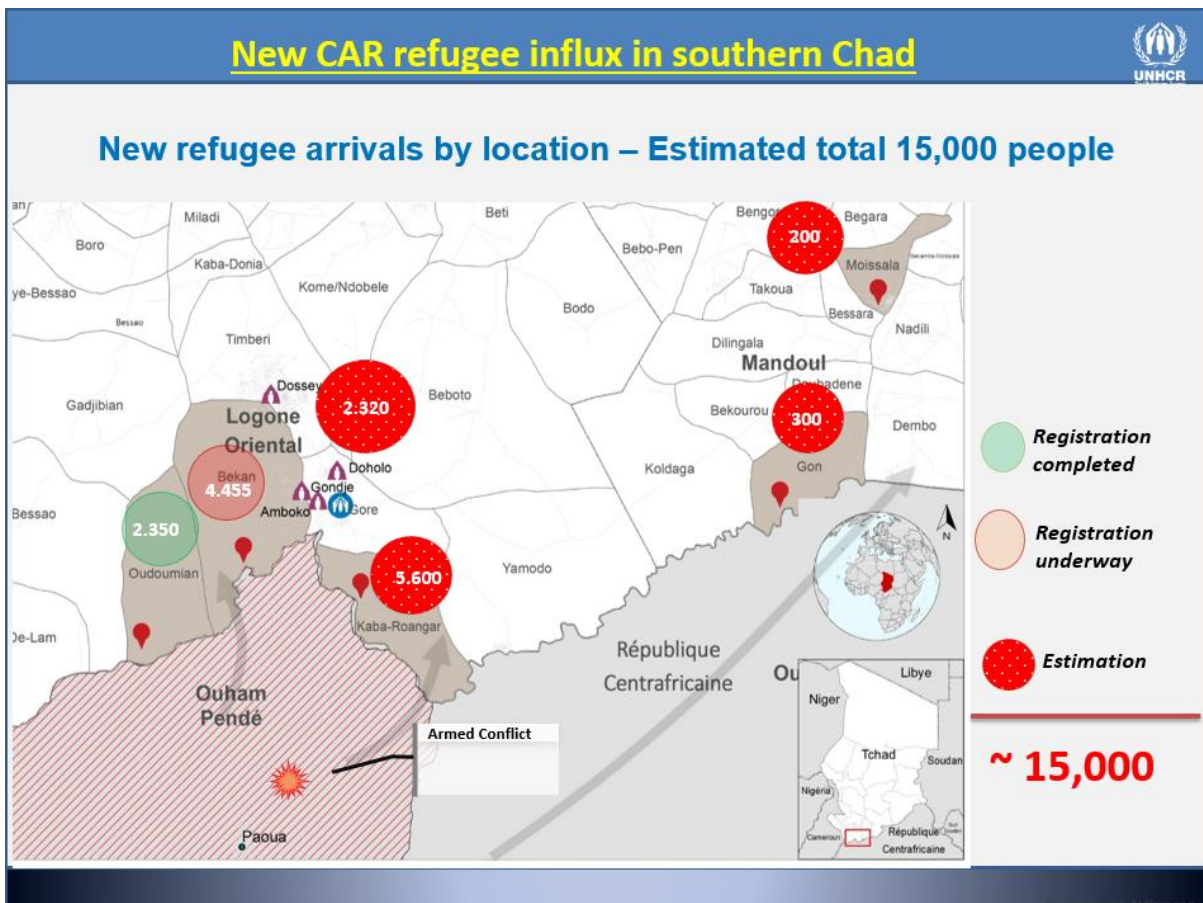
11 January 2018

New CAR refugee influx in southern Chad: UNHCR deploys more staff and resources

UNHCR and partners continue to assist and register new arrivals fleeing renewed violence in northwest CAR

7,000 new CAR refugees registered since end of December and an additional estimated 8,000 new arrivals reported in border villages

UNHCR and WFP are assisting new refugees with non-food and food items



In Chad, UNHCR is mobilising more resources to face an important influx of new refugees fleeing renewed fighting in the northwest of Central African Republic.

With its government counterpart (CNARR), UNHCR have so far registered nearly 7,000 new arrivals from CAR in various villages of the cantons of Oudoumian and Bekan. This figure is more than triple the number of new CAR refugees registered in 2017 in Chad.

More UNHCR and government counterpart staffs have been redeployed from N'djamena to the Sub-Office of Gore with additional registration equipment and vehicles to boost the registration capacity in the field.

The existing contingency plan is being revised to take into account the protection and emergency assistance needs to cater for 25,000 new refugees since situation remains very fluid along the border line.

Refugees said that they are fleeing fighting opposing armed groups and widespread violence and human right abuses in the north-western department of Ouham-Pende in CAR. According to their statements, the situation is far from improving thus prompting civilians to seek refuge in Chad or move to IDPs camp in Paoua town which is currently overcrowded

A group of refugees who arrived last week-end claimed that their villages in CAR, called Bedam, was attacked for the second time on the 5 January 2018, after an initial attack on the 29 December 2017, by armed men most likely from the Seleka rebel group. The attackers came on horses, more houses were burned down and the village pastor was killed.

UNHCR and its partner ADES are providing medical care to the new refugees who trekked on foot through difficult terrain to reach Chadian villages. A lot of children showed signs of severe malnutrition. All children under 5 are vaccinated in line with the national vaccination protocol and the most vulnerable receive special attention or get referred to the nearest health centre in the region.

Early this week, UNHCR and WFP started distributing non-food and food items to the refugees already registered. The food distribution is carried out through cash vouchers to get food commodities from local suppliers.

In line with the out of camp policy, UNHCR and CNARR are identifying villages with adequate capacity to absorb the new refugees. Given the volatile security situation prevailing in the area, refugee will be settled far from the border line.

On Wednesday UNHCR's Representative briefed the humanitarian community in N'djamena on the situation to mobilise efforts for a multisector intervention. UNHCR is concerned over renewed violence and reports of human right abuses forcing displacement of peaceful population. There already over 76,000 CAR refugees living mainly in six camps in the south of the country, with the first waves of CAR refugees into Chad recorded in 2002.