

Central African Republic Situation

June - July 2017

The Central African Republic (CAR) was making progress on the road to recovery: significant numbers of displaced people had begun to return home, the government was focused on institution-building and shoring up peace and reconciliation. However, many of these **positive developments were challenged by a progressive deterioration of the security situation** in the last few months. Nearly one in two people in CAR continued to need humanitarian aid or protection to survive, while **one in every five Central Africans remains either internally displaced or has fled to a neighbouring country**. With the proliferation of armed groups and increased human rights abuses, particular attention must be paid to the current situation and the **serious risk of further armed confrontation** which could drive a further increase in the number of refugees fleeing to neighbouring countries, as well as a rise in the number of IDPs.

KEY FIGURES

438,609

CAR refugees in the sub-region (as of end June 2017)

30,631

Central African refugees have spontaneously returned to the country (January to June 2017)

600,000

IDPs in CAR (as of end July 2017)

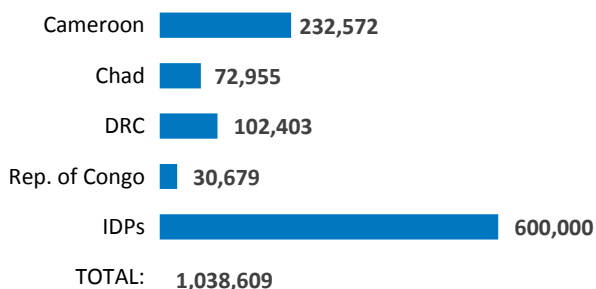
Source: *Commission Mouvement de Populations*

HIGHLIGHTS

- The number of internally displaced people has increased by 34 per cent in the **Central African Republic** between June and July, while small numbers of refugees have continued to return spontaneously since January 2017.
- In **Cameroon**, UNHCR has started providing assistance following the influx of some 7,000 new arrivals from CAR who have arrived in the North region since the beginning of July.
- UNHCR has distributed relief items and shelter for the 751 new refugees arriving from CAR in **Chad** with a prepared site for further influx.
- Since mid-May 2017, some 64,000 asylum seekers have arrived from CAR into the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**.
- In the **Republic of Congo**, UNHCR registered 242 Central African asylum seekers in July, of whom 73 were new arrivals.

POPULATION OF CONCERN (as of end of July 2017 or latest figures available)

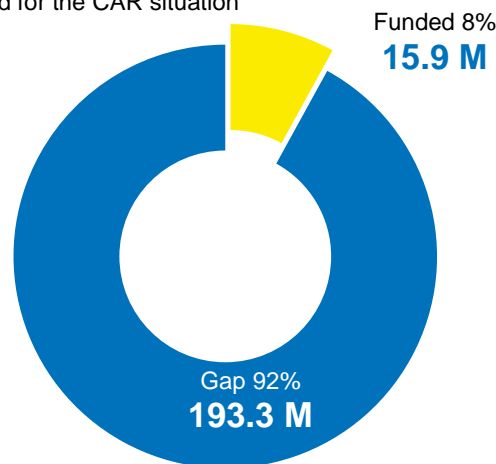
Countries



FUNDING (as of end July 2017)

USD 209.2 M

requested for the CAR situation



Operational Context

- Despite the ceasefire agreed upon in the Rome Agreement of 20 June 2017, there has been a **resurgence of violence** in the south-east and central part of the Central African Republic, particularly in the towns of Zemio, Bria, Kaga-Bandoro and more recently in Bangassou, hampering humanitarian operations, including UNHCR's. The renewed violence is taking place against a backdrop of sustained fighting in the **south-east** of the country, heightened inter-ethnic tensions and efforts by various entities to manipulate communities along religious lines. In Zemio, some 300 km east of Bangassou, UNHCR staff reported intense heavy weapons' fire on several occasions since the end of June. Some houses close to UNHCR's office were burnt down. In the **central part** of the country, in the town of Bria, the security situation remains fragile following clashes reported on 20 June 2017. It is estimated that indiscriminate attacks in Bria have left some 136 people dead and 36 wounded, with 600 houses burned and an additional 180 looted. People fleeing the violence spoke of having witnessed brutal attacks, killings, robberies, lootings and kidnappings. In a separate incident in Kaga Bandoro in the north of the country, unidentified armed men tried to break into UNHCR accommodation on the night of 28 June, 2017, with the intention of attacking staff and looting belongings. The attack was thwarted by MINUSCA Forces.
- **Humanitarian organisations, including UNHCR, are increasingly being targeted by armed groups.** Early July, in Zemio, humanitarian workers, among them UNHCR staff were kidnapped for several hours and later released. Insecurity is also preventing UNHCR staff and other humanitarians to assess the full extent of damages or displacement from the recent violence. The direct targeting of UNHCR and aid agencies has reduced humanitarian access, blocking access to IDPs for the distribution of assistance or for protection purposes.
- The departure of longstanding peacekeeping forces from some locations has led to the emergence of hostile armed groups, such as the 'self-defence' groups, and a **deterioration of the protection environment**. Advances by armed groups are now being seen in areas that were previously considered stable such as Bangassou, Zemio, Obo, and Paour. The most notable departures have been those of American and Ugandan forces based in eastern CAR, in particular in Obo, and the MINUSCA Congolese forces based in the west of the country, including the towns of Bouar and Berberati. **IDPs have no freedom of movement**, finding themselves confined to enclaves or IDP sites and risking physical assault by members of armed groups every time they attempt to venture outside. This means that they are unable to approach humanitarian actors, and unable to access vital supplies. This is true of Bangassou, as well as in Zemio where armed groups control all the roads and have destroyed bridges to prevent the movement of vehicles and MINUSCA tanks.
- Insecurity is preventing UNHCR staff and other humanitarians to assess the full effects of the recent violence. **The direct targeting of UNHCR and other aid agencies has reduced humanitarian access**, blocking access to IDPs for the distribution of assistance or protection purposes. The insecurity has resulted in the temporary withdrawal of many UN agencies as well as national and INGOs from certain locations. UNHCR temporarily evacuated personnel from both Kaga-Bandoro and Zemio. Other humanitarian actors have also evacuated their staff from Kaga-Bandoro, Zemio and Bangassou and others were waiting for an opportunity to remove their personnel from some towns in the west, including Ngaoundaye, Bang, and Bocaranga.
- The residual fallout of **conflict in CAR continues to uproot hundreds of thousands people** and poses challenges to ending the effect of conflict in neighbouring Cameroon, Chad, DRC and RoC. The acceleration in the pace of population movements – within CAR and to neighbouring countries – is creating an increasingly dire situation as displacement is protracted. Women and children continue to be most affected and critical needs continue to exceed available resource levels. Renewed and sustained donor engagement as well as flexible funding are urgently required to save fragile gains and prevent the situation from further deterioration.

Country Updates

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

- The precarious political and security situation has resulted in further population displacements with a roughly 34 per cent increase in the number of IDPs throughout the country in just two months. At the end of July, it stood at precisely 600,000 IDPs, according to *the Commission Mouvement de Population*, an inter-agency forum led by the UNHCR. In addition, insecurity has prompted the forced return of some refugees hosted in CAR, to their country of origin. An unknown number of the 2,000 Congolese refugees living in Zemio camp may have crossed back into the DRC.
- From January to June 2017, there were 30,631 spontaneous refugee returns from countries of asylum as well as returns by some IDPs to their places of origin. Many of these refugee returnees and IDP returnees have since returned to their countries of asylum and IDP sites respectively, due to the lack of security inside CAR.
- UNHCR has responded to the widespread displacement by extending its field presence to new areas where possible. In this vein, the operation has maintained a constant presence of protection and CCCM staff in Bria, the epicentre of much of the displacement in the east of the country. In those areas that are presently beyond the reach of UNHCR, such as Bangassou and Zemio, the agency has contributed NFI and shelter assistance to the overall humanitarian response. Nevertheless, even some planned deliveries of assistance by air have been delayed or blocked by the presence of armed groups restricting humanitarian access.

CAMEROON

- Fighting in CAR's north-western region, in particular in and around the town of Ngaoudaye, has forced nearly 7,000 people to flee in July, the majority being women and children, across the border to Touboro locality in the North region of Cameroon. While new arrivals are settling in host communities where the majority of Central Africans in Cameroon are hosted, they mention that the situation in their country is so unstable that chances to return any time soon are unlikely. Their immediate needs also include health care and nutrition, shelter, education, and food.
- In addition to the strong efforts of local authorities to settle newly arriving refugees, UNHCR has registered all 6,885 new arrivals and is now proceeding with their biometric verification. Non-food items (NFIs), including kitchen sets, plastic sheeting, soap, mats, blankets and buckets have been distributed to all new arrivals. Many unaccompanied children and separated children were identified during this process.
- UNHCR is reinforcing its presence in the area and is exploring the possibility of opening an antenna office in Touboro with the expected increase of new arrivals. UNHCR Cameroon's contingency plan of December 2016 is currently being updated to reflect the current situation and will be finalized this month.
- Aid agencies are providing medical care and food to the refugees. The health centre in Touboro locality is being reinforced to improve services and help assess the needs of the refugees. WFP has indicated limited resources for 2,885 people for a period of two weeks. A joint UNHCR/WFP advocacy meeting is planned in Yaoundé to draw the donor community's attention to the current situation.

CHAD

- Chad has received some 1,000 new CAR refugees in July, predominantly women and children. They fled violence in northwest CAR. While some stayed only a few days before going back to CAR, continuous arrivals were reported. UNHCR has transferred 751 people to the new sites and registered more than 585 as of the end of July.
- UNHCR has distributed NFI kits and relief items including plastic sheeting, blankets, mats, kitchen sets, buckets and mosquito nets. In addition, as of end of July, shelter has been

distributed to all 585 of the 751 new arrivals registered as refugees so far. To address food needs, WFP provided vouchers while UNHCR served hot meals.

- To adequately anticipate future inflows, UNHCR has access to a site with a maximum capacity of 2,000 people. The site is already equipped with services for up to 1,000 people and has 59 latrines and shower blocks, two boreholes, and a 200 m² warehouse.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- Local authorities estimate that 64,000 asylum seekers from CAR have arrived since mid-May in various localities of Bas-Uele and Nord Ubangui Provinces where UNHCR has limited access, particularly in the small town of Ndu, just across the Mbomou River. Most of the new arrivals are staying close to the rivers – Mbomou and Ubangi – constituting the border between the two countries, hoping to quickly cross the border again once the situation stabilizes. UNHCR teams met some of the new arrivals while others were reported by local authorities.
- Pre-registration of asylum-seekers is ongoing in Nord Ubangi Province and is being carried out by the National Commission for Refugees. As of 25 July, 26,916 asylum seekers were identified and interviewed in the territories of Yakoma (8,468) and Mobayi – Mbongo (18,448). Among the most recent arrivals were many children and pregnant women.
- From 27 July to 1 August, UNHCR and the Government's National Commission for Refugees conducted a mission to Ndu to assess the security situation, road access, protection issues, and living conditions of asylum-seekers. Three days of travel are necessary to cover 315 km of road between Gbadolite and Ndu, most of which is only accessible by motorbikes. Asylum-seekers complained of several cases of extortion and face serious protection risks related sexual and gender-based violence. The living conditions are extremely precarious with the lack of food, shelter, water and sanitation, and health care, and existing infrastructures are overwhelmed as some villages have grown up to 15 times their original population size.

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- In July, UNHCR registered 242 refugees from CAR, of which 73 individuals were new arrivals, the others were living in Congo since 2014 and 2015, while some 33 Central Africans had transited through DRC before entering Congo. UNHCR is making the preparatory works to provide assistance to these refugees (NFI and hygiene kits).



A group of new arrivals from Central African Republic being relocated by UNHCR from the border to Belom camp, 25 km away @UNHCR/ Kourouma

Financial Information

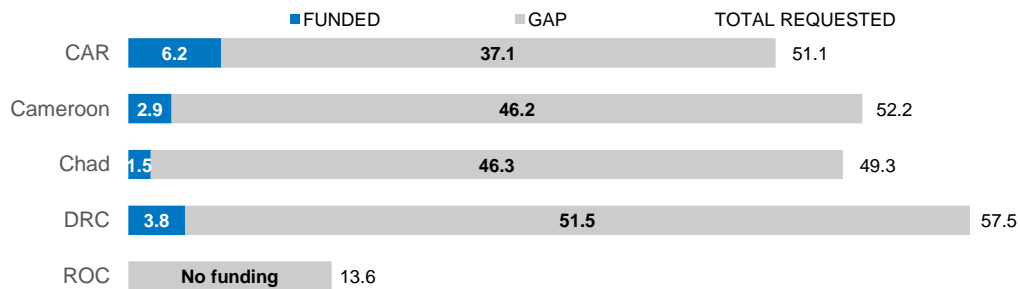
In 2017, UNHCR's requirements amount to \$209.2 million to meet the immediate humanitarian needs of people of concern in Central African Republic and for the refugee response in asylum countries. UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

Donors who have contributed to the operation:

- Country-Based Pooled Funds
- European Union
- France
- Germany
- Ireland
- Japan
- Private Donors Canada
- Private Donors Italy
- Private Donors Sweden
- Private Donors Switzerland
- Private Donors USA
- UN Foundation (UNFIP)
- UNIQLO Co., Ltd
- United Kingdom
- Vodafone Foundation

Funding (in million USD)

A total of **\$15.9 million** has been funded



Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

United States of America (95 M) | Sweden (76 M) | Netherlands (52 M) | Norway (41 M) | Private Donors Spain (35 M) | Japan (25 M) | Denmark (23 M) | Australia (19 M) | Canada (16 M) | Switzerland (15 M) | Private Donors Republic of Korea (15 M) | France (10k4 M) | Private Donors USA (13M) | Germany (12 M) | Italy (10 M)

Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

Algeria | Austria | Belgium | Bosnia and Herzegovina | Chile | Costa Rica | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Indonesia | Ireland | Kuwait | Lithuania | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Morocco | New Zealand | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Serbia | Singapore | Sri Lanka | Thailand | Turkey | United Arab Emirates | Uruguay | Zambia | Private Donors

CONTACTS

Wendy Rappeport, Senior External Relations Officer,
rappepor@unhcr.org, Tel: +41 (22) 739 8993

Alan Mouton, Associate External Relations Officer
mouton@unhcr.org, Tel: +41 (22) 739 8830

Elisa Furuta, Associate External Relations Officer
furuta@unhcr.org, Tel: +41 (22) 739 7897

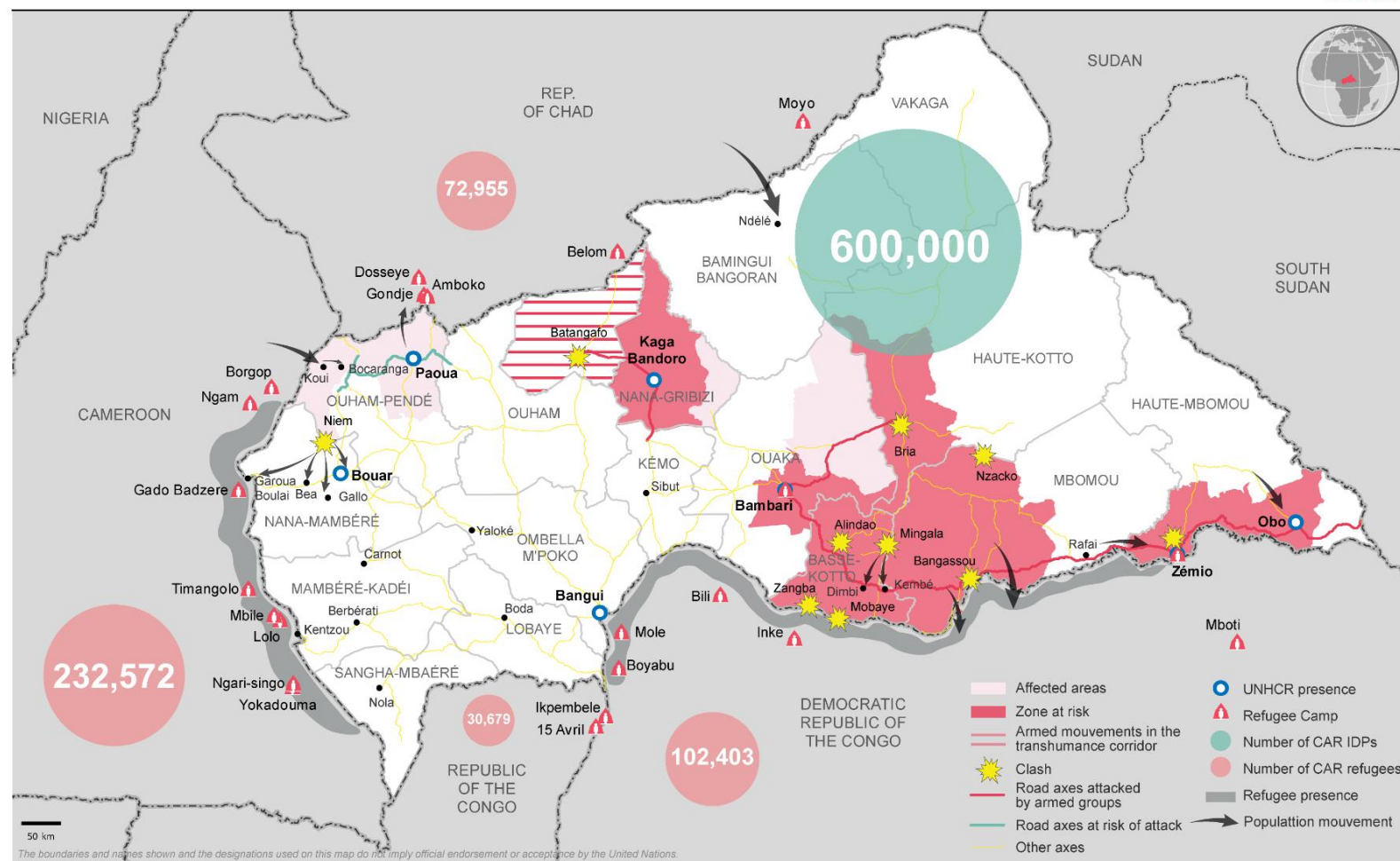
LINKS

[UNHCR AFRICA WEBPAGE](#) – [UNHCR DATA PORTAL](#) – [UNHCR CAR SITUATION WEBPAGE](#) –
[UNHCR TWITTER](#) – [UNHCR FACEBOOK](#) – [UNHCR GLOBAL FOCUS](#)

Central African Republic Regional Situation

Internal Displacement and Refugee Movements

as of 31 July 2017 or latest figures available



Creation date: 14 August 2017 Sources: UNHCR Author: UNHCR - HQ Geneva Feedback: mapping@unhcr.org Filename: caf_situation_A4L