



# Central African Republic

ECHO FACTSHEET

## Facts & Figures

**Number of internally displaced (UNHCR):** over 450 000, including over 48 000 in the capital Bangui

**Number of Central African refugees (UNHCR):** about 463 500 in neighbouring countries

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

Around **2.5 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 103.5million (in addition to €26 million for Central African refugees in neighbouring countries)

**EU humanitarian assistance (European Commission and EU Member States) since 2014:** Over EUR 255 million

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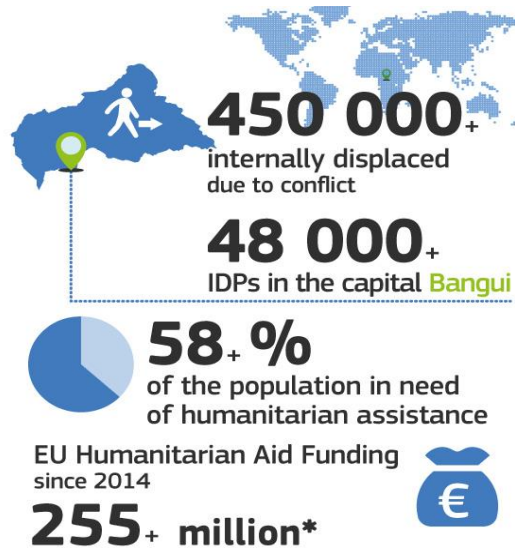
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\* All the latest ECHO Factsheets: [bit.ly/echo-fs](http://bit.ly/echo-fs)



**463 500+**

Central Africans refugees in neighbouring countries



EU's work



\*European Commission + Member States | 08/02/2016 | Source: UNHCR and OCHA



## Key messages

- The humanitarian situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) remains extremely serious over two years after the current crisis erupted in December 2013. Some 2.7 million people – or more than half of the population – are in need of humanitarian assistance. 2.4 million children are affected by the crisis, according to UNICEF.
- The situation has recently worsened after fighting broke out between rival groups in the capital Bangui at the end of September 2015. It led to at least 75 deaths, more than 400 injured and over 20 000 newly displaced. In the last months of 2015, violent incidents have continued in Bangui and spread to the provinces (Batangafo, Bambari).
- Humanitarian needs are on the rise, but regular fighting and access constraints complicate aid organisations' work and access to people in need.
- With over €255 million provided since 2014, the European Union is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to CAR. The European Commission alone has provided €103.5 million (in addition to €26 million for Central African refugees in neighbouring countries) in humanitarian aid since December 2013.
- The Commission's humanitarian assistance targets primarily needs in the areas of nutrition, health, emergency shelter, water, sanitation and protection of civilians.

# 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 change in regime in March 2013 and the deployment of international armed forces, the country has struggled to restore stability and order due to the presence of numerous armed groups and widespread criminality. Local populations are constantly victim of abuses and arbitrary violence. In spite of relentless efforts to avoid it, ethno-religious tensions remain strong.

Over 451 000 people are still internally displaced (IDPs) over two years after the current crisis erupted in December 2013. The Muslim population in Bangui has dramatically decreased, according to UN sources, and is currently living in a quasi-enclaved situation.

A new cycle of unrest that started at the end of September 2015 has worsened the situation further. Fighting broke out between rival groups in the capital Bangui on 26 September, leading to at least 75 deaths, more than 400 injured and over 20 000 newly displaced (bringing the total number of IDPs in the capital to 58 000). Since then, recurrent violent incidents have continued in Bangui and spread to the provinces (Batangafo, Bambari).

The premises of several aid agencies have been attacked and looted. Moreover, increasing intercommunity tensions have been observed and IDP sites have consequently been directly targeted. Regular fighting and access constraints have worsened an already dire humanitarian situation, preventing partners to gain access to thousands of internally displaced people. As a consequence, humanitarian needs are on the rise and emergency response must be stepped up.

Despite a temporarily decreased humanitarian presence in the first days of October 2015, lifesaving activities never ceased. They have now progressively resumed focusing mainly on emergency relief.

The ongoing insecurity combined with adverse climatic effects has more than halved the food production. As a result, crop availability is expected to be insufficient to cover the population's consumption needs in 2016. 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).

In view of the huge needs of a large part of the population of the country and the challenges ahead, it is crucial to maintain CAR on the international community agenda, especially at this very critical moment of an upcoming electoral cycle.

## Major challenges

Over half of the 4.6 million population of the country is in immediate need of humanitarian assistance. The IDP situation 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 is a major issue.** Summary executions of men are being reported, violence against women is rampant. Between 6 000 and 10 000 boys and girls have been forcibly recruited by armed groups. These children are due to be freed following an agreement reached at the Bangui Forum in May 2015.





**Around 2.5 million people are food insecure.** Communities' stocks are empty and livelihoods have been severely affected by fighting and looting, provoking substantial increases in food prices and a 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 brought about by humanitarian interventions over the past months. Sanitation is challenging due to lack of latrines and proper waste management in congested IDP camps across the country.



**Emergency shelter and basic construction materials and tools remain a priority.** Worn out tarpaulins must be replaced after one year. In order to assist people to return to their place of origin, shelter 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 €255 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 outbreak of 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 2013, the Commission has committed €103.5 million in humanitarian aid (in addition to €26 million which have been allocated to cover the essential needs of CAR 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 **Bêkou** ("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 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 €83 million (€80 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 €113 million).

The EU has organised **repeated airlifts of life-saving items and aid personnel** into 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 **€26 million to help Central African refugees\* in neighbouring countries since December 2013**. Most of the funding is spent in Cameroon (€15 million), which was facing the biggest influx of people fleeing the CAR at the beginning of the crisis; €8.8 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 **the Danish Refugee Council (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 has funded a project implemented by **Save the Children**. It provided support 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 provided 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.

