

CAR SITUATION

UNHCR CAR UPDATE

OCTOBER 2016 HIGHLIGHTS

KEY FIGURES

420,681 IDPs in CAR of whom **158,862** in sites and **261,819** in host families

258 South Sudanese refugees have been relocated in the first two convoys from Bambouti to Obo.

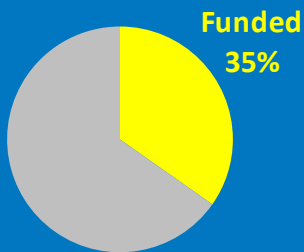
26,804 Central African refugees have returned to CAR during 2016.



South Sudanese refugees arrive at Obo after a two-day journey from Bambouti.

FUNDING

USD 57.9 million
Requested for the situation



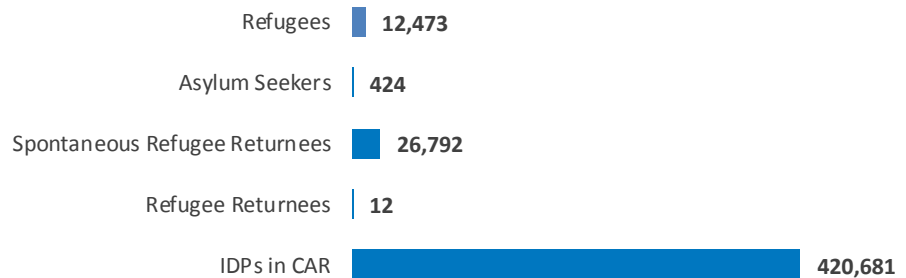
PRIORITIES

- Seek a durable solution for the displaced population in M'Poko International Airport site
- Emergency response to the needs of South Sudanese refugees in Bambouti, and the preparation of a suitable site in Obo.
- Beginning the verification exercise for the Sudanese refugees in Pladama Ouaka Camp, Bambari.

- The relocation of South Sudanese refugees from Bambouti to Obo began. Two convoys completed the journey during late October. The relocation process is expected to take two-to-three months.
- The SGBV sub-cluster published the findings of its Information Management System for the first six months of the year. Between January and June it recorded a total 5,672 cases of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV).

Population of concern

A total of **460,382** people of concern.



RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

Security

General: October witnessed the continuation of a concerning security trend as outbreaks of violence spread around the country, including the capital. An increase in the number of attacks had a pronounced effect on the delivery of humanitarian assistance. In some cases, humanitarian workers were directly targeted, whilst elsewhere the prevailing security situation restricted humanitarian space and inhibited movement in the field. The month closed with the final departure of the French SANGARIS force from the country. This force had been in CAR since the 2013 crisis and will be succeeded by a residual French presence in support of MINUSCA.

Bangui: On Tuesday, 4 October, the bodyguard of the former President Catherine Samba-Panza, Major Marcel Mombeka, was assassinated in the PK5 neighbourhood of Bangui. On the morning Monday 24 October, protests broke out in Bangui against the MINUSCA presence in CAR. The unrest left five dead and a further eight injured. UN Police stepped in to control the situation using water cannons, teargas, and firing warning shots. UN staff movement in Bangui was restricted for several days whilst the situation returned to normal. The evening of Sunday 30 October saw fighting erupt between two community self-defence groups. During the exchange of fire, a well-known local armed-group leader, under the alias 50/50, was killed.

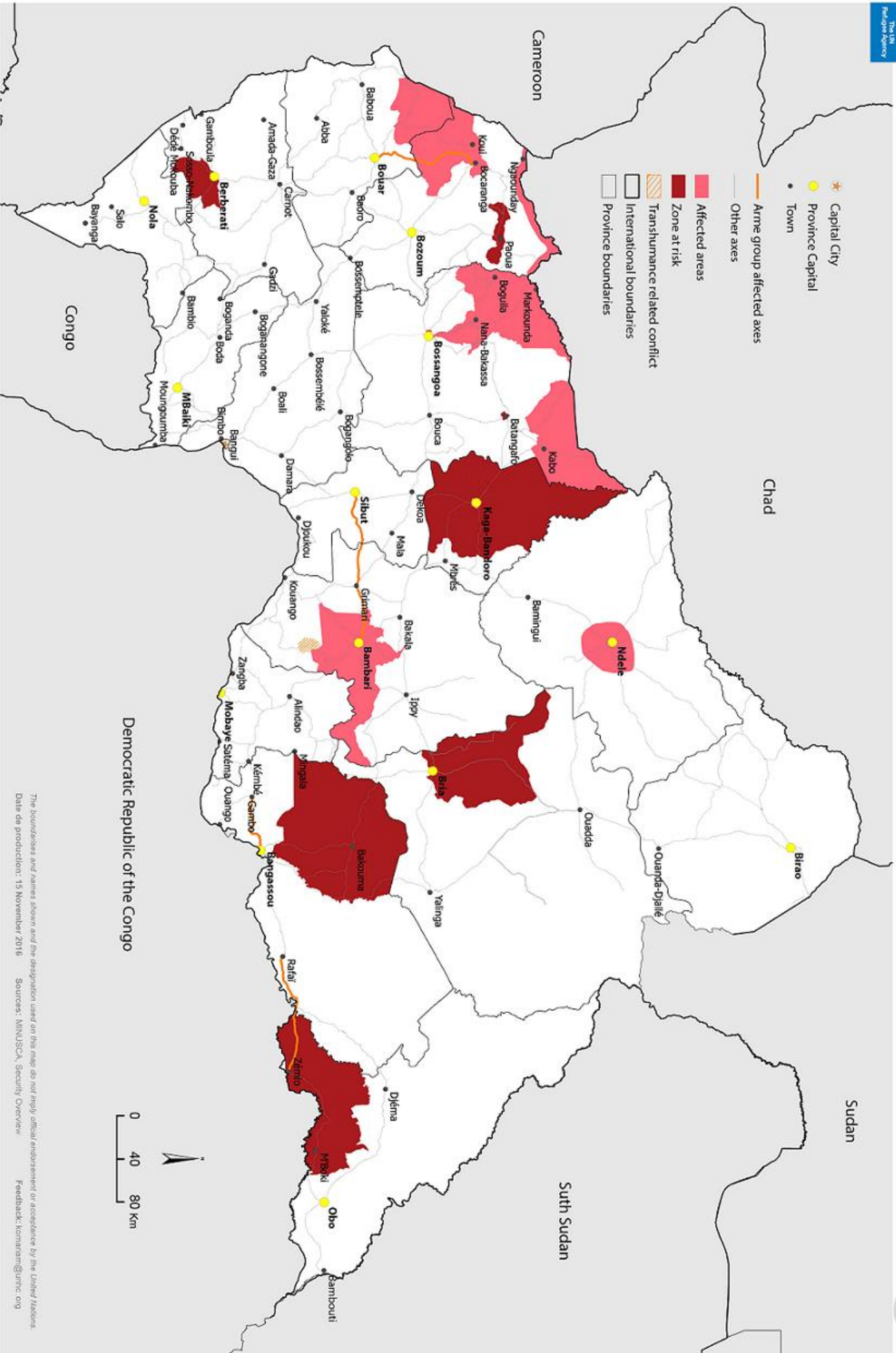
Bambari: The most notable feature of the security environment in and around Bambari was a rise in the number of assassinations. A series of incidents over the final few days of the month created significant tensions. On Friday 28 October, 6 gendarmes and 3 civilians were killed in an ambush 10km outside the town on the road to Grimari. Later on the same day, MINUSCA forces clashed with anti-Balaka who had set up an illegal check-point in the town. Amongst the three civilians killed in the cross-fire were a seven-year-old girl and a driver for the National Refugee Commission (CNR), UNHCR's key government counterpart. Also on Friday 28 October, two humanitarian workers were taken hostage by anti-Balaka in Bambari. After several hours of negotiations between the kidnappers and MINUSCA, both hostages were released unharmed.

Kaga-Bandoro: The situation in Kaga Bandoro during October remained as volatile as in previous months. Widespread looting saw NGOs pull back from the town as humanitarian workers were amongst the victims of violent robberies. On 11 and 12 October, the death of a member of the GSA armed group sparked reprisals across a number of sites, including the I'évêché IDP site as well as the Catholic Mission, Mambea, and Balékara in the town centre. In total, the violence left 38 people dead and 60 injured. Properties occupied by Intersos, IRC, Projet Londo, Solidarité Internationale, and a UNHCR warehouse, were attacked by looters. On 17 October, over 200 persons fled from Kaga-Bandoro, travelling on commercial trucks to Bangui. Some went to live with family relations, while about 71 without host families were received in the house of the chief of Gobongo village in the northern exit of Bangui. Displaced persons were subjected to racketeering by the GSA and GAU armed groups. Displaced families in sites reported being charged a CFA 1,000 protection fee; the same fee was also levied for the protection of their homes if they attempted to return.

Western Sector: In the west of the country, mounting tensions in and around Kouï caused alarm. Throughout the month, there was a visible ex-Seleka presence in the area. Since September, the inhabitants of some 145 villages in Kouï prefecture have fled, with some 15,000 displaced persons staying in the vicinity of Bocaranga. This deterioration in security has led to MINUSCA redoubling its efforts in Kouï itself, as well as strengthening its numbers in Bocaranga and in Paoua.



Hotspots in the Central African Republic as of 31 October 2016



The boundaries and names shown and the designation used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.
 Date de production: 15 November 2016 Sources: MINUSCA, Security Overview Feedback: komaram@unrc.org



Operations

In light of the tensions that gripped Ouham-Pende in September, a number of missions were conducted to the area to assess the humanitarian and protection environment. From 19 to 22 October, UNHCR staff visited Bocaranga, under the coverage of Field Office Paoua, in order to follow up on protection monitoring and to convene the local Protection Cluster meeting. During late September, violence in Degaulle town had displaced an estimated 3,400 families towards Bocaranga. The priority forms of assistance were agreed as being the health and food security sectors. A food distribution was organised for approximately 3,000 families on October 7, with UNHCR involved in ensuring that protection priorities were taken into account during the distribution. Whilst some challenges were observed in beneficiary selection, largely due to the constant flux of movement between the affected towns within the prefecture, it was found that key services are being delivered without interruption.

Despite the interruption that the security situation has caused to services in Kouï, UNHCR partner ACTED has managed to recommence activities in the neighbouring sub-prefecture of Ngaoundaye. During October, a reconstruction support and training project assisted 282 beneficiaries. The project included carpentry trainings on the fabrication of windows and doors, the distribution of reconstruction kits, and reconstruction support for the local hospital in the village of Mann. A similar project is being planned in Bocaranga.

Protection

Sexual and gender based violence

The sudden onset of the situation in Kaga-Bandoro posed a number of protection challenges, chief amongst which was how to respond to the increased risk of SGBV. Through SGBV sub-cluster, sensitization sessions were delivered for the newly displaced, individual follow-up was provided for cases, and a counselling centre temporarily established in a delivery room at the nearby hospital. Partner IRC ensured that a trained professional was on hand to give medical and psychosocial assistance.

A UNHCR-operated call centre in Ndomete, near Kaga-Bandoro, has also been providing trauma management and support for Gender-Based Violence cases after the mass violence that took place in the village during late September.

In Bambari, despite the prevailing tension, UNHCR and UNFPA succeeded in organizing trainings for the members of seven community protection committees. In total, 113 local community members were trained on sensitive protection delivery in conflicts, and 180 community coordinators were trained on SGBV prevention and response.

The first semester GBV-IMS (Information Management System) report was issued and presented to the GBV sub-cluster on 21 October. The main findings of the report were that of the 5,627 cases reported during the first half of the year some 15% of SGBV survivors were minors; 86% of survivors were female. The majority of incidents took place at the survivor's home. Legal assistance was provided for 3,123 of the recorded cases, whilst all reported cases were offered first-aid psychosocial assistance.

Child Protection

In Bambari, the child-friendly space run by the child protection sub-cluster provided recreational activities for 374 children. Child care was ensured for four children who had been accused of witchcraft. A further six children received rehabilitation and psychosocial assistance prior to being reunited with their families in Ippy. In addition to receiving trauma management assistance, persons of concern in Ndomete have also been given access to tracing services, helping to reunite unaccompanied minors with their families.

Internally Displaced Persons

The increasing uncertainty surrounding the security situation in CAR drove a marked increase in the number of displaced persons during the month of October, climbing by more than 35,000 since the previous month to 420,681. This means

that approximately 8% of the country is currently living in displacement. The vast majority of this increase stems from the unrest in Kaga-Bandoro, with almost 20,000 people fleeing towards the MINUSCA base on 12 October, seeking safety. UNHCR has provided 4,500 NFI kits for those affected. Further, the agency and its partners have been working to prepare an alternative location for those affected at the Lazare IDP site where land has been cleared, though the community are seeking security guarantees prior to moving. It is expected that the move will take place in the coming weeks.

Refugees

On 23 October, the first convoy of 100 South Sudanese refugees arrived in Obo from Bambouti. Over the previous months, UNHCR had put in place the necessary preparations to relocate this population for security, protection, and logistical reasons. Each convoy is comprised of four all-terrain trucks and a Central African Armed Forces (FACA) escort, along with two medical staff. The journey requires an overnight stop in the town of Basibilli where UNHCR ensures the provision of hot food for the refugees. A second convoy completed the journey on 28 October, carrying 158 refugees, with more set to follow throughout November and December. Initial indications suggest that a significant number of those making the journey arrived in CAR after the June/July registration exercise. The 258 new arrivals in Obo have added to some 657 who were already there and were registered in the town in September. Key services are already being provided for the latest arrivals. In particular, a needs assessment was undertaken for the 27 newly-identified persons with specific needs. UNHCR has already constructed 75 shelters of a planned 100 for families containing persons with specific needs, in addition to erecting 42 family-sized tents each of which is capable of housing a family of five. WASH needs have been met through two functional latrine and shower blocks, whilst two more are currently under construction. During the month, UNHCR's partner on the ground, Vision to Change the World (VCW) also facilitated 91 medical consultations at the health centre in Obo – malaria remains the most prevalent illness amongst the population.

Returnees

The pace of refugee returns to CAR has slowed somewhat after the large numbers that were seen in the summer. In October, just over 500 Central African refugees returned to the country. Refugee returnees in Sibut have been facing shelter problems. Some 541 individuals, who recently returned from Chad, are presently without shelter.

Durable Solutions and Reintegration

UNHCR began its preparations for a resettlement programme for the Sudanese refugees living in the Pladama Ouaka refugee camp near Bambari. A verification exercise has been planned for November to ensure that population details are correct ahead of the start of resettlement interviews. Best Interest Determination (BID) interviews have already been conducted for children in the camp.

On 27 October, a UNHCR team visited the Don Bosco IDP site in Bangui, along with a representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs. The group met with community representatives of the occupants of the site. All had already agreed that they wished to return from the site and informed the mission that preparations for this were well underway. The Don Bosco site housed 447 families. It was agreed that the return and NFI distribution would take place over a period of two days on 2 and 3 November. UNHCR reiterated that families should only return voluntarily and that those who do not wish to are under no obligation to do so. The team also visited the planning authorities to investigate the possibility of securing land titles for inhabitants of the Djongo IDP site who were seeking to locally integrate. The population of Padre Pio site, in Bimbo, 419 households, departed during late October, returning to a variety of locations, mostly within the Bangui area.



Shelter/Non Food Items/Camp Coordination and Camp Management

During October, the registration process for the M'Poko Airport IDP site that was carried out with the support of UNHCR and IOM was completed. Whilst the report is awaiting final publication by the Ministry of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation, initial results suggest that 28,000 people remain on the site. UNHCR and the CCCM Cluster is coordinating with humanitarian partners to develop a plan of action for the government's approval.

Regarding ASA and NRC, have joined with launching a pilot project in the district of Begoua, in the outskirts of Bangui. The project aims to construct a community centre which will facilitate negotiations and conflict resolution and social cohesion. This will include a component on addressing Housing, Land and Property issues. By identifying the properties of displaced families that have since been occupied by those community members who remained, the centre will then seek to start negotiations on returning the properties to their rightful owners.

UNHCR partners, ACTED and the World Lutheran Federation (LWF) have already completed beneficiary selection for a shelter construction project, with 500 beneficiaries identified in Bangui, as well as in six locations across Nana-Mambere, and Mambere-Kadei prefectures. The project aims to complete 1,000 shelters: 300 in Bangui will be managed by ACTED, whilst LWF will construct 700 shelters in the other locations.

Working in partnership

- 4 Ministries: (i) Interior, Public Security, Territorial Administration, line Ministry (ii) Social affairs and National Reconciliation, (iii) Minister of Economy, Plan and Cooperation (iv) Urban development and Housing
- 1 governmental partner the National Refugee Commission (CNR) and 10 partners selected in 2016 to implement UNHCR activities in CAR: ACTED; Afrique, Secours et Assistance; AIRD; Norwegian Refugee Council; Danish Refugee Council; Mercy Corps; Cooperazione Internazionale; International Medical Corps; Lutheran World Foundation; INTERSOS; Vision to Change the World
- 6 national NGOs: Bangui Sans Frontière (BSF); Idéal; Yamacuir; JUPEDDEC; Arbre de vie; ATEDEC;
- Three clusters led by UNHCR in CAR: Protection, Camp Coordination Camp Management (CCCM), and Non Food Items/Shelter which have been merged with CCCM.
- Partnership with UNDP and the government in the search for durable solutions for IDPs and returnees in CAR with the involvement of humanitarian partners and early recovery/development actors as well as MINUSCA.

UNHCR and Partners' presence in CAR

Sectors of Intervention:

- **Protection** of conflict-affected people including displaced
- **Emergency response** to population movements (shelter and core relief items)
- **Support to return** through support to house reconstruction and promotion of housing, land and property rights
- **Multi sectoral assistance to refugees** (registration, documentation, camp management, health, education, vocational training, income generating activities etc.)
- **Coordination of humanitarian response** in protection, camp coordination camp management, shelter and core relief items

UNHCR is grateful for the generous contributions of donors who have given lifesaving contributions to UNHCR this year as well as the following donors who have directly contributed to the operation: **France | Germany | Japan | Spain | Sweden | Switzerland | USA | Private donors in Australia, Germany and Sweden**

Contacts:

Kouassi Lazare Etien, Representative, etien@unhcr.org;

Alexander Lewis, Reporting Officer, lewisa@unhcr.org;