

Central African Republic Situation

01-31 May 2017

UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations are providing emergency assistance following recent waves of violence in the East and South-East regions of the Central African Republic (CAR) which have triggered a new, large-scale displacement of populations. One in every five Central Africans is either internally displaced or has fled to a neighbouring country. The situation is unfolding at a time when CAR faces an already dire humanitarian situation amidst a funding crunch. As at 02 June 2017, UNHCR's 2017 funding requirements (\$209 million) to meet the immediate needs of Central Africans in CAR and across the sub-region stands at only 6 per cent funded. Given the challenges of responding to humanitarian needs at such a scale and across the entire region, early and adequate contributions are vital to ensure timely and planned delivery of protection and aid programmes.

KEY FIGURES

465,253

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

20,806

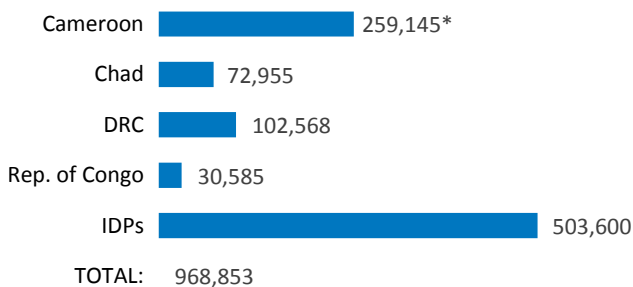
Central African refugees have spontaneously returned to the country (since the start of the year)

503,600

 IDPs in CAR (as of end May, 2017) – source: *Commission de Mouvement de Populations*

POPULATION OF CONCERN

Countries



* Biometric registration in the three regions of East, Adamaoua and the North has been completed and new figures will be made available as soon as the consolidation and statistical analysis of the data is finalised.

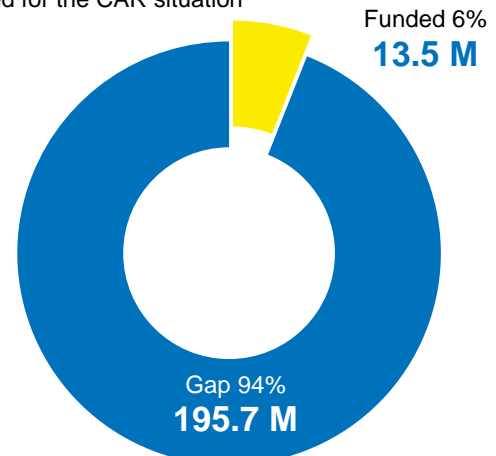
Highlights

- The number of internally displaced has increased by 15 per cent in the **Central African Republic**, with 68,000 displaced mainly in the east/south-east, whilst refugees have continued to return spontaneously.
- UNHCR has increased its engagement in **Cameroon** with development partners and donors to encourage medium and long-term investments in refugee-hosting areas.
- Following a new refugee influx in April in **Chad**, UNHCR and partners have registered some 1,209 Central Africans who fled the volatile security situation in CAR.
- In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, some 21,700 new arrivals from CAR have been reported by local authorities in Bas-Uele and North Ubangi provinces, while the figure continues to rise.

FUNDING (AS OF 02 JUNE 2017)

USD 209.2 M

requested for the CAR situation



Operational Context

- In the course of the month of May 2017, **over 88,000 people fled their homes** inside CAR, mainly in the prefectures of Basse-Kotto, Mbomou, Ouham Pende, Nana-Mambere, Haut-Mbomou and Haute-Kotto, and also to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Populations were forcibly displaced mainly due to armed violence in these areas as well as preventive displacement in other towns where attacks were feared. The total number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) recorded by the *Commission de Mouvement des Populations*, an inter-agency forum led by UNHCR, increased by 15 percent, from 440,000 in April to 503,600 in May. Meanwhile, some 21,500 Central Africans fled to DRC, bringing the number of refugees hosted in the sub-region to more than 465,000. This new episode of displacement follows similar populations movements recorded in the past few months. In April for instance, over 40,000 people were displaced as a result of fighting in the north west of CAR (Bocaranga) and in eastern CAR (between Bakouma and Nzako). Some 1,200 people fleeing violence also crossed the borders with Chad and Cameroon.
- While the **security situation in certain parts of CAR remains volatile**, not least because of the quasi-absence of law enforcement and administrative structures and institutions beyond the capital city of Bangui, **conditions in the south-west are increasingly conducive to IDP returns and spontaneous refugee return**. However, considering the current situation inside CAR, UNHCR is not promoting repatriation of refugees and will, at this stage, only facilitate voluntary returns of very limited numbers of refugees to areas considered secure and accessible to humanitarian actors.
- These developments are unfolding at a time when **CAR is already facing a dire situation**; over half of the population of the CAR requires humanitarian assistance to survive and 2 million people are food insecure. An estimated 50 percent of health services are provided by the humanitarian community, two thirds of the population still has no access to health care. Furthermore, **the World Food Programme (WFP) continues to face a critical lack of funding in countries affected by the CAR crisis**. In eastern Cameroon, WFP is distributing half-rations to CAR refugees, while in Chad, WFP suspended food assistance to 66,800 returnees from January to March, in order to prioritize available resources during the lean season.
- **Humanitarian access** in many of the areas affected by displacement, in CAR and north-DRC **remains severely restricted due to the security situation**. Populations tend to flee to very remote areas, away from main roads. UNHCR was however able to provide, through an inter-agency response, relief items for the newly displaced (see below for additional details).



Registration of new refugees in southern Chad, Diba 1 refugee camp, 19 April 2017 @UNHCR/Ngargoune

Achievements

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

- Significant rebel activity in towns along the DRC border as well as rumours of possible attacks have pushed people to flee in the Haute Kotto and Mbomou prefectures inside CAR. Attacks of armed groups resulted in displacement within the three prefectures of Bria, Bangassou and Basse-Kotto. In Bria only, more than 41,000 people have been displaced, 5,000 in Bangassou and 12,500 spread into the towns of Alindoa, Kembe, Dimbi, Mobaye and in an island on the Ubangui River, close to Zangba. Most of the displaced sleep in the open or in makeshift shelters.
- Despite severely restricted humanitarian access in Bria, Bangassou and Basse-Kotto, UNHCR was able to provide, through an inter-agency response, relief items for the newly displaced in Bria. UNHCR has also mobilised a stock of 1,500 non-food items (NFI) kits that were pre-positioned in Bambari. A total of 800 mats, 800 blankets, and 60 family tents were positioned at the MINUSCA base in Bria during the period of violence in late 2016 – this assistance will now be distributed to the most vulnerable families by UNHCR’s partner, COOPI. Following an assessment mission, 40 per cent of NFI kits needed were provided by UNHCR. While needs in Bria may have since increased, UNHCR is ready to send 1,000 NFI kits from Bangui in addition to the 500 already to be transported.
- UNHCR continues to support returnees who left the M’Poko-airport site in Bangui – where some 28,000 IDPs were hosted – with cash assistance (XAF 50,000 / USD 85 per household) along with the provision of water, sanitation, health, shelter, recovery and social cohesion activities from other humanitarian partners. UNHCR initiated and continues to support the establishment of joint coordination systems in every receiving district. The Government’s *Projet d’appui au retour et à la réintégration* (PARET) with the support of UNHCR, closed two more IDP sites in Bangui during May 2017. As part of the return process, cash assistance was provided to 218 households (594 people). The mass information campaign surrounding returns continued, with community meetings held at the remaining IDP sites in Bangui to explain the procedure for assisting those who wish to leave the sites voluntarily. PARET also identified associations that could develop income-generating activities in return neighbourhoods. This included a women’s association from the commune of Begoua which has proposed a project to manufacture and sell

soap. In addition, a return intention survey was launched for IDPs living in sites in Bambari and Kaga-Bandoro. This exercise will enable UNHCR to plan its future NFI and shelter interventions, as well as preparing a return assistance programme.

CAMEROON

- In May, a total of 147 new Central African asylum seekers were registered in Gbiti in East region, the majority fleeing attacks perpetrated by rebel groups. Other asylum seekers have been reported in the Adamaoua region, but specific numbers remain unclear because they are using unofficial entry points. The biometric registration and verification of Central African refugees in the East, Adamawa and North regions has ended in May 2017.
- UNHCR, in close collaboration with the Cameroonian Government is developing a multi-year support strategy for refugee-hosting areas, which will closely be aligned with existing Community Development Plans of the host municipalities. The support strategy for areas hosting CAR refugees is built around four pillars: (i) strengthening the capacity of local authorities to manage the refugee populations, including the administration of refugee sites and the provision of adequate documentation for refugees; (ii) promoting livelihoods activities for refugees and vulnerable host-communities; (iii) supporting the Ministry of Social Affairs in putting in place peaceful coexistence and community development programmes; and (IV) increasing access to and availability of basic social services such as education and health. On 30 May, UNHCR and the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development launched the steering committee for the coordination and monitoring of development interventions for refugee localities in the East, Adamaoua and North regions. The committee will provide strategic direction for implementation of the multi-year support plan for the municipalities in the three regions hosting refugees.
- Building on its knowledge and experience in refugee hosting areas, UNHCR is assisting the World Bank in designing the Recovery and Peacebuilding Assessment (RPBA) to enhance the capacity of the Government, strengthen their institutions, and improve their infrastructure and their national service delivery systems in CAR refugee-hosting areas. The RPBA is a partnership framework supported by the European Union, the United Nations and the World Bank to coordinate reengagement in countries affected by conflict. Ultimately, it will serve to develop a three-year strategy for recovery and peacebuilding outlining programmatic priorities, cost estimates, implementation and financing arrangements

CHAD

- Several waves of Central African refugees fleeing tensions in the northwest of the country arrived in Sourou, a town located on the Chadian border. A total of 1,209 individuals have been registered since April 2017, 85 per cent of whom are women and children. As road access to Sourou becomes difficult with the onset of the rainy season, a first group of refugees was transferred from Sourou to existing sites of Diba I and Vom, where 1,700 Central Africans who arrived last year are already living. The remaining refugees have been accommodated in a new site (Diba II) which is under construction following the allocation of additional land by local authorities. Plans include the construction of 205 shelters as well as sheds, boreholes, latrines, and showers, and as of 31 May, half of the works have been completed.
- New arrivals were assisted with NFI kits containing buckets, mats, blankets, mosquito nets, a kitchen sets, mats, jerry cans, sanitary soap and hygienic kits. Food vouchers (5,500 CFA / US\$10 per person) were provided by WFP to refugee households. Also, to facilitate the inclusion of refugees, UNHCR enabled their participation in the current crop year by helping them access arable land and providing agricultural tools and seeds as well as technical. Host populations also benefit as Central Africans work hand in hand with local Chadians. UNHCR and partners are working with the Inspectorate of Primary Education (IPEP) and the Departmental Inspectorate of National Education (IDEN) for the integration of non-accompanied and separated children that arrived in the latest waves.
- In partnership with the World Bank, a pilot '*villagisation*' project is being designed for Gondje and Amboko refugee camps in southern Chad. With the aim to find alternatives to camps for hosting refugees, the project introduces a socio-economic pilot approach for the integration of CAR

refugees by strengthening the local economic environment and basic social services whilst care and maintenance assistance will be significantly scaled-down. The pilot project is part of the overall IDA 18 window of the World Bank – a funding mechanism for the least developed countries – for Chad, whose final approval is expected by the Bank Board in the coming months.

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- Central Africans continue to arrive in the DRC, citing fear of new violence, from border localities of Bangassou, Bema and Mobayi. A total of 11,730 asylum seekers from Bangassou arrived in Bondo Territory (Bas-Uele province) and other 10,000 in Yakoma and Mobayi Mbongo territories (Nord-Ubangi province) – the latter figure continues to rise in June.
- Most of the new arrivals are settled along the banks of the rivers – Mbomou and Ubangi – constituting the border between the two countries. Most of them have found shelter with local families. People arrived there without any belongings. Among them were some wounded people who needed treatment. Also, precarious living conditions have exposed asylum seekers to protection risks. Despite access difficulties, National Commission of Refugees (CNR) staff had access to some of the asylum seekers, including through joint assessments with UNHCR.
- While areas where new arrivals are settling are difficult to reach, namely in Bas-Uele province, it has not yet been possible to provide relief items by road. Airlift support from the MONUSCO is being considered in order to overcome inaccessibility due to bad road conditions, which is exacerbated by the current rainy season and the instable security situation. NFIs for 10,000 people were made available from UNHCR Uganda and were transported to Dungu (Haut-Uele). Solutions for their onward transport – either by air or road – are currently being evaluated. Underfunding is another obstacle, especially in view of a costly airlift for the relief items.
- While the influx of Central African asylum seekers in Bas-Uele province was not concerned by the Ebola outbreak, which was located about 100 km further inland from the arrival areas. Hygiene sensitizations were carried out among refugees and asylum seekers, including the ones hosted in Ango, a remote area of Orientale province in northern DRC.

REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

- Following the decision taken in July 2015 by the Congolese authorities to put an end to the prima facie status, Central African asylum seekers have to undergo the refugee status determination procedure. More than 4,000 Central Africans are still considered as asylum seekers.
- WFP cash-based transfers for refugees living in Betou and Impfondo (Likouala Department) started mid-May. About 3,000 households are now buying goods from local traders identified by WFP thanks to mobile money transfers. Health, water, and shelter continue to be provided by UNHCR and its partners in Likouala department where the majority of refugees are hosted. It is worth mentioning that several shelters were recently destroyed by heavy rains but funds are insufficient to rebuild these shelters.

Financial Information

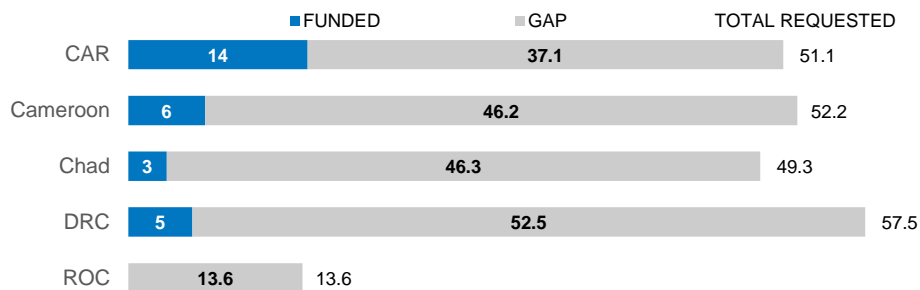
UNHCR is very grateful for the financial support provided by donors who have contributed to their activities with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds as well as for those who have contributed directly to the operation.

Donors who have contributed to the operation:

- Japan
- Germany
- European Union
- France
- United Kingdom
- Country-Based Pooled Funds
- UN Foundation (UNFIP)
- Vodafone Foundation
- Private Donors Sweden
- Private Donors Canada
- Private Donors Switzerland
- Private Donors Italy

Funding (in million USD)

A total of **\$13.5 million** has been funded



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

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Thanks to other donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017

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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

Guido Van Heugten, Associate External Relations Officer
vanheugt@unhcr.org, Tel: +41 (22) 739 7711

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