

30 May 2014

## CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

# Amid extreme poverty and state fragility, more robust response needed

Internal displacement in the Central African Republic (CAR) has occurred intermittently as a result of coups, internal armed conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations and natural hazards. The state lacks authority and capacity to provide services in the provinces. A climate of widespread impunity has allowed armed groups to proliferate ([IRIN](#), January 2012). Though rich in natural resources, CAR is chronically poor, ranked 180 out of 187 countries in the 2013 UNDP Human Development Index ([UNDP](#), April 2014).

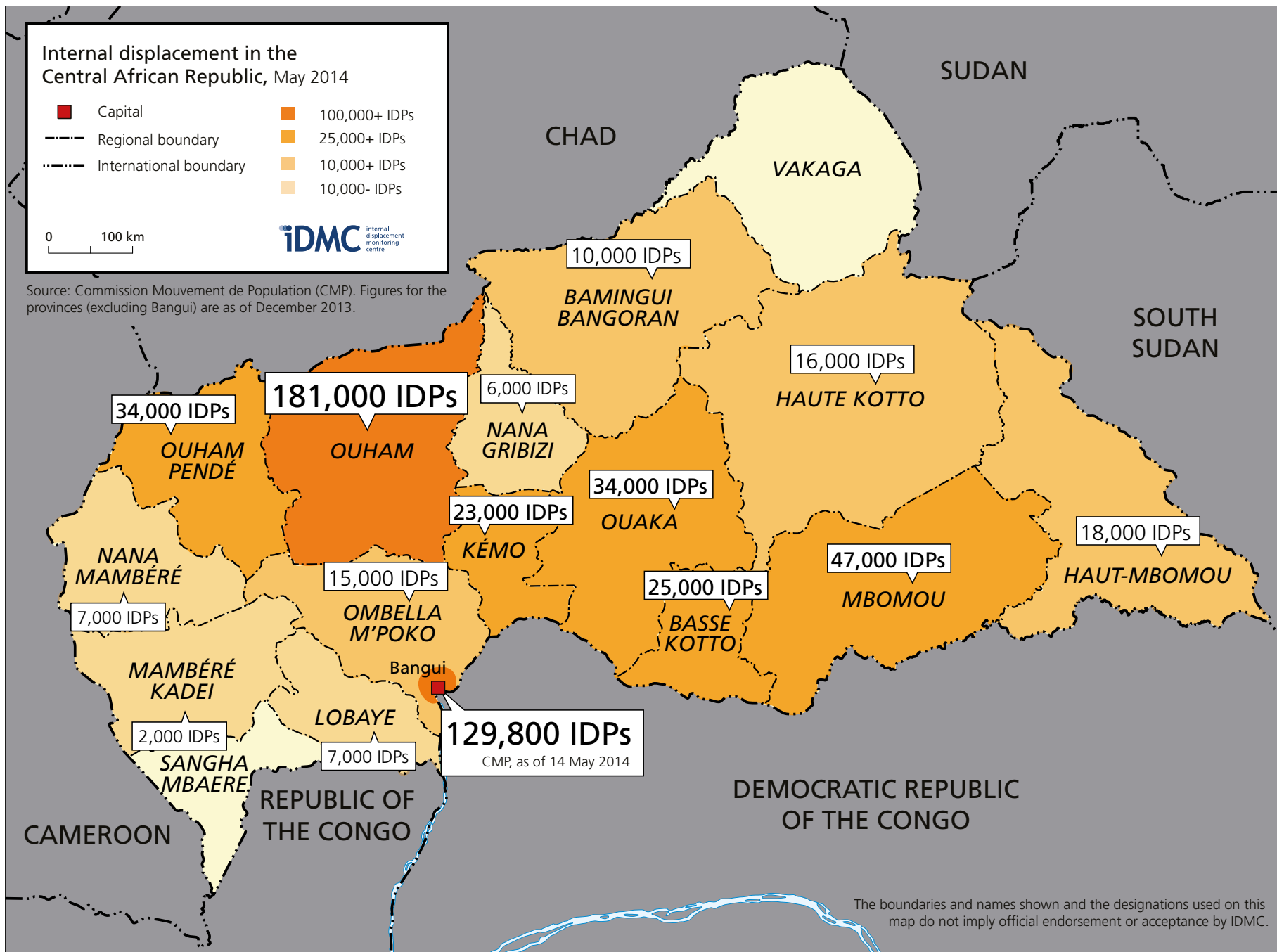
The current displacement crisis started in December 2012 and worsened when an alliance of armed militias known as Séléka seized power in a coup in March 2013. Since then, some 20 per cent of the nation's population has been displaced by conflict between various armed groups – including self-defence militias called anti-Balaka – retaliation attacks against civilians, human rights abuses and exactions perpetrated by both sides ([ICG](#), n/d; [OHCHR](#), September 2013; [OHCHR](#), February 2014). As of 20 May 2014, 554,800 people still remained displaced within the country and 349,452 were refugees in neighbouring countries (CMP, May 2014; [UNHCR](#), May 2014).

Amidst repeated new displacements and returns the displacement situation is complex and hard to track. People have sought refuge in diverse locations in both rural and urban areas. They have fled to camp-like and spontaneous displacement sites, to host families and into the bush. Findings from an IDMC mission to CAR in February and March 2014 show that IDPs face diverse threats to their physical and moral integrity, including killings, massacres, rape and recourse to survival sex. Family ties have often been disrupted by displacement, leaving IDPs with disabilities, single women and mothers, older IDPs and unaccompanied children more vulnerable.

The primary responsibility to assist and protect IDPs theoretically lies with the state yet the transitional government in power since January 2014 is struggling to do so due to acutely limited capacity and resources and on-going absence of state authority over wide areas of the large and relatively sparsely populated country ([OHCHR](#), February 2014).



The first rains in March 2014 produced dire conditions for people to live in, at an IDP site near Bangui. (Photo: M. Wissing, March 2014)



Map by: IDMC

More maps are available at [www.internal-displacement.org/maps](http://www.internal-displacement.org/maps)

Not for the first time, the international community has struggled to respond to the enormous needs in CAR. Responses to the CAR crisis have had to compete with other better-publicised high-level crises, resulting in persistent underfunding (ECHO, 2013; ECHO, 2014). Insecurity, poor infrastructure, limited staffing and limited and changing access make it even harder for UN agencies and NGOs to deliver humanitarian assistance where it is most needed.

## Background and causes of displacement

### *Armed conflict, generalised violence and human rights violations*

Since independence from France in 1960, CAR has experienced multiple coups, armed violence and internal armed conflicts. Endemic instability has been compounded by cross-border and regional conflict dynamics (HRW, March 2014) – including devastating incursions by Uganda’s Lord’s Resistance Army – inter-communal violence, banditry and resources disputes between transhumant pastoralists and sedentary populations (HRW, November 2010; ICG, June 2013).

In 2003, François Bozizé seized power in a military coup, subsequently winning presidential elections in 2005. Perceived neglect of CAR’s north encouraged armed groups to take up arms against the government in the capital, Bangui (IDMC, December 2010). Human rights abuses perpetrated by all armed groups caused the displacement

of at least 200,000 people between 2005 and 2008 (IDMC, December 2009).

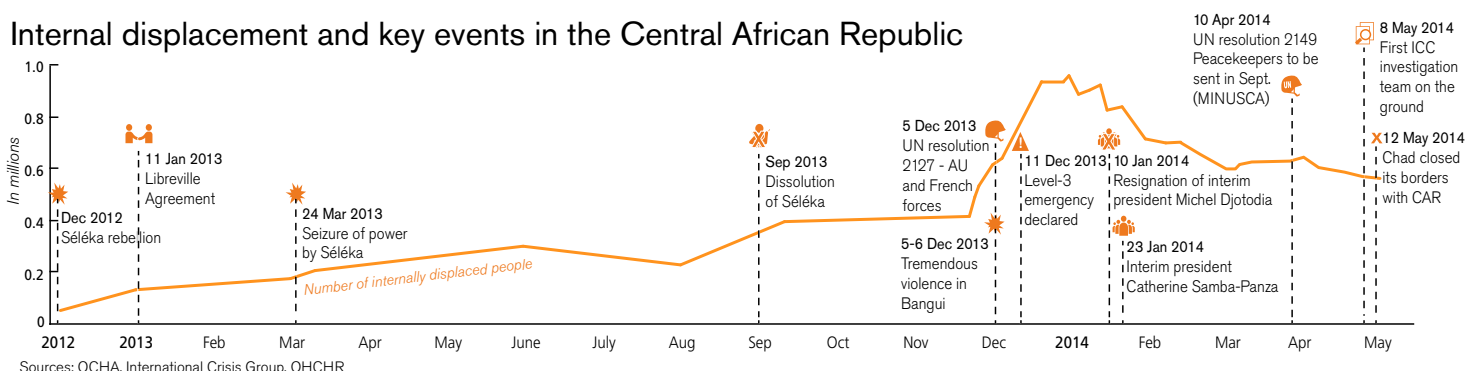
### *2012-2013 escalation of violence*

At the end of 2012, the alliance of militias known as Séléka (“coalition” in Sango, the national language) took up arms against the Bozizé government, alleging the state was not respecting the 2008 agreement signed in Libreville, Gabon, which had brought to an end conflict between the government and two major rebel militias. Séléka seized several towns in the north and north-central areas (ACAPS, February 2014), thus sparking the most extensive of CAR’s multiple displacement crises (IDMC, March 2014). It left half the country’s population in need of assistance and internally displaced one in five people at the end of 2013 (UNHCR, January 2014) as well as triggering cross-border flights of refugees.

In January 2013, a government-Séléka peace agreement was signed but the coalition accused the government of not putting sufficient political will into its implementation (OHCHR, September 2013). Séléka supporters alleged the army and the Presidential Guard committed such abuses as enforced disappearances, torture and killings against those judged to be Séléka supporters (OHCHR, September 2013). Séléka took up arms again and, led by Michel Djotodia, took control of in Bangui on 24 March 2013.

Once in power, Séléka allegedly perpetrated violations and abuses including looting, killings,

Internal displacement and key events in the Central African Republic



Sources: OCHA, International Crisis Group, OHCHR

enforced disappearances, recruitment of children and gender based violence against civilians, mostly in the north-western areas of the country ([HRW](#), May 2013; [HRW](#), June 2013; [IRIN](#), November 2013; [IRIN](#), November 2013). Initial targeting of civilians was related to their suspected allegiance to former President Bozizé ([OHCHR](#), September 2013). Djotodia dissolved his former group and called on its members to demobilise, but many of them remained active ([OHCHR](#), February 2014). Meanwhile, pre-existing self-defence groups known as anti-Balaka (“anti-machete”), mainly Christian and animist militias, had started to proliferate, responding to abuses committed by Séléka elements ([OHCHR](#), February 2014). This led to dramatic violence between ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka adherents, attacks and retaliations peaking in September and again early December 2013 ([OHCHR](#), February 2014). The cities of Bossangoa and Bangui became the scenes of violent confrontations. More than one thousand people were killed between early December and late January ([OCHA](#), December 2013).

Both armed groups shifted from targeting people based on their political opinions to instead targeting on the basis of religious affiliation ([OHCHR](#), February 2014). Since then human rights abuses, such as massacres, killings, looting of houses and gender based violence have been daily occurrences. Although not generalised, ethno-religious targeting has spurred distrust and sectarian violence between Muslim and Christian communities ([OHCHR](#), February 2014).

In January 2014, international pressure forced Djotodia to resign, bringing short-lived relief for some and tremendous fear for the Muslim population ([Reuters](#), January 2014). Séléka started to leave Bangui and wide parts of the western provinces. Minority populations in those areas have been more vulnerable to violence by anti-Balaka militias, armed bandits and other armed groups. This contributed to the exodus of Muslim civilians from some parts of the region, leading some

organisations to allege ethnic cleansing ([Amnesty International](#), February 2014).

Following Djotodia’s resignation, Catherine Samba-Panza was selected as the new interim president and will stay in post until 2015 elections end the transitional period ([UN](#), January 2014). She faces daunting challenges, leading a chaotic collapsed state with virtually no civil servants operating at province level. High levels of violence continue with thousands still fleeing.

#### *Natural hazards*

Every year heavy rains affect some parts of the country, causing flooding and the destruction of houses and farm land. In Bangui, 33,000 people were affected by heavy rains in September 2013, 1,800 of whom had to flee as their houses were completely destroyed ([IFRC](#), September 2013). Rains could also affect the IDPs displaced by conflict and violence and re-displace them as many IDP sites in Bangui are located in swampy zones ([Shelter Cluster](#), February 2014; [OCHA](#), April 2014).

## **Displacement figures and patterns**

### *Challenges in determining levels of displacement*

Since December 2012, the country has seen several waves of displacement in different areas as the geographical focus of conflict shifted. The most severe was between December 2013 and January 2014. The number of IDPs more than doubled in less than four weeks in December 2013 ([OCHA](#), December 2013; [OCHA](#), January 2014). In a single month half a million people fled their homes in Bangui ([OCHA](#), January 2014).

The number of IDPs in CAR decreased from 958,000 in mid-January to 554,800 in May 2014 ([UNHCR](#), January 2014; [CMP](#), May 2014), with a renewed slight increase from mid-March to mid-April, due to an upsurge in violence in Bangui and the impact of early rains. At the same time, the number of Central African refugees in the

neighbouring states of Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo and the Republic of Congo leaped from 246,000 in January to 349,452 at the beginning of May 2014 ([OCHA](#), January 2014; [UNHCR](#), May 2014).

During the peak of the current displacement crisis in mid-January 2014, around 958,000 people were believed to be internally displaced, one in five Central Africans. This is five times more IDPs than during the two most recent periods of instability – in 2002-2003 prior to Bozizé's arrival in power and in 2007 ([IDMC](#), August 2004; [IDMC](#), December 2010; [UNHCR](#), January 2014).

As displacement continues, figures are updated on a weekly basis – but only for Bangui – by the Commission Mouvement de la Population (CMP). There is a chronic lack of comprehensive data on the situation in the provinces, due to limited government presence, restricted humanitarian access in some areas and inadequate information flows. There is some more detailed information in areas such as Bossangoa but in much of the country little is known about the scale of internal displacement. Thus there has been no update of the number of IDPs outside Bangui since mid-December, when it stood at 425,000 ([CMP](#), April 2014). Since February, the CMP has been working on a methodology to obtain better and more comprehensive data on displacement in the provinces but results are still to be published.

The fact that IDP figures cannot be broken down by age, sex, or other differentiating criteria constitutes an obstacle to effective protection and assistance response. The CMP and the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster are currently planning on collecting such information for sites in Bangui (email, April 2014).

The impact of earlier waves of displacement, especially those which took place in 2012 and in early 2013, have not been followed up with result little is known of the 50,000 IDPs who remained

displaced in October 2012 and whether they have the same or different needs than other displaced people ([OCHA](#), November 2012).

#### *Displacement patterns*

Displacement in CAR takes place in both rural and urban areas, not only in Bangui but in towns, such as Bossangoa and Kaga-Bandoro. Rural to urban displacement is also common, Paoua, having received at least two waves of displacements from surrounding rural areas. The duration of displacement in the current crisis has varied significantly. Some people report being able to return home within days due to the departure of armed groups from their home area, while others have been living in displacement since March 2013 or longer.

Unlike previous crises, many IDPs have sought refuge in camp-like and spontaneous settlements both in Bangui – where up to 100,000 IDPs gathered at the international airport – but also in the provinces. Some IDPs in Bangui have also been renting flats or houses. Many have sought refuge in the bush or with host families. People interviewed by IDMC in Bangui and Paoua said that they have become accustomed after multiple crises to fleeing to the bush or their fields. During the latest crisis informants reported having to flee further, no longer feeling safe within ten kilometres of a main road as armed men would follow them.

While it appears that Christian and Muslim IDPs have sought refuge in separate locations, there has been inter-faith solidarity. Catholic churches, parishes and families have given refuge to Muslims and Christians are said to have taken Muslim IDPs into their homes. This challenges the simplistic media depiction of entrenched enmity between Christians and Muslims.

Both in Bangui and the provinces IDPs have moved from original places of shelter in response to the dynamics of conflict or in hope of better access to assistance ([IOM](#), March 2014). IDMC researchers spoke to people who had fled from



Kaga-Bandoro to Bangui in March 2013 and who were re-displaced in December 2013 within Bangui. Several intention surveys undertaken by the International Organisation for Migration (IOM) in early 2014 showed that around one fifth of IDPs transited through another displacement site before arriving at their then current location (IOM, February 2014).

In addition to these movement patterns, in Bangui some IDPs – as during previous crises – return to their areas of origin during the day but overnight in places of refuge (JIPS, 2011 ; JIPS, 2012; ACAPS, February 2014). IDPs do this in order to either check on their property and belongings to work or to tend their fields, thus exposing themselves to security risks.

## Protection and assistance needs

The internal displacement situation in CAR is marked by a large number of serious protection concerns. Some protection risks existed already before the 2013 crisis, but have been exacerbated in recent months as IDPs have become more vulnerable.

### *Physical and moral integrity*

IDPs have been directly targeted in killings and attacks in IDP sites (HRW, April 2014). As a result of insufficient protection from the state or international forces, some displacement sites have recruited their own guards, made up of unarmed youth, who control entry and who, for now, do not seem to represent a risk to the general population. In the town of Guen, anti-Balaka militia allegedly attacked a residence where hundreds of Muslims had found refuge. Armed men forced 45 men to leave the compound and massacred them outside the place where they had sought refuge (HRW, April 2014).

Many displacement sites in Bangui have anti-Balaka militias inside or in close proximity. This

has raised concerns about forced recruitment, violence and reduced humanitarian access (AFP, April 2014; ACAPS, April 2014). Some IDPs in sites in Bangui reported being afraid of insecurity, preventing them from pursuit of livelihoods, seeking other temporary occupation or going to markets. Some displaced communities have been trapped in their places of refuge, as armed militias and groups, including the anti-Balaka, have surrounded them. Others have been unable to move further due to lack of funds or transport (OCHA, March 2014). Many trapped IDPs have asked aid agencies and international forces to evacuate them (IRIN, February 2014). Sometimes, IDPs have not waited for an escort and have organised their own convoys. Facing the dilemma between potentially contributing to territorial partition and the risk of killings, the international community has agreed to facilitate, as a last resort, the relocation of populations at risk in consultation with concerned communities (UN, May 2014).

The risk of gender-based violence (GBV) is exacerbated by the presence of armed men in some displacement sites (IRC, March 2014). More than two thirds of displaced women treated by the International Rescue Committee for sexual and physical violence had been gang-raped (IRC, April 2014). Displaced girls and young women have been forced by destitution to engage in survival sex (IRC, April 2014). Many IDPs have witnessed or experienced horrific scenes of violence and thus need psychosocial support and counselling as well as medical treatment, but they are virtually unavailable, especially outside Bangui (OCHA, April 2014).

### *Family separation*

Violence and displacement have led to numerous cases of family separation and single-headed households (IRC, April 2014). In Paoua, IDMC researchers met a young woman and her two young children who had been separated from the children's father during flight. The woman and her children arrived in Paoua while the father reached

Chad. In many instances, mothers and fathers have become single heads of households. As many as one third of all households in some IDP sites in Bangui are female-headed ([IRC](#), April 2014).

There are also more unaccompanied children. The Child Protection Sub Cluster in CAR (CPSC) estimated that there were 66,000 unaccompanied children in September 2013, a number likely to have grown ([CPSC](#), September 2013; [UNICEF](#), February 2014). Community members have taken care of some as have religious leaders in displacement sites. However, without the care of their parents, many unaccompanied displaced children are more vulnerable to abuse, neglect, exploitation and forced recruitment. The UN estimated in January 2014 that up to 6,000 children were associated with armed groups in CAR ([UN](#), January 2014).

#### *Education*

Education has been interrupted for most internally displaced children in CAR ([IOM](#), March 2014; [OCHA](#), April 2014). After the coup in March 2013 many schools were looted, remained closed or were occupied by armed groups. Although some schools in western CAR re-opened in March 2014 many displaced children still cannot go to school as their parents cannot afford to pay the fees and because not all teachers have been paid ([IRIN](#), April 2014). NGOs and the UN have opened education programmes in a few displacement sites but tend to focus on primary education. Unschooling youth remain jobless and more vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups and criminal gangs.

#### *Access to basic services*

Violence has led to collapse of already inadequate services, including health. ([IRIN](#), March 2011; [MSE](#), November 2011; [MSE](#), April 2014). Many markets have ceased to function and agricultural activities in certain areas have come to a halt ([FAO/WFP](#), April 2014). Many who want to stay in their current displacement site are thus dependent on food aid ([FAO/WFP](#), April 2014). Many have reduced their daily food consumption: some have gone entire or

several days without eating. IDPs voiced concerns that people with disabilities and older persons, especially if they have lost their families, have even greater difficulties in finding sufficient food.

Access to potable water, sanitation and hygiene also remains a priority. Even though some progress has been made, with about 188,000 IDPs having access to water in Bangui, conditions are dire in overcrowded sites ([WASH](#), March 2014). Most of the IDP sites do not reach the Sphere standards in humanitarian response ([OCHA](#), April 2014). Women voiced their concern that secure or private sanitary facilities are lacking in many sites ([IRC](#), April 2014).

Adequate housing is also a major issue. Many IDPs live in makeshift shelters which they built themselves or that were built by humanitarian workers. Many are in overcrowded collective tents without privacy.

#### *Rainy season risks*

The rainy season – and increase in such water-borne diseases as cholera – is likely to further exacerbate needs and increase logistical challenges of delivering assistance ([MIRA](#), January 2014; [OCHA](#), April 2014). It may also force IDPs to move again as many sites are located in swampy zones. Some have already had to return home earlier than they would have otherwise chosen. The improvement of displacement sites or the relocation of affected IDPs may be necessary. Relocations need to depend on the free choice of IDPs, host communities, and the government and be accompanied by improved assistance at the destination ([MIRA](#), January 2014; [OCHA](#), April 2014). Discussions have begun to explore the possibility of relocating those IDP sites which will become unsustainable as the rainy season progresses.

## **Prospects for durable solutions**

Since early February 2014, CAR has increasingly seen return movements as security conditions in

some areas has been steadily increasing. In Bangui, the number of IDPs dropped from over half a million in January 2014 to 129,800 in May 2014 ([OCHA](#), January 2014; [CMP](#), May 2014) due to returns, the exodus of some minority populations, more people seeking refuge abroad and better data. Rather than marking a general improvement in the situation, the reduced numbers reflect a geographical and ethnic-religious shift in violence and displacement.

Intention surveys in Bangui in April 2014 showed that 57 per cent of those in IDPs in sites in Bangui plan on returning soon, compared to 66 per cent in February ([IOM](#), February 2014; [IOM](#), April 2014). Thirty two per cent indicated that they want to stay in current displacement sites for the time being, while nine per cent would like to go to another region of the country. This indicates that a nuanced and sustained response will continue to be necessary in this complex internal displacement situation.

Insecurity, ongoing generalised violence and human rights abuses remain one of the major obstacles for many IDPs ([IOM](#), March 2014). Criminality is on the rise and killings and looting continues ([OHCHR](#), February 2014; [Africa Confidential](#), March 2014).

Armed groups continue to commit serious human rights abuses. Groups, such as *Groupe Révolution et Justice* (RJ), or the LRA, appear to have seized the opportunity to mobilise and increase activities in CAR, sometimes in loose or formal alliances with other conflicting parties ([WFP](#), February 2014; [LRA Crisis Tracker](#), May 2014). This shows the need for demobilisation and disarmament interventions that are not just confined to ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka combatants ([ICG](#), June 2013).

Some IDPs do not have a home to return to since many houses have been destroyed, burned or looted. In Bangui, informants report that not only were their houses destroyed but militias and gangs dismantled them to sell bricks. This wanton de-

struction of civilian housing may have been done to prevent return or simply for economic gain and constitutes another obstacle to return for IDPs.

#### *Challenges to resumption of normal life*

IDPs will need assistance in restarting their livelihoods, for many lost tools and other assets during displacement, destruction and looting. Agriculture, which represents 57 per cent of the country's gross domestic product, shrank by 36.9 per cent in 2013 ([FAO/WFP](#), April 2014). Many displaced and returning agriculturalists have missed not just one but often two agricultural seasons because of insecurity and displacement. In addition, loss of assets threatens to prevent many from preparing their land for the current season ([FAO/WFP](#), April 2014).

Displaced larger traders, wholesalers, and truck owners were forced to interrupt their activities, with devastating economic impacts and disruption of supply chains and markets ([Oxfam](#), February 2014; [FAO/WFP](#), April 2014). As a result people have resorted to negative coping mechanisms, such as reducing the number of meals per day. Malnutrition rates among children are said to have increased ([FAO/WFP](#), April 2014). In addition, the destruction and looting of stocks will hamper resumption of trade. It is vital to urgently re-establish supply chains, markets and economic livelihoods and to assist all who struggle to buy food, reconstruct or refurbish their houses.

During the conflict some records were destroyed, including birth registries ([UN](#), August 2013). Many IDPs have lost their identity papers and other official papers. Many births in IDP sites have not been registered, risking statelessness and non-eligibility to vote for those unable to prove CAR nationality. There are doubts that the UN Security Council timeframe to end CAR's transition allows sufficient time to ensure IDPs and refugees are registered to vote ([UN SC](#), April 2014).

Although pressure on land is not as intense in CAR as in many other countries in the region the loss of



cadastral records, absence of land titles and secondary occupation of land must be addressed. Given the complex interplay of statutory and customary land laws ([ADB](#), November 2011; [Danagoro/Malo/Samba](#), n/d) and lack of ID certain IDPs and refugees may face challenges reclaiming housing, land and property (HLP) rights. Some landlords have fled, leaving tenants unsure whether they can return to properties they formerly rented. Secondary occupation of IDPs' and refugee's houses by other IDPs is reported in Paoua. This can be an obstacle to durable solutions when the owners return and cannot access their house or land. At the same time those IDPs occupying other people's houses face the risk of being evicted when the owners return.

In areas where most disputes are handled by customary authorities it remains to be seen how women – traditionally marginalised when it comes to owning and inheriting land – will be able to realise their HLP rights ([ADB](#), November 2011). The already severe competition between farmers and transhumant could worsen ([ICG](#), April 2014).

Public services are resuming slowly and their further restoration is crucial. The absence of basic services in home areas and the presence of humanitarian assistance in displacement sites have discouraged some IDPs from returning ([IOM](#), March 2014).

Restoration of peace, security and law and order will be key to ensuring that IDPs can achieve durable solutions. This cannot be achieved simply by international peacekeeping forces but hinges on state capacity to provide security, justice and good governance, end impunity and re-establish social cohesion ([UN](#), May 2014).

## National response

In principle, the primary responsibility to assist and protect IDPs lies with the state. In practice, the transitional government in CAR has been

struggling to fulfil this duty because of its acutely limited capacity and resources ([OHCHR](#), February 2014). Some government officials, especially those representing the state in the provinces, were displaced themselves, further lowering the government's capacities, presence and control. International humanitarian agencies have assumed functions of providing protection and relief. The state has been involved to a limited extent in higher level advocacy, coordination and decision making processes. The Ministry of Public Health, Social Affairs and Humanitarian Action is the main focal point for humanitarian response. At the time of IDMC's visit, however, representatives of the central government were not present in many humanitarian coordination mechanisms.

Both the national security and police forces have been unable to contain violence and protect civilians, due to low troop numbers, insufficient training and inadequate equipment ([World Bank](#), May 2007; [CRS](#), January 2014). Some soldiers from the national army, the Forces armées centrafricaines (FACA), which was only reinstated at the beginning of February 2014, are allegedly active members of anti-Balaka militia and have been involved in committing atrocities ([IRIN](#), February 2014).

Local government has been disrupted by the crisis. On seizing power Séléka replaced some officials such as mayors or sub-prefects and many other officials fled. Some local authorities have helped deal with the consequences of displacement. In Bangui, each district mayor formed a crisis committee in February/March 2014 which functions as an interlocutor with aid agencies.

Some religious leaders have led initiatives aimed at peacebuilding and inter-communal reconciliation. Through visits to villages and messages to their respective communities they have sought to promote peaceful co-existence ([OHCHR](#), April 2014). A good example was the sheltering of 2,000 Muslim IDPs by Christians parishes in Baoro ([Amnesty International](#), February 2014).

The efforts of national NGOs and civil society organisations have helped deliver assistance and restore communal harmony but many lack necessary funds and resources. Looting of offices by armed groups and criminals during the current crisis has interrupted or hampered the activities of many NGOs.

CAR is a party to several international conventions that set the framework for its response to internal displacement. These include the *Great Lakes Pact* and its protocols on internal displacement and the *African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa* (the *Kampala Convention*). The *Kampala Convention* calls for individual criminal responsibility for acts of arbitrary displacement amounting to violations of international criminal law and criminal responsibility of non-state actors, including armed groups (AU, 2009). In 2011, the Brookings Institution – University of Bern Project on Internal Displacement undertook a legal audit of existing laws at the request of the Central African government (Brookings, February 2011). It recommended the government revise existing laws to fill gaps and clarify grey areas that hinder IDPs from enjoying their full rights (Brookings, February 2011). It also recommended the adoption of a dedicated national legal framework on internal displacement. There was progress in drafting a national law on internal displacement in 2012 but the process has been stalled by the crisis.

## International response

For a long time, the crisis in CAR went ignored and neglected by the international community among others because it competed for attention with multiple concurrent crises (ECHO, 2013; ECHO, 2014). In June 2013, the UN Human Rights Council warned of the risk of fighting between communities and religious groups. However, little was done until November when diplomats and UN officials started to warn of the risk of genocide and other

international crimes (OHCHR, June 2013; UN, November 2013).

At the beginning of the crisis many UN agencies and international NGOs had been operating in a post-conflict approach, starting to focus on development programmes. This meant that humanitarian funding and staffing levels were low and some expatriate staff had limited humanitarian response experience and thus struggled to scale up emergency interventions.

In December 2013, the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) declared the crisis in CAR to have reached a level-three emergency, the highest possible (OCHA, December 2014). As a result, a senior humanitarian coordinator was deployed at the end of December and surge capacity for the emergency response was mobilised. However, field presence has been insufficient in view of enormous needs and there is a high concentration of actors in the capital (UNICEF, March 2014). The level-three status was extended for another six months in March 2014.

Rapid and unimpeded humanitarian access has been difficult due to insecurity, including attacks against humanitarian actors, as well as lack of infrastructure and logistical capacity. Médecins Sans Frontières has criticised the UN for including security regulations that made it impossible for staff in CAR to provide relief where it was most needed (MSF, December 2013).

A major additional challenge is funding. The Humanitarian Country Team developed the [CAR Strategic Response Plan 2014](#) in order to assist and to protect those in need, particularly IDPs, and host communities, which asked for almost \$550 million. This represents 12 per cent of the 2012 health expenditure of Costa Rica which has a similar population size (World Bank, n/d).

As of end of April, only 28.3 per cent of the identified financial needs had been met, making it

difficult for humanitarians to sustain even existing operations to meet IDPs' needs ([FTS OCHA](#), April 2014). In order to act concretely and rapidly to such a growing conflict, donors should fund the response plan in a sustainable and predictable way.

International or regional peacekeeping forces have been present in CAR for more than a decade ([UN](#), n/d). The experience demonstrates that low-scale 'quick-fix' peacekeeping interventions are insufficient. The current African Union force – Mission internationale de soutien à la Centrafrique (MISCA) – took over from regional peacekeeping forces in December 2013, supported by French forces following a mandate authorised by the UN Security Council on 5 December 2013. These forces have a mandate which puts the protection of civilians at its core and they have, arguably, prevented massacres and mass killings in some parts of Bangui and elsewhere ([UN SC](#), December 2013). However, many have noted that they acted too late and that their complement of 6,000 troops is insufficient for a country the size of CAR. In addition, some MISCA troops were allegedly involved in abuses committed by the ex-Séléka ([HRW](#), February 2014). On 10 April 2014, the UN Security Council passed a [resolution](#) that plans to transform MISCA into a UN peacekeeping mission by September 2014, with 10,000 military troops and 2,000 police personnel ([UN SC](#), April 2014). In addition to protection of civilians and facilitation of the delivery of humanitarian assistance, MINUSCA will also have a mandate to support the political transition process and build the national justice system and rule of law ([UN SC](#), April 2014). It is important that peacekeeping forces do not substitute for the state. Unless the CAR authorities are primarily responsible for protection of IDPs and other civilians there is high risk of recurrent crises.

Given the gravity of the atrocities committed by all parties, the International Criminal Court decided to open a new Preliminary Examination in February in order to determine if there is a reasonable basis to proceed with an investigation ([ICC](#), February 2014).

## About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) is a world leader in the monitoring and analysis of the causes, effects and responses to internal displacement. IDMC advocates for better responses to the needs of the millions of people worldwide who are displaced within their own countries as a consequence of conflict, generalised violence, human rights violations, and natural or man-made disasters. It is also at the forefront of efforts to promote greater respect for the basic rights of internally displaced people (IDPs). IDMC is part of the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC).

### *What we do:*

- Promote appropriate responses to internal displacement through targeted advocacy
- Provide timely, accessible and relevant information on internal displacement worldwide
- Develop research and analysis to help shape policies and practices that have positive outcomes for IDPs
- Provide training and support to country-based policy-makers and practitioners with a responsibility to protect IDPs

### *Who do we target?*

IDMC is best placed to effect positive change for IDPs through advocacy to influence the decisions and practices of duty bearers and all those with a responsibility or capacity to promote or fulfil the rights of IDPs.

### *How do we operate?*

As information on internal displacement is often controversial and politically sensitive, IDMC must continue to operate and be seen to operate as an independent and effective global monitor of this widespread phenomenon.

IDMC has become an indispensable resource for anyone seeking impartial data and analysis on internal displacement, independent of political or operational considerations. [www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

## Contact:

### **Sebastián Albuja**

Head of Africa and Americas department

Tel: +41 22 799 07 08

Mobile: +41 78 806 83 08

E-mail: [sebastian.albuja@nrc.ch](mailto:sebastian.albuja@nrc.ch)

### **Melanie Kesmaecker-Wissing**

Acting Regional Analyst for Central Africa

Tel: +41 22 799 07 17

Email: [melanie.wissing@nrc.ch](mailto:melanie.wissing@nrc.ch)

### **IDMC**

Norwegian Refugee Council

Chemin de Balxert 7-9

1219 Geneva, Switzerland

[www.internal-displacement.org](http://www.internal-displacement.org)

Tel: +41 (0)22 799 0700

Fax: +41 (0)22 799 0701