



Central African Republic

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

Number of internally displaced (OCHA):
Around 509 000 including 84 000 IDPs in the capital, Bangui.

Number of Central African refugees (UNHCR): 416 437 in Cameroon, Chad, DRC and Congo.

Number of refugees in CAR (UNHCR): Decreased to about 8 000.

2.5 million people in need of humanitarian assistance.

Other data

- Population: 4.6 million people
- HDI ranking: 185 of 187 countries (UNDP)

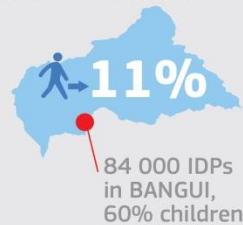
EU assistance since December 2013

European Commission humanitarian aid: EUR 55 million (including EUR 14 million for CAR refugees in neighbouring countries)

European Commission development funds: EUR 39 million

EU contribution including Member States in 2013/14: Over EUR 100 million

509 000 people internally displaced due to conflict



Over 416 000 Central African refugees in Cameroon, Chad, DR Congo and Republic of Congo



EU* humanitarian funding since December 2013



EU's work*



Source: OCHA, UNHCR - * EU institutions only; not including funding from EU Member States

10/09/2014

Key messages

- Following the escalation of inter-communal violence in the beginning of December 2013, the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Central African Republic (CAR) is estimated at 509 000. Around 84 000 are reported in the capital Bangui. Sixty percent of them are children. Over half of the 4.6 million population of the country is in immediate need of aid. More than a quarter of the population is at risk of food insecurity.
- There are huge protection concerns for all civilians. Aid workers are equally affected. A rapid restoration of security is vital to ensure conditions in which relief organisations can operate unhindered. The security situation remains extremely volatile and unpredictable. Violence, looting and killings are ongoing against communities in Bangui and mainly in the north-west part of the country.
- The crisis has forced an estimated 179 915 people since December 2013 to flee to Cameroon, Chad, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and the Republic of Congo, bringing the number of Central African refugees in neighbouring countries to 416 437 people. The European Commission has provided EUR 14 million to meet their basic needs including shelter, food, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene.
- The European Union is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to CAR. The commitment has been considerably stepped up in light of the evolving needs.
- The European Commission alone has provided EUR 55 million (including EUR 14 million for CAR refugees in neighbouring countries) in humanitarian aid since December 2013, plus EUR 39 million in development funds. The EU has also organised repeated humanitarian aid flights from Europe and the region to ferry relief supplies and aid workers to the country.

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* All the latest ECHO Factsheets: bit.ly/echo-fs

Humanitarian situation and needs

Background

The Central African Republic (CAR) is one of the poorest countries in the world, facing the worst humanitarian and human rights crisis since its independence in 1960. After a regime change in March 2013, the country has struggled to restore stability and order. Over the greater part of the country, local populations are regularly falling victim to abuses and arbitrary treatment. At the same time, the basis for an ethno-religious conflict is becoming more deeply established.

Inter-communal violence has escalated dramatically since the end of 2013. Attacks have led to serious human rights violations and the death of over 2 000 people. Around 509 000 people are internally displaced (IDPs). In the capital Bangui alone, about 84 000 people have been forced to flee their homes and are currently staying in almost 70 makeshift camps and other sites. An estimated 60% of them are children. The Muslim population in Bangui has dramatically decreased (Source: UN).

Central African refugees in neighbouring countries

The on-going crisis in the Central African Republic has forced an estimated 179 915 people to take refuge in neighbouring countries since December 2013. More than 129 000 refugees have arrived in [Cameroon](#), over 21 980 in Democratic Republic of Congo, around 19 470 in Chad and over 8 530 in Republic of Congo since December 2013. The ongoing influx brings the number of Central African refugees in neighbouring countries to 416 437 people and increases the humanitarian needs in the region. The on-going rainy season and escalating inter-community violence will likely lead to further deterioration of the humanitarian situation of CAR refugees.

Major challenges

Over half of the 4.6 million population of the country is in immediate need of humanitarian assistance. Massive displacement, destruction of property and loss of livelihoods have exacerbated vulnerabilities of an already fragile population. The situation of the IDPs is of particular concern. There is a very limited national capacity to assist those affected, and relief efforts are taking place under very challenging conditions, including lack of security:



The national health system has collapsed due to widespread violence, staff having fled and sought refuge elsewhere. Humanitarian organizations 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.



Protection of civilians has to be reinforced. Summary executions of men are being reported. Gender-based violence against women is rampant. Children are also at a high risk of abuse and exploitation, and the number of boys and girls forcibly recruited by armed groups (estimated 6 000 following UNICEF) has largely augmented.



Around 1.7 million people are food insecure, which in turn may lead to increasing nutrition problems. Communities' stocks are emptying and livelihoods have been severely affected by the fighting and looting of harvests, seeds and productive assets, while markets' disruptions have provoked substantial increases in food prices. An estimated 159 000 children are in need of highly nutritious foods. These numbers may rise further due to the ongoing conflict.



Safe drinking water is scarce in most of the displacement sites given the condition of the available pump houses. Sanitation is posing serious problems because of the lack of latrines and proper waste management, due to the congested situation of IDP camps across the country.



Emergency shelter is very limited. The UN-led initial rapid assessment revealed that tents and tarpaulins are still "in significant shortage to provide the most basic protection from the weather" to people staying in camps. Plastic sheeting is essential to ensure minimum standards for those uprooted by the on-going violence.



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 EUR 81 million in 2013 to help those in need throughout the country. A reinforced team of humanitarian experts in the field is closely monitoring the situation, assessing the needs and overseeing the use of funds by partner organizations.

On 20 January 2014, the European Commission and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) co-hosted a **high level meeting in Brussels**. A total of EUR 366 million were mobilized: EUR 150 million for life-saving interventions and further EUR 216 million for stabilization and short to medium-term assistance. Pledges came from the European Commission, EU Member States and other donors including the United States, the World Bank and the African Development Bank. The meeting was also attended by representatives from African countries, the African Union, UN agencies, NGOs and the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement.

Since the onset of the current wave of violence, the EU has organised **repeated airlifts of life-saving items and aid personnel** into the CAR to help those affected by the conflict. The European Commission deployed its humanitarian air service '**ECHO Flight**' to ferry humanitarian workers and supplies into the capital, Bangui. In addition, airlifts from Europe and Nairobi bringing emergency shelter for over 100 000 of those displaced, blankets and basic household items such as kitchen utensils, soap and mosquito nets.

Humanitarian assistance

Humanitarian assistance from the European Commission to the Central African Republic amounted to EUR 39 million in 2013, making the European Commission the country's main donor. Since the escalation of violence in December, the Commission has committed EUR 55 million of humanitarian aid (from which EUR 14 million have been allocated to cover the essential needs of refugees in neighbouring countries). Relief assistance is focused on displaced people both inside and outside IDP camps.

In order to help those affected by the current emergency, 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. **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. **Logistics and coordination of assistance** are of key importance to an effective and efficient delivery of aid. 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.

Assistance to CAR refugees

The European Commission provides **EUR 14 million to help Central African refugees in neighbouring countries**. Half of the funding is spent in Cameroon, which was facing the biggest influx of people fleeing CAR at the beginning of the crisis, EUR 6 million for Chad and EUR 1 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.

Development assistance

The EU is also providing complementary development assistance to meet the basic needs of the most vulnerable. Between 2008 and 2013, around EUR 160 million have been allocated for CAR through the European Development Fund (EDF). In December, an extra EUR 50 million support for the African-led International Support Mission in CAR to help stabilize the country. In 2014, additional EUR 101 million have been allocated to put CAR on track for development.



Examples of ECHO funded relief projects

The delivery of plastic sheeting and other relief materials through emergency airlifts funded by the European Commission has allowed humanitarian organizations to scale-up their life-saving assistance in different sectors. Three main ECHO partners are involved in this action: **Solidarités Internationales** and **ACTED** are focusing on reducing the vulnerabilities of displaced people by providing them with shelter as well as safe drinking water, proper sanitation and hygiene inside and outside IDP camps, while **Première Urgence - Aide Médicale Internationale (PU-AMI)** is reinforcing those operations and has put in place a logistics platform to store humanitarian goods and equipment of ECHO partners and other organizations on the ground. © EU/ECHO



Central Africans are in dire need of basic services. Funded by the European Commission, the **International Medical Corps (IMC)** is improving IDPs, returnees and host communities' access to health and nutrition interventions. The project is also expanding malaria prevention activities and treatment for children under 5 and pregnant and lactating women, as well as ensuring appropriate reproductive health services, correct handling of gender-based violence cases and regular maintenance of essential medicines in the operating facilities. Furthermore, IMC is training local Committees' members in risk assessment, disaster preparedness and response to enhance the most vulnerable populations' capacity to withstand humanitarian crises. © IMC

Households in the worst-hit conflict-affected areas are struggling to cope with the decreasing availability of food and income. Harvest pillages, non-operational markets and extreme poverty pose additional challenges, which may eventually trigger a country-wide food and nutrition crisis. The European Commission is funding the **International Rescue Committee (IRC)** to prevent that scenario and mitigate the impact of the current emergency through activities such as dispensing food vouchers to those in need and rolling-out cash-for-work initiatives to build safe shelters. The project also seeks to increase agricultural supplies and knowledge on farming practices among beneficiaries in partnership with Action Contre la Faim. © EU/ECHO



Under the **EU Children of Peace** initiative, the European Commission is funding a project implemented by the **Danish Refugee Council (DRC)** in the Central African Republic. The initiative supports a total of 50 schools, and is helping to develop a vocational training system to enable access to education for 14 400 boys and girls. It includes the establishment of protective environments to facilitate the reintegration of 600 children formerly associated with armed groups, and foresees an awareness campaign among community, religious, civil and military leaders in order to facilitate those minors' reintegration. 1 400 children involved in the education activities also benefit from psychological assistance. © EU/ECHO

The small towns of Kentzou, Garoua-Boulai and Ngaoui in **Eastern Cameroon** have been overrun by **people seeking refuge from the violence and looting in Central African Republic**. Some families have travelled all the way from Bangui, in buses or trucks, while others left their villages on foot. From one day to another, thousands of people found themselves stranded out in the open. Following ECHO's assessment mission in early February 2014, the European Commission has decided to support partners in order to improve the reception of refugees and organize their re-settlement to more appropriate sites. The refugees are also being provided with emergency shelter, non-food items, health care, food and water.



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