



Central African Republic

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

Population: 4.8 million people

Human Development Index ranking: 187 of 188 countries (UNDP)

Number of internally displaced (UNHCR, CMP, End November 2016): over 434 000, including over 45 000 in the capital Bangui

Number of Central African refugees (UNHCR, End November 2016): 462 000 in neighbouring countries

2.3 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)

European Commission humanitarian aid in 2016: € 24 million

European Commission humanitarian aid since December 2013: **€111.5 million**

EU humanitarian assistance (European Commission and EU Member States) **since 2014: over €355 million**

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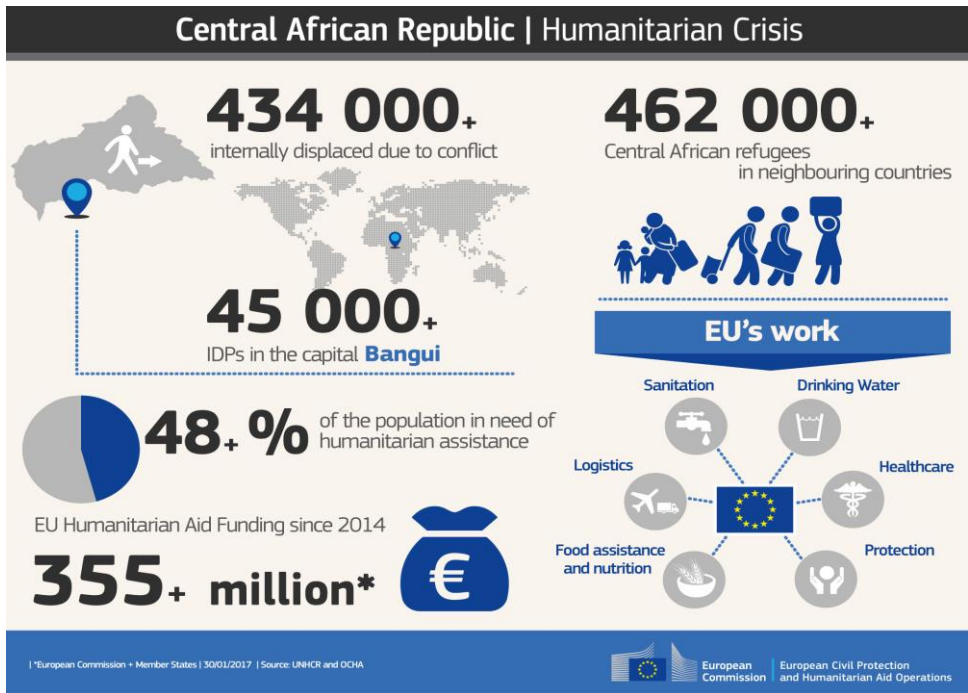
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Key messages

- The **humanitarian situation** in the Central African Republic (CAR) **remains extremely serious** more than three years after the current crisis erupted in December 2013. Some **2.3 million people** – almost half of the population – **are in need of humanitarian assistance**. Around 2.4 million children are affected by the crisis, according to UNICEF.

- Despite a successful election, **humanitarian needs persist** and remain very high, alongside recovery needs. However, regular fighting and access constraints complicate aid organisations' work and access to people in need.

- In such a challenging context, humanitarian actors remain the main partners of the national authorities. Their support ensures the provision of relief and basic services to the population. It is therefore crucial that an enabling legal and fiscal framework for humanitarian actors is put in place.

- With over €355 million provided since 2014, **the European Union is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance** to CAR. The European Commission alone has provided €111.5 million (in addition to over €37 million for Central African refugees in neighbouring countries) in humanitarian aid since December 2013.

- The Commission's humanitarian assistance primarily targets 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. Over 434 000 people are still internally displaced (IDPs) almost three years after the crisis erupted in December 2013 following a change of regime. Widespread violence ensued, with attacks on civilians from Seleka, a coalition of predominantly Muslim rebel groups, and Christian militias called anti-balaka. With the support of international armed forces, the country is struggling to restore security due to the continued presence of numerous armed groups and widespread criminality. Local populations are constantly victims of abuses and arbitrary violence. In spite of relentless efforts to resolve these issues, ethno-religious tensions remain strong.

Major challenges

Almost half of the 4.8 million people living in the country are 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. Humanitarian organisations are still providing the bulk of essential services across the country.

The persistence of banditry episodes further complicates the ability of partners to gain access to people in need. The ongoing insecurity combined with adverse climatic effects has more than halved the food production. As a result, crop availability was 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 group according to UNICEF).

In view of these substantial needs and the challenges ahead, it is crucial for CAR to remain on the international community's agenda.



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 African population 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 improvements 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. In order to assist people to return to their place of origin, shelter support in the form of construction materials and tools is required.



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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 €355 million since 2014 to help those in need throughout the country. A team of experts from the Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) is based in Bangui and is closely monitoring the situation, assessing the needs and overseeing the use of funds by partner organisations.

Humanitarian assistance from the European Commission to the Central African Republic for 2016 amounted to € 24.5 million. This aid benefited some 553 000 people through different programmes covering the most urgent needs. Since the escalation of violence in December 2013, the Commission has committed €111.5 million in humanitarian aid, in addition to the over €37 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 has organised **repeated airlifts of life-saving items and aid personnel** into CAR to help those affected by the conflict. In 2017, the European Commission is also supporting the UN humanitarian air services (UNHAS) in order to facilitate the transport of humanitarian personnel to remote locations 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 care 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, medical, psychosocial and legal support to victims as well as actions offering a protective environment for children through the **EU Children of Peace** initiative. **Food assistance** is a priority, so as to prevent a nationwide crisis. Relief efforts aim at combining in kind assistance and cash

transfer initiatives once commercial activities can resume.

Moreover, the Commission is supporting integrated actions to provide safe drinking **water**, re-establish decent **sanitation** facilities and promote better **hygiene** practices (WASH). In crowded internally displaced camps, this is crucial to prevent diseases and epidemic outbreaks. In 2016, 152 000 people will benefit from improved access to sanitation through latrines construction and waste management systems. **Emergency shelter and non-food items** such as blankets and mosquito nets are also being made available. **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 security management.

The European Commission has provided over **€37 million to help Central African [refugees*](#) in neighbouring countries since December 2013**. Most of the funding is spent in Cameroon (€21.25 million), which was facing the biggest influx of people fleeing the CAR at the beginning of the crisis. €11.3 million has been allocated for Chad, and €4.5 million for the DRC and the Republic of Congo. This humanitarian assistance addresses the basic needs of refugees such as **shelter, food, health, protection, [water, sanitation and hygiene*](#)**.

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, later joined by Italy and Switzerland. It aims to promote 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 **Commission's contribution stands at more than €100 million** (around €97 million from development funds and €3 million in humanitarian funds devoted to Linking Relief Rehabilitation and Development) out of a total "Bekou" budget of €136 million.

Examples of ECHO funded relief projects

It is estimated that 70% of health is delivered through the humanitarian system. Primary and secondary healthcare is provided by the national health system supported by international NGOs. In particular, funding from the Commission's Directorate-General for European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (ECHO) is enabling partners such as **ALIMA**, **International Medical Corps (IMC)** and Action Contre la Faim (ACF) to intervene in 3 hospitals and 14 health centres, giving free access to quality care including psychosocial and mental care to 153 000 people. © OCHA



Funded by the European Commission, **UNICEF** is implementing a project to urgently respond to newly displaced populations, through the Rapid-Response Mechanism. Fifty-four multi-sectorial needs assessments and 42 emergency interventions have already been conducted. This brought relief to the urgent needs of these populations (109 303 people received Non-Food Item kits and 25 057 people urgent Water Sanitation and Hygiene 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



In 2017, Plan International will continue providing support to a total of 5 580 children affected by the conflict in Boda, Lobaye. The action gives access to quality integrated early childhood care and development to 800 children from 0-5 years old; access to quality primary education in a safe environment for 2 780 vulnerable children from age 6-13 and alternative education for 2 000 marginalised adolescents from age 14-18 while increasing the capacity of promoting peace within the communities. © 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. © EU/ECHO

