



Central African Republic

ECHO FACTSHEET

Facts & Figures

Number of internally displaced (UNHCR):
over 436 000 including
over 44 000 in the capital,
Bangui

Number of Central African refugees (UNHCR):
over 462 000 in
neighbouring countries

2.7 million people are in
need of humanitarian
assistance

Around **1.5 million** people
are food insecure

2.4 million children are
affected by the crisis
(UNICEF)

Other data

Population: 4.6 million
people

HDI ranking: 185 of 187
countries (UNDP)

European Commission humanitarian aid since December 2013:

EUR 69 million (including
EUR 20 million for CAR
refugees in neighbouring
countries)

EU humanitarian assistance (European Commission and EU Member States) in 2014/15:

Over EUR 186 million

Humanitarian Aid and
Civil Protection

B-1049 Brussels, Belgium

Tel.: (+32 2) 295 44 00

Fax: (+32 2) 295 45 72

email:

echo-info@ec.europa.eu

Website:

<http://ec.europa.eu/echo>



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Over 436 000 people
internally displaced due
to conflict



over 44 000 IDPs
in BANGUI,
60% children

Over 462 000 Central
African refugees in Cameroon,
Chad, DR Congo and
Republic of Congo



EU* humanitarian funding
in 2014/2015



EU's work



protection



health care



food assistance
and nutrition



drinking water



sanitation



logistics

Source: UNHCR, ECHO/EDRIS - * European Commission and EU Member States

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Key messages

- The Central African Republic (CAR) is suffering a devastating humanitarian crisis since 2013, when the country descended into inter-communal violence. More than half of the population – 2.7 million people – are in need of aid. 20% are displaced within or outside of the country.
- In addition to physical protection from violence, priority needs are food security, healthcare, water, sanitation and hygiene, shelter and basic household items.
- There are serious protection concerns for all civilians. In spite of some recent improvement, security remains volatile and unpredictable and continues hindering the work of relief organisations. Wide spread criminality affects communities in many parts of the country including the capital city.
- The crisis has forced around 220 000 people since December 2013 to flee to [Cameroon](#), [Chad](#), [Democratic Republic of Congo](#) and the Republic of Congo, bringing the number of Central African refugees in neighbouring countries to over 462 000 people. The European Commission has provided EUR 20 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 with over EUR 186 million provided since 2014. The European Commission alone has provided EUR 69 million (including about EUR 20 million for CAR refugees in neighbouring countries) in humanitarian aid since December 2013.

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. After a regime change in March 2014 and the deployment of international armed forces the country has struggled to restore stability and order. If the worst has been avoided, overall the security situation remains fragile. The greater part of the country is affected by the presence of numerous armed groups and widespread criminality. Local populations are regularly falling victim to abuses and arbitrary treatment. In spite of relentless efforts to avoid it, ethno-religious tensions remain strong.

Inter-communal violence has escalated dramatically since the end of 2013. Attacks have led to serious human rights violations and the death of thousands of civilians. Over 436 000 people are still internally displaced (IDPs) after one year. In the capital Bangui alone, over 43 000 people have been forced to flee their homes and are still living in 34 makeshift camps and other sites. An estimated 60% of them are children. The Muslim population in Bangui has dramatically decreased (Source: UN).

The on-going crisis has forced over 220 000 people to take refuge in neighbouring countries since December 2013. More than 140 000 refugees have arrived in [Cameroon](#), close to 45 000 in Democratic Republic of Congo, around 20 000 in Chad and over 13 000 in Republic of Congo since December 2013. The ongoing influx brings the number of Central African refugees in neighbouring countries to over 462 000 people and increases the humanitarian needs throughout the region. The on-going insecurity has impacted on people's livelihood and productive assets leading to a decrease in production in the agriculture sector by 58%. The level of chronic malnutrition has increased and is currently among the highest in the world (around 40% of the under 5 years old population according to UNICEF). Food security in CAR is likely to further deteriorate unless security is restored.

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 the vulnerabilities of an already fragile population. The situation of the IDPs is of particular concern. There is no 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, 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 Africans having effective access to health.



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. Between 6 000 and 10 000 of boys and girls have been forcibly recruited by armed groups. These children must be freed following an agreement reached at the Bangui Forum in May 2015.



Around 1.5 million people are food insecure, which in turn may lead to increasing nutrition problems. Communities' stocks are empty 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 and substantial decrease in household income. With food insecurity increasing the chronic malnutrition rate, these numbers may still rise further.



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 improvement after one year of humanitarian intervention. 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 and basic construction materials and tools remain a priority. Tarpaulins must be changed after one year of use in harsh weather conditions. In order to assist people to return to their place of origin, support in the form of construction materials and tools is required.

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 186 million since 2014 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 organisations.

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 called Bêkou ("hope" in Sango language), established in July 2014, by the European Union and three Member States: France, Germany and the Netherlands. It aims to promote the stabilisation and reconstruction of the CAR and it has been established for a maximum duration of 60 months in order to provide a medium-term response. The EU contribution stands at €51 million (€49 million from development funds and €2 million in humanitarian funds).

Since the onset of the wave of violence that shook the Central African Republic, 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 have brought emergency shelter for over 100 000 of those displaced, blankets and basic household items such as kitchen utensils, soap and mosquito nets.

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 69 million of humanitarian aid (from which almost EUR 20 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.

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 as well as humanitarian air service and adequate safety management. 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.

The European Commission has provided about **EUR 20 million to help Central African [refugees in neighbouring countries since December 2013](#)**. Almost half of the funding is spent in Cameroon, which was facing the biggest influx of people fleeing the CAR at the beginning of the crisis, EUR 7.8 million has been allocated 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.



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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 organisations to scale-up their life-saving assistance in different sectors. Three main ECHO partners have been involved in this action: **Solidarités International** 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 organisations on the ground. © EU/ECHO



Funded by the European Commission, the **International Medical Corps (IMC)** has improved IDPs', returnees' and host communities' access to health and nutrition interventions. The project also expanded 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 Central African crisis has weakened an already fragile health system. Thanks to ECHO's funding, **Save the Children** provides free health and nutrition care to near 150 000 children and their families. Through the funds, the local health staff has been trained to improve the quality of health services and also the community health workers to prevent, identify and refer main illnesses in order for all to receive timely and appropriate treatment. Over the last year, 120 000 free medical consultations were provided, ten times more than the previous year. Save the Children also supports the regional hospital so that children suffering from severe cases of malaria, pneumonia or malnutrition receive the care they need, women deliver their babies with the support of skilled midwives, and war-wounded benefit from emergency surgery. © Save the Children

