

POPULATION OF CONCERN

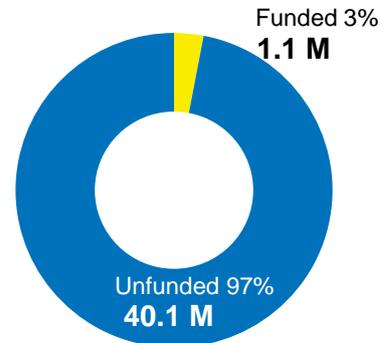
TOTAL: 747,409

Refugees		10,036
Asylum Seekers		575
Spontaneous Refugee Returnees		47,735
Refugee Returnees		363
IDPs in CAR		688,700

FUNDING SITUATION (JANUARY 2018)

USD 41.3M

Requested for CAR



UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

- 122 National Staff
- 28 International Staff
- 10 Affiliate Staff

Offices:

- 1 Branch Office in Bangui
- 1 Sub Office in Bouar
- 5 Field Offices in Bambari, Kaga-Bandoro, Obo, Paoua, and Zemio
- 1 Field Unit in Berberati



*IDPs collect NFI assistance during a distribution in Bria on 15 June 2017
Photo: Stella Fatime / UNHCR*

2017 IN BRIEF

IDPs

For the Central African Republic, after a very positive first quarter, 2017 became a year of spreading conflict. The south, east, and centre of the country suffered the effects of fighting between armed groups, and an ever-increasing number of civilians found themselves displaced. In particular, spikes in violence and the movement of armed groups attacking villages along the axes that connect the country saw massive increases in displacement in Bria, Haute-Kotto Prefecture (73,000 individuals) and, at the end of the year, in Paoua, Ouham-Pende Prefecture (c. 65,000 individuals). By the end of December, the number of IDPs in CAR had risen to 688,700 – an increase of almost 277,000 in just 12 months. This placed increasing demands on UNHCR’s resources for protection monitoring, assistance, and in its role as cluster lead for the Protection and Shelter/NFI/CCCM Clusters.

Refugees

In the refugee context, the voluntary repatriation of 1,493 Sudanese Darfuri refugees from Pladama Ouaka Camp near Bambari was a noteworthy achievement. UNHCR is now working with the authorities to

integrate the small residual population of 194 individuals into Central African society. This will involve support for livelihoods, ensuring the continued education of children, the provision of health insurance, and an initial support for the construction of permanent shelter as they prepare to leave the camp and become more independent. Camp infrastructure including the health centre and primary school are being handed over to the authorities for the benefit of the local population.

Elsewhere, the violence that gripped the country in 2017 had a profound effect on some refugee populations, none moreso than Congolese (DRC) refugees living in the camp in Zemio who were forced to cross the river into DRC to shelter from the armed groups. Although in their home country, they were still not in their area of origin, and many are still waiting for the situation to stabilise sufficiently to allow their return to the camp. It is noteworthy that some Congolese refugees had requested UNHCR to facilitate their repatriation, something that will be done as soon as possible.

Returns and Repatriation

Concerning returns and repatriation, the year began brightly with the completion of the return process for the former inhabitants of all 32 IDP sites in Bangui. This included the closure of the M'Poko Airport site in January 2017. Over the course of the year, some 88,365 IDPs successfully returned to their homes. Many did so through the invaluable support of the Projet d'Appui au Retour et à la Réintégration (PARET), a government agency supported by UNHCR and working under the Ministry of Humanitarian Action and National Reconciliation. Some 47,735 Central African refugees spontaneously returned to the country during 2017: an encouraging increase on the 34,006 who did so the previous year.

Operations

The past year presented a number of new challenges for humanitarian actors in general, and for UNHCR in particular. Access to populations of concern reduced and humanitarian space shrunk. Road and air access, particularly in the south-east of the country, were impacted by insecurity. This saw the delivery of equipment for the Obo operation in support of South Sudanese refugees delayed by several months; the operation finally overcame these difficulties by using flights as well as the route from Kampala to supply the office. Similarly, the movement of IDPs to the only airstrip in Kaga-Bandoro caused the temporary suspension of humanitarian flights to the town. UNHCR, together with partners, worked with the displaced population to find a solution, and assisted them in relocating to safer nearby site. The "Noël à la maison" operation that saw the successful return of IDPs from the Bangui M'Poko airport site was brought to Kaga-Bandoro late on in the year, with the 573 inhabitants (127 households) of the Kando site having returned in dignity and safety to their villages by the end of December.

The targeting of humanitarian actors has been a cause for concern. The looting of the UNHCR guesthouse in Kaga-Bandoro in early July 2017 and the violence to which the town of Zemio was subjected forced the temporary suspension of operations at both affected field offices. Nevertheless, pursuing a "stay and deliver" approach, normal operations resumed in Kaga-Bandoro after just a few weeks, and the UNHCR team in Zemio was again functional by November 2017.

2018 PRIORITIES

- UNHCR will continue to work in line with the National Plan for Recovery and Peace Consolidation (RCPCA). In this respect, the success of the return and reintegration operations in Bangui and Bimbo during the past year will be replicated in other parts of the country this year. UNHCR is working closely with PARET to undertake returns in Kaga-Bandoro, with a similar project in Bambari expected to follow.
- Refugees: Supporting the work of the National Refugee Commission (CNR), the agency will continue to protect and assist the 10,611 refugees and asylum seekers in CAR, ensuring the continuing integration of health and education services, as well as supporting livelihoods where possible. An early priority in the year will be the verification of residual refugee populations in non-camp locations around the country.
- Protection response to widening conflict: With eight UNHCR offices spread across the country, and a network of partners, the agency is well positioned to increase the reach of its protection activities in response to new displacement. An immediate priority will be missions to Bakala, Bangassou, Batangafo,

and Alindao, amongst other areas. UNHCR will also maintain its supporting presence in Bria for as long as the town continues to face such high levels of displacement.

- **Repatriation:** Already planned is the return of some 650 Central African refugees from the Republic of Congo. This initial operation will represent a first footstep in what is hoped will be a year focused on returns.
- **Legal:** UNHCR is supporting the Government of CAR in its efforts to transpose the Kampala Convention on the protection and assistance of IDPs into law at a national level. This year will mark the twentieth anniversary of the adoption of the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement.
- **Statelessness:** An all too frequent problem within the region, UNHCR will this year take steps to address the problem of statelessness in CAR. As the country benefits from open laws on the conferral of citizenship, there are grounds for optimism. Many groups are at risk of statelessness due to a lack of access to documentation in remote areas, and therefore face technical barriers rather than legal impediments.
- **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM):** UNHCR undertakes regular liaison with the landowners of sites to ensure that they remain open for as long as they are required. Across the country, UNHCR works with displaced communities to better organise themselves into sectorial committees, providing referral mechanisms through which issues can be addressed. A CCCM-light approach is followed in some less accessible areas.

NEEDS AND GAPS

- **Access:** The reduction in humanitarian space across the country amid deteriorating security has made the delivery of essential protection activities and material assistance all the more challenging.
- **Basic Services and State Presence:** If the rate of repatriation of Central African refugees is to be increased or sustained, it will require a consistent and far reaching effort to deliver essential services and the resumption of civil state functions in return areas.
- **Funding:** Amidst the deterioration of the humanitarian situation in CAR over the past year, humanitarian actors have had to support a growing population of concern. Targeted by armed groups, and faced with populations in dire need of assistance, the CAR situation can ill afford to become a forgotten crisis in 2018.

Special thanks to the major donors of unrestricted and regional funds in 2017 and 2018

United States of America (266 M) | Sweden (174 M) | Netherlands (91 M) | Norway (84 M) | United Kingdom (77 M) | Priv Donors Spain (60 M) | Denmark (58 M) | Australia (38 M) | Switzerland (30 M) | Priv Donors Republic of Korea (29 M) | Japan (25 M) | Priv Donors Italy (19 M) | Priv Donors USA (18 M) | Priv Donors Japan (17 M) | Canada (16 M) | Priv Donors Sweden (15 M) | France (14 M) | Germany (12 M) | Italy (10 M)

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LINKS

<https://m.facebook.com/RefugeesCAR>

