

Central African Republic (CAR) Situation

1 March 2021

Displacement of Central Africans continues

Since the December 2020 electoral crisis in the Central African Republic, neighbouring countries have reported the arrival of at least **112,000 people into border locations who fled** to escape armed conflict.

Regional Emergency Appeal

As humanitarian and protection needs grow, UNHCR is appealing for **\$164.7 million**, of which \$13.1 million are new needs related to the latest wave of displacement, to deliver critical assistance in CAR and neighbouring countries.

The threat of COVID-19

In addition to conflict and insecurity, **COVID-19 is an ongoing threat** to refugees and their host communities. UNHCR is working closely with local governments and partners to prevent the spread of the virus.

KEY INDICATORS

100,000*

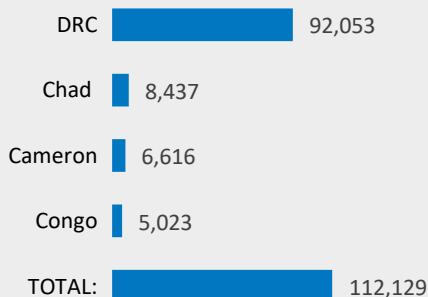
Internally displaced persons in CAR

112,129**

People that have fled CAR to Cameroon, RoC, Chad and DRC until 24 Feb 2021, due to the election situation.

DISPLACEMENT TRENDS BY COUNTRY

New arrivals



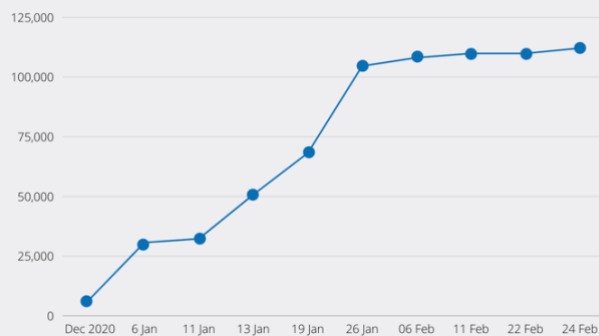
* [Foot note] Announced by OCHA on 21 January 2021. This figure is yet to be verified.

** [Foot note] Data as reported by local authorities of 24 February 2021.

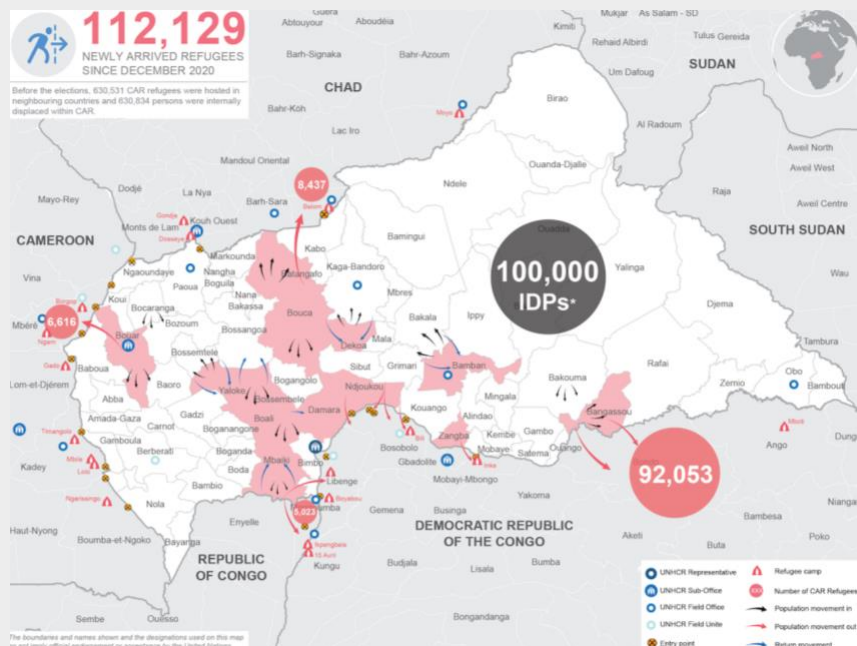
** In Cameroon, movements suggest that the actual figures are higher than the statistics.

** DRC displacement figure is a government estimate. UNHCR is conducting biometric registration to confirm it.

REGIONAL DISPLACEMENT TREND



CAR SITUATION MAP



Operational Context

Political and security situation in Central African Republic (CAR)



The general situation in CAR has improved, and there has been a significant decrease in the number of military confrontations during the last two weeks of February. However, tensions between armed groups remain.



Humanitarian access remains restricted. MINUSCA reports: “CAR is now the most dangerous place for humanitarian work; over 46 per cent of worldwide incidents were registered by international non-governmental organizations last month.”



Central African military forces have gradually reopened the MSR1 route between Bangui and Cameroon, and a coordinated convoy programme allows access for trucks. However, logistical challenges and food prices remain a concern.



UNHCR is working with local authorities to enforce health measures and monitor positive cases of COVID-19 to prevent the spread among persons of concern and humanitarian workers. Limited health resources and medical infrastructure continue to pose a challenge.



On 23 February, the Humanitarian Coordinator and UNICEF reported that 50% of children in CAR can't attend school due to violence. 999 schools can't operate due to the violence, and 26 schools have been occupied by armed groups.



Incidents of gender-based violence (GBV) – including rape, assault and femicide – against displaced women and girls have increased since the crisis began. Most cases remain unreported due to the lack of specialists in the area.



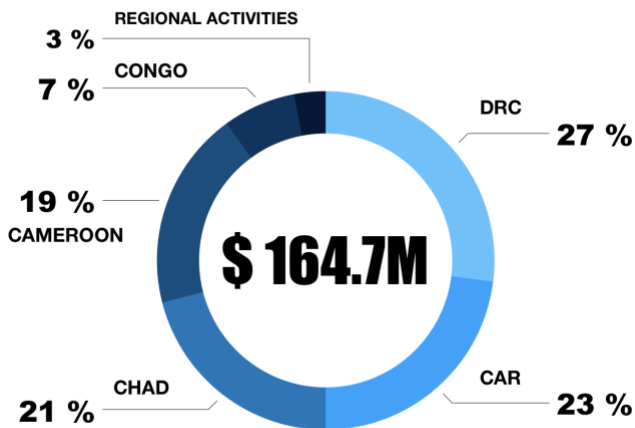
Population movements and border monitoring

- The authorities in Cameroon, Chad, the Republic of Congo have reported a decrease in the rate of Central African arrivals for the past two weeks.
- UNHCR continues to coordinate with local authorities and partners to scale up border and protection monitoring to identify asylum-seekers, address their most pressing needs, and provide urgent assistance.
- Throughout the response, UNHCR continues to prioritize support to persons with specific needs, including unaccompanied children, pregnant women, and survivors of gender-based violence.
- To mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infections, UNHCR is distributing masks, building and equipping quarantine centres for testing, isolation, and treatment, and raising awareness about the risk and prevention of COVID-19.
- New displacement of more than 200,000 people adds to the 1.3 million Central Africans already uprooted in the region, bringing the overall number of displaced Central Africans (IDPs and refugees) to over 1.5 million – almost a third of the country's total population.



Central Africa Republic Regional Emergency Appeal

Requirements



- On 25 February UNHCR launched an [emergency appeal](#) to address the Central African Republic crisis. UNHCR is appealing for \$164.7 million, of which \$13.1 million are new needs resulting from the latest wave of displacement, for Central African Republic and neighboring countries.
- As the situation in CAR continues to deteriorate, UNHCR is scaling up its emergency response to protect the most vulnerable refugees and IDPs and provide life-saving assistance.
- Read the full appeal [here](#).



UNHCR Emergency Response L1 and L2 Emergency Declaration

- Since the crisis began in December 2020, UNHCR has stepped up its emergency response in CAR and the four main refugee-hosting countries. To reinforce its emergency response and preparation activities, UNHCR declared on 21 January 2021 a Level 2 emergency for its Operation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and a Level 1 emergency for its Operations in the Central African Republic, Cameroon, Chad, and the Republic of the Congo.
- UNHCR's response involves coordination between its Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa, which covers CAR, Cameroon and Chad, and its Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, which covers the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of the Congo.



Country Operation Central African Republic

Operational Environment

- Humanitarian activities continue despite unstable security conditions in most of the country. Criminality from armed groups remains the preeminent safety threat.
- UNHCR has established a presence in Bantangafo where violations of the civilian and humanitarian character in three sites (Alternative, Zibbo Bagga, Catholic Mission) continue to be reported. Alerts were shared at briefings with MINUSCA, UNPOL and the CMCOORD meeting.
- Although authorities and military forces have returned to Bouar and Bangassou, the displaced populations fear to return in their homes as they are apprehensive of the security conditions. The presence of explosive devices in the bush has been reported, particularly in Boali and Bossembele.
- The FACA and its allies have resumed control in Bouar city again, and security conditions have improved. As a result, nearly 10,000 of 12,500 IDPs from the area have returned home recently.

Assistance provided

- UNHCR and its partners distributed NFI kits to 4,600 individuals (642 households) in Bouar.
- In Kaga-Bandoro, nine survivors of human rights violations benefited from psychosocial assistance provided by UNHCR partner INTERSOS.
- In Kemo, eight survivors of human rights violations benefited from the INTERSOS team's psychosocial support.
- In Batangafo, eight GBV survivors from Moyenne Sido were referred by the community relays to the Kabo hospital for medical care.
- Three sensitization sessions were conducted on barrier measures against the COVID-19 pandemic at the MINUSCA and Alternative sites in Batangafo centre.
- As security conditions improve on the MSR1 route, UNHCR is coordinating with MINUSCA and local authorities to transport 18,650 NFI kits. In the meantime, UNHCR will participate in an integrated road assessment (MINUSCA / UNDSS / AFP) on the MSR1 between Bangui and Bouar on 25 February.

Regional support

- UNHCR deployed an advanced team to strengthen its presence in Bangassou, Batangafo, and seven Emergency team members are reinforcing capacity for Protection (3) SGBV (1), CCCM (2) and Supply (1).
- The Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa and its protection team are preparing a mission to support the CAR operation to strengthen its response to gender-based violence cases. Psychosocial and health care are priorities.



IDP participatory assessment in CAR @UNHCR 2021



Country Operations

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Operational Environment

- As of 25 February 2021, UNHCR and government partner CNR have biometrically registered 39,795 new asylum-seekers from CAR (11,478 households), including 19,705 in Bas Uele, 10,788 in North Ubangi, and 9,302 in South Ubangi Province.
- As of 16 February, reports from UNHCR and CNR border monitoring missions in the three affected provinces indicate that most new arrivals are from the south-eastern towns of Béma, Bangassou, and more recently, Bangui. A majority of the new arrivals are staying with host families or in makeshift shelters.
- There are also reports of price hikes in host communities around refugee-hosting areas of Zongo, Yakoma and Ndu in the three affected provinces. Women have reportedly started resorting to harmful coping mechanisms such as survival sex in order to access basic household and food.

Coordinated mission between DRC and CAR operations and Geneva HQ

Spontaneous returns of Central African refugees were noted during the mission to the border between CAR and DRC. A coordinated initiative between the operations has been put in place to monitor the movements.



Central African refugees' queue at a UNHCR distribution of core relief items in Yakoma, Democratic Republic of the Congo ©UNHCR / Helene Caux

Assistance provided

- There have been 74 reported Central African children born on Congolese territory since the beginning of the new influx. UNHCR has been working with government to ensure they receive birth certificates, with 48 having so far been issued. Birth certificates help prevent statelessness and facilitate protection and assistance.
- UNHCR and partner AIDES distributed essential drugs and nutrition supplies to new arrivals across 11 sites visited by health evaluation teams in North Ubangi Province. AIDES also conducted medical and nutritional screening reaching 17,814 people. Treatments were provided for prevalent diseases such as malaria, intestinal infections, diarrhea, respiratory tract infections and malnutrition.
- UNHCR and partner ADSSE distributed CRIs including blankets, sleeping mats, kitchen sets and mosquito nets to 3,490 vulnerable Central African refugee households, or approximately 30 per cent of registered new arrivals, in North Ubangi, South Ubangi and Bas Uele Provinces over the past weeks.
- In Ndu, Bas Uele Province, UNHCR has built 20 emergency latrines and 20 emergency bathing cubicles, upgraded the superstructure of 35 latrines and bathing cubicles, and supported training for 50 community hygiene promotion volunteers including providing face masks. UNHCR's partner ACTED also rehabilitated and disinfected seven hand pumps and carried out 10 community awareness sessions to promote handwashing and environmental hygiene.
- UNHCR and UNICEF carried out joint distributions in Yakoma, North Ubangi Province, reaching approximately 6,900 individuals with soap and 485 households with buckets and jerrycans to improve hygiene and sanitation conditions and to prevent diseases. Members of the host community were among the beneficiaries of the joint distribution.

**Country Operation**
Cameroon**Operational Environment**

- As of 26 February, 6,616 new Central African refugees have crossed into Cameroon. Of these, 4,929 arrived to the Garoua Boulai area, and 643 arrived further south in the Batouri region.
- UNHCR continues to collaborate with national authorities to monitor the border and maintain a quick alert system to identify and assist new arrivals crossing irregular border points.
- Movements suggest that the actual figures are undoubtedly higher than the recorded statistics. For the moment, UNHCR cannot set up mobile registration teams and register refugees settled in the villages.

Assistance provided

- After eight COVID-19 cases were detected in the last weeks, UNHCR continues to actively engage with local authorities on the inclusion of new refugees on a strict health protocol.
- On 19 February, of the eight new arrivals who tested positive and received care at the Goroua Boulai isolation centre, seven tested negative and were released from the treatment center.
- Since 3 February, 105 people have been quarantined after contact with five refugees who tested positive for COVID-19. After 14 days of isolation and medical clearance, the new arrivals were transferred to their assigned shelters.
- At least 661 new arrivals were involved in information sessions on COVID-19, food, environmental hygiene, malaria prevention and diarrheal diseases.
- UNHCR has facilitated the inclusion of 246 children in educational institutions, including 46 secondary students and 230 primary school pupils.



New CAR refugees adjust to life at the Gado settlement. @UNHCR/HelenNgho.

Regional support

The Cameroon operation and the Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa are working on improving school enrolment capacities for refugees and host communities.


 Country Operations
Chad
Operational Environment

- As of 22 February, 8,437 new Central African refugees arrived in Chad and were registered by UNHCR in coordination with local authorities.
- As of 15 February, there were no reports from the border of forced displacement in the last two weeks.
- On 18 February, the team on a joint UNHCR/CNARR mission pre-registered 867 people (240 households).
- No positive cases or COVID19 alerts have been reported, and awareness-raising on COVID19 prevention in the camps, sites and health structures continues. Around 1,307 people (270 households) have been processed through the quarantine centre.
- 3,002 children and young people have arrived since the beginning of the crisis. As of 27 February, the school in Doholo registered 362 new refugee students, including 173 girls in the elementary school.



The arrival of a refugee family at the Gore Quarantine Centre @UNHCR / Benaibey

Assistance provided

- Last week, the quarantine centres were disinfected while empty. However, due to the lack of available shelters, they are currently used as a transit centre for new arrivals. At least 395 people (185 households) are in the Gore centre waiting for transfer to Doholo or Gondje camp.
- Measures to mitigate the risk of COVID-19 infection continue, and UNHCR's health partner CSSI conducts medical screening and consultation through its mobile clinic at the various border crossing points.
- Five GBV cases were identified and assisted with psychosocial and medical support in close coordination with UNFPA.
- During the period of 20-23 February, MSF carried out 121 curative and preventive consultations through the two medically equipped mobile clinics, 63 per cent of which were for asylum seekers, and 37 per cent for locals. Children under five years of age accounted for 37 per cent of consultations.
- Last week, 562 new arrivals (219 households) were transferred from Bedamcity village to the Doholo camps. Each household received NFI kits, including mats, jerry cans, kitchen kits, blankets, mosquito nets and soaps during the transfer.
- In coordination with the Local Pedagogical Inspector, four community teachers have been recruited to facilitate the inclusion of refugee children into the national educational system.
- UNHCR is working on improving water, sanitation and hygiene facilities at Doholo Camp. As of 24 February, in collaboration with ADES and ACF, five boreholes were rehabilitated, three boreholes were drilled, and 187 latrines were completed.

Regional support

UNHR is developing a project to raise funds to build classrooms, recruit additional teachers, provide desks, teaching materials, and school supplies.



Country Operation
Republic of the Congo

Operational Environment

- 692 new asylum-seekers from CAR arrived in Kpakaya Department between 15 and 22 February. UNHCR has been conducting emergency registration of new arrivals alongside the Government, so far registering 1,846 households comprising 5,023 individuals.
- Kpakaya department hosts the largest number of new asylum-seekers from CAR, with a majority living in villages with local communities. As such, additional resources are required to meet growing demands on basic services and local resources.
- According to information provided by new asylum-seekers on 13 February, the security situation has deteriorated in Mbaiki, Yenguela and Bagandou in CAR. The Likouala Department might receive more asylum-seekers over the coming days and weeks.

Assistance Provided

- UNHCR is urging local authorities to raise awareness among immigration officers on the rights of asylum-seekers after two cases of abuse were reported. UNHCR has followed up on the cases.
- The demand for water has outstripped the capacity of three recently installed tanks of 1,000 litres each. The exploitation of natural resources for additional water and food sources could threaten peaceful co-existence between the asylum-seekers and host communities.
- A coordination meeting to enhance protection and assistance to asylum-seekers was held between the Government's National Committee for Assistance to Refugees (CNAR), the police and military police, UNHCR, UNFPA, TSF and AARREC. It was agreed to strengthen security in villages hosting new asylum-seekers by establishing local security committees involving the whole community.
- Key needs in the health sector include mobile health clinics, which need to be increased in Kpakaya and Ndongo-Missa while a temporary health post is being completed in Kpakaya. Vaccination campaigns are also needed for pregnant women (tetanus), and for children aged 6 months to 15 years (measles) to avoid the spread of illnesses.

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