

# MIGRATION DIMENSIONS OF THE CRISIS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC



## Short, Medium and Long-term Considerations

Working Paper August 2014







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IOM International Organization for Migration

# **MIGRATION DIMENSIONS OF THE CRISIS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

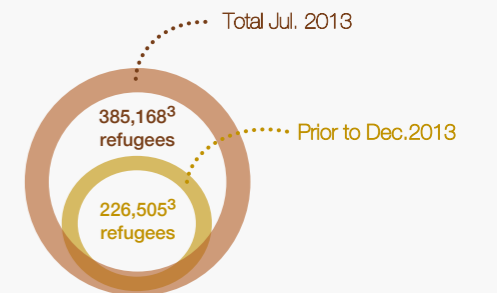
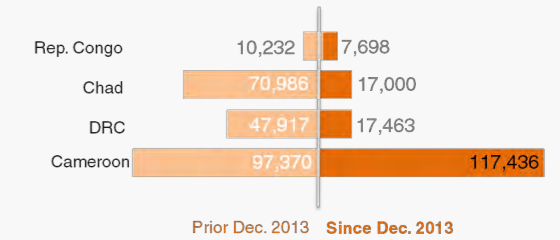
**Short, Medium and Long-term  
Considerations**

Working Paper **August 2014**

Department of Operations and Emergencies  
**International Organization for Migration (IOM)**  
Geneva, Switzerland

### REFUGEE MOVEMENTS

- ▲ Refugee Camps
- 👤 Central African Republic Refugees:

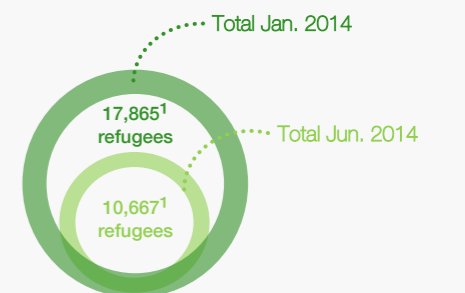


### RETURNEE MOVEMENTS

- ▲ Transit and Temporary Sites
- 👤 Returnees from CAR  
\*This figures represent known returns, however many more are likely to have taken place undocumented.

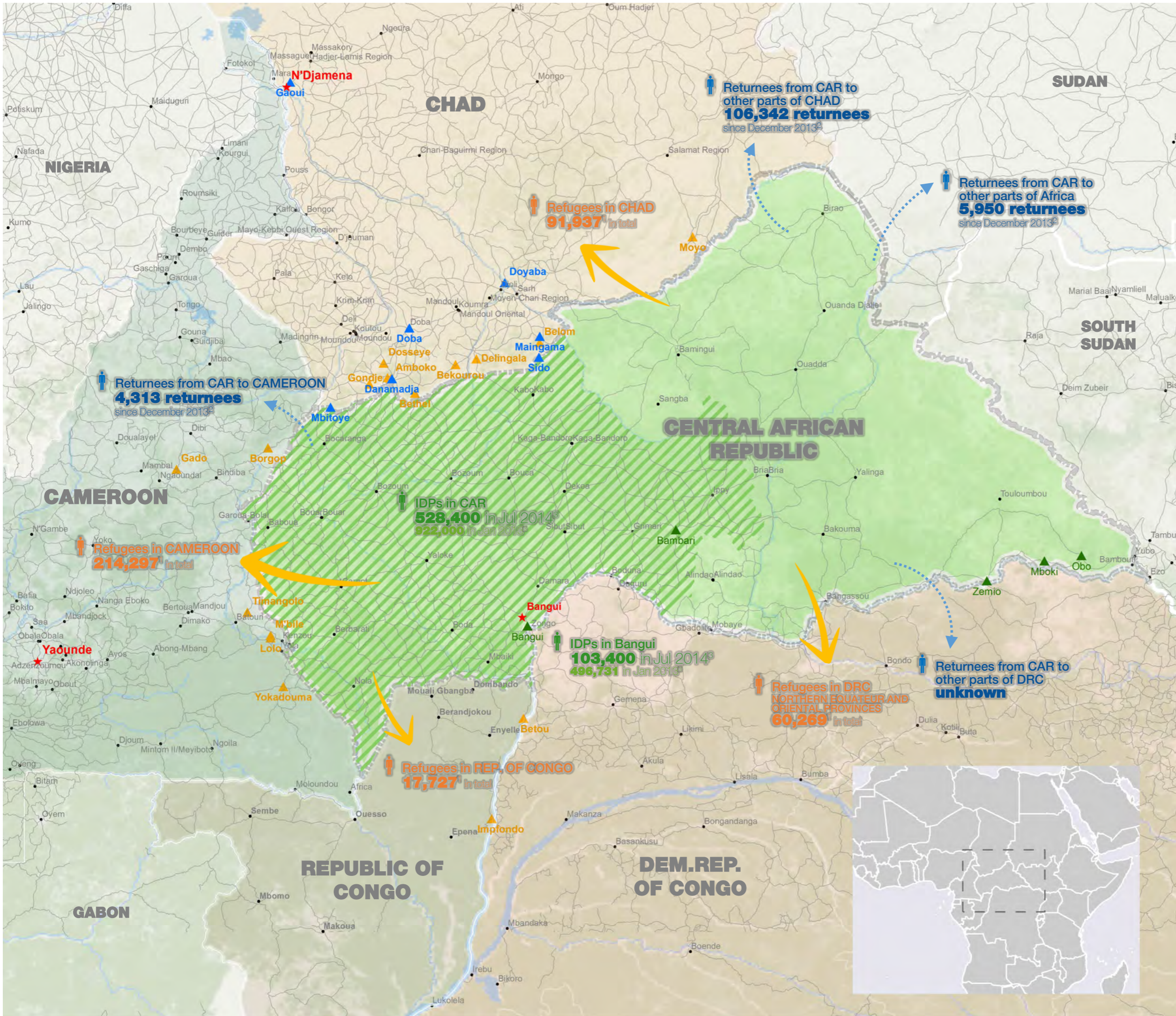
### MOBILITY INSIDE CAR - POPULATION FLOWS

- ▲ Location of Refugees of other nationalities hosted in CAR
- 👤 Internally Displaced Persons
- ▨ Areas of instability



Sources: 1. UNHCR (2014d), 2. IOM (2014a), 3. OCHA (2014a).

This map is for illustration purpose only. Names and boundaries on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by IOM.



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## ACRONYMS

<b>CAR</b>	Central African Republic
<b>DRC</b>	Democratic Republic of Congo
<b>ECCAS</b>	Economic Community of Central African States (Communauté économique des États de l'Afrique Centrale, CEEAC)
<b>FAO</b>	Food and Agricultural Organization
<b>ICG</b>	International Crisis Group
<b>IDMC</b>	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
<b>IDP</b>	Internally Displaced Person
<b>IOM</b>	International Organization for Migration
<b>LRA</b>	Lord's Resistance Army
<b>MINUSCA</b>	UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic
<b>MISCA</b>	African-led International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (la Mission Internationale de Soutien à la Centrafrique sous conduite Africaine)
<b>FNEC</b>	Fédération nationale des éleveurs en Centrafrique (National Federation of Herders in Central African Republic)
<b>NTC</b>	National Transitional Council
<b>NGO</b>	Non-governmental organization
<b>OCHA</b>	United Nations Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
<b>TCN</b>	Third Country Nationals
<b>UNDP</b>	United Nations Development Programme
<b>UNFPA</b>	United Nations Population Fund
<b>UNHCR</b>	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
<b>UNICEF</b>	United Nations Children's Fund
<b>WFP</b>	World Food Programme

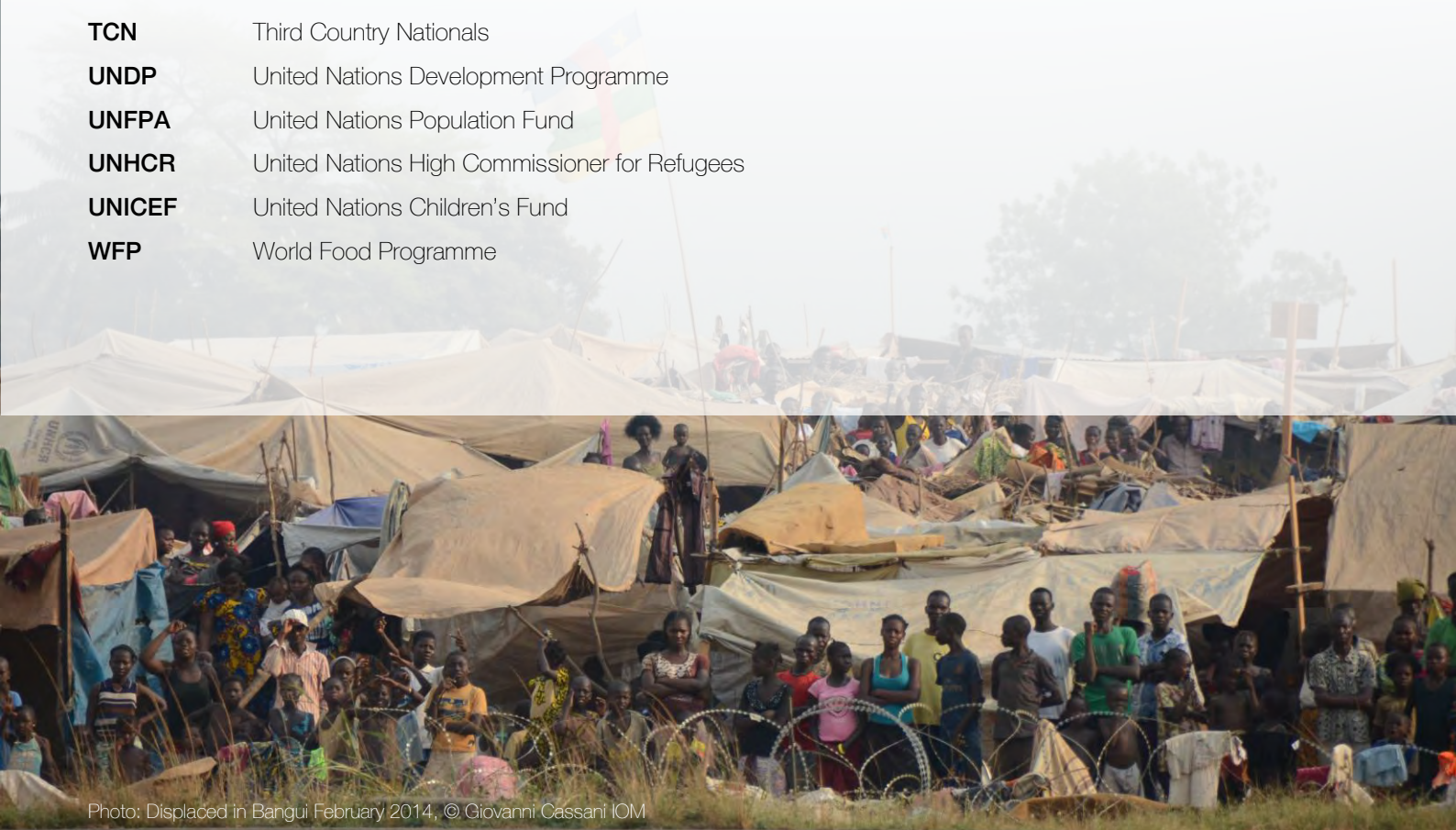


Photo: Displaced in Bangui February 2014, © Giovanni Cassani IOM

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

CAR has a turbulent history replete with failed peace and reconciliation agreements, social and geographic marginalization, endemic poverty, recurring violence, banditry and rebellions. However the scale of the current displacement is unprecedented and has introduced new social and ethno-religious dimensions that had not, for the most part, characterized the country's previous instabilities. These dimensions, however, could have significant implications on migration and socio-economic recovery.

As part of the International Organization for Migration's working paper series under its Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), this paper focuses on the migration dimensions of the crisis in CAR. It considers the impacts of the conflict on all vulnerable mobile groups and tentatively projects how the crisis will affect mobility and displacement in the short, medium and long-term. Such information is critical in helping policymakers and practitioners take an inclusive and migratory-responsive approach to interventions to assist all vulnerable mobile groups, regardless of their status, throughout different displacements and movements. It also helps towards the early identification of key criteria that may be relevant in later preparations for returns, (re-) integration or reparations.

**PART I BACKGROUND CONTEXT:** This section provides a brief synopsis of the political insecurity in CAR with a specific emphasis on the most recent wave of violence, the international response and current security context.

- CAR's history is riddled with political insecurity: from former powers vying for control over the resource rich territory to rebellions against French colonial rule and, following independence, recurring violence, banditry and rebellions and six successive coup-d'états (with the latest occurring in March 2013). Summarized simplistically, the root causes of the current conflict stem from years of accumulated political and economic grievances, which latterly manifested in three specific periods of escalated violence: December 2012, March 2013 and December 2013. Over the course of these events the initial political violence escalated into what evolved into a score-settling pursuit between the predominantly Muslim Séléka coalition and the mainly Christian anti-Balaka militia. While neither group fought with a religious agenda, religion was used to justify or mask a broader unstructured violence.
- Until recently, the international community largely overlooked the repeated crises in CAR and the international response of the violence in December 2012 was also slow and limited at the onset. The French-backed peacekeeping force (namely Operation Sangaris) and the African-led International Support Mission for CAR (MISCA) were facing "nearly an impossible situation", according to France's U.N envoy in January 2014 (Reuters, 15 January 2014). The EU

gradually deployed 700 soldiers and gendarmes between April-June 2014. The Security Council authorized the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) in April 2014. While the civilian component is underway, the military and police components, which will include up to 10,000 military personnel (including 240 military observers and 200 staff officers) and 1,820 police (formed police unit personnel, individual police officers and seconded corrections officers) will begin in September 2014 subsuming MISCA.

- On 23 July 2014, the two principle armed groups of the current conflict in the Central African Republic (CAR), the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka, signed a ceasefire agreement at the Central African National Reconciliation Forum held in Brazzaville. While the most recent agreement is a welcomed first step towards national reconciliation, its impact remains to be seen. Indeed, it represents the second ceasefire attempt since the most recent crisis began in 2012, and the fifth agreement for the country since 2002. The previous ceasefire lasted for just under two short weeks: 11-23 January 2013.

**PART II MIGRATION IN CAR:** Explores the various forms of migration in CAR, including immigration, emigration, labour and economic migration (rural-urban, natural resource sector), transhumance pastoralism and conflict displacement.

- **Prior to the current crisis.** For the most part, the levels of documented emigration and immigration have represented only a small portion of the population (about 2.9 and 1.6 per cent of the population respectively (2010)). Given the strong historical and social ties between CAR and Chad that precede independence, there is a general trend to consider all Muslims as 'foreigners', more specifically as Chadians. There is thus often a lack of clarity of whether "Chadian" is determined by ethnicity or citizenship, which blurs concepts of emigration and immigration. However, notably, about 12.4 per cent of the immigrants (16,500) were actually classified as refugees being hosted in CAR, originating mainly from Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Republic of Congo and Chad. Although UNHCR has facilitated a number of repatriations, the security situations in the countries of origin often and sporadically remain precarious.

Previous spates of violence and rebellions that have surfaced over the years have created some degree of urban push to cities, particularly to Bangui, the country's capital. Bangui also hosts the country's sole university, which also draws youth to the city. However, there is only a marginal difference between the rate of urbanization (2.6%) and population growth (2.13%). High unemployment often drives those who were drawn to the cities to return back to rural areas where they are able to pursue a subsistence/agricultural lifestyle. The Government's census (2003, the last census



undertaken) listed the unemployment rate was 15.2 per cent in urban centres and 4.2 per cent in rural areas.

Nevertheless, the natural resource sector has also drawn migration from both rural and urban areas. Estimates from 2010 revealed that artisanal mining provided employment to 80,000–100,000 miners, many of whom were labour migrants. Transhumance pastoralism has been increasing since the 1920s in CAR, and is anticipated to grow as climate change pushes herders further south. The predominant herders are Muslim 'Peulh', comprised of Mbororo, Foulbé, Chadians and Sudanese herders. Among the herders, ethnicity essentially supersedes national identity. The traditional movements of pastoralists typically involve moving northerly from roughly April to October to avoid the wet season and associated livestock illnesses; southerly to obtain secure water points in the dry season; or east-west to access certain river systems.

- **Conflict displacement:** The current crisis has witnessed an unprecedented scale of forced displacement. As of July 2014, the number of CAR nationals displaced across borders as refugees reaches 252,865. Chad has received about 106,486 individuals, among them Chadian returnees (46%), CAR claimed nationals (52%) and third country national (TCNs, 2%). Most of the TCNs (805/1073) have been transported by IOM to their countries of origin, which are primarily in west or central Africa. Overall, an estimated 137,000 Central Africans, Chadians and other nationalities fled CAR to Cameroon.

In terms of internal displacement in CAR, at the height of the conflict in January 2014, there were at least 922,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs). In mid-July 2014 displacement had decreased by 71.94 per cent in Bangui which has been linked to the slightly, albeit tentative, improvement in security. IOM intention surveys conducted in Bangui in July 2014 revealed that just over half (57 per cent) of the IDPs in Bangui planned on returning soon, while 36 per cent wanted to stay in their hosting location at least for now, while eleven per cent expressed that they would like to go to another region of the country. The primary needs of IDPs to facilitate their return were listed in the survey as security (33%), housing (31%), non-food items (13%); employment (8%); food (6%) stolen belongings (74%), absence of authorities (68%), security (66%) and housing (47%). The survey listed the main reasons preventing return to the place of origin are:

- Belongings are stolen (74%)
- Absence of authorities (68%)
- No financial means to return (66%)
- Do not feel safe (66%)
- House damaged (47%).

**PART III IMMEDIATE IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS ON MIGRANT AND DISPLACED POPULATIONS:** Highlights specific vulnerabilities and key issues faced by the different groups and how the current crisis has compounded livelihood insecurity both within CAR and in relation to cross-border movement among its neighbours.

- Given the regular surfacing of violence, rebellions and banditry, rural dwellers in CAR would often re-locate into "the bush" as a coping strategy. Families are typically adept to adjusting to and surviving under these conditions on a short-term basis, going back and forth to check on their land. Although their access to health care and education would be constrained, their presence in the 'bush' typically did not necessarily imply starvation or desperation. However, in light of the devastating levels and duration of violence, the conditions they have faced in the bush have been more desperate. As the international community has had limited access to the rural "bush" areas, there is insufficient information on the vulnerabilities and needs and whether or not they remain displaced. Nevertheless, there has been a high level of severe malnutrition cases in people returning from the bush as well as a heightened level of gender-based violence (GBV).
- There has been an almost systematic destruction of the livestock-herding sector in the northeast, centre and Bangui region. Further, insecurity and conflict directly impacts the free circulation of transhumance pastoralists and has led to the repeated exile of herders, thus affecting their access to water and maintenance of the livestock sector. All transhumance corridors have been disrupted by the presence of rebel groups and there are severe mobility limitations. The relocation of herders has a significant effect on the availability of meat and its by-products to local communities, which affects trade and commerce between pastoralists and farmers, which in turn threatens food security in CAR.
- The massive and sudden influx from CAR into Chad is causing social, economic and cohesion problems with host communities in areas of high return that do not necessarily correspond to their areas of origin in Chad. There have been clashes that have also taken place between evacuees in temporary sites and host communities, particularly in southern Chad. The displacement of transhumance pastoralists has also created bottlenecks of livestock, where the spread of disease and competition over resources pose serious concerns, particularly in hosting country Chad.

**PART IV CRISIS IMPLICATIONS ON DISPLACEMENT AND MOBILITY:** Places future mobility patterns against the overall socio-economic context of the country, which has only worsened over the course of the conflict. It explores the implications of the crisis on displacement and mobility in the short, medium and long-term. It highlights the risks of food insecurity as well as potential land and property challenges

related to returns and citizenship, which may protract or be a source of further or repeated displacement.

- CAR is classified by the UN among the “Least Developed Countries”, has long been characterized as a fragile state and ranks 180/187 in terms of the Human Development Index (2013). Two-thirds of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line and the average amount of time spent in an educational institution is 3.5 years. Although some basic services are being re-established in Bangui, the health system essentially collapsed over the course of the crisis. There is a high level of illiteracy and very limited educational and economic opportunities available for a bulging youth population.

Despite its rich mineral wealth, agriculture is the backbone of CAR's economy and is the livelihood for 74 per cent of the population. Economic growth and development have been severely constrained by:

- Poor transport and market infrastructure;
- Banking infrastructure incapable of supporting greater investments;
- Low levels of technology, including technical support and development of the agricultural sector;
- Years of domestic political instability; and
- Ongoing domestic and regional conflicts among its neighbours.

CAR's legal system has had limited capacity and has been in a gradual state of decay for decades. The diminished quality of legal training, inconsistent application and publication of laws territory-wide, and widespread corruption have all contributed to a system which was prior to the crisis, barely functional, dramatically underfunded, and mistrusted.

## SHORT-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

It remains too early to predict the sustainability of the ceasefire that was agreed on 23 July 2014. The agreement left out what is considered to be key priorities necessary for securing sustainable peace, such as a plan for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), resolving calls for partitioning the country and a political commitment to support the transition to the next election. Moreover, concerns surround the feasibility of mobilizing support for and enforcing the agreement at the ground level, where the security situation has remained precarious and unpredictable. Working in the most recent ceasefire's favour, the agreement was signed at a point in which the country has witnessed an overall reduction in large-scale violence. Also noteworthy is the fact that the military and policing components of MINUSCA are scheduled to begin in September 2014.

- Although political instability and crises are not new to CAR and the population has developed coping skills of “living in the bush”, the scale of the current conflict far

exceeds other episodes in CAR's history. In the short-term, protection, adequate conditions in displacement and transit sites as well as food security remain the top priorities.

- As different waves of displacement have taken place since 2012, it is difficult to know if IDPs remain displaced, have moved to other areas and whether or not their needs remain the same. Displaced populations have and are likely to continue to return voluntarily and spontaneously to the villages, land and property without a specific plan or reintegration strategy in place. Returnees face difficulties of reintegration and potentially finding their land, property and assets—and thus livelihoods—damaged or occupied. For this reason, the early planning of returns and reintegration is essential. While available information is limited, another potential priority area in responding to spontaneous and voluntary returns may be related to land and potential dispossession.
- Food insecurity has not been previously considered a trigger of displacement in CAR, however, there are rising concerns that insufficient reserves, lack of market access or price increases could be a contributing variable for further (re-)displacement or preventing returns. About forty-five per cent of the rural population is considered food insecure (1.7 million people, up from 1.2 million people in November 2013) according to figures from the April 2014 multi-agency Integrated Phase Classification (IPC). The below average rainfall between April to June, and particularly the rainfall deficits in the northwest in what are the main agricultural areas of Ouham and Ouham Pendé and areas north of Bangui, signals continued food needs throughout the agricultural season. Among the immediate food security concerns, as a result of damaged fields and the inability of farmers to access their lands, there are diminished yield capacities. Further, CAR is highly dependent on imports and insecurity inhibits the movement of food supplies as the major supply routes through Cameroon, Chad, and DRC are disrupted. Moreover, many traders were of Muslim origin and have fled CAR and thus the supply structures have broken down. Prices also continue to increase as shortages are replaced with a very constricted supply of looted goods.
- Another short-term concern and priority relates to the pressures and resource scarcity associated with the congestion of transhumance pastoralists and their livestock along the CAR-Chad border. The insecurity, conflict and direct persecution of pastoralists have led to a significant congestion along the Chad-CAR border and exposed thousands of herders and their cattle to health risks. The decongestion and relocation policies will have a significant impact on the patterns and safety of transhumance pastoralists. While CAR has comparatively abundant grazing opportunities, pastoralists have often faced insecurity and the risks they currently face remain high. Moreover, the impact of increasingly armed pastoralists as a form of livestock protection and defence coming in from Chad could lead

to perceived or actual safety threats or escalated violence. It could facilitate weapons trafficking, the not unusual renting out of weapons to rebels, bandits or criminal groups, or raise the demand for weapons among CAR pastoralists, all of which could undermine stabilization efforts in the country.



Photo: Woman in displacement site, February 2014 Bangui © Giovanni Cassani, IOM

## MEDIUM-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

On 15 September 2014, MINUSCA will begin its military and policing mandate, which is currently scheduled until 30 April 2015. This could signify increased stability and security at least in certain parts of the country and facilitate access to areas previously unreachable. However, the date of the next elections have not yet been set (though were initially intended for February 2015, they are not envisioned before September 2015) and could spark renewed violence.

In the medium term, it is difficult to project if the displacement context in CAR will be increasingly protracted or if stabilization efforts will provide opportunities for sustainable returns and for recovery efforts to effectively take hold.

- Given the losses in the private sector and the departure of the main business and entrepreneurial populations, the majority of whom were Muslim, the country has suffered a significant economic loss and brain-drain. Many of the departing migrants were responsible for running shops, engaging with suppliers, diamond trading and generally keeping the import-dependent economy functional. Their departure has left a large gap in an already very weak economy as entire supply chains disappeared. The longer the conflict continues, the migrants or ethnic “foreigners” may become increasingly interested in their hosting area or their newly (re-)acquainted place of origin and see little incentive to return to CAR, especially given the ethno-religious targeting of the conflict.
- The violence in CAR has been mostly at the hands of young, unemployed and frustrated men. The already grave economic and human development context and lack of infrastructure in the country prior to the current crisis have only worsened. The prospects for young men are thus grim and the longer the violence continues or the more delayed the recovery, youth could increasingly turn profiting from the “the spoils of war” into a livelihood onto itself, making it thus a larger challenge to engage them in alternative livelihoods or to expect them to return to subsistence based farming.
- One of the more complex features of the displacement/return context is the difficulty in establishing or confirming citizenship versus ethnicity between, for example, Chadians and Central Africans of Muslim or Chadian descent, especially as about 80 per cent of the individuals arriving in Chad lacked identify and citizenship papers. The ambiguities between Chadian by nationality or ethnicity, lack of documentation, closing of the Chadian border to non-Chadians (and thus leaving many to claim Chadian citizenship) could thus alter the population dynamics of both countries. It could affect the reintegration and return assistance and opportunities available to them should they wish to return to CAR. For Chad, it could mean that returnees face a range of challenges in integrating into a country where they otherwise have little connection. As many of the “Chadian” returnees are Muslims and frequently more middle class business owners in CAR, the returning population could also represent a more long-term gain and loss to Chad and CAR respectively.
- The ongoing deterioration and extreme damage to the socio-economic situation and breakdown of the societal structure could further push individuals and families to re-locate.
- Questions over land and property rights, and access to and use of resources become increasingly relevant in displacement contexts as returning populations may find their property not only severely damaged but also possibly taken over. As only 0.1 per cent of the land in CAR is titled and/or registered, the majority of returning property owners facing land occupation may have difficulty in proving their legitimate claim over their land

or property. Given that the majority of the CAR population relies upon subsistence farming or resource access, challenges in recuperating one's land thus has broader ramifications for a family's livelihood and food security. Businesses in Bangui have been also severely looted and damaged, making it difficult for returning populations to re-establish their livelihood and, in the same way, may have difficulty proving their legitimate claims to property. Conflict can alter previous dispute settlement mechanisms and can shift the sense of legitimacy others have over land and property. Village chiefs and traditional healers served as important dispute mediators, however, how and if the conflict has affected these systems, and the trust and credibility assigned to them, remains to be seen.

## LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

The current crisis in CAR compounds the weaknesses of an already very fragile state. Apart from the current crisis, certain areas of CAR have already been experiencing protracted displacement: the northern region has been affected by the conflict in Sudan and hosting rebel fighters while the remote east and southeast areas continue to suffer from infiltration and destruction from the Ugandan LRA. Further, the prevalence of Zaraguina's "coupers de route", bands of thieves who steal from cattle herders or other passersby and sometimes holding children and women for ransom, has been historically beyond the control of Government forces and is a great source of continued insecurity.

Moreover, the current crisis has introduced a previously unpronounced ethno-religious dimension. This opens up a range of potentially long-term complexities for return, reconciliation and the already limited social cohesion. As some have warned, related tensions could spill-over into neighbouring countries. Therefore, CAR's displacement and mobility issues have broader regional implications and sensitivities requiring a longer and more encompassing regional approach. Similarly, Chad and Cameroon are hosting considerable migrant populations and face their own challenges.

There is no question that migration, including return migration, is and will be increasingly tied to development, conservation and sustainable natural resource management (including pastoral management), reconciliation, local governance and judiciary practices. Rebuilding the economy presents many opportunities for migrants, and migration would also have an important function in CAR's economic development. However, in the long term, it is difficult to know what impact the current targeting of "foreigners" will have socially, culturally and politically on welcoming migrants, particularly given their propensity to predominantly engage and profit in the private sector over CAR nationals. Similarly, many of "foreigners" who left Chad may no longer seek to return to what remained of their pre-conflict livelihood.

- Years of political instability and conflict have drawn few foreign investors and buyers and for similar reasons CAR's land and other natural resource potential remains largely underexploited. Although about a third of the country is considered suitable for farming, only about 3 per cent is cultivated; and similarly while half of the land is considered suitable for grazing, less than 15 per cent is used. Timber from CAR's rich forestland is a primary source of export earnings though, like its mineral wealth, remains unexploited within its potential. Dependent upon the stability of DRC, exports will be easier and thus the timber market is expected to grow.
- Amidst a priority of conservation and protection of CAR's share in the Congo Basin and biodiversity resources, growth in these areas could be a strong source of economic development, drawing in a higher number of migrants from elsewhere in the country and the region more broadly. Potentially a positive turn for the country, an increase in migration could give rise to greater tensions associated with land tenure and property rights and expropriation given a) the majority of land is state owned and the Constitution gives priority to undefined national interests; and b) village boundaries and land and resource use are linked to customary claims, which may not be open to "foreigners" given the lack of social cohesion that existed prior to the conflict and that have been explosively exacerbated during the conflict.
- Pastoralism has been largely overlooked in the humanitarian response but plays a significant role in economic development. There are major concerns regarding the economic impacts of the sector, availability of meat and dairy as well as livelihood concerns for populations. From a long term perspective, as stabilization increases and traditional patterns of transhumance mobility return (and even increase from neighbouring countries), growing attention will be needed around the effective management of transhumance practices and corridors, such as those that exist in Chad. Climate change is likely to intensify the desertification of the Sahel, and thus favourable grazing areas and accessibility of water will continue to attract transhumance pastoralists from areas such as Chad, Niger and Nigeria to CAR. As noted, the arrival of large herds of cattle for two to three months at a time frequently destroys farming crops, which has repeatedly led to clashes between pastoralists and farmers. Given the ethno-religious turn of the current crisis, there could be the potential for increased social tensions and escalations of violence between the largely pastoralist Muslims and typically Christian sedentary farmers in the western areas of CAR. This could be compounded by the fact that there is a growing trend for large-scale Chadian pastoralists to be armed leading to a propensity towards greater armament of the pastoralist sector.

## MIGRATION CONSEQUENCES

### SHORT TERM

- Conflict displacement
- Continuing internal displacement
- Cross border migration within the region
- Spontaneous return
- Potential displacement linked to food insecurity
- Transhumance pastoralists blocked due to seasonal and security constraints

### MEDIUM TERM

- If improved security, return of displaced populations
- If continuing insecurity, protracted displacement situation
- Labour migration linked to natural resources likely to increase, particularly if security improves.
- Potentially altered population dynamics and social cohesion challenges
- Transhumance pastoralists may resume migration, but their movement is likely to be influenced by the security situation and the perceived risks associated with armed commercialized herders
- Potential land and property disputes among returnees and non-displaced populations

### LONG TERM

- Return of IDPs and cross-border migrants if favourable economic opportunity and security improved
- Potentially altered population dynamics and social cohesion challenges
- Potential land disputes among returnees and non-displaced populations
- Increasing transhumance pastoralists activity entering CAR for grazing and water access due to climate change and growing desertification of the Sahel.

## INTRODUCTION

Since gaining its independence from France in 1960, the Central African Republic (CAR) has weathered multiple conflicts, coup d'états and weak leadership. Following the most recent coup d'état in March 2013, the violence reached alarming levels: dividing and devastating the country while precipitating a new dimension of human mobility. Over the course of the crisis, nearly a million people have been displaced since December 2013.

This working paper focuses on the migration dimensions of the crisis in CAR. It considers the impacts of the conflict on all vulnerable mobile groups and tentatively projects how the crisis will affect mobility and displacement in the short, medium and long-term. Such information is critical in helping policymakers and practitioners take an inclusive and migratory-responsive approach to interventions to assist all vulnerable mobile groups, regardless of their status, throughout different displacements and movements. It also helps towards the early identification of key criteria that may be relevant in later preparations for returns, (re-)integration or reparations.

The working paper presents the results of a literature review of documents, reports and data obtained in Geneva and through contacts in Bangui, CAR and N'Djamena, Chad; as well as interviews carried out in person and over the phone in Bangui and N'Djamena during a two-week mission between 18 February and 6 March 2014.

Given the rapidly changing environment and the scarcity of systematic data, the paper is expected to be only a starting point and aid to the current discourse. It is intended to be built upon, refined or updated—formally or informally—as needed. In a similar vein, due to certain limitations in data collection in parts of the country and the fact that this paper is the first of its kind to look holistically at the full crisis dimensions of migration in CAR, this paper poses questions aimed at helping frame broader research requirements necessary for developing an informed, comprehensive and evidence base for all policy and programming considerations related to migration.

### UNDERSTANDING MOBILITY THROUGH A MIGRATION CRISIS LENS

Forming part of a broader series of profiles prepared by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) in line with IOM's Migration Crisis Operational Framework (MCOF), the paper applies a "migration crisis" approach. IOM uses the term "migration crisis" as a way to refer to and analyse the often large-scale and unpredictable migration flows and mobility patterns caused by conflict or natural disasters.

These typically involve significant vulnerabilities for individuals and affected communities and generate acute and longer-term migration management challenges. A migration crisis may be slow in onset, can have natural or man-made causes and can take place internally or across borders. By capturing patterns of human mobility in their full complexity and revealing a more nuanced picture of the vulnerabilities and conditions that emerge in the context of different forms of involuntary movement, a migration crisis analysis allows policymakers to develop an integrated response to the crisis that includes humanitarian, migration management, transition and recovery, peace and security, and development concerns.<sup>1</sup>

The 'migration crisis' approach allows for recognition that not all patterns of mobility during crises and not all those on the move during crises are comprehensively covered by current international, regional and national frameworks. Given the mixed nature of mobility and the various dimensions that affect migration in CAR, this approach is necessary to capture the dynamics of the whole picture, not only certain categories of the vulnerabilities facing the people on the move and affected communities.

#### Box 1: "MIGRATION CRISIS" APPROACH

Under the IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework, the migration crisis approach has been developed to highlight the migration dimensions of crises that are frequently overlooked in crisis response, such as:

- a) The patterns of human mobility before, during and after a crisis;
- b) The types of consequences that emerge from these patterns, from different perspectives including humanitarian perspectives (e.g. massive humanitarian needs in terms of food security and shelter), migration management perspectives (e.g. needs for large-scale transportation of populations to a safe haven) and peace and development perspectives;
- c) The implications of these types of consequences for rapid, inclusive, predictable and accountable responses for the affected population;
- d) The needs of vulnerable mobile populations not adequately covered by existing mechanisms, particularly international migrants caught in crises in their destination/transit countries

Source: IOM Migration Crisis Operational Framework, Council 101st session, 15 November 2012, p. 2

<sup>1</sup> Key institutional documents include: 'IOM migration crisis operational framework' [IOM Council 101<sup>st</sup> session, 15 November 2012, MC/2355]

and the 'IOM's migration crisis operational framework factsheet' which can be found the IOM website <http://www.iom.int/cms/mcof>



Photo: Group of CAR refugees crossing into Chad on foot from the CAR at the village of Mini, near Mbitoye, Chad © Craig Murphy IOM 2014

## STRUCTURE OF THE PAPER

**PART I Background context:** Provides a brief synopsis of the political insecurity in CAR with a specific emphasis on the most recent wave of violence, its rooted complexity and its shift from a political to an ethno-religious conflict to what often can be considered as generalized violence and banditry. The section also briefly outlines the current international response, including introducing UN Security Council Resolution 2149, which authorizes the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA) to commence in September 2014.

**PART II Migration in CAR:** Explores the various forms of migration in CAR and how various migratory trends have been impacted by the conflict. This includes the migration between rural and urban areas, labour migration linked to natural resource exploitation, transhumance migration, international migration and conflict-related displacement.

**PART III Immediate impacts of the crisis on migrant and displaced populations:** Highlights specific vulnerabilities and key issues faced by the different groups and how the current crisis has compounded livelihood insecurity both within CAR and in relation to cross-border movement among its neighbours.

**PART IV Short, medium and long term considerations on displacement and mobility:** Explores the implications of the crisis on displacement and mobility in the short, medium and long-term. It places future mobility patterns against the overall socio-economic context of the country, which has only worsened over the course of the conflict. It highlights the risks of food insecurity as well as potential land and property challenges related to returns and citizenship, which may protract or be a source of further or repeated displacement.

# PART I. BACKGROUND CONTEXT

Culturally, CAR's diverse ethnic groups—primarily the Gbaya, Mandja, Banda, Nzakara, Zandé, Mboum, Sara, Ngbandi, Oubanguiens, Bantou, Pygmées and the Peulh, have for the most part co-existed peacefully.<sup>1</sup> While inter-communal divisions, marginalization and rivalries have always been present in the country, they had not typically been a direct source of conflict.

## LEADERSHIP POST INDEPENDENCE

1960	<b>David Dacko</b>	president post-independence
1966	<b>Jean-Bédél Bokassa</b>	coup d'état
1979	<b>David Dacko</b>	coup d'état
1981	<b>André Kolingba</b>	coup d'état
1993	<b>Ange-Felix Patassé</b>	multi-party elections
2003	<b>Francois Bozizé</b>	coup d'état
2013	<b>Michel Djotodia</b>	coup d'état
2014	<b>Catherine Samba-Panza</b>	Appointed by National Transitional Council

Politically, however, CAR has almost never known peace and security. From its earliest history, dating back to the 7<sup>th</sup> century, various empires and sultanates competed for control over the resource rich territory; and slave traders ravaged the area during the 16<sup>th</sup>-19<sup>th</sup> century. The French, Germans and Belgians arrived in 1885, and from 1894-1960, France included it as part of French Equatorial Africa. However, until 1903, several revolts prevented France from establishing a colonial administration. Small-scale revolts continued to surface in the decades that followed. After the Second World War, a rebellion forced France to grant self-government in 1946. The country won its independence in 1960 under its first president David Dacko. However, five years later (1965) Col. Jean-Bédél Bokassa, known as a highly corrupt and violent leader that led the country to economic ruin,<sup>2</sup> instigated the first of what became a long series of successive coup-d'états, with the latest occurring in March 2013.

<sup>1</sup> Séléka means 'alliance' in Sango.

## BRIEF SYNOPSIS OF THE CONFLICT

### BACKGROUND

*"The root is mistrust, expressed in foreignness, exacerbated by poverty and ignited by (personal) political agendas."*

Source: Wilson, C. *Changing Definitions* (2014)<sup>3</sup>

There are a number of sources of tension that have created the pre-conditions for conflict in CAR. These include the non-payment of civil servant salaries, democratic deficit, the country's poor economic performance and the underrepresentation of Muslims and minorities in Government (though religion is not considered among the root causes of conflict). Moreover, years of corruption and violence have undermined trust in the overall political machinery of CAR.

The current 'crisis' in CAR encompasses three specific periods of escalated violence. In 2012, in response to long-held frustrations over feelings of abandonment of the northeast region—which were perceived to have deteriorated under then president Bozizé—coupled with allegations that the government was not respecting the terms of the 2008 agreement (that aimed to settle the conflict between the government and two major rebel militias), rebel groups joined together forming Séléka.<sup>4</sup> United by anti-Bozizé sentiments, in December the same year, the Séléka instigated a rebellion, which eventually led to a coup d'état (March 2013). Consequently Michel Djotodia replaced Bozizé and became CAR's first Muslim leader.<sup>5</sup> Bloodshed followed and the human rights as well as security situation in the country deteriorated.

<b>DEC 2012</b>	→ Bozizé (President) fails to implement peace agreements	→ Séléka rebellion formed in NE CAR	→ Growing frustration at inadequacy of Gov/corruption
<b>MAR 2013</b>	→ Coup d'état- Djotodia overthrows Bozizé	→ Djotodia declares himself President. Violent clashes	→ Deterioration of law and order, insecurity throughout 2013
<b>DEC 2013</b>	→ Anti-Balaka attacks of Séléka forces in Bangui and Bossangoa	→ Sharp escalation of violence, mass displacement	→ Prompted Sangari and AU/MISCA intervention

<sup>3</sup> The NTC was created on 18 April 2013 with Djotodia at its head.



In response to the atrocities committed by the Séléka movement and with the support of Bozizé, a group of mainly young Christian and Animist men joined the anti-Balaka (meaning anti-machete) group, originally a village self-defence force that had emerged in the 1990s to defend against banditry. In December 2013 the violence escalated more intensely, which led to the intervention of foreign troops. The Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) regional summit in N'Djamena in early January 2014 led to the resignation of Djotodia, and later that same month (23 January 2014) Catherine Samba-Panza was elected interim President by the National Transition Council (NTC).<sup>4</sup>

Unable to pay the Sélékas' salaries, Djotodia announced its dissolution in September 2013.<sup>iv</sup> He was, however, unable to effectively dismantle the group and the armed soldiers notoriously began undertaking 'massacres, extrajudicial executions, rape, torture and looting, as well as massive burning and destruction of villages'.<sup>5</sup> Under Djotodia's leadership, ethnic and social notions of 'other' were reinforced and manipulated. The nature of the conflict thus shifted beyond its original political rebellion towards the increasing use of religion to justify or mask broader unstructured random violence. The violence thus became increasingly ethnically motivated, which consequently often manifested against the Christian communities. However, just as Séléka became increasingly anti-Christian, the Anti-Balaka became increasingly anti-Muslim and, as Muslim's were widely perceived to be foreign, it became anti-foreigner as well. They have been perceived as conducting 'ethnic cleansing': either killing Muslims, or forcibly displacing them.<sup>6</sup>

As the scale of the conflict expanded, both sides were successfully recruiting for their cause.<sup>v</sup> However, both anti-Balaka groups and ex-Séléka factions have lacked a clearly defined membership and chain of command that unite all combatants.<sup>7</sup> For instance, while many anti-Balaka groups formed ad hoc, former military officers, displaying relatively sophisticated capacities and postulating political demands, lead others.<sup>8</sup> In an attempt to build strength against the transitional government, the ex-Séléka factions are attempting to consolidate their control over towns and villages.<sup>9</sup> It is important to note, however, that while anti-Balaka are predominantly Christian and Séléka predominantly Muslim, there are Christian Séléka members and vice versa and there is a very strong divide along social and economic lines. Although the groups are predominantly aligned by religion, neither group follows a religious agenda. Moreover, apart from ethno-religious stances, the motivations to belong or form a faction range from communal protection, political ambitions, and criminal intent.

Amidst the lawlessness that had taken over the country at the height of the violence in December 2013/2014, criminal gangs and unemployed youth opportunistically profited from the chaos in what became known as "faux anti-Balaka".<sup>10</sup> Given the fragmented coordination between anti-Balaka groups, it is difficult to attribute clear responsibility for the proliferation of criminal acts committed in Bangui and across CAR. Furthermore, the violence has also been directed towards the international assistance community, including targeted attacks, threats and looting of humanitarian workers and their offices.



Photo: MISCAs Soldiers in Bangui, April 2014 © Catianne Tijerina



Photo: MISCAs in CAR April 2014, © Catianne Tijerina

<sup>iv</sup> The Séléka was officially disbanded in September 2013, however in early-mid 2014 this armed group has remobilized under similar structures, such as witnessed in May 2014 when Séléka forces descended from Ndele to Bambari. This paper will use the terminology 'Séléka', though acknowledges that this term refers to both groups (ex-Séléka and Séléka).

<sup>v</sup> Estimates state the Séléka increased in numbers from a few thousand in early 2013 to 20,000 in late 2013. Arief, A. *Crisis in the Central African Republic*, Congressional Research Service (27 January 2014) p. 6; In February 2014, the number of anti-Balaka was estimated at 35,000. ACAPS. *Analyse des Besoins de Crise - République Centrafricaine Conflit Décembre 2013-Février 2014*, (Geneva: 12 February 2014), p. 11.

## INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE

The international response to the conflict has been slow and limited. On 5 December 2013, U.N. Security Council Resolution 2127 authorized the French-backed peacekeeping force (namely Operation Sangaris) and the African-led International Support Mission for CAR (MISCA) to protect civilians and enable humanitarian access among other objectives. The Sangaris number 2,000 troops and MISCA troops and police number 5,500. Nevertheless, in January 2014, France's U.N. envoy stated that French and African forces face "nearly an impossible situation for the soldiers".<sup>11</sup>

International troops have faced enormous challenges on the ground: "Militia members can melt into the population; local residents are traumatized and bitterly divided; infrastructure is severely lacking; and effective state institutions that might contribute to stabilization efforts are absent."<sup>12</sup> Moreover, "some MISCA contingents have been implicated in human rights abuses, while French troops have faced accusations that their efforts to disarm Séléka combatants have left Muslim communities vulnerable to attacks. Coordination among international forces has also been hindered by mutual distrust and varying rules of engagement."<sup>13</sup>

In March 2014 the European Union (EU) pledged to gradually deploy between 800-1000 troops for an initial period of six months.<sup>14</sup> On 15 June 2014, the EU announced its military force (EUFOR) reached its full operational capacity of 700 soldiers and gendarmes,<sup>15</sup> reportedly with another 100 troops "in the coming days".<sup>16</sup>

On April 10, 2014, the U.N. Security Council adopted Resolution 2149, which authorized a U.N. peacekeeping operation in CAR, namely the U.N. Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). MINUSCA will include up to 10,000 military personnel (including 240 military observers and 200 staff officers) and 1,820 police (formed police unit personnel,

individual police officers and seconded corrections officers) as well as having a sizable civilian component and support staff. While the civilian branch of MINUSCA is already operating, the military and police components will begin in September.

## CURRENT SECURITY SITUATION (JULY 2014)

There have been significant attempts at least in Bangui to restore a resemblance of law and order and the results of which have been demonstrated in the decreased numbers of displaced persons, particularly in Bangui (see part II, Conflict displacement). Nevertheless, the security situation in CAR is still considered precarious and reports of clashes and criminal activity continue to surface.<sup>17</sup>

On July 10-11 2014, the Séléka General Assembly met in Bidao, which resulted in the reinstatement of Djotodia as Séléka leader.<sup>18</sup> On 23 July 2014, the ex-Séléka and the anti-Balaka, signed a ceasefire agreement at the Central African National Reconciliation Forum held in Brazzaville. While the most recent agreement is a welcomed first step towards national reconciliation, its impact remains to be seen.<sup>19</sup> Indeed, it represents the second ceasefire attempt since the most recent crisis began in 2012, and the fifth agreement for the country since 2002. The previous ceasefire lasted for just under two short weeks: 11-23 January 2013.

In the north of Bangui, the transitional government initiated a voluntary disarmament programme (25 July 2014) for about 2000 ex-Séléka, with IOM assistance and supervised by MISCA. Upon relinquishing their weapons, combatants receive two weeks of civic education, a compensation package that has yet to be fully defined, food supplies, and clothing as well as return transport to their respective families.

## PART II. MIGRATION IN CAR

Statistics on migration in CAR are lacking. For the most part, the successive governments have not collected or safeguarded information neither on its population nor their movements. Further, government offices have been severely damaged and looted by the multiple rebellions and conflicts. Hard copy documents, computers, servers and other means of data storage have been thus lost, destroyed or stolen. Government information that is available comes from the last census conducted in 2003 by the Ministry of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation.

Understanding mobility in CAR is made more complex by the strong historical and social ties between CAR and Chad that precede independence. There is a general trend to consider all Muslims as 'foreigners', more specifically as Chadians. There is thus often a lack of clarity of whether "Chadian" is determined by ethnicity or citizenship, which blurs concepts of emigration and immigration. Likewise, the children of migrants, going back generations, may never have obtained CAR citizenship.

### IMMIGRATION

The constant simmering of political instability over the years coupled with the country's low economic performance and development has generally discouraged large numbers of migrants entering CAR. However, gradually throughout the Patassé (1993-2003) and Bozizé (2003-2013) Governments, it became increasingly easy to obtain visas and thus labour immigration increased.<sup>20</sup>

In 2010, there were about 70,000 registered immigrants (1.6 per cent of the 4.4 million population (2010)), coming from Chad, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Cameroon, France, Sudan, Senegal, Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, Mali, and Niger.<sup>21</sup> National figures drawn from 2003 detail that DRC nationals have made up the highest percentage of immigrants (51%), followed by Sudan (17.6%), Chad (16.7%), Cameroon (4.7%) and the Republic of Congo (2.6%).<sup>22</sup> Due to the porous borders among its neighbours and close ethnic linkages between CAR and Chad, the number of undocumented migrants is likely higher. Moreover, about 12.4 per cent of the immigrants (16,500) were actually classified as refugees being hosted in CAR, originating mainly from Sudan, the DRC, Republic of Congo and Chad.<sup>23</sup> Although UNHCR has facilitated a number of repatriations, the security situations in the countries of origin remain precarious.<sup>vi</sup>

<sup>vi</sup> UNHCR. Launch of the Voluntary Repatriation of Congolese Refugees from Batalimo refugee camp to DRC (10 April 2014).

Migrants arriving in CAR, despite being mostly uneducated, come for professional reasons with a significant number pursuing independent business ventures.<sup>24</sup> There is no information available on migrants with an irregular status, and whether or not the number is significant.

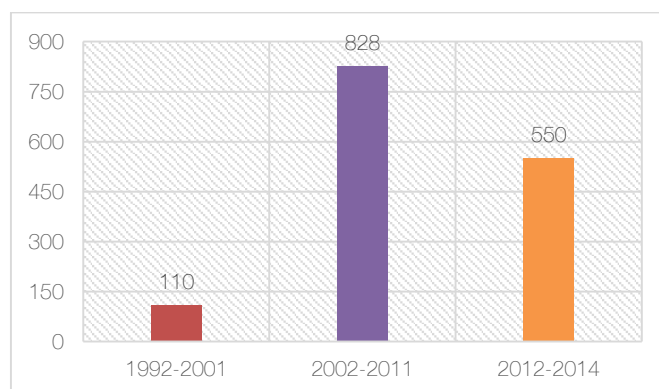
### EMIGRATION

In 2010, the World Bank estimated the number of CAR emigrants to be 129,300 reflecting about 2.9 per cent of the population.<sup>25</sup> CAR nationals have mostly departed from Bangui or across the borders in the northwest to Chad and Cameroon,<sup>26</sup> and left towards France, Cameroon, Chad and the Republic of Congo,<sup>27</sup> but also towards Mali, the Netherlands, United Kingdom, United States, Canada, Italy and Belgium.

There is little information available on the emigration of Central Africans, diaspora populations and on the in-flows of remittances, and what impact or influence these factors have, if any, on development and the conflict respectively.

Since 1992, the IOM has assisted 1,488 CAR nationals to resettle, reunite with family or be assisted under other forms of assisted migration project types (facilitated migration, voluntary repatriation or return assistance, Humanitarian Assistance to Stranded Migrants) primarily in the United States of America (873), Canada (197) and France (104) among others.

Chart 1: Resettlement, reunification and other migration assistance to CAR nationals (Jan 1992-May 2014)



Source: IOM, Resettlement Assistance Programme 2014

### RURAL AND URBAN MOBILITY

Prior to the recent conflict, just over 60 per cent of population lived in rural areas.<sup>28</sup> There is some evidence to indicate movement from rural to more urban areas. Education and training draw young rural dwellers to Bangui, where the only

university in CAR is located.<sup>29</sup> Moreover, the arduous agricultural lifestyle, electricity shortages and lack of infrastructure also draw young people to urban areas. However, in 2011, statistics show only a marginal difference between the rate of urbanization (2.6%) and population growth (2.13%).<sup>vii</sup> Further, while the socio-economic infrastructure attracts migrants to the cities, high unemployment often then drives people to return to rural areas where they are able to pursue a subsistence/agricultural lifestyle.<sup>30</sup> The 2003 census listed the unemployment rate as 15.2 per cent in urban centres and 4.2 per cent in rural areas.<sup>31</sup>

Many of the urban migrants in Bangui had been fleeing earlier spates of violence that have surfaced over the years. Urban migrants, who for the most part are the country's poorest people, were unable to afford housing in planned, serviced areas and consequently, crowded in informal settlements, living in "substandard, unsafe housing, often without basic services such as water and sanitary services."<sup>32</sup>



Photo: Children in Bangui, © Sandra Black IOM 2014

The natural resource sector has drawn migration internally and from both rural and urban areas. The sector itself has been almost exclusively under migrant management, primarily from Chad, Sudan, Mali, Mauritania, Niger, Senegal, Cameroon and DRC.<sup>33</sup> Internally, for instance, the prefecture of Lobaye typically has seen twice as many migrants move to the forestry sector than into urban areas.<sup>34</sup> Likewise the mining sector and tobacco plantations also attract migration towards rural areas as in Mambéré-Kadéï.<sup>35</sup> In 2010 the International Crisis Group (ICG) estimated that artisanal mining provides employment to 80,000–100,000 miners across CAR, who support at least 600,000 family members.<sup>36</sup> The development and exploitation of mines has seen labour migration trends towards the prefectures of Haute-Kotto, Lobaye, Mambéré-Kadéï and Sangha-Mbaéré.<sup>37</sup> Initially men have tended to relocate to these regions sometimes on a seasonal basis, and then begin to reside more permanently by bringing their families to live in the camps or villages surrounding mining areas.

The majority of artisanal miners work in exploitative conditions and receive small earnings in physically demanding conditions. They often live with their families in makeshift camps near mines. The ICG observes that revenue accumulates in the hands of the collectors and buyers with little profits trickling down to the miners and the mining community.

## TRANSHUMANCE PASTORALISM

Transhumance pastoralists migrate seasonally with their livestock. Pastoralism is relatively recent in CAR in comparison to other major pastoralist areas in Africa, such as in the Sahel. It arrived to the northwest of CAR via Cameroon in the 1920s; progressing towards the central and southwestern areas and developing a wider presence only since 1970s/80s.<sup>38</sup>

There are three types of pastoralism practiced in CAR:<sup>viii</sup>

- 1) Transhumance pastoralists circulate according to seasons and enter a particular region for a part of the year. Many originate from neighbouring countries, and usually move with the entirety of their families;<sup>39</sup>
- 2) Semi-transhumance pastoralists lead a sedentary lifestyle for a part of the year in which they also undertake agricultural activities;

<sup>vii</sup> CIA Factbook. *Central African Republic* (online: n.d.). The 2003 census noted an even smaller margin of less than 0.2 per cent rate of urbanization. *Analyse du fonctionnement des marchés en relation avec la sécurité alimentaire des ménages en République Centrafricaine*, World Food Programme (Rome: Septembre 2011), p. 19. The change of almost 2 per cent could be indicative of rural populations that fled the periodic spates of violence that surfaced between 2003-2011.

<sup>viii</sup> Transhumance pastoralists typically have between 260-530 head of cattle, whereas sedentary pastoralists have up to 60-70 head of cattle. It

is not economically viable to be transhumance with so few cattle and agriculture is needed to supplement their income. Semi-transhumance pastoralists have herd numbers that sit somewhere in between. IOM interview with Pabame Sougnabe, Pastoralist Platform National Expert, N'Djamena, 3 March 2014; International Crisis Group (ICG). *The Security Challenges of Pastoralism in Central Africa*, Africa Report No.215 (1 April 2014).

- 3) Sedentary pastoralists, whose cattle may only roam within a 10km radius of their place of residence, and who may only move with part of their families.<sup>40</sup>

The predominant herders in CAR are Muslim 'Peulh', comprised of Mbororo, Foulbé, Chadians and Sudanese herders.<sup>41</sup> Among the herders, ethnicity supersedes national identity. Many herders regardless of their nationality are united by common religion (Islam) and an ability to speak Arabic.

While some have sedentarized, the majority move in family groups to graze their animals in pastures in accordance with the season, access water and to buy goods and sell meat

and by-products to different markets. Often herders will spend 2-3 months near villages to access markets where they can sell meat as well as purchase goods before continuing their journey.<sup>42</sup> The priority for pastoralists is the health and wellbeing of their animals, and hence 'no matter where a problem arises, their first reaction is to leave'.<sup>43</sup> The traditional movements of pastoralists typically involve moving northerly from roughly April to October to avoid the wet season and associated livestock illnesses; southerly to obtain secure water points in the dry season or east-west to access certain river systems.

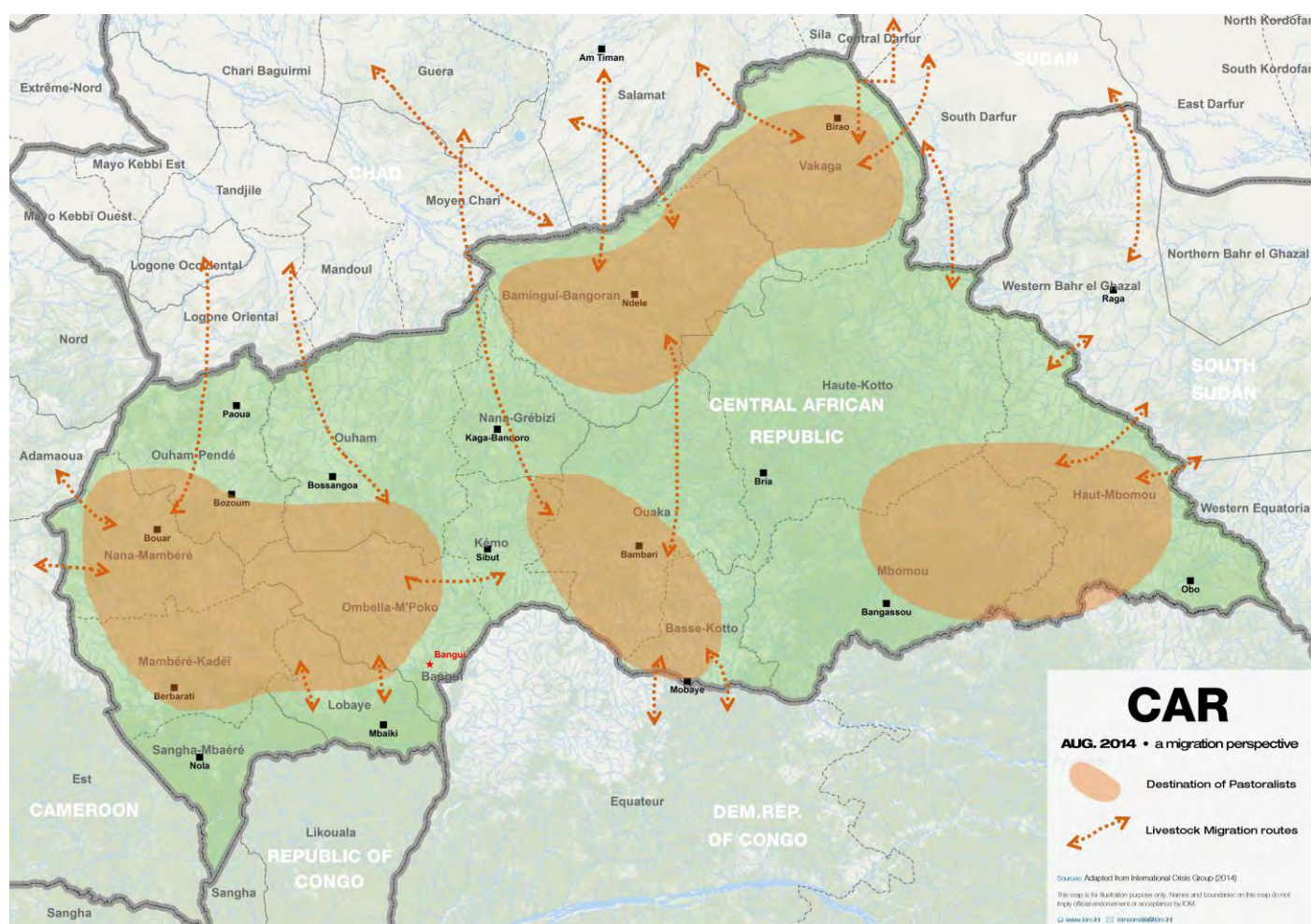
### Box 2: Insecurity, vulnerability and local perceptions of transhumance pastoralists over the years

The Mbororo have remained on the 'fringes of national life in CAR' and are widely perceived as foreigners by the majority of the population.<sup>44</sup> Their physical, linguistic and religious differences (most practice Islam, which is a minority religion in CAR) together with their predominantly nomadic tendencies have created a sense of distrust among communities across the country.

Historically, pastoralists faced two main types of tensions. The first is between local farmers, which tend to be poorer, versus the pastoralists, who are perceived as materially wealthy by the number of head of cattle in their possession.<sup>45</sup> The arrival of large herds of cattle frequently destroys the crops of farmers leading a subsistence lifestyle. Conflict resolution systems have been implemented previously in CAR, which included negotiations, creating of local committees and awareness raising. However the National Federation of Herders in Central African Republic (FNEC) has been inactive since 2010.

The second is linked to criminal acts targeting pastoralists,<sup>46</sup> such as harassment, kidnapping, racketing, attacks and assassinations. The acts are usually orchestrated by bandits, armed rebel groups, armed forces and sometimes government agents.<sup>47</sup> One such criminal element are the Zaranguina ('*coupeurs de route*') who have become an increasing threat to livestock herding pastoralists, and often force them to pay ransoms for the release of kidnapped women and children in the form of large amounts of cash or heads of cattle.<sup>48</sup> The Zaranguina appeared in CAR in the mid-1980s and have wielded an increasing influence creating insecurity especially along transhumance corridors, in the bush and along roads. Since the 2003 coup d'état, the atrocities carried out by the Zaranguina have increased dramatically, progressing from theft of property and money to hostage taking.<sup>49</sup>

Government forces have also caused insecurities along checkpoints where officials intimidate and demand money from herders. This practice appears to be particularly amplified around villages.<sup>50</sup> Hence, pastoralists, who have not benefited from any protection from local authorities and are faced with increasing vulnerability, have been forced to change their movements to avoid confrontations. Insecurity has been the major reason for the gradual departure of herders from certain prefectures, such as in the northeast where they can no longer move freely without being subject to racketing.<sup>51</sup> Many herders were forced to relocate due to insecurities long before the most recent wave of conflict, usually towards the east or cross-border to Cameroon or Chad.<sup>52</sup>



## CONFLICT DISPLACEMENT

### Previous conflict displacement

Over the years the violence rising from political instabilities and several coups d'état have resulted in various flows of displacement. Between 2002 and 2010, four out of five people had fled their homes.<sup>53</sup> The March 2003 coup d'état displaced an estimated 200,000 people, and precipitated cross border movement to southern Chad.<sup>54</sup> However due to continuous spates of violence, insecurity and the widespread destruction to property, not all those displaced were able to return to their place of origin, and some decided to remain in the hosting area.<sup>55</sup> In 2005, an estimated 212,000 people were displaced in the northwest regions<sup>56</sup> in CAR due to 'general insecurity, recurrent political violence,

all-out fighting between the armed forces and different rebel groups, and banditry'.<sup>57</sup>

In 2006, persistent insecurity and banditry, including 'arbitrary killings, rape, torture, destruction of houses and other property' reportedly displaced 150,000 people in the northern prefectures.<sup>ix</sup> Some sought refuge with friends, families and host communities in Bangui and regional towns such as Bokaranga, Kabo and Bria, while the majority fled to the bush, living a few kilometres away from their villages and "many of them traumatised and in fear of attack" and several thousand went to Chad.<sup>58</sup> For these populations, the majority had no or little access to health care, clean water, proper nutrition, education and suitable shelter.

The arrival in 2009 of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a Ugandan rebel group in the south east of CAR (prefectures of Mbomou and Haut-Mbomou) caused the internal displacement of around 18,000 people.<sup>x</sup> The arrival of the LRA in DRC at the same period led to the arrival of around

<sup>ix</sup> IDMC. *Internal displacement in Central African Republic: a protection crisis* (26 January 2007), p. 4. Most affected regions: Nana-Mambéré, Ouham Pendé, Nana-Gribizi, Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto and Vakaga

<sup>x</sup> For instance, in the southeast there are 3,400 Congolese (DRC) refugees in the Zémio camp, together with 600 in Obo and Mboki living outside of camps who fled atrocities of the LRA in 2009. In addition, since 2010, there

are 6,000 Congolese (DRC) in Batalimo, a camp south of Bangui near the border with DRC and Republic of Congo and 4,500 refugees in Bangui. UNHCR. *Central African Republic Situation, External Regional Update 6, 6-12 March 2014* (12 March 2014).

14,000 DRC Congolese refugees in the southeast of CAR.<sup>xi</sup> Sporadic insurgencies and attacks since 2008 and a lingering presence of LRA fighters continues to pose a significant threat to residents in the southeast of CAR, where Séléka /anti-Balaka tensions have otherwise yet to manifest.

The leader of the LRA, Joseph Kony, who is the subject of an indictment by the International Criminal Court, is believed to be living in southeastern CAR. Groups of LRA fighters are present throughout the area terrorising and killing locals and destroying property.<sup>59</sup> Those displaced have not been able to return as it is often unsafe to leave urban areas, and the scale of atrocities remains high in DRC thus providing few incentives for the refugees to return.

### Box 3: Displacement in CAR

HOSTING COUNTRY

#### CAMEROON

PRIOR TO DECEMBER 2013 97,370

CURRENT CRISIS 117,436/4,314  
*refugees / registered returnees*

HOSTING COUNTRY

#### CHAD

PRIOR TO DECEMBER 2013 70,986

CURRENT CRISIS 17,000/106,342  
*refugees / registered returnees*

HOSTING COUNTRY

#### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

PRIOR TO DECEMBER 2013 47,917

CURRENT CRISIS 17,463/unknown  
*refugees / registered returnees*

HOSTING COUNTRY

#### REPUBLIC OF CONGO

PRIOR TO DECEMBER 2013 10,232

CURRENT CRISIS 7,698/12  
*refugees / registered returnees - unregistered unknown*

#### CAR - INTERNALLY DISPLACED PERSONS

PRIOR TO DECEMBER 2013 Various numbers up to  
around 200,000 in response  
to different events.

CURRENT CRISIS 527,000 (July 2014)  
down from 922,000 (January 2014)

Source: UNHCR (July 2014); IOM (July 2014)

## Present levels of displacement

As of July 2014, the number of CAR nationals displaced across borders as refugees reaches 385,168.<sup>60</sup> Chad has received about 106,486 individuals, among them Chadian returnees (46%), CAR claimed nationals (52%) and third country national (TCNs, 2%).<sup>61</sup> Of which 54 per cent are men and 46 per cent are women. The individuals entered Chad either by their own means or with the help of the Government of Chad and IOM by air (N'Djamena) or by road with Government convoys in southern Chad. Most (805) of the 1073 TCNs have been transported by IOM to their countries of origin i.e. Cameroun, Congo, Côte d'Ivoire, Democratic Republic of Congo, Gabon, Mali, Niger, Nigeria, Senegal, Sudan, and Togo either by road or by air.



Photo: Migrants disembarking in Gore, Chad, January 2014 ©IOM

Overall, an estimated 137,000 Central Africans, Chadians and other nationalities fled CAR to Cameroon, many of whom were stranded on the Cameroon-CAR border.<sup>62</sup> The Chadian Government policy to not send any more evacuation convoys to CAR has also led many to flee via Cameroon to Chad. As a result, the number of migrants into Cameroon has been high. The sudden and large influx caught the Cameroon Government and international community unprepared to receive them: they lacked an absorption plan, infrastructure and personnel.

Internally, the estimated numbers of displaced persons have fluctuated between 527,000 and 922,000 since December 2013.<sup>63</sup> The number of IDPs peaked in January 2014 during which IOM's site facilitator programme monitored over 125 sites hosting over 450,000 IDPs in Bangui. This figure has now reduced to 102,000 IDPs in 40 sites in Bangui. Countrywide, the number of IDPs has been decreasing progressively down to 527,000 by July 2014. This has been linked to the slightly, albeit tentative, improvement in security

<sup>xi</sup> Another factor for the continued presence of DRC national refugees in CAR is also due to the fact that there are UNHCR-run refugee camps in CAR hence their livelihoods are somewhat protected. In contrast, over the border in DRC they would not have the protection and would be on their

own. PAM, *Evaluation approfondie de la sécurité alimentaire des ménages affectés par les conflits - République Centrafricaine* (Septembre 2011) p. 5-6.

though occasional spikes in displacement have continued to occur due to outbreaks of armed violence and insecurity.<sup>64</sup>

From January to July 2014 the number of people seeking to return to their place of origin dropped from 72.5 per cent to 56 per cent, with 36% of currently displaced people intending to remain on the displacement site.<sup>65</sup> The Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) observes that those displaced in towns have shown a lesser tendency to return to their fields.<sup>66</sup>

There is no reliable information on numbers, location, demographic, and the particular needs of those displaced outside of the capital. Given the continued instabilities, the ability to assess the scale of displacement, and the protection and survival needs remains a complex task that as has yet to be undertaken.<sup>67</sup>

At the height of the crisis, Human Rights Watch observed in Bossemptele that, 'those strong enough took their chances: Parents abandoned children with disabilities; some men left their wives and kids' to board commercial trucks bound for Cameroon and escape the violence.<sup>68</sup> IDPs in Bangui and across CAR have been taking shelter with family, friends, employers, and in makeshift sites in mosques, churches, schools, health centres, community centres and the Bangui M'Poko airport. Re-displacement has been common and between 15-20 per cent moved between one or more different sites.<sup>69</sup> At the onset of the wet season, the structures and conditions of many displacement sites were not suitable to support the heavy and persistent rains (which takes place in the north: June-September and south: May-October). After the first rains in March 2014 some sites in Bangui were already 30 centimetres deep in water. There have been several efforts to reinforce the sites against the rain, nevertheless, there are risks of water-borne diseases and some the humanitarian community is assessing which sites may need relocating as they will no longer provide suitable shelter.<sup>70</sup>



Photo: Convoy on route to Chad, April 2014 © Catianne Tijerina



## PART III: IMMEDIATE IMPACTS OF THE CRISIS ON MIGRANT AND DISPLACED POPULATIONS

### IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON LABOUR MIGRATION AND INTERNAL MOBILITY

Throughout history, many farming communities would disperse temporarily away from their villages as a coping mechanism to external shocks (spates of violence, environmental, climatic variations etc.). Soil degradation caused by a lack of field rotation and sustainable practices has also required families to temporarily relocate further away from their villages.<sup>71</sup> Farmers would commute between villages and farms, and when the levels of banditry and violence were high, families would stay closer to the fields. Families are typically adept at adjusting to and surviving under these conditions on a short term basis; going back and forth to check on their land. Although their access to health care and education are constrained, their short-term presence in the 'bush' typically did not imply starvation or desperation.

**i** Far from being an isolated event, in April 2014 attacks between international armed forces and local armed groups in the town of Boguila (northwestern CAR) left 16 civilians dead, including 3 staff members of Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF), and 7000 people fled to the bush to avoid the crossfire.<sup>72</sup>

Source: Doctors Without Borders, *Thousands flee fighting in Boguila town*, 11 April 2014. See also Human Rights Watch *CAR: Massacres in remote villages* 3 April 2014

The coping strategy of re-locating to "the bush" has characterized the current crisis as well. However, in light of the unprecedented level of violence many have been living in the bush for up to a year. While some of the displaced populations reported being able to return within days of their departure once the armed group left the home area, others have continued in a state of displacement since the early stages of the conflict.<sup>73</sup> Consequently, the conditions they have faced have been more desperate. As the international community has had limited access to the rural "bush" areas,<sup>xii</sup> there is insufficient information on the vulnerabilities

and needs of those displaced to the bush, whether or not they remain displaced and what their particular needs are. Nevertheless, there has been a high level of severe malnutrition cases in people returning from the bush as well as a heightened level of gender-based violence (GBV).<sup>74</sup>

#### Box 4: Natural resource sector and the conflict

Natural resources and control over resource-rich areas, in addition to financial support from international donors and sympathizers, continue to finance arms and bolster the powerful.

According to Kasper Agger, '[v]aluable diamonds, elephant ivory, and looting have equipped senior Séléka leaders with the money, the forces, and the access through top political connections to fund their rebellion with the help of actors from CAR, Chad, and Sudan.'

The apparent ease of smuggling and falsification of documents means that the suspension of the Kimberly Process is unlikely to have a significant impact on the sale and profit of diamonds and other resources obtained through looting and violence in CAR.

Source: K Agger, *Behind the Headlines - Drivers of Violence in the Central African Republic Enough Project*, 1 May 2014

Access to the mining regions remains challenging for reasons of insecurity as well as the general degradation of roads. Much insecurity surrounds mining areas and mining profits have helped finance armed groups,<sup>75</sup> thus harbouring vulnerability in and around mining areas. In 2013 diamond exports from CAR were prohibited under the Kimberly Process, an international body regulating the sale of 'conflict diamonds'.

However it is unclear what impact this has had on the movement of miners, and to what extent they have been displaced either directly due to conflict or because of any lack of production or exploitation of resources. Nevertheless, the IOM and several member states have evacuated migrants formerly working in the diamond mining business. In the diamond mining community of Boda, the diamond trade is on hold as the Muslim community continues to live under extremely precarious circumstances. In addition to insecurity, the lack of available food supplies to purchase is as much a grave concern.

<sup>xii</sup> References to the "bush" are not designated to one geographically defined area, but rather all areas outside any given village. Accessibility is

thus less a question of capacity but of knowing where people might have displaced to.

### Box 5: Other mobile populations: The case of the BaAka

The semi-nomadic BaAka are an indigenous pygmy population living in southwestern CAR, predominantly situated between the Sangha and Oubangui rivers.<sup>76</sup> Numbering about 20,000, they live in the country's dense forests, dependent on natural resources for survival.<sup>77</sup> The deforestation of traditional lands of the BaAka has made many groups increasingly sedentary, and many undertake employment in the agriculture and logging sectors.<sup>78</sup> In the year 2000, much of this region was declared a National Park (Sangha Tri-National Park). This led to limitations on the mobility and hunting and gathering practices of the BaAka.<sup>79</sup> In addition, many traditional corridors that connected families and friends across Congo, Cameroon and CAR are now prohibited and are in turn restricting the movements of this traditionally mobile population.<sup>80</sup>

The heavily armed Séléka forces, (acting under the Djotodia transitional Government) arrived from the north in May 2013 and placed further stress on this already fragile community. The Séléka initially forcibly disarmed the population, leaving them unable to defend themselves in the face of insecurity but also depriving many families of a hunting weapon.<sup>81</sup>

Source: Woodburne, O. (2009); Remis, M. and Hardin, R., (2014), Neme, L. (2013).

toll in this movement remains unquantified but many herders in the displacement sites report the deaths of multiple family members, or list the unknown whereabouts of family members that have been separated along the way.



Before the most recent crisis, 80 per cent of CAR's cattle (and 30 per cent of goats) were owned and managed by transhumance (or semi-transhumance) pastoralists who had on average between 120-150 head of cattle. Targeted violence, displacement, limited access to resources and constrained circulation, and livestock reduction thus has tremendous consequences for CAR's domestic meat and dairy production.

Source: V. Briac, Note sur l'élevage transhumant en RCA, with the support of FAO Bangui, February 2014.

Insecurity and conflict directly impacts the free circulation of transhumance pastoralists and has led to the repeated exile of herders, thus affecting their access to water and maintenance of the livestock sector. All transhumance corridors have been disrupted by the presence of rebel groups and there are severe mobility limitations. The relocation of herders has a significant effect on the availability of meat and its by-products to local communities, which affects trade and commerce between pastoralists and farmers, which in turn threatens food security in CAR. The entire livestock sector has been disturbed and the Bangui livestock market, which is the most significant in the country, has collapsed.<sup>82</sup>

The National Federation of Central African herders (*Federation Nationale des Eleveurs Centrafricains* – FNEC) represented all herders (of different types of livestock) and regulated their interactions with farmers, abattoirs and governments. However, the FNEC ceased functioning in 2010 due to the conditions of the Government. As a result, since 2010 there has been no level of regulation or support, particularly regarding conflict mediation and animal health. Livestock arriving in Chad lacked immunization, which thus posed a threat to the dense livestock and human populations.

For Central African pastoralists, the fact that many pastoralists coming in from Chad are armed or being escorted by security sector elements is a growing concern. In Chad, the elite and high level officials of the Chadian

## IMPACT OF THE CRISIS ON TRANSHUMANCE PASTORALISM

Originally with the rise of Séléka in 2013, there has been an almost systematic destruction of the livestock-herding sector in the northeast, centre and Bangui regions.<sup>xiii</sup> The number of assassinations, thefts and harassment has sharply increased and the typical challenges and insecurities outlined in Box 1 have intensified in the past 12 months. Many herders have had their livestock stolen by Séléka groups who subsequently herded the animals towards the northeast prefecture of Vakaga, or across the borders into Chad, Cameroon and Sudan.<sup>xiv</sup>

Similarly, anti-Balaka rebels have systematically attacked Muslim Peulh. In early 2014, the majority of herders either abandoned some or all of their animals to flee to safety; or managed to herd their cattle across the borders. The human

<sup>xiii</sup> The tangible value of cattle made herders an easy target, even if predominantly sharing the same religious affiliations as the Séléka, demonstrating the fallibility of labelling the violence in the CAR as a religious conflict.

<sup>xiv</sup> Initially the Séléka targeted the Peulh, however with some reported cases of Peulh joining Séléka, Anti-Balaka groups are also claimed to be responsible for the violence and killings of herders. International Crisis

Group, *Afrique centrale: les défis sécuritaires du pastoralisme* (1 April 2014), p 12-13A. Kota-Guinza. *Difficultés aggravantes dans le système de production et de commercialisation du bétail*, completing the report *État des lieux de l'élevage et des industries animales dans les pays de l'Afrique centrale*, Bureau sous-régional pour l'Afrique centrale Libreville (Gabon, November 2013).

defence and security forces are increasingly investing in large numbers (in the thousands) of cattle and hire herders as employees to manage the stocks.<sup>83</sup> The hired herders are equipped with weapons and satellite phones in order to defend their livestock in the face of insecurity.<sup>84</sup> However, the significantly greater size of the herds coupled with the weaponization make them a dominating force. Moreover, they function outside of traditional pastoral codes and are alleged to intimidate—and bully—the smaller herders. Moreover, while the weapons are supposedly used for self-defence, anecdotal allegations have surfaced that they are used for intentional intimidation, cattle-raiding and banditry.

## Consequences on transhumance in Chad

Normally Chadian transhumance pastoralists begin migrating south into CAR in November and return north in June/July. Given the outbreak of conflict, the Chadian Government informed herders not to cross into CAR. As a result the herders have cumulated and remained blocked in the first half of 2014 at the southern border in the regions of Logone Oriental, Mandoul and Moyen-Chari.<sup>85</sup> These include some 5,987 transhumance Chadians, 4,627 semi-transhumance and sedentary pastoralists and 2,004 Chadian returnee pastoralists, totalling 12,618 people with around 210,000 head of cattle.<sup>86</sup>

In parallel and exacerbating the territorial bottleneck, an estimated 17,269 Central African herders have fled north into Chad.<sup>87</sup> Upon entering Chad, the Central African herders have faced a shortage of pastures and water sources, acts of violence at the hands of Chadian security forces and mistrust from local communities.<sup>88</sup> Those who have no connections in Chad settled within 5-10km from the border. With no support and starving cattle, many are forced to cross into CAR during the night where they fall prey to armed rebels and are often forced to sacrifice animals and risk their lives.<sup>89</sup>

The risk of conflict among different herders (semi-transhumance and transhumance) communities in southern Chad is of concern.<sup>90</sup> The already serious shortage of pastures necessary for the high concentration of cattle is compounded by the lower than normal rainfall and fires of 2013. These factors have forced herders to sell cattle to buy straw and cereals, which has further significantly affected market values.<sup>91</sup> Meanwhile, many grazing areas offer no water points and access to resources remains a major preoccupation of herders. Given the increasing ethnic component of the CAR crisis, there are concerns that the sectarian overtones could spill-over and erupt in Chad.

In early 2014, the Pastoralist Platform of Chad investigated the growing concern for the livelihoods of transhumance pastoralists in Chad in order to develop potential mitigating strategies for human and animal health epidemics and to protect the livelihoods of the thousands made vulnerable.<sup>92</sup> The results of the mission highlighted five specific concerns:

- 1) Low morale of the pastoralists after the total or near total loss of their animals - being their principle livelihood, the torture and killings of their family members, and the

disappearance of their children and other family members;

- 2) Social integration challenges, as many returnees had spent as much as over 40 years outside of Chad;
- 3) Emotional and financial stress from the human and material losses they suffered;
- 4) Chronic lack of resources available (food shortages and malnutrition, as well as pasture and water for livestock); and
- 5) Health risks such as malaria, diarrhoea and sexually transmitted diseases, and risks for their animals due to a lack of vaccinations.<sup>93</sup>

### Box 6: Managing and settling disputes among transhumance pastoralists in Chad

In Chad a number of developments have been established to regulate transhumance corridors to minimize conflict and achieve more sustainable resource use. These include investments in water points, delineation of specific migratory corridors, enhanced regulation of market access, conflict resolution awareness-raising campaigns, and coordination with local authorities on the disarmament of herders.

In particular, la Plateform Pastorale (Pastoralist Platform) brings together government ministries, civil society, research institutes, herders and technical and financial partners such as L'Agence Française de Développement (French Agency for Development) and UN Food and Agriculture Organization for open consultations and dialogue. Their main focus is to address issues facing pastoralists, including the management of natural resources, conflict mitigation and promoting development. Civil society organizations also support committees to mediate conflict and disputes over damage caused by cattle to fields between farmers and herders. Sometimes called 'comités d'entente' or 'comités de dialogue', the success of these committees, however, depends upon the compliance and will amongst parties and communities involved.

Source: Author interview with P Sougnabé, Pastoralist Platform National Expert, N'Djamena, 3 March 2014; Author interview Pierre Luc Sutter, l'AFD, Project Officer N'Djamena 4 March 2014; International Crisis Group, Afrique centrale: les défis sécuritaires du pastoralisme, 1 April 2014.

There are proposals by the Pastoralist Platform and other actors to 'decongest' the area by locating alternative grazing areas and attempting to relocate a part of the herders and thereby reduce the concentration of animals in any one area. The Platform has also proposed an urgent vaccination campaign to prevent the outbreak of diseases that have already been epidemic in the region, the provision and delivery of food stocks, awareness-raising on peace and conflict prevention, possible areas for relocation, and support for existing structures and sites.<sup>94</sup>

The protection of herders has largely fallen outside of the current humanitarian response and has been an issue that has not received much, if any, media attention. The food security cluster managing the needs of migrants in southern Chad does not capture the needs of herders as they are not located in the designated transit sites where humanitarian aid is concentrated. Moreover, sometimes herders (of Chadian or CAR origin) do not declare themselves as herders as a way to maintain their stocks in CAR and maximize the assistance that could be available to them. In such cases the family separates, leaving some family together with their cattle in the bush, while other family members access food and resources in the sites.<sup>95</sup>

## IMPACTS OF CROSS-BORDER DISPLACEMENT

### Chad

The close historic relationship between Central Africans and Chadians brings with it a blurred notion of ethnicity or citizenship between the two, which complicated the early classification of the evacuees as returnees or refugees. Many (estimates suggest over 80 per cent) Central Africans have never possessed identity documents and upon registration are choosing—and may try to switch—their nationality depending on the most advantageous short and medium term assistance being offered to “refugees” versus “returnees”. In particular, as many of the road evacuations that were organized by the Government of Chad were means only for Chadian citizens, many CAR nationals claimed Chadian nationality to access the road evacuations to escape violence in CAR. Several are dual citizens and classified automatically as returnees, even if they had never lived in or had long since left Chad.<sup>96</sup>



Photo: Convoy to Chad April 2014, © Catianna Tijerina

By initially imposing a ten-day limit for Chadian nationals arriving in transit camps from CAR, the Chadian Government aimed at having the Chadian nationals return as promptly as possible to their place of ‘origin’. Many returnees, however, were unable to respect the ten-day limit—they have lost all

their belongings, wealth and livelihood and are effectively destitute. A significant number have been living in CAR for numerous years, many spending most of their lives or even generations in CAR, and are distinctly different to the local population, have little connection and mostly no assets in their place of origin.

After significant lobbying by the humanitarian community, from March 2014 the Chadian Government extended periods of stay from ten days to one year.<sup>97</sup> Nevertheless, second or third generation Chadians with no current links to Chad risk becoming stateless. While the government has been encouraged to issue appropriate documentation, this remains an ongoing issue. UNHCR is trying to assist the Government to prevent the statelessness among the evacuees by issuing national ID cards to those who qualify for Chadian nationality.

The Government of Chad has also established temporary sites (two in the South (Danamadja and Maigama) and one in N’Djamena (Gaoui)) to host both CAR claimed Nationals as well as Chadians with little or no connections to their places/communities of origin in Chad. They are currently hosting more than 60% of the evacuees from CAR while 30% have left to preferred places in the country by themselves or with IOM onward transportation assistance. Another site under development in Djako (Moundou) is to receive a caseload of circa 5000 Chadian migrants who have fled CAR but became stranded in Cameroon.

The massive and sudden influx from CAR is causing social, economic and cohesion problems with host communities in areas of high return that do not necessarily correspond to their areas of origin in Chad. There have been serious clashes that have resulted in fatalities between the evacuees in temporary sites and host communities, particularly in the southern Chad.<sup>98</sup>

### Cameroon

**i** The majority of people crossing into Cameroon are concentrated in: Garoua-Bouli, Kentzou Yokadouma, Biti and Mboy, with the vast majority in Kentzou. The host communities have willingly accepted the arrival of migrants but have a very limited capacity to offer assistance. The population of Kentzou, which was around 11,000, has more than doubled with the influx of 15-25,000 refugees and returnees from CAR in early 2014. As a consequence, the resources of an already poor community are extremely stretched.

Conditions in the border areas have been and are still considered desperate. While most of the refugees and returnees are hosted in camps (UNHCR) and the transit site (IOM), some are still hosted in the local community buildings. Those outside of the camps or transit site remain without food, water and they are sleeping outside under

trees. UNHCR observed that '[a]n estimated 80 per cent are suffering from serious ailments such as malaria, diarrhoea, anaemia and respiratory infections, while more than 20 per cent of children are severely malnourished.'<sup>99</sup> Most new arrivals have no connections in Cameroon and no means to travel further from the border areas.



Photo: Displaced persons at Garoua Boulai site, March 2014 © IOM

From the end of February IOM started registering the individuals, the majority of whom claimed refugee status as CAR nationals, and an international response began to mobilize. UNHCR provides assistance to refugees in camps near the villages of Lolo, Mborguene, Borgop and Gado.<sup>100</sup> IOM manages protection, and provides assistance, medical escorts and onward transportation and food distribution to all non-CAR nationals, including 8,500 Chadians stranded in Cameroon along the border in March 2014. It also facilitated return transport of Malians to Douala, Cameroon and arranged onward flights to Bamako, Mali as well as transporting other nationalities to Yaounde or Doula for onward journeys. In May 2014, IOM set up two transit sites in Garoua Boulai and Kentzou, where TCNs are registered and receive assistance such as the distribution of food (in coordination with WFP), non-food items assistance (blankets, mosquitos nets, mats, buckets and jerry cans), and medical assistance (most vulnerable cases were referred to Médecin Sans Frontières).

As noted above, in July 2014 Chad established a new temporary site in Djako (Moundou) aimed at hosting a caseload of about 3,000 individuals transferred over from Cameroon. The transfer of Chadian migrants encountered some delays over determining the reception center, to manage the large influx of persons and to allow sufficient time for UN and NGO partner coordination to set up the infrastructure. The first movement of this new evacuation began on 21 July. However, during the delay around 1,000 registered migrants independently left the transit site to go to Moundou.

Unlike in Chad, to date no assessment has been undertaken to assess the effect of the escalated violence in CAR on

Cameroonian transhumance pastoralists. It is unclear of the number of pastoralists stranded on the border, how many have returned to Cameroon and what has been the human and animal toll on pastoralists who usually move in this region.

**i** Some migrants claimed Malian nationality and were issued travel documents to allow them to board flights to Mali, however upon arrival they claimed to be Central Africans. Their motivation was to be recognized as 'refugees', which carries the hope of international relocation to countries such as the United States. The delicate nationality issues of third country nationals leaving CAR have proven complicated for the Governments and humanitarian organizations involved and thus a coherent and robust approach to documentation is necessary.

## PART IV. SHORT, MEDIUM AND LONG TERM CONSIDERATIONS ON DISPLACEMENT AND MOBILITY

In order to understand the short, medium and long-term consequences of the conflict on mobility and displacement, it is also important to consider the overall socio-economic context of the country, which beyond the conflict itself affects not only the tendencies of return but can also aggravate further displacement and re-displacement of persons, especially vulnerable groups.

CAR is one of the poorest and least developed countries in the world. Classified by the UN among the “Least Developed Countries”, it has also long been characterized as a fragile state and ranks 180/187 in terms of the Human Development Index. Two-thirds of the population is estimated to live below the poverty line.<sup>101</sup> The life expectancy is 49 years, with the average amount of time spent in an educational institution being 3.5 years.<sup>102</sup> Among its 4.5 million inhabitants, around 50 per cent are under the age of 18 years, of which 42.5 per cent are under the age of 15.<sup>103</sup>

On average, there are less than 7 people per square kilometre. The northeast represents 40 per cent of the land area yet only 5 per cent of the population.<sup>104</sup> The government is centralized in the capital, Bangui, and there is a significant dichotomy between Bangui, and the rest of the country. Outside of Bangui, there is a marked infrastructure deficit in most areas, particularly in the east and northeast. Indeed, over the years a very small percentage of the budget has been allocated to the administration of the territory outside of Bangui (4.1 per cent of the federal budget).<sup>105</sup> But even in Bangui, widespread impunity at all levels has done little to reinforce confidence in the rule of law, and the justice system has repeatedly failed to meet the needs of CAR's citizens.<sup>106</sup>

Although some basic services are being re-established in Bangui, the health system essentially collapsed over the course of the crisis, supported only by international aid or churches.<sup>107</sup> There is high level of illiteracy and very limited educational and economic opportunities for a bulging youth population.

It is also important to note that some parts of the country regularly face heavy rains and flooding, which not only cuts off the northeast region from the rest of the country and makes several routes impassable, but also destroys houses and farm land. In September 2013, for instance, 1,800 people were displaced as a result of floods. In addition, heavy rains and flooding around displacement sites that are located in swampy areas have recently provoked further displacement and forced some IDPs to return prematurely.<sup>108</sup>

### Box 7. Human and economic development snapshot of CAR

Human Development Index (HDI) ranking (2013)	180
Surface area*	623,000 km <sup>2</sup>
Population ( <i>million</i> )	4.5
Urban*	39.3
Median age	19.4
Life expectancy at birth	49.1
Maternal mortality ratio ( <i>deaths per 100,000 live births, 2010</i> )	890
Underweight children ( <i>moderate and severe, % of children under 5, 2009</i> )	24.4
Physicians ( <i>per 1,000 people, 2005-2010</i> )	0.1
% of population without sustainable access to improved drinking water (2008)**	33%
Adult literacy rate ( <i>% ages 15 and older, 2005-2010</i> )	56.0 (68% of females/46% of males)
Mean years of schooling	3.5
Expected years of schooling	6.8
Population with at least secondary education (F/M):	10.3 / 26.2
Population with secondary/tertiary education (%)	13 / 2.6
GDP ( <i>PPP \$ billion, 2005</i> )	3.2
Gross national income (GNI) per capita	722
Poverty headcount ratio at national poverty line ( <i>% of pop., 2005*</i> )	64.4
Percentage of population living less than \$1.25 per day (2008)**	62.8
Employment to population ratio ( <i>% ages 25 and older, 2011</i> )	82.8
Labour force participation rate: F/M ( <i>15+, 2011</i> )	72.5 / 85.1

Source UNDP, Human Development Report, 2013; \*World Bank Remittances Factbook, 2011; \*\* UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, Consolidated Appeal, 2013.

Despite its rich mineral wealth,<sup>xv</sup> agriculture is the backbone of CAR's economy and is the livelihood for 74 per cent of the population. Of this, 80 per cent of agriculturalists are subsistence farmers, which form the major household revenue in CAR.<sup>109</sup> However, insecurity and recurrent displacements over the last decade in key agricultural producing areas – Ouham and Ouham Pendé provinces – has disrupted rural dynamics and led to a decline in production over the last decade.<sup>110</sup> Further, economic and development growth have been severely constrained by:

- Poor transport and market infrastructure;
- banking infrastructure incapable of supporting greater investments;
- Low levels of technology, including technical support and development of the agricultural sector;
- Years of domestic political instability; and
- Ongoing domestic and regional conflicts among its neighbours.<sup>111</sup>

Before the crisis, the economy was largely run by the minority Muslim population who dominated the transport, commerce, manufacturing, production and distribution sectors. The loss in these sectors as a result of the mass exodus of the Muslim population has negatively affected the economy. Similarly, the loss of businesses and damaged infrastructure has resulted in a sharp increase in prices. The demands and needs associated with the high level of internal displacement further burdens the already limited resources (i.e. health, food supplies, fuel) of local host communities.



Photo: IOM doctor attends to patient in displacement site, February 2014 © IOM

### Box 8: Dispute settlement in CAR

A World Bank study (2012) revealed that the most trusted, used and important justice and conflict resolution provider was the village chief or in urban areas the locality (quartier) chief. The role was created under the French Colonialists to assist with the collection of taxes and administrative tasks, but evolved to also represent wisdom and a social dimension. The report found, '[g]iven the near-total lack of confidence in centralized arenas, people most often turn to their village chiefs (or, in urban areas, their quarter chief) to resolve their disputes'. Village chiefs have traditionally provided a lower cost, faster alternative to the formal justice system and as they live in the community in which they are adjudicating, they have an interest in finding solutions conducive to peace in the community. In 1988 village chiefs were formally given the powers to reconcile disputes between parties, but without any specific guidance as to how or at what cost, and thus permit discretion and flexibility. However, their role has fallen outside of the ambit of the Ministry of Justice and the provision of justice.

Traditional healers can also play a role in the resolution of conflict, often when the dispute is linked to sorcery. Their role is to determine fault and prescribe a course of treatment, usually involving different kinds of plants.

The courts/formal justice system prior to the crisis had all but degenerated and few people had confidence in its ability to adjudicate fairly, largely considering it corrupt. The majority of cases heard before the court system concerned witchcraft (which was outlawed under the French Colonialists and has remained so until today). Jail is for most Central Africans not considered 'justice' and a dispute is not over until reconciliation has taken place, which may include a fine. The report also found that law enforcement officials 'used violence capriciously' and 'as people who take payment in order to enforce the payer's justice'.

Source: A. Marc, Understanding access to justice and conflict resolution at the local level in the Central African Republic (CAR), (World Bank, Washington D.C., 24 February 2012).

CAR's legal system has had limited capacity and has been in a gradual state of decay for decades. The diminished quality of legal training, inconsistent application and publication of laws territory-wide, and widespread corruption have all contributed to a system which was prior to the crisis, barely functional, dramatically underfunded, and mistrusted.<sup>112</sup> A World Bank study noted there are 'extremely low levels of trust between Central Africans' and that 'there

<sup>xv</sup> Natural resources include diamonds, uranium, timber, and potential oil and gas deposits.

is next to no faith in the fairness of institutions, all of which are seen as having a highly personalized character'.<sup>113</sup>

In contrast, throughout its history, CAR has had a deep cultural and moral value code that underlined dispute resolution and peaceful relations within villages and in relation to different tribes. Women, particularly elder women, were very much a source of social cohesion, peace education and in resolving disputes.<sup>114</sup> Among the Islamic population, "the imam, sultan or any other person with good knowledge of the Koran could settle conflicts between individuals."<sup>115</sup> However, many of the traditional platforms for dispute settlement were eroding even prior to the conflict, and it is difficult to know how (and if) the conflict will have affected their role, especially the longer the crisis persists.

## SHORT-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

The ex-Séléka and anti-Balaka appear to be increasing coordination, structure and some are in possession of stronger weapons and ammunition.<sup>116</sup> The scale of violence and massacres in rural areas continues and many areas fall outside the ambit of MISCA or Sangaris presence.<sup>117</sup>

It remains too early to predict the sustainability of the ceasefire that was agreed on 23 July 2014. The agreement left out what is considered to be key priorities necessary for securing sustainable peace, such as a plan for Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR), resolving calls for partitioning the country and a political commitment to support the transition to the next election. Moreover, concerns surround the feasibility of mobilizing support for and enforcing the agreement at the ground level, where the security situation has remained precarious and unpredictable. Working in the most recent ceasefire's favour, the agreement was signed at a point in which the country has witnessed an overall reduction in large-scale violence. Also noteworthy is the fact that the military and policing components of MINUSCA are scheduled to begin in September 2014.



"While it appears that Christian and Muslim IDPs have sought refuge in separate locations, there has been inter-faith solidarity. Catholic churches, parishes and families have given refuge to Muslims and Christians are said to have taken Muslim IDPs into their homes."

Source: IDMC, Central African Republic: amid extreme poverty and state fragility, more robust response needed, May 2014.

In the short term, while the violence has reduced, it remains precarious. Moreover, as the different waves of displacement have taken place since 2012, it is difficult to know if IDPs remain displaced, have moved to other areas and whether or not their needs remain the same.<sup>118</sup> Of

particular concern are the elderly populations and those with disabilities who were left behind as their families fled.

Highlighting security concerns, Chad closed its border to all non-Chadians in May 2014.<sup>119</sup> As a result, the movements have shifted more through the west of CAR to Cameroon and south to DRC. More information is needed on the scale of migration into DRC, the whereabouts and conditions of migrants and what humanitarian assistance is needed.



Photo: arrivals in Moundou, Chad, March 2014, © IOM.

Food insecurity has not been previously considered a trigger of displacement in CAR, however, there are rising concerns that insufficient reserves, lack of market access or price increases could be a contributing variable for further (re-)displacement or preventing returns.<sup>120</sup> About forty-five per cent of the rural population is considered food insecure (1.7 million people, up from 1.2 million people in November 2013) according to figures from the April 2014 multi-agency Integrated Phase Classification (IPC).<sup>121</sup> The below average rainfall between April to June, and particularly the rainfall deficits in the northwest in the main agricultural areas of Ouham and Ouham Pendé and areas north of Bangui signals continued food needs throughout the agricultural season.<sup>122</sup>

A number of variables make food security concerns relevant in the short, medium and long-term. Among the immediate food security concerns, damaged fields and the inability of farmers to access their lands diminish yield capacities. Further, CAR is highly dependent on imports and insecurity inhibits the movement of food supplies, with major supply routes through Cameroon, Chad, and the Democratic Republic of Congo disrupted.<sup>123</sup> For example insecurity on the major road linking Cameroon to Bangui (Garoua-Boulai – Bouar – Yaloke – Bangui axe) meant that hundreds of trucks



carrying food stocks were blocked at the Cameroonian border in February.<sup>xvi</sup>

Prices also continue to increase as shortages are replaced with a finite supply of looted goods. MISCA forces regularly patrol corridors to Cameroon, allowing for goods to move in and out of Bangui. Although there now exist opportunities for those who remain in Bangui to re-establish links with suppliers and re-open businesses it is not without significant security challenges. Many of the previous shops and markets in Bangui and across CAR are destroyed and the majority of interlocutors are displaced. Furthermore, continued looting of existing or new businesses remains a significant risk.

In February 2014 the UN raised concerns that 96 per cent of farmers (FAO noted 84 per cent of communities in March 2014) were without access to seeds to plant for the next agricultural season,<sup>124</sup> and many farmers cannot access their fields due to displacement or continuing insecurity. Unable to plant in time for the harvest poses a major risk of shortage in the next 6-12 months, creating medium and longer-term challenges.



The Transitional Government in collaboration with FAO and WFP launched early March the 2014-2015 Agricultural Campaign, which aims at equipping farmers with the necessary tools and seeds to produce their own food and develop local opportunities.<sup>125</sup> By the end of May over 75 000 families had received agricultural tools and 25kg of seeds intended to sustain their livelihoods for the next four months.<sup>126</sup> The Campaign envisages an 18-month programme to include income-generating activities, women's empowerment, seed production and to revitalise markets.<sup>127</sup>

Another short-term concern and priority is the pressures and resource scarcity associated with the congestion of transhumance pastoralists and their livestock along the CAR-Chad border. The success of decongestion and relocation policies will determine whether transhumance pastoralists are forced to retreat back to CAR, where there are comparatively abundant grazing opportunities, but high risk. Moreover, the impact of increasingly armed of pastoralists as a form of defence coming in from Chad could lead to perceived or actual safety threats or escalated violence. It could also give rise to facilitated weapons trafficking and renting out weapons to rebels, bandits or

criminal groups, which could undermine stabilization efforts in the country.

## MEDIUM-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

On 15 September 2014, MINUSCA will begin its military and policing mandate, which is currently scheduled until 30 April 2015. This could signify increased stability at least in certain parts of the country and facilitate access to areas previously unreachable, making the provision of protection and assistance easier.

The Transitional Government continues to have little capacity to execute its core functions. Elections that were initially scheduled for February 2015 are unlikely to be achieved before September 2015 and could bring with them additional insecurities and escalated violence.

Therefore, in the medium term, it is difficult to project if the displacement context in CAR will be increasingly protracted or if stabilization efforts will provide opportunities for returns. Given the resilience of the population and traditional coping mechanisms to live in the bush in times of external shocks, displaced populations may, and have already done so, voluntarily and spontaneously return to their villages and land without a specific plan or reintegration strategy in place. Indeed, some have already prematurely been forced to return to their homes sooner than they would have chosen, due to the conditions and insecurity of their displacement site and given the rainy season that has flooded the area.<sup>128</sup> For this reason, the early planning of returns and reintegration is essential. While available information is limited, another potential priority area in responding to spontaneous and voluntary returns may be related to land and potential dispossession.



Photo: Migrant families reunited in Chad after escaping Bangui, April 2014  
© Catianne Tijerina

<sup>xvi</sup> Fearing attacks, truck drivers refused to cross into CAR until their salaries were revised and security escorts were provided by MISCA. MISCA escorts now patrol this route allowing some supplies into CAR, however, and many

shops and market places are destroyed. BBC. *CAR exodus may cause 'catastrophic market collapse'* (11 February 2014).

IOM intention surveys conducted in Bangui in July 2014 revealed that just over half (57 per cent) of the IDPs in Bangui planned on returning soon, while 36% wanted to stay in their hosting location at least for now, while eleven per cent expressed that they would like to go to another region of the country.<sup>129</sup>

The primary needs of IDPs to facilitate their return were listed in the survey as security (33%), housing (31%), non-food items (13%); employment (8%); food (6%) stolen belongings (74%), absence of authorities (68%), security (66%) and housing (47%). The survey listed the main reasons preventing return to the place of origin are:

- Belongings are stolen (74%)
- Absence of authorities (68%)
- No financial means to return (66%)
- Do not feel safe (66%)
- House damaged (47%).<sup>130</sup>

However, the ongoing deterioration of the socio-economic situation and breakdown of the societal structure could further push individuals and families to re-locate. Indeed, violence in CAR is mostly at the hands of young, unemployed and frustrated men. The already grave economic and human development context and lack of infrastructure in the country prior to the current crisis have only worsened. Further, given the losses in the private sector and the departure of the main business and entrepreneurial populations, the country has suffered a significant economic loss and brain-drain. The prospects for young men are thus grim and the longer the violence continues—making war and “the spoils of war” a livelihood onto itself—the larger the challenge of providing alternative livelihoods for them and reduced probability of returning to subsistence based farming.

**i** Muslims in CAR had a dominant place in the commerce and livestock sectors and considered by many as the backbone of the economy. As an import-dependent economy, their departure has had a significant impact on the accessibility of goods in CAR. Many of the traders, wholesalers and interlocutors were Muslims that have departed or are displaced. This, together with insecurity along roads, is contributing to the chronic shortages of food and non-food items in Bangui and across CAR.

One of the more complex features of the displacement/return context is the difficulty in establishing or confirming citizenship versus ethnicity between for example Chadians and Central Africans of Muslim or Chadian descent. As noted, Chad has received a large percentage of displaced persons, of which almost 80 per cent lacked identify and citizenship papers. While Chadian authorities confirmed nationalities, there was nevertheless a tendency among the displaced population to select a nationality based on the eligibility of assistance or evacuations based on classifications determined by their status as returnees or refugees. As Chad closed the border to non-Chadian nationals, an unknown number of Central Africans of Chadian ethnicity may have proclaimed Chadian citizenship to be allowed to enter.

The ambiguities between Chadian by nationality or ethnicity, lack of documentation, closing of the Chadian border to non-Chadians and thus leaving many to claim Chadian citizenship could thus alter the population dynamics of both countries. It could affect the reintegration and return assistance and opportunities available to them should they wish to return to CAR. For Chad, it could mean that returnees face a range of challenges in integrating into a country where they otherwise have little connection. As many of the “Chadian” returnees are Muslims and frequently more middle class business owners in CAR, the returning population could also represent a more long-term gain and loss to Chad and CAR respectively.

#### Box 9: Land and property rights in CAR

Disputes over land are a relatively new phenomenon as due to the low population density and available land, however Bangui has seen a rise in disputes (prior to the crisis) as land value has increased.<sup>131</sup> Before the most recent crisis, “[l]and rights throughout much of CAR are considered insecure as a result of political instability, lack of confidence in the government, weaknesses in government institutions, and widespread social unrest” (USAID, 2010: 3).

CAR has a range of legislative and regulatory texts covering the rights and use of land and forest areas. The principle land law (Law No. 63,441 of 9 January 1964) gives the state ownership of all land that is not registered nor formally titled. This represents the vast majority of land as only an estimated 0.1 per cent of land is titled and registered.<sup>xvii</sup>

<sup>xvii</sup> This is partly due to the customary nature of land ownership and consequent challenges in establishing adequate proof under a formal judicial system. Further, apart from the challenges associated with public services, registering property takes on average 75 days, involves five procedures and costs 18.5% of the property value. Ownership rights must

be secured through registration of the titles in the official land register. USAID. *Land Tenure : Central African Republic Profile* (Washington D.C.: October 2010), p. 6; Niewiadowski, D. *La République centrafricaine: le naufrage d'un Etat, l'agonie d'une Nation*, University of Montesquieu, Afrilex, (Bordeaux: 20 janvier 2014), p.26.

Villages (settlements) have the free use of lands, largely based on customary claims. A community mapping study noted:

*[T]he village plots are almost contiguous due to the fact that there is no area of forest not being used by a village. These areas do not belong to any village in particular but rather to all surrounding villages. These areas are thus freely accessible to people coming from neighbouring towns or villages for hunting, fishing or gathering activities in the forest areas along the water course (Rainforest Foundation, 2009: 8).*

Customary practices are prevalent and varied throughout the country. The Government recognizes to some degree certain customary use-rights over mainly forest resources. However, for the most part, its recognition does not extend beyond subsistence resource use. Overall, local populations claiming customary rights are often dispossessed with limited to no compensation (International Conference on Land Grabbing, 2012).<sup>132</sup>

- The Forest Code (Law No. 90,003 of 9 June 1990) gives local populations with customary claims of forests rights “subsistence use”. This includes rights to use the resources for personal, individual or collective needs, such as gathering, collecting wood, etc. The Forest Code was revised in 2008 to provide new provisions aimed at protecting indigenous people from eviction from certain areas “without their free and informed consent” (Rainforest Foundation, 2009: 3, 23)
- The 1999 Decree reinforces the State’s exclusive right to allocate temporary or permanent ownership or use-rights to those working (generally determined by customary claims) “to improve” the land, giving them an individual hold over rural plots. This principle is locally recognized as the “law of the axe” as clearing land amounts to effective improvement. However, some indigenous groups such as the BaAka do not typically clear the land and thus fall outside the “law of the axe” principle (Woodburne, O. 2009).
- The 2004 Constitution states that all persons have the right to property. However, it also emphasizes that, “[T]he property and goods of individuals, along with the nation’s heritage, are inviolable. The State and regional authorities, along with all citizens, have a duty of protection in this regard” (Rainforest

Foundation 2009: 1). This thus gives the state the overriding claim for all land. Indeed, various decrees provide the basis for the state’s expropriation of public land (albeit with some degree of intended even if unfulfilled compensation). In particular, in the forested areas in southwest CAR, overlapping interests and stakeholders have resulted in constitutional rights taking precedence over customary rights (Rainforest Foundation 2009: 1).

Questions over land and property rights, and access to and use right of resources become increasingly relevant in displacement contexts as returning populations may find their property not only severely damaged but also possibly taken over. As only 0.1 per cent of the land is titled and/or registered, the majority of returning property owners facing land occupation may have difficulty in proving their legitimate claim over the land or property. Conflict can alter previous dispute settlement mechanisms and can alter the sense of legitimacy others have over land and property. Given that the majority of the CAR population relies upon subsistence farming or resource access, challenges in recuperating one’s land thus has broader ramifications for a family’s livelihood and food security. Businesses in Bangui have been also severely looted and damaged, making it difficult for returning populations to re-establish their livelihood and, in the same way, may have difficulty proving their legitimate claim to the property.<sup>xviii</sup>

Sources: USAID. Land Tenure Central African Republic Profile (Washington D.C.: October 2010). Marc, A. Understanding access to justice and conflict resolution at the local level in the Central African Republic (CAR), (World Bank, Washington D.C., 24 February 2012); International conference on large scale land grabbing in Central Africa, Conference report, Friedrich Ebert Stiftung, (Yaoundé: 20-22 August 2012); The Rainforest Foundation. Community Forest Tenure and Mapping in Central Africa, Central African Republic Case Study (UK: 2009); Woodburne, O. Securing indigenous peoples’ rights in conservation: Review of policy and implementation in the Dzanga-Sangha Protected Area Complex, Central African Republic, Forest Peoples Programme (UK: June 2009).

## LONG-TERM CONSIDERATIONS

It is difficult to project whether or not, and to what extent, the displaced populations of the immediate crisis are facing a protracted situation. Apart from the current crisis, certain areas of CAR have already been experiencing protracted

landowners are unable to reach agreement over land tenure issues. However, the forum is not functional at the moment.

<sup>xviii</sup> Notably, prior to the conflict the only specific piece of legislation addressing for land dispute settlement is CAR’s 2009 Mining Code, which provides for a forum for dispute resolution provided by the Ministry of Mining and Energy in the event that mining companies and local

displacement:<sup>xxx</sup> the northern region has been affected by the conflict in Sudan, hosting rebel fighters while the remote east and southeast areas continue to suffer from infiltration and destruction from the Ugandan LRA.<sup>133</sup>

Further, even apart from the current crisis, the prevalence of Zaraguina's "coupeurs de route", bands of thieves who steal from cattle herders or other passersby and sometimes holding children and women for ransom, has been historically beyond the control of Government forces and is a great source of continued insecurity.

As the effects of climate change intensify the desertification of the Sahel, favourable grazing areas and accessibility of water will continue to attract transhumance pastoralists from areas such as Chad, Niger and Nigeria to CAR.<sup>134</sup> As noted, the arrival of large herds of cattle for two to three months at a time frequently destroys farming crops, which has frequently led to clashes between pastoralists and farmers. Given the ethno-religious turn of the current crisis, there could be the potential for increased social tensions and escalations of violence between the largely pastoralist Muslims and typically Christian sedentary farmers. This could be compounded by the fact that there is a growing trend for arming Chadian pastoralists and their increased access to weapons (see Part III, under Impact of Crisis on Transhumance Pastoralism). Pastoralism has been largely overlooked in the humanitarian response but plays a significant role in economic development. From a long term perspective, as stabilization increases and traditional patterns of transhumance mobility return (and even increase from neighbouring countries), growing attention will be needed to ensure the effective management of transhumance practices and corridors, such as those that exist in Chad.

Related to effects of the ethno-religious dynamics of the crisis, Amnesty International warns that the mass exodus of Muslims is setting a 'terrible precedent for other countries in the region, many of which are already struggling with their own sectarian and inter-ethnic conflicts'.<sup>135</sup> Consequently, CAR's displacement and mobility issues could have broader regional implications and sensitivities requiring a longer and more encompassing regional approach.

There is no question that migration, including return migration, is and will be increasingly tied to development. Years of political instability and conflict have drawn few foreign investors and buyers. For similar reasons, CAR's land and other natural resource potential remains largely underexploited. Although about a third of the country is considered suitable for farming, only about 3 per cent is cultivated; and similarly while half of the land is considered suitable for grazing, less than 15 per cent is used.<sup>136</sup> Timber from CAR's rich forestland is a primary source of export

earnings though, like its mineral wealth, remains unexploited within its potential. Dependent upon the stability of DRC, exports will be easier and thus the timber market is expected to grow.

Amidst a priority of conservation and protection of CAR's share in the Congo Basin and biodiversity resources, growth in these areas could be a strong source of economic development, drawing in a higher number of migrants from elsewhere in the country and the region more broadly. Potentially a positive turn for the country, an increase in migration could give rise to greater tensions associated with land tenure and property rights and expropriation given a) the majority of land is state owned and the Constitution gives priority to undefined national interests; and b) village boundaries and land and resource use are linked to customary claims, which may not be open to "foreigners" given the lack of social cohesion that existed prior to the conflict and that have been explosively exacerbated during the conflict.



Photo: Displaced children playing in Bouar, April 2014, © Catianne Tijerina

<sup>xxx</sup> *Protracted displacement*. Forced Migration Review, Refugee Studies Centre Oxford Department of International Development, University of Oxford (Issue 33, UK: September 2009). For instance: There are around 2,000 Darfur Sudanese refugees in a village 9km from Bambari who represent an entire village attacked in Darfur and originally crossed the border in 2007 to Sam Ouandja. Due to subsequent insecurity in CAR, in

2009 UNHCR relocated this group to near Bambari where they remain. Those who chose to stay near Sam Ouandja did not wish to be disarmed and have alliances to the local armed groups IOM interview with Jean-Claude Ndanga, UNHCR, Protection Officer (Bangui 26 February 2014).

## CONCLUSION

The current crisis in CAR compounds the weaknesses of an already very fragile state. Albeit to decreased levels as earlier in 2014, reports of killings, looting and destruction of buildings persist on a daily basis. The country's geographical size, the underdeveloped road infrastructure and limited access have meant that many areas of the population have remained vulnerable. In towns where international forces have been established, armed groups have been pushed out to more remote areas and the violence in many areas continues with blurred distinctions between rebel groups and opportunist banditry.

Moreover, the current crisis has introduced a previously unpronounced ethno-religious dimension. This opens up a range of complexities for return, reconciliation and the already limited social cohesion. As some have warned, related tensions could spill-over into neighbouring countries. The weaponization of Chadian pastoralists and congestion along the transhumance corridors could provoke insecurity and such flow of weapons into CAR could further fuel rebel activity, violence escalation or banditry.

Chad and Cameroon are hosting considerable migrant populations and face their own challenges in absorbing the continuous number of arrivals. The physical integrity of many sites in Chad as well as across CAR in internal displacement sites are under acute strain.

Although political instability and crises are not new to CAR and the population has developed coping skills of "living in the bush", the scale of the current conflict far exceeds other episodes CAR's history. In the short-term, protection, adequate conditions in displacement and transit sites as well as food security remain the top priorities. In the medium term, much depends upon the impact of MINUSCA in policing and containing the violence. However, given previous patterns of hiding in the bush, many of the displaced populations will likely spontaneously return to their origins, regardless of structured assistance. Indeed, they face difficulties of reintegration and potentially finding their land, property and assets—and thus livelihoods—damaged or occupied. Village chiefs and traditional healers served as important dispute mediators, however, how and if the conflict has affected these systems, and the trust and credibility assigned to them, remain to be seen.

Given that much of the displaced population crossing into Chad and Cameroon lack identity documentation and the blurring between Chadian by citizenship or by ethnicity, the population dynamics of both countries could be affected. In particular, as the Chadian had border closed to all non-Chadians, many may have claimed Chadian nationality in order to cross.

Many of the departing migrants are Muslim and were responsible for running shops engaging with suppliers, and diamond trading and generally kept the import-dependent economy functional. Hence, their persecution and subsequent departure has left a large gap in an already very

weak economy as entire supply chains disappeared leading to shortages of goods and food in a country with few alternatives. The longer the conflict continues, the migrants or ethnic "foreigners" may become increasingly interested in their hosting area or their newly (re-) acquainted place of origin and see little incentive to return to CAR, Especially given the ethno-religious targeting of the conflict.

The impact of the crisis on transhumance pastoralists in CAR has been devoid of much media attention and international assistance. In CAR, the insecurity, conflict and direct persecution of pastoralists has led to significant congestion and exposed thousands of herders and their cattle to health risks along the Chad-CAR border. As such, more than an issue of security, it represents a major concern for the economic viability of the sector, availability of meat and dairy as well as livelihood concerns for populations.

It is difficult to project whether or not the conflict in CAR will evolve into a situation of protracted displacement. Even apart from the current crisis, unrelated instabilities, banditry and displacement affected many parts of the country and the northeast and southeast have been particularly affected by the conflicts and rebel groups of neighbouring countries.

The traditional level of mobility within CAR has not been overly significant, largely due to the political and security instabilities the country has endured over the years and its lack of development. However, there is no question that migration, including return migration, is and will be increasingly tied to development, conservation and sustainable natural resource management (including pastoral management), reconciliation and local governance and judiciary practices. Rebuilding the economy presents many opportunities for migrants, and migration would also have an important function in CAR's economic development. However, in the long term, it is difficult to know what impact the current targeting of "foreigners" will have socially, culturally and politically on welcoming migrants, particularly given their propensity to predominantly engage and profit in the private sector over CAR nationals.

## MIGRATION CONSEQUENCES

### SHORT TERM

- Conflict displacement
- Continuing internal displacement
- Cross border migration within the region
- Spontaneous return
- Potential displacement linked to food insecurity
- Transhumance pastoralists blocked due to seasonal and security constraints

### MEDIUM TERM

- If improved security, return of displaced populations
- If continuing insecurity, protracted displacement situation
- Labour migration linked to natural resources likely to increase, particularly if security improves.
- Potentially altered population dynamics and social cohesion challenges
- Transhumance pastoralists may resume migration, but their movement is likely to be influenced by the security situation and the perceived risks associated with armed commercialized herders
- Potential land and property disputes among returnees and non-displaced populations

### LONG TERM

- Return of IDPs and cross-border migrants if favourable economic opportunity and security improved
- Potentially altered population dynamics and social cohesion challenges
- Potential land disputes among returnees and non-displaced populations
- Increasing transhumance pastoralists activity entering CAR for grazing and water access due to climate change and growing desertification of the Sahel.

- <sup>1</sup> Marc, A. *Understanding access to justice and conflict resolution at the local level in the Central African Republic (CAR)*, World Bank (Washington D.C.: 24 February 2012) p. 49.
- <sup>2</sup> Bokassa's regime was heavily supported by the French, both militarily as well as financially. Isse, I. *Central African Republic: Retaliatory Violence Creating Atmosphere Of Insecurity*, Alternatives International Journal (Montreal: 1 December 2013).
- <sup>3</sup> Wilson, C. *Changing Definitions of Autochthony and Foreignness in Bangui.*, Fieldsights - Hot Spots, Cultural Anthropology Online (11 June 2014).
- <sup>4</sup> The Assessment Capacities Project (ACAPS). *Analyse des Besoins de Crise - République Centrafricaine Conflit Décembre 2013-Février 2014*, (ACAPS, Consortium of HelpAge International, Merlin and Norwegian Refugee Council, Geneva: 12 February 2014, p.10).
- <sup>5</sup> Bøas, M. *The Central African Republic – a history of a collapse foretold?*, NOREF Norwegian Peacebuilding Resource Centre Policy Brief (Oslo: January 2014); and Amnesty International, *Central African Republic: Ethnic cleansing and sectarian killings* (London: 12 February 2014) p.7.
- <sup>6</sup> Amnesty International. *Central African Republic: Ethnic cleansing and sectarian killings* (12 February 2014) p. 5.
- <sup>7</sup> Arieff, A. *Crisis in the Central African Republic*, Congressional Research Service (Washington D.C., 14 May 2014), p.5.
- <sup>8</sup> Ibid., p.5.
- <sup>9</sup> Marchal, R. *As Violence Persists, International Intervention in CAR Falls Short*, The Global Observatory (5 February 2014).
- <sup>10</sup> Agger, K. *Behind the Headlines - Drivers of Violence in the Central African Republic* Enough Project, Center for American Progress (Washington D.C.: 1 May 2014) p 14.
- <sup>11</sup> Reuters, *Central Africa Republic Religious Hatred was Underestimated: France* (UN New York: January 15 2014).
- <sup>12</sup> Arieff, op cit.
- <sup>13</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>14</sup> Reuters. *EU launches peacekeeping force for Central African Republic* (Brussels: 1 April 2014); Croft, A. and Braun, E. *EU peacekeepers take charge at Central African Republic airport, violence rages*. Reuters (Brussels/Bangui: 1 May 2014).
- <sup>15</sup> France Diplomatie. *Central African Republic - EUFOR RCA operation – Declaration of full operational capability*, Joint statement by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development and the Ministry of Defense, French Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Development (June 15, 2014).
- <sup>16</sup> Tigner, B. *EU force in the CAR becomes operational*. IHS Jane's Defence Weekly (online: 16 June 2014).
- <sup>17</sup> ACAPS. *Analyse Des Besoins De Crise République Centrafricaine Conflit* (December 2013-July 2014) p.1
- <sup>18</sup> Africa Times News: *RCA: assemblée générale des ex-Séléka* (11 July 2014); AFP. *Ex-C.Africa president renamed as head of Seleka militia* (12 July 2014).
- <sup>19</sup> IRIN. *Central African Republic: A Tentative Ceasefire in CAR* (Brazzaville: 29 July 2014).
- <sup>20</sup> IOM Interview with Anne Laure Bitep Angue and Daniel Sogoba, Human Rights Officers, BINUCA, Bangui 24 February 2014.
- <sup>21</sup> World Bank. *Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011* (2<sup>nd</sup> edition), International Bank for Reconstruction and Development, World Bank (Washington D.C.: 2011) p. 89.
- <sup>22</sup> *Atlas de la République Centrafricaine*. University of Bangui, Department of Geography, 2005, p. 68.
- <sup>23</sup> UNHCR. *Central African Republic Situation, External Regional Update 6, 6-12 March 2014* (12 March 2014).
- <sup>24</sup> *Migrations et Urbanisation*. Ministère de l'Economie, du Plan et de la Coopération Internationale, Direction Générale de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques et Sociales, Bureau Central du Recensement, Bangui: 2005, p. 46.
- <sup>25</sup> World Bank Migration and Remittances Factbook 2011 p. 89.
- <sup>26</sup> Ankogui-Mpoko, G. *Programme 1.1. Mobilités Humaines et Animales: Logiques, Perceptions et Impacts, Rapport Scientifique de Recherche RCA 2005-2008* (March 2008), p. 20.
- <sup>27</sup> *Migrations et Urbanisation*, Ministère de l'Economie, du Plan et de la Coopération Internationale, Direction Générale de la Statistique et des Etudes Economiques et Sociales, Bureau Central du Recensement (Bangui: 2005), p. 48.
- <sup>28</sup> In 2003 the urban population (living in a town of at least 5,000 inhabitants) represented 38% of the population and the three main cities of Bangui, Birbo and Berbérati accounted for three quarters of the urban population. *Analyse du fonctionnement des marchés en relation avec la sécurité alimentaire des ménages en République Centrafricaine*, World Food Programme (Rome: Septembre 2011).
- <sup>29</sup> Ankogui-Mpoko, op cit.
- <sup>30</sup> IOM Interview with Bekpa Hyacinth Anicet, l'université de Bangui – Chef du Département des Sciences Sociales, Bangui CAR, 19 February 2014.
- <sup>31</sup> *Caractéristiques économiques de la population de Centrafrique: rapport d'analyse thématique* Government of the Central African Republic, Ministry of Economy, Planning and International Cooperation (Bangui: 2005), p 41.
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