



## **PROFILE OF INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT : CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC**

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## PROFILE SUMMARY

### **Central African Republic: lawlessness outside capital continues to cause small-scale internal displacement**

*Most of the 200,000-people internally displaced by the fighting which culminated in the coup d'état of March 2003 have reportedly returned to their homes or integrated with the resident population in the capital Bangui. Following the coup, the self-appointed President François Bozizé abolished the constitution and formed a new transitional government which organised the first and second round of legislative and presidential elections in March and May 2005. The elections were generally deemed free and fair by national and international observers. The incumbent president was declared winner on 24 May with more than 60 percent of the votes and little political and social unrest has been reported. However, state structures are virtually non-existent in large parts of the country outside the capital Bangui, enabling armed bandits to loot and commit other human rights abuses largely unchecked by state authority. These raids frequently result in the temporary, small-scale displacement of villagers hiding in the bush for fear of being targeted by the bandits. In the north and north-west, for example, bandits and former combatants have engaged in killings, kidnappings for ransom and looting of the civilian population on both sides of the Central African-Cameroonian border, sending around 3,000 cattle-herders fleeing to Cameroon in April 2005, and causing internal displacement there too.*

*Repeated civil strife, the destruction of infrastructure and lack of funds have seriously curtailed access to basic health care, drinking water and education for both returning IDPs and the resident population. Although food appears to be readily available in markets across the country, there are reports of high rates of chronic malnutrition in some areas. Due to the fluctuating nature of the displacement situation, few aid programmes if any specifically target internally displaced people (IDPs). Salary arrears in the public sector – a key factor sparking the 2002-2003 unrest – are on the increase again and could lead to renewed violence and displacement if not addressed. However, the transitional government would need support from the International Monetary Fund or World Bank to meet its commitments. Repeated appeals to donors have so far yielded meagre results, with only around six per cent of requirements for the Consolidated Appeal for 2005 being met as of May 2005.*

### **Background and main causes of displacement**

The potential wealth of its natural resources (diamonds, gold, uranium and timber) has not prevented the Central African Republic from appearing on the UNDP's Human Development Index as one of the world's poorest countries. Since it gained independence from France in 1960, the landlocked country has suffered decades of coups, instability and misrule. The latest violent shift of power took place in March 2003 when rebel leader General François Bozizé ousted the democratically elected president Ange-Felix Patassé in a military coup that was preceded by six months of intense fighting. The fighting caused the displacement of more than 200,000 people in addition to massive human rights violations such as rapes, summary executions and looting by the warring parties (UN Human Rights Committee, 22 July 2004; ICRC, 8 July 2003).

The coup in March 2003 had been preceded by years of increasing opposition from the army and government employees, some of whom had not received their salaries for several years. This also led to repeated strikes and protests by teachers, civil servants, students and pensioners, undermining the government's legitimacy and pushing an already fragile economy further towards collapse. Salary arrears, which were partially settled in late 2003 after the coup thanks to the support of some donor countries, have accumulated again during the first half of 2005 (Afriquecentrale, 9 March 2005, US DOS, 28 February 2005)

A transitional government set up by Bozizé organised legislative and presidential elections in March and May 2005. The incumbent president Bozizé was declared winner by an independent electoral commission on 24 May after seizing more than 60 percent of the votes. The security situation in the capital Bangui is as of late May 2005 calm and little political and social unrest has been reported. The elections were generally accepted as free and fair by national and international observers, despite the persistent insecurity caused by roaming bandits and livestock thieves in the countryside (IRIN, 24 May 2005; IZF, 15 March 2005).

Among the perpetrators reportedly are an unknown number of heavily-armed Chadian militias, who helped overthrow Patassé in March 2003. These unpredictable men were not paid what they were promised for their support to the coup d'état and have subsequently engaged in banditry, kidnappings, killings and looting, both inside the country and in neighbouring Cameroon (Reuters, 14 April 2005; OCHA, 8 December 2004; UNSC, 16 June 2004). Some 3,000 cattle-herders sought refuge across the border in Cameroon, where the militias also caused some displacement of the local population in March 2005. In April 2004 the militias clashed with the national army and the regional military force in the capital Bangui causing the deaths of ten people. Human rights violations such as summary executions have also reportedly been committed by the security forces with the implicit approval of the transitional government (Grio.com, 20 April 2005; FIDH, 4 March 2005).

### **IDPs have returned or integrated in Bangui**

Humanitarian organisations seem to agree that there are no concentrations of IDPs as of May 2005. However, the breakdown of state structures and lawlessness in the countryside reportedly allow ex-rebels and bandits to cause small-scale and short-term displacements which often follow this pattern: bandits enter a village, fire into the air and force people to hide in the bush for some hours; this is sufficient for the bandits to eat and steal before leaving and allowing the villagers to return (E-mail, 29 April 2005; OCHA, 10 March 2004, p.11)

This short-term and highly fluctuating pattern of displacement has led some humanitarian organisations to question the relevance of singling out internally displaced people from the rest of the population in the affected areas; they also point to the difficulties of establishing criteria to determine the number of internally displaced. The main concern for most of the aid workers is rather the almost complete breakdown of state structures and socio-economic activities, aggravated by persistent insecurity. Therefore few if any programmes specifically target IDPs.

Around half of the 200,000 IDPs who fled the fighting preceding the 2003 coup moved from the then rebel-held zones to government-controlled areas in the south, mainly to Bangui (IRIN, 24 March 2003). A great number of them may have integrated with the resident population for fear of reprisals in their areas of origin from the new authorities and the Chadian militias. By way of example, around 30,000 refugees from two prefectures who fled to UNHCR-protected camps in Chad are reluctant to return as long as Bozizé's government is in power and his former Chadian allies and regular bandits continue to cause insecurity. This volatile security situation has reportedly not prevented the rest of the IDPs from returning to their homes (Telephone interviews with UN officials, April 2005; Centrafrique Presse, 10 July 2004).

### **Only a handful of international NGOs**

The size of the country, poor road infrastructure and persistent insecurity, pose serious obstacles to humanitarian access. Nevertheless, the French Red Cross, Oxfam Quebec, MSF Spain and COOPI are present in many districts, including some of the worst affected, generally moving around without military escort. Access for UN personnel is more limited as security regulations require a military escort for most travel outside Bangui (E-mail from field worker, April 2005; OCHA, 21 March 2005; IRIN, 18 March 2005).

### **Humanitarian crisis averted**

The most recent and relatively comprehensive inter-agency needs assessment dates from March 2004 and describes a collapsed health system and chronic malnutrition amongst children and elderly people. It also describes a devastated education sector in the war-affected districts following the displacement of teachers,

destruction of records and school buildings and lack of budgetary support. In four districts, 500 primary schools and 40 secondary schools have had to close. These findings were reflected in the Consolidated Appeal for 2005 (OCHA, 21 March, 2005; 10 March 2004, 19 July 2004, p.18).

While there is no doubt as to the devastating impact of the fighting between October 2002 and March 2003, a humanitarian crisis has reportedly been averted as a result of fertile soil, good rainfall and improved harvest (IRIN, 18 March 2005; FAO, 28 February 2005; OCHA, 10 March 2004). Reports on the humanitarian situation are somewhat contradictory; while there seem to be some areas with high rates of chronic malnutrition, food appears readily available in markets.

### **International response**

Repeated appeals for humanitarian assistance have received close to no donor response. By the end of May 2005, only around six per cent of the requirements for the 2005 Consolidated Appeal had been met (OCHA, 25 May 2005). A top UN official emphasised, upon return from a field mission in March 2004, that a relatively modest contribution of \$6.8 million would significantly improve the humanitarian conditions for hundreds of thousands of people, including the returning IDPs. His appeal yielded virtually no response. The deployment of a Humanitarian Affairs Officer to reinforce coordination activities and information collection and dissemination from May 2004 up to April 2005 was one of the most tangible results of the appeal.

This seems to point to a recurrent situation in which donors become reluctant to respond to humanitarian needs because of lack of confidence in state structures and the various governments' or coup-makers' mismanagement of public funds and long-term development assistance (OCHA, 21 March 2005, p.4). By way of example, a delegation from the International Monetary Fund recently ruled out an imminent agreement with the transitional government, expressing disapproval of its attempts to improve management of public funds (IRIN, 22 February 2005). In the meantime, salary arrears are being accumulated which in turn increases the prospects for a return to armed conflict with ensuing mass displacements and humanitarian needs (Updated May 2005).

# CAUSES AND BACKGROUND OF DISPLACEMENT

## Background

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### No nation existed when the colonialists arrived, 1885-1930

- Four major ethnic groups: the Baya-Mandja in the west, the Banda in the east, and the Nzakara and Azande in the south
- Each group has its own language, but most people also speak Sango
- The current international borders are a result of the colonial powers' struggle
- Borders in the French Equatorial Africa were changed by administrative decrees
- The border with Cameroon was moved four times between 1894 and 1920
- At the beginning of the 20th century the territory was sold to companies which embarked on virtual looting
- Large parts of the country, mainly in the east is presently underpopulated because of centuries of slave trade

"While the C.A.R. is a land of many peoples, there are four major ethnic groups: the Baya-Mandja in the west, the Banda in the east, and the Nzakara and Azande in the south. Each group has its own language, but most people also speak Sango, a Ubangi language that spread throughout the country during the colonial era and became an official language in 1991. Most people still adhere to classical African religions, and the arts remain closely tied to this traditional milieu. Large areas in the east remain virtually uninhabited, and most of the population is concentrated in the western half of the country. Bangui, the capital, is the largest city." (Discoverfrance, 31 December 2002)

"Situé au cœur du continent, le territoire qui est devenu la République Centrafricaine a été longtemps, pour reprendre l'expression de P. Kalck, "la dernière tache blanche qui subsistait sur les cartes de l'Afrique aux environs de 1885" (1976:127).

Devant ce vide, l'imagination occidentale a pu dériver de la manière la plus folle. À ce sujet, nous pouvons citer, non seulement la fiction présentée par J. Verne dans Cinq semaines en ballon mais aussi l'imposture scientifique des hommes à queue dont l'ouvrage de J.-D. Pénel, Homo caudatus , 1982, démonte les rouages.

L'histoire écrite commence avec l'arrivée des explorateurs européens: Schweinfurth, auteur de Im Herz von Afrika, voyagea aux confins du Soudan vers 1870; Junker, quelques années plus tard, pénétra en pays zandé mais l'insurrection mahdiste devait rendre difficile l'arrivée des explorateurs par l'est.

L'exploration et la conquête se firent par le sud, en remontant l'Oubangui et ses affluents. C'est pour des raisons géostratégiques que les Européens furent obligés de traverser ce vaste territoire. En effet, ils cherchaient à atteindre le Nil par la voie de l'Oubangui: Vangèle (1886-1890) pour le compte des Belges, Marchand (1897-98) pour celui des Français. Entre 1892 et 1900, quatre missions eurent pour but le lac Tchad (Brazza par la Sangha, Crampel, Maistre et Gentil à partir du coude de l'Oubangui). De ces tentatives de relier l'Oubangui au Chari, il nous reste quelques récits qui peuvent nous renseigner sur l'état du pays au moment de la conquête.

Parler de pays, au sens de nation, serait tout à fait inexact à cette époque. Comme le remarque C. Prioul (1982: 29): "Vers 1890, le seuil Oubangui-Chari est occupé par des ethnies dont les domaines sont bien circonscrits dans l'espace et dont les us et coutumes diffèrent sensiblement."

Les contours actuels du territoire centrafricain ne furent fixés que progressivement en raison de l'âpre lutte que se livraient les puissances coloniales dans cette zone. On sait que le roi Léopold II de Belgique alla jusqu'à présenter de fausses cartes de la région! Cette situation est parfaitement résumée par Y. Boulvert (1986a: 91): "La frontière méridionale avec le Zaïre, sur le thalweg de l'Oubangui résulte de la rivalité avec les agents de l'État Indépendant du Congo" (1894). Celle, orientale, avec le Soudan est une conséquence de la crise de Fachoda avec la Grande-Bretagne en 1899 mais elle ne fut délimitée qu'en 1923! La frontière avec le Kamerun allemand fut, sur une profondeur atteignant 300 km, déplacée quatre fois entre 1894 et 1920. Quant aux frontières avec le Tchad et le Congo, il ne s'agissait, du temps de l'Afrique Équatoriale Française, que de limites administratives pouvant être modifiées par simple décret."

En 1897, fut créé par la France le territoire de l'Oubangui-Chari et d'octobre 1901 à janvier 1910 furent pris une série de décrets instituant l'Afrique Équatoriale Française dont le Gouverneur Général siégeait à Brazzaville. Cependant, à la même époque, le pays fut vendu pour son exploitation aux compagnies concessionnaires qui se livrèrent à un véritable pillage (cf. Coquery-Vidrovitch, 1972). André Gide, dans son Voyage au Congo, publié en 1927, dénonça les exactions de certains de leurs agents. Les populations locales, saignées à blanc, se révoltèrent: la plus célèbre de ces révoltes fut la guerre de kongo-wara (guerre des manches de houes) en pays gbaya, qui dura de 1924 à 1930 environ. La colonisation fut vécue comme un véritable traumatisme par les habitants de cette région qui, outre le travail forcé et le portage, eurent à subir les déplacements de populations, la réquisition des hommes pour la construction du chemin de fer Congo-Océan sans compter l'impôt et l'enrôlement "volontaire" lors des deux dernières guerres mondiales.

La "mission civilisatrice" de la France fut longtemps réduite à l'implantation de postes administratifs, au tracé de quelques routes (surtout à partir de 1920 grâce aux efforts du Gouverneur Lamblin et... des indigènes). On lui doit aussi la propagation du christianisme sous l'égide de Monseigneur Augouard. Faisant le bilan de ces années, l'historien P. Kalck considère l'Oubangui-Chari comme "la plus délaissée des colonies" (1976: 221). D'ailleurs, les chiffres de la population européenne au début de la colonisation confirment bien que le pays était sous-administré: l'Oubangui comptait en 1906 148 Européens et assimilés, 348 en 1911, 261 en 1921 et 327 en 1926. Quant à la population indigène, le recensement de 1926 donnait le chiffre de 1066444 habitants mais l'administrateur Bruel faisait remarquer qu'il existait une étendue déserte d'environ 170 000 km<sup>2</sup> le long de la frontière du Soudan anglo-égyptien: "C'est dans l'ancien Dar Fertit (pays des esclaves) où depuis des siècles sans doute, on est venu chasser l'esclave de bien des coins de l'horizon. Les Ouadaïens, les Foriens, les Nubiens, les Égyptiens y faisaient encore, il y a 50 ans, des incursions annuelles.[...] (Ces régions) de mémoire d'hommes, étaient peuplées il y a 40 à 50 ans; des traces de villages subsistent et des témoins." (Bruel cité par Boulvert 1986 b: 25).

Pillée par les razzias esclavagistes, meurtrie par la colonisation, la population centrafricaine est encore en majorité rurale. Elle reste, en dépit de l'attrait du monde moderne, encore largement attachée à ses coutumes et à ses langues régionales." (Bibliothèque en ligne, 31 Décembre 2002)

### **The French colonisation, 1885-1976**

- France occupied the northern banks of the Oubangui river in 1889 further to an agreement with Belgium
- The interior was consequently exposed to capitalist enterprises which forced the local population to work for them

- The territory was included in French Equatorial Africa in 1910
- The local population revolted against the repressive french colonisation
- Around 50 percent of the population may have perished between 1890 and 1940 as a consequence of malnutrition, forced labour and diseases

"Vers 1885, des explorateurs belges découvrirent le cours inférieur de l'Oubangui. Les territoires situés de part et d'autre du fleuve furent partagés ensuite entre la Belgique et la France. En 1889 fut fondé, sur la rive droite de l'Oubangui, un premier poste français appelé Bangui. Le pays s'appelait alors l'**Oubangui-Chari**.

Le territoire fut alors livré à l'exploitation des sociétés capitalistes qui soumirent les populations aux travaux forcés. En 1903, l'Oubangui-Chari devint une colonie française, laquelle fut intégrée, en 1910, à l'Afrique équatoriale française (AEF), dont le gouverneur général siégeait à Brazzaville (Congo). De tous les territoires de l'Empire colonial français, l'Oubangui-Chari connut probablement l'une des colonisations les plus brutales. De 1928 à 1931, les Gbayas se révoltèrent contre le recrutement forcé lors de la construction du chemin de fer Congo-Océan et refusèrent de payer des impôts. La guerre dite du Kongo-Wara (guerre des «manches de houes») en pays gbaya se poursuivit jusqu'en 1931. La colonisation française fut vécue comme un véritable traumatisme par les habitants de cette région qui, outre le travail forcé et le portage, eurent à subir de nombreux déplacements de populations.

La fameuse «mission civilisatrice» de la France fut longtemps réduite à l'implantation de petits postes administratifs et au tracé de quelques routes, notamment à partir de 1920. Faisant le bilan de ces années, l'historien P. Kalck considérait en 1976 l'Oubangui-Chari comme «la plus délaissée des colonies» françaises. D'ailleurs, le nombre des Européens au début de la colonisation confirme bien que le pays était sous-administré: l'Oubangui comptait en 1906 quelque 148 Européens et assimilés, puis 348 en 1911, ensuite 261 en 1921 et finalement 327 en 1926. Les contours actuels du territoire centrafricain ne furent fixés que progressivement — en 1923 — en raison de l'âpre lutte que se livraient les puissances coloniales dans cette zone. Entre 1890 et 1940, on estime que la moitié de la population périt, victime des travaux forcés, de la malnutrition et des maladies apportées par les Blancs. La colonisation française introduisit le christianisme par l'entremise de Mgr Augouard, ainsi que le développement des premières écoles primaires"(Leclerc Jacques, 8 June 2003)

## **Post-colonial history, 1960-2002**

- David Dacko became the first president after independence in 1960
- Dacko was ousted by the military in 1965 and replaced by Jean Bedel Bokassa
- In 1979 Bokassa was ousted in a bloodless coup backed by France and led by David Dacko
- Dacko was in turn overthrown in a 1981 military coup led by Gen. André Kolingba
- Multipartyism was legalized in 1991 and Kolingba lost the presidential election in 1993 to Ange Félix Patassé
- Uprisings by soldiers demanding the resignation of the president Patassé in 1996 and 1997 led to looting and social distress
- After two postponements, new presidential elections were held in September 1999; Patassé won 51.6% of the disputed vote
- Popular discontent with Patassé mounted as the economy worsened

"Most of the country's present-day inhabitants are refugees from Muslim slave-raiders in adjacent parts of Africa in the 19th century. The raiders' relentless pursuit resulted in the depopulation of vast regions of the C.A.R. between the 1880s and 1915. About the same time French military expeditions reached the area, and in the 1890s the region was annexed to the colony of the French Congo; subsequently it became a separate colony in French Equatorial Africa. Internal self-government was granted by the French in 1958. In 1960 the country became independent.

**D**avid Dacko became the first president after independence. Dacko was ousted by the military in 1965 and replaced by Jean Bedel Bokassa, who proclaimed the state an empire in 1976 and crowned himself emperor in a lavish ceremony in 1977. In 1979 he was ousted in a bloodless coup backed by France and led by Dacko, who reestablished the republic and again became president. Dacko was in turn overthrown in a 1981 military coup led by Gen. André Kolingba. A new constitution approved in a 1986 referendum made the C.A.R. a one-party state with an elected legislature; Kolingba was elected to a further 6-year term as president. Bokassa voluntarily returned to the C.A.R. in 1986. Sentenced to death on several counts of murder, he was released in 1993 and died in 1996. Multipartyism was legalized in 1991. Kolingba lost the 1993 presidential election to Ange Félix Patassé. A new constitution adopted in 1994 allows the president to serve two terms; the prime minister implements presidential policies.

**U**prisings by soldiers demanding the resignation of the president in 1996 and 1997 led to widespread looting, despite the presence of French troops. In 1997, Patassé named a new national unity government, but continued unrest led the United Nations to approve the sending of a peace-keeping mission composed of African soldiers to replace the French forces when they departed in April 1998. In new general elections held late in 1998 under terms of a reconciliation pact signed earlier that year, neither Patassé's party nor the opposition won a legislative majority, leading to a new political crisis that was exacerbated when fighting in the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo spilled over into the C.A.R. The fighting caused an influx of Congolese refugees into the country's capital, Bangui. In February 1999 the UN Security Council extended the mandate of the UN peace-keeping mission in the C.A.R. until November 1999. That same month France formally ended its military role in the country.

**A**fter two postponements, new presidential elections were held in September 1999; Patassé won 51.6% of the disputed vote and declared himself the winner. Popular discontent with Patassé mounted as the economy worsened, and amid widespread strikes and demonstrations in early 2001, the opposition continued to call for his resignation. Martin Ziguélé replaced Anicet Dologuele as prime minister in April of that year. In May, after intense fighting in the capital city in which hundreds of people died, the government, aided by Libyan troops, put down an attempted coup by renegade soldiers loyal to Kolingba. Libyan troops again entered the capital in November to put down another revolt by dissident elements of the armed forces, and unrest continued despite international efforts to end the conflict peacefully. Kolingba was believed to have fled the country after the May coup failed, and a government ban on his party imposed in June 2001 was finally lifted in April 2002." (Discoverfrance, 31 December 2002)

### **Repeated mutinies and attempted coups in recent years affecting up to two million people, 1993-2003**

- The forces behind a coup d'etat on 15 March 2003 dissolved the National Assembly, dismissed the government and set up transitional government
- The opposition and other political forces in the country were included in the transitional government
- The majority of the population and the political classes supported the new political authorities
- The fighting that preceded the coup d'etat on 15 March 2003 divided the country in three zones with devastating humanitarian consequences

"The Central African Republic (CAR) has experienced repeated mutinies and attempted coups in recent years, which have tragically aggravated the already perilous living conditions for a major part of the population of this poor and landlocked country. On 15 March 2003, an unprecedented politico-military crisis has exacerbated the situation since the last attempted coup of 25 October 2002, resulting in further political changes on 15 March 2003.

With the participation of the opposition and other political forces in the country, including the party of the former President, the political and military situation changed with the installation of a transitional government. The new authorities suspended the constitution, dissolved the National Assembly, and adopted new measures for the restoration of security through disarmament operations and the recuperation of looted goods. The creation of a National Transitional Council and a government assigned to re-launch growth and prepare for forthcoming elections was initiated. The majority of the population and the political classes have supported these measures by the new political authorities, particularly the appointment of a charismatic leader from the opposition as Prime Minister.

The conflict of October 2002 was unlike previous crises in that the effects of the fighting were not limited to the capital, but were also widespread in the interior, resulting in the withdrawal of former rebels who had occupied a part of the national territory. For five months, the country was divided into different areas:

- an area under the control of government (named the "green zone");
- an area under the direct control of the insurgents ("red zone"); and,
- a third area with little or no access and isolated from any communications with the capital ("yellow zone").

This partition caused a significant deterioration in the humanitarian condition of at least two million people as a direct or indirect consequence of the conflict." (UNOCHA, 18 November 2003)

" 3. The period under review was marked principally by the Coup d'état of 15 March 2003 of General Francois Bozizé, who overthrew the regime of President Elect Ange Félix Patassé, thereby interrupting the already well-advanced preparations for the national dialogue on which so much hope was placed.

4. The coordinators of the dialogue, appointed by President Patassé at the end of December 2002, had met all the parties involved, from both within and without the country, in January and February 2003. A first phase of the dialogue was even announced in Rome under the auspices of the Sant'Egidio Catholic Community.

5. The importance of the national dialogue for the future of the Central African Republic seems not to have been overlooked by the new authorities, which have pledged to organize it during the period of transition.

6. I firmly condemned the assumption of power by non-constitutional means in a press release of 17 March 2003 (SG/SSSM/8637/AFR/584). The members of the Council will recall that they too condemned it, in the same terms, through the statement of their President on 20 March 2003 (SC/7700/AFR/588).

7. The new authorities have stated that the interruption in the democratic process is temporary and is designed to enable the conditions for a return to genuine democracy to be established. To this end, they have opted for management by consensus of the period in transition, with the involvement of every political opinion and the other actors of civil society. They envisage a period of transition which would last less than 22 months, the return to constitutional legality being planned for January 2005.

8. The holding of elections is scheduled for the second half of 2004, in accordance with the terms of the statement of the President of the Security Council of 17 April 2003 (SC/7736/AFR/607), in which the members of the Council expressed the hope that elections would be held as soon as possible. The authorities, however, make the fulfilment of this commitment conditional upon substantial assistance from

the international community for the restoration of security in the country and the improvement of the economic situation.

9. For the time being, institutional arrangements for the transition are in place: a 28-member Government representing all political opinions (including the Mouvement de Libération du Peuple Centrafricain (MLPC), the party of President Patassé) and even involving the trade unions; and a National Transition Council, which is a consultative body whose membership includes political actors and civil society organizations.

10. General Bozizé has issued an order amnestying those responsible for the attempted coup d'état of 28 May 2001, including ex-President André Kolingba, said to be the instigator of the abortive coup. This act, which is in keeping with his proclaimed concern for national reconciliation, induced many Central Africans in exile or seeking refuge abroad to return to their country. Likewise, the members of the military (numbering approximately one thousand), who had fled in the wake of the failed putsch of 28 May 2001, began one by one to be reintegrated in the army, in accordance with article 3 of the amnesty order. Lastly, ex-President Kolingba, who had been demoted to private after the attempted coup, saw his rank restored to that of Army General on 19 May 2003.

11. General Bozizé has stated that he will not be a candidate in the next presidential election, thereby bringing relative calm to the transition process. " (UN Security Council 20 June 2003)

### **Elections in 1993, 1998 and 1999 were generally deemed free**

- The presidential elections in 1999 were marred by irregularities in voter registration and distribution of electoral materials
- Since 1996 members of the security forces, complaining of low wages and salary arrears, have rebelled repeatedly against the president Patasse who was ousted in March 2003
- Kolingba is a Yakoma from the south whose 12-year rule ended in 1993 when Patasse became the first northerner to rule the country
- There was occasional violence during the presidential election campaign in 1999 including fighting in Bangui between supporters of President Patasse and former President Kolingba

"The Constitution provides citizens with the right to change their government at the national level. This right was first exercised in free and fair elections in 1993 that were the culmination of a successful democratization movement led by President Patasse. Patasse's MLPC [Movement for the liberation of the Central African Republic] won both the Presidency and a majority of seats in the National Assembly. Citizens again exercised their constitutional right to change their government by democratic means through the National Assembly and presidential elections in 1998 and 1999, respectively. International observers deemed both elections generally free; however, the presidential elections were marred by irregularities in voter registration and distribution of electoral materials. Some of the registration irregularities tended to favor the ruling party.

On April 1,[2001] President Patasse replaced the Prime Minister, Anicet Georges Dologuele, with Martin Ziguele, a member of the MLPC party. On May 28, former President Andre Kolingba led a faction of the armed forces in a coup attempt, which resulted in 10 days of fighting in Bangui between government forces and troops loyal to Kolingba. President Patasse retained power with the assistance of troops from Libya and rebel FLC soldiers from the DRC led by Jean-Pierre Bemba. Since 1996 members of the security forces,

complaining of low wages and salary arrears, have rebelled repeatedly against Patasse (see Section 6.c.). Kolingba is a Yakoma from the south whose 12-year rule ended in 1993 when Patasse became the first northerner to rule the country. The May coup resulted in hundreds of deaths and injuries, numerous arrests, 80,000 IDP's, and numerous other abuses [...]

In August the President dismissed the Minister of Defense, the Minister of the Interior, the Secretary of State for Interior, and the Secretary of State for Disarmament on charges of complicity in the attempted coup. On August 30, the President named a new Cabinet, most of whom are members of his MLPC party. On October 26, President Patasse removed General Bozize as Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces after accusing him of complicity in the attempted coup.

In the 1998 National Assembly elections, opposition parties won 55 seats, while the ruling MLPC party of President Patasse and its allies won 54 seats. However, the defection of one opposition National Assembly member in December 1998 gave the ruling party and its coalition a one-seat majority. The opposition parties and the UFAP strongly protested this defection and boycotted the inauguration of the new session of the legislature.

President Patasse's first term of office expired in 1999, but he constitutionally was eligible to seek a second consecutive term. In 1999 the Government established an Independent Electoral Commission (CEMI) to supervise the presidential election. Although the CEMI included representatives from many political parties on its board, persons loyal to the President controlled it. The Government explicitly rejected suggestions by elements of the international community, which provided material and financial support for the election, that the executive branch of the Government not involve itself in the management of the electoral process. In August 1999, President Patasse promulgated a decree that subordinated CEMI to the state Organ of Control (OCASPA), a state organization that he had created by decree in May 1999 to oversee the election process. Before the presidential election, there were credible reports of attempts to inflate sharply the number of registered voters in pro-MLPC northern areas, although this was corrected before the polling. The Government postponed the first round of the presidential election, first from August 29 to September 12, and then to September 19, after serious problems in ballot distribution became evident; however, the Government denied requests from opposition leaders for further delays to permit more complete resolution of the problems with the electoral process. Some provisions of the electoral code, requiring publication of voter lists at least 15 days before the election and distribution of voter identification cards at least 8 days before the election, were not respected. On election day, a shortage of ballots was reported in some largely pro-opposition districts. Opposition party poll-watchers reported the use of some falsified voter identification documents by voters, and there were several reports of ballot boxes being delivered to the CEMI without certified tally sheets, or from unofficial polling places.

Two weeks after the voting, the Constitutional Court announced the official results of the election and declared President Patasse reelected with 51.6 percent of the votes cast. Nine other candidates certified by the Constitutional Court had competed in the election. The Constitution required a second-round runoff election if no candidate received 50 percent of votes cast in the first round election. However, only one of the unsuccessful candidates filed a complaint with the Constitutional Court.

There was occasional violence during the presidential election campaign, including fighting in Bangui between supporters of President Patasse and former President Kolingba, and attacks by some opposition supporters on foreign diplomats whose governments' were perceived to have supported Patasse.

The Constitution provides for multiple political parties. The state is highly centralized. The central Government appoints all subnational government officials, and subnational government entities have no significant fiscal autonomy. The Government has not held constitutionally required local elections in recent years, ostensibly due to budgetary restrictions. The Government has appointed four successive mayors, including the mayor of Bangui, the capital, a southern city well outside the ruling party's main political base in the north." ( U.S. Department of State, 4 March 2002)

### **Until 1993 members of the former president's ethnic group, held a disproportionate number of senior positions government institutions**

- As a result of hirings and firings following President Patasse's 1993 election, Yakomas no longer hold a disproportionate number of positions in the civil service
- Approximately 80 percent of the Special Presidential Unit (USP) members are native to the ousted president Patassé's northern region
- Major political parties tend to have readily identifiable ethnic or ethnic-regional bases
- The Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People (MLPC) party of President Patassé has strong support in the north, especially among the Sara and Baya
- The Movement for Democracy and Development (MDD) party of former President Dacko is strong in the southwestern part of the country
- The Central African Democratic Rally (RDC) party of former president Kolingba is popular in the southeast
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"The population includes approximately 90 ethnic groups; many of these groups speak distinct primary languages and are concentrated regionally outside urban areas. The largest ethnic groups are the Baya (more than 30 percent), the Banda (more than 25 percent), the Mandja (more than 20 percent), the Sara (approximately 10 percent), and the Yakoma (approximately 3 percent). The Mbororo make up approximately 5 percent of the population but play a preponderant role in the economy; they are involved in mining development and remain the most important cattle breeders in the country.

Until 1993 members of Kolingba's ethnic group, the Yakoma subgroup of the Ngbandi, held a disproportionate number of senior positions in government, the armed forces, and state-owned firms. As a result of hirings and firings following President Patasse's 1993 election, Yakomas no longer hold a disproportionate number of positions in the civil service, but the armed forces still are being restructured to achieve greater ethnic balance. Approximately 80 percent of USP members are native to the President's northern region; many belong to the President's Kaba ethnic group or closely related groups.

Major political parties tend to have readily identifiable ethnic or ethnic-regional bases. The results of the 1998 legislative elections and the 1999 presidential election confirmed that the MLPC Party of President Patasse has strong support in the north, especially among the Sara and Baya ethnic groups, but that it also has strengthened its support in the capital (see Section 3). The MDD party of former President Dacko is strong in the southwestern part of the country; the RDC Party of Kolingba is popular in the southeast, in the Oubangui River basin, especially among the Yakoma" ( U.S. Department of State, 4 March 2002)

### **Voting along ethnic lines (April 2005)**

- High level of participation in the presidential and legislative elections
- The electorate voted along ethnic lines, disregarding the quality or the political programmes of the candidates

"La Ligue centrafricaine des droits de l'Homme (LCDH) s'est déclarée satisfaite vendredi de la "participation massive" de la population du pays aux scrutins présidentiel et législatifs du 13 mars mais a déploré le caractère "ethnique, clanique ou régional" de son vote. "Si la LCDH est satisfaite de la participation massive de la population au scrutin, en revanche elle relève que le vote n'a pas été fait en fonction du programme ou de la qualité du candidat mais en fonction de l'appartenance ethnique, clanique ou régionale", a déploré dans un communiqué son président, Me Nganatouwa Goungaye Wanfiyo. "Les partis politiques qui sont constitués sur ces bases ou les leaders qui ont largement contribué à ce phénomène identitaire portent la lourde responsabilité de l'éclatement de la cohésion nationale", a-t-il poursuivi. La LCDH a par ailleurs désapprouvé "l'appel lancé par certains partis politiques demandant l'annulation pure et simple des élections". A l'approche de la publication des résultats complets du premier tour de la présidentielle, la Ligue a enfin appelé tous les partis à respecter le verdict des urnes, quel qu'il soit. "En démocratie, il faut accepter de perdre. Cependant, il appartient au vainqueur de respecter les droits de la minorité", a conclu la LCDH."(IZF, 13 April 2005)

### **Second round of presidential elections scheduled for May 2005 (April 2005)**

- The current head of state won 42,97 percent of the votes in the first round of the presidential elections in March 2005
- His opponent M. Ziguélé won 23,53 percent in the same round
- The draft constitution is based on the Constitution of 14 January 1995
- Draft constitution was submitted for approval by the people through a referendum that took place in December 2004

"Le président centrafricain François Bozizé a fixé au 8 mai la date du second tour des élections présidentielle et législatives, initialement prévue pour le 1er mai par la Commission électorale mixte indépendante (Cémi), a annoncé mercredi la radio nationale.

"Le scrutin se déroulera sans interruption de 6h à 16 heures (de 5h00 à 15h00 GMT) sur toute l'étendue du territoire national, dans les représentations diplomatiques et consulaires de la RCA à l'étranger" pour la présidentielle et exclusivement en Centrafrique pour les législatives, selon le décret.

La campagne électorale pour ce second tour de scrutin qui oppose le président Bozizé à l'ancien Premier ministre Martin Ziguélé, aura lieu du samedi 23 avril au vendredi 6 mai.

Le chef de l'Etat a remporté 42,97% des suffrages le 13 mars dernier contre 23,53% pour M. Ziguélé, candidat indépendant soutenu par le parti de l'ex-président Ange-Félix Patassé, qui a été renversé en mars 2003 par le général Bozizé.

Onze candidats s'étaient présentés au premier tour de la présidentielle et plus de 900 autres aux législatives. Seul 17 députés sur 105 ont été élus dès le premier tour."(Afriquecentral, 13 April 2005)

"The political situation essentially remains marked by the continuation of the electoral process that will lead to the holding of the forthcoming general elections, which are designed to restore the constitutional order, in the first quarter of 2005. The Committee of Foreign Partners to Follow Up on the Electoral Process, whose members include China, France, Germany, the European Union,

BONUCA, the other agencies of the United Nations system, the Executive Secretariat of the Central African Economic and Monetary Union (CEMAC) and the Commander of the CEMAC Multinational Force, continues to support the electoral process.

3. At the second session of the National Transition Council, which closed on 15 July 2004, National Councillors considered and amended the draft constitution and the draft electoral code, which they then transmitted to the transitional government for adoption. Their amendments concerned, inter alia, the type of regime to be adopted, the powers of the Prime Minister, the length of the presidential term of office, the amount of the deposit payable by candidates for the legislative and presidential elections, the conditions for eligibility, and the conditions for establishing the criminal liability of the Head of State.

4. Following a second reading of the texts by the Government, the Head of State initialled and distributed the draft constitution and signed and enacted the ordinance on the Electoral Code. Some of the amendments proposed by the National Transition Council were not considered.

5. Subsequently, the National Transition Council adopted, during its third session, held from 16 August to 1 October 2004, the draft ordinance on political parties and the status of the opposition. The National Councillors also carried out a comparative reading of the draft constitution and the draft electoral code as published by the Government, without consulting the latter. In doing so, they noticed discrepancies with respect to the amendments made in accordance with the recommendations of the national dialogue. Those discrepancies were resolved through mutual concessions agreed to by the parties and facilitated by the good offices of my Representative in Bangui, among others.

6. An ordinance amending and supplementing the ordinance on the Electoral Code was adopted by the Government, which also modified the draft constitution, in accordance with the terms of the agreement, and enacted it by decree. The draft was approved by the people of the Central African Republic in a referendum held on 5 December 2004.

7. At its fourth session, held from 8 to 26 November 2004, the National Transition Council adopted the draft ordinance on the establishment, organization and functioning of the transitional constitutional court, the draft ordinance on the establishment of a commission to oversee the freedom of the press (Haut Conseil de la communication), and the draft ordinance on the freedom of the press in the Central African Republic. The texts were submitted to the Government for adoption and enactment.

8. On 23 August 2004, the Mixed and Independent Electoral Commission set up, in partnership with BONUCA and the National Transition Council, a committee of experts responsible, on the one hand, for defining and developing an appropriate interpretation of the Electoral Code and, on the other hand, for identifying and devising any derogation measures required for applying it to the upcoming election dates. The Commission set the electoral budget at 5.5 billion CFA francs. The Central African Republic contributed 1 billion CFA francs; the European Union, 1.8 billion; France, 540 million; the United States of America, 130 million; the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP), 323 million; and BONUCA, 35 million. Germany, Italy and the International Organization of la Francophonie indicated their intention to contribute to the electoral budget, which is currently in deficit in the amount of 1.361 billion CFA francs." (UNSC, 23 December 2004)

### **Good prospects for peaceful elections and hand over of power (March 2005)**

- No rumours of any coup attempts for the last two years
- The UN peace-keeping mission left prematurely after the 1999 elections
- The mistake should not be repeated

- The Secretary General's Representative in CAR advised the ousted president Patassé to appoint Bozize as lieutenant general and give him a diplomatic post in an Asian capital
- Concern that candidates will hire bandits and armed groups to intimidate each other
- The Army could also be a big problem if recruitment or promotion becomes an ethnic consideration

"After years of political turmoil and violence, the Central African Republic (CAR) is set to hold its first presidential and legislative elections on Sunday [13 March 2005].

Its current leader, former army chief-of-staff Francois Bozize, seized power on 15 March 2003, after six months of armed conflict between his supporters and those of former President Ange-Felix Patasse. Forces from a former rebel group in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), CAR's southern neighbour, fought for Patasse. Armed groups from Chad, CAR's neighbour to the north, fought for Bozize.

The Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the CAR, Lamine Cisse, was in the country during that conflict - and others before it - trying to persuade the political and military groups to work out their differences peacefully. Cisse was once the chief of staff of the Senegalese armed forces. Later, he became Senegal's interior minister. IRIN interviewed him in March in the CAR capital, Bangui, at the UN Peace-Building Support Office, known as BONUCA. Here are excerpts from that interview:

**QUESTION:** You have been the UN's Special Representative in the CAR since July 2001 and lived through countless political crises here. Is the situation really better now, or is this just a pause between the last crisis and the next?

**ANSWER:** The current situation is far better than during Patasse's rule. No region in the country is now occupied [by rebel or outside forces]. For the last two years [since Bozize took power], we did not hear of any coup attempts. There is a consensus now for the first time.

**Q:** In 1998 the UN had a full-blown [1,350 troops] peacekeeping mission in CAR, which in 1999 organised elections. Yet soon after the peacekeepers left in 2000, armed conflict broke out again. Why should elections work any better now?

**A:** MINURCA [the UN Mission in CAR] left too early.

**Q:** Are you saying the UN made a mistake?

**A:** Yes, of course, it left the CAR too quickly and too totally. I don't know if the UN has learned from that mistake but everyone can see what happened.

**Q:** Were the 1999 elections also faulty?

**A:** Certainly Patasse was democratically elected, but the other political groups were all against him, as was the army, which caused ongoing tensions.

**Q:** And so Patasse was overthrown?

**A:** The coup was decided in a European city on 7 December 2002 at a gathering of various political groups and [prominent] CAR citizens. They decided then and there to support Bozize [in overthrowing Patasse] and to create a joint transitional government.

**Q:** Did you do anything to try to prevent the coup?

**A:** I had several meetings with Patasse and I told him the truth. If he had listened to me he would not have been ousted. I advised him to appoint Bozize as lieutenant general and to give him a diplomatic post in an Asian country but Patasse refused.

**Q:** Do you also speak so frankly with President Bozize?

**A:** Yes. I knew Bozize when he was the army chief-of-staff. Now we meet frequently. The good thing about him is that if he says he will do something, he will do it.

**Q:** The army of Chad supported Bozize. What role is Chad now playing in the CAR?

**A:** Chad is playing a security role through its contingent in the regional peacekeeping force of CEMAC [Economic and Monetary Community of Central African States]. There are also Chadian soldiers in Bozize's army. Chad is a natural ally of CAR.

**Q:** And what about Jean-Pierre Bemba [the former rebel leader of the Congolese Mouvement de Libération du Congo whose troops occupied CAR in 2002 at Patasse's invitation]?

**A:** Jean-Pierre Bemba's role is more complicated. Bozize works with [the government of Joseph] Kabila. But if conflict breaks out in the DRC again, then Bemba [whose forces are based in the DRC's Equateur Province which borders CAR] could become a problem for the CAR.

**Q:** What is your biggest fear?

**A:** It is that the electoral process fails. Political violence could still break out. I'm worried that the candidates will hire bandits and armed groups to intimidate each other.

**Q:** There are also documented cases of human rights abuses by government security forces, and unknown armed groups who are harassing people in the provinces.

**A:** The government needs to unite to fight impunity. The armed bandits harassing people are unemployed youths and former soldiers who joined Bozize's rebellion - as well as former Chadian troops. Highway banditry occurs all over Africa. It only really becomes a problem when politicians manipulate the armed groups.

**Q:** Could the army also be a problem?

**A:** Yes, the army could be a big problem if recruitment or promotion becomes an ethnic consideration. This could again lead to mutinies. The army must be depoliticised and detribalised.

**Q:** And what about the political process?

**A:** After the elections, when the transitional process ends, my hope is that another transitional government will be formed that includes all the parties that lose the elections. Having a government of national unity like this will help minimise social tensions. It will be a grace period to help reinforce national cohesion. It must be formed regardless of ethnic group. Behind politics here you always find an ethnic dimension. The priority now must be good governance and fighting corruption.

**Q:** Tell us about the current living conditions of people in the CAR?

**A:** In general people are living in a precarious situation. I think the biggest single problem is salary arrears [for civil servants]. As long as salaries are not paid there will be social instability and crises.

**Q:** What should be the priority of the next government?

**A:** The immediate task of the new government should be to negotiate with donors like the European Union, France and China so that aid could resume as soon as possible. With the most recent IMF mission [in late February] it is now clear that new aid is unlikely to arrive until perhaps as late as August. This means the problem of salaries will continue. CAR is rich in natural resources, but few of the companies exploiting them pay taxes. If they did pay taxes the money could be used to pay government salaries. But this could only happen if the tax system is modernised and computerised, otherwise corruption will continue and salary arrears could pile up."(IRIN, 11 March 2005)

### **The Central African economy in deep distress (June 2004)**

- Salary arrears, labor unrest, and unequal treatment of military officers lead to mutinies
- 30 per cent decline in tax revenue between January and June 2004
- 73 per cent of Central Africans live below the poverty line
- Humanitarian and health situation is constantly deteriorating

"Salary arrears, labor unrest, and unequal treatment of military officers from different ethnic groups led to three mutinies against the Patasse government in 1996 and 1997. The French succeeded in quelling the disturbances, and an African peacekeeping force (MISAB) occupied Bangui until 1998 when they were relieved by a UN peacekeeping mission (MINURCA). Economic difficulties caused by the looting and destruction during the 1996 and 1997 mutinies, energy crises, and government mismanagement continued to trouble Patasse's government through 2000. In March 2000 the last of the MINURCA forces departed Bangui. In May 2001 rebel forces within the CAR military, led by former President and army General Andre Kolingba, attempted a military coup. After several days of heavy fighting, forces loyal to the government, aided by a small number of troops from Libya and the Congolese rebel Movement for the Liberation of the Congo (MLC), were able to put down the coup attempt. In November 2001, there were several days of sporadic gunfire between members of the Presidential Security Unit and soldiers defending sacked Chief of Staff of the Armed Forces Francois Bozize, who fled to Chad. In mid-2002 there were skirmishes on the CAR-Chad border"(Nation by Nation, 31 December 2003)

"The economic and social situation derives from the situation that prevailed at the end of 2003, which was characterized by a decline in production in most sectors of activity. The formal private sector now consists of a very small number of companies, with a low level of visibility. There has been a marked decline in the activities of the timber and diamond sectors because of the temporary suspension, by the government, of concessions and operating permits, with a view to their overhaul. This situation has had adverse repercussions on the economic and social climate during the six-month period under review, with a 30 per cent decline in tax revenue. On 31 May 2004, only the November and December 2003 salaries could be paid, and part of the January 2004 salaries. These conditions made it impossible for the State to devote sufficient resources to the social sectors, in a country in which the prevalence of HIV/AIDS is 15 per cent, and the net rate of school attendance is under 50 per cent.

22. The poverty and vulnerability of the Central African population continue to be a source of concern. According to a survey carried out by the United Nations system in December 2003, 73 per cent of Central Africans live below the poverty line. This situation of extreme poverty is exacerbated by the constantly increasing difficulties of access to basic social services, particularly health services, by the most disadvantaged strata of the population. The humanitarian and health situation is also constantly deteriorating, with the resurgence of numerous epidemics, particularly meningitis, poliomyelitis, tropical ulcers, measles and pertussis. With regard to schools, after several months of a strike by teachers

demanding their salaries, the education sector has enjoyed relative calm, particularly because of the agreement reached between the transitional government and teachers' union leaders, which led to a resumption of classes. [...]

26. Despite the difficulties referred to above, the overall situation is improving, in particular because of the gradual resumption of mining and forestry production resulting from the recent repeal of measures for the suspension of activities in these two sectors. In the area of good governance and stabilization of public finances, the transitional government, in the context of the 2004 finance act, has adopted a number of measures, including measures for the reduction of gross salaries, on a monthly basis and under progressive rates ranging from 25 to 30 per cent, for the 2,000 public servants (including the military) who earn salaries of over 300,000 CFA francs. This will help reduce the salary bill by about 5 per cent."(UN SC, 16 June 2004)

"The economic situation remains precarious, with negative economic growth expected for this year. This situation has arisen because of the State's grave cash flow problems, due primarily to the discontinuation of the cooperation programme between the Government and the Bretton Woods institutions. As a result, the country has not received financial assistance from the Bretton Woods institutions for several months. With a view to exploring ways and means of rapidly resuming this cooperation, which is vital to the recovery of the country's economy, consultations were held in Paris, from 30 October to 7 November 2003, between representatives of the Government and officials of these institutions.

20. The Government has also begun discussions with the European Union with a view to resuming its cooperation with that institution. A guidelines and strategy document, containing a number of commitments, has been submitted to the European Commission.

21. Within the context of these commitments, the Government held meetings with leaders of the mining sector in July, [2003] and with leaders of the water, forestry, hunting and fishing sectors in September. These meetings were designed to help the Government combat fraud, smuggling, and the rampant exploitation of the country's natural resources with a view to the sustainable revitalization of these sectors.

22. An interim report outlining the steps taken by the authorities to honour their commitments was also submitted to the European Commission for its consideration on 12 September 2003.

23. After reviewing the interim report, the European Union recognized that some commitments had been the subject of encouraging initiatives, but also expressed concern about shortcomings in a number of areas and, as a result, partially suspended its cooperation with the Central African Republic. This was the case with road construction and macroeconomic support projects. However, it has agreed to continue cooperation on a progressive basis, particularly in the social sphere (health care and direct support to the population), as well as in the areas of electoral assistance, good governance and the reform of public finances.[...]

26. The situation with respect to public finances continues to be a matter for serious concern. The level of budgetary revenue remains very low, with total revenue for the year 2003 standing some 25 per cent below that of the previous year. In this regard, arrears owed to multilateral and bilateral creditors continue to rise and are now extremely high (150.6 billion CFA francs in November 2003)."(UN SC, 29 December 2003)

### **Payment of salary arrears single biggest challenge for the new government (March 2005)**

- As long as salaries are not paid there will be social instability and crises
- Unpaid civil servants have found alternative illegal sources of income
- Taxes are unlikely to provide the shortfall

- Members of the armed forces demand payment at roadblocks, much like highway bandits

"The biggest single problem the next government will face, he said, was payment of salary arrears.

"As long as salaries are not paid there will be social instability and crises," he said.

Some unpaid civil servants have found alternative illegal sources of income, and diplomats in Bangui wonder how the new government will battle corruption if it fails to pay its employees.

Taxes are unlikely to provide the shortfall. The amount of import tax to enter government coffers was lower in 2004 than during the armed conflict in 2003, an economist, who requested anonymity, said.

Members of the armed forces demand payment at roadblocks, much like highway bandits. Security forces have been accused of committing widespread abuses against civilians.

The human rights section of the UN Peace-Building Support Office in the CAR, known as BONUCA, has documented many cases of rape, torture and murder. BONUCA also has evidence of the government granting impunity to some of the alleged perpetrators, while other people are held in prison without any charges being brought against them.

Cisse also expressed concern about ethnic tensions, particularly within the armed forces. "They continue to pose a grave danger to the stability of this country," he said. "If recruitment or promotion becomes an ethnic consideration, this could again lead to mutinies." (IRIN, 18 March 2005)

### **Near collapse of the country's socio-economic structure combined with a lack of political dialogue root causes of the conflict (December 2002)**

- Soldiers staged a series of mutinies in the mid-1990s
- In May 2001, army officers in the Central African Republic came perilously close to overthrowing the Government of the elected President, Ange Félix Patassé
- Tensions have been stirred by the civil war in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo

" The conflict in the Central African Republic occurred when soldiers staged a series of mutinies in the mid-1990s. In 1998, following an intervention by troops from France, the former colonial power, and later by an African multinational force (MISAB), the United Nations sent a peacekeeping mission (MINURCA) mandated to help improve security in the capital, Bangui. Later the United Nations also provided support for elections, which were concluded the following year. The United Nations Peace-building Office (BONUCA) was created in February 2000, following the withdrawal of the peacekeeping mission. But in May 2001, army officers in the Central African Republic again staged an uprising and came perilously close to overthrowing the Government of the elected President, Ange Félix Patassé.

[...]Though the Government was able to foil the coup, the situation remained unstable. Government security forces began systematically attacking the ethnic group of the former head of State, General André Kolingba, who claimed responsibility for the attempted overthrow. There was widespread looting and killing. Among the victims was the United Nations field security coordinator, Jean-Pierre Lhomme. He

was shot dead when he came to the assistance of a United Nations staff member who was being attacked in her house by unidentified gunmen.

[...]In Mr. Cissé's [The representative of the Secretary-General] view, 'the current instability is not just a continuation of the former conflict, as in Liberia where former combatants have taken up arms again.' Tensions in the Central African Republic have been stirred by the civil war in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo. This has created a proliferation of weapons in the region. In addition, fighters from the Congo frequently cross the border into the Central African Republic. The root of the conflict, says Mr. Cissé, is the near collapse of the country's socio-economic structure combined with a lack of political dialogue.

One of the most immediate problems is that the Government lacks resources. Soldiers and civil servants have not been paid in months. 'This has been a big reason for the ongoing instability,' says Mr. Cissé. The trade union for civil servants has frequently held strikes and demonstrations that aggravated the situation. 'What they have been doing is understandable, but the situation was too fragile,' he says." (UN DPI, 31 Dec 2002)

### **International Criminal Court called upon to fight impunity (January 2005)**

- The national judicial system does not have the capacity nor the will to pursue all the crimes that preceded the coup d'etat of 15 March 2003
- No investigation has been opened against the current president's allies

"Alors que le procès de l'ex-Président de la République Ange Félix Patassé devant la Cour criminelle de Bangui a été reporté sine die le 22 décembre, la FIDH vient d'apprendre la saisine de la Cour pénale internationale (CPI) par la République centrafricaine (RCA) sur « les crimes de guerre et crimes contre l'humanité commis sur l'ensemble du territoire depuis le 1er juillet 2002 » .

La FIDH se félicite de la saisine de la CPI, appelle la Présidence de la CPI à désigner une chambre préliminaire et demande au Procureur d'ouvrir immédiatement une enquête.

Pour rappel, la FIDH avait, dès le 13 février 2003, demandé au Procureur de se saisir proprio motu de la situation en République centrafricaine sur la base d'une mission internationale d'enquête [1] de la FIDH qui avait mis en lumière l'existence de plusieurs centaines de cas de viols, d'exécutions sommaires et de pillages systématiques lors de la tentative de coup d'Etat du général Bozizé d'octobre 2002, constitutifs de crimes relevant du champ de compétence de la Cour.

Sans méconnaître l'opportunité d'une telle saisine pour le chef de l'Etat à quelques jours des élections présidentielles et législatives prévues en février 2005, la FIDH considère cependant que l'implication de la CPI dans la situation en RCA est nécessaire à l'établissement d'une justice effective, indépendante et respectueuse des victimes et au droit à un procès équitable des suspects.

En effet, la FIDH considère qu'en dépit du procès ouvert devant la Cour criminelle de Bangui contre les dirigeants de l'ancien régime, le gouvernement centrafricain n'a ni la volonté ni la capacité de rendre justice aux victimes des crimes commis en RCA, au regard des critères définis à l'article 17 du Statut de la CPI [2] : l'appareil judiciaire en totale déliquescence ne permet pas une justice indépendante et effective en RCA ; aucune poursuite judiciaire n'a été engagée contre de présumés responsables de crimes de guerre dans les rangs des ex-rebelles dirigés par le général Bozizé ; et enfin, le nouveau régime n'a toujours pas

adopté de loi nationale visant à l'harmonisation de la législation centrafricaine avec les dispositions du Statut de la CPI, en particulier concernant la définition des crimes et la coopération entre les juridictions nationales et la Cour.

Cette analyse est corroborée par le procès en cours des ex-dignitaires du pays qui présente les aspects d'une justice expéditive, non conforme au droit à un procès équitable reconnu par les instruments internationaux de protection des droits de l'Homme."(FIDH 3 January 2005)

## **Causes of displacement**

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### **Outflux of Centraficans to Cameroun (April 2005)**

- Former centrafricans combattants attack, loot and kill Bororo cattle keepers in the areas bordering Cameroun, forcing them to cross the border
- The ex-combattants have followed their victims into Cameroun and caused the displacement of an additional 15,000 Cameroonians
- The perpetrators are reportedly well armed and have good communication equipment
- They are also reported to take hostages and claiming ransomes without hesitating to kill upon resistance

"Plus de 15.000 Camerounais et 3000 Centraficains ont fui leurs villages après les attaques des "coupeurs de route", ces bandits de grand chemin qui sévissent au nord-est du Cameroun, a indiqué jeudi à l'AFP le Haut commissariat des Nations unies pour les réfugiés (HCR).

"La situation est sérieuse et mérite d'être prise en compte, notamment par la mise en place de moyens de réaction et d'une assistance humanitaire", a fait valoir le représentant du HCR Jacques Franquin, à l'issue d'une mission dans les villages de Djohong et Ngaoui (800 km au nord-est de Yaoundé).

Depuis quelques mois, des anciens combattants centrafricains tuent, pillent et prennent des otages dans cette région frontalière de la Centrafrique, les pasteurs bororos étant les premières victimes de ces exactions. Fuyant l'insécurité des campagnes, les villageois trouvent refuge en ville.

"Ils ont commencé par terroriser les populations à l'ouest de la Centrafrique et ont poussé 3000 Centraficains à se réfugier au Cameroun avant même de les suivre pour poursuivre les exactions en terre camerounaise", a témoigné le gouverneur de l'Adamaoua, Joseph Noutsu, précisant que "les pouvoirs publics ont commencé à renforcer les mesures de sécurité".

Selon une source locale, "il s'agit d'une véritable armée composée d'éléments puissamment armés et équipés d'armes sophistiquées et d'appareils de communication qui détient pour l'heure en otage en territoire centrafricain plus de 50 personnes dont 21 enfants" (Grio.com, 20 April 2005).

"Des "coupeurs de route" venant de Centrafrique ont tué ces derniers jours trois personnes à Djohong (700 km au nord-est de Yaoundé) et en ont pris seize en otage, a annoncé jeudi la radio nationale camerounaise. Selon le correspondant de la Cameroon Radio and Television (CRTV) dans la région, les malfaiteurs ont

exigé une rançon de 40 millions de francs CFA (61.000 euros ) pour remettre en liberté leurs otages. Décrits comme "lourdement armés" et "très informés", ces bandits de grand chemin ont déjà, selon la même source, opéré il y a quelques semaines dans un village de la même région proche de la frontière centrafricaine. Ils y ont tué le chef traditionnel et pris des otages qu'ils ont ensuite remis en liberté contre 4 millions de francs CFA (6.100 euros). Les autorités camerounaises ont lancé un appel aux populations locales, les appelant "au calme" et les invitant à la "collaboration" pour mettre les détresseurs hors d'état de nuire. Depuis plus d'un an, ces "coupeurs de route", souvent d'anciens combattants en Centrafrique, sévissent à l'est et dans le nord du Cameroun. Ils dépouillent les voyageurs, prennent des otages et n'hésitent pas à tuer tous ceux qui leur opposent la moindre résistance. La semaine dernière, un groupe de ces malfaiteurs avait ainsi tué trois personnes et en avait blessé plusieurs autres, dont un policier, près de Fouban (400 km au nord-ouest de Yaoundé)."(IZF, 13 April 2005)

"Frequent attacks have also been reported in northwest CAR, towards Chad, in an area where fighting was particularly intense between 2002 and 2003. People living in towns and villages there told IRIN of the presence of armed groups.

"There was [an] attack just last week, just 20 km from here," one man in the provincial town of Bossangoa, said in March.

He added that some of the people who fled into the forest in 2002 were still there.

Farther south at the village of Ndjoh, a man told IRIN that attackers only target the Fula (semi-nomadic cattle herders), because they own cows.

"We don't have problems any more in our village because we have nothing left to steal," he said"(IRIN, 18 March 2005)

### **Opponents of Bozizé killed 20 people in north-east (November 2004)**

- The attack came ahead of a referendum on the constitution
- No displacements reported following the attack
- The government sent troops to the area and reported that calm had been restored

"At least 20 people have been killed in a raid on the remote town of Birao in the north-east of the Central African Republic, according to reports.

The attack comes ahead of a referendum on the constitution and as fears mount that the CAR could soon see an influx of refugees from Sudan's Darfur region.

Officials have blamed the attack on opponents of President Francois Bozize who seized power in March 2003.

The north-east of the CAR has seen raids by Sudanese poachers in the past.

Elections

The government has sent troops to the area and says calm has been restored.

The CAR votes in a referendum on the constitution on 5 December and in parliamentary and presidential elections in January.

The last constitution was annulled by President Bozize, when he took over in a coup in 2003.

A government statement broadcast on state radio said one of the aims of the attack on Birao was "to disturb the process of restoring normal constitutional life".

General Bozize is expected to stand in the presidential elections.

The former ruling party, the Movement for the Liberation of the Central African People (MLPC), has nominated as its candidate former president Ange-Felix Patasse, who is in exile in Togo, after being ousted by General Bozize.

However, it is unlikely General Bozize will allow him to return to the CAR to stand in the poll." (BBC, 23 November 2004)

### **Persistent insecurity may cause renewed large-scale displacements (March 2004)**

- Massive displacements followed the military confrontations in 2002-2003
- Fear and anxiety throughout the countryside
- Peasants may decide to abandon their homes if they see their crops being stolen
- The forest doesn't offer the same level of protection as before because of increased numbers of armed bandits
- Refugees from Chad wish to return because of insecurity
- Reports of rapes, extrajudicial killings and torture
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"During the military activities of 2002-2003, large sections of the rural population sought refuge from urban centres and villages in favour of safe haven in the forests. In addition, some 42,000 have become refugees in Chad. The UNCT and NGOs estimate that there were, (at the time of the 2002-3 crisis), some 200,000 internally displaced persons. Over the past twelve months there has been a steady return to places of origin and today one can generally state that there are no IDPs in CAR, (although small pockets still reportedly exist due to a lack of clothing and a sense of shame about returning to villages located along the roads.

[...] the factors that can trigger a renewed large displacement still exist throughout the areas visited [by a UN mission in March 2004]. Levels of fear and anxiety remain high throughout the countryside and even in some urban centers as Bozum Representatives of the population of this town – women and youth associations, and government workers – indicated to the UN mission in a meeting that took place on March 4 that they fear that the “coupeurs de route” may start “visiting” the town once the rainy season sets in and the access to Bozum from Bangui becomes more difficult. Generally, peasants are sticking to their villages hoping that they will be able to work their fields (even if their seed stocks are scarce). However, if they continue to be impeded from growing crops due of insecurity, or if they see their crops largely being taken away at the end of the season – as happened in 2003 – they may decide to abandon their villages once again. Contrary to the situation in 2002/2003, the forest doesn't offer protection due to the increased

presence of armed bandits. Villagers may have no other alternative but to seek refuge in the towns – themselves already stressed and living in quasi-stagnation.

[...]Due to the changed environment, many of this caseload[Chadian refugees] now wishes to repatriate to Chad as armed bandits regularly harass them (related to my mission when we visited the area on March 2 The same tale of despair and anxiety was evident from our conversation with the Central-African population of Boubou, on the main road and some twelve kilometers away from the location(s) where the Chadian refugees live." (UN OCHA, 10 March 2004, p 11)

"In late 2002 and early 2003 combatants systematically raped hundreds of women. Many women, including the elderly and children, were said to have been raped by MLC fighters, who included child soldiers, others by forces loyal to François Bozizé. Some victims were reportedly killed while resisting rape, or died from their injuries. Some who survived were infected with HIV or other diseases, and were abandoned by their partners as a result. Others became pregnant. In most cases, no action was taken against MLC rapists by the government of President Patassé, or against rapists in the forces led by François Bozizé before or after he came to power in March.

- After a woman testified on a privately owned radio station that she had been detained and raped by five members of a Presidential Guard unit in Bangui on 28 October, President Bozizé dismissed the alleged perpetrators and two accomplices from the army. The suspects were detained in a military barracks but had not appeared in court by the end of the year. The commander of the Presidential Guard was also removed from his post and transferred to a provincial governorship.

Female genital mutilation continued despite a 1966 law banning the practice and the existence of a government department with responsibility to campaign against it.

#### Extrajudicial executions

Both government and armed opposition forces unlawfully killed dozens of unarmed civilians they accused of supporting their opponents.

Numerous extrajudicial executions by forces loyal to former President Patassé came to light. They included the killings north of Bangui of at least 25 Muslims of Chadian origin for allegedly colluding with the armed opposition.

In Damara and Sibut, in the north, an improvised court martial set up by the armed opposition ordered the execution of at least 10 people. It did not respect fair trial procedures. In March a Chadian military commander reportedly ordered the summary execution of an unspecified number of civilians accused of looting. No investigation was known to have taken place and no action was taken against the officer responsible.

In August an army lieutenant reportedly shot dead two students who were among demonstrators demanding better conditions at Barthélémy Boganda College in Bangui. The officer was demoted as punishment, but was not charged or brought to trial for the killings.

Throughout the year armed men, usually in military uniform and believed to be members of the security forces, reportedly killed unarmed civilians. The victims included Barry Okonkwo Norason, shot dead in September. Soldiers at a roadblock north of Bangui robbed him and his brother as they returned from a business trip, then shot them both. His brother was injured.

#### Torture and other ill-treatment

Torture and other cruel, inhuman or degrading treatment were widely used by government and armed opposition forces. Chadian troops reportedly introduced a form of torture known as arbatachar, often inflicted on government opponents in Chad, in which the victim's limbs are tied tightly in 14 places, causing extreme pain and often resulting in death.

Soldiers tortured government officials accused of embezzling public funds and other offences soon after their arrest, threatening to kill some of them, including former government minister Gabriel Jean-Edouard Koyambounou. Nearly all the detainees were held unlawfully, often without charge, and were denied the right to challenge the basis of their arrest and detention." (AI, 1 January 2004)

### **Medical staff fleeing congolese allies of the government that was ousted on 15 March 2003 (December 2002)**

- Deeply felt anti-MLC [Movement du libération du Congo]sentiment among the CAR civilian population following over seven weeks of harassment, humiliations and rape by these troops
- They are reported to be harassing lorry drivers and other civilian travelers requesting money and seizing personal belongings
- The role of these troops is not part of any security-related deal within the CAR, within CEMAC, between the CAR and its outside partners, within the UN, and even within the framework of the newly negotiated inter-Congolese accord signed in South Africa on 17 December 2002

#### "Role of the MLC troops of Jean Pierre Bemba in the DRC

Within the city of Bangui, shooting incidents involving the Presidential Guard and MLC forces and the civilian population have continued. On 12 December, prolonged shooting was reported in the 8th district of Bangui after the population erected barricades to prevent the government from installing MLC fighters in a school compound. As of 13 December, security forces had dismantled the barricades. The government has however strongly denied seeking to install MLC troops in school compounds in the capital. This nonetheless was another manifestation of deeply felt anti-MLC sentiment among the CAR civilian population following over seven weeks of harassment, humiliations and rape by these troops. The tension between the population and the MLC troops is evident and could spill over into open confrontation any moment with predictable results. In any case, attempts to find more infrastructure in Bangui to house the MLC troops, and the latter's lengthening reach (they are presently in Damara and apparently poised to move further North to Sibut) are clear proof that their presence in the Central African Republic is not about to end any time soon. Their presence is also reported on the Bangui-Bouar road (the main land access to the CAR from Cameroon) where they are reported to be harassing lorry drivers and other civilian travelers requesting money and seizing personal belongings and valuables. This presence and control in an ever increasing number of CAR cities, coupled with their notoriety in the area of human rights violations (rape, widespread looting, summary executions, etc) remain a major security threat and concern. Significantly, the role of these troops is not part of any security-related deal within the CAR, within CEMAC, between the CAR and its outside partners, within the UN, and even within the framework of the newly negotiated inter-Congolese accord signed in South Africa on 17 December 2002. The earlier this issue is confronted by the international community, the better it will be for the victimized civilian population of the Central African Republic, and the signature of the inter-Congolese Agreement is a unique opportunity for the new DRC government and the international community that helped broker the peace to hold Mr. Bemba to account.[...]

For fear of being harassed and looted, all medical personnel have fled not only the Health centers but their homes as well. Humanitarian agencies visiting Damara have heard eye-witness accounts of MLC troops chasing the civilian population into the hills to strip them of what little possessions they have taken with them in their flight. Within Damara itself, there are no doctors, and up to 40 km from Bangui, there is virtually no civilian population in areas that were inhabited prior to the arrival of the MLC troops." (UN Resident Coordinator, December 2002)

## Peace efforts

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### National dialogue raises hopes for reconciliation (November 2003)

- Current president Bozizé apologises for his actions to a national reconciliation conference
- Some of Bozize's fighters had committed many excesses including looting and destroying public property
- Former president Kolingba said many people had suffered reprisals or been forced to flee the country due to his actions and declarations during the coup attempt in May 2001

"The political landscape has substantially evolved since 15 March 2003, when the constitution was suspended, and the National Assembly and the Government were dissolved. Inside the country, temporary political structures were put in place, such as the National Transitional Council, a consultative structure. [...]The national dialogue opened on 16 September 2003 and has been considered a significant step towards a consensus on durable solutions to the multiple crises. There is much hope for this work, which should become the basis for a new Central African society." (UN OCHA, p 7, 18 November 2003)

"Central African Republic leader Francois Bozize apologised to the nation on Tuesday for damages and suffering caused during the war he waged against President Ange-Felix Patasse between October 2002 and March 2003.

'From the bottom of my heart, I apologise to the country's daughters and sons,' Bozize told the 350 delegates attending the national reconciliation talks in the capital, Bangui.

He said that during the war, some of his fighters had committed many excesses including looting and destroying public property. He said his relatives and those of his fighters were also targeted by reprisals.

'I personally accept the consequences of my political action and, as a leader, bear responsibility for the suffering endured by certain categories of my compatriots,' Bozize said.

He mentioned the foreigners, religious communities and businessmen who were victimised by the 15 March coup.

During the war that took place largely in the north of the country, churches were looted and destroyed. Soon after Bozize's coup, shops and state-owned buildings in Bangui were also looted and some burnt. These included offices of the World Bank and the UN World Health Organisation.

While repeating that his apology was sincere, Bozize said the public should not be blinded by apologies made by some political actors since they still kept firearms in their homes, to destabilise the nation.

Bozize's apology follows those made by former Presidents Andre Kolingba and David Dacko, who both admitted having made political mistakes.

Bozize also told the delegates that their recommendations would be seriously considered, unlike the case with three previous conferences. "This dialogue will not be a bracket that we opened and closed immediately," he said.

Following divisions among the delegates on the implementation of the recommendations, a team was set up on Monday to propose the type of follow-up structure to be established.

The plenary sessions of the talks end on Wednesday. The official closing ceremony will take place on a date to be fixed." (IRIN, 14 October 2003)

" Former Central African Republic (CAR) leader Andre Kolingba apologised to the nation on Monday for the errors of his government during his 12-year rule and for his role in the May 2001 failed coup attempt against the then president, Ange-Felix Patasse.

'I solemnly present my apology to my compatriots," he told 350 delegates to the ongoing national reconciliation talks.

He said many people had suffered reprisals or been forced to flee the country due to his actions and declarations during the coup attempt; others had been unjustly imprisoned or ill-treated.

'I take on the entire moral responsibility for my declarations,' he said.

Kolingba, who ruled from 1981 to 1993, was a self-declared president. During the May coup attempt, speaking on Radio France Internationale, he called on Patasse to resign and hand power over to him. When Patasse flushed out Kolingba's supporters, many from Kolingba's Yakoma ethnic group were ill-treated or killed. Others had their properties destroyed.

Kolingba said he had not masterminded the coup attempt, but had been asked by a group of soldiers to support their revolt. "After sober reflection on my responsibilities as a former head of state and former army chief bearing the highest army rank, I decided to support those compatriots," he said.

In August 2002, the Bangui criminal court sentenced him to death in absentia. It also sentenced 800 others, 600 of them in absentia. But following an amnesty granted all May 2001 coup convicts by the nation's current leader, Francois Bozize, Kolingba and thousands of other exiles returned home.

Kolingba also apologised for the excesses committed under his government, which resulted from an earlier coup, in 1981, this time against David Dacko. Mentioning the names of Bozize, Prime Minister Abel Goumba and Dacko, as well as other political and labour union leaders, Kolingba asked for forgiveness.

Accused of having plotted a coup in 1982, Bozize, then in exile in Benin, was extradited to Bangui in 1989, where he was reportedly tortured.

In an appeal for national healing, Kolingba said that once key political leaders reconciled, the general public would follow.

"The time has come for us all to stand together sincerely and forgive each other for the harm we did among ourselves," Kolingba said." (IRIN, 7 October 2003)

### **UN peace-building support office strengthened (June 2004)**

- Human rights monitors will be able to operate throughout the countryside
- Judicial assistance to human rights victims
- The office will also play an active role in promoting the disarmament of combatant

" Following a report by General Touré and discussions with the Government, the Security Council and the Secretary-General decided to strengthen the mandate [of the UN peace-building support office] under which he will operate. The peace-building support office will be given more staff, and he will be able to play a more active role in the peace-building process. 'The mandate has not exactly been changed,' explains General Cissé, 'but it has been strengthened.' [...]

Now, for example, United Nations human rights monitors will be able to operate throughout the countryside, and the peace-building support office will provide judicial assistance to human rights victims. The office will also play an active role in promoting the disarmament of combatants. Some of the staff will be involved in 'early warning' to better anticipate future threats to the peace process, and General Cissé will try to work with the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund and other United Nations financial and development institutions to help the Government create some desperately needed revenue. But, he says, 'the more involved I get, the more implicated I am in the politics.' He tells of myriad groups and factions in the Central African Republic, all with competing agendas. ' In this bouillabaisse of instability it is not going to be easy to keep them all on my side.' "(UN Department of Information, 31 Dec 2002)

"In implementation of the BONUCA mandate, my Representative in Bangui and his staff will continue to monitor the evolution of the situation throughout the country. To that end, I should like to encourage all parties to take the appropriate measures to facilitate greater involvement of Central Africans in the electoral and transition process which is under way. I also appeal to the community of countries friendly to the Central African Republic to support the efforts undertaken by the transitional institutions for a successful outcome of the electoral and transition process."(UN SC, 16 June 2004)

# POPULATION PROFILE AND FIGURES

## Global figures

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### No more concentrations of IDPs in the Central African Republic (April 2005)

- There are no recent reports on numbers and conditions for the internally displaced people in the Central African Republic
- Short term displacement is likely to continue as a result of banditry and insecurity (April 2005)
- There are reportedly no IDP camps in the country

There are as of April 2005 no concentrations of IDPs in the country according to key humanitarian stakeholders. However, persistent insecurity continue most probably to cause short-term displacements following residual crime and looting by former combatants. (Telephone conversation with field-based organisations, April 2005)

"Although most of the 230 000 IDPs have returned home, an estimated 41 000 refugees from CAR are still living in Chad."(FAO, 28 February 2005)

"During the year, there continued to be large numbers of persons who were internally displaced by the 2003 coup and the continuing instability. By June, between 230,000 and 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) remained in the country, although there were reports that many IDPs were returning to their homes in the second half of the year."(US Department of State, 28 February 2005)

"There are currently around 200,000 displaced persons in the Central African Republic and almost 30,000 Central African refugees in Goré (Chad) following the events of 15 March 2003. In turn, the Central African Republic is providing refuge to almost 46,000 people of Sudanese, Chadian, Congolese (from the Democratic Republic of the Congo), Rwandan and Burundian origin. From 25 to 27 August 2004, a joint mission of the Central African Republic and the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) travelled to Kinshasa to sign a S/2004/1012 tripartite agreement prior to the repatriation of refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo living in the Central African Republic. The repatriation operation began in October 2004 and is ongoing."(UNSC, 23 December 2004)

"It was reported that there are currently 2.2 million vulnerable people who do not have access to food or health supplies and 200,000 IDPs. The crisis has various implications in the areas of health (risk of epidemic outbreaks), insecurity ("coupeurs de route" phenomenon), human rights violations and ethnic tensions, poor infrastructure impending humanitarian assistance, fragile regional environment with the current or potential crises in neighbouring countries: DRC, Congo-Brazzaville, Sudan and Chad."(UNOCHA, 18 June 2004)

"The armed conflict has caused many Central Africans in rural areas to abandon their homes and farms to camp out in forested areas or flee to neighboring Chad. Many missed their planting seasons. An estimated 230,000 to 300,000 internally displaced persons (IDPs) remain in the country and 42,000 others fled to north to Chad as refugees. Displaced people are slowly returning to their homes but are prevented from working in their farms in many areas because of insecurity. One aid worker told RI, "Many of the donor

agencies that used to support development have stopped, thus blocking agriculture and education programs for the people." (Refugee International, 21 May 2004)

"During the military activities of 2002-2003, large sections of the rural population sought refuge from urban centres and villages in favour of safe haven in the forests. In addition, some 42,000 have become refugees in Chad. The UNCT and NGOs estimate that there were, (at the time of the 2002-3 crisis), some 200,000 internally displaced persons. Over the past twelve months there has been a steady return to places of origin and today one can generally state that there are no IDPs in CAR, (although small pockets still reportedly exist due to a lack of clothing and a sense of shame about returning to villages located along the roads."(UN OCHA, p 11, 10 March 2004)

"Ouham and Ouham Pende have about 650,000 people, half of whom are still in hiding after being displaced by six months of fighting between rebels and government troops, Colombo said.

He said that the presence of the COOPI medical team in Ouham might encourage internally displaced people (IDPS) to return home.

'They are not far from their villages where they come in the morning or in the evening to visit their homes before returning to the bush,' he said.

Most of the October 2002-March 2003 fighting took place in Ouham and Ouham Pende provinces between fighters loyal to Francois Bozize, a former CAR army chief of staff, and government troops of President Ange-Felix Patasse. Hundreds of residents fled the region then, and many are reported to be hesitant to return as insecurity prevails. The fighting ended when Bozize ousted Patasse in a coup on 15 March." (UN OCHA, 19 May 2003)

### **The Central African Republic less populated than estimated (March 2004)**

- Estimated 3,1 million people in the whole country as of December 2003
- Estimates revised downwards from 3,8 million people
- More than 4000 registration officials conducted the census

"Un recensement de la population a été effectué en novembre et décembre 2003 par plus de 4 000 enquêteurs. Outre le nombre d'habitants, les résultats des enquêtes permettront de connaître un certain nombre d'éléments sur les aspects sociaux de la population de Centrafrique : langue parlée, alphabétisation, et indicateurs de santé (taux de natalité, de mortalité et de mortalité infantile) et mesurer l'incidence des conflits des dernières années sur les déplacements de populations. Les données recueillies sont en cours de consolidation.

Le nombre estimatif d'habitants, 3,1 millions, est inférieur aux estimations les plus récentes qui donnaient une population de 3,7 à 3,8 millions d'habitants.

La Centrafrique, qui figure aux tout derniers rangs du classement mondial des pays sur la base de l'indice de développement humain du Pnud, est l'un des pays d'Afrique les plus fortement affectés par le VIH/Sida, avec un taux de prévalence au sein de la population sexuellement active de plus de 20% et un accès aux soins très réduit." (GoF, 31 March 2004)

### **Towns in Ouham and Ouham Pende were only inhabited by 30 percent to 50 percent of their pre-war populations (April 2003)**

- Heavy fighting in areas bordering Chad in February 2003 caused massive displacements
- 4/5 of a population of 200,000 estimated to have fled the occupied towns
- 231,000 people had left their homes as a result of the war in the CAR
- About 105,000 of them had fled from the former rebel zones in the north to former government-held areas in the south
- More than 100,000 were still hiding in the bush in the north as of March 2003

" An employee of the Italian NGO Cooperazione Internazionale, Enerico Colombo, has toured the northern provinces of Ouham and Ouham Pende, the worst affected during the war. He told IRIN on Friday that many villages had been partially or wholly burnt. Currently, he said, towns in both provinces were only inhabited by 30 percent to 50 percent of their pre-war populations. Many other town residents, fearful of roaming armed gangs, have built new homes on their farms.

"The few who are still in villages run to the bush when they see a vehicle,' he said."(IRIN, 22 April 2003)

" La population de l'ouham est estimée à 195.323 habitants dont la plupart est concentrée dans les grands centres urbains de Bossangoa (30.000 habitants), Bouca (19.000 habitants), Batangafo (20.000 habitants) qui a servi de bases arrières aux rebelles pendant leur lutte pour la « libération du pays ». L'occupation de ces centres urbains par les hommes armés, leur présence dans les grands villages et les affrontements qui ont suivi (surtout ceux de février mars 2003), ont provoqué des déplacements massifs de populations dans les brousses, les champs et autres villes environnantes du Tchad, de la capitale Bangui, etc. On estime à plus de 4/5 les populations qui se sont retrouvées, à un moment ou l'autre déplacées, toutes catégories confondues (autorités administratives, fonctionnaires, paysans, jeunes, femmes, etc.)"(UNICEF et al, 12 May 2003)

" WFP reported on 12 March that some 231,000 people had left their homes as a result of the war in the CAR. About 105,000 of them had fled from the former rebel zones in the north to former government-held areas in the south; 26,000 were refugees in southern Chad, and more than 100,000 were still hiding in the bush in the north." (IRIN, 24 March 2003)

# PATTERNS OF DISPLACEMENT

## General

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### Displacements can last only some hours (May 2005)

- There are no recent reports on numbers and conditions for the internally displaced people in the Central African Republic. However, based on telephone interviews with field workers, e-mails and field mission reports, certain conclusions can be drawn; There are as of May 2005 no IDP camps in the country, though families or smaller groups of people flee insecurity in rural areas where bandits and former supporters of the national leader Bozizé roam in the absence of state structures. The displacements are often short-term, with people hiding only for some hours in the bush, while the bandits eat and steal their belongings. Relatively large numbers of people are also thought to have fled more permanently to the major cities and mixed with the general population. (The Global IDP Project, 2 May 2005)

"Although the armed conflict was relatively short and low intensity, the population was exposed to numerous exactions (hold-ups, rape and summary executions) and looting on both sides of the front line. State services were badly hit, in particular hospitals, health centres, public administration buildings, businesses and religious missions. Public servants and staff abandoned their work places and the local population found refuge for several weeks in the bush, taking with them their most essential items. Despite the long distances between their villages and temporary refuges, these to-and-fro movements have not really stopped. Commerce and subsistence trading slowly developed between the villages and those living in the bush." (ICRC, 8 July 2003)

"In the past five months,[from May 2003] many persons were forced to flee from acts of violence perpetrated by armed groups and the fighting raging on the various fronts. Many of them found refuge with relatives, while others took to the bush, many sought security in the town, and most recently, there were numerous population displacements along the Northern borders of the country following various offensives and counter-offensives by the warring factions. About 25,000 persons (including 10,000 in the camp set up by the HCR at Gore, 5,000 at Sarh and about 10,000 in border villages) migrated to Chad. Some of them identified as Chadians decided to return to their country because of the recent events. As for those who had long lost contact with their villages of origin or their families, UNHCR has, for all practical purposes considered them as CAR refugees and is providing them with assistance to that effect.

The most disturbing cases, however, are the thousands of displaced persons in the bushes and the Central Africans who have settled at the border with Chad and who still find themselves in a more precarious situation because of tensions between Chadians and Central Africans in these border regions. An evaluation mission will be conducted to better appraise and analyse the phenomenon of displacement across the country during the conflict, so as to seek proper solutions."(UN OCHA, 8 May 2003)

"[...] However, the CAR Red Cross has continued to register new IDPs who want to be assisted, after many days in the bush.

'On Thursday we registered 19 people from Bossangoa [305 km northwest of Bangui] and among them there were a baby aged five months and four children aged between five years and 15 years,' Patrice Yazenga, the CAR Red Cross secretary-general, told IRIN on 1 February.

Between 35 and 50 IDPs were reaching Bangui every day, he added, but many of them failed to register because they did not believe they would get help. He said children and the elderly had started displaying signs of malnutrition. 'These people ask for food, blankets, cooking pots, clothes, shoes and other household stuffs,' he said. Some IDPs were being helped by their relatives and others by religious communities, he added.

A Red Cross census carried out in December 2002 in two of Bangui's eight suburbs showed there were about 2,300 IDPs.

People in the centre and north of the country have been fleeing into the bush, making for Bangui, or southern Chad, in fear of Bozize's armed followers and possible government army counterattacks. The Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees in Bangui reported in January that about 10,000 people, including at least 1,300 CAR nationals, had fled to southern Chad." (IRIN, 3 February 2003)

### **Approximately 80,000 fled during and following the May [2001] coup attempt, mostly to the forests and small village areas southwest of Bangui**

- Approximately 50,000 were displaced internally
- By mid-July approximately 10,000 to 40,000 persons had returned to their homes
- Smaller numbers continued to flee because of continued targeting of the Yakoma population by the Government
- Most fled to the outskirts of the capital, where they sought shelter in local homes and the surrounding forest
- Approximately 25,000 crossed the Oubangui River into northwest Congo-Kinshasa
- As many as half of the uprooted population returned home by July 2001
- Others trickled home later in the year, often finding their houses looted and destroyed
- Most of those who remained refugees or internally displaced at year's end were ethnic Yakoma who feared retribution

"Approximately 80,000 citizens, including half of the country's ethnic Yakoma population, fled during and following the May [2001] coup attempt, mostly to the forests and small village areas southwest of Bangui. Approximately 50,000 were displaced internally; an estimated 24,000 fled to the DRC border town of Zongo, and approximately 2,000 fled to the Republic of Congo. By mid-July approximately 10,000 to 40,000 persons had returned to their homes; however, smaller numbers continued to flee because of continued targeting of the Yakoma population by the Government" (U.S. State Department, 4 March 2002)

"Approximately 70,000 residents of Bangui fled their homes during the coup attempt [By former president General Andre Kolingba in May 2001] and the subsequent retaliations by government supporters.

Most fled to the outskirts of the capital, where they sought shelter in local homes and the surrounding forest. Approximately 25,000 crossed the Oubangui River into northwest Congo-Kinshasa, including hundreds of armed participants in the coup attempt. About 2,000 refugees went to Congo-Brazzaville.

Central African Republic authorities officially closed their border with Congo-Kinshasa and deployed military patrols along the Oubangui River in an effort to halt cross-border traffic, preventing many citizens of Central African Republic from bringing food to relatives who had fled Bangui's violence.

Many displaced families were exposed to heavy rains before finding shelter. Residents of nearby towns and neighborhoods struggled to supply food, drinking water, and medicines to displaced persons in their midst.

As many as half of the uprooted population returned home by July, while others trickled home later in the year, often finding their houses looted and destroyed. Most of those who remained refugees or internally displaced at year's end were ethnic Yakoma who feared retribution." (US Committee for Refugees, 1 January 2002)

# PHYSICAL SECURITY & FREEDOM OF MOVEMENT

## Physical security

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### Human rights abuses by government security forces (March 2005)

- Presidential guard and Central Office for Suppression of Banditry accused of serious human rights violations

" La Section des droits de l'Homme a été informée des cas d'atteinte au droit à la vie imputables aux forces de défense et de sécurité et notamment, de la Garde présidentielle, de l'Office Centrale de Répression du Banditisme (OCRB). En outre, elle a reçu des informations et des dénonciations concernant des atteintes à la liberté d'aller et venir, de traitements cruels, inhumains, humiliants et dégradants.

Bien que la République centrafricaine ait signé et ratifié des instruments juridiques internationaux, des cas d'exécution sommaires, d'atteinte à la liberté d'aller et venir sont quotidiennement commises et signalés tant aux autorités qu'à la section des droits de l'homme. Ainsi, selon des témoignages concordants, des hommes armés ont abattu publiquement le 13 novembre, le Président de la Délégation Spéciale de la commune d'élevage de Niem-Yéloa ainsi que ses deux fils, par des hommes armés après leur avoir extorqué de l'argent.

Le crime de braquage est devenu le crime standard pour justifier la garde à vue prolongée des nombreux détenus dans les geôles de l'OCRB. Ces derniers temps, les prétendus braqueurs sont automatiquement abattus au champ de tir et les corps remis aux familles qui n'osent pas se plaindre, craignant les représailles. Ces faits sont portés régulièrement à la connaissance des autorités. Cependant, les méthodes de travail des agents de ce service semblent ne pas émouvoir les autorités de tutelle.

Il s'agit d'actes contraires aux dispositions pertinentes de l'article 3 du Pacte international relatif aux droits civils et politiques auquel le pays a librement souscrit."(UNOHCHR, 31 March 2005)

"La situation générale des droits de l'Homme demeure un sujet de grave préoccupation. L'insécurité doublée de graves dysfonctionnements du système judiciaire constitue un facteur de systématisation et de généralisation des violations des droits humains.

La Section des Droits de l'Homme a reçu de nombreux témoignages et informations faisant état des cas de violations du droit à la vie, d'exécutions sommaires et extrajudiciaires, de traitements cruels inhumains, ou dégradants, de justice populaire, d'arrestations arbitraires et/ou illégales et à la liberté de la presse. Ces cas ont été dénoncés par les organisations locales de défense des droits de l'Homme, principalement la Ligue Centrafricaine des Droits de l'Homme (LCDH)." (UNOHCHR, 21 September 2004)

### Former militia supporters of the national leader cause insecurity (March 2005)

- Volatile security situation in two of the conflict ridden prefectures (March 2005)
- Bandits harass vehicles, ransack villages and loot
- Lack of security most evident in rural areas
- Militias that supported the coup d'etat on 15 March 2003 demonstrated to be paid

"La sécurité dans les deux préfectures l'Ouham et la Nana-Membéré est en permanence remise en cause par des attaques armées contre les populations civiles." (UNOHCHR, 31 March 2005)

"The Central African authorities continue to be concerned about controlling the security situation. During the period under review, the lack of security has been most evident in the provinces, particularly in rural areas, where civilian populations are vulnerable to attacks by persons engaged in road-blocking, livestock thieves and uncontrollable elements, in particular the "former liberators" who gave military assistance to General Bozizé during the coup d'état of 15 March 2003.

The most recent action carried out by the "former liberators", in April 2004, severely tested the regime. The demonstrators demanded the "bonuses promised" in return for their support of the rebellion that had led to the overthrow of the regime on 15 March 2003. In exchange for these "bonuses" and laissez-passer to allow them to travel to their places of origin, the former liberators would re-enter civilian life and resume their former activities. During their demonstration, they set up barricades along the highway at the northern exit of Bangui. The demonstration gave rise to violent confrontations with the regular forces, supported by Central African Economic and Monetary Community (CEMAC) forces, which claimed 10 lives and some 15 wounded."( UN SC, 16 June 2004)

" There has been increasing activity by growing numbers of armed bandits. These groups, (some of them with access to sophisticated communications means), harass vehicles travelling along road axes (the traditional activity of the "coupeur de routes"), but also regularly ransack villages and the crops in the fields. Both issues need to be tackled swiftly to avert a humanitarian disaster that may result in: (i) renewed and larger displacement of populations potentially towards urban centres in the interior (themselves not much safer or better equipped and already under stress) and ultimately, across national borders and/or towards Bangui; (ii) increased occurrence of epidemics – particularly meningitis and measles – and; (iii) further deterioration in food security and the overall well-being of populations amongst whom signs of potentially catastrophic malnutrition already exist." (UN OCHA, p. 8, 10 March 2004)

### **Precarious humanitarian situation (December 2004)**

- Lack of access to health, drinking water and education
- Access for humanitarian actors is severely limited due to bad road conditions and insecurity
- Only 1/3 of the health infrastructure in the affected districts have been repaired
- Reports of frequent epidemics

"In the humanitarian sphere, the situation remains precarious, marked by the people's lack of access to basic health care, drinking water, education and food self-sufficiency, and by violence and extortion linked to residual crime. The number of humanitarian organizations, which is already low, is constantly falling, with the exception of agencies of the United Nations system. As a result, the capacity to take action is becoming more limited, even as people's level of vulnerability grows. It remains difficult for humanitarian organizations to reach vulnerable population groups, and in some areas it is even impossible. This difficulty is due to the poor state of road infrastructures and to the insecurity that prevails in the interior of the country."(UNSC, 23 December 2004)

"L'infrastructure sanitaire est insuffisante – 1 centre de santé pour 6 000 habitants, 1 lit pour 1 100 habitants – et obsolète ou en grande partie détruite, y compris en ce qui concerne la chaîne du froid. Seulement un tiers des infrastructures dans les zones les plus touchées ont été réhabilitées. En termes de ressources humaines, les indicateurs sont aussi négatifs

– 1 médecin pour 6 000 habitants et 1 infirmier pour 17 000 habitants), avec une distribution géographique inégale.

D'autre part, seulement 30 pour cent de la population ont accès à de l'eau potable. • Le système de surveillance ne fonctionne pas, et seulement 38 pour cent des centres de santé envoient un rapport régulièrement. Les épidémies sont fréquentes: en 2004, Il y a eu des épidémies de méningite, de poliomyélite (dont la transmission par le virus sauvage avait cessé depuis 2000), de rougeole et de shigellas."(WHO, 31 December 2004)

## SUBSISTENCE NEEDS

### Food

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#### Contradicting information on the food situation (March 2005)

- The food output in 2005 is expected to recover somewhat compared to last year
- Reports of acute malnutrition in some areas, but food appears readily available in markets
- Food grain deficit of 71% of total production in the provinces of Nana Gribizi, Kemo, Ouham and Ouham-Pende (2004)
- Animals were stolen or consumed during the crisis
- Low output of the agriculture sector have had dire consequences for children and women
- More than 50% of households had lost their already meager sources of income

"Harvesting of the 2004 cereal crops is complete. The output is expected to recover somewhat, reflecting an improved security situation relative to the situation in 2003 and increased plantings following agricultural inputs distribution with assistance of FAO in the localities which were adversely affected by the 2003 rebellion."(FAO, 28 February 2005)

"According to some reports, acute malnutrition has reached 14 percent in some areas. Yet the head of the UN Children's Fund health-and-nutrient programme, Eli Ramamonjisoa, told IRIN that malnutrition was currently "not a major problem in the country". Food appeared to be readily available in markets that IRIN visited this month in Bangui and towns and villages in the northwest.

A humanitarian specialist for the UN Development Programme (UNDP), Fabrice Boussalem, said some aid workers in the CAR are more concerned with crisis prevention."

"I don't think there is really a humanitarian crisis here yet," he told IRIN. "But indicators show that the humanitarian situation is deteriorating."

Boussalem also said aid workers "have no idea what is going on in 95 percent of the CAR". Only a handful of NGOs and UN agencies are operating in country, which is larger than France."(IRIN, 18 March 2005)

"The pillaging and insecurity that followed the events of October 2002-March 2003 caused major disruption of economic and agricultural activity. In November 2003, FAO and WFP undertook a joint mission in areas that had been most affected to evaluate the food security situation. Preliminary results found a food grain deficit of 71% of total production in the provinces of Nana Gribizi, Kemo, Ouham and Ouham-Pende, thereby confirming the vulnerability of the rural population and the precariousness of the food situation in the areas visited. Further analysis resulted in the production of a map of food insecurity vulnerability in the CAR (see below).

Populations robbed of their seed stocks and tools are experiencing the greatest difficulties in re-establishing their means of production. The livestock sector was also seriously affected, as animals were either stolen or consumed during the crisis.

The seed production system put in place by the Institut Centrafrican de Recherches Agronomiques (ICRA) during the 1990s under the auspices of the World Bank was totally destroyed during conflicts. Farmers were forced to abandon their activities due to insecurity.

In Bangui as well as in the provinces, much of the farming and livestock regions and infrastructure was destroyed. Small livestock (goats, sheep, pigs, poultry) were the hardest hit by the successive crises, to such a degree that the CAR now imports poultry products from neighboring countries, South Africa and Europe. Livestock activity is concentrated around Bangui and the Mbaiki-Bossemele and Damara axis. People living in the former red zone have no access to poultry products.

The low output of the agriculture sector and the continued limited means of production, especially in the conflict zones, have had dire consequences for the most vulnerable populations, particularly children and women.

WFP's Vulnerability Assessment Mapping (VAM) from March to May 2004 in the targeted provinces found a continued deterioration of the food security situation, as more than 50% of households had lost their already meager sources of income."(UNOCHA, 11 November 2004, p. 6)

## Health

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### **The last conflict aggravated an already precarious health situation (December 2004)**

- 28% acute and 12% severe malnutrition among children from 6-56 months in war affected districts
- More than 2.2 million people in the eastern and northern regions were cut off from humanitarian assistance
- Health workers have fled
- Poor epidemiological conditions and malnutrition in the countryside

"Nutrition/Health: a comprehensive survey was undertaken by WFP in September (covering 13 prefectures out of 16). Results indicate 28% acute and 12% severe malnutrition among children from 6-56 months - well above emergency levels.

The health system has collapsed, and is unable to detect, prevent or respond to epidemic outbreaks. At the same time, the Government imposes a rigid cost-recovery programme which limits access to the few services that do exist. There is 15% prevalence of HIV/AIDS. Outbreaks of polio continue in CAR, with 27 cases being reported in the western province of Mambere Kadei in October. A 3-day nationwide Government anti-polio immunisation campaign began on 22 November, targeting children under 5."(UNOCHA, 8 December 2004)

"Humanitarian conditions in the CAR are difficult to characterize. It is a complex emergency that includes chronic epidemiological problems, malnutrition, instability and displacement. During the fighting more than 2.2 million people in the eastern and northern regions were cut off from humanitarian assistance. [...]

People in the northwest have been subjected to diseases because there are no health workers to provide services as many of them fled the area during the rebellion. Children remain at great risk of communicable and other diseases. Measles and several diarrhea outbreaks were reported in four areas in the north in November of 2003." (Refugees International, 22 May 2004)

## **Interview with Ramiro Lopes Da Silva, OCHA Special Humanitarian Adviser for CAR:**

"Q: How real is the threat of famine in the northwest?"

A: The term "famine" has a very clear definition. The CAR is not facing a situation of famine. However, it is clear that populations have less access to food. There is also malnutrition, which obviously worsens every day. The aim of our mission [ humanitarian mission to the north-east in February-March 2004] is to try and respond to that situation.

Q: The northwest is considered the country's granary. However, peasants have lost two planting seasons for lack of seeds and have not been able to sell their cotton harvests, which could have improved their situation. What would you recommend in that respect?

A: That is not part of my current mission, which is finding humanitarian responses. Other solutions aimed at reviving the country's agriculture and economy should be handled by the government with the support of its development partners and UN agencies in the country.

Q: Only two NGOs (Spanish charity Medicos Sin Fronteras and Italian Cooperazione Internazionale) are active on the ground in the northwest, where epidemics such as measles, meningitis, tropical ulcers and polio are reported. Would your mission encourage the coming of more medical charities?

A: The CAR humanitarian situation can be characterised in two ways: the epidemiological aspect and malnutrition. For the epidemiological aspect, we are going to mobilise funds for the UN World Health Organization so that it can urgently carry out an epidemiological control drive nationwide. We will emphasise this while talking to donors." (IRIN, 8 March 2004)

"As the hostilities ended, inter-agency assessment missions in the field allowed evaluations of the degree of damage caused by the war and looting. It was found that the situation in combat zones was unbearable: infrastructure and health care equipment had been destroyed, resulting in a complete lack of medicine, including complete loss of vaccines due to disruptions to the cold chain.

It should also be noted that the public health system was in chronic crisis even before the last conflict (October 25, 2002 to March 15, 2003), illustrated by the marked deterioration of the principal health indicators, currently among the lowest in the world. The conflict has aggravated this dramatic situation. " (UNOCHA p 8, 18 November 2003)

## **Health facilities looted in Ouham, Ouham Pendé and Ombella M'Poko (July 2003)**

- Hospitals and health centres looted for sanitation materials, medicaments and furniture
- Reduced or complete absence of extended vaccination programmes
- Half of medical staff in place
- Health personell lack qualifications
- In spite of COOPI's assistance, sanitation facilities operate below the pre-conflict level
- The health conditions are specially alarming for mothers and children
- Small pox reported in all health facilities visited
- 70 dead children reported of the disease in the sous préfecture of Nana - Bakassa

"Dans ce domaine on déplore également le pillage des matériels, équipements sanitaires, médicaments et consommables médicaux, mobiliers de bureau dans toutes les formations sanitaires visitées (hôpitaux, centres et postes de santé)

Les activités PEV ne se pratiquent pas d'une manière générale ; (i) 100 % des unités PEV de l'Ouham et (ii) 60 % des unités de l'Ouham M'Pende ne sont pas fonctionnelles. Cependant, trois unités PEV sur 4 visitées dans la sous préfecture de l'Ombella M'Poco pratiquent le PEV (Damara, Bossembélé et Yaloké) ;

Le suivi nutritionnel (la courbe de croissance, l'assistance en produit PAM) n'est pas réalisé.

La moitié du personnel de santé est sur place. Cependant leur niveau de qualification n'est pas suffisant et on déplore le manque de médecins qui sont essentiels dans l'organisation des services et l'assurance et la qualité des soins. Malgré l'assistance de COOPI dans la fourniture des médicaments essentiels et la motivation du personnel disponible, les structures sanitaires fonctionnent en deçà de leur capacité préalable aux évènements.

[...]

L'état de santé de la population, surtout celui du couple mère/enfant est précaire. Les cas de rougeole ont été signalés dans toutes les formations sanitaires visitées. La situation est plus alarmante dans la sous préfecture de Nana - Bakassa où 70 décès ont été signalés chez les enfants. Cela a conduit MSF à mener une campagne de vaccination. Par ailleurs, des cas de malnutrition et de diarrhées ont été signalés". (UN Resident Coordinator, 31 July 2003)

## **Water and sanitation**

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### **Inadequate supply of clean water for returning IDPs (July 2003)**

- Water facilities seriously damaged during the six-months of fighting
- Many of those materials as well as those looted from hospitals are being sold in local markets
- No social, health or administrative infrastructure is working in Ouham Province

"The supply of clean water is not guaranteed everywhere. The maintenance of water points started to be neglected well before the conflict due to lack of funds. Where there are urban water supply systems, the problems are most often linked to the proper functioning of the pumps. The lack of adequate staff, fuel, electricity and spare parts all add to the problems."(ICRC, 8 July 2003)

"A UN humanitarian assessment mission to the northern province of Ouham, in the Central African Republic, found that water facilities had been seriously damaged during six-months of fighting, Diego Zorilla, who headed the 2-6 May mission, told IRIN on Wednesday.

'The most urgent needs are in water facilities and sanitation,' Zorilla, head of the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) bureau in CAR, said.

The mission, he said, found that just six of the 20 wells UNICEF had dug in Bossangoa, 305 km north of Bangui, the capital, were still in a good state. In addition, he said that equipment belonging to the state water utility, the Societe des Eaux de Centrafrique, had been looted; rendering the company unable to provide safe drinking water.

'Many of those materials as well as those looted from hospitals are being sold in local markets,' he said. 'We held meetings with chiefs of neighbourhoods to urge them to convince the population to return those materials.'

Private and public buildings were vandalised, looted or destroyed during the rebellion. 'No social, health or administrative infrastructure is working in Ouham Province,' he said." (UN OCHA, 8 May 2003)

# ACCESS TO EDUCATION

## General

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### **Collapsed education sector in areas of return (February 2005)**

- Around 400,000 out of 600,000 pupils have no access to basic education
- Most primary and secondary schools remained closed up to May 2003
- 500 primary and 40 secondary schools have closed in four war-affected prefectures
- Parents perception that school does not result in concrete job offers for their children
- Salary arrears to teachers aggravating factor
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"The education sector is also in crisis, despite the effective resumption of classes during the academic year 2004-2005. Around 400,000 out of 600,000 pupils have no access to basic education, a third of teachers have no training and school facilities continue to suffer from repeated looting. The literacy rate is 37 per cent, while the net school enrolment ratio is 49 per cent."(World Bank, 21 February 2005)

"La situation déjà préoccupante du secteur de l'éducation s'est trouvée aggravée par les événements militaires d'octobre 2002 à Mars 2003. Jusqu'au mois de Mai 2003, toutes les écoles primaires et secondaires des préfectures du Nord du pays, de l'Est et certaines zones du Sud-Ouest du pays sont restées fermées. Infrastructures scolaires détruites, pillages du matériel scolaires et pédagogique et dérouté des enseignants réfugiés à Bangui sont autant de facteurs qui ont entravé l'accès des enfants à l'école. Dans 4 des préfectures touchées par les conflits, 39 écoles préscolaires, 500 écoles primaires et 40 établissements secondaires ont fermés.

A l'instabilité politique et militaire s'est ajoutée une tension sociale provoquée par l'irrégularité dans le paiement des salaires. L'impact de cette situation sur l'éducation est désastreux et se solde par des taux de scolarisation tombés au plus bas. Le taux net de scolarisation est passé de 63% en 1995, à 43% (46% pour les garçons et 39% pour les filles). Seule 48% de la population est alphabétisée et les disparités sont grandes : 34,8% dans les zones rurales et 66,8% dans les zones urbaines ; 64,7% pour les hommes et 33,5% pour les femmes.

En Juin 2003, la situation a évolué positivement avec la reprise effective de l'année académique 2002-2003 sur toute l'étendue du territoire. Cependant, les capacités institutionnelles du Ministère de l'Education Nationale et des inspections académiques sont amoindries (bureaux brûlés ou pillés, archives détruites, absence de fournitures, de manuels scolaires et pédagogiques, bâtiments scolaires privé de portes, fenêtres et tables banc). Des déplacements des populations sont à envisager et prendre en compte dans le cadre de la scolarisation." (UNOCHA, Juillet 2004)

"The military events of October 2002 to March 2003 worsened the already deteriorated education sector, marked particularly by a teachers' strike. Until May 2003, most primary and secondary schools in the northern parts of the country remained closed, while the eastern parts remained mostly inaccessible together with parts of the southwest. The destruction of school infrastructures, the looting of schools and educational equipment as well as the flight of hundreds of teachers who took refuge in Bangui further worsened the access of children to education. Altogether, 58 pre-schools, 891 primary schools and 40 secondary schools were closed, leaving out 1,779 pre-school age children, 152,443 primary school students, and 16,652 secondary students. 45 instructors, 2,119 teachers and 328 lecturers were also affected.

The political and military instability was accompanied by social tension provoked by irregular payment of salaries to civil servants (many of whom having accumulated up to 32 months of arrears). The impact of this situation is disastrous for the education sector: the net enrolment rate deteriorated from 63% in 1995, to 43% in 2003 (46% for the boys and 39% for the girls). Only 48% of the population is literate, with large disparities: 34.8% in the rural areas vs. 66.8% in the urban areas; 64.7% for men vs. 33.5% for women.

Due to the firm political will of the Government, the situation in the education sector evolved in June 2003 with the effective resumption of the academic year 2002-2003 in the entire country. The academic year is divided in 2 zones: the capital Bangui and the zones of the southwest of the country where it covers the period from October 2002 to July 2003, and the rest of the country from May to December 2003. The final exams (Certificates of High Schools, A-Level, etc.) were actually organised in the first zone.

Problems continue regarding the collapse of the institutional capacities of the Ministry of Education (MoE) as their offices have been burnt and archives destroyed; local school inspectorates have been looted, supplies and school manuals for students in the former conflict zones are unavailable, educational manuals for teachers are lacking, doors and windows of schools buildings have been looted and tables and benches that have been broken and used by the fighters as firewood in some areas are also lacking. Education for All (EFA), the framework for action that was drafted by the international community in 2000 in Dakar, is not being pressed by the responsible authorities, who it seems do not give it high priority.

The parents are completely impoverished and their economic capacities have been wiped out by the events. Two bad cotton harvests as well as lack of agricultural produce, looted and stolen by the fighters for their survival, have left parents without resources to pay teachers from their own pockets.

The lack of effective communication to parents on the benefits for the community of their children's education, together with the risks and insecurity of trying to access schools, constitute a handicap for school attendance. In addition, schools are perceived by the communities as an institution to attend in order to be able to integrate into the public administration of the country. Yet most of the vacancies do not appear openly on the job market. This situation contributes to reinforce the parents' reluctance to enrol their children in an educational system they consider as useless, as it is not resulting in concrete job offers for their children.

Early childhood care and education equally calls for urgent action. Many under-five children are left unattended in their villages. No structure is envisaged to take care of them: the parents leave them alone in the village while working on the fields. Many children are suffering from malnutrition or malaria, and are exposed to various dangers such as road accidents and snakebite. Some of the children have been hurt causing fires while playing. This lack of protection for small children and of early childhood education is a result of a lack of policy in this domain." (UNOCHA, 18 November 2003)

"Most certainly, the educational sector, already undermined by frequent and prolonged strikes by teachers, stands out as one of the hardest hit by the last armed conflict. The UN would, therefore, collaborate with other partners to carry out a thorough needs assessment, so as to better understand the urgent problems faced by the sector. In the meantime, there are indications that the conflict has had a significantly negative impact on all schools in the most affected areas: buildings damaged, desks looted, lack of equipment, library and teaching material looted, etc. All the schools within combat zones were closed down, in all 58 nursery schools with an enrolment of 1,779 pupils and 45 teachers; 891 primary schools with 152,443 pupils and 2,119 teachers; and 40 secondary schools. Furthermore, some 200 teachers accompanied by 2,000 students left the occupied regions for Bangui, where they sought admission into schools, further stretching the school infrastructures in Bangui." ( UN OCHA, 8 May 2003)

# ISSUES OF SELF-RELIANCE AND PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

## Self-reliance

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### Many houses rebuilt in areas of return (March 2005)

- A cotton-processing factory in one of the war-affected districts has restarted operations (March 2005)
- Concern that increased cash-flow in local economy will attract bandits
- The rebellion that ended with a change of regime on 15 March 2003 devastated the country's agriculture, health and education sectors
- The five provinces of Ouham, Ouham Pende, Nana Grebizi, Kemo and parts of Ombella Mpoko were most affected

"Citizens of the CAR are using money less than they used to. The UNDP estimates that 95 percent of the population live on less than \$1 a day, up from 67 percent in 2000.

People have been mostly bartering, or subsisting on food they grow themselves, but without money they have been unable to access the fee-based health care system. The wards in hospitals and health clinics visited by IRIN were mostly empty.

Health officials have said there was evidence that diseases previously brought under control were now spreading again, such as human sleeping sickness and river blindness. There has also been a new outbreak of tropical ulcers.

Moreover, the government estimates that 15 percent of Central Africans have contracted HIV, the virus that causes AIDS.

The transitional government has been unable to provide other social services. "Two-thirds of the country's children do not go to school. Three-quarters of the teachers here had no formal training," Ntumba said.

There are small signs of economic recovery. In Bossangoa, many homes that were destroyed during the fighting have been rebuilt. In February, a cotton-processing factory in the town that was looted during the conflict finally restarted operations.

The factory is expected to inject cash into the local economy by paying factory workers, as well as cotton farmers. However, the managers at the cotton factory expressed concern that the unidentified armed groups could learn of the new influx of cash and increase their attacks on civilians."(IRIN, 18 March 2005)

"Cotton farmer Faustin Bagaza, 55, wears the cloak of poverty around him even tighter these days. Despite harvesting his crop for two successive years, he has made no sales. The reason? A rebellion in northwestern Central African Republic (CAR) that has devastated the country's agriculture, health, education and other services.

"I have kept the cotton I harvested in 2002 and 2003 in my house and nobody has come to buy it," he told IRIN on 26 February.

Bagaza lives in Sibut, Kemo Province, 185 km northeast of the nation's capital, Bangui. He has been able to keep his three children at Sibut Secondary School, despite his meagre earnings and despite not having planted cotton in 2004.

Bagaza's situation is not unique. Poverty seems to be the experience of most people in the northwest, an area that bore the brunt of a six-month rebellion waged by former army chief of staff Francois Bozize against President Ange-Felix Patasse. The rebellion ended on 15 March 2003 when Bozize overthrew Patasse.

The country has undergone several armed conflicts since the mid-1990s that badly affected the population. But unlike the 1996-7 mutinies and the May 2001 coup attempt by former leader Andre Kolingba, which affected a section of Bangui residents, Bozize's October 2002 to March 2003 rebellion wrecked havoc in five provinces: Ouham, Ouham Pende, Nana Grebizi, Kemo and parts of Ombella Mpoko. Thousands of people abandoned their homes for the bush or for neighbouring Chad.

As a result of the rebellion, most peasant farmers lost two planting seasons and have had no buyers for their last cotton harvest; health and educational facilities were looted, exposing people to diseases and epidemics; and insecurity increased in villages as armed robbers acquired modern guns and ammunition.

So far, an estimated 41,000 refugees remain in southern Chad, afraid to return home because of continued insecurity, the collapse of infrastructure, and destruction of villages. "(IRIN, 3 March 2004)

# PATTERNS OF RETURN AND RESETTLEMENT

## General

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### **40,000 refugees from the Central African Republic in Chad refuse to return because of insecurity (July 2004)**

- Systematic looting of villages bordering Chad forced 40,000 to cross the border
- The refugees are currently staying in UNHCR WFP supported camps
- Most of the refugees refuse categorically to return as long as insecurity prevails and Bozizé remains in power

"La rébellion de Bozizé a eu pour conséquence le pillage systématique de tous les villages centrafricains frontaliers avec le Tchad de 2001 à 2004. [...]"

Les autorités locales notamment les Sous Préfets de Paoua (RCA) et de Goré (Tchad) ont également pris part à cette rencontre. Depuis le 15 mars 2003, date de la prise du pouvoir par Bozizé à Bangui, 40 000 personnes de cette sous préfecture ont fui vers Goré où un camp leur a été aménagé à Amboko. La majorité d'entre eux refuse catégoriquement de regagner leur village tant que les tchadiens continueront à entretenir l'insécurité dans cette zone et que Bozizé sera au pouvoir. Les efforts du PAM et du HCR n'y ont rien pu. Il y a quelques semaines environs, une rencontre de ce type avait eu lieu à Markounda dans l'Ouham."(CentrAfrique Presse, 8 July 2004)

### **Insecurity impeding return of civil authorities (November 2003)**

- Insecurity discourages displaced people from returning
- Return of those who fled the hinterland to Bangui (including state employees and civil servants) is subject to the payment of their salaries and the rebuilding of infrastructure
- New population displacements are unlikely

"[...]despite the significant efforts made by the military forces (supported by the contingent provided by the Economic and Monetary Community [CEMAC] countries), the insecurity in the eastern and northern parts of the country remains a major problem. This lack of confidence is impeding the return of the civil authorities to these regions and disrupting the launch of normal activities, thus discouraging people from returning home." (UN OCHA, p. 5, 18 November 2003)

" Displaced persons are currently returning from the bush. However, the return of those who fled the hinterland to Bangui (including state employees and civil servants) is subject to the payment of their salaries and the rebuilding of infrastructure on the spot. Although new population displacements are unlikely, security remains problematic in the northern border region. Attacks by armed elements are again increasing. Similarly sporadic incursions into southern regions of the country from the DRC cannot be

totally excluded. As a result an emergency stock (food and non-food) has been pre-positioned in case of any eventuality". (ICRC, July 2003)

### **Displaced returned rapidly once the violence in the capital ended ( May 2003)**

- Thousands of people fled their homes during the violence in Bangui, particularly in northern sections of the city
- The violence triggered resentment against Congolese and Chadians who lived in Bangui
- Some 6,000 residents fled from Bossembele, 160 km north of Bangui

"Thousands of people fled their homes during the violence in Bangui, particularly in northern sections of the city. Several thousand fled to villages as much as 50 miles (80 km) north of Bangui before rapidly returning home once the violence in the capital ended.

A small number of Bangui residents managed to flee across the country's nearby border with Congo-Kinshasa, despite harassment at the border by CAR government soldiers who blocked some families from leaving.

The violence triggered resentment against Congolese and Chadians who lived in Bangui primarily as migrants. Up to 10,000 Chadians fled back to Chad, according to government officials there. Some 1,000 to 2,000 Congolese nationals took shelter in their country's embassy in Bangui and returned to Congo-Kinshasa in November with assistance from the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR). It was unclear how many, if any, of the Chadian and Congolese returnees were refugees.

Additional population displacement occurred during November and December as the violence moved to northern villages. Some 6,000 residents fled internally from Bossembele, 100 miles (160 km) north of Bangui. About 1,000 refugees from CAR fled to Chad, according to government officials there." (U:S Committee for Refugees, 29 May 2003)

### **Internally Displaced Persons have started going home (February 2003)**

- 20,000 residents had been hiding in the bush near Bozoum since 19 December 2002
- Even though the IDPs were returning, the town was still insecure

" Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) from Bozoum (384 km northwest of the capital, Bangui) have started going home after government and allied forces recaptured the town on 13 February, government-owned Radio Centrafrique reported on 22 February.

'Presently, a precarious calm prevails in Bozoum,' Jean Pierre Sacko, Bozoum's deputy-governor, told the radio.

Bozoum's 20,000 residents have been hiding in the bush since 19 December 2002, when rebels loyal to Francois Bozize, the former army chief of staff, occupied that town. Since then, they have received no aid as humanitarian workers could not reach the area.

Sacko said even though the IDPs were returning, the town was still insecure. He had asked the government to send police and gendarmes to guarantee public order and security. He said some rebels, who were unfamiliar with the area, were still hiding in abandoned homes and in the surrounding mountains. He noted that his services, youth organisations and the local Red Cross were examining ways of burying the corpses now littering the town so as to avoid epidemics." (UN OCHA, 24 February 2003)

# HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

## General

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### **Volatile security across the country, but NGOs present in most districts (April 2005)**

- Increasing social tension in Bangui restricts movements
- Bandits on the roads in the provinces
- Reports currently reaching Bangui suggest many cases of exaction committed by errant soldiers armed gangs
- Essential that security be strengthened to ensure minimum safety standards for humanitarian activities

The mere size of the country, poor road infrastructure, a very limited number of NGOs and UN agencies in combination with the persistent insecurity pose serious obstacles to the work of humanitarian agencies. Nevertheless, the French Red Cross, Oxfam Quebec, MSF Spain and COOPI are present in many districts, including some of the worst affected, generally moving around without military escort. The access for UN personnel is more limited as security regulations require military escort for most travels outside Bangui (E-mail, 29 April 2005)

"Since Bozize took control of the capital, unidentified gunmen have continued to stage attacks in various rural areas, by setting up roadblocks and taking whatever goods they can.

"They seem to be mostly interested in looting, rather than controlling territory," Lamine Cisse, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary-General to the CAR, said. "It would really become a problem if politicians manipulate the armed groups."

The groups, Cisse said, were "unemployed youths and former soldiers who joined Bozize's rebellion - as well as former Chadian troops". Some of the Chadian fighters supporting Bozize have remained in the CAR and joined the nation's army.

Other officials have speculated that the unidentified gunmen include Patasse's former presidential guards and Congolese rebels. Civilians may also be among the faceless attackers.

Unidentified armed groups have been active in remote eastern areas too, close to the border with Sudan's Darfur region, where an estimated 20,000 Sudanese refugees have crossed into the CAR.

"The east has few roads and poor communications with [the] capital Bangui," said Luke Beeder, country head of Médecins Sans Frontières, one of the few NGOs in the CAR with a programme in the area.

Frequent attacks have also been reported in northwest CAR, towards Chad, in an area where fighting was particularly intense between 2002 and 2003. People living in towns and villages there told IRIN of the presence of armed groups.

"There was [an] attack just last week, just 20 km from here," one man in the provincial town of Bossangoa, said in March.

He added that some of the people who fled into the forest in 2002 were still there.

Farther south at the village of Ndjoh, a man told IRIN that attackers only target the Fula (semi-nomadic cattle herders), because they own cows.

"We don't have problems any more in our village because we have nothing left to steal," he said. "(IRIN, 18 March 2005)

"Persistent insecurity prevails for populations outside of Bangui, and the internal security situation remains precarious. Clashes took place in Bangui, 16-24 April, between Government forces and former rebels (who didn't feel they had received all the benefits promised for their support during the rebellion) and, as the economic crisis deepens, there are concerns that such clashes will become more frequent. Insecurity outside Bangui curtails humanitarian access."(UNOCHA, 8 December 2004)

"Pendant la période sous revue,[May-July 2004] la situation générale des droits de l'Homme s'est dégradée. La situation sécuritaire constitue toujours une source de grande inquiétude. Dans l'arrière-pays, les coupeurs de route continuent leurs actions.

C'est dans ce contexte que le 25 mai, au cours de la cérémonie solennelle de lancement du Conseil de Paix et de Sécurité, le Président de la Commission de l'Union Africaine a soutenu que "le problème de l'insécurité est encore loin d'être résolu en RCA".

[...]

"Durant la période sous revue, la situation sécuritaire dans la région [de Bouar]reste très préoccupante. Des cas d'opération de coupeurs de route et de prise d'otages d'enfants contre rançon ont été enregistrés. Des transporteurs signalent des exactions aux différents postes de police sur l'axe Bangui-Bouar."(UNOHCHR, 21 September 2004)

"Depuis les événements de mars 2003, la sécurité dans Bangui et ses environs immédiats s'est progressivement améliorée. Toutefois, comme suite à un regain de tension sociale dans la capitale, il convient d'éviter pour le moment tout le quartier adjacent à l'université (avenue et rond-point des Martyrs, portion de l'avenue Boganda) et faire résolument demi-tour dès qu'un barrage est en vue.

De même, la sécurité dans les provinces est loin d'être entièrement rétablie. Outre les zones traditionnellement déconseillées (cf. rubrique numéro 4), il convient de ne pas se rendre, jusqu'à nouvel ordre, dans l'ouest du pays (route de Bouar à Nola), où sévissent des coupeurs de route bien armés depuis la mi-février.

La situation pouvant évoluer très rapidement, il est recommandé dans tous les cas aux voyageurs de prendre l'attache préalable du consulat général à Bangui (Tel (236) 61 30 00 - 61 57 84)." (GoF, 19 July 2004)

"One important constraint in undertaking humanitarian assistance activities in the CAR at the moment is insecurity across the country, which increases poverty and the vulnerability of the population. While the capital, Bangui, is secured by the troops of the French-sponsored Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa States (CEMAC) contingent whose strength stood at around 350 prior to the coup d'etat and which is set to increase with the arrival of a Chadian contingent. As for the rest of the country, reports currently reaching Bangui suggest many cases of exaction committed by errant soldiers armed gangs. The government has stated its willingness to launch activities aimed at restoring law and order within the country in the next few days. This operation might however take a long time, especially in the most affected areas. In the meantime, it is essential that security be strengthened to ensure minimum safety standards for humanitarian activities throughout the country. This will be achieved through an increase in the number and a wider geographical assignment of security officers of the UN Security Unit and more effective circulation and exchange of information on security between national authorities, the UN and humanitarian organisations."(UN OCHA, 1 May 2003)

## **Security has improved considerably in Bangui (April 2005)**

- Security in Bangui has improved considerably since the coup d'etat in March 2003
- Drive slowly and stop upon request from law and order entities
- Many controls are abusive, but stay calm and negotiate
- Some regions in the provinces should be avoided

"Depuis les événements de mars 2003, la sécurité dans Bangui et ses environs immédiats s'est sensiblement améliorée. Cependant, la sécurité dans certains secteurs de l'arrière pays n'est pas encore totalement rétablie.

La situation pouvant évoluer assez rapidement, il est recommandé dans tous les cas aux voyageurs de prendre l'attache préalable du consulat général à Bangui (Tel (236) 61 30 00 - 61 57 84).

1/ La circulation routière dans Bangui exige certaines précautions :

- Rouler doucement et s'arrêter à toute injonction des forces de l'ordre. Dans ce cas, rester courtois et s'armer de patience. Beaucoup de contrôles sont abusifs, mais il faut savoir négocier calmement le "passage".
- En cas d'accident avec dommages corporels, ne pas s'arrêter et rejoindre immédiatement la gendarmerie la plus proche (avenue Nasser à Bangui). Prévenir dès que possible le Consulat général ou le poste de sécurité de l'Ambassade (61 30 00).
- En matière de documents (passeports, carte grise, permis de conduire), il est recommandé de n'avoir avec soi que des photocopies certifiées conformes.

2/ Photographies dans Bangui

- Il est fortement déconseillé de faire des photographies ou reportages video dans la capitale.
- Il est strictement interdit, notamment, de photographier : le palais présidentiel, les abords de la villa du chef de l'Etat (PK 11), ainsi que tous les édifices publics.

3/ Zones interdites dans la capitale :

- Le rocher de l'artillerie (devant l'hôtel Oubangui, en bordure du fleuve) et les antennes de "la colline aux panthères".

4/ Déplacements en province :

- Tout déplacement en province par voie routière nécessite certaines précautions préalables en fonction de la zone concernée.
- Sont particulièrement déconseillées :
  - La région nord-ouest du pays au delà d'une ligne Bouar-Bozoum-Bossangoa-Batangafu-Kabo en direction du Tchad (présence occasionnelle de bandits de grand chemin).
  - La région de Birao à l'extrême nord-ouest du pays (en proie à des incursions de braconniers en saison sèche et d'autres bandes armées non clairement identifiées)"(IZF, 15 March 2005)

## **The new leader of the Central African Republic assures humanitarian workers on security (May 2003)**

- The restoration of security topped the new government's priorities

- The major problem for the implementation of a medical project in Ouham and Ouham Pende remains security
- Absence of state structure encourages robberies and prevents return movements

"Central African Republic leader Francois Bozize told officials of a humanitarian NGO that is planning medical aid to the north of the country that their security was assured, government-run Radio Centrafrique reported.

The assurance was given during a meeting between Bozize and officials of Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI), an Italian NGO.

'He has reassured us very much, saying that the restoration of security topped his government's priorities', Enerico Colombo, a COOPI official, told the radio after their meeting with Bozize.

Colombo said COOPI presented its medical project to Bozize, detailing how the NGO planned to support health structures in Ouham and Ouham Pende provinces in northern CAR. Both provinces were badly affected by a six-month rebellion that pitted fighters loyal to Bozize against forces of the then president, Ange-Felix Patasse. Bozize comes from Ouham Pende.

During the rebellion, the east was totally cut off from supply routes. The rebellion ended when Bozize ousted Patasse in a coup on 15 March. Patasse is currently in exile in Lome, the capital of Togo.

'The major problem for the implementation of this project remains security,' Colombo said; adding that the EC Humanitarian Office, ECHO, would financially support the project.

Although provincial governors have been named, some have not reported to their stations. This has encouraged armed robberies and discouraged those displaced by fighting from returning home. "( UN OCHA, 9 May 2003)

## NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL RESPONSES

### Overview of national and international response

The absence of IDP camps and the short-term nature of the displacements, often lasting only some hours, make it next to impossible or even irrelevant to single out IDPs from the rest of the population. Consequently, the main concern for most of the humanitarian actors is rather the almost complete breakdown of state structures and socio-economic activities aggravated by persistent insecurity, and few if any of their programmes target specifically IDPs. The country is to a large extent considered strategically insignificant with structural problems that has undermined the donors' confidence in the utility of humanitarian assistance. This is reflected in the overall humanitarian response which is utterly underfunded. By the end of April 2005, less than 4 percent of the requirements for the 2005 Consolidated Appeal had been met. A top UN official emphasised, upon return from a field mission in March 2004 that a relatively modest contribution of \$6.8 million would significantly improve the humanitarian conditions for hundreds of thousands of people. His appeal yielded virtually no response and the numbers of UN agencies and international NGOs responding to the needs of the war-affected population are very limited. UN OCHA is again trying to raise funds to address the precarious needs by planning a donor mission after the elections in May 2005.

This comes shortly after ECHO ended its programmes in areas of return and a mission from the International Monetary Fund (IMF) left the Central African Republic (CAR) dissatisfied with the transitional government's efforts to reform its management of resources.

Members of the UN Country team include UNDP, WHO, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, WFP, UNESCO, UNSECOORD, UNHCR.

In November 2004, BONUCA, the UN peace-building office in the Central African Country opened a regional field office in Bossangoa some 300 km north of Bangui to observe the human rights situation and give support to the judicial system.

See; [http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/docs/conflict/central\\_africa.html](http://www.un.org/Depts/dpa/docs/conflict/central_africa.html)

A UN staff stated in March 2005 that the humanitarian conditions in 95 percent of the country remain unknown because of lack of access for the UN agencies and under-funding. Most of the war-affected areas are in security phase 4, which requires military escort to move around.

However, international NGOs are not bound by the same regulations. They are present in a majority of the country's district, including the worst affected: The French Red Cross in Kemo, Oxfam Quebec in Mbomou and Basse Kotto, COOPI in Bamingui Bangoran, Vakaga, Ouham, Ouham Pende and Lobaye, and MSF Spain has during the first half of 2005 conducted fact-finding missions to Nana Gribizi, Ouaka, Ouham and Ouham Pendé.

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In May 2003, the newly self-installed government had set up a coordination mechanism for humanitarian activities, but little is known of its efficiency and functioning. (May 2005)