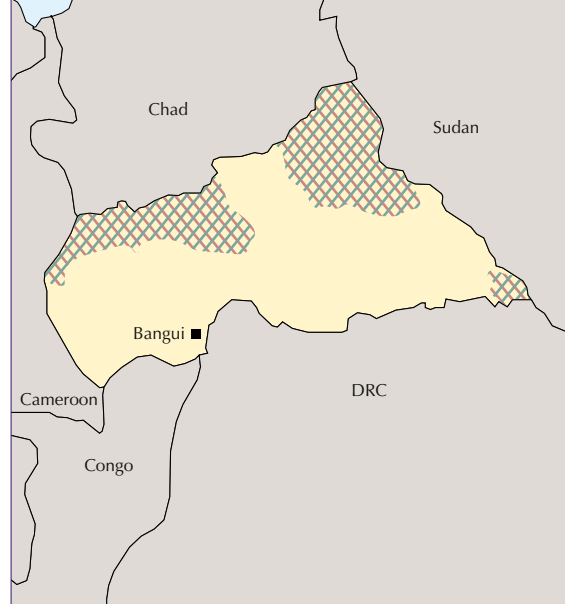


Central African Republic



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	162,000
Percentage of total population	3.7%
Start of current displacement situation	2005
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	212,000 (2007)
New displacement	15,000



The number of people displaced within the Central African Republic (CAR) rose in 2009 due to a resurgence of violence and new stumbling blocks in the country's peace process. Clashes between the army and a splinter rebel group, and attacks against civilians by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) brought the numbers of IDPs up to 162,000 by the end of the year. The LRA operated initially in northern Uganda, but had expanded its field of operations to Southern Sudan, DRC and CAR, contributing to sub-regional instability. In addition, Central Africans sought refuge in neighbouring Chad.

Since 2005, IDPs in CAR have suffered from a range of human rights abuses, including killings, looting and burning of villages, destruction of fields, loss of livelihoods, sexual violence, and the abduction and recruitment of children. Members of all armed groups have perpetrated these crimes. Each wave of IDPs has been forced to take shelter in fields and forests without access to basic services, before seeking support from impoverished host communities when it has been safe to do so. There is only one IDP camp in CAR, and most IDPs rely almost entirely on host communities in remote rural towns.

Repeated patterns of internal displacement due to an increase of violence in areas of displacement and areas of return have further affected IDPs, making it all the more difficult for them to rebuild their lives. In 2009, over 73,000 people returned to their villages of origin but were unable to find durable solutions. For most IDPs in CAR, return was not yet a viable option. IDPs were reluctant to return because of security concerns and the lack of basic services in their villages of origin. Houses had been burned and health posts, schools, and water pumps were damaged or unlikely to be functioning, leaving very little incentive for people to return.

International peacekeeping forces in CAR have had little impact in providing security in areas of displacement and return because they have been deployed in small numbers and have been unable to engage criminal gangs. In March 2009, European Union troops deployed to Chad and CAR with a Security Council mandate to protect IDPs, refugees and humanitarian workers were replaced by a UN peacekeeping force known as MINURCAT. UN troops worked at half operational capacity due to lack of funding and problems in the acquisition and transportation of military equipment by contributing countries.

Accessing displaced communities is a big challenge in CAR for both logistical and security reasons. Collapsed road

infrastructure between the capital and internally displaced communities means that transport is difficult and costly, and impassable roads during the rainy season prevent timely response to their needs. The impact of these difficult conditions on the delivery of humanitarian assistance is exacerbated by the fact that the IDPs most in need of help do not live in concentrated groups. Continuing insecurity also restricts humanitarian access. Criminal gangs kidnapped two French aid workers in 2009, forcing several humanitarian agencies in CAR to relocate field staff to the capital.

Until recently, the government charged the Ministry of Social Affairs with coordinating assistance to IDPs. However, it lacked the funds and the capacity to respond to their needs. In 2009, CAR's High Commissioner for Human Rights and Good Governance created the National Standing Committee for IDPs to coordinate the national response to internal displacement. In October 2009, CAR was among the signatories to the Kampala Convention. Ratification of the Convention by CAR would show its commitment to protecting the rights of IDPs and achieving their durable return, resettlement or reintegration. CAR has already ratified the Great Lakes Pact which commits member states to incorporate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into domestic law. Although CAR has yet to enact national legislation to protect IDPs, a draft law is expected in 2010.

In 2009, UN agencies and international NGOs provided protection and assistance to conflict-affected communities in CAR, and some also worked on early recovery and development programmes. Since the cluster approach was implemented in CAR in 2007, ten clusters have been activated, including the protection cluster. By the end of 2009, 68 per cent of the \$116 million requested in the 2009 Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP) had been funded. The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) recognised that CAR was an underfunded emergency and allocated \$2.8 million for life-saving assistance, benefiting 355,000 people. The UN Peacebuilding Commission also contributed \$10 million to kick-start the peacebuilding process, but more sustained bilateral and multilateral support will be needed to rebuild CAR for durable solutions and lasting peace.