

DNA Disaster Needs Analysis 12/Feb/2014

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

CONFLICT – Dec. 2013- Feb. 2014



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Crisis Overview

- **The Central African Republic (CAR) has been in the midst of an escalating emergency since 5-6 December 2013**, when fighting between rival armed groups in the capital, Bangui, left at least 1,000 people dead. Fighting, led by a northeastern coalition of armed militia known as Seleka, initially broke out in CAR in December 2012. The Seleka fighters, the majority of whom are Muslim, then seized power in a coup in Bangui on 24 March 2013 and the coalition leader was installed as CAR's interim President. After disbanding the Seleka in response to international pressure in September, the short-lived President was eventually removed from office in late 2013 while fighting intensified. In response to ongoing attacks by ex-Seleka fighters against the mostly non-Muslim civilian population, 'self-defence' militias known as Anti-Balaka have mobilised as the crisis took a turn for the worse.
- **The humanitarian crisis has worsened significantly in the two months following the violent events on 5-6 December 2013**. To date, **violence continues to rage in Bangui, where it has so far left 1,200 people dead and 3,000 wounded**, and has also spread to other parts of the country, mainly to western and northwestern regions. Various armed groups have targeted not only other combatants, but also civilians based on their Muslim or Christian religion. Against this background, tensions between Christians and Muslims further heightened and inter-civilian fighting, along religious lines, has become widespread.
- **Resolution 2127 (2013), voted on by the UN Security Council on 5th December 2013**, provided a mandate for a 1,600 strong French military contingent (Operation 'Sangaris') to disarm the armed groups and protect civilians. The French troops were deployed to CAR on 6-7 December to work alongside the African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (MISCA) which operates under the same UN mandate.

Consequences and Humanitarian Needs

- **Violence has triggered large-scale population movements and resulted in 838,000 internally displaced people**, roughly half of which are in the capital. An estimated 100,000 CAR refugees have crossed into neighbouring countries. In February 2014, the departure en masse of Muslim civilians from the western and northern part of the country towards Chad was reported by organizations on the ground.
- **The current crisis, which affects an estimated 4.6 million Central Africans – the entire population of the country, has triggered widespread insecurity across CAR**. To date, the international peacekeeping forces have been unable to put an end to extensive violence, neither in Bangui nor in the rest of the country. **Large-scale human right violations, forced recruitment of child soldiers, and sexual and gender-based violence** by all parties to the conflict have been reported. **Population protection and emergency humanitarian assistance** are an utmost priority.

- **The crisis has triggered the collapse of all basic services**. In several sectors, services were however already almost non-existent or covered only a limited part of the territory prior to 2013. The current deterioration is due to the extensive looting of premises and equipment, public and private alike, and to insecurity, which has triggered the flight of employees and restricted user access to still-functioning services.
- **The entire population of CAR is affected by the lack of access to medical care**, in a country where life expectancy was of 49 years prior to the current crisis. The health system, which is almost exclusively supported by international NGOs and religious organisations, covers only 10 to 20% of the population. The incidence of malaria, the first cause of morbidity, is reportedly on the rise, a situation compounded by the **systemic shortage of medicine**. The epidemic risk (acute diarrhoea, measles, meningitis) is high.
- **The crisis has led to increased food insecurity for nearly all Central Africans**. Population flight, the vandalising of fields, the looting of agricultural inputs, seeds and of other sources of livelihoods, have led to a significant reduction in agricultural production in a country where 70% of the population is dependent on the agricultural sector. The crisis has also reduced the access of the population to income-generating activities and to markets, thereby triggering an economic slowdown and food price hikes. With the lean season due to start earlier, as soon as February-March 2014, humanitarian actors warn that **food insecurity is likely to further increase in the coming months**. Malnutrition rates are also reportedly rising across the country.
- **Considering the endemic, and lately interreligious, characteristics of the violence in CAR**, actors on the ground report that the chronic lack of an efficient disarmament, demobilisation and reintegration (DDR) program of combatants remains a paramount issue that hinders the implementation of an integrated strategy to support the development and rehabilitation of the country, as well as the rebuilding of traditional solidarity mechanisms within the population.

Humanitarian Response and Limits

- **The humanitarian community launched a USD 551 million appeal in January to cover humanitarian needs in 2014**. CAR has consistently suffered from underfunding of humanitarian assistance over the last 5 years, with **funding rates amongst the lowest in the world**.
- **Current humanitarian assistance in the country remains largely insufficient**, including in Bangui, despite the reinforced presence of humanitarian organisations. Across CAR, humanitarian access is extremely limited, due to persistent insecurity and to the lack of infrastructures.
- **There is an urgent need for more coherent humanitarian data collection and analysis system** to inform humanitarian response. In spite of the many sectoral and cross-sectoral humanitarian needs assessments that have been conducted so far, the level of information on needs remains limited, being close to nil on some parts of CAR.