

**Peacekeeping and Stability Operations Institute (PKSOI)  
Peace Operations Estimate—MINUSCA and UNOCA**

**United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission  
in the Central African Republic  
and  
United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa  
(update 10 February 2017)**



[MINUSCA Deployment Map](#)

[Link to MINUSCA Mission Website](#)

[Link to UNOCA Website](#)

[Link to CIA Country Fact Sheet Central African Republic](#)

**MINUSCA/UNOCA Executive Summary**

Although [the February 2016 elections](#) were peaceful and President [Faustin-Archange Touadéra's new government](#) was confirmed, Central African Republic (CAR) remains one of the ten "most fragile" states, [ranking third on the 2016 index](#). Almost a year since the installation of the new government, and over two

year after its activation, MINUSCA is still struggling to have a significant impact on the situation. In January 2017, the UN reported:

The security situation in the CAR has continued to be precarious. The government of President Faustin Archange Touadera has limited control outside the capital, Bangui, and efforts to convince various armed groups to disarm have not gained traction, with factions of the Muslim-dominated ex-Séléka and Christian anti-Balaka rebel groups declining to give up their hold on large areas. **The presence of MINUSCA has not been able to eliminate the threat of armed groups in huge swathes of the country** (*emphasis added*)...In one October incident, in Kaga-Bandoro, ex-Séléka fighters killed at least 37 civilians, wounded a further 60 and forced more than 20,000 people to flee their homes...(in) December 2016...the Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation group (3R) had taken control of an area in the Ouham Pende region...and displaced at least 17,000 people...They are also reported to have killed at least 50 people and displaced another 17,000...(in)...November...Unknown attackers killed two Moroccan peacekeepers and wounded two others when their convoy was attacked on 4 January about 60 kilometres west of the town of Obo in the south-eastern part of the country. The following day, a Bangladeshi peacekeeper on patrol near Bocaranga in the southwest was killed by an unknown assailant.

#### **Other major considerations:**

- The humanitarian situation is dire, with nearly one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in other countries and a lack of essential services for most of the population. Despite the promise of the new government, the violence against the population is [trending towards genocide](#). In late fall of 2016, armed fighters “hunted down and massacred members of the Fulani ethnic group” in door-to-door engagements. The high unemployment and continued “political marginalization” of Muslims concern many observers because it creates opportunity to [radicalize](#) Muslim youth.
- MINUSCA's forces have difficulty influencing regions outside of Bangui because of low troop density and armored transportation capability. In addition, repeated reports of murder and [sexual abuse](#) and exploitation by soldiers under MINUSCA command led to the replacement of the leadership in August 2015. However, the [complaints of abuse](#) by peacekeepers have not abated, leading to over [120 troops repatriated](#) in the past year. A [December 2016 UN investigation report](#) identified an additional 41 peacekeepers for abuse that occurred from 2014-2015. There are also [accusations of sexual abuse](#) by Ugandan forces and [French soldiers](#) that operated in the country separately from MINUSCA.
- Sectarian violence and crime committed by ex-Séléka, anti-Balaka, and other armed groups continues and prevents progress across all sectors and poses challenges to conflict resolutions in neighboring South Sudan and Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). While Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) group's [kidnappings](#) reached a six-year high in the first half of 2016, [overall LRA violence trended down](#) in the past year. However, the October 2016 withdrawal of the French forces and the reduction in Ugandan forces in the region—all deployed separately from MINUSCA to “fix and fight” the LRA and other de-stabilizing armed groups—has created additional security voids.

#### **Mission Overview**

**1. Background.** The **United Nations (UN) Integrated Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic (BINUCA)** operated in CAR beginning in 2010. Its mandate was strengthened by UN Security Council Resolution (UNSCR) [2121 \(2013\)](#). In March 2013, a resumption of violence by a rebel Muslim coalition known as the Séléka (“*coalition*”) toppled the government. Conflict escalated between the Séléka and a predominantly Christian movement known as the anti-Balaka (“*anti-machete*”). By

December 2013, the situation devolved to the point that the UN authorized an African-led **Mission Internationale de Soutien à la Centrafrique sous conduite Africaine**, or **MISCA** (also known as “International Support Mission in the CAR”) with [UNSCR 2127\(2013\)](#). Near-simultaneously, the French deployed troops in [Operation Sangaris](#). In July 2014, mediation efforts supported by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) resulted in the signing of the [Brazzaville Cease-fire Agreement](#). **MINUSCA** subsumed BINUCA and MISCA in September 2014, with [UNSCR 2149\(2014\)](#).

The [United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa \(UNOCA\)](#) is a Special Political Mission with a regional mandate to help prevent conflict and consolidate peace in Central Africa. It was established through an “exchange of letters” in March 2011 and it coordinates the UN’s support for the operationalization of the African Union-led Regional Cooperative Initiative for the elimination of the LRA and the African Union Regional Task Force (AURTF).

**2. Mandate(s).** In July 2016, the UN Security Council extended the MINUSCA mandate until **15 November 2017** [\[UNSCR 2301\(2016\)\]](#). The renewed mandate is also includes [immediate priority tasks](#), such as the protection of civilians by “maintaining a robust, mobile and flexible posture,” the promotion and protection of human rights, and facilitation of a secure environment for the immediate, full, safe and unhindered delivery of humanitarian assistance. Additional “core priority tasks” are for “support for the reconciliation and stabilization political processes, the extension of state authority and for security sector reform and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration programmes *[sic]*”. Other tasks are identified as “essential” and “additional.”

The mandate is in keeping with the [strategic review](#) of 8 July 2016, which emphasized three main pillars: *Political* (supporting government dialogue with armed groups, addressing the root causes of the conflict, and establishing state authority); *Security* (emphasis on protection of civilians, and support for security sector reform (SSR) and disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) programs); and *Justice and Reconciliation*.

*The recent renewal and revision process for MINUSCA evidenced the ongoing debate in the UN regarding the principles of peacekeeping and appropriate actions and activities in UN missions. One draft of the MINUSCA mandate used terms such as “robust,” “modern technologies,” and “intelligence capabilities”—which implied an aggressive and intrusive use of MINUSCA force that many UN country representatives considered “beyond the scope” of UN peacekeeping mission traditions. While some of that same language exists in other mission mandates (such as MINUSMA), in this case it was modified to satisfy those with concerns.*

The mandate also retains the authorization for French forces to provide operational support to MINUSCA “within the limits of their capacities and areas of deployment...until the end of MINUSCA’s mandate...to use all necessary means to provide operational support to elements of MINUSCA...”, although their redeployment in October 2016 makes that item moot.

In January 2017, [UNSCR 2339\(2017\)](#) [renewed the sanctions](#) on individuals and entities in CAR until **31 January 2018** and extended the Panel of Experts authorization. It added some new provisions, and recognized sexual violence allegations as a distinct “asset-freeze listing criterion”, the first of its kind.

The mandate of UNOCA expires on **31 August 2018**. A recent [UN special report](#) points out that regional offices, such as UNOCA, are a “particularly effective innovation” and “credible though (a) discreet facilitating role in addressing emerging or incipient conflict.”

**3. Deployment.** MINUSCA’s forces are concentrated in Bangui and seven other locations, and not at all established in the northern and eastern regions. The top [Troop Contributing Countries \(TCCs\)](#) for MINUSCA are primarily from Asia and Africa and include (as of December 2016): Rwanda (1,302); Egypt (1,168); Pakistan (1,132); Bangladesh (1,081); and Cameroon (1,063). Other major troop contributors

**Authorized Strength:**

**12,870** total uniformed personnel, including:

10,750 military personnel (including 480 Military Observers and Military Staff Officers)

2,080 police personnel (including 400 Individual Police Officers and 108 corrections officers)

- An appropriate significant civilian component

are: Mauritania (878); the Congo (787); Morocco (770); Zambia (769); and Burundi (756). While [the Rwandan police peacekeepers](#) were commended for their professionalism and inclusion of women police officers, they are also alleged to have individuals that participated in sexual assault. [The UN's Independent Review](#) identified other [peacekeeping contingents](#) for similar illegal behaviors, the largest of which include: Morocco, the Congo, Burundi, and Cameroon.

61% of the UN civilian posts are filled, with women

**Current Strength: 13,098 total, including:**

- Uniformed personnel: **12,135**
  - Troops: 10,032
  - Military observers: 398
  - Police: 1,705
- Civilian personnel: 760
  - International civilians: 518
  - Local civilians: 242
- UN Volunteers: 203

comprising 29%. The United States has 13 deployed.

**4. Casualties.** The UN report on fatalities (as of 30 November 2016) indicates [25 fatalities for MINUSCA](#) since its beginning. However, violence against MINUSCA protected areas is increasing in recent weeks, so that total does not include the January 2017 deaths of three peacekeepers ([Bangladesh](#) and [Morocco](#)) in separate malicious attacks, which brings the total of fatalities to **28**.

These totals do not account for other MINUSCA [casualties](#), either due to attack-related injuries, disease, or accidents. Nor does it include the French army fatalities and other casualties in Operation *Sangaris*; or the Ugandan casualties engendered in their operations against the LRA.

**Situation**

**5. Drivers of Conflict.** There has been an alarming increase in [violence since democratically elected President Faustin Archange Touadera took office](#), in contrast to the relative calm of the election period. There may be many reasons for this escalation, but two explanations appear significant. First, the proliferation of armed groups in itself, coupled with the ease of arms acquisition, makes it difficult to address discontented organizations comprehensively through either political or security methods. Politically, the new government appears to be using to great extent many—if not most—officials that served in the pre-2013 government. This creates disgruntlement on the part of the armed groups that participated in the overthrow of the same government only three years ago. Second, the pre-election (and previous years) intercommunal violence between Christians and Muslims continues in reprisal form while efforts to reform the national army are inadequate.

Underlying all the above is a continual conflict regarding land and water rights; the general lawlessness of numerous armed criminal groups, to include poaching and smuggling; and the pervasive poverty of a population in crisis.

**6. Significant Events.**

**a. Recent Events.**

- **2 February 2017.** MINUSCA and UNOCA representatives called for “the immediate cessation of hostilities between **FPRC** (Front Populaire pour la Renaissance de Centrafrique)’s coalition and

UPC (Mouvement pour l'Unité et la Paix en Centrafrique)" after several clashes resulted in civilian deaths and displacement.

- **27 January 2017.** [UNSCR 2339\(2017\)](#) was adopted which renews the CAR sanctions regime until 31 January 2018 and the mandate of the Panel of Experts until 28 February 2018.
- **January 2017.** MINUSCA suffers the deaths of three peacekeepers ([Bangladesh](#) and [Morocco](#)) in separate malicious attacks.
- **November 2016.** An armed group that claims to be an "[ethnic defense force](#)" killed 50 civilians and conflicts between various groups of ex-Séléka about road access to diamond mines killed another dozen or more civilians.
- **October 2016.** Significant clashes between of ex-Séléka and anti-balaka groups, as well as armed Muslim and Christian civilians, killed almost 40 civilians and displaced almost 10,000 between 12-17 October (the [Kaga-Bandoro Incidents](#)).
- **23 August 2016.** The UN [imposed](#) targeted sanctions on Ali Kony and Salim Kony, deputies in the Lord's Resistance Army.
- **15 August 2016.** President Touadera announced he would engage in [dialogue with opposition armed groups](#) to "clarify points" regarding the proposed DDR program.
- **12 August 2016.** [MINUSCA detained 10 members of an armed group, and a significant quantity of weapons and ammunition](#) after a stand-off with a larger group over the disarming demand was rejected by them.
- **5 August 2016.** The Panel of Experts of the 2127 Central African Republic Sanctions Committee briefed members on the Panel's [mid-term report](#).
- **July 2016.** LRA kidnappings increased in the first half of 2016, a six-year high.
- **20 June 2016.** Ex-Séléka elements took six police officers hostage in the Muslim neighborhood, injuring several peacekeepers when they evacuated the police officers.
- **June 2016.** International Criminal Court (ICC) sentenced ex-rebel Jean-Pierre Bemba to 18 years in prison for abuses and violence from 2002 to 2003.
- **March 2016.** New President installed and began to form his government.
- **16 February 2016.** CAR held peaceful presidential [runoff votes](#).

## b. Upcoming Events.

- **15 November 2017.** MINUSCA mandate expires.
- **31 January 2018.** CAR sanctions expire.
- **28 February 2018.** Panel of Experts mandate expires.
- **31 August 2018.** UNOCA mandate expires.

## Operational Environment (GPMESII)

**7. Geographic.** CAR is a tropical country with over 5 million people. It is slightly smaller than Texas, with hot, dry winters and hot, wet summers. A central plateau is bounded by the Bongos Mountains in the east and the Karre Mountains in the west. Rainy seasons last from June to September in the north and May to October in the south.



**8. Political.** Faustin-Archange Touadera, a former prime minister and math professor, was declared the winner of [presidential election in February 2016](#). He won 62.71% of the run-off vote, campaigning as a peacemaker. The second round of the parliamentary election was held on 31 March 2016 with 17 parties winning seats, but none of them with more than 13 seats. Independent candidates won a total of 56 seats.

The election concluded a multi-year process which began after the [Brazzaville Cease-fire Agreement](#) signing in 2014. By May 2015, a national reconciliation forum (the [Bangui Forum](#)) led to a constitutional reform. That reform was approved by almost 90% of CAR citizens voting in December 2015.

CAR is ranked in the bottom 24% of corrupt countries. The country suffered the worst crisis in its history in early 2013 when mainly Muslim Séléka fighters toppled the government and predominately Christian (anti-Balaka militias) responded by attacking the Muslim minority. The government does not occupy vast areas of the north and west, where rebel groups and transnational crime organizations continue to fight over weapons and diamonds. The nationwide process of demobilizing and disarming militias, pledged at 2015's reconciliation forum, has not yet begun.

Despite the relatively peaceful voting period, CAR politics is still dominated by a small number of families. The final two candidates for the presidential election had both been ranking position holders in the previous government's cabinet. Even the candidates in the earlier voting rounds were family of previous political leaders.

**9. Military/Security.** [The security situation in CAR remains fragile.](#) CAR's main security threats include non-state armed groups, unpoliced borders with neighboring countries, intercommunal conflict, and civil unrest which may increase due to unmet expectations after the recent elections. Muslim-dominated ex-Séléka and Christian anti-Balaka factions still control vast parts of the country, and some of their elements have been unwilling to engage in dialogue with transitional authorities. The national forces are still a weak institution and are not present in vast areas of the country.

**a. Central African Armed Forces (FACA).** Prior to the 2013 crisis, the FACA was weakened by successive governments to mitigate coup threats and subsequently disintegrated along with the country's other institutions. At several points in its history, the government leaders' guards were actually from neighboring countries. The military force that currently exists lacks in professionalism, training, discipline, equipment, and has low morale as it is underfinanced, resulting in poor equipment and salaries.

**b. Non-State Armed Groups.** There are [two dominant rebel groups](#), the Muslim-dominated ex-Séléka and the predominantly Christian anti-Balaka. However, the rebel groups and militias have splintered into other armed factions that often target each other, and none of which appear inclined to disarmament and reconciliation. In addition, while communities in other parts of the country are keeping their distance from either ex-Séléka or anti-Balaka armed groups, they have also formed their own "defense" groups.

- **Ex-Séléka.** "Séléka" is the Sango word for "coalition" (or "alliance" or "union"). While Séléka was not originally considered a religious movement, it is dominated by persons of Muslim faith. Séléka comprised two major groups based in north-eastern CAR: the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) and the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), but also included the lesser known Patriotic Convention for Saving the Country (CPSK). Two other groups based in northern CAR were also considered allied with Séléka: the Democratic Front of the Central African People (FDPC) and the Chadian group Popular Front for Recovery (FPR).

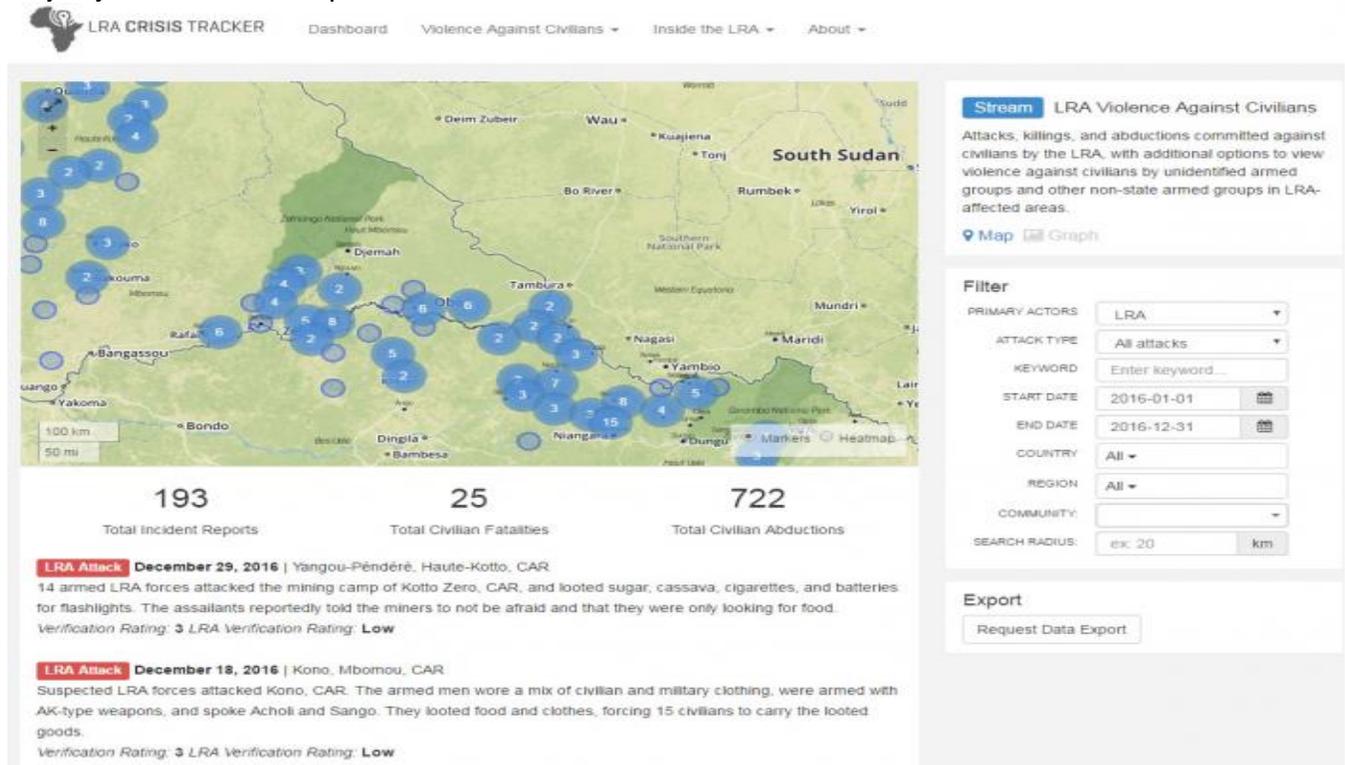
The Séléka overthrew the CAR government in spring of 2013, committing atrocities across the country, but mostly against former government members and Christian communities. In the fall of the same year, Michel Djotodia (the installed post-rebellion president) allegedly dissolved Séléka. However, the various militia groups, now called [ex-Séléka](#), continue their atrocities against government and Christian communities, sometimes in conjunction with Muslim herders known as the Fulani.

Today, the most well-known ex-Séléka groups are the Union for Peace in CAR (UPC) and Popular Front for the Central African Renaissance (FRPC). These groups are accused of the atrocities of November

2016, where many Fulani—previously aligned with some ex-Séléka groups—were killed in door-to-door assassinations by the FRPC.

- **Anti-Balaka.** “Balaka” is the Sango word for “machete” [although it is also French for bullets of an automatic rifle (“balle AK”)]. “Anti-balaka” has come to mean, also, “invincible”—in part to the power allegedly bestowed by the charms that hang around the necks of most members. The anti-Balaka were informally designed in self-defense against bandits and cattle raiders, but then became a generic term for the people resisting the brutal ex-Séléka, which are predominantly Christian. After the 2013 coup, the [groups now include former police and military personnel from the FACA.](#)

- **Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).** The LRA is active in the country's east, far from Bangui and the majority of MINUSCA's operations.



In November 2016, [UNOCA's report to the UN Security Council](#) included the following assessment:

The LRA remains a threat to civilians in the region. After an increase in activity attributed to the LRA in the beginning of 2016, particularly in the south-eastern part of the Central African Republic (CAR), the LRA continued to be active in the region with 143 abductions reported between April to mid-September, according to the latest report by the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA). A report by the NGOs Invisible Children and Resolve found that LRA forces abducted 44 civilians in eight attacks in October, in southeast CAR and the north-eastern part of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). According to the NGOs, five of these attacks were probably committed by the LRA splinter group led by Achaye Doctor, operating independently of Joseph Kony's command since late 2014.

- **Organized Criminal Elements (Domestic and Transnational):** Organized crime exists in many forms, the most prevalent being poaching, extortion and illegal control of the country's natural resources.

### c. Other International Actors.

- **Regional Neighbors.**

- **Chad.** Chad [has long sought to influence the fortunes of its southern neighbor](#), CAR. During the coup period of 2012-2013, then [Chadian President Idriss Deby sent troops](#) to support the Séléka-backed new government of Djotodia. Many of the CAR population perceive their northern citizens as more “Chad” than CAR in loyalties.

- **DRC.** CAR has [important historical connections to the south](#). For over twenty years, from its mid-1960s independence through the 1980s, two of Africa’s most notorious and flamboyant dictators, Zaire’s President Mobutu and CAR’s Emperor Bokassa, reigned over the Central African sub-region ruthlessly, while eating at each other’s table regularly as self-professed brothers.

- **Uganda.** Uganda has [2,500 troops are operating in eastern CAR](#) as part of Africa Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) to impede the LRA. Although Uganda indicated it will withdraw from CAR due to a lack of support from the international community, it is not yet clear if this has happened yet.

- **Other International Countries.**

- **China.** While China does not provide troops to MINUSCA, it is a TCC for MINUSCO and other African peace missions. It also provided the [African Union with US\\$100 million in military assistance for its peacekeeping operations](#). China certainly has significant—and increasing—business interests in Africa. Some observe that:

In essence, China deploys peacekeeping troops because it needs to protect its multi-billion investments and numerous assets, enterprises and citizens abroad. Through its peacekeepers, Beijing can also elevate its status as a responsible stakeholder and security provider in the international community and improve operational capabilities of Chinese military and police forces.

- **France.** In October 2016, France [ended a three-year military peacekeeping operation](#), called [Operation Sangaris](#). [France's presence in the country](#), which eventually grew to 2,500 soldiers, provided a stabilizing force and enabled Samba-Panza's [transitional government](#) to take over from Djotodia, who had been incapable of asserting his government’s rule.

- **Russia.** Russia may be [re-emerging as an important relationship](#) to CAR. As the new President Touadera stated: "We have very good relations with Russia...But we'd like our relationship to become more robust to increase cooperation because we used to have very good cultural ties in the past in terms of educating students and teachers."

- **Other International Organizations.** There are many other international agencies operating in CAR, beyond those of the UN and the AU. Some examples are:

- **European Union (EU).** With over €355 million provided since 2014, the EU is the largest donor of humanitarian assistance to CAR. The EU Military Advisory Mission (EUMAM) current assists CAR [with security sector reform](#), announcing the launch of another [two year military training mission](#), designed to “reform the FACA into multi-ethnic, professional, and representative armed forces.”

- **African Union (AU).** The African Union Regional Task Force (AU-RTF) is comprised of troops from Uganda, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo, and CAR operates in the east against the LRA.

**10. Economic.** CAR's economy relies heavily on agriculture and natural resources. Ongoing conflict, poor infrastructure, and an unskilled workforce contribute to CAR having the world's 175<sup>th</sup>-lowest GDP. Diamonds and lumber comprise most of CAR's exports, but illegal economic activities are rampant including illicit mining, human trafficking, and "tax" collection by armed groups. Much of the illicit economic activity is funded by international corporations, particularly in the diamond and lumber industries. Three years of past insecurity will [still exert a heavy toll](#) into the near future. Livestock availability is decreased to less than 50% of the pre-crisis levels, and infrastructure damaged the fishing industry to 40% of its early capacity. The formerly lucrative cotton and coffee sectors are now essentially non-existent. Disrupted markets led to food prices soar, resulting in purchasing power decreasing about one third in 2015. Unemployment is high and the north is particularly marginalized.

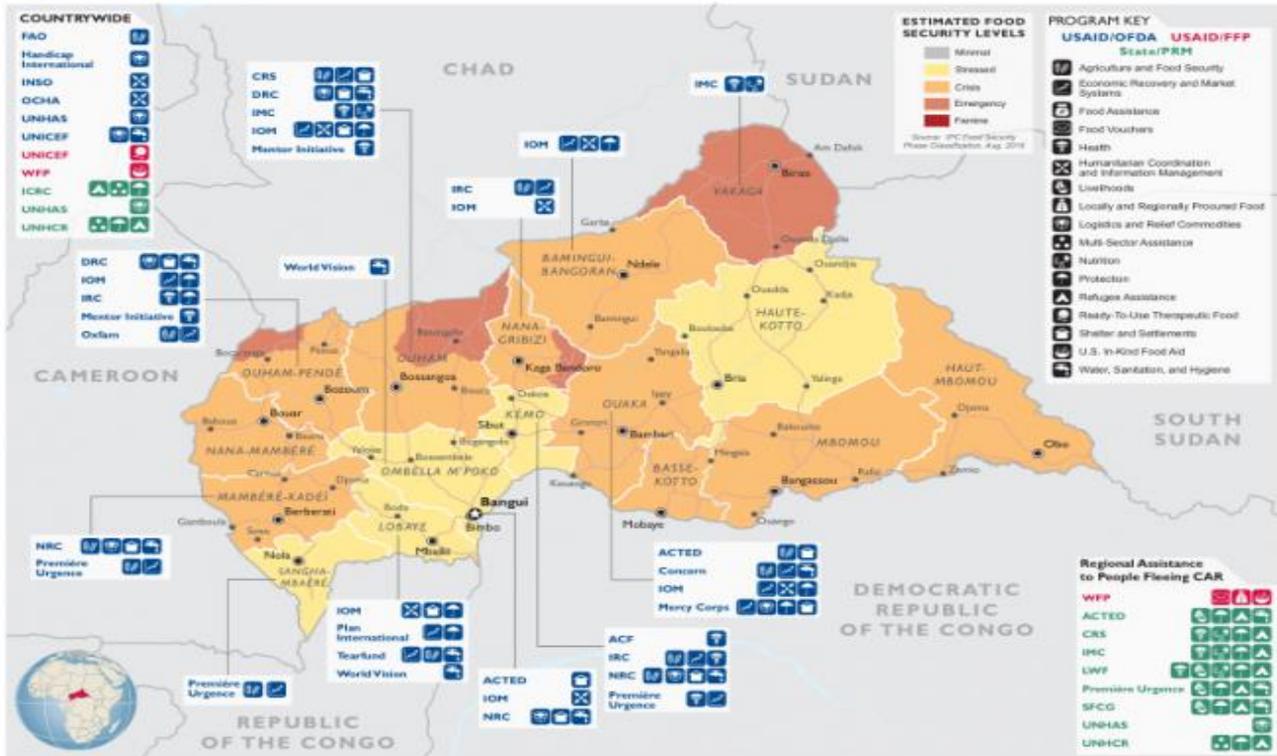
The international community [financed 40 percent](#) of the CAR government's 2015 budget, which did little more than cover running costs and the salaries of civil servants.

**11. Social.** Sangho and French are the official languages, but the country has over 80 ethnic groups, each with their own. Approximately 15% of the population are Muslim, 25% Catholic, 25% Protestant, and 35% have indigenous beliefs. Magic and other mysticism co-exist with more formal belief systems. The country is essentially partitioned into a predominantly Christian south/west and a predominantly Muslim northeast; some factions favor a permanent separation of the two regions. With 72 percent of the population under 29, youth is not just the country's future, but it's present. For too long, youth's chief role has been as rank and file fodder for the militia groups. Now, however, new, youth-led organizations like Uru (Take Off), *Association Pour la Jeunesse de Centrafrique* (Association for Central African Youth) and Kode Ti Kwa (Value of Work) have emerged to give youth a positive voice and played a vocal role in the election process.

**a. Rule of Law.** Lack of Rule of Law processes and institutions [delays the improvement of the country](#) across all its sectors. However, in November 2016, a Brussels international donors' conference requested over US\$105 million to "operationalize" [the Special Criminal Court \(SCC\)](#) (a 'hybrid' court of national and international judges and staff). The SCC was established that in intended to bring to justice those individuals suspected of having committed crimes under international law during the conflict.

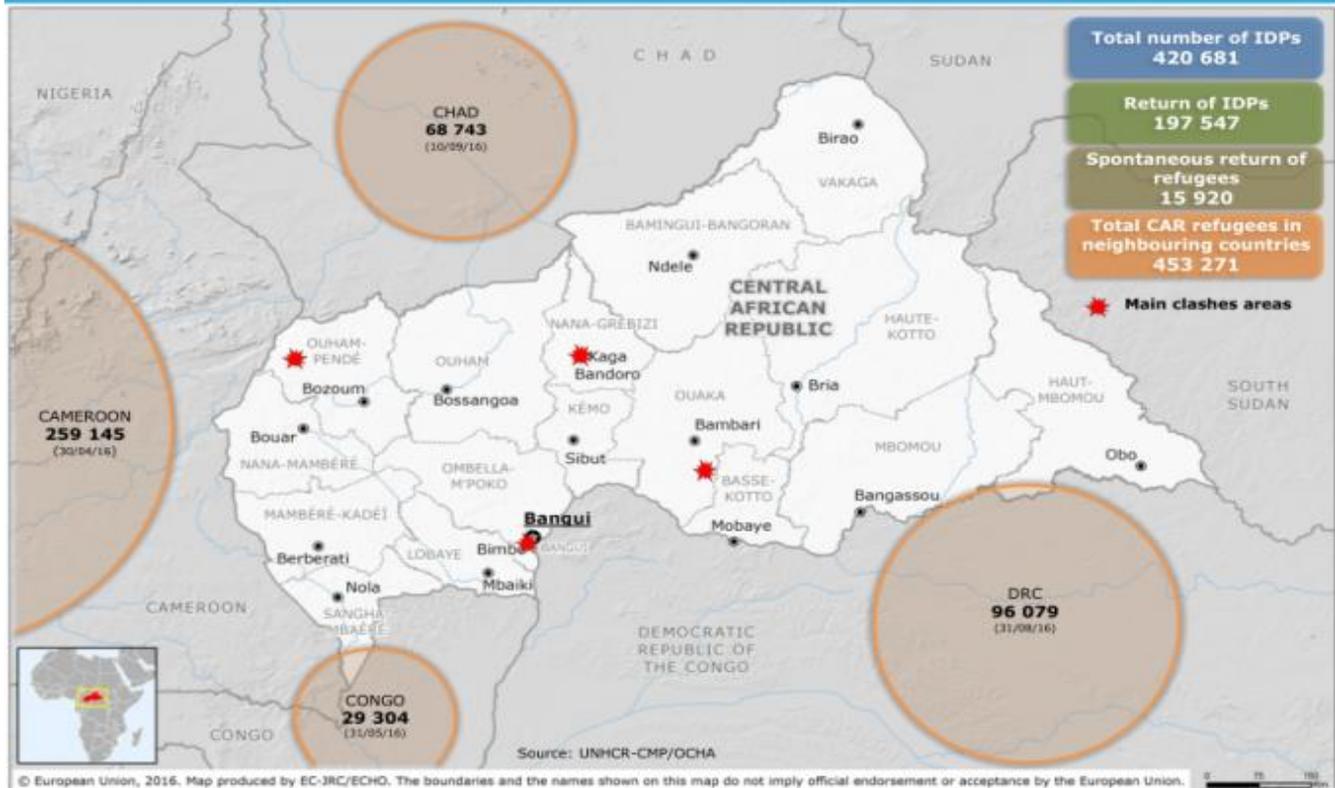
**b. Humanitarian Assistance.** In 2016, [UN agencies and humanitarian partners](#) in the CAR requested US\$531 million to provide vital assistance to millions of people affected by the crisis through its Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). USAID/OFDA [provided more than \\$15 million](#) in additional humanitarian assistance for the emergency response in CAR, bringing total U.S. Government (USG) support in FY 2016 to more than \$95 million. Other international donors provided more than \$112 million—approximately 21 percent—toward the nearly \$532 million requested by the 2016 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for CAR. 2016 HRP funding aimed to support an estimated 1.9 million vulnerable people, including internally displaced persons (IDPs) and host communities, across CAR between January and December.

Despite the funding, the CAR humanitarian situation remains "[extremely serious](#)". "Some 2.3 million people – almost half of the population – are in need of humanitarian assistance. Around 2.4 million children are affected by the crisis, according to UNICEF."



The boundaries and names used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the U.S. Government.

**Emergency Response Coordination Centre (ERCC) – ECHO Daily Map | 17/11/2016**  
**CAR Crisis - Population displacement October 2016**



© European Union, 2016. Map produced by EC-JRC/ECHO. The boundaries and the names shown on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the European Union.

**c. Human Rights.** CAR ranks low on the on the UN Human Development Index (179 out of 187 countries) and scores poorly on indices such as human rights, literacy, and health. Respect for human rights has long been deficient in CAR, and extra-judicial killings, arbitrary arrests, harassment, and physical assault continue. In particular, the sexual violence against women and children is yet un-abated.

One of the most important programs in CAR is the [reintegration of child soldiers](#)—most from the LRA—and child survivors of violence into society.

**12. Information.** Given the shortage of electricity, many rely in remote villages on word-of-mouth and messengers.

Newspapers are privately-owned. Their reach is limited by low literacy levels and a lack of distribution in rural areas. Around 3.4% of the population is online, mainly in Bangui. As in many African countries, radio stations are the most effective means to reach large segments of the population. The country has one government-controlled television station and about two dozen privately-owned radio stations. Many of them are run by religious organizations. BBC World Service (90.2 FM), Radio France Internationale and the Voice of America are available via local relays in Bangui. Radio Ndeke Luka ("bird of luck"), run by Swiss NGO Fondation Hirondelle, provides balanced output, and rebroadcasts international news bulletins. The MINUSCA runs Guira FM, which is available in the capital and in the regions. The station is named after a tree under which differences are solved and is managed by a woman and has both Muslim and Christian members.

Approximately 20% of the population has cell phones.

**13. Infrastructure.** There are 39 airports, two of which (Bangui and Ndole) have paved runways. Road infrastructure is poor and electricity is inadequate. There are several waterways including the Congo tributaries along the country's southern borders. Supporting infrastructure for many sectors such as medicine and law has largely disintegrated.

### **Peace Operations Functions**

**14. Command and Control.** MINUSCA [leadership](#) is as follows:

- **Special Representative of the Secretary-General and Head of MINUSMA:** Parfait Onanga-Anyanga (Gabon)
- **Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in MINUSMA:** Diane Corner (United Kingdom)
- **Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General in MINUSMA and UN Resident Coordinator, Humanitarian Coordinator and Resident Representative of UNDP:** Fabrizio Hochschild (Chile)
- **Force Commander:** Lieutenant General Balla Keïta (Senegal)
- **Police Commissioner:** Luis Miguel Carrilho (Portugal)

The [United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa \(UNOCA\)](#) is currently headed by the Secretary-General's Special Representative [Abdoulaye Bathily \(Senegal\)](#).

**15. Intelligence.** MINUSCA does not have a clear understanding of the various armed groups outside of Bangui or the transnational criminal groups, including foreign fighters and mercenaries that originate from Chad, South Sudan, and elsewhere. A large number of those interviewed from within and outside the Mission believe that MINUSCA [was caught by surprise](#) by the violence in September 2014, something

that may be partly explained by weak information gathering and analysis capacity. MINUSCA does not have All Source Information Fusion Units (AFISUs) in its contingents.

While MINUSCA apparently uses a ["protection matrix"](#) to identify "flashpoints" throughout the country, and consider mitigation techniques, it is unclear how this process assisted (or did not assist) during the October 2016 Kaga-Bandoro violence.

**16. Operations.** More robust operations are required against armed groups that do not abide by ceasefire and disarmament agreements. In addition, few (if any) MINUSCA operations reach the regions to the north and west of CAR. Current MINUSCA elements' level of operating capability stress the need for additional staff and unit training by TCCs prior to deployments.

## **17. Protection.**

**a. Mission Protection.** UN agencies and other aid groups are under constant risk of attack, as are MINUSCA forces that attempt to provide them protection. Violence against peacekeepers has significantly increased in the past six months. Not only has MINUSCA suffered peacekeeper deaths in 2016, the [UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(OCHA\) reported](#) "there were 336 attacks against humanitarian workers in 2016, 56.8 per cent of them robberies and burglaries."

**b. Protection of Civilians.** The [October 2016 Kaga-Bandoro violence](#) included attacks against an IDP camp as well as other villages in the area. Dishearteningly, the MINUSCA peacekeepers deployed outside the camp allegedly did not protect the civilians. (Although the UN's own report indicated that "MINUSCA Forces took strong measures to protect civilians during the crisis and assisted in providing immediate humanitarian assistance to the displaced in the form of food, water and health care.")

*Human Rights Watch interviewed 32 victims and witnesses of the [October 2016 Kaga-Bandoro violence](#) (and in the country's capital, Bangui), testifying "that the mostly Muslim Seleka forces, possibly with assistance from Muslim civilians, shot, stabbed, or burned to death the civilians, including at least four women, five children, three older people, and four people with disabilities. The casualty numbers are most likely higher because some victims were buried quickly."*

While all civilians are vulnerable, the Muslim population is currently at greatest risk. In a *de facto* ethnic cleansing campaign by anti-Balaka militias, 99% of the Muslim population in Bangui has been forcibly displaced or killed, with up to 80% of the CAR's Muslim population driven from the country. Many Muslims are trapped in besieged locations without access to humanitarian necessities. Nearly three million depend on humanitarian aid to survive, but aid organizations have limited access to much of the population, and displaced persons are particularly vulnerable to disease, starvation, dehydration, exposure, sexual violence, and other crimes. Between [6 and 10 thousand children](#) are being used by armed groups as child soldiers, auxiliaries, or child labor. In the spring of 2016, the UN engaged with several armed groups, [signing an agreement](#), to end and prevent the recruitment and use of, and other grave violations against, children. Since the agreement was signed, 1,446 children have been separated from armed groups. In total, 2,679 children were separated from armed groups: almost 89 per cent from anti-balaka elements and 10 per cent from former Séléka elements.

**18. Sustainment.** Logistical operations are critical to sustain MINUSCA units in remote locations and to support humanitarian assistance. These are challenging because of the lack of roads and other infrastructure.

## **Issues and Considerations**

**19. Issues.** The major issues confronting MINUSCA and CAR are summarized as follows:

- Violence committed by ex-Séléka, anti-Balaka, and other armed groups continues and prevents progress across all sectors.
- MINUSCA's forces have difficulty influencing regions outside of Bangui because of low troop density, difficult terrain, and the low capability of many of its units.
- The humanitarian situation is dire, with over one million internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees in other countries and a lack of essential services for most of the population.
- MINUSCA's units require more thorough training on military fundamentals, mission tasks, and standards of conduct; reports of sexual abuse must be credibly investigated and remedial actions must be implemented.

## **20. Considerations.**

**a. US.** It is yet unclear what, if any, policy changes the Trump Administration will have for Central African Republic, specifically. However, a list of questions submitted by the transition team to the US Department of State regarding policies for Africa indicated "[possible skepticism](#)" regarding current funding and programs. In combination with the (proposed) "[Auditing and Reducing U.S. Funding of International Organizations](#)", there may be significant changes to the US approach to Africa in the near future.

In the past, the [US government](#) (USG) has long supported economic growth, strengthening the rule of law, and political stability in CAR, and should remain concerned about the high levels of violence and worsening humanitarian crisis. Premature withdrawal will undermine the new CAR government, limit economic recovery, and provide spoilers a chance to reemerge. Therefore, the USG should continue to ensure the international community remains involved in CAR, even if extended the current MINUSCA mandate. Further, the USG should consider facilitating a suspension or mitigation of the [Kimberley Process](#) for CAR, in order to assist the new government in acquiring capital through the sale of diamonds.

For the US military, specifically, the US government should provide or augment intelligence assets to MINUSCA. It can also participate in pre-deployment training with TCCs to gain efficiencies and respond to the training needs identified by MINUSCA.

**b. UN.** Many recommendations for the UN and MINUSCA are general in nature and apply to any peacekeeping operations. Included, for example, is subjecting TCCs to more training to emphasize battalion and higher staff procedures (including intelligence analysis), patrolling, medical procedures at all levels (first aid, unit aid stations, evacuation, and Level II care), standards of conduct, convoy escort procedures, the protection of civilians, detention of suspects, disarmament procedures, and human rights. In addition, the most successful peacekeeping missions are tied to an effective political strategy, have clear goals and expectations, and include diplomatic tools, such as mediation and negotiations. Specific [considerations for MINUSCA](#) include the following:

- MINUSCA must [improve its capacity](#) to anticipate and rapidly respond to emerging security threats;
- Ensure presence of adequate military forces with appropriate equipment remain and conduct patrols in high risk and strategic areas;
- Forcibly disarm groups that continue to threaten populations;
- Assist the government in accountability for mass atrocity crimes and other violations and abuses;

- MINUSCA should continue efforts to implement a more victim-sensitive approach to combat sexual exploitation and abuse by peacekeepers. The UN Secretariat should review options for accelerating the preliminary investigation process; and
- Continue efforts to [build common ground and serve as community liaisons](#).

**c. Central African Republic (CAR).** Most observer recommendations for CAR recognize the opportunity that the newly elected president has to bring stability and economic resurgence to his country. [As suggested](#), “The new government must decisively break with that pattern” of corruption that existed with previous governments, and “demonstrate its competence, its inclusiveness and its commitment to development.” However, consolidating the authority of a central government, with its attendant responsibilities to national programs and processes, will require time. In the interim, the CAR government should recognize and reinforce “Locally-driven solutions to community peacebuilding, reconciliation and disarmament, and even economic development...” through traditional mediation mechanisms that involve youth and women. Other specific recommendations include:

- Commit to providing sustained support to enable MINUSCA to fulfil its mandate, including the protection of civilians
- Establish government control of gold and diamond mining sites and border crossings, to undermine the use of those economic places for extortion and other forms of corruption
- Expand the [training of police regarding gender issues](#)
- [Prioritize accountability for mass atrocity crimes and other violations and abuses](#)

## **Resources**

### **21. Key Documents and On-Line References.**

- [Amnesty USA, Strengthening Peacekeeping in CAR](#)
- [CIA, The World Fact Book--Central African Republic](#)
- [CFR, Peace Operations in Africa](#)
- [Congressional Research Service, The Central African Republic Background and US Policy, December 2016](#)
- [Department of State, US Embassy CAR](#) and [USAID, CAR](#)
- Enough Project, [Warlord Business: CAR's Violent Armed Groups and their Criminal Operations for Profit and Power](#)
- International Crisis Group, [The Central African Crisis: From Predation to Stabilisation](#)
- [Military Review Operation Sangaris A Case Study in Military Intervention, November December 2016](#)
- [MINUSCA, Special Report on Kaga Bandoro Incident, October 2016](#)
- [National Counter Terrorism Center, Lord's Resistance Army \(LRA\)](#)
- Norwegian Defense Research Establishment, [Protection of Civilians in Practice: Emerging Lessons from the Central African Republic](#)
- [Relief Web CAR 2015](#)[Telegraph UK, Greatest Threat to Global Stability](#)
- [UN Reports and Documents, CAR and MINUSCAUNSCR 2301UN Peacekeeping Missions--MINUSCA](#)
- [US Institute for Peace The Current Situation in CAR, December 2016](#) and [US Institute of Peace, Risk to CAR](#)