Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC)

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Global Report on Internal Displacement (GRID 2018)

Conflict displacement
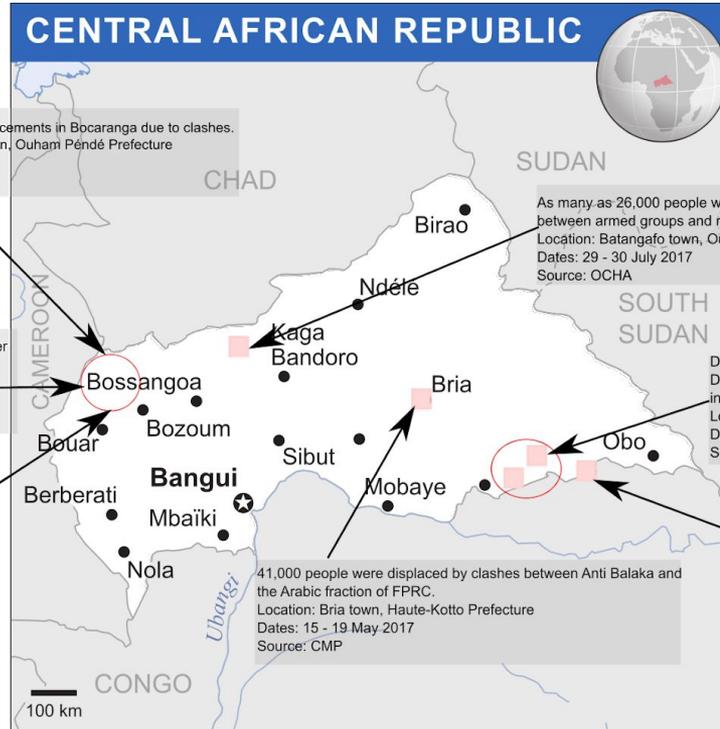Figures analysis

CAR - Contextual update

CAR's current displacement crisis began in late 2012, but violence increased in 2017, including attacks on civilians and medical and humanitarian staff. A reduction of violence in 2016 led to less displacement and hope that the reconciliation efforts of the a new government would take hold. Instead there was an unexpected upsurge in conflict over territory, resources and livestock, and armed groups realigned, all with a sectarian undertone. Violence and displacement returned to levels unseen since 2013, and spread to areas previously unaffected. Most of the country outside Bangui is controlled by armed groups, and child recruitment and sexual violence are common. Several humanitarian workers were killed in 2017, which led aid agencies to suspend operations.

A number of international and regional organisations have supported peace efforts since late 2016, but a ceasefire agreed between the government and 13 of the 14 main armed groups in June was broken the following day with 50 assassinations in Bria. The EU subsequently organised a round table in Brussels, and the African Union, together with President Faustin-Archange Touadéra, ECCAS and ICGLR with the support of Angola, Chad, Congo and Gabon launched a roadmap for peace and reconciliation in July, which aimed to facilitate direct engagement between the parties. MINUSCA's mandate was renewed in November 2017 and its capacity increased, but the population's perception of the UN mission and the government's relations with it remain poor.

The prefectures with the highest numbers of new displacements in 2017 were Ouham Pende with 125,000, Mbomou with 93,000 and and Base Kotto with 88,000. As of the end of the year, there were 90,000 IDPs in Ouham Pende, 86,000 in Ouaka (86,000) and 85,000 in Bangui.

CAR - Major displacement events in 2017

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

About 19,000 new displacements in Bocaranga due to clashes.
Location: Bocaranga town, Ouham Péndé Prefecture
Date: 2 February 2017
Source: CMP

As many as 26,000 people were displaced from their homes due to confrontations between armed groups and regrouped in five IDP camps in town.
Location: Batangafo town, Ouham Prefecture
Dates: 29 - 30 July 2017
Source: OCHA

About 20,000 people were displaced in Ngaoundaye and Bang localities after armed men attacked the two towns.
Location: Ouham Péndé Prefecture
Date: 4 April 2017
Source: OCHA

Due to confrontations, 18,000 inhabitants of Dembia, and 8,000 IDPs from Zemio sheltering in Dembia were forced to flee to the bush, Rafai, and Bangassou. 3,000 people in Rafai sought refuge in the proximty of the MINUSCA base out of fear of an attack.
Locations: Dembia and Rafai towns, Mbomou Prefecture
Dates: 20 - 23 November 2017
Source: OCHA

About 22,500 people were displaced in Ngaoundaye and Bang localities after another attack by an armed group.
Location: Ouham Péndé Prefecture
Date: 10 July 2017
Source: OCHA

As many as 23,000 people were displaced to IDP camps and into the bush due to an intercommunity conflict.
Location: Zemio town, Haut Mbomou Prefecture
Date: 6 July 2017
Source: CMP

41,000 people were displaced by clashes between Anti Balaka and the Arabic fraction of FPRC.
Location: Bria town, Haute-Kotto Prefecture
Dates: 15 - 19 May 2017
Source: CMP

CHAD

SUDAN

SOUTH SUDAN

CAMEROON

Birao

Ndélé

Kaga Bandoro

Bossangoa

Bria

Obo

Bouar

Bozoum

Sibut

Bangui

Berberati

Mobaye

Mbaïki

Nola

CONGO

Ubangi

100 km

Sources: Displacement data (IDMC); map (OCHA, Reliefweb) created in Sep 2013.
The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations and IDMC.

iDMC — internal displacement monitoring centre

20 YEARS 1998 - 2018

CAR - Stock: 689,000 IDPs

This corresponds to the total number of individuals in a situation of internal displacement at the end of 2017

Sources and methodologies

Our primary source is the Population Movement Commission (CMP), a subsidiary of the UNHCR-led protection cluster. CMP publishes regular dashboards and reports based on data provided by local and international NGOs, community and religious groups and local authorities. The reports estimate the number of new displacements and returns, and a stock figure.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges

The CMP dashboards occasionally contradict its reports. We have been unable to establish contact with CMP or find any public documents that describe its definitions and methodology.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale

Our figure is based on the CMP dashboard for December 2017.

CAR - New displacements: 539,000

This corresponds to the estimated number of internal displacement movements to have taken place during the year

Sources and methodologies
Data on IDPs is compiled by various sources and verified by CMP. Other sources include 65 reports from OCHA, CMP, MSF, UN, MINUSCA, ECHO, and ICRC.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges
Sources report on new displacements in a disorganised way. Reports are constantly repeated and updated, they do not differentiate clearly between stocks and flows or between arrivals and expulsions. We compiled all of the reports and decided on an ad-hoc basis which to use as the basis for our estimate. It should also be noted that sources gather their data in dangerous conditions and may experience access restrictions.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale
We organised information about 162 displacement events from 65 reports from OCHA, CMP, MSF, UN, MINUSCA, ECHO and ICRC. Some referred to displacements associated with the same event, in which case we chose not to include any reports that could lead to double counting. To the same end we also ignored reports of IDPs' arrival and only registered expulsions. We only took changes in regional stock figures into account when it was clearly stated that the increase was intrinsically linked to a specific incident. As a means of triangulation, we considered the sum of positive differences in the monthly stock figures - totals, disaggregated by prefecture, disaggregated by shelter-type and disaggregated by both, with the latter proving most precise.

Significant methodological and contextual changes from last year
We had no comprehensive list of individual displacement events for 2016, so we arrived at our estimate by adding up the positive differences in the national stock of IDPs in camps and the national stock of IDPs in host families, which made it an underestimate.

CAR - Returns: 39,000

This corresponds to the number of individuals for which sufficient evidence exists to indicate a return to the habitual place of residence

Sources and methodologies
The CMP reports a monthly figure for returns. During the first three months of the year its dashboard only referred to a total figure, though its analytical report for January included a few individual reports. From April onwards, the analytical reports contained individual reports that generally added up to the total figure reported in the dashboard. For May to December, CMP clarified on its dashboards that its figure for returns included returned IDPs and refugees.

Main caveats and monitoring challenges
There is no clarity about the methodology used to account for returns and no follow up, meaning that there is no evidence with which to gauge the success of returns. There may also be mistakes in the figures. CMP reported exactly the same number of returns in January and March, and occasionally the sum of individual reports did not add up to the total monthly figure. There were also some May returns accounted for in the June report and some June returns accounted for in the July report.

IDMC figure, methodology and rationale
We added up all returns that clearly involved IDPs to obtain our annual figure. This is an underestimate, because it left out returns that were not clearly defined as involving IDPs.

Significant methodological and contextual changes from last year
Our 2017 figure is only 18 per cent of the previous year's. There are several possible explanations for this. The 2016 reports were in all likelihood a mixture of returns involving both IDPs and refugee returns, meaning we overestimated the number of returns. Even accounting for this, however, there seems to have been a 50 per cent reduction. This may be explained by the escalation of violence and the unreliability of the data.

CAR - Provisional solutions: 4,600

This corresponds to cases of individuals who IDMC considers to not have achieved a durable solution

Challenges in accounting for returns

CMP publishes a monthly dashboard with a returns figure but this includes both IDPs and refugees returns, and the accompanying analytical report rarely disaggregates completely between them. Nor does there seem to be any follow up, meaning that not much is known beyond the fact that the movement took place. We also have have no information about the definition or methodology used to register returns. We have included all returns that explicitly refer to IDPs in our return figure. Returns that explicitly refer to refugees are included as a provisional solution (cross-border returns to unknown), since there is no information on the success of these returns.

Cross-border returns to unknown conditions

Given that there is no disaggregated figure, our estimate is based on the CMP reports that specify that a return was in fact cross-border. As such, is a lower bound, including only the cases when we are certain that the returns involved refugees. An upper bound would be the total number of returns, 113,000, minus the total number confirmed to involve IDPs, 39,000, which would mean 74,000. We prefer, however, to use conservative estimates and so decided to publish the figure referring to the 4,600 certain refugee returns. These are considered to have achieved provisional solutions because it is unknown if they were able to settle sustainably once back in their homes.