

Committee: Social Humanitarian and Cultural Committee (GA3)

Issue: The issue of displaced children in the Central African Republic

Student Officer: Katerina Livaniou

Position: Co-Chair

PERSONAL INTRODUCTION

Dear Delegates,

My name is Katerina Livaniou, I am an 10th grade student in Pierce-The American College of Greece, Athens and it's my utmost honour to be serving as one of the Co-chairs of the Social, Humanitarian and Cultural Committee.

This will be my first time serving as a student officer at a conference, and my ninth conference overall. Having attended numerous conferences, I believe MUN is a fantastic opportunity for teenagers not only to learn about current affairs around the world, but also to meet like-minded individuals. Throughout my MUN experience, I've met students from all over the world, learned about international concerns, and gained experience with diplomacy. I've also had fruitful debates with people I can now call friends over the last two years.

The agenda for this year includes three highly important and current subjects that the world must resolve. This study guide's topic is "The issue of displaced children in the Central African Republic," which is a very essential one.

The goal of this study guide is to assist you in your research by explaining the conflict, clarifying essential words, and presenting you with some key information and potential solutions to the problem.

If you have any questions at all, don't hesitate to contact me at: a.livaniou@acg.edu

I look forward to meeting you all and working with you!

Stay safe and healthy,

Katerina Livaniou

TOPIC INTRODUCTION

Since a violent seizure of power in 2013, the Central African Republic has been in chaos. Armed groups signed a slew of peace deals in the aftermath, even as they continued to battle each other and wage assaults on civilians. However, the violence has not abated, and political tensions are once again on the increase. Crisis Group gives practical advice on how to manage both the important electoral time in late 2020 and the long term, concentrating on how to persuade armed groups to lay down their weapons, through on-the-ground reporting, and campaigning. The aforementioned, all lead to having a number of 738,000 people ¹(50% of them being children,) ¹ being now internally displaced across the country as a consequence of violence in the Central African Republic. This is the country's highest number of child migrants since 2014, ² and we must keep in mind the grave dangers that children face, such as exposure to violence (both physical and sexual), use by armed forces and groups, rising malnutrition rates, and limited access to water, sanitation, health care, and public transportation.

The impact of recent displacements on host communities, which were already vulnerable due to years of conflict and instability, is equally concerning. According to UNICEF, at least 168,000 children have been forced to escape their homes because of the violence that has swept the country. Almost 70,000 have been unable to return home. Children in the Central African Republic (CAR) who are affected by the challenges described above, particularly displaced children, risk long-term consequences. The psychological ramifications of the violence they've seen and experienced. The inability to protect them today poses a significant threat to their future well-being and the economic development of their communities.

¹ "370,000 Children Displaced in Central African Republic; Highest Level since 2014 | | UN News." *UN News*, 28 Apr. 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1090812>.

² "---." *UN News*, 28 Apr. 2021, <https://news.un.org/en/story/2021/04/1090812>.

DEFINITION OF KEY TERMS

Armed Conflict

An armed conflict is a contested incompatibility that concerns government and/or territory where the use of armed force between two parties, of which at least one is the government of a state, results in at least 25 battle-related deaths in one calendar year.³

Child Displacement

Child Displacement is a term that refers to the removal or separation of children from their parents and immediate family or settings in which they have initially been reared. The term includes various categories of children separated from their family and social settings for numerous reasons, including refugees and asylum seekers. This include persecution, war, armed conflict and disruption and separation for varied reasons.⁴

Malnutrition

Malnutrition is a serious condition that happens when one's diet does not contain the right amount of nutrients. It signifies "poor nutrition" and can refer to undernutrition, meaning not getting enough nutrients, and overnutrition, meaning getting more nutrients than needed)⁵.

³ Melander, Erik. *The UCDP Armed Conflict Definition*. <https://www.undp.org/content/dam/norway/img/sdg-16-oslo-2016/Erik%20Melander.pdf>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

⁴ "Child Displacement | Psychology Wiki | Fandom." *Psychology Wiki*, https://psychology.fandom.com/wiki/Child_displacement. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

⁵website. "Malnutrition - NHS." *Nhs.Uk*, 23AD, <https://www.nhs.uk/conditions/malnutrition/>.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Total Population	4,302,360
Number of Internally Displaced Children(updated)	370.000
Population without access to clean water	74%
Doctors per 100.000 people	8
Life expectancy	43 years
Number one cause of death	Malaria

Table 1: General Information about the CAR**Historical Background**

Anti-balaka troops launched major retaliation attacks against primarily Muslim civilians in September 2013, driving tens of thousands of people to Séléka - controlled areas in the north. The government disbanded Séléka troops soon after revenge attacks began, but many ex-Séléka members began launching counterattacks, plunging CAR into a state of chaos and a humanitarian disaster. Thousands of people have been killed and about 575,000 people⁶ have been displaced since the commencement of fresh war in 2013, the bulk of whom have fled to neighboring Cameroon and the Democratic Republic of Congo. Despite the hope that followed President Faustin Archange Touadera's election in the spring of 2016, the problem only worsened. Violence between Muslim and Christian forces have slowed because of a geographical separation, while fighting between ex- Séléka factions has increased. Even though the government controls Bangui, most armed groups have refused to participate in President Touadera's efforts to de-escalate the situation through disarming, leaving the government impotent outside the capital. Armed organizations have thrived in the remainder of the nation, and warfare has escalated in the central, western, and eastern regions. The battle has also caused havoc on the economy, devastating the private sector, and impoverishing about 75% of the people. Human rights organizations and UN agencies have reported that both ex- Séléka soldiers and anti-balaka factions have perpetrated war crimes and crimes against humanity. Due

⁶ "Caritas Leads the Way for Humanitarian Aid in Central African Republic." *Caritas*, <https://www.facebook.com/IAmCaritas/>, 29 Apr. 2019, <https://www.caritas.org/2019/04/caritas-central-african-republic/>.

to the gravity of the crisis, the Security Council of the UN authorized a peacekeeping operation in April 2014, which comprised African Union and French forces already committed to the Central African Republic. The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission was founded with the aim of safeguarding citizens and disarming rebel forces, and it now has almost 15,000 troops serving within the Central African Republic.



Figure 1: UN peacekeepers in the Central African Republic patrolling the streets

Rise of Displaced Children (DCs)

Violence, population displacement, limited access to food, health, water and sanitation services, rising food prices, and the COVID-19 pandemic all contributed to the increase in displaced children. Undernutrition among children under the age of five is now alarming in 27 communities across 14 health districts across the country. According to the most recent data gathered, more than 2%⁷ of children in these areas are malnourished. Years of war have wreaked havoc on infrastructure and government institutions, leaving millions of Central Africans without clean water, health care, or food. The elections in the end of 2020 caused violence to increase, resulting that way in even more child displacements.

⁷ OCHA. *African Republic Situation Report*. 28 Feb. 2022, https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/Situation%20Report%20-%20Central%20African%20Republic%20-%202021%20Feb%202022_0.pdf.

Water

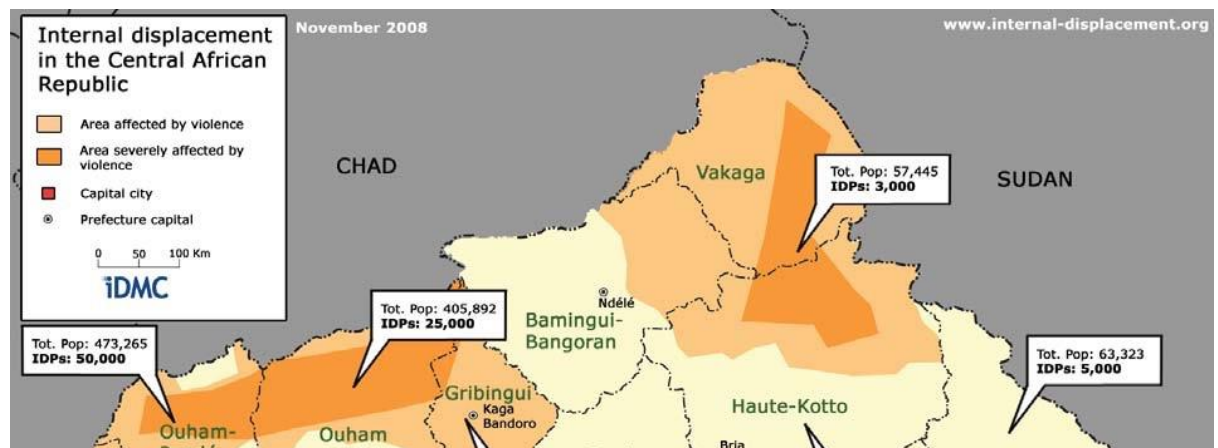
Running water is only available to a small percentage of Central Africans. Years of conflict have ruined many waters access points, while dead bodies have poisoned others. During the rainy season, which lasts most of the year in the south and only a few months in the north, disease transmission increases. Cholera, for example, spreads through water contaminated by an infected individual, a problem that has recently gotten worse.

Health care

The CAR's health-care system is barely operating due to a lack of competent health workers and medical materials. Gunshot and stab wounds, burns, and rape injuries are treated for victims of violent attacks. Apart from physical wounds, Central Africans are suffering from severe mental health problems as a result of devastating violence and insecurity. Finally, Central Africans' insufficient access to sanitation implies that diseases that are easily preventable continue to be life-threatening.

Violence

Armed factions now control more than two-thirds of the country, and violence is spreading into formerly safe areas. Thousands of children are thought to have died as a result of the fighting in the Central African Republic, and more than half of them now require humanitarian assistance.



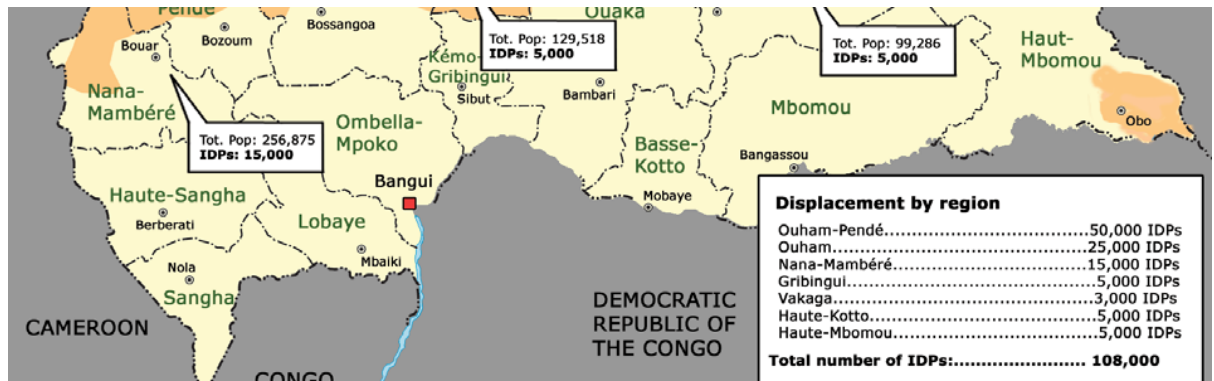


Figure 2: Internal displacement in the CAR in 2013

Important Events

The war between the Séléka and anti-balaka armed groups in the CAR began in 2013. Armed violence has escalated since then, destroying the country and resulting in massive human rights violations and deaths. The war has resulted in a large number of people being displaced. A coalition of armed factions fired a rocket in December 2020, triggering even more displacement across the country. Since December, a total of 276,000 individuals have been internally displaced by this act of violence, with 129,000 still displaced in February.⁸ There have also been reports of a lack of food and excessive food prices. The Central African Republic is currently on the verge of a humanitarian catastrophe. After the election, the violence increased again, resulting in 276,000 new IDPs, of whom 129,000⁹ remain displaced due to armed group activity that prevents them from returning. A large number of refugees have also fled to the Democratic Republic of Congo, Chad, Cameroon, and the Republic of Congo. Children who have been forced to flee their homes require safety, as well as shelter, water, food, clothing, and medical treatment.

Infrastructure and assistance

Armed gangs continue to damage or occupy basic infrastructure. Humanitarian personnel are being threatened and attacked. In the Haut-Mbomou and Ouham Pende regions, three humanitarian relief workers were killed and others were injured recently. As a result of instability and armed group roadblocks, movement restrictions have been imposed in a number of locations. Over the last three months, many

⁸ “Central African Republic - Alarming Rise in Displacement across the Central African Republic | Digital Situation Reports.” *Situation Reports*, <https://reports.unocha.org/en/country/car/card/5f1RpAzV2C/>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

⁹ “CAR Complex Crisis | ACAPS.” *ACAPS*, <https://www.acaps.org/country/car/crisis/complex-crisis>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

humanitarian organizations have been compelled to cease operations in the Haute-Kotto, Ouaka, and Ouham due to security concerns. Humanitarian workers have been harassed in the past, notably at checkpoints. The poor state of the roads and transit severely restricts access to specific locations, particularly during the winter. Although the extent of the existence of improvised explosive devices (IEDs) and unexploded ordnance is uncertain, there have been reports of injuries in the previous six months.

Consequences

Forcibly displaced children in the Central African Republic confront serious security issues as a result of the country's persistent instability and conflict. They have been traumatized as a consequence of seeing extraordinary levels of abuse, such as the murder of relatives when their towns were assaulted by road criminals. Some refugee minors have been kidnapped for hostage or forced to serve as transporters of stolen items during these attacks. Several have been enrolled into armed forces personnel or organizations, and their discharge is being held up owing to a delayed political settlement and a lack of funding and implementation of effective protection and treatment services. The displaced children of CAR's food, hygiene and sewage, health, and housing requirements are generally unmet. Many people are in desperate need of suitable shelter after being forced to sleep outside during the raining season, putting them at risk of malaria and lung illnesses. Displaced children are exploited economically because they are compelled to work in host communities' farms in return for food or a little wage.

MAJOR COUNTRIES AND ORGANIZATIONS INVOLVED

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

In December of 2020 violence surrounding the CAR presidential elections sent an estimated 92,000 refugees¹⁰ fleeing into the DRC. Despite its poor economic system and violent environment, the DRC is a home for thousands of refugees escaping from the Central African Republic. The government has created a National Refugee Commission to deal with shelter seekers. It has also created refugee camps, mostly in places that are difficult to reach, though most refugees settle outside of set areas.

¹⁰ Schlein, Lisa. "Voluntary Repatriation of Refugees to Central African Republic from DR Congo Restarts." *VOA*, Voluntary Repatriation of Refugees to Central African Republic from DR Congo Restarts , 27 Oct. 2021, <https://www.voanews.com/a/voluntary-repatriation-of-refugees-to-central-african-republic-from-dr-congo-restarts-/6287392.html>.

Cameroon

With almost 290,000 refugees from CAR,¹¹ Cameroon is the country with the greatest refugee population. Many individuals have been displaced for years, including 45,000 people who had lived¹² in Cameroon for over ten years. Humanitarian aid, education, access to the health system, food, protection, and a secure place to remain are provided to CAR refugees.

International Rescue Committee (IRC)

The IRC is a non-profit organization that helps people in need across the world with humanitarian aid, disaster relief, and development. The IRC assists refugees and anyone displaced by conflict, persecution, or natural catastrophe in both emergency and long-term situations. President of the IRC is David Miliband, who has managed to make the IRC respond quickly to humanitarian crises. The IRC began assisting Central Africans in 2006 and will remain in the nation until 2021 to assist individuals who have been affected and those who are still displaced. The IRC helped Central Africans by providing health care and emotional support to war survivors, also providing food and economic possibilities to displaced individuals (mainly women and young adults) and establishing schools and other safe places and workshops for children to learn.

United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF)

UNICEF has installed mobile child safety teams that can reach children in danger, particularly those in remote locations. UNICEF and its partners hope to provide children with mental health and psychosocial activities through child-friendly spaces and other community-based projects. Since 2014, UNICEF and its partners have assisted the release of about 15,500 children.¹³ UNICEF is also assisting the government in its COVID-19 response, including increasing immunization rates while focusing on prevention in schools and communities.

¹¹ "Cameroon CAR Refugees | ACAPS." ACAPS, <https://www.acaps.org/country/cameroon/crisis/car-refugees>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

¹² "Cameroon CAR Refugees | ACAPS." ACAPS, <https://www.acaps.org/country/cameroon/crisis/car-refugees>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

¹³ "Growing Risks for Children in the Central African Republic as Child Displacement Hits Highest Levels since 2014 - UNICEF Geneva Palais Briefing Note." UNICEF, <https://www.unicef.org/press-releases/growing-risks-children-central-african-republic-child-displacement-hits-highest>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

International Organization for Migration (IMO)

The International Organization for Migration (IOM) was established in the Central African Republic (CAR) in January 2014 following the migratory concerns and displacement caused by violent breakouts in the country. With IMO's assistance, support for the urgent stability and rehabilitation of communities in CAR that are at danger is being ensured, community violence in CAR is being reduced, in Ouham Pende, CAR, intercommunal conversation and nonviolent conflict resolution are being strengthened. In order to prevent human trafficking and other types of exploitation in the Central African Republic, the country's reaction and awareness-raising skills must be strengthened. Internally displaced individuals (IDPs), returnees, and host communities get emergency humanitarian aid.

TIMELINE OF EVENTS

Date	Description of event
2013	Eruption of a war in the CAR between Séléka and anti-balaka armed groups.
25 th April 2013	The establishment of UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission by the UN Security Council.
2014	Agreement on cessation of hostilities in the Central African Republic.
2015	The rejection of a peace agreement between two militia groups to stop more than a year of fighting.
6 th February 2019	Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in the Central African Republic.
27 th December 2020	The general elections of CAR.

RELEVANT UN RESOLUTIONS, TREATIES AND EVENTS

Conventions on the rights of the child (November 20, 1989)

Articles of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child explain children's rights and how governments should work together to ensure that all children have access to them. Governments are required under the agreement to meet the basic needs of all children and to support them in achieving their full potential.

Mandate of the Special Rapporteur on the human rights of internally displaced persons (July 18th, 2016)

The Special Rapporteur is tasked with addressing the complex problem of internal displacement, in particular by mainstreaming the human rights of the internally displaced into all relevant parts of the United Nations system and also working to strengthen the international response to the complex problem of internal displacement due to reasons such as armed conflict.¹⁴

Protection of and assistance to internally displaced persons (December 19, 2017)

This resolution, submitted by the third committee of the General Assembly prioritises the rights of displaced persons, discusses the protection of displaced people and their rights and finally asks for humanitarian assistance from UN organisations.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

The creation of a UN organization

A good solution is proposing the creation of an UN organization or commission concerning the surrounding areas of the Central African Republic, that will provide humanitarian services for children and install child-friendly spaces where they can learn and play during their stay at these host countries.

¹⁴ "UN Convention On The Rights Of The Child | Save the Children UK." *Save the Children UK | International Children's Charity*, <https://www.savethechildren.org.uk/what-we-do/childrens-rights/united-nations-convention-of-the-rights-of-the-child>. Accessed 28 Feb. 2022.

New legislation

Another suggestion is the adoption of new legislation that protects displaced children in their host countries, covers their needs and paves their path to accessing their fundamental rights.

Raising awareness

Finally, the delegates should also focus on raising awareness about the issue at hand and the importance of donations, via public platforms and television as well as social media, in order to gather the funds needed for non- governmental organizations to assist the displaced children in the Central African Republic.

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