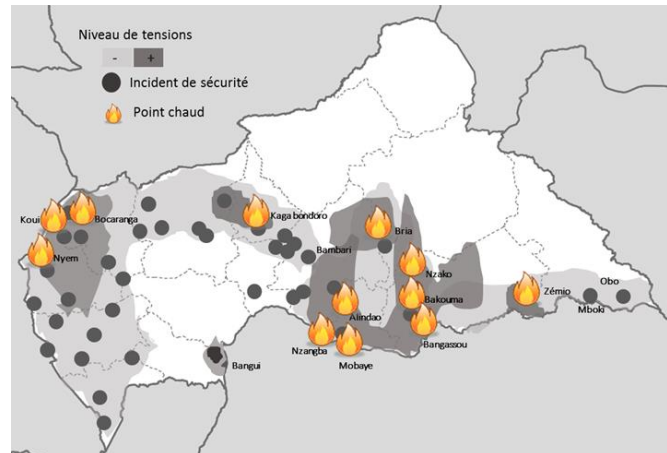


The international NGO members of the INGO Coordination Committee (CCO) are mobilising to express their **grave concern with regards to the rapid deterioration of the security situation in the Central African Republic (CAR)**, the heavy impact on the civil population and the upsurge in essential needs following the reduction of humanitarian space and the decreased access of the population to basic services and emergency responses.

CONTEXT

For the past few months, following a period of relative calm during the elections in early 2016, the security situation has continued deteriorate. This is characterised by:

- A progressive spread of violence through territories that have been, until now, relatively stable (Basse Kotto, Mbomou, Haut-Mbomou): over the last 12 months, no less than 8 of the 16 prefectures in the country have been affected by the cycles of violence ; nearly 70% of the territory is now in the hands of armed groups and completely beyond State control;
- Recurrent confrontations between armed groups, a splintering of these groups and a reshaping of alliances based on fluctuating interests;
- Intercommunal violence led by sub-contracted so-called self-defence groups and xenophobic messages or calls for slaughter;
- A multiplication of abuses targeting civilians, loss of human life amongst civilians – the foremost victims of the violence (at least one casualty in 17% of the 2381 security incidents registered in 2017 by the humanitarian community) – and massive population displacements;
- A jeopardized access of affected populations to both life-saving relief assistance and basic services due to the numerous incidents and attacks face by humanitarian actors (181 since the beginning of the year). CAR for the third year consecutively is considered the most dangerous country for humanitarian personnel in the world – in terms of number of incidents faced –;
- Increasingly violent and deadly clashes with international forces: the MINUSCA has lost 11 soldiers since the beginning of the year (on duty).



Map of tensions, incidents and clashes in CAR, June – July 2017, Source: OCHA.

HUMANITARIAN CONSEQUENCES

- Nearly half of the country's population is dependent on humanitarian aid to survive (Approximately 2,2 million Central Africans. Source: Humanitarian Country Team);
- More than 215,000 people were forced to flee their homes in the first half of 2017 to find refuge in equally poor conditions (during the rainy season);
- More than 20% of the population has fled their homes: More than 600,000 people are currently displaced while 438.724 people live as refugees in neighbouring countries (July 2017 figures; Source: OCHA/UNHCR);
- 48% of the population is suffering from hunger and receives a single meal per day (WFP);
- Only 35% of the population has access to drinking water and 27% to sanitation services (OCHA);
- 2 out of 3 Central Africans do not have access to primary healthcare services: there is only one doctor available for 22,000 people. One out of 4 health facilities has been destroyed.

RECOMMENDATIONS

To the government of the Central African Republic:

- Implement all necessary means to meet its primary responsibility of providing security and protection to all civilians on the Central African territory;
- Push forward the political agenda and the establishment of the National Peacebuilding and Recovery Plan (RCPCA), notably in terms of reform within the security, justice, fight against impunity and disarmament sectors;

- Develop and establish a national reconciliation strategy to include all parties in this conflict, addressing all communities as a priority;
- Condemn all rhetoric and actions that encourage further tension and that call for violence against civilians;
- Take all necessary measures against those, in particular amongst State representatives, who are guilty of encouraging xenophobia and violence;
- Launch investigations and prosecution against those guilty of abuses, of violations against human rights and against international humanitarian rights;

To the international community and UN Secretariat General:

- Reinforce support to the CAR government in the political, security - with a particular emphasis on the enhanced protection of the civil population -, humanitarian and recovery sectors. The Central African crisis must generate a multifaceted, targeted and flexible response to answer to the needs of the vulnerable populations and the current emergency situation whilst also addressing the root causes of the crisis (chronic under-development, absence of a centralised government, and most notably, impunity);
- Accelerate the provision of means – human, material and financial – to ensure the implementation of the RCPCA and of the Humanitarian Response Plan at the level of the increasing needs;
- Ensure the implementation of Security Council resolutions / recommendations, notably through the reinforcement of the United Nations' Integrated Mission for the stabilisation of CAR (MINUSCA) mandate and the means put at their disposal – notably in terms of human resources, with a number of civil and security personnel of appropriate quality to be adapted to the context -;
- Hold all parties of the conflict accountable for their engagement and their actions against the efforts and funds invested by the international community in CAR (including national authorities, the entirety of armed groups and the different components of the MINUSCA);
- Reinforce flexibility of the contingents' rules of engagement and deployment within the MINUSCA framework with an aim to develop a robust response in all necessary areas and to respond efficiently to the emerging protection of the civilians needs and improve humanitarian access;

To the United Nations Integrated Mission for the stabilisation of the Central African Republic (MINUSCA):

- Prioritise in all circumstances the protection of civilians;



- Support the Central African population and their representatives in the implementation of political conflict resolution and peacebuilding processes;
- Adopt a transparent accountability framework with an aim to improve the quality of the United Nations response to the Central African crisis;
- Replace the contingents that do not respect their commitments (in terms of rules of engagement, deployment, quality, discipline...) and fight against impunity;
- Clearly establish the distinction between the political, military and humanitarian components of the Mission through a mechanism showcasing the autonomy of humanitarian operations implementation; sign the civil-military interaction guidelines and guarantee the independent action of humanitarians;
- Reinforce the awareness of the contingents and personnel of their first mandate to protect civilians and facilitate the delivery of humanitarian aid as specified in UNSC Resolution 2301.

To armed and belligerent groups:

- Apply and impose the accords for a cessation of hostilities with an aim to preserve the life of humans threatened by the conflict;
- Reinforce the respect of human rights and the International Humanitarian Law;
- Guarantee the protection of the civil population irrespective of their origins or beliefs;
- Guarantee unconditional access of humanitarian actors to the vulnerable populations and of these populations to the basic services available, as well as respect of humanitarian principles;

To the Central African population:

- Support all initiatives for the peaceful resolution of the conflict, for the easing of intercommunal and/or interfaith tensions; actively encourage and participate in all projects building mutual understanding and national harmony;
- Reject all forms of xenophobia and intolerance, all forms of violence.

INTERNATIONAL NGO COORDINATION COMMITTEE IN CAR (CCO)

INGO SIGNATORIES:

