

# CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC REFUGEE

**BVOR BACKGROUNDBERS**





# B V O R B A C K G R O U N D E R S

## FRAGILE GOVERNMENT AND COUP

The political crisis began when a group of predominantly Muslim rebel movements came together in a loose alliance known as Séléka to oppose the regime of then-President François Bozizé. These militia committed mass atrocities and it escalated into a conflict between the government, the Séléka, and the anti-balaka (a Christian self-defence group).

## ARMED CONFLICT – CIVIL WAR (2012 AND 2017)

The main cause of refugees leaving the Central African Republic (CAR) is the ongoing civil war that involves the government, rebels from the Séléka coalition and anti-balaka militias. This non-international armed conflict commenced in December 2012, as the Séléka armed group started fighting against the government. As a result of this more than 640,000 people were forced to flee the country in search of safety, and an additional 630,000 were internally displaced. Weak state authority, internal ethnic tensions, and frequent armed insurgencies have increased the risks of mass atrocities against civilians.

The unrest continued in August 2017 and there was surge in murder, torture, rape, sexual and gender-based violence, destruction of property and villages and forced displacement by a Séléka splinter group.



**CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC** IS LOCATED IN THE CENTRE OF AFRICA, IT IS LANDLOCKED BETWEEN **CHAD**, **SUDAN**, **SOUTH SUDAN**, **THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**, **REPUBLIC OF CONGO**, AND **CAMEROON**





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## **ELECTION TURBULENCE**

The CAR continues to experience infrequent surges of violence due to elections. The most recent occurrence was in December 2020, after a troubled election displaced more than 200,000 people in less than two months.

## **RELIGIOUS CONFLICT**

The conflict between Muslims and Christian populations is another reason for displacement. The Séléka and anti-balaka militias fight against each other regularly, and carry out reprisals against civilians, forcing them to flee the country looking for safety. In late 2013 and early 2014, a large portion of the Muslim population was violently displaced from the west of the country.

## **VIOLATIONS OF HUMAN RIGHTS AND WAR CRIMES**

All parties to the conflict have used rape as a means of violently humiliating and degrading their victims. The population has also been subjected to war crimes, torture, and sexual and gender-based violence. Armed groups are documented as having engaged in human and sex trafficking and using children as soldiers as well as for forced labour and domestic servitude in mines and agriculture.

## **WHERE DO PEOPLE GO?**

Most refugees from the CAR flee to Cameroon, Chad, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Sudan and South Sudan.





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## WHY CAN'T THEY STAY THERE?

### Cameroon

**Lack of access to services, employment and school:** Access to work and other social services like school, education, and health are very limited to refugees from CAR. There is limited access to services for women and girls, including schooling. They make them prone to sex trafficking, sexual assault and exploitation as going far from the camps looking for firewood, water and other necessities.

**Political instability and insecurity:** Boko Haram has increased and intensified its attacks against civilians on both sides of the Cameroon/Nigeria border. Other groups, such as the Islamic State in West Africa, have also risen to prominence, threatening the safety of civilians' safety and continuing to forcibly displace populations in Cameroon and Nigeria. This instability and insecurity can make it unsafe for refugees from the CAR and have an impact on living conditions.

### Chad

**Living conditions and lack of employment:** The living conditions in refugee camps can be poor with limited access to basic services. The camps often flood during the rainy seasons and there is scarcity of food and water. These conditions expose refugees to disease and malnutrition, which coupled with a lack of infrastructure, access to schools and healthcare, make it difficult for them to restart their lives there.

**Political instability and inter-communal violence:** Internal armed conflict and intercommunal and inter-ethnic violence has intensified across Chad in recent years, which puts refugees lives at risk.





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## REFUGEE SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

The Blended Visa-Office Referred (BVOR) program helps to resettle refugees to Canada identified by the United Nations Refugee Agency (UNHCR) as those who are the most vulnerable and most in need of resettlement.

The BVOR program is a partnership program between sponsor groups in Canada, Immigration, Refugees, and Citizenship Canada (IRCC), and the newcomers. IRCC provides up to six months of income support to the newcomers, while the private sponsors provide the start-up costs, remaining six months financial support, along with social and emotional support for the newcomers' first year in Canada.

For more information about the BVOR program, and to view profiles of refugees that urgently need to be matched with a sponsoring group, please visit our website or contact us via email.

**Refugee Sponsorship Training Program**

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 [RSTP.CA](http://RSTP.CA)

 **CCS**  
Catholic Crosscultural Services

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