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Central African Republic

The Central African Republic (CAR) is highly exposed to the impacts of climate change due to socioecological vulnerabilities and ongoing insecurity. Drivers of vulnerability include the absence of state authority, natural resource mismanagement, and low household and community resilience. Although the security situation has improved in recent years, it remains volatile; factions of the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), self-defence groups and bandits regularly clash with government forces, allies and mercenaries such as the Wagner Group (now Africa Corps) in rural areas. A changing climate and the deteriorating security situation in the Sahel and the Great Lakes region have driven transhumant pastoralists further into CAR earlier in the transhumance season, creating tensions. Additionally, the spillover effects of the war in Sudan have put added pressure on the humanitarian situation in CAR, particularly in the Vakaga and Haute-Kotto prefectures.

- Climate change is expected to increase extreme weather events, negatively impacting livelihoods and food security. Conflict and poor governance are detrimental to households' adaptation capacities, disproportionally affecting women.
- The impacts of climate change and insecurity in the wider region contribute to unregulated transhumance into CAR, which affects conflict dynamics and poses risks to protected areas and biodiversity conservation
- In the absence of effective state authority in some regions, armed groups, militias, self-defence groups, bandits and private military and security companies like the Wagner Group/Africa Corps are extracting and controlling natural resources.
- Natural resource mismanagement, illicit mining and the illicit trade
 of timber have played a major role in funding the protracted conflict.
 Corruption has prevented the government from fully leveraging its
 resources and is hampering economic development and climate
 action.

There has been progress in implementing the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in CAR (APPR-RCA) and the Luanda Joint Road Map for Peace in CAR, along with concerted efforts to restore peace and foster development. Nevertheless, greater efforts and resources are needed to address CAR's security and development challenges, including climate-related security risks.

RECOMMENDED ACTIONS:

- The United Nations Security Council should task the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA) and other relevant UN agencies in CAR and the broader region to conduct analyses of the interlinkages between climate, peace and security in CAR. TThe UN's Climate Security Mechanism should deploy a climate, peace and security advisor to MINUSCA to facilitate coordination among the mission's different pillars and mainstream assessment methodologies.
- The CAR government, together with MINUSCA, UNOCA, the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS) and other partners, should continue to support the implementation of the priority actions of the May 2024 High-Level National Conference for Peaceful and Prosperous Transhumance in the CAR. Moreover, UNOCA and ECCAS should facilitate cooperation between CAR, Cameroon and Chad to strengthen bilateral and regional transhumance agreements. To support this, more weather stations and transhumance monitoring stations should be established across the region through the UN's Early Warnings for All initiative to improve climate prediction, weather monitoring capacity and early warning mechanisms.
- ➤ The CAR government should continue to engage in dialogue with groups from the Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC), while regional actors such as Chad should commit to mediation efforts between the CAR government and the CPC. Peacebuilding efforts should incorporate environmental and climate considerations, continue to support community-based mediation practices and invest in local resolution mechanisms to prevent conflict between farmers and herders.
- ▶ UN agencies, MINUSCA, UNOCA, ECCAS and other relevant partners should support and facilitate the process of integrating conflict-sensitive climate adaptation into CAR's first national plan for development. They should also help to secure adequate funding for the implementation of adaptation activities.

Figure 1. Key statistics

Climate and environment

N2

Projected mean annual temperature increase of up to 2.32°C by 2060 $\,$



Unregulated transhumance threatens biodiversity and intensifies resource conflicts



Precipitation projections indicate a longer rainy season by $2050\,$



Climate-induced hazards threaten livelihood and food security

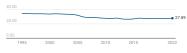
Population

Total population 5.9 million (2024)
Internally displaced population 467 000 (2024)
Population in moderate or severe 2.5 million (2024)

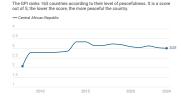
ND-GAIN Country Index

The ND-GAIN Country Index captures a country's vulnerability to climate change and other global challenges, and its readiness to improve resilience. It is a score out of 100; the higher the score, the less vulnerable and more ready the country.

— Central African Republic

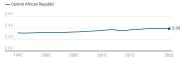


Global Peace Index (GPI)



Human Development Index (HDI)

The HDI measures a country's achievement in key dimensions of human development: a long and healthy life, being knowledgeable and having a decent standard of living. It is a score out of 1.0; the higher the score, the higher the level of human development.





Sources: United Nations Population Fund, World Population Dashboard, 'Central African Republic', accessed 18 Sep. 2024; UN High Commissioner for Refugees, Operational Data Portal, 'IDPs in Central African Republic', accessed 18 Sep. 2024; Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 'Central African Republic: Acute food security situation projection update for Apr.—Aug. 2024', accessed 18 Sep. 2024; Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative (ND-GAIN), 'ND-GAIN Index country rankings 2020', accessed 18 Sep. 2024; Vision of Humanity, 'Global Peace Index 2022', accessed 18 Sep. 2024 and UN Development Programme, Human Development Reports, 'Central African Republic', accessed 18 Sep. 2024

Climate exposure: Trends and projections

CAR is a landlocked country characterized by a hot and humid climate, with an arid and semi-arid climate in the north and savanna woodland and tropical forests in the south.¹ Subject to regional variability, the rainy season typically lasts from May to October and the dry season from December to April.²

Temperature: Annual average temperatures in CAR range from 23°C in the south to 26°C in the north.³ A mean annual temperature rise of 0.35°C per decade has been observed over the last 50 years and mean temperatures are expected to increase by 2.32°C by 2060.⁴ This is likely to lead to more frequent incidents of dry spells and drought.

Precipitation: Observations indicate an 8 per cent increase in total rainfall over the last 30 years, characterized by more intense and extreme rainfall events. Precipitation projections remain uncertain due to limited meteorological stations across CAR, but suggest that the rainy season will be longer by 2050. Rainfall is also likely to be more variable, increasing the risk of more frequent and intense floods and droughts.

Socioecological vulnerabilities

Although CAR enjoys a high degree of biodiversity and rich natural resources such as timber, gold and diamonds, it ranks among the countries with the lowest gross domestic product per capita globally. In 2023, an estimated 65.9 per cent of the population of 5.9 million lived in extreme poverty, with projections indicating an increase of 1 per cent by 2025 due to negative per capita growth. Moreover, the average life expectancy is 54.48 years, placing CAR among the four lowest countries in the world. Access to essential services, including healthcare and clean water, remains limited following decades of conflicts that have hindered public infrastructure development.

Ongoing insecurity in CAR and the deterioration of security in neighbouring countries, in combination with the absence of state authority, social fragmentation, resource mismanagement, flooding and disease outbreaks, have created a challenging humanitarian situation. Flooding incidents in CAR forced 69 000 into displacement in 2023. As of September 2024, reports indicate that recent torrential rains and strong winds have impacted nearly 8000 people, displacing approximately 3300 and destroying 1700 homes. ¹⁰

An influx of refugees and returnees from Sudan following the 2023 crisis is exacerbating the humanitarian situation in north-eastern CAR. In Insecurity in northern and north-eastern CAR, especially along the borders with Chad, South Sudan and Sudan, has restricted trade and driven up the prices of essential goods. In The CAR—Chad border, for example, is subject to attacks by armed groups and intercommunal conflict between transhumant herders and farmers. In

Climate-related peace and security risks

Climate change is rarely the main driver of conflict, but can undermine development gains, exacerbate the dynamics of ongoing violence and disrupt fragile peace processes. Violent conflict and political instability can also weaken community resilience to the effects of climate change. This fact sheet uses four interrelated pathways to navigate the relationship between climate change, peace and security: (a) livelihood deterioration, (b) migration and mobility, (c) military and armed actors, and (d) political and economic exploitation and mismanagement.¹⁴

Livelihood deterioration

Limited capacity for weather monitoring and analysis of climate-related security risks means there is insufficient understanding of how climate change impacts peace and security in CAR. However, research from similar contexts suggests that climate change can heighten conflict risks by worsening livelihoods and intensifying grievances.¹⁵

Despite its rich agricultural land and natural resources, CAR is one of the most food-insecure countries globally. In July 2024, around 2.5 million people were facing severe food insecurity due to armed conflict, forced displacement, rising food prices, low agricultural productivity and climate-related disasters such as flooding. In Insecurity in rural areas continues to increase the vulnerability of millions of people, particularly women, as livelihoods are eroded and access to food and basic services is critically restricted. In Insecurity In

Approximately 75 per cent of the population in CAR rely on agricultural activities for their livelihoods, with women making up 78 per cent of the agricultural workforce. ¹⁸ Armed conflict is a major disruption to the country's agricultural potential, as it forces people to abandon their fields, disrupts harvesting and negatively affects functioning institutions such as markets. ¹⁹ The agricultural sector, which is mostly rainfed, is also highly vulnerable to the potential effects of climate change, particularly floods and to some extent droughts. ²⁰

In 2023, 95 000 Central Africans were affected by flooding, especially in Bangui and the Ombella-M'poko prefecture, which contributed to the disruption of people's livelihoods and hindered access to fields and markets. The inadequate or extremely fragile infrastructure in many places in CAR renders it vulnerable to climate-related constraints (e.g. heavy rainfall and river flooding). This poses challenges to the effective delivery of humanitarian assistance and to actors like MINUSCA in accessing affected communities. Place livelihoods in action attacks by armed groups on humanitarian convoys further hamper humanitarian assistance efforts. The loss or lack of livelihoods in rural areas in CAR makes young people more vulnerable to recruitment by armed groups, which can appear to offer better socioeconomic opportunities and livelihood security.

Together with the CAR government, UN agencies, relevant partners and local organizations should prioritize climate-resilient development,

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- 17 OCHA, 'Central African Republic: Gender-based violence, a scourge with devastating consequences', accessed 22 Aug. 2024.
- ¹⁸ World Bank, 'Central African Republic can lift millions out of poverty by revitalizing its agricultural sector: World Bank report', 10 Mar. 2023.
- ¹⁹ Blankespoor, B., Touray, S. and Katayama, R., 'Estimating the effect of conflict on agricultural activity in the Central African Republic with remotely sensed data', 31 Dec. 2020; and World Bank (note 2).
- ²⁰ OCHA (note 16); World Bank, Central Áfrican Republic Poverty Assessment 2023: A Road Map Towards Poverty Reduction in the Central African Republic (World Bank Group: Washington, DC, Oct. 2023); and World Bank (note 2).
- ²¹ OCHA, 'West and Central Africa: Flooding situation overview (Jan.–Dec. 2023)', Infographic, 6 Mar. 2024; and IOM, 'Central African Republic Crisis Response Plan 2023', 2 June 2023.
- ²² UN staff member 2, Interview with authors, online, 2 Sep. 2024; and OCHA (note 21).
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focusing on building up a robust infrastructure, resilient agricultural practices, livelihood and food security, and disaster preparedness.

Migration and mobility

The effects of climate change, combined with factors such as insecurity and a changing demographic landscape in West and Central Africa, are putting increasing pressure on existing traditional transboundary transhumance routes, with major implications for CAR. For example, droughts, land degradation and desertification in the Sahel and the Lake Chad Basin are forcing transhumant pastoralists to alter migratory routes, pushing them further south into northern CAR in search of pastureland and water resources.²⁵ Increasing transhumance particularly from Chad and Cameroon into CAR and the gradual abandonment of the official transhumance corridors due to insecurity are a source of tension and increase the risk of biodiversity loss and habitat degradation.²⁶

Transhumance-related conflicts are a cause of

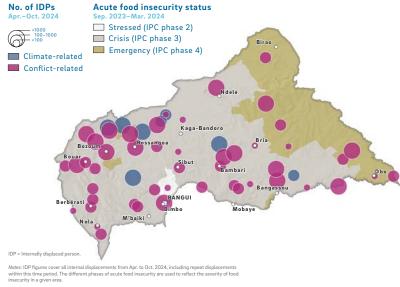
displacement across CAR. Tensions can arise between different groups of transhumant herders, between armed groups, militias, bandits and transhumant herders, or between transhumant herders and local communities, including sedentary farmers. Tonflicts erupt due to increased competition over natural resources, lack of water resources dedicated to herders and their livestock, poorly defined agricultural zone boundaries, the extension of agricultural fields and the presence of armed groups, among other factors. For example, in the Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded 358 incidents of conflict between transhumant herders and Indigenous communities in 2022, most taking place near water points. For example, in the groups, among other factors, and the presence of armed groups, among other factors. For example, in the Bamingui-Bangoran prefecture, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded 358 incidents of conflict between transhumant herders and Indigenous communities in

Increasing unregulated transhumance into CAR poses risks to protected areas and biodiversity conservation, as growing pastoralist activity due to mobility constraints or loss of resources elsewhere can lead to overgrazing, the exploitation of forest resources and poaching; this, in turn, results in environmental degradation. If properly managed, however, nature conservation can promote peace by integrating peacebuilding into conservation strategies and identifying shared interests between conservationists, pastoralists, Indigenous Peoples and local communities.

Ongoing efforts to address the transboundary transhumance issues in Central Africa include the development of a regional protocol and a strategy on transhumance by the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS), with support from the UN Regional Office for Central Africa (UNOCA). The CAR government, with facilitation from MINUSCA, hosted its first national conference on transhumance in May 2024. The aim was to strengthen support for the government in managing peaceful and prosperous transhumance, in accordance with the APPR-RCA and the Luanda Joint Road Map.

MINUSCA and other partners should continue to assist the government in implementing the agreed priority actions, such as strengthening the security of transhumance corridors, bolstering conflict prevention and





Sources: International Displacement Monitoring Centre, 'Country profile: Central African Republic', accessed 2 Oct. 2024.; and Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), 'Central African Republic: Acute food insecurity snapshot, Sep. 2023—Mar. 2024', 13 Nov. 2023

promoting cross-border dialogue. ³² International and regional actors should support these efforts by mobilizing financial and technical assistance and facilitating regional negotiations on transboundary transhumance. The governments in CAR, Cameroon and Chad should also improve collaboration and develop a regional approach to the issue.

Military and armed actors

The security situation in CAR remains volatile, due to violent clashes among armed groups, mercenaries and bandits, particularly around mining sites, transhumance corridors and border areas.³³ Spillover effects from the wider region, particularly the war in Sudan, are further complicating the security landscape.³⁴ Although the Central African Armed Forces (FACA), with support from MINUSCA and other allies, have recaptured much territory since 2019, armed actors continue to seek control over transhumance corridors and mining sites to generate revenue in rural areas. 35 In the absence of state authority, armed groups are exploiting herders by imposing illegal taxation on cattle herders and demanding services in exchange for grazing and security in precarious areas. This exacerbates tensions between herders and farmers, undermines social cohesion and weakens local dispute resolution mechanisms.³⁶ Predatory approaches by rebel groups are spreading fear among pastoralists who tend to arm themselves to protect their livestock and families.37

CAR's abundant natural resources have attracted foreign militaries, mercenaries and rebel groups, which compete for access to mining sites, with negative consequences for local communities.³⁸ For example, illicit gold mining inflicts harm on local communities, degrades the environment, causes deforestation and habitat loss, and hampers economic development and climate resilience.³⁹ Illegal timber exports have also attracted militias seeking funds to buy weapons, which has

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- ³⁸ ACLED, Moving Out of the Shadows: Shifts in Wagner Group Operations Around the World (ACLED: Grafton, WI, 2023).
- ³⁹ Issa, I., 'How illegal gold mining in Central African Republic is stunting economic development', HORN Institute, 31 Oct. 2022.

caused further instability in rainforest regions.⁴⁰ The Wagner Group/Africa Corps has repeatedly clashed with armed groups over the control of strategic mining sites, killing many civilians and driving displacement.⁴¹ Moreover, armed groups have reportedly destroyed water facilities and restricted access to water for civilians and enemy groups.42

MINUSCA should continue to support the government in securing transhumance activities and reducing violence in certain hotspots, particularly around transhumance corridors, border areas and mining sites. As local communities often exercise considerable influence over armed actors, the UN organizations in CAR, MINUSCA and humanitarian and peace actors should continue to promote and complement community-level peace and mediation efforts.⁴³ Cameroon, Chad and regional actors should also continue to engage in mediation activities. Moreover, peacebuilding efforts need to specifically incorporate environmental and climate considerations.

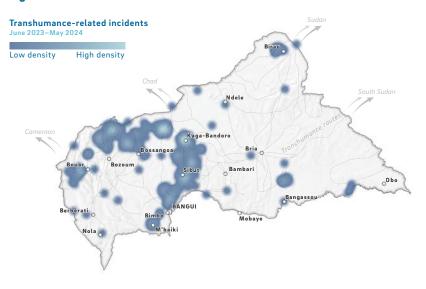
Political and economic exploitation and mismanagement

Mismanagement, corruption, poor state capacity and stressed public finances pose challenges for effective and inclusive governance in CAR.44 This has prevented CAR from fully leveraging its resources and is hampering socio-economic development.⁴⁵

A precarious security situation, weak law enforcement, corruption in the mining industry and the illicit trade of timber have all played a role in funding the protracted conflict in CAR.46 Insecurity has in turn had consequences for environmental degradation and exacerbated climate vulnerabilities. Although there is limited research on the interlinkages between political and economic exploitation, natural resource mismanagement and climate change in CAR, research from neighbouring countries suggests that state fragility, fragmented patronage systems and corruption increase grievances among populations facing multiple challenges.⁴⁷ Without adequate development and adaptation measures, the impacts of climate change may create compound risks that drive existing grievances and tensions and exacerbate conflict risks and vulnerabilities in the country.⁴⁸

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Figure 3. Transhumance and armed conflict in CAR



CAR's 2022 national adaptation plan incorporated peacebuilding and the national peacebuilding process and included resource-related conflict resolution in the objectives for the livestock and agricultural sectors. 49 Moreover, in 2023 a high-level dialogue in Bangui between government ministries, civil society and the private sector focused on including climate adaptation in CAR's national plan for development, which is currently being drafted.⁵⁰ However, funding and limited capacity, and factors such as insecurity and lack of intersectoral coordination, are hindering the effective implementation of adaptation measures identified in national and sectoral plans.51

UN agencies, MINUSCA, UNOCA, ECCAS and other relevant partners should support and facilitate the process of integrating conflict-sensitive climate adaptation into CAR's first national plan for development and help secure adequate funding for the implementation of adaptation activities.

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The Climate, Peace and Security Fact Sheets aim to generate reliable, relevant, timely and actionable information and analysis on climate-related peace and security risks in selected countries and regions on the United Nations Security Council agenda.

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