

# Central African Republic

## MIGRATION PROFILE

*Study on Migration Routes  
in West and Central Africa*



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# 1. Introduction

The Central African Republic (CAR) is a Central African state with a surface area of 622,984 sq km. It is bordered by six different states, namely Cameroon, Chad, Sudan, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and the Republic of the Congo. The CAR has no coastal regions, but its southern border is naturally defined by the Oubangui River, a tributary of the Congo River (CIA, 2017). In 2016, the CAR had an estimated population of almost 4.6 million people, of which 40 per cent lived in urban areas (World Bank, 2017). In the Human Development Index, the CAR scores 0.352, ranking last worldwide. Moreover, discounting Somalia, the



Source: CIA, 2017.

CAR is the country with the lowest GDP per capita globally. In 2016, the CAR's GDP per capita was estimated to be around 700 PPP \$ (World Bank, 2017). According to the figures of 2010, it is considered that 76% of the CAR population is multidimensionally poor, while 55 per cent live in severe levels of multidimensional poverty (UNDP, 2016). In 2016, the unemployment rate among the youth population was estimated to be 12%, while overall unemployment was almost 7% (World Bank, 2017).

**Table 1: Central African Republic Key Demographic and Development Indicators**

Indicator	Central African Republic
Total area, in sq km <sup>a</sup>	622,984
Population (2015), in million <sup>b</sup>	4.546
Urban Population (2016), % of total <sup>d</sup>	40%
Population Growth Rate (2016), annual % <sup>b</sup>	1.1%
Ethnic Groups <sup>a</sup>	Baya 33% Banda 27% Mandjia 13% Sara 10% Mboum 7% M'Baka 4% Yakoma 4% other 2%
Human Development Index (2015), country rank out of 188 <sup>c</sup>	0.352 188
GDP Based on PPP per Capita, current international dollars per capita <sup>b</sup>	698.9
Life Expectancy at Birth (2015), years <sup>b</sup>	51.4

Unemployment (2016), % of labour force <sup>b</sup>	6.9%
Youth Unemployment (2016), % ages 15-24 <sup>b</sup>	11.8%
Multidimensional Poverty Headcount (2010), % <sup>c</sup>	76.3%
Gini Coefficient (2010-2015) <sup>c</sup>	56.2
Foreign Direct Investment (net inflows, 2015), current USD millions <sup>b</sup>	3.0
Net Official Development Assistance Received (2015), current USD millions <sup>b</sup>	486.94
Personal Remittances Received (1993), current USD millions <sup>b</sup>	0.159

<sup>a</sup> CIA, 2017; <sup>b</sup> World Bank, 2017; <sup>c</sup> UNDP, 2016; <sup>d</sup> UN DESA, 2015b.

Since its independence from France in 1960, the CAR has suffered from multiple coups d'état, conflicts, and weak leadership (Dukhan, 2016). The most recent coup d'état happened in March 2013, and violence has been devastating the country ever since. Since December 2013, over one million people have been displaced (IOM, 2014). In 2016, after years of negotiations and peace agreements, a new elected government lead by Faustin-Archange Touadéra won the elections. However, this was not a turning point as expected by the international community, and now the CAR continues to experience violence and armed conflicts in many regions (Mangan, & Murray, 2017). These conflicts between armed groups are compelling massive human rights violations and vary from massacres, tortures, looting, and burning to the destruction of entire villages (Isaacs-Martin, 2016). Moreover, this situation of violence is escalating rapidly, and it is considered to be worse now than in 2016 (Global Conflict Tracker, 2017; Invisible Children, 2017). As shall be explained below, this situation of perpetuated conflicts highly influences human movements out of and into the CAR. However, before digging deeper into the migratory patterns within the CAR, it is important to consider that migration data are extremely poor and lacking. Indeed, the many governments that have ruled the country since its independence did not collect nearly any information regarding population movements. Moreover, the few data that have been collected have been lost due to the multiple attacks to government structures (IOM, 2014).

Historically it can be argued that the CAR has never been an extremely attractive country for immigrants. Its long history of violence, instability, and poverty largely discouraged immigration (IOM, 2014). However, in the last ten to fifteen years, there has been an increase in the number of labour immigrants, as the process to obtain a visa was facilitated by Bozizé government (IOM, 2014). According to estimates of the UN DESA (2015a), the number of immigrants in CAR, mainly coming from Sudan (24%), Democratic Republic of the Congo (21%), Chad (12%), and France (12%), was 81,598 in 2015.

In regards to emigration, UN DESA (2015a) estimates indicate that there were around 440 thousand CAR international migrants in 2015<sup>1</sup>. Accordingly, they were mostly residing in Cameroon (46%), Chad (21%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (17%), Congo (7%), and France (4%). Despite this information, little is known about the CAR's emigrants, the remittances they send, and the impact of those remittances on the developmental outcome of the country or on the conflict. Indeed, it is

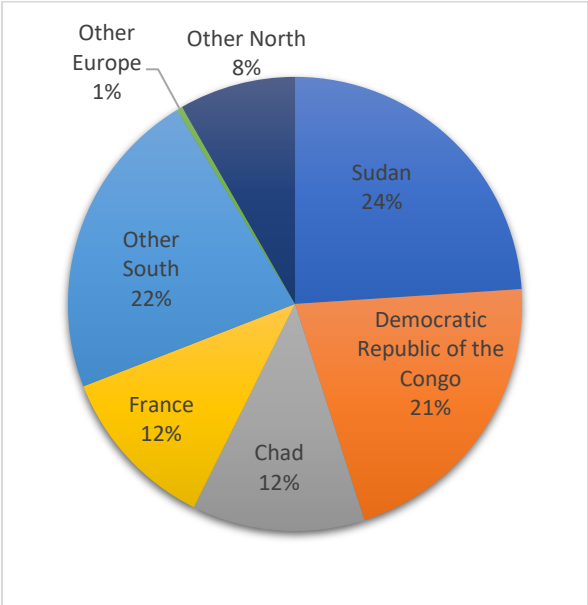
<sup>1</sup> Note that migration statistics from UN DESA (2015a) illustrate mixed migration stocks and may include some, but not all, of refugees in/from a given country. For further information visit: <http://www.un.org/en/development/desa/population/migration/data/estimates2/estimates15.shtml>

unclear whether diaspora members can be considered ‘peace keepers’ or ‘peace wreckers’ (IOM, 2014).

The movement of the CAR is surely characterized by forced migration. Indeed, four out of five people were forced to leave their place of usual residence at some point between 2002 and 2010 (Vinck & Pham, 2010). As of July 2017, estimates from UNHCR (2017a) illustrate that the number of refugee from the CAR is more than 480 thousand, mainly hosted in Cameroon (57%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (21%), Chad (15%), and the Republic of Congo (6%) (UNHCR, 2017a). According to the same statistics (UNHCR, 2017a), the number of IDPs as of July 2017 is 600 thousand, and it is very likely that many of these IDPs will look for security outside of the CAR if the conflicts continue; if this is the case, they will become refugees. Interestingly, almost all refugees from the CAR seek protection in bordering states to the south, west, or north of the country, while none seek safety along the Eastern border in Sudan and/or South Sudan. This can be partially explained by the fact that most of the conflict since 2013 took place in west and central areas of the CAR (Weyns et al., 2014). Only since the beginning of 2017 are conflicts escalating in the eastern part of the country (Global Conflict Tracker, 2017).

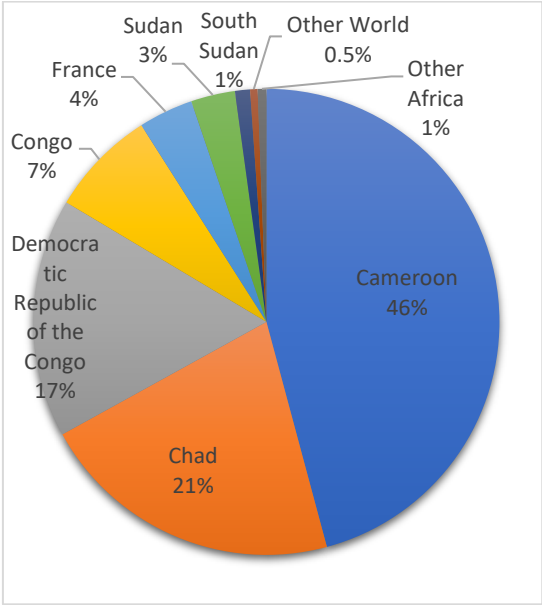
By comparing Figures 1 and 2 and also by considering the main destination countries of CAR refugees, interesting patterns can be identified. Indeed, it stands out that most migration in and from the CAR happens within the Central African region, with the bordering nations being both the sources and destinations of most migrants. Importantly, most of the remaining stock of immigrants (12%) and emigrants (4%) reflects the long colonial relationship between France and the CAR.

**Figure 1: Origin of Migrants in Central African Republic, 2015**



Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

**Figure 2: Destination of Migrants from Central African Republic, 2015**

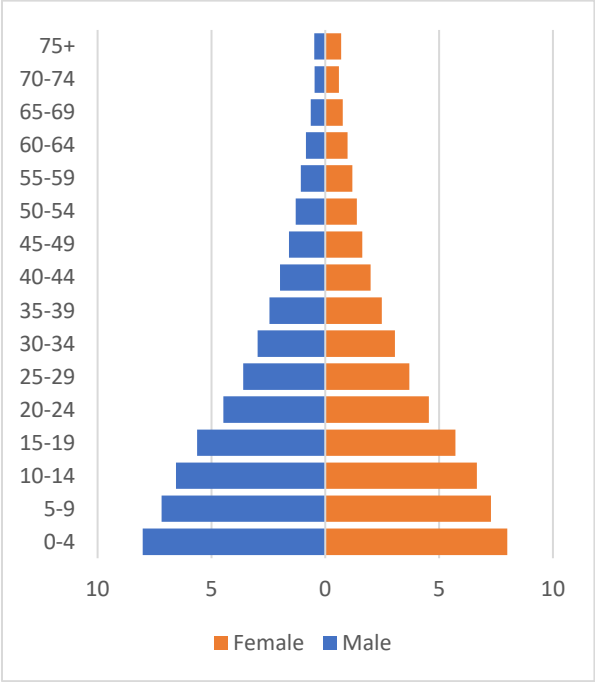


Source: UN DESA, 2015a.

By comparing the population pyramid of the CAR and of the migrant stock in the CAR (Figure 3 and Figure 4, respectively), interesting patterns arise. The latter has a rather usual shape with a population spread among different age groups, mainly ranging from 0 to 50 years of age. The population pyramid of the CAR, on the other hand, is highly concentrated in low age groups, with

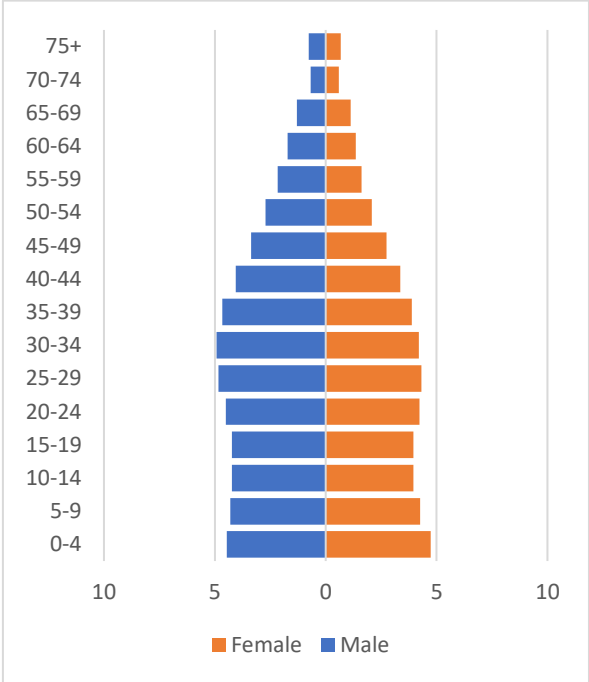
55% of the population being aged less than 20 years old (UN DESA, 2015a). This situation is in line with other demographic indicators. In fact, the CAR is one of the countries with the highest total fertility rates (31<sup>st</sup> worldwide) and one of the lowest life expectancies (219/224 worldwide) in the world. Moreover, it has one of the highest death rates (11<sup>th</sup> worldwide) and HIV/AIDS levels globally, two major impediments to long lives (CIA, 2017).

**Figure 3: Total Population in Central African Republic by Age Group, 2015**



Source: UN DESA, 2015b.

**Figure 4: Migrant Stock in Central African Republic by Age Group, 2015**



Source: UN DESA, 2015b.

## 2. Forced Migration/ Displacement

### 2.1. Refugees in Central African Republic

Considering its geographical position, in the midst of surrounding countries with prolonged instances of violence, civil war, and persecution, the CAR has hosted refugees from these countries for many years (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2008). However, the CAR should be considered a source of refugees rather than a destination for refugees, since the figures of refugees from the CAR are much higher than of those hosted in the CAR. The latest figures of 2017 illustrate that the stock of the refugee population hosted in the CAR is 12,115 people, while the stock of asylum seekers is 304 (UNHCR, 2017b). In 2016, the stock of the refugee population was slightly lower (11,734), and most of the refugees came from bordering nations. Specifically, in 2016, refugees in the CAR originally came from South Sudan (42%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (40%), and Sudan (18%) (UNHCR, 2017c). The reasons behind displacement from these countries into the CAR are very similar and include conflicts, violations of human rights, famine, epidemics, and sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) (European Commission, 2017a; European Commission, 2017b; UNICEF, 2011). Specifically, the South-Sudanese crisis started in 2013, with the beginning of a civil war between armed groups that have displaced more than one and half million refugees until today. Moreover,

this situation of instability brought to severe level of famine, and now in South Soudan 4.9 million people, representing 41.7% of the population, are severely food insecure. In the future, this number is expected to increase to 5.5 million. The situation of famine and violence experienced in South Sudan is of unprecedented proportion, and it will probably increase the number of people that will resettle both inside and outside South Sudan (European Commission, 2017a). Similarly, in the last five years, refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo have been seeking protection in the CAR (amongst other countries) because of continuing violence, conflicts, food insecurity, and epidemics in their countries of origin (European Commission, 2017b). Moreover, since the beginning of 2017, 65,000 people have been displaced from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, and this trend is expected to continue in the future. Lastly, mainly starting in 2011, people from Sudan migrated toward the CAR because of conflicts, flooding, and malnutrition in their country of origin (UNICEF, 2011). Overall, the problems faced by the population of these three origin countries are considered to perpetuate in the future, with a direct impact on human mobility also toward the CAR.

Refugees in the CAR are granted their status within 30 days of submitting an application and conducting an interview. The application for becoming a refugee can be directly presented to the National Refugee Commission but also to border and local authorities, the UNHCR, or other international organizations (IOs). After receiving refugee status, refugees have the right to move freely in the country, are granted access to the labour market, and have equal treatment with respect to health care and education services. However, despite this open policy that does not constrain refugees within camps, most of them are vulnerable to violence if they leave these facilities (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2008). Indeed, as of 2015, most refugees in the CAR were hosted in seven camps spread across the country and managed by UNHCR, other IOs, and NGOs (UNHCR, 2015a). However, at present, the resurgence of conflicts in the central and southeast parts of the CAR is constraining humanitarian operations and assistance. Recently, UNHCR's offices as well as those of NGOs have been burned down, while others have suffered from heavy weapon fire on several occasions (UNHCR, 2017d). Moreover, UNHCR staff and other humanitarian workers have been kidnapped for hours before being released. Some refugee camps, such as Zemio in the southeast of the CAR, have been directly attacked. This direct targeting of aid corporations and the UNHCR, consequently, has reduced humanitarian access and responses. Refugees, therefore, experience increased vulnerability due to violence and also from the lack of basic needs including food, water, sanitation, and education (UNHCR, 2017d).

**Table 2: Refugees in Central African Republic, Mid-year 2016.**

<b>Country of Origin</b>	<b>Refugees</b>
South Sudan	4,708
Democratic Republic of Congo	4,708
Sudan	2,114
<b>Total</b>	<b>11,734</b>

*Source: UNHCR, 2017c.*

## **2.2. Refugees from Central African Republic**

The stock of Central African refugees has increased remarkably over the last four years. Precisely, in 2013, there were around 9 thousand refugees from the CAR, but this number rose exceptionally to

140,000 in January 2014. Following this, the number of refugees more than doubled, reaching 308,000 in 2015 (UNHCR, 2017a). These steep increases among the refugee population are considered direct consequences of the coup d'état of 2013 and of the ensuing civil war. Indeed, since 2013, systemic violations of human rights, SGBV, and the destruction of markets and economic activities have led to major population displacement (IOM, 2017a). In 2016, the figure of the refugee population increased even further to 450 thousand. As of July 2017, estimates from UNHCR (2017a) indicate that the number of CAR refugees is levelling off around 480 thousand. Currently, these refugees are mainly hosted in Cameroon (57%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (21%), Chad (15%), and the Republic of Congo (6%). Women and girls represent the majority of them (52.4%), while men and boys represent the minority (47.6%). Interestingly, more than 60 per cent of these refugees are children, defined as people aged less than 18 years (UNHCR, 2017a). Hence, there is an overrepresentation of minors amongst the refugee population when compared to the national population. Moreover, as shall be explained below, the CAR's refugees experience different vulnerabilities that vary depending on the country that is hosting them.

Most of the CAR's refugees are hosted in Cameroon, with around 70% living in hosting communities and 30% in refugee sites. Malnutrition is the biggest challenge for this refugee population, as 34% is estimated to be at risk of food insecurity (UNHCR, 2016a). Other areas of concern are related to freedom of movement, child protection, SGBV, and access to official documentation. Other areas of intervention are related to nutrition, shelters, education, and health care (UNHCR, 2017d). Extreme poverty levels and clashes over resources with the hosting communities worsen this situation (UNHCR, 2016a).

The refugees hosted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are located in areas along the border, in a remote area with limited access and inexistent roads (UNHCR, 2017d; UNHCR, 2016a). Camps are overcrowded and facilities are lacking. In the Inke Camp, for example, 104 refugees share one latrine (UNHCR, 2016a). Moreover, shelters are limited, as some villages have grown up to 15 times their size. There are also evidences of infiltrations of elements belonging to armed groups into refugee camps (UNHCR, 2017d; UNHCR, 2016a). Lastly, refugees hosted in the Democratic Republic of the Congo face serious problems related to extortion, SGBV, as well as lack of food, water, sanitation, shelters, and health care (UNHCR, 2017d).

In Chad, refugees from the CAR were mostly resettled in the capital and in nineteen hosting villages, following an out of camp policy. Nevertheless, as of October 2015, around 66,000 refugees were hosted in six camps as well (UNHCR, 2016a). Vulnerabilities and needs of these refugees vary depending on where they are living. Specifically, people living in host villages seem more disadvantaged as humanitarian intervention is constrained by resources and logistical issues. While famine is not considered a major challenge, response to human rights violations, child protection, and SGBV are needed as these are major risks faced by the refugee population in Chad (UNHCR, 2016a). Particular attention should be given to the last two points, as 85% of refugees that arrived in Chad since April 2017 are women and children (UNHCR, 2017e).

The majority of the refugee population hosted in the Republic of the Congo lives in the Béту district (66%), while the rest live in Brazzaville (23%), Impfondo (5%), and other three cities. In total, 40% are living in two sites located into Béту district, while the rest are settled in hosting communities. Shelters, as well as the sanitation facilities, in these camps are inadequate (UNHCR, 2016a).



Moreover, there are only two hospitals to serve an estimated population, including both natives and refugees, of 80 thousand people. Hence, the main areas of concern are related to health care provision, shelters, and sanitation (UNHCR, 2016a). Moreover, efforts are put into re-establishing a *prima facie* status determination for the CAR's refugees by Congolese authorities (UNHCR, 2017e).

**Table 3: Central African Republic Refugees (2017)**

<b>Country of Destination</b>	<b>Refugees</b>
Cameroon	274,914
Democratic Republic of the Congo	102,403
Chad	72,955
Republic of the Congo	31,305
<b>Total</b>	<b>481,577</b>

Source: UNHCR, 2017a.

### 2.3. Internal Displacement in Central African Republic

As mentioned in Section 1, violence and conflicts have long characterized the history of the CAR. Indeed, internal displacement is not a new issue for this country (IOM, 2014). Prior to the violent clashes of 2013, there were already around 130,000 IDPs in the CAR. They were mostly running from militia and bandit groups active in the northwest of the country. However, the number of IDPs rocketed to 935,000 in 2013. In just one year, almost one person out of four was forced to leave their place of usual residence (IDMC, 2017). This was a direct consequence of the clashes that took place after the coupe d'état of 2013, which displaced people mainly in Bangui and in the western and central regions of the CAR. During the following two years, the number of IDPs decreased and stabilized between 400,000 and 450,000 (UNHCR, 2017a). This sizable reduction in the number of IDPs could be partially justified by the many peace agreements and the consequent relaxation of the conflict that lasted until the elections of 2016 (Mangan, & Murray, 2017). Starting in January 2017, however, the stock of IDPs in the CAR increased again; as of July 2017, it is estimated that there are 600,000 IDPs in CAR (UNHCR, 2017a). This increase is probably due to the new conflicts ongoing in the eastern regions of the country, in which civilians are experiencing increasing violence and attacks by armed groups (Global Conflict Tracker, 2017). As of April 2017, estimates indicate that 24% of IDPs were living in IDP camps, whereas 76% were staying in host families (UNHCR, 2017d). Importantly, this situation is in continual evolution and should not be considered static. This implies that, when conflicts reduce in one part of the country, they might escalate in another, causing different patterns of return and displacement. Indeed, most recent reports indicate that, in May 2017, violent clashes among four different armed groups have risen dramatically to affect the north-western and south-eastern areas. At the same time, violence has reduced in the capital and in the surrounding areas. Hence, while some 100,000 people were forcibly displaced, some others were spontaneously returning to their homes (UNHCR, 2017d; FAO, 2017).

IDPs are considered to be a particularly vulnerable population, and food scarcity is one of the main problems that they face. According to the FAO (2017), limited and poor food consumption among IDPs remains above 50 per cent. Moreover, since the national health system collapsed in the CAR,

access to health care is very problematic. Drinking water is accessible by just one third of the IDP population, and sanitation in IDP camps is lacking (European Commission, 2017c). Additionally, since the beginning of 2017, it is increasingly challenging to deliver humanitarian assistance to IDPs, as the UN, other IOs, and NGOs have become targets of various armed groups (FAO, 2017; UNHCR, 2017d). Indeed, almost 30% of the total attacks against UN workers worldwide are registered in the CAR (FAO, 2017). Despite some delays, UNHCR is trying to implement humanitarian aid assistance by air to circumvent these armed groups (UNHCR, 2017d). At present, the efforts of the European Union in dealing with this delicate humanitarian crisis are put into nutrition, emergency shelters, health, sanitation, water, and protection of civilians. This aid is focused on IDPs both inside and outside of IDP camps (European Commission, 2017c).

## **3. Regular/ Labour Migration**

### **3.1. Immigration**

Due to a lack of government data and records on migration in the CAR, not much is known about immigration into the country and about its impact on the economy (IOM, 2014). Moreover, it seems that the international community is entirely focussed on the instances of forced migration in and from CAR, leaving the issue of voluntary migration largely understudied. Additionally, as mentioned already in Section 1, widespread violence and low economic performances have generally discouraged foreigners from migrating to the CAR. Nevertheless, regular labour migration is considered to have increased between 1993 and 2013, thanks to a facilitated procedure to obtain labour visas (IOM, 2014).

In 2010, the stock of immigrants in the CAR was around 70,000, representing 1.6 per cent of the country's population (World Bank, 2011). Instead, this number increased to 132,000, reflecting 2.8 per cent of the CAR's population, in 2013 (UN DESA, 2013). These migrants were mostly uneducated and migrated to the CAR for professional reasons, mainly related to opening an independent business activity in the country (IOM, 2014). Moreover, these migrants are considered to originally come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Cameroon, Chad, France, Senegal, Sudan, Senegal, Nigeria, the Republic of the Congo, Niger, and Mali (World Bank, 2016). In 2015, the number of international migrants in CAR reduced to 81,598 (UN DESA, 2015a). Accordingly, migrants from Cameroon made up the biggest share of the immigrant population (46%), followed by Chad (21%), Democratic Republic of the Congo (17%), Congo (7%) and France (4%) (IOM, 2014).

### **3.2. Emigration**

Similar to what was said in the previous section, data on emigration from CAR are almost inexistent (IOM, 2014). Arguably, this is due to both lack of governmental data and lack of interest by IOs toward voluntary migration within the CAR context. According to Knoema estimates (2017), the CAR has had a negative net migration rate since the beginning of 2015, indicating that there has been more emigration than immigration in the last fifteen years. Estimates from the World Bank (2011) indicate that the stock of CAR emigrants was almost 130 thousand in 2010, representing 2.9 per cent of the country's population at the time. In just three years, this stock rose to 342,000, or 7.3 per cent of the CAR's total population (World Bank, 2016). Most of these emigrants migrated toward Chad,

Cameroon, France, the Republic of the Congo, Mali, USA, Canada, and other European states (World Bank, 2016). In 2013, there were 699 highly skilled emigrants from the CAR; while the overwhelming majority was living in France (602), others were settled in Saudi Arabia (53), USA (28), South Africa (9) and Oman (7) (UN DESA, 2013). In this regard, there is not much information about the personal remittances sent back by CAR's emigrants, and the latest relevant figure is from 1993 (World Bank, 2017). This lack of data is rather problematic, especially since this means that the extent to which remittances are invested in development or used to fuel the country's conflicts is unknown (IOM, 2014).

## 4. Internal Migration

In the last 50 years, the CAR has experienced a gradual urbanization process. Indeed, the urban population (as percentage of the total population) doubled during the last fifty years (World Bank, 2017), indicating a long-term urbanization process characterised by rural-urban movements. Training and education are considered the main pull factors of this trend, especially since the only university in the CAR is located in the capital, Bangui. Additionally, the main push factors for rural-urban migration can be found in the risks related to the insecurities arising from an agricultural lifestyle. Importantly, urban unemployment is considered to be at least three times higher than rural unemployment; this pushes people to leave cities in favour of rural areas and generates additional urban-rural movements (IOM, 2014). Interestingly, much migration within the CAR happens from both rural and urban areas toward the natural resources sector. In fact, there is more migration happening towards mines, tobacco plantations, and forestry than toward rural or urban areas per se (IOM, 2014). Specifically, migration towards artisanal mines is noticeable; even though such migration was initially characterized by a seasonal nature, it evolved into more permanent migration, with increasing numbers of camps and villages established surrounding mining areas (International Crisis Group, 2010). Hence, it might be concluded that internal migration in CAR is primarily driven by economic opportunities that attract migrants from rural and urban areas into specific places where companies working in the natural resources sector have labour shortages.

Rural-rural migration is also rampant since there is a dense population of pastoral, nomadic groups in the CAR. Some of them are more mobile than others and tend to migrate with the household. Overall, these nomadic groups usually migrate north during the wet season from April to October and south during the dry season to access water (FAO, 2015; International Crisis Group, 2014; IOM, 2014). This instance creates seasonal rural-rural movements across the whole country. Importantly, these transhumance pastoralist groups are highly vulnerable to violence. Indeed, they are often victims of racketing, kidnaps, attacks, assassinations, and harassments, perpetrated by both bandits and government agents (FAO, 2015).

## 5. Irregular Migration

Measuring irregular migration is generally challenging, especially in developing countries with fragile institutions and weak statistical offices (Ratha & Shaw, 2007). Accordingly, the number of irregulars in CAR is not known, and it is impossible to concretely estimate the magnitude of this phenomenon (IOM, 2014). However, some speculations can be made. Specifically, since a lack of documents is a

common feature of South-South migration, it is likely that irregular migration happens quite frequently in the CAR. Moreover, when immigration rules are unclear, badly articulated, and/or poorly implemented, as is the case in the CAR (see Section 7), the incentives to migrate regularly are reduced. Moreover, incentives for irregular migration are given when most of the economy of a country is within the informal sector (Ratha & Shaw, 2007). Specifically, this seems to be the case for the CAR, as an estimated 200% of total foreign trade happens informally (UNECA, 2013). Hence, we might conclude that, despite missing information about irregular migration, it is reasonable to assume that this kind of migration is prominent in the CAR. Moreover, as we shall see, trafficking in human beings is rampant in the CAR, reinforcing the suspicion of high levels of irregular migration in the country.

### **5.1. Human Smuggling**

Human smuggling and human trafficking are crimes against international law and involve the irregular movement of people from one country to another. The main two differences between these phenomena lie in the presence or absence of consent and in the exploitation of migrants upon destination. Smuggling, as opposed to trafficking, is a service that migrants consensually use to get from A to B and that finishes upon arrival. Instead, trafficking victims are forced to migrate against their will (absence of consent), and this continues upon destination with the exploitation of the trafficked person (UNODC, 2017a). Nevertheless, the lines between trafficking and smuggling are thin, and smuggling very often becomes trafficking due to the increased vulnerability of migrants on the move (UNODC, 2017a).

Human smuggling does not appear a common instance in the CAR. Indeed, no article about or reference to human smuggling within the CAR was retrieved in the literature review for this analysis. This is not surprising because, by looking at the nationalities of sea arrivals to Europe, it stands out that only a minority of people comes from countries that are located more south than the CAR (UNHCR, 2016b). Additionally, the small numbers of migrants from southern African countries that try to reach North Africa, or to a lesser extent Europe, do not pass through the CAR on their journeys. Indeed, none of the African routes leading north passes through the CAR. Instead, these routes pass through the coastal African states, either west or east of the CAR (Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2017; Global Initiative Against Transnational Organized Crime, 2014).

### **5.2. Trafficking in Human Beings**

According to the 2017 Trafficking in Persons (TIP) Report, the CAR does not meet the minimum standards regarding the elimination of human trafficking. Moreover, CAR performances and efforts in combating human trafficking have not developed over the past years. Instead, they even became worse, as CAR was ranked between Tiers 2 and 3 in 2010 and is currently ranked Tier 3. In fact, during the years, the CAR government did not persecute any trafficker, protect any trafficking victims, nor undertake any anti-trafficking training or campaign (US Department of State, 2017). For these reasons, it is considered that the CAR government is not making any effort to stop trafficking in the country. As the CAR is ranked Tier 3 in the TIP Report, it is among the least performing countries (US Department of State, 2017).

At present, even though the scope of human trafficking in the CAR is largely unknown, the CAR is considered a source, transit, and destination country for human trafficking victims. However, most of the human trafficking is assumed to happen within the borders of the state and not internationally. In the CAR, children are often victims of forced labour and sex trafficking, men of forced labour, and women of forced prostitution (US Department of State, 2017). IDPs are considered to be at even greater risk of human trafficking for all the purposes mentioned above when compared to the rest of the population. Moreover, IDPs are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation by the hands of peacekeeping troops (Amnesty International, 2016; UN General Assembly Security Council, 2016; UN Security Council, 2016). The most common instances of forced labour as result of trafficking are related to domestic work, mining especially in the diamond sector, agricultural work, and conflicts. The presence of many militias and armed group in the CAR is linked to many of the instances of human trafficking just mentioned.

Precisely, these groups continue to adopt practices of compulsory recruitment of child soldiers and to abduct children for forced labour (UN General Assembly Security Council, 2016; UN Security Council, 2016). It is estimated that between 6,000 and 10,000 children are used by these non-state armed groups to serve as combatants, cooks, and concubines. At the Bangui Forum in 2015, an agreement was signed by ten armed groups and the transitional government to put an end to these forms of child slavery. The armed groups agreed to release all the children under their control and put an end to the recruitment of child soldiers (Amnesty International, 2016; UN General Assembly Security Council, 2016; UN Security Council, 2016). Estimates indicate that, even if forced recruitment of child soldiers continues, as many as 7,500 children have been removed from the control of militias thanks to the Bangui Agreement (US Department of State, 2017). Nevertheless, these children are considered to be at high risk of re-recruitment (UN Security Council, 2016).

Having said that, it is important to consider that the CAR has ratified the most important international conventions against child labour, and it has a well-developed institutional mechanism for its enforcement (US Department of Labour, 2017). Moreover, article 151 of the penal code criminalizes all instances of trafficking in persons, with penalties of between 10 years and life imprisonment for human traffickers (US Department of State, 2017). Nonetheless, the CAR's government is unable to control the ongoing violence and has no power to enforce its legislations (US Department of Labour, 2017; US Department of State, 2017).

## **6. Migrant's Vulnerabilities and Protection Issues**

As noted in Section 1, the CAR is probably the least developed and the poorest country in the world. Violence and instability have long characterized the CAR's history, and most of the country's population is at risk of multiple threats; this is true for the entire population, not only for IDPs or refugees. Specifically, it is considered that the CAR population is vulnerable to violence, SGBV, and famine. Moreover, the inexistence of a health care system further worsens this situation (FAO, 2017). Children are considered particularly vulnerable compared to the rest of the population, as they are often victims of forced labour and sex trafficking (US Department of State, 2017). Similarly, they are also at high risk of compulsory recruitment by the hands of armed group to serve as combatants (US Department of State, 2017).

The internally displaced population is also considered to be particularly vulnerable. Indeed, food scarcity, illnesses, and violence, in addition to a lack of drinking water and sanitation facilities are problems that are commonly faced in IDP camps (FAO, 2017; European Commission, 2017c). Particularly concerning is the vulnerability of IDPs to violence and force re-displacement, as some IDP camps are attacked and burned by armed groups; these factors further increase the vulnerability of IDPs toward external threats (Thomas Reuter Foundation, 2017). Furthermore, IDPs are vulnerable to commercial sexual exploitation and trafficking by both armed groups and peacekeeping troops (Amnesty International, 2016; UN General Assembly Security Council, 2016; UN Security Council, 2016). Therefore, efforts to help this population should focus on nutrition, water, health, as well as protection from violence and SGBV (European Commission, 2017c).

The risks faced by the refugee population in the CAR are very similar to those faced by IDPs. Particularly, while famine, shelters, sanitation, and healthcare are common problems in refugee camps, violence is still one of the main concerns. Some refugee camps, such as Zemio in the south-east of the country, have been directly attacked by armed groups (UNHCR, 2017d). Moreover, as subset of the refugee population, women and kids are considered to be particularly vulnerable to sexual abuse. Refugee camps have been sites of sexual abuse against women, girls, and boys by UN peacekeepers during the last three years (Laville, 2016a; Laville, 2016b; Lazareva, 2017).

Given the vulnerabilities and areas of concern just mentioned, it is important to consider that it is increasingly challenging for the UN and aid organizations to deliver aid in the CAR. Since the beginning of 2017, the UN, other IOs, and NGOs have become targets of various armed groups. In particular, their offices have been burned down and/or attacked with heavy fire (FAO, 2017; UNHCR, 2017d). These direct attacks to aid corporations and UNHCR have, therefore, reduced humanitarian access and responses. This means that refugees and IDPs experience increased vulnerability toward violence but also toward the lack of basic needs including food, water, sanitation, and education (UNHCR, 2017d; FAO, 2017).

## **7. Relevant National Policies and Stakeholders**

According to C. T. Call (2011), a "failed state" has three gaps that it is unable to fill: capacity (when the state is incapable of delivering basic goods and services), security (when the state loses the monopoly on the legitimate use of violence), and legitimacy (when a significant portion of society rejects the regulating power). From the previous analysis, it appears that the CAR is unable to fill any of these three gaps, therefore resulting in a 'failed' or 'fragile' state (IDMC, 2014). Hence, given this situation, it is not surprising that most of the efforts by the UN, IOM, and UNHCR in the CAR are not related to migration management, or legislative frameworks per se, but are instead centred around the reduction of violence and peace building (IOM, 2017b; UN Security Council, 2016a). Additionally, this situation can explain, at least partially, why there is not a migration management plan in the CAR. Dialogues in this regard started in March 2017, and it is too early to talk about any results or future developments.

However, as key national stakeholders for future migration policy management, the Migration EU Expertise (MEUX) team identified the Ministry of Interior, Public Security and Territorial Administration; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, African Integration and Central Africans Abroad; as

well as the Ministry of Territorial Administration and Decentralization as key stakeholders in this regard (ICMPD, 2017). Together with other IOs, these ministries will be involved in developing a multi-stakeholder migration management plan for the CAR. In fact, non-governmental actors have vital functions in many areas related to migration management in CAR. With IOM and UNHCR being the most prominent, non-governmental stakeholders are essential and have a monitoring role in the development and implementation of migration-related policies, especially related to IDPs and refugees (UN Security Council, 2016a).

The CAR is part of the Economic Community of Central African States (ECCAS). This regional integration plan aims to strengthen cooperation among its members to realize a balanced economic development. Amongst the many fields touched by the ECCAS, there is the free movement of persons in the region (UNECA, 2017). The protocol for free movement of persons prescribes freedom of residence and establishment for all ECCAS citizens in any country of the region. However, this is effective only in Cameroon, Chad, Congo, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In CAR, visas are still required and the protocol is not yet being implemented (UNECA, 2017).

At present, the CAR government has not yet ratified any of the most important ILO conventions regarding labour migration. This instance indicates a first gap in the migration management context, which is related to the lack of regulations for regular labour immigration and emigration. In fact, none of the following conventions has been ratified nor have action been taken in their regard (OHCHR, 2017; ILO, 2017).

- 1949 Migration for Employment Convention (no. 97) – ILO
- 1975 Migrant Workers Convention (no. 143) – ILO
- 1990 UN International Convention on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families
- 1997 Private Employment Agencies Convention (no.181) – ILO

Even if the CAR allows for double citizenship (Bronwen, 2010), little is known about the CAR diaspora (IOM, 2014). Indeed, there are no data on such remittances. Moreover, the legislative framework in this regard appears lacking, as also illustrated by the non-ratification of the previously mentioned conventions (IOM, 2014; World Bank, 2017).

The CAR government has instead ratified both the 1951 UN Convention relating to the Status of Refugees and the 1967 Protocol (UNHCR, 2015b), indicating a good practice with respect to refugees and asylum seekers. Moreover, as prescribed by the CAR constitution, refugees enjoy freedom of movement as well as equal access to the labour market, to schools, and to services (US Committee for Refugees and Immigrants, 2008). Similarly, the CAR government shows a good legislative framework in respect to trafficking and smuggling, as it has ratified both the 2000 UN Protocol against the Smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air and the 2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children (UNODC, 2017b; US Department of Labor, 2017). Moreover, article 151 of the penal code criminalizes all instances of trafficking, and offences can be punished with life imprisonment and hard work. To investigate and coordinate the efforts to address human trafficking, an inter-ministerial Committee to Combat Human Trafficking, overseen by the Ministry of Public Security, is in place. Nonetheless, this legislative framework is almost never implemented, the administrative organ just mentioned is not

making any noticeable effort to fight trafficking, and human traffickers act by large with impunity (US Department of Labor, 2017; US Department of State, 2017).

**Table 4: Central African Republic's Key Migration Policy Response**

<b>Policy</b>	<b>Content</b>
<b>1951 UN Convention relating to the status of Refugees. 1967 Protocol.</b>	The 1951 Convention defines who is a refugee and who has the right to be granted asylum. Moreover, it sets the responsibilities of the hosting nations with respect to the hosted refugees and asylum seekers populations. However, this convention had some precise spatial and temporal limitation related to who could be granted the refugee status. The 1967 protocol removed these restrictions.
<b>2000 UN Protocol against the smuggling of Migrants by Land, Sea and Air</b>	This protocol is part of the Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime, and it aims to protect the rights of migrants in transit. Moreover, it stresses the need to fight the root causes of human smuggling with a joint and cooperational approach. Additionally, it criminalizes all instances of migrant smuggling.
<b>2000 UN Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, especially Women and Children</b>	This protocol is part of the Convention against Transnational Organized Crime, and it is used to combat and prevent trafficking in persons. Moreover, it promotes the assistance of victims, and cooperation among origin, transit, and destination states to fight all human trafficking instances.
<b>Article 151, 262 Penal Code</b>	It criminalizes all the instances of human trafficking and commercial sexual exploitation of children. It prescribes penalties from 10 years imprisonment to life sentence with heavy work.
<b>1990 Constitution</b>	Provides that ratified treaties are a higher source of authority than local laws. E.g. 1951 UN Convention relating to the status of Refugees.
<b>2007 Refugee Law</b>	Defines the procedure to follow to become a refugee. Additionally, it prescribes various rights and duties of refugees hosted in CAR. On principle, they are allowed to join the labour market, to use social services, hospitals, and education facilities just as CAR's nationals.

*Sources: US Department of Labour, 2017; OHCHR, 2017; ILO, 2017; US Committee for Refugees and Migrants, 2008.*

## **Gaps**

After this analysis, it stands out that the main gap in the CAR regards data collection and statistics. Indeed, there are no data on legal labour immigration and emigration (IOM, 2014), where the latest figures on private remittances are from 1993 (World Bank, 2017). Similarly, data are lacking on irregular migration, and the scope of human smuggling and human trafficking in the country is unknown (US Department of State, 2017; IOM, 2014). This lack of data highly constrains any possible effort in developing ad-hoc policies for the achievement of regular and orderly migration in the CAR.



A second gap arises within the existing policy framework for migration. Particularly, the CAR has not ratified any of the most important international conventions for labour immigration and emigration (OHCHR, 2017; ILO, 2017). Therefore, the most important legal instruments for regular migration are missing. As identified by Ratha & Shaw, (2007), this situation naturally pushes migrants to move and work irregularly.

Another gap in the CAR migration management context is linked to the non-implementation of existing laws and policies (IOM, 2014). Specifically, the legal framework to combat trafficking and smuggling and to defend the rights of children is fully developed, though nearly never implemented. Therefore, human traffickers and exploiters act with law impunity in the CAR, and this business is considered to be prominent (US Department of State, 2017).

Lastly, due to the continuous attacks of armed groups to UN, IOs, and NGOs in the region, delivering humanitarian aid is increasingly challenging (FAO, 2017; UNHCR, 2017d). Moreover, this gap in the aid delivering system is worsened by the fact that most of the projects and mission within CAR are underfinanced and lack the economic resources needed to work efficiently.

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