



Integrated Country Strategy

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

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1. Chief of Mission Priorities

INTRODUCTION: A poor and landlocked country in the heart of Africa, the Central African Republic has experienced recurring bouts of instability and violence since 2013. This has had a significant impact on other U.S. regional priorities, and thus our overriding priority is to move CAR toward enduring stability, national reconciliation, and development. Failure to achieve these goals risks renewed communal conflict and creation of a large, chaotic space under the control of a patchwork of armed factions, self-proclaimed leaders, religious extremists and criminal elements. By contrast, success in moving CAR toward stability will alleviate human rights concerns and expand central government control over the country. Given the current capacities of the government, the concerted support of the international community will be essential for a positive outcome.

In 2013, a coalition of mostly Muslim armed groups, the Seleka, overthrew the government and occupied Bangui. Seleka depredations created a backlash from the anti-Balaka, largely Christian self-defense groups: thousands died and tens of thousands were displaced in the increasingly sectarian conflict that followed. Outside players stepped in. Internal violence abated following a regional summit in January 2014, and the situation began to stabilize. France deployed an intervention force, and the African Union deployed a peacekeeping mission that was rehattd in 2014 as a UN peacekeeping mission, MINUSCA.

Violence nonetheless persisted, albeit on a diminished scale, and armed groups held (and still hold) sway over much of the country. A transitional government emerged in 2015, and CAR held a constitutional referendum and presidential and parliamentary elections in 2016. The new president, Faustin Archange Touadera, initiated disarmament and prioritized reform of the security and justice sectors. The European Union committed to strengthening the CAR army; a donors' conference mobilized \$2.2 billion in pledged assistance for all sectors.

Despite these gains, armed groups and outside political elements still retain the capacity to destabilize the country, and the UN peacekeeping force, MINUSCA, is hard pressed to provide security throughout. The state has limited control over much of its territory, and development programs languish. In early 2018, unrest in Bangui and outlying areas indicated the daunting challenges that remain, including additional measures needed to strengthen the security and justice sectors, return of refugees and displaced persons, governance, and development. The government has limited human and technical capacities and insufficient financial resources to achieve these ends.

The USG has played a major role in moving CAR forward from its protracted crisis, and, absent our bilateral and multilateral support, the situation in CAR would likely be more precarious. Our continued engagement should be focused on the following priority domains:

HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE AND SUPPORT FOR THE INTERNATIONAL COMMUNITY – The United States is the largest humanitarian donor in CAR. In 2017, we provided more than \$140

million in bilateral assistance implemented by USAID's Office of Foreign Disaster Assistance and Food for Peace, as well as State's Bureau of Populations, Migration and Refugees. Nearly half a million Central Africans have sought refuge outside the country, with another 400,000 displaced internally. The USG should provide continued assistance with water, sanitation and hygiene; logistics support; relief commodities; food security; shelter; humanitarian coordination; and protection. The return and resettlement of displaced populations is the key. To this end, USAID has an annual budget of approximately \$1-3 million to promote social cohesion and address the root causes of inter-communal violence, as well as about \$10 million in annual counter-Lord's Resistance Army programming. Through expanded stabilization programs, these flows of assistance pave the way for durable social/economic development.

The UN has a lead role in safeguarding security in CAR that in turn will advance the political process to focus on lasting peace. MINUSCA is the most effective security actor presently active in country; without its presence, the prospects of renewed violence would rise exponentially. The United States UN Security Council (UNSC) assessment covers 28 % of MINUSCA's annual operational costs. Our continued support in the UNSC is essential to maintain troop and resource levels that permit MINUSCA to fulfill its pivotal role.

SECURITY AND RULE OF LAW: The State Department has committed substantial resources to the disarmament, demobilization, reintegration and security sector reform. The UN, World Bank and other bi/multilateral actors have supported negotiations between armed groups and the CARG. The U.S. should support this process. The commitment of the Bureau of International Narcotics and Law Enforcement to improving the police, judicial and corrections systems is slated to continue, as are Department of Defense and State Department programs to train and equip the Central African military (FACA), in tandem with international partners like the EU, so that FACA is able to reoccupy and defend the country's territory and eventually replace international forces at the guarantor of the security of the Central African population.

To restore justice, the establishment of a hybrid national/ international court – the Special Criminal Court – will be a determinant in bringing high profile human rights violators to justice. INL, which has provided resources to this court, projects a ten-year role ahead in the reform and restructuring of the law enforcement and justice sectors in tandem with ongoing efforts to protect the population and strengthen governance.

CONSULAR ACTIVITIES: Bangui is home to very few U.S. citizens. This is a single post; families and spouses are not permitted at this time. U.S. citizens living in Bangui are employed by the United Nations Development Programs in one of their many agencies or with private non-government organizations. All U.S. citizens are firmly encouraged to register with STEP. Embassy Yaoundé handles visa applications and transmits all alerts and messages to Bangui registrants.

EMBASSY PERSONNEL AND INFRASTRUCTURE: Significant infrastructure and capacity deficits constrain our efforts in CAR. A chancery of 1948 vintage meets few security standards and is

substandard. Despite significant infrastructure investments since 2014, when the embassy reopened, we remain in catch-up mode. OBO seeks to purchase a new site this calendar year to make way for a new chancery, the only long-term solution to the problem. Embassy staffing is presently tilted heavily toward security personnel; as circumstances permit, this staffing pattern needs rebalance. Our Locally Employed Staff (LES) dwindled during the crisis years and must be rebuilt. Many LES lack adequate training in the basics.

Looking ahead, the diplomatic work of this Mission, from public diplomacy outreach to engagement with senior political, business and security leaders, will be the mainstay of our future policy and programmatic endeavors. Our goal is to provide robust support now to the people and government of CAR, bilaterally and multilaterally; to assure a return to peace in the mid-term; and to promote effectively the United States policy positions across the board over the longer term.

2. Mission Strategic Framework

Mission Goal 1: Provide protection as well as and basic humanitarian needs to the Central African civilian population until Central African security forces and state institutions can do so.

Mission Objective 1.1: Coordinate with the U.N. and partners to ensure that MINUSCA has sufficient mandate, personnel, and resources to protect the civilian population.

Mission Objective 1.2: Collaborate with international partners to transform the Central African military into a force capable of safeguarding the population and the full range of national interests.

Mission Objective 1.3: Assist the return of the 25% of displaced Central Africans to their places of origin, facilitated by provision of humanitarian aid until they achieve self-sufficiency.

Mission Goal 2: A functional justice system and strengthened security apparatus address the issues of impunity, national resources management, and undermining of democratic governance by negative actors.

Mission Objective 2.1: Coordinate with international partners to provide training, equipment, technical expertise and resources to the law enforcement, judicial and correction sectors support of accountability and reconciliation at national and local levels.

Mission Goal 3: Mission is prepared for and provides effective support to U.S. citizens in times of national emergencies.

Mission Objective 3.1: Maintain contacts with United Nations agencies and NGOS which have U.S. citizen employees to ensure evacuation readiness and assistance should it be needed.

Management Objective 1: Construct a new embassy compound to house all sections and agencies of the mission in a functional, secure facility

Management Objective 2: Rebalance and right-size Embassy U.S. Direct Hire (USDH) staff and contractors to optimize the positions working in support of Embassy program goals, recalibrating security personnel based on threat environment.

Management Objective 3: Recruit and train a full complement of locally employed staff (LES) in support of priority embassy goals.

3. Mission Goals and Objectives

Mission Goal 1: Provide protection as well as basic humanitarian needs to the Central African civilian population until Central African security forces and state institutions can do so.

Description and Linkages: Initiatives to transform the CAR security forces into a force that can protect the population against negative actors are underway. Until CAR can become the guarantor of national security, there will be a continued role for international protection mechanisms such as MINUSCA. The U.S. and other international donors are addressing the humanitarian needs of the 25% of Central Africans currently displaced. The State Department, the Department of Defense and USAID manage synchronized programs to strengthen security forces and provide humanitarian relief. Linkages for these initiatives are found in the National Security Strategy's (NSS) Goal 1, the use of synchronous Cross-Agency Collaboration in rebuilding security forces and strengthening the rule of law. Additional linkages are the State/USAID Joint Strategic Goal Framework Goal (SUSRGF) 1.4, increasing the capacity of partners to deter aggression and malign influence by non-state actors and Goal 3.1, transitioning nations from assistance recipients to reliable diplomatic, economic and security partners, and Goal 3.4., projecting American values through provision of humanitarian relief. The final linkage is Goal 4 of the AF/AFR Joint Regional Strategic Goal Framework for Africa (AASJRSGF) on inclusive country-led development.

Mission Objective 1.1: Provide protection as well as and basic humanitarian needs to the Central African civilian population until Central African security forces and state institutions can do so.

Justification: MINUSCA currently is the only capable security force in the country despite gains by the Central African military. USG support and influence, both at the United Nations level and in CAR, will be key in ensuring that MINUSCA is adequately resourced and can fulfill its mandate on the ground.

Mission Objective 1.2 Collaborate with international partners to transform the Central African military into a force capable of safeguarding the population, the government, and national interests.

Justification: The only long-term solution to the recovery and stability of the CAR is a functioning national military force. Outside assistance is required to achieve this outcome, both in terms of training and equipment.

Mission Objective 1.3: Assist with the return of the 25% of displaced Central Africans to their places of origin, facilitated by humanitarian aid until they achieve self-sufficiency.

Justification: The cycle of violence that has displaced 25% of Central Africans and disrupted the socio-economic fabric of the country must be broken to promote a return to normalcy, ideally by resettlement and community reconciliation backstopped by robust security.

Mission Goal 2: A functional justice system and strengthened security apparatus address the issues of impunity, national resources management, and undermining of democratic governance by negative actors.

Description and Linkages: Central African Republic has not experienced a functional judicial system for several years. Developing a judicial system that works for the people involves ensuring their rights, providing security and providing access to law. A proactive program to link the development of the judicial systems, judicial police, corrections systems, and law enforcement units began in 2014 with the installment of International Narcotics and Law (INL) personnel into the U.S. Embassy staffing. For two years the focus has been capacity building efforts, restoration of the Rule of Law and the fight against impunity. INL has provided technical support, advocacy, jury training, and substantial logistical assistance. INL funding will continue to enable the American Bar Association (ABA) to establish legal aid clinics and train personnel while INL funding for United Nations Development Programs (UNDP) will support security and justice in both the lower courts and a Special Criminal Court system that will bring to justice those Central Africans accused of gross violation of the law.

Mission Objective 2.1: Coordinate with international partners to provide training, equipment, technical expertise and resources to the law enforcement, judicial and correction sectors support of accountability and reconciliation at national and local levels.

Justification: The criminal justice chain in CAR, from police training to professional prosecution to incarceration, is understaffed, undertrained, underequipped and underfunded. An up-front investment in all of these areas is needed to rebuild a sector that can address the needs of a still fragile Central African state.

Mission Goal 3: Mission is prepared for and provides effective support to U.S. citizens in times of national emergencies.

Description and Linkages: Embassy Bangui does not accept visa applications or process visas. American citizens living in CAR are working for one of the United Nations agencies or a private non-governmental organization (NGO) which provides emergency and evacuation services. Just the same our embassy has a Town Hall with American citizens twice a year. Our political officer handles visa applications, the majority of which are government officials. Visa applicants must go Yaoundé for interviews and processing. Embassy Bangui will continue to liaise with the consular officer in Yaoundé to ensure that processes remain in place.

Mission Objective 3.1: Maintain contacts with United Nations agencies and NGOs which have U.S. citizen employees to ensure evacuation readiness and assistance should it be needed.

Justification: Given the Central African Republic's potential for terrorist activity and natural disasters, it is imperative that there are evacuation procedures for U.S. citizens, to include establishing closer contacts with local authorities and strengthening posts' methods of communication with private U.S. citizens.

4. Management Objectives

Management Objective 1: Construct a new embassy compound to house all sections and agencies of the mission in a functional, secure facility and in the interim complete necessary upgrades to maintain current site in a secure and functional condition and bring other USG-owned properties into habitable condition.

Justification: The chancery in Bangui is a relic of a by-gone era and is unsuitable for current or future operations in terms of safety, security, communications or other management concerns. A new embassy compound is an essential step to establishing a mission that can successfully pursue our policy and security interests over the longer term.

Management Objective 2: Right-size Embassy U.S. Direct Hire staff and contractors to optimize support of Embassy program goals, recalibrating security personnel based on threat environment.

Justification: Security conditions when Embassy Bangui reopened in 2014 dictated a robust security element. The contingent of 34 Worldwide Protective Specialists was halved in 2018 and the Marine Security Guard Detachment reactivated. As security conditions permit further reduction of security elements, the embassy will require additional reporting and program personnel to support expanding operations.

Management Objective 3: Recruit and train a full complement of locally employed staff in support of programs in support of priority embassy goals and programs.

Justification: There was a hemorrhage of local staff even before the 2013 closure. This contingent was never replaced. Due to security conditions and American direct-hire vacancies, training of local staff also suffered. To redress these shortfalls, both hiring and training must increase in order to ensure up-to-date skills and improved readiness and institutional knowledge.