



Towards a Roadmap to Peace and Prosperity

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

2022

CREATING THE PATHWAYS FROM POVERTY TO PROSPERITY

ABOUT THE LEGATUM INSTITUTE

The Legatum Institute is a London-based think tank with a bold vision to create a global movement of people committed to building pathways to prosperity from poverty and to the transformation of society.

We seek to do this by raising up leaders of character, restoring ethical vitality in all sectors of society, and developing data tools and practical solutions that will contribute to the development of inclusive and peaceful societies, with open economies and empowered people.

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Cover image: "Children welcome Pope Francis during his 2015 visit to Bangui, Central African Republic, holding posters asking for peace." by United Nations Photo is marked with CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Note on Sources

In producing this report, we have relied on three major sources of information. These have provided a broad and rich perspective on the challenges facing the Central African Republic (CAR), and the opportunities for peace and stability.

The first type of source constitutes interviews and conversations with leading academics, researchers, officials, and experts – 25 in total in CAR and around the world. The report benefitted from a visit to CAR in December 2021.

The second includes academic articles, reports, and news articles that provide an up-to-date evidence base.

Third, we based our report on the Legatum Prosperity Index, which uses global datasets from the World Bank, World Economic Forum, and International Monetary Fund. We use this to benchmark CAR's performance on a wide range of indicators.



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FOREWORD

Our mission at the Legatum Institute is to create pathways from poverty to prosperity in a secure and stable environment, by fostering inclusive societies, open economies, and empowered people. Our work is focussed on how prosperity can be created and sustained. Prosperity is more than material wealth; it encompasses security, freedom, wellbeing, and opportunity. Without safety, security, and stability for all people, it is extremely challenging to create an environment in which people have the freedom, resources, networks, and opportunities to flourish.

The Central African Republic ranks 166th out of 167 countries in the Legatum Prosperity Index™. Its pathway to prosperity is a difficult one. For decades the political competition in the country has been carried out through conflict, extreme violence, and the raiding of other groups for resources. Hence, a viable political settlement has not emerged, hindering prosperity.

The State – unitary in name only – does not generally control most of the national territory or fulfil its normal functions. It has become the second-poorest country in the world with one of the most unequal wealth distributions, a third of its population displaced and two thirds in need of humanitarian assistance. Yet it is largely ignored by the international media and global public opinion. Nevertheless, it receives substantial foreign assistance (a third of its GNI) and large UN-mandated military support (MINUSCA) – a world champion of peacekeeping missions. It is situated in the most fragile region of the world and has become a base for Russian Wagner Group mercenaries.

International partners have supported the idea of a unitary state and the Government in Bangui, with aspirations of it becoming the “ideal” state. This approach has contributed to a concentration of resources in the capital as opposed to developmental support throughout the country. Because peace processes and agreements are Bangui-focussed, these assistance programmes have not managed to address the drivers of conflict, particularly access to local resources. In this context, this report finds that there is little incentive for most of the political and economic elite to change the status quo. Consequently, the prospect for conflict and further violence continues unabated, so a movement toward peace is a narrow corridor.

This report seeks to identify a solution that would ultimately allow for the creation of a pathway to prosperity. It would involve a change from the current status quo, facilitating a cease fire and a peacebuilding process. We argue that this solution presents a realistic opportunity for conciliation, a de-escalation of violence that would lead to national transformation.

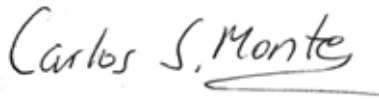
De-escalating conflict could be initiated with the Government not only declaring a national cease-fire, but also recognising that it is not possible for any one side to win the armed conflict, given the country's geography, history, and population distribution. In this scenario, the Government would choose to delegate its authority to different areas, creating space for local authority and accountability to develop in some areas. Incentivising the movement to peace in local areas is essential.

This process would also require international development partners to act in unison, with the main aim of creating incentives for peace building. They could contribute in their capacity to coordinate effective UN military support – a strengthened MINUSCA force would make peace a more attractive option. Furthermore, they could support local development through reallocation of large foreign assistance budgets and resources in areas outside of Bangui using a stability fund.

In addition, this report outlines some of the principles, policies, and practices that a locally based peacebuilding programme supported by a stability fund could include. The roadmap outlines a conciliation process that respects local tradition and culture, and the needs of individual ethnic and social groups, which re-allocates access to resources. In a more peaceful environment,

attention could be focussed on the immediate drivers of economic and social wellbeing of the people. These include enhanced farming productivity, developing consensus on land-use rights, re-building commerce and lifting economic roadblocks, and rebuilding local infrastructure. Once the conditions for investment are created, the people of Central African Republic can continue developing their own pathway to prosperity.

We hope that this report contributes to a greater understanding of the suffering and plight of the people in Central African Republic, and that it is paramount for policymakers around the world to think constructively about their contributions to real solutions that can actually tackle these problems. Local solutions are complex and do not contain all the answers, but central plans and an idealised unitary state model have not been effective. If nothing changes, it is likely that even higher levels of violence will arise in already the most fragile neighbourhood in the world. The proposed changes create an opportunity and the means for Central African Republic people and their leaders to gain more agency over their lives, offering a platform from which they can develop their own prosperity.



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OVERVIEW OF THE REPORT

The report starts with an executive summary that introduces the key facts, diagnosis, and proposals.

Part I of the report includes four sections:

The first section “The Central African Republic Matters,” outlines the many important reasons why CAR should not be overlooked with respect to development assistance, humanitarian aid, and geo-political discussions around the world, especially given the Central African Republic is part of the most fragile neighbourhood in the world in addition to Russia’s increasing role in the country. We have engaged because to date no viable solutions have been implemented to end its cycles of violence and conflict.

The second section, “Diagnosis of Political Capacity and Stability,” includes a political timeline as well as an analysis of the political capacity of CAR (including a discussion on the absence of a viable political arrangement, predatory political behaviour, and weak state capacity). This section also discusses how regional and geo-political conflicts (including the recent intervention by the Russian Wagner Group) have intensified the cycles of violence and conflict. Neither foreign assistance (military support and development assistance), nor national peace processes seem to have resulted in greater stability in CAR. However, some local peace agreements have shown relative success wherein local drivers of conflict have been addressed.

The third section, “Narrow Road to Stability and Peace,” describes the tragedy of the current situation for the population, and that the key actors do not have incentives to change the status quo. It proposes that for change to occur, key actors will have to start using different lenses to see the problems in CAR, in other words, not through the ‘ideal’ unitary state lens, but rather focus on local accountability, and exploring political, as well as financial, decentralisation. We propose that development partners start this process of change by creating incentives for a national ceasefire to provide the space for more regional autonomy and decentralisation. It can be complemented with the allocation of more foreign development assistance and resources outside of Bangui. We conclude with recommendations of a ceasefire, pragmatic local actions to support peacebuilding (supported by a stability fund), and a process of conciliation to build local peacebuilding that addresses the drivers of conflict.

The fourth section presents key conclusions of the first part of the report, namely that transformation is achievable if international development partners were to alter key incentives facing stakeholders in CAR. For example, incentives to promote a ceasefire would lead to changes in behaviours which could lead to greater stability in regions outside Bangui and that could quick start greater local accountability.

Part II of the report is “National Transformation: Possible Policies of a Roadmap Towards Peace.” In this part of the report, we suggest potential types of policies and practices that would be consistent with the decentralised, locally based, economic-driven approach that we are proposing. All policies and practices are directed at addressing the drivers of conflict. These policies are tentative since one of the key insights of this report is pivoting the focus away from grand solutions and plans, and instead follow a decentralised approach which we are proposing to experiment with local solutions, so we can learn and scale the solutions that are successful.

Part II contains 20 sections covering the different elements that fall under the three domains of Legatum’s Prosperity Index: Inclusive Societies (Politics), Open Economies (Economics) and Empowered People (Social). Each section provides background information, some of the strengths and weaknesses of each area, a vision of how the sector would look in a prosperous CAR, and some illustration of possible policies or practices that may contribute to building peace. The Inclusive

Societies chapter covers the reform of the security sector, public safety and crime, diplomacy, judiciary and law, political accountability, personal freedoms, and civil liberties. The Open Economies section discusses employment and the independent sector, land tenure and property rights, banking and finance, macroeconomic management, international trade, agricultural and mining sectors, and infrastructure. The final section, the Empowered People, details the sectors of health and education, as well as food security and social protection. Part II roughly follows the Prosperity Index arc, which includes a ceasefire, decentralization and an effective international force securing an end to conflict, followed by accountable governance, building of a strengthened economy, and provision of basic services to achieve prosperity in CAR.

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROSPERITY



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Central African Republic has become the second poorest country in the world. It is saddled with violence and conflict yet is largely ignored by the international media and public opinion. Large amounts of foreign assistance and military support have not stabilised the country, and most of the population suffers.

CAR has become a centre of geopolitical tensions, not only within the region, but also involving the big powers. The Russian Wagner Group are militarily active in most of the country. It has been reported for human rights violations by the UN Panel of Experts and subject to sanctions by the EU – the most influential foreign assistance partner.

However, international partners and organisations have the capacity to support change in this desperate situation by using their large foreign assistance budgets and capacities to coordinate effective UN military support, to make peace a more attractive option, and by supporting the reallocation of resources to areas outside Bangui. This will require strong and united leadership, along with taking calculated risks.

These policy changes are difficult, but they would create space for the Central African people and their leaders to gain more agency over their lives. This is the only way to avoid the spiralling of violence in CAR and across the region. If these changes were implemented, the international partners could successfully deliver a model for how foreign assistance can help stabilise poor failed states. On the other hand, if nothing changes, the risk is that CAR could reach South Sudan levels of violence.



The mayor of the PK12 district of Bangui, Begoua, sits at his desk.
Marcus Bleasdale

Key Facts

- The CAR state has always been fragile, but violence and conflicts have intensified over the past 15 years, with 1.4 million currently displaced and more than 3 million in need of humanitarian aid.
- The regional neighbourhood is the most challenging area in the world, with five of CAR's six neighbours themselves classified as fragile states and contributing to CAR instability.
- Rule of law/action against impunity, protection of lives, respect of human rights and private property are not enforced despite repeated commitments.
- Productive activity is based on the country's rich land resources (agriculture, forestry, and mining), yet CAR remains the second poorest country in the world, ranking 150th or lower on 40 out of 67 Elements of Prosperity.
- Substantial foreign assistance and military support for peacebuilding has not brought more peace, while in many areas it has distorted economic and institutional incentives. Developmental assistance is channelled through the central Government in Bangui while humanitarian aid is more evenly distributed around the country.
- Actions of the Wagner Group have contributed to an escalation of violence and human rights violations in many parts of the country; this has disrupted certain sectors, such as mining. Military wins are likely to be volatile and can backfire.
- For the Government and the rebel forces alike, the situation is unstable and presents many risks. Changes may result in them losing the resources they control and extract from others, or even the loss of their lives.
- A common national identity to unify the country does not exist, and it is further fragmented by unequal distribution of economic resources and ethnic cleavages.
- The Government's legitimacy vis-à-vis the international community is built on the appearance of complying with formal democratic processes because it has military control of the capital. However, democratic accountability is poor.
- The Government generally does not have the capacity to control territory on its own without support from external forces (MINUSCA, Wagner Group, Rwandan troops, etc.).

Diagnosis

- The stability of the Government is fragile, and its survival depends on external military forces and the control of foreign assistance resources.
- Elections are often seen as a donor requirement that provides access to foreign assistance and military support. However, this is not yet part of a process for de-escalating violence and building accountability.
- CAR does not have a functioning 'social contract.' The main interaction between its citizens is raiding, where groups extract resources from one another. People see each other as potentially dangerous enemies.
- The conflict is mainly the result of groups competing to extract or raid resources from the population (including bandits from neighbouring countries) together with political grievances in the Northwest.
- From this perspective, academics have noted that groups in Government, rebels, militia and even bandits have many similarities.

- The absence of a legitimate (or even de-facto) authority to enforce property rights, security or border controls is a key factor that impedes economic growth.
- Grasslands for livestock, agricultural produce, logging, road transport, mining, the state budget, and foreign assistance are all resources over which conflicts arise.
- Foreign assistance has become one of the most attractive sectors to appropriate, as it constitutes about 30% of GNI, and therefore dominates the country's economy. For example, developmental foreign aid related to peace agreements contributes to the theatre of "national peace agreements," including the multiplication of rebel groups and the weakening of the relationship between rebel leaders and their local areas.
- The international community's belief in the Central African Republic as a unitary Government, with its centre in relatively rich Bangui, makes the military control of the capital especially valuable. It also provides incentives to demonstrate a capacity to have military control of the entire country. The control of Bangui facilitates access to valuable foreign assistance resources.

Principles for Building Peace

- The vision of a peaceful CAR requires that key stakeholders act differently. International development partners hold a key to positive change, but they need to act in a united manner and use all the resources at their disposal – and the political leverage they secure. These resources need to be directed with a single-minded focus on supporting policies that reduce levels of conflict and violence and support the security of external borders.
- Conciliation needs to start one step at a time, initially providing opportunities for stakeholders to build some level of trust with one other. For example, by holding inclusive conversations, such as the grass-roots conversations in the 2015 Bangui National Forum.
- Actions and policies that contribute to peacebuilding should not be Bangui-centric, but instead informed by an understanding of local conditions outside of Bangui.
- Safety and security are the most important constraints to prosperity in CAR – no significant activity is feasible or sustainable under the current high levels of conflict. However, security requires ensuring that the conflict becomes less attractive to both the Government and the rebels.
- Making the conflict less attractive will require international development partners to look at CAR through different lenses, and recognise:
 - the *de-facto* similarity among different groups competing for resources (including the Government).
 - the difficulty of running the country as a unitary Government from the centre.
 - the severity of the problems that result from not being able to control external borders.
 - how foreign assistance has not been able to play a stabilising role.
- In this context, international partners need to realistically observe the actions and interests of all groups who compete for resources, including the Government.
- International partners need to shift the priority of developmental assistance to regions outside of Bangui and support the building of governance and accountability structures, order, and security at a local level. Some humanitarian emergency aid already focusses on building the capacity of the CAR people outside of Bangui, and this model should be expanded.
- Conflict in CAR is about safety and security, and there are no in-country capabilities to provide for this security. The only possibility of stabilisation requires deploying a relatively large military peace force – in practical terms a reformed and strengthened MINUSCA with a strong

mandate, and support from all the members of the Security Council (may require negotiations with Russia).

- Safety and security need to be built on locally negotiated solutions between neighbouring groups, in other words, local peace agreements mediated by trusted authorities, including traditional authorities and religious leaders.
- Greater security and stability accompanying local community activities would provide the basis for building a system of accountability and governance to support internal security, basic justice, and respect for human rights. This could be made possible by collaboration among local armed groups, respected traditional and religious leaders, and other trusted individuals.
- Conciliation between political parties should contribute to de-escalating conflicts and initiating discussions aimed at a fairer social compact. For this to happen, political opposition leaders will need to be safely back in the country.
- Conflict in CAR points to a struggle over resources. Therefore, a growing economy that delivers more resources to local people will contribute to stability. Building the economy by supporting rules, customs, and land use practices that best serve the local population; improving basic local infrastructure (transport, energy, water, communications, financial services); and supporting commerce (especially informal) is sound peacebuilding.
- International partners can support the building of the economy by ensuring their development assistance is directed to areas outside of Bangui and that it follows a smart/high impact 'investment' model, rather than a distribution model. For example, it should focus on local basic infrastructure, when feasible, and support farmer productivity and entrepreneurship through innovative and cost-effective digital tools.
- Empowering people by addressing core basic needs (food security, education, and health) through both employment opportunities and employment-based social protection, with a special focus on young people and children who have never experienced peace in their lifetime. Young people in rural areas have little formal education; consequently, there is much incentive to join the armed groups.
- Positive changes in the lives of local people need to be demonstrated quickly to citizens and armed groups. Generating hope amongst people is a matter of urgency.

Roadmap for Peace

DE-ESCALATION OF CONFLICT

- The Government recognises that, given the geography of the country, its history, and the distribution of the population, it is not feasible for one side to win the armed conflict. As a result, the Government unilaterally chooses to end its ambitions to control by military force the entire territory of the Central African Republic— sending a strong signal that this is not business as usual, and it is a once in a lifetime attempt to build trust.
- The Government declares and implements a complete ceasefire and focusses on its control of the area around Bangui in which it has had control of in the past.
- The international community in the context of the Security Council of the UN organises the deployment of reformed and strengthened MINUSCA forces, with increased discipline and operational effectiveness (for example, by selecting forces that have a tradition of respecting the rights of the local population and are an effective military force). Currently, MINUSCA forces do not play a leading role in CAR and often have problems with the local population.

- These new more effective and disciplined MINUSCA forces are used to ensure that the Government forces (including the Wagner Group) are replaced by a MINUSCA force that can provide greater protection to the local population from bandit/rebel raids. When needed, the withdrawal of the Government forces is phased to avoid power vacuums.
- In some cases, the withdrawal of the Government forces should enable the local dominant armed groups in a region to consolidate their control and authority (and accountability) in their area, partly by increasing coordination with respected traditional and religious leaders and other members of the community. This will not be possible in areas where the dominant military force is likely to be mainly predatory.
- Reformed MINUSCA forces will monitor to ensure the army and rebel forces adhere to peace and respect human rights in their areas of control.
- The end of Government versus rebel fighting will reduce the level of conflict in many areas of the country, creating space for building more peaceful interaction between different groups.
- Greater foreign development assistance reallocated to local areas should facilitate the transition of armed groups into local groups that offer safety and security by providing compensation, training in policing by consent, and respect for human rights. It should also help provide economic opportunities for armed forces that demobilise.
- International partners should exercise their influence with neighbouring countries to reduce the incursion of bandits across the borders; reformed MINUSCA forces should be used to control these cross-border incursions. This is a key element of the proposal.
- The key to stability of the country is security and order; however, training programmes for Government armed forces or rebel forces will not be successful until fundamental governance and accountability capabilities are developed in CAR. The political process of conciliation and negotiations between different groups, civil society and political parties is the only sustainable way to develop stronger governance.

STABILISATION SUPPORTED BY SYSTEMATIC ANALYSIS OF LOCAL CONFLICTS

- The International Peace Information Services (IPIS) detailed mapping of conflict (Government-rebels, rebels-rebels, population, resources, etc.) should serve as a key guide to the de-escalation process, as well as to identify where to put greater efforts to support local peacebuilding and investment in cross-border projects.
 - Where is rebel-to-rebel infighting for resources still intense?
 - What are the resources that different groups are competing for in local areas?
 - Which rebel groups have a broader base of support in the territory they control and have good connections with respected traditional authorities and religious leaders?
 - Which rebel groups have the characteristics of rebels, but are mainly robbers?
 - Which rebel groups already collaborate in the delivery of basic services to their local people?
- The conflict mapping would also suggest the areas where the reformed MINUSCA redeployment would be most effective and where local 'cross-border' projects would have more peace-building impact in bringing all conflict parties to listen to each other and negotiate.
- The reformed MINUSCA deployment should focus on the areas where the conflict is the greatest, and where most population is affected. The deployment could facilitate negotiated settlements between local actors or revive local agreements that are likely to be effective.

BUILDING DECENTRALISED STRUCTURES

- Central Government decides that its key responsibility is to provide good Government for Bangui. It delegates authority in other areas, including to dominant local armed groups that have some degree of legitimacy in consultation with respected traditional and religious authorities. These actions produce de-facto incipient federation structures.
- The international community, especially the EU, can support this process as it has some successful experience supporting the creation of federation structures, for example in Somalia.
- Local armed forces are made to understand that they will be responsible for the safety of their communities, as the de-facto authority in these areas, and to keep a modicum of order and justice (following traditional community law). Reformed MINUSCA forces will monitor local armed forces (as above) and be responsible for the control of bandits, and human rights abuses.
- Local negotiations supported by respected traditional and religious leaders are the best peacebuilding tool to deal with local disagreements and grievances. International partners should provide resources for training of the local negotiators and to finance 'cross-border' projects to ease local conflicts.
- Reinforce or create community structures that support accountability processes, such as health committees, etc. Humanitarian assistance should always support building capacities in the local population – for example providing health training to local health workers.
- Support local actors' capacity to negotiate peace agreements and support armed groups in their new task of providing local security.
- Creating spaces for local dialogue to discuss the root causes and drivers of conflict and to use these insights to influence national and international peacebuilding policies and approaches.
- Local elections, in the context of the de-escalation of violence, offer the potential to build local accountability and to support local service delivery.
- Central Government in coordination with development partners develops financial incentives for different regions to support stability and governance legitimacy in their areas, with respect to human rights. Central Government could support national standards and good practices.
- Develop capacity in local areas by providing business school-type training to local armed forces, comprising negotiation, economic development, entrepreneurship.
- Central Government, at the request of international donors, agrees that most foreign assistance should be allocated to regions outside of Bangui through a simple inter-regional system. Clarity and transparency on this allocation resource system is essential for the different regions to gain trust in the new system. These systems could become the basis of an incipient federal structure. Consider creation of a Stability Fund supporting peacebuilding – as in Somalia.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

- Economic prosperity is only possible with a minimum degree of stability and border control. All economic tools must be directed toward the support of peacebuilding and conciliation.
- Economic reforms could include:
 - Recognising the importance of protecting land-use rights and customary law.
 - Introducing simple innovative packages to improve the productivity of farmers, including mobile extension agricultural services, mobile micro-insurance, mobile banking, renewable energy, uberisation of tractors, use of satellites.
 - Cooperation agreements to implement tech solution (including satellite capability to facilitate digital solutions).
- Programmes focussed on supporting and mentoring young people, so they chose peaceful alternatives to resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner (such as Conciliation Resources programmes). Young people do not have the experience of living in a country at peace (18-45 years old represent 60% of the population) and they will be key to promoting and achieving peace.
- Implement guaranteed public works programmes to bring dignity as well as economic resources to people, including provision of local infrastructure, such as roads.
- Provide “Innovation fairs” to inspire young entrepreneurs (perhaps currently armed rebels) to pilot different technologies to generate profits and high social impact.

CHANGES IN FOREIGN ASSISTANCE AND INTERNATIONAL DIPLOMACY

- Central Government and international partners agree to allow a significant part of development assistance to be allocated to regions, subject to adherence to principles of respecting human rights and freedoms, individual rights, property rights, and setting up of robust and inclusive governance arrangements. A stability fund could support this process.
- This change of foreign assistance allocation, if effectively implemented, would do much to bridge the gap between the relative wealth of Bangui and the rest of the country. It should also allow implementation of innovative 'investments and entrepreneurship programmes - as described above.
- In contrast to developmental assistance, humanitarian assistance is already distributed all around the country. Humanitarian assistance could maximise community, teacher, health worker capacity and involvement, and help build more significant and effective local accountability/management systems for the running of essential services.
- These changes will require flexibility from international development partners so they can do what is needed (innovative, implement high impact programmes) rather than continuing traditional assistance models. Only if foreign assistance is used effectively and subsequently results in the material improvement of people's lives is there a chance to stabilise CAR.
- International donors and regional organisations (AU and EU) are also capable of influencing CAR neighbours to ensure incursions of criminal gangs and bandits from their territory diminishes.

International assistance accounts for 30% of the GNI, and as such it is the most important tool to influence the Government to take courageous actions to seek stability, by de-escalating the conflict and abandoning the use of the Wagner Group forces – now subject to the EU sanctions.

PART I

1. Central African Republic Matters

The suffering of the people in Central African Republic (CAR) is unparalleled. CAR ranks 166th out of 167 countries in the Legatum Prosperity Index 2021 (see full Prosperity Index Country Profile in Part II), and from the 189 countries in the UN Human Development Index, it ranks 188. It has the lowest life expectancy in the world (53 years)¹ and is the sixth most unequal country in the world.² Moreover, CAR is at the bottom of the indices in state fragility, located in one of the most fragile regions in the world (five of its six neighbours are classified as fragile states).

Violent conflicts, political crises, and severe human rights violations have affected CAR since its independence but unlike other conflict-affected countries, its predicament has been largely ignored by the international media and public opinion, even by most African experts. At the same time, international development partners have provided substantial military and developmental cooperation support.

Since 2014, the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in the Central African Republic (MINUSCA), the second largest UN Peacekeeping operation in the world, has been mandated to protect civilians and support the country's transition process.³ Currently, it deploys more than 15,000 personnel at a cost of more than USD 1.1 billion.⁴ CAR has also become a relatively large beneficiary of foreign assistance – USD 164 per capita, an equivalent to almost one third of its GNI.⁵ Several peace negotiations have been attempted over the last two decades, but so far without much success.

None of these efforts yielded results. Today the country is poor and unstable, and almost two thirds of the population require humanitarian assistance,⁶ one third of which is displaced either internally or in a neighbouring country.⁷ CAR has the third highest number of displaced people in the world, after the Democratic Republic of Congo and Yemen.⁸

The Central African Republic should matter also because it, like some other countries in Africa, has become a ground for geopolitical confrontation between the EU/France and Russia.

In addition, what happens in the Central African Republic should matter because it, like some other countries in Africa, has become a ground for geopolitical confrontation between the EU/France and Russia. Mercenaries from the Russian Wagner group have allowed Russia to gain military, political and economic influence in the country, at the expense of France and the EU (who had been the main international actors in CAR).⁹ The influence of the Wagner Group is pervasive. It protects the President, works closely with the armed forces, and has economic interest in the mining sector. Russian language learning has become compulsory for university students in CAR.¹⁰ Russian and French competition is also reflected in a social media war.¹¹

Moreover, the Wagner Group has recently started operating in Mali, where France has accused them of “despoiling” Mali's natural resources in exchange for protecting the military supported Government.¹² In CAR, UN experts have reported that the Wagner Group harasses and uses violent intimidation tactics against civilians,¹³ thus have called on the CAR Government to end all relationships with the Group. However, as of early 2022 the Wagner Group are still active in most of the country, and they are under sanctions by the EU. Indeed, because of their presence in CAR, the EU has suspended its military training support in CAR.¹⁴



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The current situation in the Central African Republic is an overlooked humanitarian emergency. In short, it is nearly the poorest and most fragile country in the world immersed in violent civil conflict. The Government receiving military support from the Russian Wagner Group has not improved the situation. Despite the relatively large foreign financial and military assistance, this endemic humanitarian and governance crisis lacks realistic prospects for a solution. Therefore, we have engaged in addressing this challenge. This report seeks to identify a solution that would involve a change in the current status quo, allowing for a ceasefire and a process for peacebuilding, ultimately opening a pathway to establish prosperity.

“The current situation in the Central African Republic is an overlooked humanitarian emergency.”

In our exploration of potential realistic solutions, we have engaged with academics, experts, officials, and other stakeholders. We have explored innovative approaches using various lenses to understand the problems and identify key principles and actions for a roadmap to peace – in effect, the basis of a national transformation. These principles include effective decentralisation, a focus on local actors, addressing the drivers of conflict, managing forestry and mining industries, and increasing the productivity of the population. We have used the Prosperity Index as a framework for diagnosing the challenges facing the Central African Republic.

The two primary constraints to prosperity lie in the drivers of civil conflict and very weak governance. Therefore, the themes of this report follow an arc of a ceasefire, decentralization and an effective international force securing an end to conflict, followed by accountable governance, the building of a strengthened economy, and provision of basic services to achieve prosperity in CAR.

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2. Diagnosis of Political Capacity and Stability

Central African Republic

1894-1960 Colonial era & independence

Colonial rule

- 1894-1960, French colony
- From 1940s, modest openings for participatory governance
- French use forced labour & hardened ethnic classification
- Sows seeds for exploitative rule and ethnic tensions

▽ Boganda

- 1958
CAR gains self-Government under MESAN leader Boganda
- 1959
Boganda dies

▽ Dacko

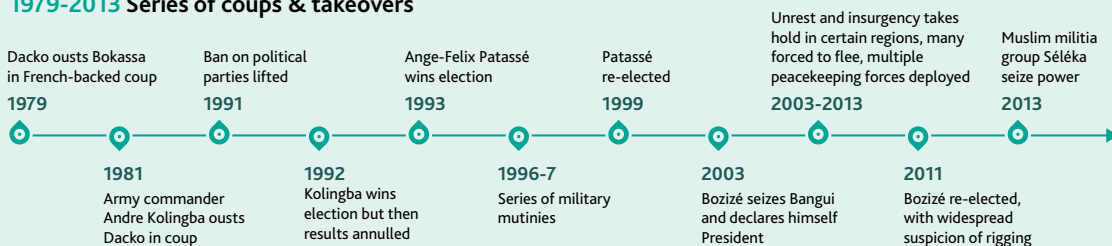
- 1960
CAR gains full independence
- 1960-1965
Dacko rules CAR as a one-party state

1965-1979 Bokassa & Empire

- 1965 army commander Jean-Bedel Bokassa ousts Dacko in a coup
- 1972 declares himself emperor for life
- 1976 renames the country the Central African Empire
- 1979 the regime conducts serious violence against protesting children and teenagers



1979-2013 Series of coups & takeovers



2013-2017 Séléka & collapse of the state

- 2013 Séléka leader Michel Djotodia sworn in as president
- 2014 Djotodia resigns & Catherine Samba-Panza takes over as interim leader
- 2015 New constitution is passed, elections are attempted but annulled
- 2016 President Touadéra elected
- 2017 Violence intensifies and many aid agencies withdraw due to the danger



- Remaining state infrastructure is destroyed
- Violence between Christian & Muslim militias escalates
- Many thousands are displaced, and sexual violence rampant

Present day



2020
Touadéra elected for 2nd term



Chronic violence still plagues CAR



An estimated 1.5 million people have been displaced by the conflict



An estimated 83% of the population live in poverty



At least 14 military groups are operating in CAR, including the Russian Wagner group

History of national peace agreements

✎ 13 major peace agreements have been signed:

- First: 2008 Libreville Global Peace Accord
- Signatories = 3 armed groups + Government
- Latest: 2019 Khartoum Accord
- Signatories = 14 armed groups + Government
- Guarantors = AU, Economic Community of Central African States
- Facilitators = UN, Angola, Cameroon, DRC, Gabon, Sudan, Chad, Equatorial Guinea

* Common features

- Each has failed to reach lasting peace
- Power-sharing increased over time
- Strategy of transition through disarmament not resolution
- Repeated breaches have not been reprimanded

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The history of CAR over the last decades has involved a political process whereby the elites of the country have not been able to reach a viable political settlement. The nation does not have a functioning 'social contract,' and the main interaction between citizens is raiding groups to extract resources from one another. Grasslands for livestock, agricultural produce, logging, road transport, mining, the state budget, and foreign assistance are all resources over which conflicts arise.

“Political competition for power has resulted in a spiral of conflict and violence and an increasingly weakened state capacity.”

Moreover, political competition for power has resulted in a spiral of conflict and violence and increasingly weakened state capacity. The predatory behaviour of political and economic elites has intensified. From this perspective, academics note that Government, rebels, militia and even bandits have similar characteristics. Political accountability and the rule of law have been unable to constrain these behaviours. Thus, the absence of a legitimate (or even de-facto) authority to enforce property rights, security, and border controls are key factors that impede economic growth.



Civilians living close to the Seleka Camp Kasai celebrate as Seleka fighters are driven towards a more distant district.

Marcus Beasdale

Violent Political Competition

The Central African Republic emerged from a harsh colonial past in 1960, but President Dacko, then Bokassa's Empire, and the subsequent series of coups failed to advance a common national identity, or build a more accountable, legitimate, and effective political system. On the contrary, control of the state became a way to extract public resources for personal benefit and resulted in predatory behaviour that has affected the country's political and economic system to this day.

Successive military coups and foreign intervention only escalated the violence. In 2003, the so-called Bush War and the rebellion of the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR) led to the Government losing control of national territory. This period also marks the start of a 'cottage industry' of peace agreements between 2007 and 2012, resulting in a unity Government in 2009.

At the end of 2012 a violent take-over of Bangui by Séléka forces, linked to an old rebel Muslim group supported by Chad, and a violent counterattack by Anti-Balaka forces marked a substantial intensification of violence. Vast parts of the national territory fell under the control of "armed entrepreneurs," which include more than 14 armed groups, ex Séléka in the North and East, and ex anti-Balaka in the South and West. From then on, subsequent Governments have had little control of areas outside Bangui. This period marks the start of the mandate of MINUSCA in 2014.

The Touadéra presidency – marked by elections in 2016 and 2020 and the signing of the Khartoum Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation in February 2019 – features a mixed record with respect to peace. Rebels contested the 2020 presidential election results, escalating the conflict. The Government then engaged mercenaries from the Russian Wagner Group, for both personal protection and to advance its military objectives. By the end of 2021, the Government managed to establish control of many urban centres.

Nevertheless, the situation remains precarious. Armed groups have retreated to the bushes, and new tensions have arisen between the Government and the influential Fulani group, further complicating the scene and possibly triggering another dangerous cycle of violence.¹ Today, the inventory of armed groups in CAR consists of the Government forces (FACA), a plethora of rebel groups, MINUSCA and the Wagner Group mercenaries. For the Government and rebel forces alike, the situation is unstable and presents many risks. Any change may result in losing the resources they control and extract from others, or even the loss of lives.

Weak state capacity

The Government's 'legitimacy' vis-à-vis the international community is built on the appearance of complying with democratic processes and control of the capital. While the Government of CAR is recognised internationally and has the capacity to enter relations with other States, it does not fully meet most of the remaining criteria for statehood, including a permanent population and defined territory.²

With regards to the population, CAR has one of the highest rates of refugees and internally displaced people in the world. There are about 1.4 million displaced people, internally or taken refuge in other countries – about one third of the entire population.³ This translates to one sixth of the country living as refugees in neighbouring countries, particularly in the DR Congo. In consequence, the criterion of permanent population is not met.

Fundamental elements inhibit the building of a unitary state. Its territory is as large as France, but they have a small population – five million – and porous borders among some of the most fragile states in the world. These challenges are further compounded by low state capacity and poor transport infrastructure.

Another obstacle is that the CAR security force is poorly paid, ill-equipped, and not competently trained; they lack the efficacy and legitimacy needed to protect its population. As a result, the Government does not exercise meaningful control over its territory, and historically it has not

governed beyond Bangui and its surrounding areas. Limited control over its territory is exercised with the support of the Russian Wagner Group and MINUSCA forces. Moreover, the small amount of control they do have is only accomplished with the threat of violence, as there is no voluntary cooperation from citizens. The population is subject to violence and arbitrary detentions by the security forces.

Finally, a common national identity is largely absent in CAR. This is not only because of ethnic and religious fragmentation, which has been politically polarised to the advantage of some politicians, but because the population in the North is often considered foreign to the country. This is another cause of the breakdown of trust, social capital, and security exacerbating the violent situation. Few young people in rural areas have formal education and there is strong incentive to join armed groups.

In the Legatum Prosperity Index, CAR ranks 139th for social tolerance out of 167 countries, and places 166th for personal and family relationships. Hence, there is a clear need for conciliation and greater trust, both within and between communities. Violence due to competition over resources, ethnic and religious tensions, and mass displacement have all contributed to the breakdown of social capital in CAR.



The concept of an 'ideal' unitary state does not correspond to the features of CAR.⁴ Holding the country to this unrealistic standard has not served successive Governments of CAR well, and it may be time to reimagine the concept of an ideal state, one that would support more local accountability structures and decentralisation. Local solutions are not simple and not a panacea, but they offer the possibility of opening new ways to build peace.

Lack of Political Settlement as a driver of conflict

The elites in the country have not been able to reach political agreement on resource access and power-sharing, which would permit a stable and viable political arrangement. Furthermore, elections are often seen as a donor requirement to gain access to foreign assistance and military support. However, elections are not yet part of a process for the de-escalation of violence and building accountability. In these circumstances there are no limits to the exercise of power, the rule of law, or accountability mechanisms. Nor is there state capacity for a strong security sector.

The elites in the country have not been able to reach political agreement on resource access and power-sharing which would permit a stable and viable political arrangement.

In fact, predatory behaviour and conflict among elites have prevented the emergence of a viable political arrangement. Instead, there is violent competition to control the Government in Bangui and win elections, which would deliver predatory access to resources, including foreign assistance. This conflict at national and local levels is driven by the contest for control of resources,

such as livestock, grasslands, forestry, diamonds, gold, extortion at roadblocks, and among other contentions, regional grievances.

Adding to the discontent, the elites have exacerbated great disparities and socio-economic differences between provinces in the Central African Republic – already among the most unequal countries in terms of income distribution. Understandably, there is a feeling of exclusion and marginalisation amongst large parts of the population.

This violent competition for resources has resulted not only in extensive displacement, but also increased vulnerability levels of the population, in which almost two thirds require urgent aid relief (the highest proportion in five years). Meanwhile, the situation in the northwest of the country is becoming more critical due to famine.⁵

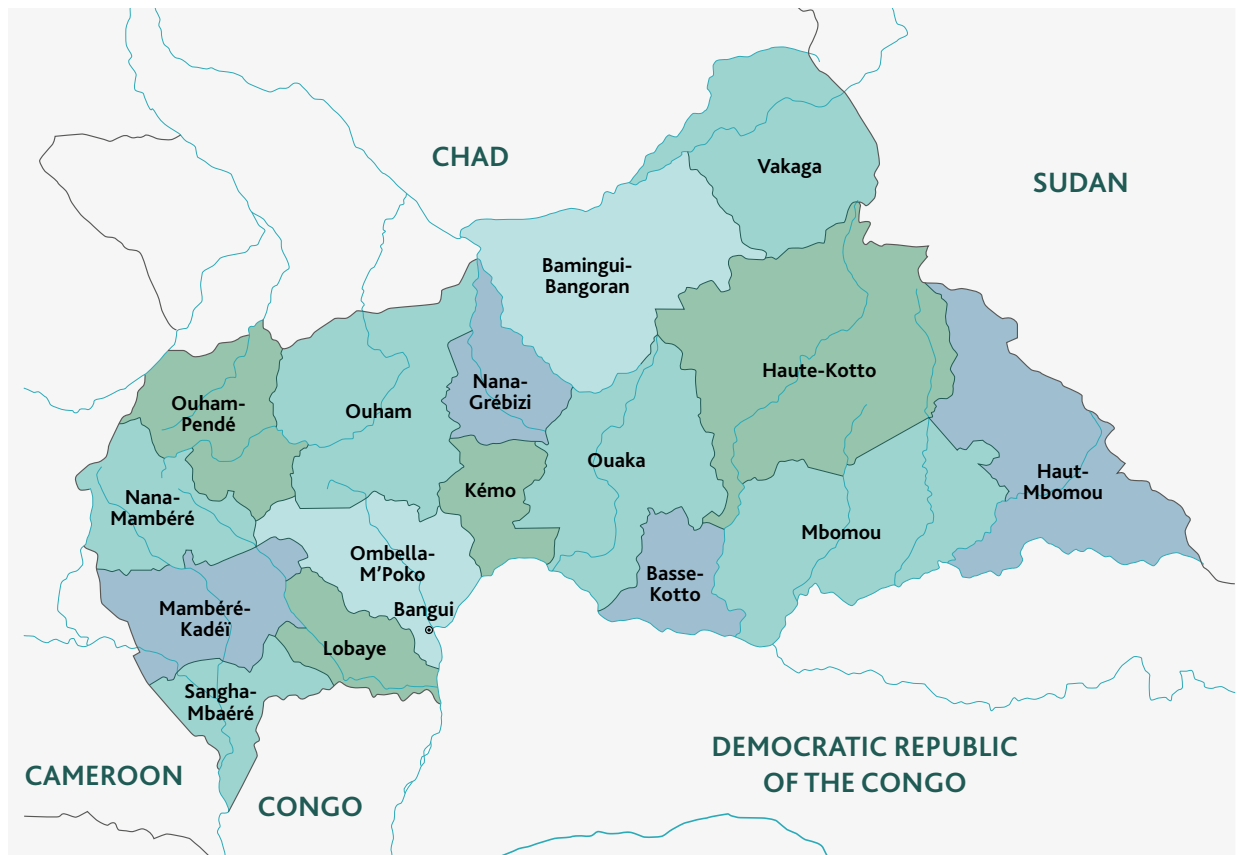
Maintaining internal order and external borders in a large country, while coping with poor transport infrastructure and porous boundaries, would be challenging for any army. But due to the dysfunctional political system, its security sector (Government armed forces, FACA) has not been professionalised and lacks discipline and a clear chain of command. Thus, this challenge is unsurmountable for a country with such low state capacity, even with the existing level of support from MINUSCA and the Russian Wagner Group.

Regional and geo-political drivers of Conflict

A large country with a small population and porous borders, the Central African Republic is situated in the most volatile region in the world, with five of its seven neighbours classified among the world's ten most fragile states.⁶ It has a history of regional conflict lasting decades, with Chad and Cameroon often supporting rebel groups or incumbent Governments. The spillage of violence from bandits operating across borders and gross human rights violations perpetrated by foreign armed groups continues to prevail. The presence of these armed groups and the interference of neighbouring countries have heightened tensions. There is religious

CAR politics has always been played as much internationally as it has been played within CAR borders.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC DISTRICTS AND NEIGHBOURING COUNTRIES



and ethnic fragmentation amongst citizens, along with a negative perception of Muslims living in the North-West, often presumed to be foreigners coming from Chad.

CAR politics has always been played as much internationally as it has within CAR borders.⁷ And prominent international actors are key decision makers. Traditional players in the region and in the country, such as France and the EU, are losing ground, while new powers – Russia, Rwanda, and potentially China – are gaining momentum. These clashes of influence make the likelihood of peace in the country even more remote.

France has played a dominant role since the colonial era, especially in the first years of independence. In 2016, however, France ended its military mission, and two years later President Touadéra deployed Russian military contractors from the Wagner Group as bodyguards and military specialists. Today an estimated 1,200 to 2,000 Wagner Group mercenaries are in CAR.⁸

Consequently, Russia has usurped France and the EU as the dominant international player in CAR, expanding diplomatic and military influence, in addition to increased commercial deals with diamond mining companies, Alrosa and Prigozhin-aligned M-Invest.⁹ The EU is carefully monitoring the situation, sensing Russian plans for a springboard to strengthen their influence in Central Africa. Indeed, a military base would counter French influence in the region.¹⁰ This competition in CAR has already resulted in intense disinformation and trolling battles between Russia and France.¹¹

It seems the Russian strategy is gaining traction as Western actors focus their attention on the Sahel. The International Crisis Group reports that, “today, Russian advisers have the Government’s ear in not just military but also political and economic matters.” Unfortunately, this influence seems to have strengthened the predatory behaviour of Governments in CAR, and there is a



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“CAR has become one of five most aid-dependent countries in the world.”

"growing tendency to stifle dissent and allegations of human rights abuses in the counter-insurgent campaign."¹²

To neutralize the situation, the EU recently imposed sanctions on the Wagner Group, who recruited, trained, and dispatched private military operatives to conflict zones around the world to fuel violence, loot natural resources, and intimidate civilians in violation of international law – international human rights law included.¹³ Russian influence in the Central Africa Re-

public, however, may be difficult to counteract or reverse. As International Crisis Group concludes: "CAR is now in the tricky position of having to balance the benefits of Russia's military and political support with the prerogative of securing the Western financial support on which it will continue to depend."¹⁴

Foreign Assistance

While the circumstances in Central African Republic lacks attention from international public opinion and the media, they have received a substantial amount of foreign assistance (in addition to the UN MINUSCA military support). In fact, CAR is by some counts the world champion of peacekeeping missions.¹⁵ Support from International partners has almost quadrupled, from USD 203 million in 2013 when the conflict intensified to USD 750 million in 2019 (OECD DAC).¹⁶ As a result, CAR has become one of five most aid-dependent countries in the world, receiving funds of almost one third of its entire Gross National Income (USD 160 per capita). Aid also constitutes half the financing for the Government budget.

Meanwhile, the largest donors are the EU and its member states: Germany, France, and Sweden, followed by the World Bank Group. Almost 70% of all foreign aid is allocated to humanitarian aid.¹⁷ A recent evaluation of EU assistance indicates that their funding, along with that provided by

the Member States, has been poorly coordinated.¹⁸ Due to its financial relevance, foreign assistance has become one of the most attractive sectors to appropriate.

International development partners see the Central African Republic as mostly a unitary central state, despite the fact that it does not display the main components of a functioning state. They have for the most part worked only with the central Government and have supported it in its aims to exercise control over the entire territory.

Nevertheless, this centralised approach has not contributed to peacebuilding or to the prosperity of the population. It is difficult to see the Central African Republic through a different lens, one that recognises that there are many groups competing for resources and political control, and most are focussed on raiding and extracting resources from the population.

While international development partners view the Central African Republic as more or less a unitary central state, the country does not display sufficient characteristics to function as one. The partners generally work with the central Government and support its aim to exercise control over the entire territory; however, this centralised approach has not contributed to peacebuilding or to the prosperity of the CAR population. The international community deeming them a unitary Government with its centre in relatively rich Bangui, makes military command over the capital especially valuable, since controlling Bangui facilitates access to foreign assistance resources.

Despite the substantial foreign development assistance, there has been limited progress on peace or development in CAR. The donors' approach that focusses on the centrality of the unitary state and Bangui has likely accentuated the marginalisation of the rest of the country and has had little to no impact on addressing the real drivers of the conflict. Furthermore, developmental assistance attached to peace agreements has contributed to the theatre of enacting national peace agreements, which have multiplied the number of rebel groups and weakened the relationships between rebel leaders and their local areas.

Peace Processes and Sustainable Peace

One attempt to end the decades-long cycle of violence was the 2019 Khartoum Accord between the CAR Government and fourteen armed groups within the country, sponsored by international partners and the African Union. After three years, however, the political agreement for peace and reconciliation has shown its limitations. According to the head of United Nations Peacekeeping Mission in the country, the level of human rights and international humanitarian law violations has never equalled those recently committed.¹⁹ In addition, rebel groups attempted to take the capital in 2020, and could only be stopped with the combined efforts of Rwanda, Wagner Group and MINUSCA forces.

In fact, the twelve agreements that preceded the Khartoum process suffered from similar shortcomings; they were Bangui and internationally-focussed and were not sufficiently inclusive of the population. The peace agreements were formal, but they failed to address the drivers of conflict. None of them covered strict compliance mechanisms.

It appears that international partners do not recognise the magnitude of failure with the 2019 peace agreement and prior negotiations, including the multiple Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) programmes. Indeed, these experiences suggest a need for a different approach. Academic research, including that of Louisa Lombard, suggests that peace agreements, DDR programmes and international development assistance tend to create incentives for more armed groups to emerge.²⁰

“International development partners see the Central African Republic as mostly a unitary central state, despite the fact that it does not display the main components of a functioning state.”

“Local peace processes that directly focus on addressing the local drivers of conflict and improving the conditions of the population would likely be more sustainable.”

Ultimately, these national peace efforts fail the population, who continue to shoulder the consequences of violence and live in an extreme state of vulnerability. Therefore, local peace processes that directly focus on addressing the local drivers of conflict and improving the conditions of the population would likely be more sustainable.

Local peace agreements have shown some success in controlling violence and conflicts. These agreements make the immediate cessation of violence possible. However, their successes have relied on the goodwill of the signatories since the drivers of conflict (such as unequitable resource distribution and transhumance corridors) are often not addressed. From the analysis of local agreements, we find that in order to be successful, agreements need to be specific and comprehensive, e.g., inclusive of women, youth, community leaders and other civil society organisations. These groups help to identify local interests and provide a knowledge base that can strengthen social capital in the community. All these factors have impacted the success of some local agreements (detailed in box below).

LESSONS FROM LOCAL PEACE AGREEMENTS:

- The use of local, traditional mechanisms of conflict resolution appears to be an essential component of durable peace. Viewing CAR's conflict resolution through a lens of a security-development nexus could be constructive.
- Agreements that create conditions for the safe return and re-integration of IDPs allow regions to recover human capital after conflict has been resolved.
- Peace agreements that involve all groups, i.e., armed groups, community leaders, religious leaders, as well as youth and female CSOs, are most effective.

Source: Legatum review of these agreements (See Part II for more details).

EXAMPLES OF LOCAL PEACE AGREEMENTS ²¹

NORTH EAST

Vakaga, June 2019

Agreement between Sudanese cattle breeders and farmers to respect established transhumance routes and prevent or repay damage to agricultural land from livestock. The conflict over land had been fuelling the destruction of natural resources, violent retaliation, and food insecurity. The peace agreement included a Monitoring Committee, but it did not possess enforcement powers, so relied on voluntary compliance.

Haute-Kotto, April-August 2019

This was a commitment between six armed groups operating in the region which recognised violations of previous national peace agreements and made pledges to end the violence. The agreement had inclusive declarations of inter-communal reconciliation between ethnic groups and commitments to facilitate the return of internally displaced persons. The agreement was ultimately unsuccessful because it did not address a key source of the conflict, which is the monopolies of diamond in the region. Violence resumed following the 2020 elections.

Vakaga, Haute-Kotto & Bamingui-Bangoran, November 2020

This agreement involved many ethnic groups - including the Goula, Rounga, Sara, Peulh, Haoussa, Arabe and Banda. The agreement tried to restructure electoral districts in the area; however, given the poor internal order in the area, this had limited impact. The insurgency continues to be fuelled by the disparity of wealth with the Bangui, minimal public expenditure, and historic social inequality.

NORTH WEST

Ouham & Ouham Pendé, May 2018-January 2019

This agreement is between militia groups on transhumance and initially allowed rebel groups to impose their "taxes" on livestock. However, FACA forces regained control of this area in January 2021, and discussions were held between anti-Balaka and ex-Séléka fighters. The only agreement reached was the return of internally displaced people.

Nana-Grebizi, June 2019

This was a broad roundtable discussion, producing non-binding recommendations, including the call for criminal justice to prosecute acts of sex and gender-based violence used as weapons. There were also proposals for MINUSCA to use technology, such as drones, to monitor transhumance routes. However, it was recognised that due to MINUSCA's lack of resources, these recommendations could not be implemented.

SOUTH EAST

Basse-Kotto, December 2018

This peace process resulted in a document stressing the moral authority of elders over armed groups, and the need to allow the freedom of movement of people and goods. However, these statements did not translate into concrete actions.

Mbomou, March 2019

This agreement established a Monitoring Peace committee following the ethnic cleansing of Muslims by anti-Balaka forces in 2017. This body put forward agreements to end all forms of violence, stop the circulation of weapons and called for a development-security nexus that would support local vocational training, socio-economic emancipation of women, revival of agricultural activity, physical and digital infrastructure, and the resettlement of internally displaced people. Despite these commitments, violence erupted around the 2020 elections in Bangassou, the prefecture's capital.

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3. Narrow Road to Stability and Peace

The starting point for transformation in CAR is understanding that the country's prosperity requires a strong focus on peacebuilding and addressing the key drivers of conflict. It is only with stability and peace that governance and state capacity can be strengthened and ultimately create the conditions for economic development and improved wellbeing of citizens. The goals of stability and peace are three-fold: increase security and reduce violence; increase political stability; address the drivers of the conflict (see box).

The starting point for transformation in CAR is understanding that the country's prosperity requires a strong focus on peacebuilding and on addressing the key drivers of conflict.

THE GOALS OF STABILITY AND PEACE:

Increase security, reduce violent/terrorist activity over territory and resources

- Capable, accountable, and rights-based CAR institutions providing basic safety and security for citizens.
- Independent and accountable justice institutions, capable of addressing the justice needs of the people.

Increase political stability and predictability

- Inclusive political processes.
- Political discourse based on the autonomy of different regions.
- Alliance of political parties for peace and conciliation.
- Stable relations between different CAR regions, and between regions and the centre.

Address drivers of conflict and support employment

- Transparent and accountable revenue generation, equitable distribution and sharing of public resources.
- Business environment that supports enterprise and employment.
- Broad-based inclusive economic growth, with increased productivity and livelihood enhancement of the most vulnerable.
- Health and education delivered more effectively in areas outside Bangui.
- Local capacity to deliver equitable, affordable, and sustainable services that promote national peace and reconciliation among CAR's regions and citizens.
- Girls and women empowered to take a more active role in personal and political decision-making processes.

Our analysis suggests that the possibility of greater peace and stability for CAR is extremely limited. There is a very narrow corridor of opportunity for the nation to gain peace given the existing situation and the set of political and economic incentives.

Change requires all actors to use a different lens through which to see the problems in CAR. In particular, one must recognise that continuing to look at the country as a unitary state will not contribute to building peace. Discussions on the characteristics of the country which limit its options should make it easier for the Government, rivals, and international partners to understand that it is not feasible to expect a unitary Government to control the entire territory and external borders. This is reinforced by a reading of CAR history. Unfortunately, most governments in CAR have not acknowledged this challenge. International partners as well rarely abandon their ideals for a strong unitary state based in Bangui beyond a broad support for decentralisation.

Hence, the suggested roadmap towards peace is based on recognising the fact that CAR cannot succeed as a centralised state and that no group can secure total control of the country. The roadmap to peace proposes a national ceasefire and decentralisation policies that would provide the space for local peace processes and agreements to occur.

Sustainable security may be attainable if the conflict are less attractive to the Government and rebels. For this, domestic participants and international development partners would need to see CAR through different lenses and recognise the de-facto similarity between different groups competing for resources (including the Government); the difficulty of running the country as a unitary Government from the centre; the severity of the problems that result from not being able to control external borders; and how foreign assistance has not managed to play a stabilising role.

Sustainable peace depends on the willingness of central Government to support stability through a ceasefire and to accept political and administrative autonomy in other areas in the country. Therefore, the goal of all stakeholders should be creating the conditions for lasting ceasefires around the country and conceding the idea that any one government could be in the position of imposing internal military control of the entirety of CAR territory.

There are five components to creating an environment of stability and peace from which a roadmap to prosperity can be built. The components comprise:



International Partners Resolve: The international development partners need to act in unity to use their assistance to provide strong incentives to make peace possible.



Ceasefire and Stability: Safety and security is the most important constraint for CAR prosperity – no significant activity is feasible or sustainable under the current high levels of conflict.



Devolution: This peacebuilding process would place CAR on the pathway to a more federal structure of Government.



Local initiatives to support development: A growing economy that delivers more resources to local people will contribute to stability by providing an alternative to fighting for resources.



Conciliation: Conciliation needs to start one step at a time, initially providing opportunities for stakeholders to build some level of trust with one another.



INTERNATIONAL PARTNERS RESOLVE

This narrow corridor for change and a roadmap towards peace will initially require international development partners to be aware of the actions and interests of all groups competing for resources, including the Government. They would need to use every resource at their disposal and all political leverage they can secure to support a country-wide cessation of hostilities.

Given there are no in-country capabilities to provide adequate safety and security, stabilisation requires deploying a relatively large military peace force – in practical terms, a reformed and strengthened MINUSCA with a strong mandate and support from all the members of the Security Council. Such forces would need to increase discipline and operational effectiveness. For example, forces who have a tradition of respecting the rights of the local population and are militarily competent should be selected. These reformed – more effective, disciplined – MINUSCA forces would replace Government forces (including the Wagner Group mercenaries) and provide greater protection to the local population from bandit and rebel raids. When needed, the withdrawal of the Government forces would be phased to avoid power vacuums.

Foreign development assistance should be used exclusively to support peacebuilding. Exercising leverage would also mean international partners provide support through development assistance to ensure local accountability and through local Government structures. Assistance should be reallocated to local areas to facilitate the transition of armed groups into local groups who can provide safety and security; they can be provided with adequate compensation and trained to police by consent and respect for human rights. International partners should also provide resources for training local negotiators.

In addition, international partners should exercise their influence with neighbouring countries to reduce the incursion of bandits across the borders. The reformed MINUSCA forces could be used to control these cross-border incursions.

International development partners would need to use all the resources at their disposal and the political leverage they can secure to support a country-wide cessation of hostilities.

Foreign development assistance should be used exclusively to support peacebuilding.



Machetes collected by African Union troops as part of the disarmament process. In the past, efforts for disarmament have overlooked actual resolution of the conflict and have therefore had limited success.

Marcus Bleasdale



CEASEFIRE AND STABILITY

The first step for the Government is to recognise that it is not feasible for any side to win the armed conflict; given the country's structural conditions (large territory, small population, poor transport, limited state capacity, and porous borders), no single group has the capacity to impose order across the entire territory. Hence, a unilateral decision to end ambitions to militarily control the entirety of CAR sends a strong message that this is not business as usual, and that this is a once in a lifetime opportunity to build trust. This policy could be implemented through Government declaration and implementing a country-wide ceasefire.

The first step for the Government is to recognise that it is not feasible for any side to win the armed conflict; given the country's structural conditions.

Overall, safety and security need to be based on locally-negotiated solutions between neighbouring groups – local peace agreements mediated by trusted authorities, including traditional authorities and religious leaders. A system of accountability and governance to support internal security, basic justice, and respect for human rights can be made possible with better security and stability, and by local community activities and collaboration among local armed groups, respected traditional and religious leaders, and other trusted individuals.

In some cases, the withdrawal of the Government forces could enable the local armed groups in the region to consolidate their control and authority (and accountability) in respective areas by increased collaboration with respected traditional and religious leaders and other members of the community. The ceasefire could also facilitate negotiated settlements between local actors and revive local agreements which have the potential to be effective. This will not be possible in all areas, especially when the dominant military force is predatory in nature. The reformed MINUSCA forces will need to monitor the army and rebel forces to ensure that they adhere to peace and respect human rights in their areas of control.

A reformed MINUSCA deployment should focus on the areas where the conflict is the greatest and the population is most affected.

The adoption of a ceasefire should be accompanied by support - from the Government and international partners - for the right to self-determination so that communities have the stability and space to gradually build accountable institutions and local government structures.

The International Peace Information Services (IPIS) detailed conflict mapping (Government-rebels, rebels-rebels, population, resources, etc.) should serve as a key guide for the de-escalation process, and as a resource for designating support for local peacebuilding and investment in cross-border projects. The conflict mapping would also suggest areas where reformed MINUSCA redeployment would be most effective and where local cross-border projects would have the greatest impact, creating a space where all parties can gather to negotiate constructively.

An effective policing programme targeted at peacebuilding and state building should closely monitor the acceptance of new police forces in communities. Polling, perception surveys, and qualitative interviews will provide a better understanding of outcome data. Although these processes are expensive, they are essential for such outcomes as public awareness of police presence and monitoring levels of public trust.



DEVOLUTION

First, the adoption of a ceasefire should be accompanied by support (from the Government and international partners) for the right to self-determination so that communities have the stability and space to gradually build accountable institutions and local government structures.

Second, an understanding of conditions in regions outside of Bangui should inform actions and policies that contribute to peacebuilding, rather than be Bangui-centric. Most decisions could be devolved to the local level, where trust can be built more effectively (see box on Local Peacebuilding Agreements). Supporting political autonomy in different areas and decentralising financial support from Bangui would create space for more stability. In this context, armed groups, representative traditional authorities, and local communities will be free to interact and explore ways to strive towards greater local accountability.

Furthermore, the central Government would focus on good governance for the Bangui area while devolving authority to other areas, in effect dominant local armed groups that have some degree of legitimacy, as well as respected traditional and religious authorities. These policies will start to produce de-facto incipient federation structures.

Local leaders will need to assume responsibility for the safety and wellbeing of their communities, be the de-facto authority in these areas, and keep a modicum of order and justice (following traditional community law). To support the sustainability of peacebuilding, international partners would shift their development assistance to regions outside Bangui and support the formation of governance and accountability structures, order, and security at a local level. Some humanitarian emergency aid is already directed at education and health capacities outside of Bangui. We suggest expanding these models.

Our analysis recognises the risks associated with distributing foreign assistance to local leaders or armed groups who have failed to garner support from their populations. However, the literature review and consultations with experts present compelling evidence that favours the adoption of a loose federal model that would encourage building accountability at a local level.¹ International partners should also help provide economic opportunities for armed forces that demobilise and 'cross-border' projects that can ease local conflicts.





LOCAL INITIATIVES TO SUPPORT DEVELOPMENT

A critical aspect of peacebuilding is strengthening the economy by supporting rules, customs, and land use practices that best serve interests of the local population. This can be facilitated by improving basic local infrastructure (transport, energy, water, communications, financial), encouraging productivity of farmers and supporting commerce and entrepreneurship (especially informal).

Addressing core basic needs (food security, education, and health), through employment opportunities and employment-based social protection – with a special focus on young people and children, can empower people who have never lived in peace. The provision of local infrastructure, such as roads, could be implemented through guaranteed public works programmes, which would offer people dignity in addition to economic resources.

A pragmatic model for achieving best practices on the ground is connecting regions and local areas with world-class natural resource companies.

Another possible action concerns the generation of economic activities in a context of a weak state. A pragmatic model for achieving best practices on the ground is connecting regions and local areas with world-class natural resource companies (for example in forestry) committed to high standards of environmental and institutional governance. These connections can be facilitated by development partners and other international actors to help create the conditions for successful deals-led development where good practices are imported through world-class companies. This model is currently being tested with the regional Government of Cajamarca (Peru) in collaboration with universities and policy institutes.²

Increased activity in mining, livestock, forestry, and other commercial sectors will gradually support the emergence of internal order in different areas, even in areas where armed groups dominate. This is because some internal order is required for the success of any commercial operations, as argued by Dr Christine Cheng, 'trade makes the state.'³

Moreover, a stability fund, like that which functioned in Somalia, could offer additional support of catalytic investments, bolstering the productivity of small farmers and the agile delivery of social services, training local staff to provide mobile health services, for example.

ECONOMIC REFORMS TO SUPPORT PEACEBUILDING COULD INCLUDE:

- Recognising the importance of protecting land-use rights and customary law.
- Introducing simple innovative programmes to improve the productivity of farmers; these would include mobile extension agricultural services, micro-irrigation, renewable energy, uberisation of tractors, use of satellites.
- Financial inclusion, mobile micro-insurance, mobile banking, and micro-credits.
- Cooperation agreements to implement tech solutions (includes satellite capability to facilitate digital solutions).
- Provision of "Innovation fairs" to inspire young entrepreneurs (perhaps currently armed rebels) to pilot different technologies to generate profits and high social impact.

International partners can contribute to building a prosperous economy in CAR by ensuring that developmental assistance addresses the drivers of conflict and follows a smart/high impact investment model, rather than a distribution/philanthropic model. Furthermore, the central Government upon the suggestion of international donors should support the allocation of foreign assistance to regions outside of Bangui through a simple inter-regional system. Clarity and transparency of this allocation resource system is essential for cultivating trust in different regions. These systems could become the basis of an incipient federal structure.

In the context of conflict and high risk, a decentralised development assistance programme for CAR will require rigorous monitoring and would rely on the private sector for implementation. The programme would need to develop a sophisticated monitoring system to verify and collect beneficiary feedback through call centres and online data platforms. Moreover, third party partners would need to be used to monitor portfolio activities.

Finally, humanitarian assistance should always foster capacity training in the local population, providing health training to local health care workers, for example. In this way, donors could reinforce or support the creation of community structures that strengthen accountability processes, such as health committees, etc.

The economic mechanisms suggested here are dependent on a successful ceasefire that leads to clear and tangible reduction in violence and conflict. Only in these circumstances can the financial resources of a Stability Fund be deployed, first in the areas that show greater stability and where a minimum level of local accountability and internal order is present.



CONCILIATION

Conciliation between political parties should enable broader discussions of policy. For example, by holding inclusive conversations, like the grass-roots conversations part of the 2015 Bangui National Forum. For this to happen, political opposition leaders would need to be safely back in the country.

Once a ceasefire has been established, a roadmap to deeper conciliation should be pursued to reduce tensions and increase trust within regions and communities across CAR. This is essential for peace to endure and if the country is going to begin moving towards a more prosperous future.

The key to stability in the country is security and order. However, training programmes for the Government armed forces or rebel forces will not succeed until fundamental governance and accountability capabilities are developed in CAR. Local elections in a more peaceful environment offer the potential to build local accountability and to support local service delivery. The role for central Government could be supporting national standards and good practices.

The political process of conciliation and negotiations between different groups, civil society and political parties is the only sustainable way to develop stronger governance.

Roadmap to Trust and Conciliation

A new social contract is needed in CAR to restore interpersonal, intercommunal, and institutional trust. As is the case with peacebuilding and forming accountable political structures, this cannot be achieved simply through a top-down declaration of common identity. Rather, this must begin with regional stakeholders, then local communities, and from this a sense of national reconciliation can be built.

Supporting the capacity of local actors to negotiate peace agreements and armed groups in their new task of providing local security will be necessary. This will include creating spaces for local dialogue on the root causes and drivers of conflict. These insights can be employed to influence national and international peacebuilding policies and approaches.



"Central African Republic: Torn Apart by Violence" by UNHCR Photo Download is marked with CC BY-NC 2.0.

Regional Dialogue for Trust: Conversations among all regional stakeholders can begin to build relational trust and a shared vision of how to tackle contentious issues, such as access to resources. These discussions should be mediated and focus on building trust between people and groups.

Regional Conciliation Agreements: Once these discussions become established, conciliation agreements should be collaboratively created in each region, building on previous local peace agreements. These agreements should state in writing the conclusions reached surrounding regional concerns and should meet the demands of all stakeholders. Such agreements should be subject to independent judicial oversight and require public endorsement, and adherence should also be independently monitored.

Programmes to **support and mentor young people should be considered**. These programmes encourage young people to choose peaceful alternatives to resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner (such as Conciliation Resources programmes). Young people do not have the experience of living in a country at peace (18-45 years old represent 60% of the population) and they are key to promoting and achieving peace.

Next 3-5 years

Community-level dialogue: Set up projects at the community level which focus on reconciling differences, especially in cases where violence has entrenched deep divisions within communities. This should be done through community leaders and independent oversight bodies, promoting new social cohesion and mutual trust. These conversations should also include the creation of strategies for the reintegration of IDPs and determine how this can be done in a way which respects everyone's need for access to housing and resources.

Cross-regional dialogue: Once regional trust has been restored, regions can begin working together to form a more cohesive social contract, addressing issues such as wealth disparities and the reach of public services. These discussions should ensure that all regions are equally represented, and that any agreements reached reflect their interests in equal measure. Through these discussions, a sense of a greater common identity can begin to form.

LESSONS FOR CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC OF THE SOMALIA TRANSITION

1. **Foreign assistance should be limited and targeted to support peacebuilding.** Regional power-sharing can help conflict over resources subside, giving groups a stake in the economy and motivation to protect their incomes. However, there is a danger that foreign assistance increases in response to instability provides incentives to oppose full peace and the building of the state. In Somalia, the 2004 “elite bargain” gave elite groups the incentive to maintain their share of foreign assistance and that strategy has – along with international pressure – successfully prevented a return to full-scale civil war. Nonetheless, elites oppose reaching a full peace settlement, obstructing negotiations in the transitional power-sharing arrangement. The elites recognise that instability attracts foreign development assistance.
2. **A substantial peacekeeping force is needed to support decentralisation and avoid the risks of major unrest.** Decentralising power and resources can create resistance from elites in the capital, sparking unrest. In Somalia, following Yusuf’s alienation from the Mogadishu elites in 2016, the Islamic Courts Union, an Islamist coalition, formed an insurgency in the capital which ousted the Government, only removed through intervention from the Ethiopian army. Power contestation had to be controlled with substantial force.
3. **Inclusivity in Government should be accompanied by accountable structures to support legitimacy rather than patronage. Inclusivity should support conciliation, not be just a platform for contestation.** Mandated proportional ethnic representation in governing or legislative bodies can diminish tensions and end ethnic power monopolies. Unfortunately, this can also institutionalise clientelist political culture, and make transition to a more direct democracy challenging. In Somalia, guaranteed ethnic representation in the political system has incentivised elites to not revert to full-scale civil war. However, the ethnic constitution of Parliament and Government positions remain a contested and volatile issue. Corruption and patronage have remained endemic in Somali politics, with elites openly buying votes, and public resources used to benefit their ethnic groups. Power-sharing has not removed the root of contested resources that fuel conflict, even though the scale of violence is much reduced.
4. **External threats should be countered with internal unity and cooperation.** External threats can be used to foster unity, despite their risk of upsetting a fragile peace. In Somalia, Al-Shabaab continues to pose a threat to political order. However, their presence has also forced reluctant cooperation between rival elites, consolidating the peace.

ENDNOTES

- 1 Including the conclusion of the ICAI independent evaluation of the UK programme in Somalia. Source: "UK aid in a conflict-affected country: Reducing conflict and fragility in Somalia," ICAI, 23 June 2017, <https://icai.independent.gov.uk/html-version/uk-aid-conflict-affected-country-reducing-conflict-fragility-somalia/#>, accessed 9 February 2022.
- 2 Brokered by Cambridge University and the Legatum Institute. See www.dialogoperu200.pe
- 3 As argued by Christine Chen in her book "Extra-legal Groups in Post Conflict Liberia: how trade makes the state," where she explains how armed groups in Liberia protected commercial activities and eventually contributed to greater stability and internal order.

4. The Roadmap Towards Peace

Since CAR independence, successive governments and the country's elite have failed to establish a feasible political settlement, allowing for predatory behaviour and violence to be endemic in the political system. It has also resulted in a very weak state. The successive cycles of violence are the result of a continued failure to reach a viable political settlement, with regional and geo-political drivers of conflict further complicating the situation.

The key drivers of the conflict remain largely unaddressed, and the existing situation – though desperate for the population – benefits the political and economic elite, armed groups, and some international actors. It has been difficult to see the CAR through a different lens, one that recognises that there are many groups competing for resources and political control, and that most of these groups are focussed on raiding and extracting resources from the population. Meanwhile, armed groups of bandits, militias, rebels, or the Government, continue to benefit from their capacity to extract or raid resources from others or from the economic boom in Bangui and resources provided by large foreign assistance funds.

Consequently, there are currently no incentives for key players to promote and ensure peace in the country. Only the local population has an urgent desire for change, but they do not have the means to achieve it. Moreover, the current geo-political context, with the increasing role of Russia in CAR, and reduced influence of actors like France and the EU further aggravates the existing situation. On the other hand, the conflict in Ukraine could further exacerbate the geopolitical competition in CAR between Russia and the EU, so this may present an opportunity to consider new ways to support the country and its peace building efforts.

A successful initiative in CAR must demonstrate its benefits to citizens and armed groups quickly, by showing that people's lives have improved. There is urgency in generating hope amongst people. The opportunity to produce a better quality of life in CAR depends on a shift in international development partner behaviour that would alter the incentives encountered by key actors - namely the Government and rebels. Perhaps a possibility due to geopolitical competition between big powers driven by the presence of the Russian Wagner Group in CAR. Should these domestic actors modify their behaviour in certain ways, like adopting a ceasefire for example, it could lead to further change in the incentives other groups confront, effecting a cascade of change from Bangui to remote areas in the country.

The opportunity to produce a better quality of life in CAR depends on a shift in international development partner behaviour that would alter the incentives encountered by key actors.

The approach set out in this report favours searching and exploring diverse solutions rather than relying on an overall national plan. It allows for experimentation of tactics in different areas so as to create success that can be replicated, even in the context of weak local authority capability. It relies on improving practices on the ground by attracting world class international companies. The focus of our approach is sustainable commercial impact rather than philanthropic development assistance.

These are not easy undertakings, and this strategy demands substantial reinforcement from MINUSCA. However, these changes are expected to support peace and contribute to local stability. Greater stability would permit the Central Africans and leaders more agency over their own lives and unblock some key barriers on the road towards peace.

PRINCIPLES FOR BUILDING PEACE

- The vision of a peaceful CAR requires that key stakeholders act differently. International development partners hold a key to positive change, but they need to act in a united manner and use all the resources at their disposal – and the political leverage they secure. These resources need to be directed with a single-minded focus on supporting policies that reduce levels of conflict and violence and support the security of external borders.
- Conciliation needs to start one step at a time, initially providing opportunities for stakeholders to build some level of trust with one other, for example, by holding inclusive conversations, such as the grass-roots conversations in the 2015 Bangui National Forum.
- Actions and policies that contribute to peacebuilding should not be Bangui-centric; they should be informed by an understanding of local conditions outside of Bangui.
- Safety and security are the most important constraints to prosperity in CAR – no significant activity is feasible or sustainable under the current high levels of conflict. However, security requires ensuring that the conflict becomes less attractive to both the Government and the rebels.
- Making conflict less attractive will require international development partners to look at CAR through different lenses, and recognise:
 - the *de-facto* similarity among different groups competing for resources (including the Government).
 - the difficulty of running the country as a unitary Government from the centre.
 - the severity of the problems that result from not being able to control external borders.
 - how foreign assistance has not been able to play a stabilising role.
- In this context, international partners need to realistically observe the actions and interests of all groups who compete for resources, including the Government.
- International partners need to shift the priority of developmental assistance to regions outside of Bangui and support the building of governance and accountability structures, order, and security at a local level. Some humanitarian emergency aid already focusses on building the capacity of the CAR people outside of Bangui, and this model should be expanded.
- Conflict in CAR is about safety and security, and there are no in-country capabilities to provide for this security. The only possibility of stabilisation requires deploying a relatively large military peace force – in practical terms, a reformed and strengthened MINUSCA with a strong mandate, and support from all the members of the Security Council (may require negotiations with Russia).
- Safety and security need to be built on locally negotiated solutions between neighbouring groups, in other words, local peace agreements mediated by trusted authorities, including traditional authorities and religious leaders.
- Greater security and stability for local community activities would provide the basis for building a system of accountability and governance to support internal security, basic justice, and respect for human rights. This could be made possible by collaboration among local armed groups, respected traditional and religious leaders, and other trusted individuals.
- Conciliation between political parties should contribute to de-escalating conflicts and initiating discussions aimed at a fairer social compact. For this to happen, political opposition leaders will need to be safely back in the country.
- Conflict in CAR points to a struggle over resources. Therefore, a growing economy that delivers more resources to local people will contribute to stability. Building the economy by supporting rules, customs,

and land use practices that best serve the local population; improving basic local infrastructure (transport, energy, water, communications, financial services); and supporting commerce (especially informal) is sound peacebuilding.

- International partners can support the building of the economy by ensuring their development assistance is directed to areas outside of Bangui and that it follows a smart/high impact 'investment' model, rather than a distribution model. For example, it should focus on local basic infrastructure, when feasible, and support farmer productivity and entrepreneurship through innovative and cost-effective digital tools.
- Empowering people by addressing core basic needs (food security, education, and health) through both employment opportunities and employment-based social protection, with a special focus on young people and children who have never experienced peace in their lifetime. Young people in rural areas have little formal education; consequently, there is much incentive to join the armed groups.
- Positive changes in the lives of local people need to be demonstrated quickly to citizens and armed groups. Generating hope amongst people is a matter of urgency.

PART II: NATIONAL TRANSFORMATION

Possible Policies for a Roadmap Towards Peace and Prosperity

Part II of this report builds on Part I and considers the opportunities and challenges facing the Central African Republic on its pathway to peace and prosperity. It sets out examples of policies for National Transformation, which has the potential to deliver increased prosperity. It is focused on supporting the foundations for peace and security.

True prosperity is when all people have the opportunity to thrive. It is underpinned by an inclusive society, with a strong social contract that protects the fundamental liberties and security of every individual. It is driven by an open economy that harnesses ideas and talent to create sustainable pathways out of poverty. It is built by empowered people, who create a society that promotes wellbeing. Such prosperity allows everyone to fulfil their unique potential, playing their part in strengthening communities and the nation. The Legatum Institute's Prosperity Index captures this concept through three domains: Inclusive Societies (Politics), Open Economies (Economics) and Empowered People (Social Aspects).

THE BUILDING BLOCKS OF PROSPERITY



The Transformation agenda set out below roughly follows the Prosperity Index arc, with a cease-fire, decentralisation and an effective international force securing an end to conflict, followed by accountable governance, the building of a strengthened economy, and provision of basic services to achieve prosperity in CAR.

The Inclusive Societies chapter covers the four pillars of Safety and Security (reform of the security sector, public safety and crime, diplomacy); Governance (the judiciary and law, political accountability); and Personal Freedom (including civil liberties). The Open Economies chapter addresses Enterprise Conditions (employment and the independent sector); Investment Environment (land tenure and property rights, banking and finance); Economic Quality (macro-economic management, agricultural and mining sectors); Infrastructure and Market Access (including international trade). And the final chapter, Empowered People, details Health, Education, and Living Conditions (food security and social protection).

Each section provides background information, some of the strengths and weaknesses of each area, a vision of how the sector could look in a prosperous CAR, and some illustration of possible policies/practices that may contribute to building peace and prosperity.



1. Inclusive society

157th in the Prosperity Index

This chapter focuses on the Inclusive Society domain of the Prosperity Index, which captures the relationships and power structures that exist within a society - between and among individuals and broader institutions - and the degree to which they either enable or obstruct societal cohesion, peace, and collective development. These social and legal institutions are essential in protecting the fundamental freedoms of individuals, and their ability to flourish.

In an inclusive society, people live in peace and are free from the threat of violence, oppression, and crime; everyone's inherent dignity is respected, and freedom of speech and assembly are protected; governing institutions act with integrity, are accountable to citizens, and are subject to the rule of law; and stable families and supportive communities build the bonds of trust needed for society to transition from conflict and ultimately to flourish.

Creating an inclusive society with peace, justice, and strong functioning institutions is a priority for the Central African Republic. The vision conveyed here is for a nation at ease with itself, where the issues that have divided it in the past have been confronted and resolved, and where political violence has become a remnant of the past.

Part I of this report set out the core elements for a roadmap to peace, which included themes that are covered in more detail in this section. These include the need for a ceasefire and stability, and the importance of the role of international development partners in providing strong incentives to make peace possible. They also include the role of decentralisation in placing CAR on the pathway to a more federal structure of Government, and the need for conciliation, initially providing opportunities for stakeholders to build a level of trust with one other.

This chapter extends these themes to address the judiciary and the rule of law, political accountability, government effectiveness, personal freedoms, and civil liberties. In order to sustain and reinforce an emerging peace settlement, these aspects of the institutional environment will also need to be strengthened.

Reform of the Security Sector¹

The CAR Government has historically exercised limited control beyond Bangui and the surrounding areas, with the majority of the country under the control of rebel groups. The inventory of armed groups in CAR includes the Government forces (FACA), a plethora of rebel groups, MINUSCA and the Wagner Group mercenaries.

Armed combatants number only several thousand.² Armed groups enjoy cross-border support (particularly in the case of Chad) and can retreat to bases in neighbouring countries as needed.³ Many militias are largely motivated by self-defence, addressing marginalisation or governance grievances, and opportunities for enrichment/political power – ideology and identity factors largely absent.⁴ However, popular support is noticeable in the Muslim northeast.⁵

A large UN peacekeeping force consisting of predominantly African soldiers – MINUSCA – has been operating in the country since 2014. It has been mandated to protect civilians and support the country's transition process,⁶ although it has not been able to deliver sustained security. Some of its soldiers have committed sexual abuse and other crimes, affecting their legitimacy and popular support. Hence, MINUSCA's presence has effectively served to maintain the violent status quo.⁷

In 2016, France ended its military mission to the country, and since 2018 President Touadéra has deployed Russian military contractors from the Wagner Group as bodyguards and military

specialists. Russia has played an increasingly important role since the signing of a CAR–Russia military agreement in August 2018 – providing weapons, ammunition, military and civilian instructors, as well as personal security advisors to the President from the Wagner Group. Today the number of Wagner Group mercenaries present in CAR is estimated to be around 1,200–2,000.⁸

The CAR security force (FACA) is poorly paid, equipped and trained. A cycle of political leaders overhauling the country’s armed forces along with their own or allied ethnic groups has undermined the effectiveness and legitimacy of armed forces – Muslim ethnic groups are especially underrepresented and wary.⁹ As a result, the Government does not exercise meaningful control over its territory, and historically it has not governed beyond Bangui and its surrounding areas.

The EU (led primarily by France), in coordination with MINUSCA, has been training CAR security forces since 2014.¹⁰ In spite of this, the CAR armed forces (FACA) rely on support from MINUSCA (and recently the Wagner Group) to carry out operations.¹¹ Of the 8,244 soldiers employed in June 2020, just 1,500 were deployed beyond Bangui in any of CAR’s other 16 districts. Consequently, they are unable to provide effective security, as they are unable to be deployed as a permanent garrison force.¹² Furthermore, issues with salary payments in turn led to a weak command system, often rendering the FACA a source of insecurity.

FACA personnel have criticised lengthy training by the EU and their governments’ lack of support for army reform, and its overly top-down model. Reforms of military justice and the introduction of genuine command-and-control structures have been slow or put aside altogether, while the role of local stakeholders and local buy-in has been limited. The EU has not been able to track the progress of its trainees once they have left training.

Recent Government military actions, with the support of the Wagner Group, have enabled some advancement in territorial control outside the capital, although many expect this will not be sustainable over time.¹³ However, a recent UN report stated that in 2020, the Government and the Wagner Group carried out brutal attacks on civilians that may feed grievances and further undermine prospects of peace.¹⁴ Unlike the EU, Russia has provided CAR forces with military equipment from the outset, and they view FACA personnel as fully qualified soldiers. In the Russian military training being provided, less weight is given to the learning of international humanitarian laws.

SECURITY SECTOR

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The FACA has been put under the control of the Minister of Defence, and some administrative and human resources reforms have taken place.¹⁵ The Government has made formal commitments regarding balanced ethnic representation and diversity, civilian oversight, and support for national reconciliation.¹⁶ There is access to training, advice, and aid for the security forces. The number of rebel fighters is limited. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The historical legacy of the FACA as a tool of oppression used by incumbents, and the underrepresentation of certain ethnic groups undermines legitimacy. Weak governance limits the effectiveness of the FACA, as do poor and inconsistent provision of resources and payment of salaries. A large MINUSCA force helps to protect the Government in Bangui, and is able to access significant development assistance, providing limited incentives for addressing the drivers of conflict. The Government, Russian Wagner Group, and MINUSCA forces have each committed gross abuses of human rights. EU and UN training of FACA forces has been slow. Security delivered by the guns of the FACA, and Wagner Group could potentially aggravate grievances in the population.



Walking on the streets of Bangui. Shutterstock.com

VISION FOR REFORMING THE SECURITY SECTOR

A ceasefire provides a larger and more effective international force the opportunity to produce greater stability in many areas and regions. Then, local armed groups can begin providing security in their areas, in the context of a federal arrangement. Communities will gradually be empowered to provide their own security. Security forces are a trusted and disciplined institution, committed to peace, securing external borders, and protecting people from predation.

Effective security reform that contributes to conciliation and peace depends on addressing the political governance breakdown in CAR. Only then will it be possible to institute effective command-and-control mechanisms, democratic oversight (including a role for Parliament), and military justice.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR REFORM OF THE SECURITY SECTOR

De-escalation

- The International Peace Information Services (IPIS) provides a detailed mapping of the conflict (Government-rebels, rebels-rebels, population, resources, etc.) which should be used to identify the nature of the de-escalation process for different regions across CAR.¹⁷
- Political and security discussions are held to understand the difficulties of a military solution, which would be able to impose internal order given its characteristics: geographically large, poor transport infrastructure, fragmented ethnic groups and porous borders with fragile states. The solution required is politically focussed to address the drivers of conflict and seek the support of community and regional leaders across the country – not only armed groups.
- A national ceasefire supports a political resolution of the conflict and negotiates a strengthened MINUSCA force to replace Wagner Group military support and allow for greater local autonomy.

Reform of security forces

- MINUSCA is strengthened to provide more effective protection to CAR civilians and international borders.
- Substantial reform of MINUSCA forces to ensure greater discipline, operational effectiveness, and respect for the rights of the local population.
- Basic training and equipment for locally accountable self-defence patrol units could be provided (e.g., Home Guards in Malaya 1948-1960). These units could form the basis of regional defence units. Success will depend on local accountability mechanisms.
- Appropriate and regular remuneration to the FACA and local forces is key to improving military discipline.
- A strengthened and more disciplined FACA could focus its attention on securing the country's external borders, in close coordination with local armed groups and MINUSCA.

Public Safety and Crime

Crime – including murder, torture, sexual violence, theft, abduction, and the destruction of property – are carried out with impunity in CAR. In the absence of peace and security and in the context of a weak judicial system, justice is clouded in revenge, violence, and further crime.¹⁸

In many places, violence is commonplace – mostly due to competition over territory and resources (mining, cattle).¹⁹ Insecurity, roadblocks and the country's limited road infrastructure make trade expensive and dangerous.

Despite ongoing training by the EU, Russia, the UN, and France, the CAR security forces (the FACA, gendarmerie, and the police) rely on support from MINUSCA.²⁰ A constant cycle of political leaders overhauling the country's armed forces along ethnic lines has severely undermined the armed forces' effectiveness and legitimacy in the eyes of the people.²¹

Similarly, many citizens view the other armed groups in the country as predatory and violent criminal organisations who have also committed war crimes.²²

PEACE AGREEMENTS

Between 1997 and 2022, 13 major agreements have been signed between the central Government and various armed groups, with no durable peace achieved. The most recent agreement was signed in January 2019 (the Political Agreement for Peace and Reconciliation or the Khartoum Accord) by 14 of the major rebel groups, with support from the African Union and other international actors. Through a combination of Government delays in delivering many agreement commitments and the familiar failure of the armed groups to honour their end of the bargain, this peace agreement collapsed in 2020, accompanied by widespread violence.²³

Many of the peace agreements have fallen through because the militia leaders view them as a means to enrich themselves. Governments have focussed on demobilisation, rather than addressing the underlying causes of conflict, which limits the impact of the agreements, thus grievances persist.²⁴

Militias are formed for different reasons, but they largely serve the interests of political leaders or wealthy warlords. Militias proliferate most widely in rural areas where a lack of opportunities and constant insecurity drive many to join their ranks, for reasons of survival and income.²⁵

National strategies of reconciliation are not connected to the reality on the ground, where localised and more practicable deals have been made between groups based on their specific contexts, drawing only sporadic interest from a national/international level.²⁶

PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Localised and practicable peace agreements have resolved certain issues across CAR. The establishment of the Truth, Justice, Reparation, and Reconciliation Commission following the <i>Khartoum Agreement</i> represents a shift away from amnesty and impunity. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Militias and political operators have participated in the cycle of violence, peace agreements and return to violence, through which they gain concessions, and some impunity. The Government's armed forces cannot exercise internal order beyond Bangui. Different interests from different groups make it harder to secure a lasting peace. The FACA is mistrusted by a significant proportion of the population.

VISION FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME

Citizens live their lives knowing they are safe from crime and security risks. Local forces protect their communities and police respect the basic rights of all individuals. An ongoing process of reconciliation and the delivery of justice helps to build a safe and inclusive society.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND CRIME

- Develop local peace agreements to address reasonable grievances, so as to enjoy community support and enhance public safety, without excessive use of force.
- Provide additional protection for more vulnerable local communities, with a strengthened MINUSCA force.
- Encourage armed groups and local communities to start the process of establishing conditions for greater public safety once a ceasefire provides stability.
- Incentivise peacebuilding efforts utilising different tools and programs to increase the desire to abandon armed conflict.
- Support peacebuilding efforts and the formation of groups that protect the local community, with increasing accountability enabled by decentralisation of development assistance and a stability fund.
- Train and support the development of local civil defence units.

Diplomacy and International cooperation

CAR has a long history of outside forces raiding the land and population and faces the challenge in its geographical position and having porous borders.²⁷ For example, the Uganda-based Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) was previously active in the country, and the North-East has historically been used as a safe haven and operational base for Chadian and Sudanese armed groups.²⁸ Groups in Chad and Sudan can exploit pastures for herds and extensive natural resources.²⁹

CHAD'S ROLE IN CAR³⁰

Chad has often intervened in CAR. For example, in 2003, Chadian President Idriss Déby intervened to depose President Ange-Félix Patassé and replace him with François Bozizé. Chadian militias later joined the ranks of the Séléka and helped Michel Djotodia take power in Bangui in 2013. Djotodia was unable to exercise control over the Séléka alliance – which quickly spread throughout the country, violently ruling towns as their own chiefdoms. This in turn contributed to the local discontent that resulted in the anti-Balakaka counter-violence. Tired of Djotodia's inability to stabilise the situation, Déby then intervened to force Djotodia to stand down, and airlifted the entire CAR Government to N'Djamena, where Catherine Samba-Panza was elected as the President of the transitional Government. In 2013, it was estimated that Chadian and Sudanese mercenaries constituted 80% of the Séléka.

France has maintained a political stronghold in CAR. It is also the largest foreign investor in the country, providing significant budgetary and military support and having a number of global French businesses operate in the Central African Republic.³¹ France is also the driving force behind EU engagement in the country, which includes large financial assistance, and support for CAR's security sector.³² *Operation Sangaris* was the most recent French military intervention in CAR, operating from 2013 to 2016.³³ In June 2021, France suspended its direct military involvement in CAR, as well as €10 million of budgetary support, in relation to an anti-French disinformation campaign and Russia's influence in CAR.³⁴

CAR is the sixth most aid-dependent country in the world. Foreign assistance comprises 31.6% of the nation's GNI, funding more than half of the Government's budget.³⁵ Foreign assistance has hugely increased in the last 20 years, to USD 754 million in 2019, up from USD 203 million in 2013 and USD 51.5 million in 2003.³⁶ About 70% of this sum is humanitarian aid.³⁷ However, most of these resources have done little to support peacebuilding.³⁸ Political elites centred around the capital of Bangui have simply adopted the language of democracy and have displayed formal adherence to democratic principles in order to secure access to international funding through a process called extraversion.³⁹ Meanwhile, rebel groups have been able to utilise violence and intimidation to gain access to wealth, power, and concessions offered through a series of peace processes that have failed to achieve their cause.⁴⁰

UN forces under MINUSCA have been unable to deliver sustained peace.⁴¹ Moreover, without the intervention of Wagner Group and Rwandan (officially as part of MINUSCA) troops, Bangui would have fallen to CPC rebels following their assault in early 2021.⁴²

The African Union – along with Russia – brokered the 2019 Khartoum Agreement. However, it has not been able to address breaches of the agreement.⁴³ In addition, Russia has been playing an increasingly important role since August 2018.⁴⁴ Shut out from European markets due to sanctions, Russian business elites have begun looking to Africa.⁴⁵ Russian companies have allegedly bought stakes and were granted concessions in gold and diamond mines in CAR.⁴⁶ This for-profit self-financing arrangement through the Wagner Group allows Russia to expand its security, diplomatic and economic presence in Africa.⁴⁷

International actors also frequently pursue their own narrow interests or deploy international financial resources to provide humanitarian and military support, often without a clear peacebuilding strategy. Foreign assistance in turn weakens the incentives for locals to change the status quo. Simultaneously, geopolitical competition between France (and the EU) and Russia has developed in relation to Wagner Group intervention in CAR.⁴⁸

DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAR receives large foreign assistance budgets. An Internationally supported peace agreement exists and provides a basic framework. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> International partners do not focus singlehandedly on peace-building or on providing strong incentives to achieve an effective ceasefire and process of national conciliation. There is no unified strategy for major international donors in CAR. CAR's porous borders and weak state capacity leave the country open to importing the instability of its neighbours.

VISION FOR DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

Neighbouring countries and international development partners collaborate on CAR's roadmap to peace, supporting peacebuilding efforts and the emergence of a viable political settlement – with elites incentivised to support change. The people take centre stage and are autonomous in decisions surrounding their future. International partners assist in decentralising political and financial powers from Bangui to regions and communities, to support their peacebuilding efforts.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR DIPLOMACY AND INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION

- International development partners use all the resources at their disposal and all the political leverage they can secure to support a country-wide cessation of hostilities.
- International partners exercise their influence with neighbouring countries to reduce border incursions; reformed MINUSCA forces should be used to control these cross-border incursions.
- Support political and financial decentralisation outside Bangui – working collaboratively with political leaders, business communities, civil society leaders, and other key stakeholders.
- Foreign assistance supports the implementation of local accountability processes and the decentralisation of political power to the regions, which can receive direct funding for rebuilding and investing in key services.
- Foreign assistance – redistributed in a decentralised manner – moves to an investment model, rather than a distributary one. Development assistance is channelled through a stability fund (similar to that in Somalia), and its resources support peacebuilding.

Judiciary and the Rule of Law

Despite recent attempts to reform the judiciary, CAR faces severe corruption, inefficiency, understaffing and underpayment in this area.⁴⁹ This has resulted in very low levels of public trust in these institutions, and is confounded by the fact that a large part of the country has not traditionally been under state jurisdiction.⁵⁰ CAR ranks 154th for rule of law, and 162nd in executive constraints in the Legatum Prosperity Index, demonstrating the extent of these issues.

There is a culture of widespread impunity at all levels of society, but especially in relation to elites. The constitution outlines many civil liberties – freedom of expression, freedom of assembly etc, but these protections are not generally enforced and do not exist in militia-controlled territories.⁵¹ This is especially the case for minority and marginalised groups, such as the Muslim Mbororo, women, and particularly girls.⁵²

MINUSCA and the UNDP have attempted a number of initiatives to strengthen the rule of law, including the creation of the Special Criminal Court (SCC) linked to the International Criminal Court (ICC).⁵³ In addition, there has been a significant UN effort to reform the training and professionalisation of those working in the judiciary, the police force, and the penitentiary system.⁵⁴ However, there have only been a few cases of increased independence in the courts or increased capacity of the criminal justice system because the state is weak and lacks jurisdiction. Human rights violations and serious crimes continue to be committed with impunity. Furthermore, initiatives such as the SCC are extremely dependent on UN personnel and funding, and therefore promote an unsustainable judicial system for CAR. The high level of international funding invested into an unsustainable central state judiciary illuminates the problems of foreign assistance dependency.

Violence and the proliferation of militia groups have increased over the past few years. Without addressing impunity and other drivers of conflict, increased criminal justice infrastructure is ineffective. The UN is focussed on reforming centralised institutions and professionalisation, but often neglects the importance of local disputes surrounding land rights, tenure, and distribution.

JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some independence in different courts such as:• High-profile cases against violent militia actors, including the conviction of an anti-Balaka warlord.⁵⁵• ICC extradition of an ex-military leader to the Hague for accusations of murder, torture and attacking civilians.⁵⁶• The Constitutional Court has struck down some laws and drafted laws relating to presidential term limits.⁵⁷• Rebuilding of judicial and criminal justice infrastructure.• Training of new judges and other legal actors.⁶⁰• Establishment of 17 functioning courts, and the redeployment of 220 magistrates.⁶¹	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Overall, court independence is very limited.• Supreme Court judges are appointed by the President.• Advisory minister and CPC leader Ali Darassa escaped trial by the SCC,⁵⁸ demonstrating the absence of legal constraints and impunity in the executive.• Judicial systems are dependent on external funding⁵⁹, rendering the SCC unsustainable.• Legislation provides an appearance of the rule of law, but it is not effectively implemented.• Poor access to Civil liberties and the judicial system.⁶²• Human rights violations are not addressed by the judiciary.• Pre-trial detention rates comprise 80% of custodies.⁶³• Only 12% of burglary victims report the crime to any form of authority.⁶⁴• Trust in the judiciary is especially low in the key area of land disputes.⁶⁵

VISION FOR JUDICIARY AND THE RULE OF LAW

A well-established judiciary protects all citizens in CAR equally under the law and provides easy and direct access to a fair and politically impartial justice system. Executive powers are subject to the rule of law, holding the executive accountable and imposing checks and balances on its influence. The culture of impunity is in the past, especially in relation to human rights violations and violence.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR RULE OF LAW

- Pursue the rule of law through a regionalised strategy in which regional judicial structures and administration reflect local customs and norms to ensure local support, accountability, and flexibility. These elements would avoid overdependence on international assistance.
- Negotiate and establish the sovereignties of different courts (regional and Supreme Court, SCC, ICC etc.).
- Create and entrench local judicial structures which are void of political bias and partiality and are separate from executive powers.
- Establish relationships with local authority figures (such as respected local chiefs) and develop understanding of customs, norms, and interests in each area, and identify existing social capital, capacity, and stability of these leaders. For example, Mentor Initiative healthcare work in the volatile north-westerly regions of CAR.⁶⁶
- Ensure that the judicial bodies and established codes demonstrate a commitment to the universal protection of civil liberties; are religiously and ethnically inclusive; and recognise the rights of women, reflecting the diversity of different areas.
- Ensure land and property rights are addressed and disputes settled through negotiations and strengthen judicial capacity in this area.

Political Accountability

The Central African Republic's post-independence history has been marked by violence and political turmoil. In the past two decades, a cycle has developed in which the group that controls the Government uses its resources for their private benefit, sparking a rebellion and occasional coup, after which the cycle repeats itself with greater intensity.⁶⁷ This cycle has deepened divisions and undermines the state's legitimacy.

There have been consistent allegations of fraud in elections and many groups refused to accept the results of the 2020 presidential election.⁶⁸ Violence and intimidation discouraged the population from participating in the elections, with a third of the electorate not being able to participate.⁶⁹ As a result, CAR's Freedom House score for free and fair elections fell from 1 to 0.

While political protests and parties are legally permitted, violence and other means of intimidation meted out by state officials and militia groups alike have limited these rights.⁷⁰ In 2016, voters were only informed of the list of presidential candidates shortly before the voting day.⁷¹ Similarly, in 2015, voters were asked to vote on a new constitution without all of its details being made public.⁷²

Historically, the central Government has mainly controlled Bangui and the surrounding area. Elected representatives beyond Bangui have little contact with their constituencies.⁷³ Non-political organisations are prohibited by law from uniting for political purposes, limiting the involvement of civil society in politics.⁷⁴ Public discussion and debates have been limited by fear of retaliation.⁷⁵

The executive holds significant power, appointing the prime minister, the council of ministers, supreme court judges, and all the country's mayors and prefects. However, the change in constitution in 2015 formally mandates the President and the Prime Minister to confer with the council of ministers.⁷⁶

Reliance on international development assistance requires keeping some appearance of democracy.⁷⁷ However, the absence of a political settlement leads to conflict and an intense competition for access to resources. There are no constraints in exercising executive power, and political accountability is absent.⁷⁸ While regulations governing the funding of political parties exist, they are not enforced.⁷⁹

The status quo allows elites to enrich themselves without needing to govern beyond Bangui, and the various rebel groups similarly benefit through control of resources and peace processes. In this equilibrium, there is no need to gain citizen support. Instead, CAR's formality of democracy allows groups to use identity politics for political gains and to sow division and antagonism between different groups.

POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• There is some independence in the Constitutional Court.• Formal elections take place.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Cycles of violence and increasing identity politics weaken the political system.• 'Winner takes all' violent competition for control of the executive power.• Winning control of the executive power provides private access to resources (including foreign aid).• Generalised violence impedes political accountability.• The executive is unconstrained in its use of power and therefore the voices of citizens are not heard.• Elites on all sides benefit in the short-term from the conflict, as they can continue their predatory behaviour.• Appearances of democracy provide access to foreign assistance, which contributes to the stability of the status quo.

VISION FOR POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

The Government gets closer to people through a process of decentralisation, where most decisions are taken at the local level, and where local accountability is gradually strengthened. Communities across the country are empowered to manage and control their own affairs, pursuing activities that promote peace with support from foreign assistance. Local customs are respected and organically support local accountability structures.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR POLITICAL ACCOUNTABILITY

- Use the newfound stability (provided by a ceasefire) to begin a process of building local accountability structures, based on the context of their local area.
- Change the law to allow non-political organisations to unite for political purposes.
- Encourage the participation of armed group members in local Government through a process of decentralisation.⁸⁰ See the example of Burkina Faso.⁸¹
- Incentivise local accountability by local leaders/authorities (including addressing drivers of conflict) through the use of a stability fund. Foreign assistance could use performance-based financing for supporting regional governments.⁸²
- Ensure local government administration reflects local customs and traditions, while also working to strengthen real accountability to the local population.
- Ensure that incentives for participation in local accountability processes exist, including incentives for people in armed groups.⁸³

Effectiveness of Government and Decentralisation

The country is divided into 16 provinces (prefectures); however, the reach of the state beyond Bangui is limited.⁸⁴ The predatory and 'winner takes all' nature of politics has eroded Government capacity and has resulted in endemic corruption amongst Government ministers and officials.⁸⁵

Outside Bangui, armed militias have typically been a key source of protection and employment.⁸⁶ Armed groups in many areas accept the presence of Government representatives and coordinate with them.⁸⁷

Foreign donor assistance in some cases complicates policy coordination and implementation. For example, in the case of the National Recovery and Peacebuilding Plan (PNRCP), donors have insisted resources be used only for implementation and not to build administrative capacities.⁸⁸

Attempts to develop public sector capacity are negatively affected by the frequent introduction of 'outside models' that do not adapt easily to the local context.⁸⁹ Civil servants are also incentivised to remain in low-capacity; following each crisis, CAR can claim 'post-conflict' status, which brings an increase in outside funding, quick-fixes, and a relaxing of standards – allowing for an increase in personal entitlements.⁹⁰ Moreover, instability promotes a short-term perspective, which further creates a culture of self-service and enrichment.⁹¹ In fact, employment in the civil service is a lucrative source of wealth; along with commerce, it represents the vast majority of economic activity in the capital.⁹²

The public sector is small and lacks the capacity to deliver basic services, while public institutions are personalised and do not follow formal rules.⁹³ According to the Legatum Prosperity Index, CAR ranks 155th out of 167 countries for Government effectiveness, suggesting low capacity. A recent World Bank report noted that civil servants outside Bangui cannot receive their salary locally and must travel to a bank (generally in Bangui) to receive their pay.⁹⁴ Hence, assignments outside of Bangui are not incentivized and are considered a punishment. Staff look for quick personal gains and prefer to seek (exceptionally high) per diems and other benefits.⁹⁵

Consequently, local communities have been trying to sustain the public sector. For example, the Government pays the salaries of an estimated 37% of public primary teachers, while households finance the remaining so-called community teachers.⁹⁶ Therefore, the World Bank indicates that the official public administration sector receives particularly low scores in CAR.⁹⁷

Additionally, the de facto impunity surrounding corruption is illustrated by the Parliament Vice President's re-election in March 2020, despite a leaked recording where he admits to fixing a parliamentary vote on a finance bill.⁹⁸ Furthermore, local mayors and prefects are appointed by the President, though this is supposed to change through local elections.

EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT AND DECENTRALISATION

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armed groups generally respect the country's territorial integrity and tolerate the state in certain areas – with the state formally represented in each prefecture.⁹⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Power is centralised in Bangui, and the reach of the state outside Bangui is limited. Government capacity is extremely low. Short-termism reigns due to constant instability. There is a disconnect between the national level (essentially Bangui) and local contexts.¹⁰⁰ Plans and funding sources are inconsistent and frequently not aligned with local factors. Corruption is endemic and a reflection of the nature of the political system.

VISION FOR EFFECTIVENESS OF GOVERNMENT AND DECENTRALISATION

A more stable political settlement emerges in Bangui and in other areas of the country, enabled by the ceasefire. Administrative and financial decentralisation allow for local accountability that supports more effective administration, both in Bangui and locally. Financial stability so civil servant remuneration is more consistent. Effective administration contributes to directly addressing the drivers of conflict and supports peacebuilding and the delivery of basic services, such as education and healthcare. The political settlement with greater accountability, rule of law and judiciary which in time results in weakening the impunity of corruption in Government.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR ENHANCING EFFECTIVE GOVERNANCE

- Adopt a ceasefire subject to support (from the Government and international partners) for self-determination for all peoples which will offer a stable environment and space for these communities to gradually build accountable institutions and local Government structures.
- Local areas should build local accountability systems and local capacity to provide defence and policing.
- Encourage the participation of armed group members in local Government, e.g., following the example of Burkina Faso.¹⁰¹ Local leaders will need to acknowledge that they will be responsible for the safety and wellbeing of their communities, as the de-facto authority in these areas, and to keep a modicum of order and justice (following traditional community law).
- Support dialogue between local communities, respected traditional authorities, existing officials, and armed groups to work on providing basic local authority services to an area - coordinate health, education, and employment programmes (see box on Londo project).
- The Stability Fund could support programmes that address the drivers of conflict and support peacebuilding.
- Local governance structures could include community councils consisting of local leaders, such as teachers, religious leaders, respected traditional chiefs, etc. Elections respect the norms and customs of each community.
- Foreign development assistance should be decentralised to support areas outside Bangui, and support the building of governance and accountability structures, order, and security at a local level.

- Decentralisation of international assistance requires working in partnership with local communities, authorities, and armed groups, and providing resources for areas depending on both historical imbalances and need. These partnerships need to be monitored closely - as part of the Stability Fund approach.
- Financial decentralisation of foreign assistance should be used to enhance the impact of intervention in local areas by using the private sector, NGOs, and civil society as delivery mechanisms.¹⁰² Use performance-based financing to support the most effective agents of service delivery.
- The central Government should recognise that its de-facto control of territory is limited and choose to focus on providing good government for the Bangui area. The central Government's broader role could eventually settle in facilitating financing and standard setting.¹⁰³

CASE STUDY (LONDO PROJECT)¹⁰⁴

The Londo project is designed to adapt to the context in which it operates. It creates temporary jobs for 35,000 people in all the country's sub-prefectures. 5–7% of all households in the country have a family member working in the program. "Londo's nationwide presence, its ability to deploy quickly to new areas, its public lottery system used to decide who wins the right to participate in the scheme, and its transparent approaches allow the project to tangibly contribute to improved social cohesion, and a restoration of the legitimacy of public authorities, while repairing some critical infrastructure (roads and landing strips) at the same time." It also leaves used tools (wheelbarrows, pickaxes, and spades) that local authorities can use to support future activities.

Personal Freedoms and Civil Liberties

Protection of Civil Rights

Civil rights are guaranteed by the Constitution; however, in the context of almost perpetual conflict, the state and various rebel groups have repeatedly violated them.¹⁰⁵ Weak state structures and institutions – including the judiciary – as well as a culture of impunity for elites has undermined the protection of civil rights and personal freedoms.¹⁰⁶ This is exacerbated by the state's limited reach beyond Bangui.

According to the Legatum Prosperity Index, civil liberties have been in decline in CAR for 10 years, with significant decreases in freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of speech and access to information.

Poor training, inadequate staffing, delayed salary payments, insufficient resources, and ongoing conflict have created the circumstances for corruption to flourish and made it difficult for citizens to access justice.¹⁰⁷ Certain groups, such as Muslims, nomadic pastoralists, the forest-dwelling Ba'aka, women, and the LGBT+ community have suffered ongoing discrimination – both at the hands of the state and others.¹⁰⁸ Although the independent High Authority for Good Governance is tasked with protecting the rights of minorities, its reach and effectiveness are limited.¹⁰⁹

Freedom of Expression

Protection of Freedom of expression is also limited in practice. Public discussion and debates are limited by fear of violent retaliation.¹¹⁰ Radio is the most important (and sometimes only) source of information for many in the country.¹¹¹ While a number of independent broadcasters exist, many (particularly in Bangui) are aligned to specific groups or international actors

(including Russia) and turn to state-owned media.¹¹² In the most recent election period, state-owned media was not impartial and favoured the position of the existing administration.¹¹³

The quality of media in CAR is low, partly due to the poor remuneration of journalists, which makes them vulnerable to bribes and subjective reporting.¹¹⁴ The High Commission of Communication has attempted to regulate the media, limit hate-speech, and ensure impartiality; however, to-date it has not been particularly effective.¹¹⁵

Freedom of Assembly

Freedom of assembly has been restricted in practice, particularly beyond Bangui and in rural areas.¹¹⁶ While political protests and parties are allowed, violence and other means of intimidation exerted by state officials and militia groups alike have deterred many from availing of these rights.¹¹⁷ Non-political groups are currently prohibited by law from meeting for political purposes, curbing civil society engagement in politics and infringing substantially on the freedom of assembly.

Police/Security Forces

The police are severely understaffed, undertrained, underequipped, and frequently underpaid.¹¹⁸ Their presence and mobility are limited, they operate based on bribes, or are linked to abuses of power, creating mistrust.¹¹⁹ These weaknesses impede the defence of essential rights for ordinary citizens, and once again this is worsened by the limited reach of state infrastructure beyond Bangui.

PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Law provides protection for essential rights.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Constitutional freedoms are not protected due to a weak judiciary, the zero-sum-nature of politics in CAR, impunity for elites, and endemic violence.• Religious violence has been intense in recent years.• The media is dominated by state-owned companies and has frequently been used to incite violence and hatred.• The fear and actual threat of violence and retaliation has led many individuals, civil society organisations, and politicians to self-censor and not utilise their freedom to assemble. Activist groups face threats to their personal safety, leading them to self-censor.

VISION FOR PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

Respect emerges for civil liberties and personal freedoms due to greater stability, more security and less political violence. Citizen trust in the state and its different authorities strengthens because of the effects of peacebuilding and the decentralisation of power to local areas. Essential personal freedoms and civil liberties are also respected by the Government and security services. A competent and independent judiciary protects civil liberties under the law. Every citizen feels confident and free from fear, knowing that their essential rights are protected, including security, liberty, privacy, equal treatment under the law, right of due process and fair trial. Citizens enjoy freedoms of expression, assembly, speech, and the press. Strong oversight of state institutions instils confidence that those infringing liberties will be held to account. The respect of these essential civil liberties contributes to the legitimacy of the Government and to the trust and reconciliation in the country.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR PERSONAL FREEDOMS AND CIVIL LIBERTIES

- Focus on the local protection of essential rights, rather than complete adherence to directives and rules issued from the central Government in Bangui.
- Promote the development of locally-based police forces that act in accordance with local norms and enjoy the support of their communities – this could involve the introduction of civilian-run police forces.¹²⁰
- Provide training to local police forces based on the protection of essential rights and the encouragement of mediation.
- Strengthen oversight institutions for ensuring adherence to core policing principles.
- Prioritise the consistent payment of salaries to the police.

CASE STUDY – 'RESISTANCE COUNCILS' IN UGANDA (1981-1986)¹²¹

"In Uganda, the rebel group handed over administration, including security and policing, to local communities that followed customary practices. Though administration was later institutionalised, it still retains many of the elements of customary justice and security that it bore earlier. At the local level, customary practices were never replaced by a national police force but continued – and continue – to supplement democratised customary policing form. Customary practice gives priority to reconciliation, restitution, and apology (Tidemand 1994: 143–7)."

Building a Trusting Society

CAR has a long history of 'raiding' and aggressive resource extraction within the country, carried out by both domestic and international actors.¹²² In the past 10 years, this has manifested in intense conflict and violence between rebel groups and the Government, displacing 1.4 million citizens – internally and as refugees- about one third of the entire population.¹²³

This conflict is the result of elites competing violently for power, to be able to raid resources. This means a viable political settlement is not possible.¹²⁴ Central to this issue is the lack of security throughout the country.

Rebel group leaders often leverage the violence of their fighters to secure a seat in the next peace agreement negotiations, through which they can secure political and/or material gains without any firm intention of honouring their commitments.¹²⁵ The motivation for those fighting is different, often relating to a desire for security, protection, and an income, in a country where the aforementioned are scarce.¹²⁶ In recent years, conflict has also been exacerbated by the weaponisation of religious differences in the country by opportunistic elites, competing for political power. The Government based in Bangui can be seen through a similar lens, although – through its control of the capital and appearances of democracy – it benefits from international recognition.¹²⁷ This has allowed it to secure access to substantial foreign development assistance, as well as the protection of MINUSCA and the Russian Wagner Group. The current situation, whereby the Government maintains firm control of Bangui and fights with various rebel groups for the remainder of the country, is facilitated by the policies of international partners. Meanwhile, CAR citizens suffer from violence, hunger, and few opportunities for prosperity. According to the Prosperity Index, CAR ranks 157th out of 167 countries in Inclusive societies domain, and 163rd in the social capital element, illustrating the situation in the country.

Communities and rebel groups have in some cases been able to reach several meaningful peace agreements at a local level; however, those pursued nationally have been detached from the population and opened opportunities for self-enriching elites.¹²⁸ Many of the rebel groups enjoy only limited support in their (or any) areas of operation, but the central Government also lacks legitimacy.¹²⁹

BUILDING A TRUSTING SOCIETY

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The absence of strong state institutions across the country makes decentralisation feasible.• The lack of strong ideological bent motivating the rebel groups could make propositions that appeal to everyone’s best interests easier to reach.• The presence of significant international development assistance and military support is a critical resource.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Very low trust between communities and individuals. Endemic violence.• Raiding and aggressive resource extraction of elites is pervasive. Narrow interest of elites.• International donors find it difficult to change their traditional way of operating and continue to focus on central Government, rather than effective peace-building specific to CAR.• Many factors sustain violence and conflict.

VISION FOR BUILDING A TRUSTING SOCIETY

A national ceasefire and a strengthened peacebuilding force allows stability to take root, enabling local accountability and local democratic processes to begin to emerge. International partners support this process by decentralising their financial support. Trust between individuals and communities increases.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR BUILDING A TRUSTING SOCIETY

- Establish a Regional Dialogue for Trust, in which conversations between all regional stakeholders can begin to build relational trust and a shared vision of how to tackle contentious issues, such as access to resources. These discussions should be mediated and focus on building trust between people and groups.
- Develop Regional Conciliation Agreements. Conciliation agreements should be collaboratively created in each region, building on the peace agreements established following the ceasefire. These agreements should state in writing the conclusions reached surrounding regional concerns and should meet the demands of all stakeholders. Such agreements should be subject to independent judicial oversight and require public endorsement, and adherence should also be independently monitored.
- Promote programmes to support and mentor young people and encourage them to choose peaceful alternatives to resolving conflicts in a non-violent manner (such as Conciliation Resources programmes).
- Build long-term community-level dialogue. Set up projects in the community which focus on reconciling differences, especially in cases where violence has entrenched deep divisions. These conversations should also explore strategies for reintegration of Internally Displaced People which respect everyone’s need for access to housing and resources.

- Facilitate cross-regional dialogue, so regions can begin working together to form a more cohesive social contract which address issues such as wealth disparities and the reach of public services. These discussions should ensure that all regions are equally represented, and that any agreements reached reflect their interests in equal measure. Through these discussions, a sense of a greater common identity can begin to form.

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2. Open Economy: supporting stability and peace

162nd in the Prosperity Index

This chapter focuses on the Open Economies domain of the Prosperity Index, which captures the extent to which an economy is open to competition, encourages innovation and investment, promotes business and trade, and facilitates inclusive growth. Prosperity is driven by an open economy that harnesses ideas and talent to create sustainable pathways out of poverty. For the Central African Republic in particular, a growing economy that delivers more resources to local people will contribute to stability because it presents an alternative to fighting over resources.

In an open economy, property rights are protected so investment can flow; business regulation enables entrepreneurship, competition, and innovation; open markets and high-quality infrastructure support trade and commerce; and fiscal and monetary policy are used responsibly to foster employment, productivity, and sustained economic growth. Increased commercial interactions around mining, livestock, forestry, and other commercial activities should gradually support the emergence of greater internal order, even in areas where armed groups dominate.

On the other hand, without an open, competitive economy, it is very challenging to create lasting social and economic wellbeing where individuals, communities and businesses are empowered to reach their full potential. Trade between communities, regions and nations is fundamental to the advance of productivity and innovation that creates economic growth and prosperity. In contrast, an uncompetitive market, or one that is not designed to maximise welfare, stagnates growth while crony capitalism thrives, with knock-on effects elsewhere in society.

Part I of this report set out the core elements for a roadmap to peace, which included local initiatives to support economic development. This chapter builds on this theme to establish what is required for more comprehensive and longer-term economic transformation. It addresses Enterprise Conditions (employment and the independent sector), Investment Environment (land tenure and property rights, banking, and finance), Economic Quality (macroeconomic management, agricultural and mining sectors), and Infrastructure and Market Access (including international trade). In addition, a Stability Fund (which played a similar function in Somalia) could support catalytic investments bolstering the productivity of small farmers and the agile delivery of social services (training local staff to provide mobile health services, for example).



Ex-combatants participate in a pilot programme for disarmament, demobilisation, rehabilitation, and reintegration (DDR) in Bangui.
"Participants of Pre-DDRR Pilot Project in Central African Republic" by United Nations Photo is marked with CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

Employment and the Independent Sector

The history of armed conflict and weak governance in CAR has disrupted the country's economy, destroyed industries, and left few opportunities for employment. In addition, poor infrastructure, excessive Government regulation, burdensome bureaucratic and taxation requirements, and a rigid labour market introduce barriers to job creation and the development of a formal economy.¹

In the most recent World Bank Enterprise Survey, 24% of firms reported an inadequately educated workforce as a major constraint (compared to 16% for Sub-Saharan Africa),² and it is estimated that between 75% and 90% of workers are employed informally.³ Approximately 70% of the population is engaged in subsistence farming.⁴ Women are most likely to be engaged in agriculture (96% of those employed).⁵

The formal economy in CAR is small relative to the size of the independent (informal) sector. However, despite this, the independent sector does not play a substantial role in Government strategic planning.⁶

The significant scale of the independent sector means that most citizens in CAR are employed outside of the social security system and cannot enjoy a minimum wage or avail themselves to rights and services designed to protect them.⁷ Therefore, these people are particularly vulnerable to the economic and health-related impact of COVID-19.⁸

With limited economic opportunities available to ordinary citizens or ex-combatants alike, violence in the country perpetuates. Many are drawn to supporting various armed groups to secure an income, seek protection or revenge, or seek to redress the system. The constant cycle of violence discourages long-term investment and creates an extremely short-term focus for budding entrepreneurs. Furthermore, previous DDR (demobilisation, disarmament, and reintegration) programmes have had only limited successes in creating opportunities for ex-combatants.

EMPLOYMENT AND INDEPENDENT SECTOR

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The independent (informal) sector is the backbone of the economy and is labour intensive, providing informal processes for acquiring skills, and supports family ownership, self-employment, and apprenticeships.⁹ 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Armed groups demand their own 'taxes' and impose their own bureaucratic systems that impede the functioning and productivity of enterprises. A lack of opportunities drives many to join armed militias for survival.

VISION FOR EMPLOYMENT AND THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

The independent (informal) sector is celebrated – offering employment and economic opportunities. Governments have clear strategies of support. Individuals and communities are supported through the provision of training, equipment, and financing to develop new and complementary skills. Individuals no longer feel that participation in armed groups is their only option. Tension between communities has subsided through close working relationships and economic dependencies that have brought advancements for all.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT AND THE INDEPENDENT SECTOR

- Focus on boosting the productivity of the independent sector.¹⁰
- Announce policy change to support, rather than coerce or formalise, the independent sector (particularly in agriculture and artisanal mining).
- Engage with independent sector stakeholders to understand the obstacles they face.
- Provision of "Innovation fairs" to inspire young entrepreneurs (perhaps currently armed rebels) to pilot different technologies to generate profits and high social impact.
- Offer training and support to prospective entrepreneurs locally, tailored to local needs and build complementary skills between communities that promote reconciliation and cohesion.
 - For example, a community with skills to manage abattoirs could promote a closer relationship with cattle herding communities.
 - International organisations and NGOs, in consultation with local actors, could be enlisted to deliver specific training programmes from start-to-finish.
 - Different communities could teach their own learned skills to other communities, promoting conciliation and cohesion.

Enabling Competitive Enterprises

The cycles of violence have destroyed productive assets in the country and ethnic/religious-based attacks have undermined the pre-existing commercial networks – in particular, the reprisals against Muslim merchants have impacted financing for artisanal mining.¹¹ There has been tension because some ethnic groups benefit more than others from commercial activities.

CAR's business environment is one of the least attractive in Africa due to not only the country's violent conflicts, ongoing insecurity, and poor infrastructure, but also the poor regulatory and bureaucratic environment.¹²

The economy is guided by Government decree with excessive regulation and inefficient bureaucracy, making running enterprises expensive.¹³ CAR is ranked 184th in the world for starting a business in the 2020 World Bank Doing Business report.¹⁴ The result is an economy where most

businesses are forced to circumvent formal rules to run their operations. These businesses are key to the economy, but they are vulnerable to authorities and tend to underinvest.¹⁵

Several of CAR's largest businesses are state-owned enterprises that operate in agriculture, forestry, and transport.¹⁶ The new law on the management of state-owned enterprises, signed in October 2020, promotes improved corporate governance.¹⁷ However, implementing the law in the current political context of CAR is not feasible.

CAR has adopted CEMAC's regional competition regime; however, there are no formal institutions to implement this, and competition regulations are difficult to enforce – for example in telecommunications and banking. Government officials and armed groups across the country have used monopolies to enrich themselves.¹⁸

Between 40 and 60% of economic activity in the country is carried out by micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs), operating in the independent (informal) sector – a figure higher than the SSA and CEMAC averages.¹⁹ CAR has only around 40 formal, sophisticated firms, which are concentrated in Bangui and account for about 50% of the GDP.²⁰ These formal firms are often family-owned conglomerates (many from the Lebanese diaspora) and subsidiaries of multinational corporations with access to finance.²¹

The burdensome nature of complying with tax administration leads to widespread avoidance; tax revenues were just 7.8% of GDP in 2019.²²

Forestry companies often act as local social service providers whose taxes are important for local community budgets (representing up to 85% of them in some cases).²³

There is a significant lack of public-private dialogue in CAR which would help Government and business work together to address regulatory and bureaucratic bottlenecks and build a conducive business environment.²⁴ The recent creation of a public-private dialogue framework (Cadre Mixte de Concertation pour l'Amélioration du Climat des Affaires) is a positive step.²⁵

There is a need to further improve the capabilities of the One-stop shop for Business Formalisation (GUFE).²⁶ In fact, the lack of an appropriate regulatory framework for procurement has led to widespread fraud and corruption.²⁷ This again works only for the benefit of those who are politically well connected.

The political advantages of certain businesses support the argument that the state does not serve armed militias. Support for the private sector is a key component of a more stable economy and peacebuilding. Without access to opportunities for employment and income generating activities, the appeal of armed militias is greater.

ENABLING COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISES

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some steps to promote public-private dialogue to improve the business environment have been taken. As a member of CEMAC, CAR, they could draw on expertise and support from partners to develop competitive markets more conducive to entrepreneurship. A precedent of forestry companies delivering public services and supporting local budgets exists. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The focus is still on formalising businesses rather than supporting productivity of the independent sector. Elites that have captured certain markets and state-owned enterprises may prove to be difficult opponents to more competition. The business environment is burdensome, and it favours those linked to politicians, contributing to national grievances. There is a limited tax base.

VISION FOR COMPETITIVE ENTERPRISE

A thriving private sector with more local entrepreneurs provides jobs and income for people. Competitive markets and fewer Government regulations promote the dynamic development and innovation for an independent (informal) sector. The Government engages proactively with the business community to identify and remove regulatory tax and bureaucratic burdens that hinder productivity. By allowing for flexibility and autonomy in approaches across the country, there is the possibility to focus on innovation and entrepreneurship rather than simply compliance. A more open and competitive political system makes it easier to reform state-owned enterprises, so they can operate in competitive markets. Trust begins to emerge between the Government, local authorities, and entrepreneurs. Communities are empowered to work together to drive the financing of mutually beneficial projects that boost local productivity and provide a real alternative for many who would have otherwise felt compelled to turn to violence in search of basic needs and equal access to economic opportunities.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR ENABLING ENTERPRISE

- De-regulate the economy to allow the independent (informal) sector to compete on a more equal field, without favouring groups associated to politicians. In this way, cohesiveness is promoted and collaboration between different ethnic groups is enhanced (as in the livestock supply chain).
- Empower the Cadre Mixte de Concertation pour l'Amélioration du Climat des Affaires to adopt market-oriented policies. Include independent (informal) sector entrepreneurs to ensure they benefit all.²⁸
- Establish regional and local economic dialogue frameworks.
- Provide autonomy to local areas to apply flexible approaches, for example with forestry companies.
- Update business regulations and the legal and institutional framework to facilitate public-private-partnerships, and to enable private-sector participation.²⁹

Land Tenure and Property Rights³⁰

Access to land, water, forestry, and mining rights in CAR is determined very largely by customary law. CAR also has legislation in place to govern water, mining, and forestry.

In practice, however, the formal law governing land tenure is outdated; administrative structures have limited reach and rules are rarely implemented. Armed groups who control most areas outside Bangui have often shown little respect for tenure. There is an ongoing conflict between herders and farmers over traditional transhumance routes and cropping areas; seizure or looting of property has displaced an estimated 1.5 million people.³¹

LAND TENURE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A formal regulatory framework is in place for water, mining, and forestry, e.g., Forestry and Mining Codes.• Customary law is recognised by formal law and in practice is widely applied.• There have been efforts by the World Bank, UNHCR and Norwegian Government to assist displaced people returning and reclaiming their property.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Formal land tenure law is outdated. Across all sectors, formal provisions are rarely implemented due to loss of control over regions, lack of resources, weak infrastructure and institutions, corruption, and ongoing sporadic violence which continues to displace people.• Traditional authorities are undermined by the armed conflict as tenure allocations are disrupted by violence in the regions. Despite their dominant role in agriculture, women rarely enjoy property rights in their own name.• Large numbers (25-30% of population)³² are affected. Displacing those who have taken possession of abandoned property is a complex issue.

VISION FOR LAND TENURE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

Security starts building confidence in the enforceability of rights and roots out corruption in licensing and control processes. Greater clarity and enforcement of land tenure rights address the root causes of farmer/pastoralist violence. Improved land tenure attracts displaced people back onto their land and increases productive investments (such as small irrigation schemes), benefiting women, farmers, and urban resettlement areas.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR LAND TENURE AND PROPERTY RIGHTS

- Recognise the importance of protecting land-use rights and customary law.
- Convene meetings of herders, farmers, and authorities in each region to agree on local solutions to tenure issues, such as re-settlement/compensation for the dispossessed from the region; define transhumance corridors and cropping areas; and reinstate independent tenure dispute resolution and enforcement.
- Implement agreed re-settlement or compensation for lost or destroyed property. The scale and duration of the disruption means that this exercise is fraught with illegitimacy, logistical and legal challenges.
- Determine farming areas and official transhumance routes, including designated sites for pastoralists around farming communities. Create synergies. Revise the agro-pastoral code to improve cohabitation and resource sharing:

- Restore and support the arbitration role of respected customary authorities on rules and charges for cross border pastoralism with the authorities of neighbouring areas.
- Deploy security to monitor cross border transhumance and community policing.
- Extend lessons of the FAO project, "Restoration of peace and dialogue between communities affected by cross-border transhumance in the Central African Republic and Chad," funded by the United Nations Peacebuilding Fund, started in December 2018.³³
- Regional leaders should consider confirming and supporting local tenure rights for community forestry.
- Agree to mechanisms that protect and improve of the rights of women and marginalized populations (e.g., female titles, community shares of licence revenues).

Banking and Finance

A significant constraint on private-sector development and entrepreneurship is the lack of access to financing in CAR. Without access to credit, opportunities for development and growth are limited, exacerbating tensions in the country. Financial inclusion has improved over the past decade, but only 14% of adults have access to a bank account.³⁴ The country's use of digital payments is also low, limited by inaccessibility to mobile phones.³⁵

CAR has the smallest financial sector of the CEMAC region, and it is dominated by a banking sector that provides limited credit to the private sector.³⁶ The banking sector consists of four banks with assets totalling approximately 20% of GDP: three are foreign-owned – with a subsidiary of the pan-African group Ecobank accounting for close to half of all banking assets – while one state-owned bank (Banque Internationale pour la Centrafrique) represents 25% of the sector.³⁷ In addition, there are two savings banks and two micro-finance institutions.³⁸ The small and undeveloped financial system remains concentrated in Bangui, while its payment systems are weak and not well integrated with regional and international systems.³⁹ Domestic credit to the private sector is very low.⁴⁰

Short-term loans predominate - intended to alleviate cash flow issues but are ill-adapted to support long-term investment and growth.⁴¹ The banks focus on a few large companies – particularly those involved in telecommunications, hydrocarbons, or general trade – while the agricultural sector and SMEs are neglected.⁴²

The cycles of violence have undermined pre-existing commercial networks. In particular, the persecution of Muslim merchants has impacted traditional informal sources of financing for artisanal mining.⁴³

Legal underpinnings and regulation for the financial system and capital markets exist – through CEMAC institutions – but the market is poorly differentiated and offers few opportunities for investors.⁴⁴

The Government has adopted a microfinance development strategy, outlining its intentions to expand access to financial services by increasing the use of mobile banking.⁴⁵

BANKING AND FINANCE

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • As part of CEMAC, CAR has access to expertise and support from other countries, as well as developed regulatory institutions and practices. • A micro-finance strategy has been adopted. • Informal networks of merchants embedded in the community that provided project financing have existed in the recent past and present an opportunity, if they can be revitalised. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The ongoing conflict and poor infrastructure present a significant challenge to expanding the reach of the country's financial system. • Interethnic/religious supply chains have been weakened through conflict.

VISION FOR BANKING AND FINANCE

Individuals and enterprises can gain access to affordable credit in a straightforward manner. Businesses can invest in long-term growth, boosting productivity and greatly increasing the availability of good jobs in the country. Local communities begin to have access to finance through micro-credits and digital banking.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR BANKING AND FINANCE

- Promote the creation of cross-community, co-operative banks to support locally based projects for the benefit of all. Include support and information services; for example, use mobile phones for helplines or to request qualified adviser input. Focus on simple micro-loans and micro-leasing instruments to restart stalled industries (such as artisanal mining) and replenish lost productive assets.
- Support financial inclusion, digital banking, and the use of micro-credits – availing foreign assistance and a Stability Fund.
- Decentralise financing instruments, such as micro-loans and micro-leasing to restart stalled industries and replenish lost productive assets.⁴⁶ See UNDP Gogoro savings bank (a microfinance programme established to support entrepreneurs).⁴⁷

Macroeconomic Management

CAR is a member of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), a monetary union with the Central African CFA franc (FCFA) as a common currency.⁴⁸ The FCFA is pegged to the Euro, while the Central Bank for Central African States (BEAC) acts as the union's central bank, with a focus on price stabilisation (at an inflation rate target of 3%) and the maintenance of the peg.⁴⁹

Security issues affect economic growth, which has fluctuated significantly.⁵⁰ The Government also relies extensively on foreign development assistance and external debt.⁵¹ The country is at a high risk of debt distress.⁵² CAR has frequently been in arrears on debt repayments, successfully negotiating partial/full cancellations on several occasions.⁵³

CAR's savings rate is very low,⁵⁴ and in 2022 it had a current account deficit of -5.7% of GDP.⁵⁵

CAR has access to wider reserves as part of BEAC; however, the pandemic has weakened BEAC foreign reserves.⁵⁶ Exports have dropped, private sector credit has been low, and there is a structural overvaluation of the FCFA.⁵⁷ Under a structural programme started in 2016, the IMF has

provided an extended credit facility that includes objectives such as supporting macroeconomic stability, improving administrative capacity, addressing governance issues, boosting the business climate, managing external vulnerability and increasing tax collection.⁵⁸ Domestic primary spending has been limited.⁵⁹

MACROECONOMY

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The 2016 IMF structural programme. • The monetary union provides a minimum of macro-economic stability. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Too strong a focus on revenue collection, given the state of the economy.

VISION FOR STABLE MACROECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Macroeconomic resilience provides the foundation for a strong economy. Moderate inflation, sustainable budget deficits, a broad tax base, moderate external debt, and a unified exchange rate are important protective aspects of the macro-fiscal environment. The servicing of debt is manageable, while domestic savings support investment.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR MACRO-ECONOMIC STABILITY

- Remain in the CEMAC, as its support provides stability and investment confidence, essential given CAR's very low institutional capacity.
- Restrict external debt when not allocated to productive investments.

Farming, Livestock and Forestry

Agriculture is fundamental to CAR. It is the primary source of income and food sourcing for most people and employs around 70% of the population.⁶⁰ Agricultural activities combine farming (mainly subsistence), livestock herding and forestry (with logging estimated to account for over 10% of GDP and up to 40% of export earnings).⁶¹

Despite considerable and largely untapped agricultural potential, recurrent violence and instability have decimated agricultural productivity.

AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

Strengths	Weaknesses
<p>Geography:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CAR is endowed with abundant land, adequate soil, good rainfall, relatively favourable hot and humid climate conditions, and dense tropical forests. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Roughly a third of the country is considered suitable for farming, yet only about 8% is under cultivation.⁶² CAR is highly vulnerable to climate change (ranked 180 out of 181 countries in the 2020 ND-GAIN Index). Floods are increasingly common in the South and West, while the northernmost part of the country suffers from rising temperatures and has a hot semi-arid climate; droughts and wildfires are common. Plot sizes are small, productivity is low, and output is predominantly subsistence crops for domestic consumption. Cash crops (cotton and coffee) production have been severely disrupted. There is almost no irrigation of cropped land. Water and grazing are not evenly distributed, forcing pastoralists to migrate in the dry season from the northern drylands to the more humid south. As farmers practise extensive rotational cultivation, herders and farmers encroach on one other's territory and conflict and competition are inevitable.
<p>Cattle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Close to half the land is suitable for livestock grazing (yet less than 15% is used). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Livestock is a key source of conflict. Community defence groups have evolved into armed groups motivated by profiting from cattle.⁶³ Cattle racketeering to armed groups is very profitable and may make them less supportive of peace. Armed herders from other regions come to CAR and escalate conflict over resources. As CAR pastoralists have been displaced by violence, the country's vacant and relatively lush pastures and its ungoverned borders attract bandits.⁶⁴

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herders and farmers are interdependent, and they traditionally resolve disputes locally, with informal agreements and settlements. <p>Forestry:⁶⁵</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CAR has significant forestry resources, particularly the dense, semi-deciduous forests in the Southwest and South-Central regions. • Commercial logging is the only formal, large-scale enterprise and accounts for a significant number of exports. • CAR signed the EU-FLEGT initiative and benefits from interventions by international agencies.⁶⁶ <p>Employment:</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict has become the norm and leads to a cycle of violence and score-settling. • Pastoralists have been seen as enemies of the anti-balaka, who resent the wealth of pastoralists, especially relatively wealthy Muslims. • Armed groups often disrupt dispute resolution, forbidding village chiefs from mediating. Transboundary herders bypass traditional processes and refer disputes to groups like 3R (to whom they have paid taxes). But 3R is perceived by farmers to be biased towards the herders. • Deforestation is at high risk. • The sector has been affected by conflict and dilapidated infrastructure. • A high concentration of a few timber companies (owned by foreign investors) are CAR's largest private employers. • Implementation of the Forest Code is patchy and illegal practices are common. • Labour productivity is undermined by limited adult literacy (37.4% in 2018).⁶⁷ • Women have few rights to the land they farm.
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VISION FOR AGRICULTURAL SECTOR

A thriving agricultural economy is the main peace dividend, with increased food security and restored facilities. Sustainable forestry generates revenue and export earnings, and livestock movement is carefully planned to avoid conflict with farmers.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR FARMING, LIVESTOCK, AND FORESTRY

- Build a national/regional consensus between local populations and armed groups by positioning agricultural reforms as key to securing both popular legitimacy and financial rewards to farmers. Evidence of benefits will need to be clear to outweigh the losses for armed groups.
- Convert pastoralism from a driver of conflict to a peacebuilding tool.
 - Enlist armed groups to encourage dialogue between farming communities and pastoralists in their region.
 - Map current land usage to serve as a benchmark for future negotiations.
- Support both returnees and remaining host community members to stimulate food production, and prevent the further deterioration of food security, easing tensions over lack of resources.
- Develop a cash-for-work programme to rehabilitate the ruined infrastructure.
- Focus infrastructure investment on multipurpose agriculture growth poles (agro-poles)/community hubs.

- Introduce simple, innovative packages to improve the productivity of farmers, including mobile agricultural extension services, micro-irrigation, renewable energy, uberisation of tractors, and use of satellites.
- Improve training and extension services by updating programmes to include climate, environmental and sustainability information, using radio and community television at agro-poles to communicate agricultural messages, rehabilitating existing centres and redeploying extension officers.
- In terms of specific agricultural sub-sectors:
 - a. Livestock:
 - Rehabilitate pastoral infrastructure.
 - Institute a programme for tsetse fly control, vaccination and deworming of cattle (partly funded through contributions from pastoralists).
 - Implement extension services for better herding techniques.
 - b. Farming:
 - Agricultural research study should identify areas with the most potential to grow cash crops that offer job creation, increase revenues, import substitution and high value exports.
 - Land rights, tools, education, and solar powered micro-irrigation should be provided to support this.
 - Build input storehouses and product warehouses; improve transport links to key towns in CAR and markets elsewhere to support value chains in cash crops.
 - c. Commercial forestry:
 - Review all existing commercial licenses and negotiate new terms (including suspending operators until arrears are fully paid/terminating unused licenses).
 - Invite (with international support) world standard forestry companies that could help implement best environmental practices and community investment.
 - d. Community forestry:
 - Regional leaders should proactively enlist international assistance to develop community-based, artisanal forestry by boosting community awareness and building technical and administrative capacity (see case studies below).

CASE STUDIES

- In forestry, the EU Fern project proposes that recognising, securing, and enforcing forest community rights is the most effective and inclusive way to preserve, restore and enhance forests. Specific emphasis must be put on supporting those disenfranchised such as women and Indigenous peoples. It is important to use inclusive community structures; equitable access to benefits and clear incentives; enhanced capacities; and adoption of publicly financed national programmes.⁶⁸
- Farming and livestock development assistance initiatives: In June 2021, the World Bank approved a new USD 50 million grant from the special Crisis Response Window of the International Development Association to provide support to more than 465,000 food insecure small farmers through cash-for-work activities, while rehabilitating small-scale agricultural infrastructure in six prefectures.
- The CAR Emergency Food Crisis Response Project (PRUCAC) engages approximately 45,000 farmers in cash-for-work projects and several thousand producers will receive agricultural inputs and technical support, while benefiting from the rehabilitation of irrigation systems and other agricultural infrastructure.⁶⁹
- WelthungerLife provides market gardening/vegetable growing support in Bangui; a cash for work programme clearing land; and a programme building pathways and roads.⁷⁰
- IFAD: The Project to Revitalize Crop and Livestock Production in the Savannah (PREPAS – approved 2018, duration 2018-25, budget USD 30.45M). This targets 30,000 vulnerable households of agricultural producers in several sub-prefectures.⁷¹

TRUST BUILDING IN THE AGRICULTURAL SECTOR⁷²

- To build trust, confidence, and productive communication between farmers and pastoralists, and incorporate into CAR's customary law the model of the inclusive Kabara committees, which have reduced farmer-herder conflict in Nigeria's Shuwa community.⁷³
- To address resource access (the root cause of farmer-herder conflict) learn from initiatives in western Mali and RECOPA in eastern Burkina Faso that codify resource use through mapping, involvement of all stakeholders, and ongoing independent mediation.

Mining Industry

CAR has considerable mineral resources, such as diamonds, gold, uranium, iron and copper.⁷⁴ However, diamond exports have declined substantially,⁷⁵ and precious metals accounted for 26% of exports in 2019.⁷⁶ Poor infrastructure and the high cost of importing machinery has meant that small-scale artisanal mining and informal mining dominate the sector.⁷⁷ Employment is seasonal, surging during the dry season: from January to June.⁷⁸ Mining concessions have frequently been used by political leaders to benefit their own ethnic/supporter groups, resulting in tensions.⁷⁹ Mining operations have also provided significant sources of financing for criminal armed groups and smugglers.⁸⁰

The artisanal mining sector has been beset by a number of issues. Prior to the conflict in 2013, mineral buying houses (largely operated by Muslim traders, with Christians filling many other roles throughout the value chain) promoted a system of interdependence between different religious and ethnic groups.⁸¹ Following the violence that erupted in 2013, this sense of interdependence broke down, with many Muslim traders being persecuted, taking their networks,

expertise, and financing with them.⁸² Without access to financing, many new and existing excavation projects ceased.⁸³ In the absence of the traditional actors, new wealthy individuals/groups moved in without buying licenses and began buying stones illegally at very low prices – which desperate sellers felt forced to accept.⁸⁴

The requirements of the Kimberly Process Certification Scheme (KPCS) to prevent the sale of ‘conflict diamonds’, makes trading more complex.⁸⁵ CAR’s suspension from the KPCS (and the Extractive Industries Transparency Initiative) in 2013, however, hit the sector hard.⁸⁶ Its reinstatement in 2015 for rough diamonds mined from ‘green’ or ‘compliant’ zones did help the industry, but compliant zones are limited to the southwest of the country.⁸⁷

MINING INDUSTRY

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Inter-community value chains existed in the past and could be rebuilt.• The sector is a potential source of income when conflict free and is sustainable.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The mining sector lacks sources of financing and is limited in terms of mechanisation.• Smuggling and illegal mining is a predominant factor in armed militias and criminal organisations.• Both CAR and its neighbours have poor due diligence.⁸⁸• Violence and conflict have severely damaged value chains and community ties.

VISION FOR MINING INDUSTRY

Mineral resources are explored and exploited in ways that maximise revenues and the nation’s developmental impact and protect the environment. CAR and local areas utilize international support to attract some of the world’s best companies (with high governance and appropriate green standards). The practice of mining in different areas of the country improves. The flow of revenues helps to build local infrastructure, support community enterprises, repair local value chains and acts as a glue that brings communities together. Artisanal miners receive training and support from larger mining companies, increasing their productivity and prosperity.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR MINING AND EXTRACTIVE INDUSTRIES

- Work with trusted international partners (research institutes, universities) to identify and recruit the world’s best mining companies (in terms of environmental and governance standards) to operate in CAR – to realistically improve mining practices, rather than attempt to implement an ideal law.
- Encourage/facilitate artisanal miners to create cooperatives that enhance their capabilities (including training and environmental norms) through information on international best practice.
- Rebuild supply chains, particularly with the return of some traders who have left.
- Strengthen access to short loans, grants, leasing, or to second-hand equipment and machinery with an inclusive micro-credit process. Focus on artisanal miners, small farmers, and cooperatives.⁸⁹

Infrastructure

The country is landlocked, extensive, and sparsely populated, and lacks adequate transport infrastructure. It is also prone to seasonal flooding and periodic droughts.

INFRASTRUCTURE

Strengths	Weaknesses
Transport:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Transport networks are very limited.⁹⁰ • Imports/exports depend on unreliable transport connections to neighbouring states. • The poor condition of transport networks. Severe flooding isolates many regions for months at a time. Many villages are unreachable and almost cut off all year-round • Roadblocks impose costs on road transit and are very profitable for armed groups, including the Government. • Transport programmes have been delayed by security issues.
Communications:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reach and access are very limited for all media. • Mobile and internet services are restricted by costs. 20% of average earnings are needed to purchase 1GB of mobile broadband data (vs. Africa average of 7.12%).⁹¹ • Broadcast media programming resources are limited and focussed on news and security issues.⁹² • The political and regulatory climate is not conducive to investment. Socatel is 60% state owned, operates an obsolete and underinvested network, and needs institutional reform.
Energy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There is potential for renewable energies, especially biomass, hydropower, and solar power. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Biomass for energy generation⁹³ poses a health hazard, increases deforestation, and allows neglect of alternatives. • Access to electricity is limited to around 14% of the population, mainly in Bangui.⁹⁴ State utility ENERCA is unable to renew equipment. Bangui suffers from frequent power outages. • Focus is on large projects, like Boali, rather than off-grid provision in rural areas.
Water/sanitation: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are abundant water resources, though unevenly distributed. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rotational farming and herding are vulnerable to conflict. • Access to drinking water has been reduced.⁹⁵ • Rural water infrastructure has been destroyed. In some villages, water sources were purposely contaminated by armed groups.⁹⁶ • Urban areas are underserved by SODECO.⁹⁷ • For the growing urban population, access to safely managed drinking water has been reduced.⁹⁸

VISION FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

CAR adopts a regionally focussed, community approach to infrastructure development, which contributes to peace as living conditions for vulnerable communities improve and stimulates the development of education, health, industry, and trade. A twin-track strategy delivers off-grid community access to water, solar power, and services through agro-poles in rural areas, while Bangui and principal secondary centres are served by rehabilitated water, sanitation, power, and transport facilities.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR INFRASTRUCTURE

- Focus on development assistance, supporting quick win regional improvements to road, water and power networks in productive areas that can create prosperity.
- Negotiate with armed groups to rationalise the use of roadblocks.
- Move away from large and high capital/technology projects (except when already in place and easy to complete) towards smaller, local projects under the sponsorship of local authorities in each area. Local communities should be involved in directing infrastructural investment.
- With transport, for example, focus on smaller, regional projects supported by local communities, and implemented locally. Use local labour for public works, as in the case of the World Bank-funded construction of Bamingui Bridge.⁹⁹
- Regarding communications, for example, combine expansion of radio reception with wider access to receivers. Promote local programming on conflict mitigation and agricultural techniques, food security, health, and education.
- For energy, follow the World Bank's ROGEP project model, for example, by working with local leaders to supply solar power to community hubs; and support private development of technology-enabled business models, such as pay-as-you-go solar power. Support this with micro-financing.
- Water, for example, projects can follow the model of Concern USA working with communities to renovate rural water points. Local water committees can be established to manage the supply of water and the responsible use of water points.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR COMMUNICATION

- Gradually build a trusted level of communication locally.¹⁰⁰
- Convene stakeholders to develop a strategy for using communications to support conciliation and promote productivity, health, and other skills.
- Prioritise radio and support wider ownership of receivers and improve the radio broadcast infrastructure to cover even remote communities.
- Support development of situation-relevant programming (e.g., on conflict mitigation strategies or agricultural techniques).
- Use community hubs to offer free public access to radio and television broadcasts, internet access, mobile telephony, and device charging. Hubs also provide training on more advanced information technologies.
- Local communities to work with private operators to enhance mobile penetration.
- Simplify regulation and licensing rules to promote private sector investment. Regulator institutions should include the voice of local areas.

COMMUNICATIONS CASE STUDIES¹⁰¹

South Africa - Clockwork radios that do not require batteries or mains electricity supplies are being distributed to villages to enable them to listen to development programming. The Baygen Freeplay radio is one of the first commercially successful communication devices to employ a clockwork mechanism as its power supply. Sold commercially for approximately USD \$75, it has been used extensively by NGOs as a key element in community education programmes and disaster relief efforts. In Ghana, the Government distributed 30,000 Freeplay radios so villagers could follow elections.

Zambia - A survey of 21,000 farmers enrolled in radio-backed farm forums found that 90% found programmes relevant and more than 50% credited the programmes and forums with increasing their crop yields.

The Philippines - UNESCO, the Danish International Development Agency and the Philippine Government provide radio equipment and training to remote villages with local programming content. The project has not only increased local business and agricultural productivity, but also resulted in the formation of civic organizations and more constructive dialogue with local officials.

A4AI reports that Namibia reduced costs by allowing new service providers to enter the market, while Kenya made internet access more widely available by eliminating a tax on handsets.

In Bangladesh, Grameen Bank, the village-based micro-finance organization, leases cellular mobile phones to successful members.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR ENERGY

- Adopt a decentralised approach that relies on small-scale solutions based on renewable energy, to provide electricity to community hubs in rural areas. Support installation of solar facilities at community hubs.
- For urban areas, complete rehabilitation of the existing hydro generation, transmission and distribution assets, but seek to serve other urban areas beyond Bangui, and provide access to electricity to community hubs in poor areas, deferring new large projects.

ENERGY CASE STUDIES¹⁰²

The World Bank's Regional Off-Grid Electricity Access Project (ROGEP, initiated in 2019) aims to accelerate the deployment of stand-alone solar products across 19 countries in Western and Central Africa (including CAR).¹⁰³ However, ROGEP funding (USD 250M) includes 19 countries, so CAR would need to lobby to receive significant funding. In Kenya 700,000 home solar systems were installed on the pay-as-you go purchase model, which is a flexible payment plan that makes electricity accessible to more people. Pay-as-you-go models, allowing payment in instalments, have become increasingly attractive in many markets and are expanding rapidly across Africa.

In Bangladesh, the World Bank helped to deploy 1.4 million solar home systems. More than 18.5 million people in rural areas now have reliable access to solar-powered electricity.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR WATER

- Twin track strategy: decentralised, community-based rural provision; and urban rehabilitation and extension (particularly social connections to impoverished areas).
- Stability Fund to support water programmes in different areas with strong local involvement.
- Institutional reforms to facilitate the water programme: promote private sector involvement for drilling boreholes and constructing latrines, supplying spare parts, and maintaining facilities.
- Development assistance support for regional authorities to promote community ownership of facilities within a decentralised framework. Focus on the efficient use of water and better sanitation and community involvement in project planning, design, and capacity-building. Local water committees can manage the supply of water and the responsible use of water points. These committees can foster social cohesion, reducing the potential for conflict between the host community, internally displaced people, herders, etc.¹⁰⁴
- Local labour should be employed in projects and provided with skills training to enable communities to maintain the assets. In the case of demobilised soldiers and abandoned children, this can aid re-integration into society.

WATER CASE STUDIES:

Concern USA has been working in CAR since 2014 and has pioneered the use of manually operated “village drills,” which rely on genuine people power rather than electricity. The drills are 33% cheaper than typical mechanized drills and can be transported to remote areas and assembled on site.¹⁰⁵

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR TRANSPORT

- Focus on smaller, regionally focussed projects supported by local communities and subsequently implemented by the authorities in each region.
- The Stability Fund could act as a mechanism to pool funding to follow a regional, community supported approach.
- Regional authorities could be invited to submit proposals for transport priorities in areas under their control, such as constructing road links to improve access to markets. This could act as a visible “peace dividend.”
- Prioritise those projects that can be delivered over a short timeframe, reduce conflict, and benefit the greatest number of people. Delivery should follow a labour-intensive public works approach and involve community-based crews (including women, youth, and former combatants) to carry out non-mechanized tasks.
- On-the-job training that equips participants with the skills to maintain assets on an ongoing basis.
- Support regional administrative capability to initiate projects, gain community support and monitor progress against milestones that trigger project payments.

TRANSPORT CASE STUDY:

Subject to securing greater local input/support, the World Bank's USD 53 million Rural Connectivity Project (in implementation from 2019) appears to be a good model. It aims to improve a network of targeted rural roads in two selected intervention areas in the Northeast and Northwest, to ensure maximum impact on agricultural production. This would ensure farmers have better access to markets to sell their products and buy agricultural inputs. It would also improve access to basic social services such as schools and medical clinics and facilitate humanitarian activities.¹⁰⁶

International Trade

CAR is a landlocked country. Hence, the Government has actively supported regional integration and is a member of the Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC), the African Union (AU), and others.¹⁰⁷ However, the COVID-19 containment measures and restrictions on movement have disrupted local and cross-border supply chains (particularly at the Cameroonian border) and caused an increase in the price of necessities.¹⁰⁸

The port of Doula in Cameroon is used for about 80% of CAR's international trade.¹⁰⁹ The transit is lengthy, sometimes taking more than 20 days for a truck to reach the port from Bangui.¹¹⁰ Poor infrastructure and insecurity have rendered foreign trade relatively expensive. Studies show that during the period 2008-2013, CAR's trade corridor was the least efficient in the world.¹¹¹

Over the past two decades, CAR has developed a growing trade deficit, as imports jumped from USD 97.6 million in 2000 to USD 300 million in 2019.¹¹² Over the same period, CAR's total exports decreased by 69% – from USD 257 million in 2000 to USD 79.5 million in 2019.¹¹³

This is a result of instability as well as a significant drop in diamond exports from 2003 onwards.¹¹⁴ Only four products account for 90% of CAR's exports, with timber replacing diamonds as the most significant contributor since 2006.¹¹⁵ In 2000, diamonds accounted for 70% of total exports, timber 14%, cotton 6.4%, and coffee 3.3%.¹¹⁶ In 2019, timber made up 62% of total exports, gold 17%, and diamonds 8.4% - with cotton at 1.61% and coffee at 0.46%.¹¹⁷

Asia and Europe are CAR's primary export destinations, despite the distance and high competition in these markets.¹¹⁸ Since 2012, China has become CAR's main export destination – primarily for timber.¹¹⁹ CAR's top five export markets are China (41%), the UAE (19%), France (6.6%), the US (4.3%), and Italy (4%).¹²⁰ CAR was reinstated by the United States as a beneficiary of its African Growth and Opportunity Act (AGOA) at the end of 2016 (having been suspended in 2003).¹²¹

In contrast to CAR's limited integration into global value chains, the country is well-integrated in the global black market for small arms, poached animals, gold, and diamonds.¹²² The ongoing insecurity and limited state presence across the country have made it easy for groups to cross the country's borders with illicit goods.¹²³

INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• CAR is a member of a number of regional organisations, including CEMAC.• CAR has been reinstated as part of AGOA.• CAR produces goods that regional neighbours are importing from other places.• Being a landlocked country, CAR will especially benefit from regional integration.¹²⁴	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Ongoing violent conflict.• Poor infrastructure and roadblocks.• CAR's economy is not diversified, and exports are dependent on timber.

VISION FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

Trade links with regional neighbours are secured through targeted investment and cooperation with local communities across the country. Producers across the country are supported to come together to share their knowledge and maximise their output, becoming important suppliers of a range of agricultural products to neighbouring countries. World-class international (forestry) companies are linked with local areas and set up in CAR and disseminate good practice, despite institutional constraints. Increased revenues from exports are used to promote nationwide development and reconciliation, demonstrating the benefits of unity over division.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR INTERNATIONAL TRADE

- Focus on regional trade, support existing production, and diversify the country's economy through a targeted strategy. For example, the market for coffee, wood, and agricultural products.¹²⁵
- Use the opportunity of AGOA to bolster exports to the U.S., particularly in the case of wood products which are AGOA eligible.¹²⁶ Direct links with world class forestry companies (with green and governance standards) would ensure good practice on the ground.
- Encourage agricultural exports regionally through agricultural schools (or touring teachers) and centres for experimenting with new processes across the country, plus, cooperatives to support with processing, marketing, input purchases, machine time-shares, and irrigation.¹²⁷ This could also help to promote community cohesion across CAR.
- Support catalytic investment in agriculture in different regions through the Stability Fund to support cohesion.

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3. Empowered People

166th in the Prosperity Index of 167 countries

This chapter focusses on the Empowered People domain, which captures the quality of people's lived experience and what enables individuals to reach their full potential through autonomy and self-determination. It considers the resources required for a basic level of wellbeing, including access to material resources, adequate nutrition, basic health services and outcomes, quality education, and a safe and clean environment.

Living conditions in CAR are poor, primarily attributed to poor nutrition. Over recent years, living conditions have worsened due to difficulties in the agricultural sector, arising primarily from the security situation. For the Central African Republic in particular, an important dividend from peace and reinforcer of stability will be the sense that living conditions and wellbeing are improving.

In a prosperous future, most people will be able to live on their income, with access to sufficient food, shelter and basic services. Those who can work will be able to support themselves and their dependents by employment, or through public works programmes, while those who cannot work and cannot be supported by their families, have access to social assistance. People would be able to take care of their physical and mental health and have access to effective healthcare; learning is valued and everyone receives a high-quality education, so they can reach their potential; and the natural environment is stewarded well, as a legacy for present and future generations.

Health

The healthcare system in CAR has collapsed in the face of civil war and violence. Civilians, health-care workers, facilities, and other infrastructure have been attacked and the system severely lacks public funding.¹

The lack of infrastructure, the scarcity of medicine supply, and long distances to reach medical facilities leave many without basic access to healthcare.² Only one in three medical facilities have at least one clinically trained staff member, while just one in ten rural posts have qualified personnel.³ The country has only one health specialist per 20,534 people.⁴ Approximately 70% of health services are provided by humanitarian organisations.⁵

In 2020, CAR already had 2.2 million people in need of medical assistance and, according to the UN, was one of the least-prepared countries in the world to face the COVID-19 pandemic.⁶ Most of the deaths in children under 5 are related to malaria.⁷ Vaccination rates are very low (only 2% of children are fully immunised before their second birthday).⁸ CAR suffers from the highest HIV prevalence across West and Central Africa, while fewer than half of those infected are receiving antiretroviral (ARV) treatment.⁹

Services in reproductive health, infant and child health, and nutrition are limited. These have led to the prevalence of preventable childhood diseases such as polio and measles.¹⁰ The maternal mortality rate stands at 882 per 100,000 live births, and the under-five child mortality rate is 13%.¹¹ 41% of children under the age of five are stunted and 24% are underweight, among whom 7% are acutely malnourished.¹²

In 2019, CAR was the country with the worst life expectancy in the world, at 53 years.¹³ CAR is ranked lowest in the world for health on the Legatum Prosperity Index, demonstrating the severe impact that violence and lack of infrastructure and services has on ordinary citizens.

HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some international humanitarian organisations have had success delivering healthcare by building trust at the local level. (See case study on page 92). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> There are few health facilities and long distances to reach them – worsened in the rainy season. People become very ill before seeking medical attention.¹⁴ Increasing violence directed at patients, healthcare staff, and medical infrastructure.¹⁵ Health provision facilities (external organisations included) are being looted and destroyed by armed groups.¹⁶ There are fewer than two licensed midwives per 10,000 people.¹⁷ Children are missing regular vaccinations, and the vaccination rate for common childhood illnesses is low.¹⁸

VISION FOR HEALTHCARE SECTOR

Good healthcare is a service that all communities and groups agree should remain available to every citizen. This cross-community understanding promotes dialogue and reconciliation because it demonstrates the benefits of cooperation over antagonism. Services are delivered locally in communities across the country. Community members are empowered to provide basic health care to their people who will enjoy better quality of life and increased life expectancy.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR HEALTH

- Promote a community-based healthcare system for local/regional level understandings among area leaders to support, facilitate, and protect healthcare endeavours and initiatives. Develop secure central procurement of medicines.
- NGOs and local areas should focus on providing basic healthcare training programmes, including childbirth education, for community members to improve healthcare outcomes in respective communities. To promote reconciliation between various groups, these training programmes should include individuals from distinct backgrounds and provide a space for them to work and learn alongside each other.¹⁹ It is important to ensure that training locations are (and feel) safe, that community leaders support the initiative, and that the training is delivered in a fair and equal manner without favouritism.²⁰ The positive outcomes of this initiative should be publicised via radio and mass media to highlight the collective and cross-community nature in which CAR citizens supporting each other.
- Follow the model of the 2014 MSF vaccination campaign which succeeded in administering more than one million vaccines to children under 5.²¹
- Run media campaigns promoting vaccination, health practices, and nutrition.²²

CASE STUDY – MENTOR INITIATIVE²³

'MENTOR has built an innovative network of community healthcare workers which allows the provision of essential healthcare directly to even the most isolated communities. Since 2008, this network has allowed MENTOR to navigate the perpetual violence and insecurity in CAR, reaching areas that other NGOs have difficulty accessing. Through daily consultation with communities, MENTOR is able to assess risks and adjust how and where to deliver support. Community healthcare workers are recruited directly from displaced and host communities, ensuring that they are trusted, respected, and welcomed into communities in a way that outsiders would not be. In cases of population displacement, the community health workers move with their communities, allowing healthcare provision to continue.

'Community healthcare workers are trained to provide a package of health services: health education, diagnosis and treatment of the most common diseases including malaria and diarrhoea, screening for malnutrition, iron supplement and malaria prophylaxis for pregnant women. Their ability to identify patients with other diseases (such as respiratory infections) and/or severe symptoms of malaria and diarrhoea enables them to be transferred (using local motorbike taxis) to health facilities which are better equipped to address more serious cases. MENTOR's community approach has been developed in close collaboration with the Ministry of Health and is fully in line with national health policy strategies in CAR. In addition to the community healthcare network, MENTOR also provides support to a number of health posts to improve referral level healthcare by ensuring that the posts are supplied with appropriate medications and staffed sufficiently where state provision or support from other health partners is lacking.

'Using this combination of approaches, nearly 550,000 consultations have taken place since the current humanitarian crisis started in March 2013. Of these, more than 263,000 cases were children under five years with a confirmed malaria diagnosis. Without the appropriate and timely treatment provided by MENTOR supported healthcare workers, these children would have been at high risk of death. In parallel to the highly successful clinical results of the community-based approach, important, extensive health education has been carried out to promote prevention against the most common diseases and to encourage initial treatment seeking. Different approaches are applied through sensitisation activities carried out directly by the community health workers in their village, coupled with targeted training of influential people in the communities (including women's groups and youth clubs) as well as large scale health promotion campaigns (with film projections, football matches, quizzes etc.).

Education

The primary and secondary school-age population (6-18) represents 35.5% of the overall population.²⁴ The education system consists of pre-primary, primary, lower-secondary, upper-secondary, and tertiary levels, with education ostensibly mandatory up to the age of 15.²⁵ Conflict has undermined administrative capacity and public finance in the education sector.²⁶ The majority of open schools are supported by international actors.²⁷

Basic infrastructure is completely lacking. Insecurity has destroyed schools and forced school closures, while many existing buildings are also being used as military bases by armed groups.²⁸ There is one classroom in good condition for every 148 students in public primary schools.²⁹ Schools are tuition-free; however, students must pay for books and supplies, and there is a severe lack of these resources in the country.³⁰

Displacement and conflict have resulted in a significant shortage of teachers.³¹ There is a pupil-teacher ratio of over 80:1 at primary level.³² While UNICEF has trained parents to become teachers and paid their salaries, this has only been possible in areas with strong community connections and has been less effective in more rural or conflict-affected regions.³³

Many children in rural areas are not registered with the Government at birth. Furthermore, Séléka armed group members have looted registration offices and destroyed many existing records.³⁴ Children with no birth registration have no access to citizenship, which causes difficulties in accessing education opportunities.³⁵ Many children have also been forced to join or assist some of the armed groups operating in the country. During 2020 UNICEF estimated that 5,000 children were active in armed groups.³⁶ Despite the legal age for marriage being 18, a 2017 UNICEF report found that 68% of girls (and 27% of boys) married earlier than this, while 29% of girls married before the age of 15.³⁷

CAR has extremely low education completion rates – only 14% for secondary level, while the average for sub-Saharan Africa is 44%.³⁸ Nearly a third of primary age children are out of school and only 59% complete primary education – more than half of girls do not complete primary education.³⁹

Despite significant foreign assistance support for education over the past two decades, little progress has been made.⁴⁰ Literacy rates stand at around 37% overall, and just 24.4% for adult women.⁴¹ In the Legatum Prosperity Index, CAR ranks 166th for education. The COVID-19 pandemic forced the closure of 3,679 functional schools and deprived 1.5 million students of access to education across all levels.⁴²

EDUCATION

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Existing programmes, such as the parent-teacher initiative, provide a promising model for delivering basic education. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The key building blocks of an education system – teachers and schools – are missing. Long-term neglect has severely undermined the existing system and left many citizens without access to basic education.

VISION FOR EDUCATION

Children are not denied access to an education that provides both technical and vocational skills, with the base they need to live a full and fulfilling life and bring about a process of reconciliation. There are schools with trained teachers for all age ranges accessible to every community. Resources and investment in education are distributed equitably. The education system ensures that school leavers are literate and numerate. Children are prepared for life as citizens, participating fully in society and in the economy, with the curriculum including technical, vocational, and civic skills. There is no deficit of technical skills in the labour force.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR EDUCATION

- Implement informal education structures on a local, small-scale level to reduce the risks associated with the ongoing conflict. Educating children at home in clusters on a local level will create opportunities for children to receive basic pre-primary and primary education, which will allow for them to return to elementary and secondary school when the conditions allow for peaceful access to formal schooling.

- Establish a system of teacher training at a local level. Such teachers can be trained parents, community leaders, or volunteers. Such training may be provided by organisations, such as UNICEF, with the cooperation of local NGOs.
- Establish remote education programmes via radio, particularly in rural and remote areas or areas with unstable security situations.
- Reconstruct schools through the support of public funds and community engagement. The rebuilding of schools could provide community employment opportunities and directly address the severe deficit in classrooms.
- Reform the national curriculum to address the most pressing needs of children growing up in CAR today, being flexible enough to allow regional variations across the country.

CASE STUDY

The International Rescue Committee with the support of the organisation Educate a Child, launched a project to address the barriers to education in the Democratic Republic of Congo. The “Enrolling Out of School Children” project took place in a few provinces where 47,750 children had no access to quality formal or informal education. Providing scholarship support increased enrolment and community support for schooling; parent participation increased through outreach and media campaigns. The curriculum was restructured in a way to fit six years of primary education into three years in order to increase literacy levels and encourage enrolment. A similar approach with the support of international organisations could be utilised in CAR where many remote areas have little or no access to any form of education.⁴³

Food Security and Social Protection

CAR is characterised by intense and widespread poverty.⁴⁴ 71% of the population live below the international poverty line, according to the 2020 World Bank estimates.⁴⁵ Access to basic social services is extremely limited, especially beyond Bangui. Additionally, the inconsistent registering of child births – and the refusal in certain cases to register the births of some Muslim children considered ‘foreigners’ – makes it difficult for these people to access social services.⁴⁶

Rural areas are significantly poorer than urban areas.⁴⁷ More than half the population are considered food insecure with around 40% (or two million people) experiencing acute food insecurity.⁴⁸ The vast majority of workers operate beyond the limited social security and minimum wage system in the independent or ‘informal’ sector.⁴⁹

The ongoing cycle of violence and conflict in the country is a significant factor. Insecurity hinders agricultural production and leads to widespread population displacement, acting as an underlying cause of the high levels of acute malnutrition.⁵⁰ In 2016, approximately three million people in CAR (around 63% of the population) were in need of humanitarian assistance – almost one million more than in 2013.⁵¹

FOOD SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Strengths	Weaknesses
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Cash-for-work programmes have been deployed. Many of the most powerful armed groups tolerate a minimal state presence in their respective regions, so the delivery of social protection services by the state in these areas is feasible.⁵² 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Providing salary/cash payments beyond the security of Bangui has proven difficult. The widespread displacement of citizens within the country poses a challenge for rebuilding local communities.

VISION FOR FOOD SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

Individuals and local communities are empowered to rebuild for the future and are free to invest in productivity enhancing activities, safe in the knowledge that their most basic needs can be met. Everyone can secure adequate food for themselves and their families. Those able to work can receive a living wage while contributing to the development of their local towns and regions. The poor and vulnerable members of society who cannot support themselves are covered by an appropriate social protection system. In this context of greater food security, a process of lasting reconciliation takes place.

SOME SUGGESTED ACTIONS FOR FOOD SECURITY AND SOCIAL PROTECTION

- Expand public works programmes to provide a safety net to the population and allow rebuilding and building of basic infrastructure. Build on the success of existing programmes, such as the Londo Project (see case study) or the Mahatma Gandhi Guaranteed Public Employment Programme in India. Tailor to local circumstances, with the focus on interventions supported by communities based on their collective needs. Implement transparent auditing.
- Central Government could assume a position of facilitator, supporter, and regulator of locally based groups/organisations/individuals that can deliver social protection services in a way that appropriately reflects the context they are operating in. The process could be facilitated by relying on trusted intermediaries.
- Promote a registration drive for all unregistered individuals within the country, channelled through community leaders.

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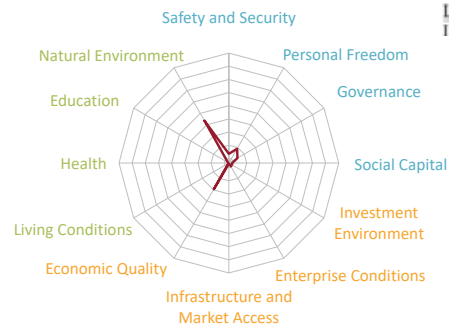
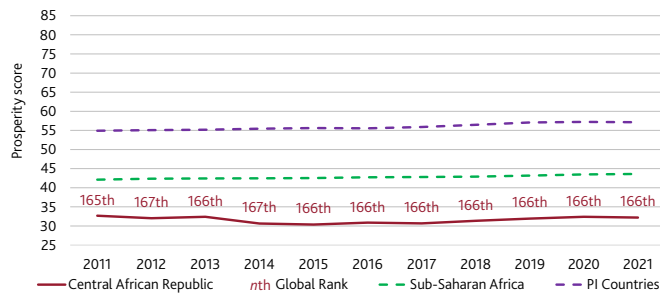
Legatum Prosperity Index Country Profile: CAR

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Central African Republic: Prosperity score 32.2 (166th)



Prosperity over time
































































































































































Breakdown of performance

	2011	Score 10-year trend	2021	Rank - Global (1 to 167) 2021	10-year rank change	Rank - Sub-Saharan Africa (1 to 49) 2021
Prosperity score	32.7		32.2	166	1	48
Inclusive Societies	38.3		35.0	157	4	44
Safety and Security	36.9		38.3	154	4	43
Personal Freedom	43.2		36.7	143	16	42
Governance	27.0		26.6	153	-	42
Social Capital	46.2		38.5	163	44	48
Open Economies	28.7		29.7	162	1	47
Investment Environment	26.2		27.2	163	1	47
Enterprise Conditions	30.7		33.2	162	-	48
Infrastructure and Market Access	17.2		18.3	167	-	49
Economic Quality	40.5		40.2	122	15	19
Empowered People	31.1		31.8	166	1	48
Living Conditions	19.6		21.1	167	-	49
Health	28.4		32.8	167	-	49
Education	18.7		19.5	166	2	48
Natural Environment	57.5		53.9	94	24	21

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Central African Republic (166th): Pillar and element scores

 Safety and Security		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021	 Personal Freedom		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021
War and Civil Conflict	20%	35.8		24.7	154	 4	43	Agency	25%	26.1		212	143	 16	42
Terrorism	15%	67.6		25.9	161	 10	48	Freedom of Assembly and Association	20%	49.7		33.7	136	 17	43
Politically Related Terror and Violence	30%	22.6		60.0	99	 57	23	Freedom of Speech and Access to Information	20%	59.6		52.2	118	 10	34
Violent Crime	25%	27.7		25.2	156	 6	46	Absence of Legal Discrimination	20%	41.9		39.1	132	 3	39
Property Crime	10%	58.7		51.8	113	 5	13	Social Tolerance	15%	42.8		42.9	139	 45	40
 Governance		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021	 Social Capital		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021
Executive Constraints	15%	21.4		21.4	162	 -	48	Personal and Family Relationships	20%	36.5		212	166	 5	49
Political Accountability	15%	44.2		43.1	123	 2	34	Social Networks	20%	60.1		44.1	155	 64	42
Rule of Law	15%	29.7		29.3	154	 -	42	Interpersonal Trust	20%	42.4		40.0	66	 13	23
Government Integrity	20%	19.5		24.9	147	 12	38	Institutional Trust	20%	53.8		51.7	81	 22	23
Government Effectiveness	20%	28.1		21.9	155	 7	43	Civic and Social Participation	20%	38.2		35.4	110	 17	34
Regulatory Quality	15%	21.5		21.1	159	 3	44								
 Investment Environment		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021	 Enterprise Conditions		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021
Property Rights	30%	32.7		32.7	159	 3	47	Domestic Market Contestability	30%	26.2		26.2	147	 3	38
Investor Protection	20%	20.1		21.1	150	 1	37	Environment for Business Creation	25%	27.8		37.4	163	 1	48
Contract Enforcement	20%	28.6		29.9	157	 2	46	Burden of Regulation	25%	31.6		31.6	161	 1	48
Financing Ecosystem	20%	24.0		24.9	164	 1	47	Labour Market Flexibility	10%	43.1		43.1	118	 10	29
Restrictions on International Investment	10%	18.2		22.5	158	 6	45	Price Distortions	10%	37.0		37.7	128	 4	41
 Infrastructure and Market Access		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021	 Economic Quality		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021
Communications	25%	11.4		21.3	166	 -	48	Fiscal Sustainability	25%	51.3		44.7	92	 19	17
Energy	15%	3.3		3.4	163	 2	46	Macroeconomic Stability	10%	53.0		50.5	130	 -	31
Water	10%	11.9		11.9	165	 2	48	Productivity and Competitiveness	30%	38.2		41.6	116	 12	11
Transport	25%	18.2		15.2	167	 6	49	Dynamism	15%	14.3		18.0	142	 10	35
Border Administration	5%	37.4		34.4	138	 27	31	Labour Force Engagement	20%	44.1		43.8	124	 4	26
Open Market Scale	5%	16.1		16.0	129	 18	25								
Import Tariff Barriers	5%	41.9		41.9	136	 2	29								
Market Distortions	10%	33.4		28.2	160	 5	47								
 Living Conditions		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021	 Health		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021
Material Resources	20%	10.0		11.6	164	 1	46	Behavioural Risk Factors	10%	81.1		79.9	22	 -	21
Nutrition	20%	41.1		46.3	158	 -	44	Preventative Interventions	15%	33.0		26.0	164	 3	47
Basic Services	10%	14.1		14.0	166	 2	48	Care Systems	15%	13.4		21.4	164	 2	46
Shelter	20%	6.8		5.6	167	 1	49	Mental Health	10%	25.9		21.6	167	 1	49
Connectedness	15%	13.0		15.6	166	 4	48	Physical Health	20%	25.1		26.0	164	 2	46
Protection from Harm	15%	31.3		31.2	167	 2	49	Longevity	30%	19.0		34.5	166	 1	48
 Education		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021	 Natural Environment		2011	 Prosperity score 10-yr trend	2021	2021	Global Rank 10-yr rank change	Sub-Saharan Africa Rank 2021
Pre-Primary Education	5%	3.7		5.1	160	 2	44	Emissions	15%	72.1		65.3	98	 43	33
Primary Education	20%	26.6		28.0	165	 1	47	Exposure to Air Pollution	15%	78.3		70.1	105	 21	32
Secondary Education	30%	15.2		14.8	166	 1	48	Forest, Land and Soil	20%	41.3		39.4	97	 12	22
Tertiary Education	20%	14.9		15.0	160	 1	43	Freshwater	20%	50.6		48.7	120	 11	28
Adult Skills	25%	22.6		24.7	157	 3	40	Oceans (Insufficient Data)	15%						
								Preservation Efforts	15%	52.9		52.5	41	 8	3

For more detailed information on CAR's Prosperity Index Country Profile, please visit:

<https://www.prosperity.com/globe/central-african-republic;>https://docs.prosperity.com/8316/3516/2701/Central_African_Republic_2021_Picountryprofile.pdf



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