

MIGRANTS IN COUNTRIES IN CRISIS

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CASE STUDY

Central African Republic at a Crossroads – Socio-economic Development Implications of Crisis-induced Returns to Cameroon and Chad

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Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC)

Central African Republic Case Study: Central African Republic at a Crossroads – Socio-economic Development Implications of Crisis-induced Returns to Cameroon and Chad

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List of Acronyms

ADES	Association for Development and Solidarity
APLFT	Chadian Association to Promote Fundamental Freedom
AU	African Union
BINUCA	UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office
CAR	Central African Republic
CEMAC	Economic and Monetary Commission of Central Africa
CNARR	National Commission for Assistance and Reinsertion to Refugees and Returnees
CRASH	Centre for Research in Anthropology and Social Sciences
CRT	Chadian Red Cross Committee
CSO	Civil Society Organisation
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHO	European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations
EU	European Union
FAO	Food and Agriculture Organisation
ICG	International Crisis Group
ICMPD	International Centre for Migration Policy Development
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDP	Internally Displaced Person
IHDL	Humanitarian Initiative for Local Development
ILO	International Labour Organization
IMI	International Migration Institute
IOM	International Organization for Migration
LRW	Lutheran World Federation
MICIC	Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative
MINUSCA	Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in Central African Republic
MISCA	International Support Mission to the Central African Republic
MSF	Médecins Sans Frontières
NGO	Non-governmental Organisation
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
SECADEV	Catholic Relief for Development
TCNs	Third Country Nationals
UDE	Equatorial Customs Union
UDEAC	Economic and Customs Union of Central Africa
UN	United Nations
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water, sanitation and hygiene
WFP	World Food Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation
XAF	Central African Francs

Executive Summary

Between 2013 and 2014, the Central African Republic (CAR) underwent a crisis during which the government was overthrown in a coup d'état following an armed offensive that began in December 2012. Hundreds of thousands of migrants – particularly citizens from Cameroon, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – were not only implicated but also directly targeted amidst the politicisation of sectarian rivalries pitting largely Northern-based Muslim populations against Southern-based Christians. This case study report generally investigates the experiences of nationals of Cameroon and Chad during and after the CAR crisis with a focus on key actors that participated in the provision of evacuation, return and reintegration assistance and returnees' re-integration experiences in origin countries. The report on CAR presents the results of one case study among six of the Research Component of the four-year project 'Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Supporting an Evidence-based Approach for Effective and Cooperative State Action', which provides policy-relevant analysis of the implications of crises in host countries.

The Case Study

Once a colony of France, the CAR has a textured history of migration and conflict. At the beginning of the 19th century, CAR was incorporated in the trans-Saharan (largely Muslim) networks of raiding and (slave) trading, with the French entering into alliances with Muslim sultans. Although the trans-Saharan networks remained relevant, raiding and trading waned considerably in the early part of the 20th century, as the French established administrative outposts largely in the capital leaving the northern part of the country to its own devices. Populated primarily by pastoralist communities and Muslim merchants, the Northeast remained ungoverned by colonial oversight, thus transforming it into a region perceived as inhabited by 'foreigners'. Meanwhile, the capital continued to serve as the primary site of French-Christian political and economic enterprise, and this colonial division manifests itself in the most recent crisis of 2013-2014, where the 'state' and 'nation' are framed as geographically situated in the capital, Bangui.

Therefore, mostly Muslim residents of the Northeast have been marginalised for decades, with very little central government interference or the provision of basic social services. As a result, grievances by Northeast inhabitants resulted in the formation between 2006 and 2008 of rebel groups that demanded an equal share in state resources. These rebels would eventually form part of the mostly Muslim coalition, called Séléka, which ousted the President in 2013, spiralling CAR into crisis. Other sources of tension have included high levels of immigration as a result of instability in Chad and economic deprivation in Cameroon, with mostly Muslim migrants engaged in successful commerce as shop owners and diamond traders. This bolstered concerns in the popular imagination of a foreign invasion, harkening back to the trading and raiding sultans of the 19th century.

CAR has been embroiled in conflict and upheaval since civilian rule was first established in the mid-1990s. The most recent crisis began in 2013 with the Séléka power grab, which "marked a fundamental reversal of CAR's traditional political landscape" with a minority Muslim population taking over the mantle of power for the first time since independence.¹ Largely politicised by ethno-religious differences involving two major factions – the predominantly Muslim Séléka coalition of rebels and majority Christian militias calling themselves Anti-Balaka – the crisis very quickly morphed into sectarian violence with both sides enlisting foreign mercenaries from countries such as Chad and Sudan. Although Séléka was officially disbanded in September 2013, they continued clashing with Anti-Balaka forces thereby generating "strong intercommunal tensions that were exacerbated by the instrumentalisation of religion, societal fractures and collective fears, reviving traumatic memories of the pre-colonial slave trade era".²

Violent exchanges between Séléka and Anti-balaka have not only resulted in widespread death and displacement of innocent migrant and non-migrant civilians, but they have also been compounded by conflicts between armed communities, with Séléka and Anti-balaka fighters perceived – rightly or

¹ International Crisis Group. (2015). *Central African Republic: The roots of violence* (Report No. 230/Africa). Retrieved from <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-roots-violence>.

² International Crisis Group (2015).

wrongly – as “the protectors of Muslims” and the “defenders of Christian communities”, respectively.³ An agreement signed in Bangui in May 2014 prioritised disarmament as a means of minimising the violence, however the communal nature of the crisis worsened “the fragmentation and criminalisation of CAR’s armed groups” thus making peace negotiations rather difficult.⁴ Moreover, the crisis resulted in the displacement of not only CAR nationals but also migrants resident in CAR from Chad, Cameroon, the DRC and Sudan. While it is difficult to ascertain how many foreign nationals were actually affected by the episodes of political violence, hundreds of thousands were compelled to return to their countries of origin with or without the assistance of external actors.

Research Methodology and Findings

Largely exploratory and qualitative, the methodology employed for this case study consisted of secondary data collection of desk-based research already published and primary data collection through semi-structured interviews in Cameroon and Chad – namely with government authorities; intergovernmental organisations; civil society organisations; experts and private sector actors; return migrants; and family members of return migrants. Migrants from Cameroon and Chad were selected based on their experience of crisis in CAR from 2013 to 2014, subsequent evacuation and return to countries of origin. Family members of migrants were interviewed based on their knowledge of relatives’ migration and return experiences. Government authorities, intergovernmental organisations, civil society organisations, experts and private sector actors were sampled based on the degree of their knowledge of or involvement in policy formulation and execution, advocacy, protection, technical and logistical support or the provision of funding for evacuation, repatriation and reintegration of migrants.

Interviewees/Fieldwork Countries	Cameroon	Chad
Migrants (M)	23	15
Family Members of Migrants (F)	5	1
Government Authorities (A)	4	1
Experts and Private Actors (E)	3	4
Intergovernmental Organisations (I)	3	5
Civil Society Organisations (C)	3	4
Total	41	30

The CAR case study demonstrates a number of clearly observable, important empirical trends. First, migrants caught in the CAR crisis were targeted not because of their ethnicity, religion, or nationality per se, but rather because of the politicisation of ethno-regional and religious differences, their perceived involvement (and the involvement of their governments) in the crisis, and their often perceived advantaged socio-economic positions in CAR.

Second, a number of migrants returned to their countries of origins on their own, receiving little to no support from external actors such as origin state governments and intergovernmental organisations. Third, the extent to which migrants are able to exploit assistance provided by origin states depends entirely on the willingness of origin states to accept the nationality of their citizens at face value, without identity documents as verification. As a case in point, whereas the Chadian state appeared more flexible in this regard, providing assistance to anyone claiming Chadian ancestry/nationality, the Cameroonian state was more rigid, insisting on the verification of identity documents for access to air evacuation. Furthermore, the extent to which return migrants are able to fully take advantage of external assistance is also contingent upon how relevant and useful the assistance is.

³ International Crisis Group (2015); Chauvin & Seignobos. (2013).

⁴ International Crisis Group (2015).

And lastly, although there was short-term emergency relief and repatriation support from families, origin governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society, and private sector actors during the CAR crisis, medium- to longer-term socio-economic reintegration has not materialised for return migrants.

Recommendations

The CAR case study indicates an immediate need for coordination amongst a range of stakeholders involved in evacuation, repatriation, resettlement and re-integration of migrants implicated in crisis situations outside of their countries of origin. Policies and standard operating procedures need to be costed and budgeted for, with clearly delineated mandates assigned to relevant stakeholders. Origin country diplomatic missions abroad need to be fully engaged in the process of supporting their nationals, through providing easily accessible consular services beyond capital cities. Furthermore, the ability of origin governments to support their nationals abroad in crisis situations – particularly through citizenship and nationality checks that do not require original ID verification – would be significantly enhanced by reliable data on their migrant populations abroad and nationally derived migration policies with crisis and emergency response protocols. The collation of accurate data on migrants is also critical to international responses to crisis situations in which migrants are implicated. According to respondents interviewed at the level of intergovernmental organisations, the rapid mobilisation of resources to take care of returned migrants can limit the adverse impact of unexpected arrivals of return migrants on local populations and strengthen their resilience post-crisis. Thus, securing emergency contingency funding for national systems strengthening should be an imperative for governments such as Chad and Cameroon given other looming threats posed by crises in the Lake Chad Basin.

The 2013-2014 crisis in CAR exposed the need to strengthen the capacities of the governments of Cameroon and Chad and their inter-governmental and civil society counterparts to manage long-term mass returns of migrants ensnared in humanitarian emergencies abroad. Although it is clear that these stakeholders recognise the need to better organise their actions and strategies to protect migrants in crisis situations, their lack of political will has been particularly evident in the absence of clearly defined provisions on emergency return and long-term reintegration.

1. Introduction, Background and Overview

1.1. General Introduction

In 2015, the four-year project 'Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Supporting an Evidence-based Approach for Effective and Cooperative State Action' was launched by the European Union (EU) and has been implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD) with EU funding. The project contributes to the global Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, a government-led process co-chaired by the governments of the Philippines and the United States, which shares similar goals. It aims to improve the capacity of states and other stakeholders to assist and provide protection to migrants who find themselves in countries affected by crisis, as well as address the long-term implications therein. Within the project, six regional consultations with states and other relevant stakeholders have been conducted, contributing to the development of the MICIC initiative 'Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster'⁵. In addition, capacity building activities⁶ have been adopted to follow up on key recommendations that have emerged over the course of the project.

This report on the Central African Republic (CAR) presents the results of one case study among six⁷ of the Research Component of the MICIC project, which provides policy-relevant analysis of the implications of crises in host countries. Between 2013 and 2014, CAR underwent a crisis during which the government was overthrown in a coup d'état following an armed offensive that began in December 2012. Hundreds of thousands of migrants – particularly citizens from Cameroon, Chad and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – were not only implicated but also directly targeted amidst the politicisation of sectarian rivalries pitting largely Northern-based Muslim populations against Southern-based Christians. The case study report generally investigates the experiences of nationals of Cameroon and Chad during and after the CAR crisis with a focus on key actors that participated in the provision of evacuation, return and reintegration assistance and returnees' reintegration experiences in origin countries. Given that the EU-funded MICIC project explores how migrants are implicated in crisis situations and how their return to their countries of origin affects socio-economic development, Cameroon and Chad were selected as fieldwork sites because they served as countries of origin to which migrants fleeing political unrest in CAR returned. Unlike the DRC where security currently remains an ever-present concern, Cameroon and Chad were selected because they are relatively safe sites for fieldwork.⁸

1.1.1. The Case Study

Once a colony of France, the CAR has a textured history of migration and conflict.⁹ At the beginning of the 19th century, CAR was incorporated in the trans-Saharan (largely Muslim) networks of raiding and (slave) trading, with the French entering into alliances with Muslim sultans.¹⁰ Although the trans-

⁵ Migrants in Countries in Crisis Initiative (MICIC). (2016). *Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster*. Retrieved from: https://micicinitiative.iom.int/sites/default/files/document/micic_guidelines_english_web_13_09_2016.pdf.

⁶ For more information on the capacity building activities, as well as the regional consultations, see: <http://www.icmpd.org/our-work/migrants-in-countries-in-crisis/>.

⁷ The other case studies under study are: Côte d'Ivoire (2002-2003 and 2010-2011 political unrest); Libya (2011 political unrest); South Africa (xenophobic violence between 2008 and 2015); Thailand (2011 natural disaster) and Lebanon (situation of migrant domestic workers and the 2006 crisis). The research has also generated a comparative analysis of the case studies as well as a summary report.

⁸ No fieldwork was conducted in the Central African Republic because the focus of the research was countries of origin to which migrants returned, rather than the country affected by crisis.

⁹ Lombard, L. (2016). *State of rebellion: Violence and intervention in the Central African Republic*. London, UK: Zed; International Organisation for Migration (IOM). (2014a). *Migration dimensions of the crisis in the Central African Republic: Short-, long-, and medium-term considerations* (Working Paper August 2014). Retrieved from: http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/iom.int_files_live_sites_iom_files_Country_docs_Migration-Dimensions-of-the-Crisis-in-CAR.pdf.

¹⁰ Lombard. (2016); Lombard, L. (24 January 2014). Genocide-mongering does nothing to help us understand the messy dynamics of conflict in the CAR [African Arguments blog]. Retrieved from: <http://africanarguments.org/2014/01/24/genocide-mongering-does-nothing-to-help-us-understand-the-messy-dynamics-of-conflict-in-the-car-by-louisa-lombard/>.

Saharan networks remained relevant, raiding and trading waned considerably in the early part of the 20th century, as the French established administrative outposts largely in the capital leaving the northern part of the country to its own devices.¹¹ Populated primarily by pastoralist communities and Muslim merchants, the Northeast remained ungoverned by colonial oversight, thus transforming it into a region perceived as inhabited by ‘foreigners’.¹² Meanwhile, the capital continued to serve as the primary site of French-Christian political and economic enterprise, and this colonial division manifests itself in the most recent crisis of 2013-2014, where the ‘state’ and ‘nation’ are framed as geographically situated in the capital, Bangui.¹³

Therefore, mostly Muslim residents of the Northeast have been marginalised for decades, with very little central government interference or the provision of basic social services.¹⁴ As a result, grievances by Northeast inhabitants resulted in the formation between 2006 and 2008 of rebel groups that demanded an equal share in state resources.¹⁵ These rebels would eventually form part of the mostly Muslim coalition, called Séléka, which ousted the President in 2013, spiralling CAR into crisis.¹⁶ Other sources of tension have included high levels of immigration as a result of instability in Chad and economic deprivation in Cameroon, with mostly Muslim migrants engaged in successful commerce as shop owners and diamond traders.¹⁷ This bolstered concerns in the popular imagination of a foreign invasion, harkening back to the trading and raiding sultans of the 19th century.¹⁸

CAR has been embroiled in conflict and upheaval since civilian rule was first established in the mid-1990s.¹⁹ In 2010, after a succession of military coups and rebellions, the United Nations (UN) deployed a peacekeeping force to the CAR through the UN Integrated Peacebuilding Office (BINUCA) “with a mandate to help consolidate peace and strengthen democratic institutions”.²⁰ The most recent crisis began in 2013 with the Séléka power grab, which “marked a fundamental reversal of CAR’s traditional political landscape” with a minority Muslim population taking over the mantle of power for the first time since independence.²¹ Largely politicised by ethno-religious differences involving two major factions – the predominantly Muslim Séléka coalition of rebels and majority Christian militias calling themselves Anti-Balaka²² – the crisis very quickly morphed into sectarian²³ violence with both sides enlisting foreign mercenaries from countries such as Chad and Sudan.²⁴ Although Séléka was officially disbanded²⁵ in September 2013, they continued clashing with Anti-Balaka forces thereby generating “strong intercommunal tensions that were exacerbated by the instrumentalisation of religion, societal fractures and collective fears, reviving traumatic memories of the pre-colonial slave trade era”.²⁶ As a case in point, a prominent scholar of the region argued persuasively in December 2013 that after the French deployed troops to the CAR under the premise of preventing a genocide,

¹¹ Lombard. (2016); Lombard. (24 January 2014); Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013). The Central African Republic’s imbroglio: State territories, rebels and bandits. *Contemporary Africa*, 248, 119-148.

¹² International Crisis Group; Lombard. (24 January 2014).

¹³ International Crisis Group; Lombard. (24 January 2014).

¹⁴ International Crisis Group; Lombard. (24 January 2014).

¹⁵ International Crisis Group; Lombard. (24 January 2014).

¹⁶ International Crisis Group (2015); Mayneri, A.C. (2014). The Central African Republic, from the Séléka rebellion to Anti-Balaka groups (2012-2014): Uses of violence, persecutory patterns and media perspectives on the conflict. *African Politics*, 134, 179-193.

¹⁷ International Crisis Group; Lombard. (24 January 2014).

¹⁸ International Crisis Group; Lombard. (24 January 2014).

¹⁹ Mehler, A. (2011). Rebels and parties: The impact of armed insurgency on representation in the Central African Republic. *Journal of Modern African Studies*, 49, 115-139; Einsporn, H.M. (2014, June 19). A forgotten crisis: Displacement in the Central African Republic [Web log message]. Retrieved from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/forgotten-crisis-displacement-central-african-republic>; United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2014). *2014 UNHCR country operations profile-Central African Republic*. Retrieved from: <http://www.unhcr.org/pages/49e45c156.html>.

²⁰ Einsporn, H.M. (2014).

²¹ International Crisis Group (2015); Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013).

²² ‘Anti-Balaka’ means anti-machete or anti-bullet. United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2014).

²³ Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013).

²⁴ Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013).

²⁵ Agence France-Presse (2013, September 14). CAR’s Djotodia dissolves Séléka rebel group. *Agence France-Presse*. Retrieved from: <http://www.france24.com/en/20130913-central-african-republic-djotodia-dissolves-seleka-rebel-group>.

²⁶ International Crisis Group (2015); Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013).

the country has been “experiencing state collapse and limited intercommunal killings after a military takeover by a coalition of undisciplined militiamen known as Séléka”.²⁷

Violent exchanges between Séléka and Anti-balaka have not only resulted in widespread death and displacement of innocent civilians, but they have also been compounded by conflicts between armed communities, with Séléka and Anti-balaka fighters perceived – rightly or wrongly – as “the protectors of Muslims” and the “defenders of Christian communities”, respectively.²⁸ An agreement signed in Bangui in May 2014 prioritised disarmament as a means of minimising the violence, however the communal nature of the crisis worsened “the fragmentation and criminalisation of CAR’s armed groups” thus making peace negotiations rather difficult.²⁹ Moreover, the crisis resulted in the displacement of not only CAR nationals but also migrants resident in CAR from Chad, Cameroon, the DRC and Sudan.³⁰

1.1.2. Methodology

Largely exploratory and qualitative, the methodology employed for this case study consisted of secondary data collection of desk-based research already published and primary data collection through semi-structured interviews in the field. Qualitative researchers deploy a wide range of interconnected methods, including desk-based research, semi-structured interviews, focus group discussions, participant observation, etc.³¹ For the purposes of the CAR case study, researchers conducted semi-structured interviews in Cameroon and Chad with six categories of interviewees – namely Government Authorities (A), Intergovernmental Organisations (I), Civil Society Organisations (C), Experts and Private Sector Actors (E), Return Migrants (M) and Family Members of Return Migrants (F).³²

Interview respondents were selected through snowball sampling. Migrants from Cameroon and Chad were selected based on their experience of and evacuation from crisis in CAR from 2013 to 2014. Family members of migrants were interviewed based on their knowledge of relatives’ migration and return experiences. Government authorities, intergovernmental organisations, civil society organisations, experts and private sector actors were sampled based on the degree of their knowledge of or involvement in policy formulation and execution, advocacy, protection, technical and logistical support or the provision of funding for evacuation, repatriation and reintegration of migrants. Six tailored interview guides were developed for the six main categories of interviewees, based on an overall topical guideline prepared for the MICIC project as well as a data collection manual developed by the ICMPD and the International Migration Institute (IMI). In consultation with the case study manager at the IMI, each of the research partners in Cameroon and Chad conducted pre-fieldwork workshops for designated research assistants to train them on data collection protocols, research ethics and communications skills, including the use of translators, obtaining informed consent, guarantees of anonymity and confidentiality.

1.1.3. Ethical Considerations

In cases where written consent was not possible because the interviewee was illiterate, interviewers obtained verbal consent. For the sake of confidentiality, consent forms and interview guides were kept separate at all times, so as not to link interviewees with their responses. Researchers reiterated to interviewees that participation in the research (i.e. interviews) was voluntary and that withdrawal from the interviews would not lead to any sanctions.

²⁷ de Waal, A. (18 December 2013). Opinion: Playing the genocide card. *New York Times*. Retrieved from: http://www.nytimes.com/2013/12/19/opinion/playing-the-genocide-card.html?_r=0.

²⁸ International Crisis Group (2015); Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013).

²⁹ International Crisis Group (2015); Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013).

³⁰ International Crisis Group (2015); Chauvin, E. & Seignobos, C. (2013).

³¹ Denzin, N. & Lincoln, Y. (Eds.). (1994). *Handbook of qualitative research*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, p. 2.

³² The capital letters A, I, C, E, M and F are abbreviations adopted to identify categories of interviewees, and will be employed throughout this report as references. For instance, while the first migrant returnee interviewed in Cameroon is identified as CMR-M-01, the fifth intergovernmental organisation representative interviewed in Chad is identified as CH-I-05.

Where possible and in most cases, researchers conducted interviews in locations where participants could speak freely without interruption or the risk of being overheard by others. Interviewers in all fieldwork countries were trained to always be sensitive to the needs of interviewees, including interview timing and procedures. A summary sheet containing information on the rationale for the project was presented to any participant who needed more background information.

1.1.4. Criteria for Selection of Interviewees

Various categories of interviewees were selected based on the following specific criteria, detailed in the data collection manual previously mentioned:

- **Migrants (M):** Migrants returning from CAR as a result of the 2013-2014 socio-political crisis;
- **Family members of migrants (F):** Close and extended family members knowledgeable about the migration experience, return process and impact of return on the household;
- **Government Authorities (A):** Government/state authorities (ministries, departments, agencies, legislators, governors etc.) at the central, regional and local levels and representatives abroad (embassies, consulates) who actively participated in the evacuation, repatriation and reintegration of returnees from CAR or could provide information about these processes. All government authorities interviewed were from the origin countries of migrants;
- **Civil Society Organisations (C):** International, regional, national, and local non-government organisations that worked with or are currently working with returnees from CAR and whose members are individuals or associations;
- **Experts and Private Sector Actors (E):** Any other knowledgeable interviewees speaking on their own behalf and not covered in the previous categories, including academic experts, community leaders, professionals (doctors, lawyers, trainers etc.) who may or may not have provided services to returnees from CAR;
- **Intergovernmental Organisations (I):** Membership-based regional and multilateral organisations such as the United Nations (UN), International Organization for Migration (IOM) and the EU which provided logistical, technical, financial or advisory support for the evacuation, repatriation and reintegration of returnees from CAR.

While Table 1 provides a breakdown of the interviewee pool by fieldwork country, Table 2 provides a detailed breakdown of the migrant interviewee pool with respect to gender.

Table 1. Numbers of Interviews per Stakeholder Groups in Designated Fieldwork Countries

Interviewees/Fieldwork Countries	Cameroon	Chad
Migrants (M)	23	15
Family Members of Migrants (F)	5	1
Government Authorities (A)	4	1
Experts and Private Actors (E)	3	4
Intergovernmental Organisations (I)	3	5
Civil Society Organisations (C)	3	4
Total	41	30

Table 2. Breakdown of Migrant Interviewee Pool Based on Gender

Fieldwork Countries/ Gender Breakdown of Migrant Interviewees	Male	Female
Cameroon (23)	18	5
Chad (15)	8	7
Total	26	12

1.1.5. Limits to Interviewee Pool and Challenges Conducting Fieldwork

In general, recruiting interviewees across the two fieldwork countries was arduous. In Cameroon, the identification of return migrants was difficult primarily because of a lack of comprehensive, official source data on migrant returnees. Scheduling interviews with government authorities was also exceptionally bureaucratic, and the research team was only able to conduct one interview with a chief of service at the division of demographic and migration analysis at the Ministry of Economy, Planning and Regional Development. Other authorities did not receive the team before the end of the data collection period because of administrative delays.³³

In Chad, gaining access to representatives of government involved in the management of returnees was also difficult. The 2016 elections were contested by opposition leaders³⁴, which prompted public protests and violent repression by state security forces.³⁵ Unfortunately, the local research team's fieldwork coincided with this tumultuous period. Furthermore, locating Chadian returnees proved challenging because many did not return to their origin regions in Chad but were rather settled in sites run by state and non-state agencies (Red Cross, Humanitarian Initiative for Local Development, National Commission to Assist Refugees and Returnees) (CH-I-01; CH-I-04). It was also difficult to access relatives of Chadian returnees who remained in Chad before, during and after the CAR crisis because Chadian families tended to migrate to CAR together, so instances of return migrants being reunited with family members were rare. As a case in point, the local research team came across only one family reunited in a village because they originated in this part of the country (CH-F-01).

1.1.6. Fieldwork Period and Selection of Field Sites

Conducted in European languages (English and French) and local languages (Fulani in Cameroon and local Arabic, Sango, Fulani and Ngama in Chad) depending on interviewees' proficiencies, interviews were audio recorded, transcribed and summarised, except in cases where interviewees opted not to be recorded. Where necessary, research teams hired translators to act as language mediators, although this delayed the pace at which interviews were conducted. All interview summaries were eventually translated into English.

In Cameroon, fieldwork was conducted from 22 April 2016 to 26 July 2016 in Douala, Bertoua, Yaounde, Garoua-Boulai, and Kentzou. These localities were selected for a number of reasons. Douala was the entry point for migrants returning from CAR through the airlift organised by the Cameroonian state. Bertoua is the regional capital of the eastern region where a number of administrative authorities, NGOs and international organisations who deal with migrants are found; it is also a region where Cameroonians resided before migrating to CAR and returned to during the crisis. Yaounde is the administrative capital of Cameroon and the location of government authorities, intergovernmental organisations, NGOs and experts. Lastly, Garoua-Boulai and Kentzou are towns in the eastern region of Cameroon that border the CAR and were the main entry points for Cameroonians and other migrants as well as refugees from CAR who travelled by road during the crisis.

³³ In general, any request filed in a ministry is received by the mail service for transmission to the minister who then forwards it to the competent technical team member. After evaluation of the request, a proposal is made to the minister and a response is sent to the applicant. This long process can take two months or more, depending on the case. Sometimes, requests are outright rejected.

³⁴ Gourlay, Y. (8 April 2016). Electoral campaign under high pressure in Chad. *Le Monde Afrique*. Retrieved from: http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2016/04/08/au-tchad-une-campagne-electorale-sous-haute-tension_4898521_3212.html. **Translated into English, this is the first full reference in this report that was originally published in French. Subsequent French language references have been translated into English.**

³⁵ Gourlay, Y. (8 April 2016).

Informal neighbourhood surveys were conducted to enable the local research team in Cameroon to identify returnees. The surveys were limited to general questions about knowledge of migrants, their places of residence and any intermediary who could easily introduce the local research team to migrant returnees. Informal neighbourhood surveys focused on questioning contacts who had friends, parents or relatives who resided in CAR before the crisis.

In Chad, fieldwork was conducted from 14 April 2016 to 12 May 2016 in regions where Chadian returnees reside in large numbers as well as locations in which state and non-state organisations run sites for Chadian returnees from CAR, namely, N'Djaména, Baguirmi, Logone Oriental, Logone Occidental, and Moyen Chari. Focused on general subjects like the Chadian state's responsibility to returnees, returnees' unfulfilled expectations upon relocation to Chad, etc., informal discussions preceded formal, documented interviews, and they were held with local people (such as taximen, restaurant or pub owners, traders, local village inhabitants) who observed returnees on a regular basis, primarily because they were living or working in the neighbourhoods where returnees had settled. These discussions enabled the local research team to understand local dynamics by deepening formal interviews with returnees and other interviewees.

The following section details the CAR crisis contexts for which interviewees and fieldwork sites were selected.

1.2. Politicisation of Ethno-Religious Differences and Implications for Migrants

In March 2013, a loose coalition³⁶ of mostly Muslim minority groups known as Séléka, comprising young Northeastern villagers and mercenaries from Chad and Sudan, launched a coup d'état to overthrow the (majority Christian) government of President Jean-François Bozizé following an armed offensive that began in December 2012.³⁷ This can be traced to the politicisation of sectarian rivalries, which crystallised in 2003 when General Jean-François Bozizé became President after toppling the elected government in a successful coup.³⁸ Perceived as illegitimate from the start, Bozizé's presidency was marked by violence which catalysed the formation of the largely Muslim rebel coalition Séléka.³⁹ In an attempt to undermine Séléka, Bozizé tried to hold onto power by inciting sectarian violence against the militia and framing them as 'foreign jihadists', but his plans backfired when the rebels overthrew him in March 2013, and he fled to neighbouring Cameroon for asylum.⁴⁰ Bozizé's asylum in Cameroon would subsequently incite reprisals against Cameroonian nationals in CAR because of concerns that their country was shielding him.⁴¹

Post-coup, Séléka rule was marked by gross human rights violations against Christians and Muslims, although Christians were disproportionately targeted.⁴² Séléka commander-turned-President, Michel Djotodia, formally dissolved the militia, which splintered into smaller armed factions that continued killing and looting throughout the country.⁴³ As Djotodia's power and influence waned, anti-Séléka sentiments gained traction leading to the formation in September 2013 of Christian Anti-Balaka militias – previously private security groups of villagers comprising farmers equipped with machetes and handmade shotguns⁴⁴ – who targeted not only Séléka but also Muslim civilians and pastoralists who were accused – rightly or wrongly – of being Séléka loyalists and allies.⁴⁵ Anti-Balaka gained the upper hand by taking over Séléka-controlled territory and targeting Muslims in a violent "spree of rape, torture, and extrajudicial executions" that international human rights organisations declared the

³⁶ Mayneri, A.C. (2014).

³⁷ Einsporn, H.M.

³⁸ Einsporn, H.M.; Mayneri, A.C. (2014).

³⁹ Einsporn, H.M.; Mayneri, A.C. (2014).

⁴⁰ Kindzeka, M.E. (16 December 2013). Cameroonians stream home from troubled CAR.

Voice of America. Retrieved from: <http://www.voanews.com/content/cameroonians-stream-home-from-troubled-central-african-republic/1811339.html>.

⁴¹ Kindzeka, M.E. (16 December 2013).

⁴² Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014).

⁴³ Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014).

⁴⁴ Mayneri, A.C. (2014).

⁴⁵ Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014); International Crisis Group (2014). *The Central African Republic's hidden conflict* (Briefing No. 105/Africa). Retrieved from: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/central-african-republic/central-african-republic-s-hidden-conflict>.

ethnic cleansing of Muslims.⁴⁶ Because trade and agricultural production were largely the mainstay of Muslim populations inhabiting the Northeast of the country, these sectors were severely crippled with food insecurity becoming widespread.⁴⁷ The situation also worsened for pastoralists from CAR, Chad and other neighbouring countries. As the crisis degenerated in late 2013, the UN peacekeeping force established in 2010 became more pronounced with the deployment of an additional 6,000 uniformed personnel who were buttressed by 2,000 French peace keepers as part of the International Support Mission to the Central African Republic (MISCA).⁴⁸ Nevertheless, heavy fighting between Séléka and Anti-Balaka forces in December 2013 led to the internal displacement of hundreds of thousands of civilians. By mid-January 2014, refugees and IDPs combined totalled nearly one million.⁴⁹

Amidst mounting international pressure and diplomatic negotiations, Djotodia resigned on 14 January 2014 and was exiled.⁵⁰ Less than a month later, former mayor of Bangui, Catherine Samba-Panza, was sworn in as interim President, although Anti-Balaka forces continued to control half of the country while engaged in combat with Séléka.⁵¹ In April 2014, the UN announced the establishment in September 2014 of its Multidimensional Integrated Stabilisation Mission in CAR (MINUSCA), replacing MISCA and African Union (AU) forces with an initial deployment of 10,000 military and 1,800 police personnel who were joined by a 1,000-member EU military force mandated by the Security Council.⁵² While the EU and French forces were primarily stationed in Bangui, MISCA personnel were mainly located in the western part of CAR, where Muslim civilians had been forced to flee in large numbers.⁵³

1.2.1. Migrant and Refugee Outflows During Crisis

In mid-May 2014 alone, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) estimated that 359,834 people had fled to neighbouring countries for refuge while 554,800, mostly Muslim, were internally displaced.⁵⁴ In the first six months of 2014, 121,000 refugees had fled to neighbouring countries including Chad, Cameroon, the DRC and Sudan.⁵⁵ Even though the border between CAR and Chad was officially closed by Chadian President Idriss Deby on May 12, 2014⁵⁶, those displaced by the fighting in CAR continued to arrive in Chad, with an estimated 101,752 people of various nationalities registered by IOM in Chad between December 2013 and June 2014.⁵⁷ By end-June 2014, 48,849 CAR nationals and Third Country Nationals (TCNs) including Chadian returnees were registered in transit sites and in need of humanitarian assistance.⁵⁸ Moreover, continued fighting in CAR in May and June 2014 led to increases in the numbers of TCNs seeking refuge in Cameroon.⁵⁹ Despite the veneer of international protection during this period, refugee convoys comprising mostly Muslim civilians were attacked by Anti-Balaka forces.⁶⁰ While insecurity and weak infrastructure delayed the distribution of desperately needed humanitarian assistance, particularly to Anti-Balaka strongholds, staff members of international humanitarian organisations such as Médecins Sans

⁴⁶ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁴⁷ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁴⁸ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁴⁹ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁵⁰ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁵¹ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁵² Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2014).

⁵³ Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014).

⁵⁴ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2014).

⁵⁵ United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2014).

⁵⁶ Fearing a spill-over of the CAR crisis into Chadian territory, President Deby announced that, with the exception of Chadian nationals wishing to return home, "no one is authorised to cross this border until the crisis in Central African Republic is resolved". Reuters (2014, May 12). Chad closes border with Central African Republic. *Reuters*. Retrieved from: <http://www.reuters.com/article/us-centralafrica-chad-idUSBREA4B0M320140512>.

⁵⁷ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014b). *CAR crisis: IOM regional response* (Situation Report 20 May-2 June 2014). Retrieved from: <http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-Regional-Response-to-the-CAR-Crisis-Sitrep-20-May-to-2-June-2014.pdf>.

⁵⁸ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014b).

⁵⁹ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014b).

⁶⁰ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014b).

Frontières (MSF) also came under attack⁶¹, with insecurity an ever present concern even after a ceasefire was signed on July 23, 2014.⁶²

It has been argued that the large out-flow of mostly Muslim refugees fleeing CAR's crisis strained the limited resources of neighbouring countries; these movements also destabilised the ethnic and religious mix within a region already embroiled in politically-motivated ethnic and sectarian violence.⁶³ As a result, refugee arrivals in Chad and the DRC particularly affected the governments of those countries.⁶⁴ While 58,000 refugees fled to already fragile regions of the DRC such as Orientale Province, an estimated 94,000 people fled to Chad, putting a strain on already limited state resources.⁶⁵ According to UNHCR estimates, approximately 192,000 refugees had fled to Cameroon by mid-May 2014, and the large influx of displaced persons at the Cameroon border had severely outpaced the capacity of aid agencies including MSF, UNHCR and the Red Cross.⁶⁶ In addition to the major challenge refugee flows posed to neighbouring countries, large-scale border crossings also caused a spill-over of violence as exemplified by Séléka combatants who targeted adversaries by crossing over into neighbouring Cameroon.⁶⁷ It has also been argued that refugees placed pressure on the provision of basic social services such as health and education in neighbouring countries, exacerbated environmental degradation by cutting down trees for firewood and fuelled tensions over access (or lack thereof) to arable land.⁶⁸

1.2.2. CAR Crisis and the Complexities of 'Foreignness'

Scholars who have studied CAR for long periods of time have argued convincingly that the framing of the 2013-2014 crisis as *genocide*, *ethnic cleansing*, or *interreligious* in nature runs the risk of oversimplification of victim vs. perpetrator to justify foreign military intervention, particularly by French and other European forces.⁶⁹ Although the conflict had religious undertones, it was *not* about religion per se.⁷⁰ Instead, the 2013-2014 CAR crisis was a "conflict-within-the-conflict" in which "intercommunal clashes between pastoralist and farming communities" spiralled out of control, as previously mentioned.⁷¹ According to this analysis, pastoralists responded to raids and theft of their cattle with violent retaliations long before the CAR crisis, and the herdsmen's assumed links to Séléka worsened the conflict of 2013-2014.⁷² According to the International Crisis Group (ICG), "the enrolment of vulnerable young herdsmen in armed groups, the crumbling of traditional agro-pastoralist mediation structures and the yearly coming of pastoralists, especially Chadians, to CAR" exacerbated rural warfare and intercommunal violence during the crisis period.⁷³

Therefore, increased violence in the CAR is a function of "political opportunism and an omnipresent feeling of mistrust of the foreigner, set against a background of poverty and lack of opportunities" where 'foreignness' has been exploited for political gains.⁷⁴ Thus, as one scholar has argued, "viewing the conflict in terms of foreignness helps us to look beyond the religious discourse projected onto the conflict and to understand it from a historical perspective. The root is mistrust, expressed in foreignness, exacerbated by poverty and ignited by (personal) political agendas".⁷⁵ As a case in point, the assumption of power of Djotodia in March 2013 first led to return flows of mostly of ethnic Gbaya

⁶¹ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014b).

⁶² International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a)

⁶³ Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014).

⁶⁴ Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014); Integrated Regional Information Networks (17 July 2013). Chad returnees strain aid resources. *IRIN News*. Retrieved from: <http://www.irinnews.org/report/98430/chad-returnees-strain-aid-resources>.

⁶⁵ Integrated Regional Information Networks (17 July 2013).

⁶⁶ Integrated Regional Information Networks (17 July 2013).

⁶⁷ Integrated Regional Information Networks (17 July 2013).

⁶⁸ Integrated Regional Information Networks (17 July 2013).

⁶⁹ Lombard, L. (24 January 2014); Lombard, L. (2016); Wilson, C. (11 June 2014). Changing definitions of autochthony and foreignness in Bangui. [Web log message, Hot Spots]. Retrieved from: <http://www.culanth.org/fieldsights/540-changing-definitions-of-autochthony-and-foreignness-in-bangui>; Mayneri, A.C. (2014).

⁷⁰ Mayneri, A.C. (2014).

⁷¹ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁷² International Crisis Group (2014).

⁷³ International Crisis Group (2014).

⁷⁴ Wilson, C. (11 June 2014).

⁷⁵ Wilson, C. (11 June 2014).

Cameroonians suspected of being pro-Bozizé, the deposed President.⁷⁶ In December 2013, however, the situation reversed with the intervention of French forces and the subsequent resignation of Djotodia, which provoked atrocities against Muslims of majority Fulani ethnicity.⁷⁷ Thus, framing the CAR crisis of 2013-2014 as a manifestation of a mistrust of 'the foreigner' enables a more meaningful explanation for why Cameroonians and Chadians were particularly implicated.

⁷⁶ European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2014). *Central African Republic, regional impacts* (Crisis Report No.15). p. 2.

⁷⁷ European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2014).

2. Crisis Situation and Long-Term Consequences

2.1. Contextual and Structural Factors

2.1.1. Migration History, Demography and Human Capital Factors

CAR shares borders with both Cameroon and Chad, with cross-border movements apparent for decades. Despite its perennial instability, the CAR offers many economic opportunities for migrant communities, including the mining of gold and diamonds (CMR-E-01; CMR-A-01; CMR-E-03). Further endowed with rich subsoil and evergreen pastures, CAR has also been a source of attraction for many Cameroonian and Chadian pastoralists and traders (CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03; CMR-A-01; CMR-A-02; CMR-A-03; CMR-A-04). While many Cameroonian and Chadian migrants have lived in CAR cities, towns and villages for long periods of time, it is difficult to ascertain their exact numbers because of the tendency to conflate Muslims with 'foreigners' – and 'Muslim foreigners' with Chadians – as well as the strong migration linkages including various undocumented forms of "immigration, emigration, labour and economic migration (rural-urban, natural resource sector), transhumance pastoralism⁷⁸ and conflict displacement"⁷⁹ (CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03; CMR-A-01; CMR-A-04). Moreover, it is apparent that the migration experiences of Cameroonians and Chadians interviewed for this study reflect the historical patterns of movement between CAR-Cameroon and CAR-Chad.

On either side of the CAR-Cameroon 797-kilometre border⁸⁰ are communities such as the Gbaya and Fulani who cohabitate peacefully, share blood and filial ties and engage in cross-border exchange of goods and services.⁸¹ CAR also hosts populations of young Cameroonians who went to pursue their studies, civil servants working in international organisations including the Economic and Monetary Commission of Central Africa (Commission Economique et Monétaire d'Afrique Centrale) (CEMAC) with headquarters in Bangui and some teachers in secondary and higher education (CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03; CMR-A-01; CMR-A-04). Moreover because of the porosity of the CAR-Cameroon border, there is constant movement of traders and pastoralists across both sides of the border (CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03; CMR-A-01; CMR-A-04). Some respondents interviewed for this study, especially those living in Baboua or in nearby locations, frequently came to supply manufactured goods (drinks, candy, oil mill, soap, cement, etc) to Garoua-Boulai and resell the same in CAR (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-06; CMR-M-16). Pastoralists graze their herds in CAR because there is a belief that the Central African savannah is more conducive for breeding compared to Cameroon (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03; CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03⁸²; CMR-M-07; CMR-M-08; CMR-M-11; CMR-M-12; CMR-M-13; CMR-M-18).

The Bangui-Douala corridor, first dedicated to transporting goods, has served as a conduit for human mobility between CAR and Cameroon for years with many migrants climbing aboard trucks from Douala to Bangui and vice versa in order to improve their living conditions (CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03; CMR-A-03). This has been the case since 1962 when Cameroon joined the Equatorial Customs Union (Union Douanière Equatoriale - UDE), then consisting of CAR, Congo, Gabon and Chad, which became in December 1964 the Economic and Customs Union of Central Africa (Union Douanière et Economique de l'Afrique Centrale - UDEAC) and finally CEMAC in 1998.⁸³ Since its creation, this organisation promotes the free movement of goods and people.⁸⁴

Mobility has always been a central feature of population and political dynamics in the areas occupying present-day CAR and Chad. In this vein, migration has primarily been facilitated by cross-border

⁷⁸ Seasonal migration of pastoralists with their livestock.

⁷⁹ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

⁸⁰ Amadou, A. (2015). WD CAR: The repercussions of the Central African Republic crisis in Cameroon: tensions already perceptible [Web log message]. Retrieved from: www.connecting-in-times-of-duress.nl/wd.

⁸¹ Amadou, A. (2015).

⁸² Amadou, A. (2015).

⁸³ For further information, see www.cemac.int.

⁸⁴ For further information, see www.cemac.int.

trading.⁸⁵ It is established that Chadian herders started migrating to CAR in the 1920s because of the progressive diminishing of watering points and pasture in the Sahel.⁸⁶ Besides that, droughts in 1970 and 1984 accelerated the precariousness of watering points and pastures in some parts of Chad, namely in the north and central regions.⁸⁷ This obliged many cattle herders (mainly the Fulani) to start seasonal migration between the centre of the country and the south according to the seasons.⁸⁸ Some went south and ended up settling in CAR, with access to more pastures and water sources. After decolonisation (1960) and at the beginning of the long-running instability and insecurity in Chad from 1975, larger movements of Chadians to CAR continued, although the scale and magnitude of this migration is inconclusive.⁸⁹ The 1979 war in Chad and Hissène Habré's subsequent reign of terror from 1982 to 1990 pushed Chadians to migrate to CAR once again⁹⁰, as corroborated by a 20-year-old Chadian migrant interviewee who said: "My parents migrated to CAR around 1979 when Chad was in civil war because of insecurity and political instability" (CH-M-02). During the reign of terror and beyond, Chadians progressively started settling in CAR and investing in trade, transport, gold and diamonds.⁹¹

Most Chadian interviewees migrated to CAR for trading, access to pastures and water (CH-M-06; CH-M-09; CH-M-13). While some herders continued herding, others shifted to cattle trading, as explained by this 55-year-old female Chadian returnee: "My parents were cattle herders who left Chad with their herd for CAR. When they arrived in CAR, they gave up nomadism and became traders, that's why they definitively stayed in Bangui" (CH-M-13). Thus, most Chadian migrants returning to Chad as a result of the 2013-2014 crisis in CAR were born in CAR (only three of the 15 migrants interviewed were born in Chad (CH-M-03; CH-M-05; CH-M-11) and some of their parents were even born in CAR.

2.1.2. Legal Situation and Relevance for Migrant Status

Obtaining CAR visas and residence permits is usually pursued by migrants engaged in contracting/formal employment activities in CAR (CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03). Generally, most migrants take advantage of lineage solidarity to cross the border.⁹² Once on Central African Republic territory, they use different informal connections to obtain a CAR legal identity document (identity card or passport) thus enabling them to stay and operate legally in the country.⁹³ Intensive and irregular checks of foreigners are not compliant with CEMAC community legislation. However, whether a migrant has a legal document or not, as a foreigner, s/he is subjected to harassment, which is contrary to CEMAC community agreements.⁹⁴ This is why some Cameroonian and Chadian migrants hid their origin nationalities during their stay in CAR, to avoid harassment and possible xenophobic attacks (CMR-M-05; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-19; CMR-M-21).

Cameroon and CAR in particular have instituted for almost ten years a free movement of persons and goods protocol within the CEMAC that allows their citizens to travel without being forced to obtain a visa for a stay not exceeding three months.⁹⁵ This implies that beyond this trial period, all Cameroonians residing in CAR have to obtain a residence card and be identified by the consular authorities of Cameroon.⁹⁶ The Cameroonian returnees interviewed for this study admitted leaving their Cameroonian identification documents in Cameroon to avoid stigma and blackmail because during regular checks in towns and at home by CAR authorities, Cameroonian identity cards could be

⁸⁵ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

⁸⁶ Ankogui-Mpoko, G. (2008). Program 1.1, human and animal mobility: Logics, perceptions and impacts, Scientific Research Report, CAR 2005-2008.

⁸⁷ Hoinathy, R. (2013). *Oil and social change in Chad*. Paris: Karthala.

⁸⁸ Magrin, G. (2001). *Southern Chad under Mutation: from Cotton Farm to Oil Decoys*, Paris, CIRAD-PRASAC-SEPIA, p. 324; Hoinathy, R. (2013), p. 142.

⁸⁹ Ankogui-Mpoko, G. (2008).

⁹⁰ Buijtenhuijs, R. (1987). *The frolinat and civil wars in Chad (1977-1984)*. Paris: Karthala

⁹¹ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a), p. 10.

⁹² Amadou, A. (2015).

⁹³ It is possible through informal corrupt means for a foreigner to be granted legal CAR identity documents (birth certificate, identity card) by CAR officials. In this regard, the testimonies of Jean Luc Danzoui Bonifey and Jean Pierre Mara on the site www.sangonet.com denounce the corruption of the judicial apparatus in CAR which allows the issuance of CAR passports to foreigners (accessed 19 November 2016).

⁹⁴ This kind of situation is experienced by foreigners in CAR, including Cameroonians. See the travel tale from Douala to Bangui told by Lakosso Gervais on www.base.afrique-gouvernance.net/fr (accessed 3 November 2016).

⁹⁵ For further information, see: www.cemac.int.

⁹⁶ For further information, see: www.cemac.int.

confiscated and held for ransom (CMR-M-05; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-17; CMR-M-19; CMR-M-21; CMR-M-23).⁹⁷ For Cameroonian migrants, having a CAR national identity card enabled them to avoid paying residence permit fees⁹⁸ and for those engaged in commercial activities this tactic enabled them to avoid harassment and pressures by CAR state authorities to pay taxes (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-06; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-16; CMR-M-20; CMR-M-23).

While the research team in Cameroon was able to gather information about the general immigration status of Cameroonian migrants in CAR, the team in Chad had difficulty ascertaining the legal status of Chadian migrants in general before, during and after the CAR crisis. This is primarily because, as the desk-based literature suggests, there is “often a lack of clarity of whether ‘Chadian’ is determined by ethnicity or citizenship” which makes it difficult to distinguish between “Chadian and Central Africans of Muslim or Chadian descent”.⁹⁹ This lack of clarity about the legal status of Chadians was particularly compounded by the fact that 80% of those fleeing the CAR crisis and entering Chad lacked valid identity documents verifying their citizenship, Chadian or otherwise.¹⁰⁰ Most Chadian returnees interviewed for this study who had been born in CAR possessed Central African ID cards, passports, and birth certificates (CH-M-01, CH-M-02; CH-M-04; CH-M-06; CH-M-07), as corroborated by Florent Méhaule, Head of OCHA office in N’Djaména who said:

“More than 50% of [return] migrants have their parents who were born in CAR, that’s to say that the half of these returnees have been Central African since two generations. Most of them above 25% have their grandparents who were born in CAR.” (CH-I-03)

Central African law number 1961.212 enables children born and living in CAR to be eligible for Central African nationality and citizenship.¹⁰¹ The same law also states that for adults with foreign origins Central African nationality could be obtained from the CAR public authority (Ministry of Interior Affairs) at the request of the foreigner. This is why most often Chadian migrant adults obtained CAR citizenship/nationality and later their children were born Central African citizens. Those who married Central African citizens could also obtain CAR nationality and citizenship (CH-M-08). So, although Chadians were identified by Central Africans as people with foreign origins because of their religion (Islam) and livelihood activities (pastoralism)¹⁰² they could benefit from the opportunities granted CAR citizens, such as employment, voting rights, etc. (CH-M-08).

2.1.3. Socio-economic Position of Migrants in Comparison to Host Population

The economy in CAR has been stagnant due to repetitive civil unrest, thus lowering living standards considerably and putting a burden on most households.¹⁰³ Despite its mineral riches, CAR is classified as one of the world’s ‘Least Developed Countries’, with two thirds of the population living below the poverty line.¹⁰⁴ With more than 74% of Central Africans engaged in agriculture – largely at the subsistence level – the country’s economy has also suffered from the lack of banking, transport, and market infrastructure.¹⁰⁵ Despite these conditions, however, most Cameroonian and Chadian migrants interviewed for this study were doing relatively well economically compared to their Central African counterparts before the crisis largely because of their entrepreneurial ventures.

Cameroonian migrants succeeded in self-employment in CAR before the crisis, expressing economic factors as the major motivation for their migration to CAR (CMR-M-06; CMR-M-23). They mainly worked in trade in manufacture of goods (11 out of 23 interviewees) (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-06; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-16; CMR-M-17; CMR-M-19; CMR-M-20; CMR-M-21; CMR-M-23) and

⁹⁷ For further information, see: www.cemac.int.

⁹⁸ The establishment of the residence permit with a validity of two years is subject to payment of 200,000 Central African Francs (XAF) (EUR 305), with bribes of unspecified amounts often demanded from government officials. See: www.sangonet.com (accessed 19 November 2016).

⁹⁹ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

¹⁰⁰ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

¹⁰¹ Law number 1961.212, adopted on April 20, 1961, on Central African Nationality Code.

¹⁰² International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

¹⁰³ Loubière, T. (5 December 2013). Six keys to understand the conflict in CAR. *Le Monde Afrique*. Retrieved from : http://www.lemonde.fr/afrique/article/2013/12/05/republique-centrafricaine-le-conflit-en-six-points_3526169_3212.html#4zIP2IKfu2Xxzyt.99.

¹⁰⁴ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

¹⁰⁵ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

breeding of cattle (six out of 23 interviewees) (CMR-M-07; CMR-M-08; CMR-M-11; CMR-M-12; CMR-M-13; CMR-M-15; CMR-M-18). Other professions were marginally represented in the Cameroon migrant interviewee pool, namely farmer (CMR-M-03), artist/dancer (CMR-M-04) and fortune-teller (CMR-M-22). However, it is important to note that incomes generated by these activities also offered the opportunity to buy and resell precious stones (gold, diamonds) thereby increasing one's income (CMR-M-10; CMR-M-16; CMR-M-20). Some Cameroonian migrants were used to buying gold from traditional miners and selling them at higher prices to authorised operators¹⁰⁶, as articulated by this interviewee:

"I was not employed. I was [the] owner of a shop that I was managing. In addition, I bought and resold gold and diamonds. Moreover, I was also owner of a herd of cattle." (CMR-M-20)

The purchase and resale of precious stones (gold and diamonds) by Cameroonian migrants in CAR is revealed in articles, reports¹⁰⁷ and books on CAR.¹⁰⁸ It is even established that a large quantity of gold and diamond sold on the world market passes through Cameroon.¹⁰⁹

Cameroonian migrants made easy profits from their various business ventures, which allowed them to cover their daily needs and at the same time support their families in Cameroon (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-03; CMR-M-07; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-12; CMR-M-13; CMR-M-16-CMR-M-23), as articulated by this interviewee:

"I sent money to my brother... This money was intended for the construction of my home in Garoua-Boulāi [...]. I usually sent around 100,000 XAF [EUR 150] per month." (CMR-M-16)

Similar to Cameroonian migrants, the vast majority of Chadian migrants in CAR worked as traders (in transport, clothes, gold and diamond, etc) or herders and could live decently before the crisis of 2013-2014 (CH-M-03; CH-M-04, CH-M-07; CH-M-13). Chadian migrant women in particular primarily worked in small-scale businesses like food selling and trading in clothes (CH-M-07). In the interviewee pool, only four out of 15 Chadian migrants did not have regular income (CH-M-02; CH-M-05; CH-M-10; CH-M-12). The 11 other Chadian migrant interviewees had incomes between 60,000 Centralafrican francs (EUR 91.50) and 4 million Centralafrican francs (EUR 6,100) a month, with the latter individual being an outlier who traded in iron products (for export) and peanuts (for import) (CH-M-03). According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), the official minimum wage in CAR was below EUR 100 (65,000 XAF) in 2011¹¹⁰, so the range of incomes amongst Chadian interviewees indicates that they were doing better economically than the host population. Some interviewees became prosperous with their businesses, investing in houses and other assets that were subsequently destroyed during the crisis in CAR (CH-M-13). Some Chadian migrants managed to access salaried jobs in CAR, including managing computer centres and serving as mayors (i.e. CH-M-12; CH-M-08).

¹⁰⁶ In CAR, it is possible to buy a diamond carat at US\$ 160 (EUR 150) from a digger and be able to resell it between US\$ 400 and US\$ 600 (EUR 376 and EUR 565) at an authorised purchasing office. See: www.lavie.fr/actualite/monde (accessed 29 November 2016).

¹⁰⁷ Cameroon is the main transit country for the diamond trade in Central Africa. See: www.afriqueexpansion.com (accessed 2 December 2016).

¹⁰⁸ Guion, A. (18 October 2013). *In Central African Republic, diamonds are eternal*. Retrieved From: www.lavie.fr/actualite/monde.

¹⁰⁹ Guion, A. (18 October 2013).

¹¹⁰ International Labour Organization (ILO) (2011). *World report on salaries: Information note on Africa 2010/2011*, p. 21.

3. Migrant Experiences of and Responses to Crisis

As illustrated below, migrants' experiences during crises have a bearing on the possible long-term implications of their return on countries of origin. Their resource accumulation strategies during peace times and (lack of) return preparedness¹¹¹ resulting from crises greatly affect their reintegration options, leading some to re-migrate back to host countries even before a complete halt of violence. Although migrants may exhibit vulnerabilities to violence, intimidation and loss of livelihoods during crisis situations, they simultaneously demonstrate varied levels of agency in responding to and coping with the consequences of crises. Migrants' decisions to return had mostly negative effects. In addition to important losses incurred as a result of the journey back to Cameroon or Chad (financial and material), there was also an increase in household expenses, psychological trauma and reintegration challenges.

3.1. Violent Encounters, Reprisals and Trauma

Given that Chadians served as a source of recruitment of militiamen on both sides of the CAR crisis and the Chadian state intervened to assert its regional stronghold thereby preventing a Chadian rebellion within its borders¹¹², CAR citizens of Chadian ancestry and Chadian migrants were particularly targeted because of the perception that they were associated with either Séléka or Anti-Balaka forces (CH-M-02; CH-M-08; CH-M-10):

"We returned [to Chad] because as Muslims and Chadians our lives were under Anti-Balaka threat." (CH-M-02)

Chadians were also targeted by the Anti-Balaka because of their perceived socio-economic privilege, particularly as successful entrepreneurs (CH-M-03). Some were threatened, killed or injured by the Anti-Balaka, as corroborated by the previously quoted migrant:

"All the Anti-Balaka's actions were first oriented against Muslims and then people with Chadian origins, so we were also directly targeted and attacked. My father was assassinated by the Anti-Balaka during that crisis." (CH-M-02)

Both Chadian and Cameroonian survivors of the crisis testify of having witnessed horrific scenes of people butchered with cutlasses, raped and tortured (CMR-M-03; CMR-M-05; CMR-M-11; CMR-M-21; CMR-M-22; CMR-M-23). Although targeted attacks against Cameroonian migrants were less apparent than those perpetrated against Chadians in this interviewee pool, Cameroonians used several strategies to escape from the atrocities in CAR. Among those strategies, the first was to hide themselves. This consisted of taking refuge in Christian churches before returning to Cameroon, as illustrated by this Cameroonian migrant:

"[As a] Muslim, I was threatened by Anti-Balaka. I was forced to run away and take refuge in the church for three weeks [...]. I left my home to rush for refuge to the church. My home and shop were looted [...]. MSF [Medecins Sans Frontieres – Doctors without Borders] has supported us during our stay in church." (CMR-M-23)

Hiding in designated shelter was a strategy mostly used by migrants residing in localities other than the capital (CMR-M-09; CMR-M-23). In the capital, Cameroonian migrants took refuge in churches, in the Muslim neighbourhood Km5, in their friends' places or in the Cameroon embassy in CAR (CMR-M-03; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-19; CMR-M-21), as indicated by this 44-year-old male migrant:

"Threatened in my home in [the] Combattant neighbourhood [in Bangui], I took refuge at Km5 neighbourhood before leaving Bangui for Sarh, Chad." (CMR-M-21)

Respondents interviewed for this study showed great psychological distress upon their return to their countries of origin because of the abuses experienced in CAR and the long journey undertaken to

¹¹¹ Cassarino, J.P. (2004). Theorising return migration: The conceptual approach to return migrants revisited. *International Journal on Multicultural Societies*, 6, 2, 253-279.

¹¹² Chauvin, E., & Seignobos, C. (2013).

reach the border (CMR-M-03; CMR-M-04; CMR-M-06-CMR-M-23). Moreover, given their experiences in CAR, some migrants are still traumatised, often experiencing grief, fear of the other, etc:

“I will not go back to CAR anymore [...] in this country [CAR], they kill men like sheep.” (CMR-M-16)

“I am sick. I suffer from blood pressure, heart problems, diseases aggravated by the events of Bangui. In addition, our revenues are low.” (CMR-M-03)

“Materially, the return of my elder sister does not cost me anything. It is psychologically that she mostly needed us. She lives in grief and is traumatised. The slightest sound scares her, darkness makes her nervous. She lives in constant fear [...]. I have to constitute myself as a psychologist to help my sister to overcome her anxieties. She makes me sad and it hurts me a lot.” (CMR-F-05)

3.2. Loss of Livelihoods and Possessions

The CAR crisis caused great distress in Cameroonian and Chadian migrant communities, with them leaving behind possessions accumulated over long periods of time. Sometimes they were only able to carry important documents while fleeing (CMR-M-01; CH-M-23; CH-M-01-CH-M-15), as illustrated by this 43-year-old male migrant:

“I did not prepare my departure. I was able to recover just my Koran and prayer papers.” (CMR-M-23)

Interviewees reported losing valuable property in CAR, including abandoned houses, shops, plots, and money, as articulated by this 37-year-old man:

“I returned empty handed. All my goods remained [in CAR], including a plot [of land] of a value of 800,000 XAF [EUR 1,200], a tire workshop of the same value, a bazar estimated at about 4 million XAF [EUR 6,050].” (CMR-M-10)

Other interviewees reported major financial losses because many of them did not keep their savings in banks; rather great sums of money were kept in migrants' homes which were not easily transportable (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-03; CMR-M-23). Although some migrants had time to recover important documents (CMR-M-22), others did not, as articulated by this 20-year-old man:

“I have not been prepared for the return. Indeed, we could not bring anything. Even my degrees remained there [in CAR]. Later, we learned that the house was burned. I'm inconsolable until today.” (CMR-M-02)

As for Cameroonian breeders, many of them lost some of their livestock (CMR-M-07; CMR-M-11); most often, the loss of animals occurred on the way back to Cameroon. Interviewees accused the Anti-Balaka of taking their animals (CMR-M-12; CMR-M-13; CMR-M-15; CMR-M-17; CMR-M-18). One household reported having abandoned all their livestock, with no one able to go in search of them in the bush (CMR-M-08), as corroborated by this 36-year-old woman:

“We have brought nothing, not even our oxen. We were forced to abandon them.” (CMR-M-08)

3.3. Processes of Evacuation, Return and Repatriation

Broadly speaking, Cameroonian and Chadian interviewees reported that armed warfare between the Séléka and Anti-Balaka forces as well as the targeted killings of Muslim and Christian migrants were the main reasons for their return to their countries of origin (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-23; CH-M-01; CH-M-15).

Cameroonian migrants returned by air and by road primarily, with air evacuation services organised by the Cameroonian state for those who could show proof of Cameroonian nationality, including original national ID cards, birth certificates or passports (CMR-A-02; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-19). The

absence of any of these documents was a hindrance for many Cameroonians who expected to leave CAR by air, as articulated by this 37-year-old man:

“Having secured my family at Km5 Muslim neighbourhood, I went to inquire about the boarding procedures on charter flights organised by the state of Cameroon. The main condition was the possession of Cameroonian identity card, [a] document that I did not have. I called relatives in Cameroon, but they sent me the scanned version, which was denied.” (CMR-M-10)

Many returnees going to the Cameroonian Embassy in Bangui and to the Cameroon/CAR border encountered difficulties proving their nationality due to the lack of documents, which were left in Cameroon during their migration to CAR (CMR-M-05; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-19). Those Cameroonians who could prove their nationality were airlifted, as instructed by the Cameroonian head of state, Paul Biya, on the route Douala-Bangui-Douala at the beginning of December 2013 (CMR-A-02).¹¹³

Unlike Cameroonians, however, when Chadians were evacuated from CAR and repatriated to Chad by the Chadian government and IOM, they were considered *de facto* Chadians by the Chadian state. So, according to some interviewees, they were not required to present Chadian identity documents to authorities to prove their nationality (CH-M-02; CH-M-04; CH-M-06). To flee CAR, for instance, those trapped around the Mpoko airport were evacuated in planes arranged by IOM and the Chadian state, as corroborated by this 40-year-old female returnee: “We were escorted till the Bangui airport by the Chadian militaries” (CH-M-09). For Chadians living in Bangui and other cities, they escaped via military convoys in trucks sent by the Chadian state to transport them to Chad (CH-M-05; CH-M-08). This was corroborated by a 43-year-old Chadian returnee, who said, “the President Idriss Deby Itno sent us a plane and vehicles to repatriate us [to] Chad” (CH-M-05).

Other Chadians remained trapped in their homes because the Anti-Balaka were often people from their neighbourhoods who made threats, and given that the Chadians were unarmed they could not defend themselves. Moreover, the Central African police seemed incapable of defending them, according to Chadian interviewees. Some of these migrants could only flee when escorted by Chadian military (CH-I-04; CH-I-01)¹¹⁴, as explained by this 52-year-old female Chadian returnee: “We were escorted by the soldiers of the [Chadian] embassy to the airport for the departure” (CH-M-15). Although actual figures are inconclusive, a number of Chadians fled to Cameroon on their own before receiving IOM’s assistance to travel to Chad, as this 50-year-old female returnee corroborated: “From CAR to Cameroon I paid myself the transport and other costs. From Cameroon IOM helped us” (CH-M-03). As of March 2014, IOM reported that there were approximately 8,500 Chadians stranded in Cameroon awaiting repatriation assistance.¹¹⁵

Cameroonian interviewees who were denied access to air evacuation by their embassy in Bangui because of the absence of identification documents, inhabitants of inland towns and those along the Cameroon-CAR border were attracted by road travel. The routes were numerous and transport means varied. Depending on the opportunities, the trip could cost from 5,000 to 10,000 XAF (EUR 7.2 to EUR 15) per individual (CMR-M-03; CMR-M-04; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-20; CMR-M-21). They travelled with trucks of goods in containers and arrived either in Garoua-Boulaï, Kentzou or Ngaoui (CMR-M-03; CMR-M-04; CMR-M-05; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-23). Many of those who left Bangui took advantage of truck departures escorted by MISCA (CMR-M-03; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-20; CMR-M-21; CMR-M-23). Despite the escorts, trucks full of Cameroonians dodged many gunshots in their progress towards Cameroon and some were attacked by armed insurgents who instigated altercations with Muslims, as articulated by these return migrant testimonials:

¹¹³ Compiled data from local Cameroonian and international newspapers. See: Journal du Cameroun: <http://www.journalducameroun.com/>; WelcomeBack Cameroon (WBC): <https://welcomebackcameroon.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/les-droits-des-migrants-au-cameroun-sont-garantis-par-notre-constitution-et-lois-selon-pr-jean-claude-tcheuwa/>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/694-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrigue--12-890046-134-lang1-index.html>; VOA: <http://www.voanews.com/content/cameroonians-stream-home-from-troubled-central-african-republic/1811339.html>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/3075-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrigue--12-891410-134-lang1-index.html>.

¹¹⁵ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

“With my husband and our children, we boarded a truck within which were 47 members of family and neighbours, in short, all those who felt the urge to leave. We made the trip [through] Carnot - Berberati - Kentzou which lasted seven days. We were threatened on the way by the Anti-Balaka who summoned my husband to bring down from the vehicle Arabs-Choa and Mbororo [two ethnic groups of Cameroon, mainly Muslims] so that they [could] kill them. He sometimes promised to bring them gifts on his return from Cameroon. We could escape only because as a driver, he had knowledge of them and used to frequently beg and convince them.” (CMR-M-05)

“After being blocked at the entrance of the Cameroon Embassy in Bangui, I planned my return with my family. We boarded a truck escorted by MISCA from Bangui to Garoua-Boulai through Bossembéle, Yaloke, Bossantele, Baoro, Bouar, Baboua, Beloko and Cantonnier. The trip lasted four days. 100 people were on board the truck. Despite the escort, the Anti-Balaka was shooting from everywhere. We recorded 4 dead.” (CMR-M-10)

For those Cameroonians who travelled by road, three main routes were mentioned by migrant interviewees, according to their places of residence:

- Bangui – Boali – Bossembele – Yaloke – Bossantele – Baoro – Bouar – Baboua – Beloko – Cantonnier – Garoua-Boulai (CMR-M-02; CMR-M-03; CMR-M-10);
- Bouar – Baboua – Beloko – Cantonnier – Garoua-Boulai (CMR-M-04; CMR-M-06; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-20);
- Carnot – Berberati – Gamboula – Kentzou (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-05).

About 7,000 Cameroonians were able to reach their country of origin through border crossings such as Garoua Boulai, Kentzou, Kette, Gari Gombo and Ngaoui (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03).¹¹⁶ In the case of large Cameroonian families in the CAR, the head of household chose to send his family ahead to Cameroon, remaining behind to protect assets initially and then subsequently following the family (CMR-M-07; CMR-M-08). As for breeders' families, some family members travelled by car while others walked with their animals (CMR-M-07; CMR-M-14), as noted by this 48-year-old woman:

“There has been no preparation. When my husband decided, he put us in a vehicle. From Baboua to Cantonnier, we paid each 4,000 XAF [EUR 6]. My husband came later. He came on foot, with his flock.” (CMR-M-14)

Other interviewees travelled on foot, particularly Cameroonian migrants, of whom about 5,000 were reported to have returned through fields and forests (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03).¹¹⁷

Although Cameroonian and Chadian migrants made unilateral decisions to return to their countries of origin during the height of the crisis in CAR, family members also influenced those decisions. With the expansion of the crisis, some migrants' families, having experienced previous crises in CAR, simply called their relatives and insisted on the need to return home immediately (CMR-F-03), as corroborated by this 39-year-old Cameroonian man:

“With the insistence of my parents who had got wind of the situation, I returned home. My mother had called and insisted because she was receiving very bad news from CAR.” (CMR-M-01)

Family members also remitted money to their stranded relatives in CAR, during departure from CAR, or at a specific step along the way back to Cameroon in particular (CMR-M-05). Migrants who were traders reported that they came to Cameroon to supply their shops and did not return to CAR; they

¹¹⁶ Compiled data from local Cameroonian and international newspapers. See: Journal du Cameroun: <http://www.journalducameroun.com/>; WelcomeBack Cameroon (WBC): <https://welcomebackcameroon.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/les-droits-des-migrants-au-cameroun-sont-garantis-par-notre-constitution-et-lois-selon-pr-jean-claude-tcheuwa/>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/694-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrigue--12-890046-134-lang1-index.html>; VOA: <http://www.voanews.com/content/cameroonians-stream-home-from-troubled-central-african-republic/1811339.html>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/3075-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrigue--12-891410-134-lang1-index.html>.

¹¹⁷ See: Compiled data from local Cameroonian and international newspapers.

had to organise the return trip of their families from CAR to Cameroon while in Cameroon (CMR-M-06; CMR-M-16), as articulated by this 31-year-old man:

“I could not prepare myself, because I came to Cameroon to do some shopping for my shop, I heard about the degradation of the security situation. I simply asked my wife and 3 children to return to Cameroon.” (CMR-M-16)

Three Cameroonian migrants out of 23 interviewed for this study turned to their family members to regain possession of their national identity cards left in Cameroon (CMR-M-05; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-19). In fact, when leaving Cameroon at the beginning of their migratory process, they left their Cameroonian identity cards or passports. In order to send migrants’ identification documents, family members had to get in touch with rare and courageous drivers that supplied the city of Bangui (CMR-M-05; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-19). This would take one to two weeks. Once in possession of the identity document, the migrant could come to the consular service in Bangui to benefit from the protection and evacuation of the Cameroon state (CMR-M-10; CMR-M-19), as articulated by this 65-year-old woman:

“When I came to meet my husband in CAR in 1984, I had left my identification document at Garoua-Boulai [in Cameroon]. When the situation worsened in CAR, I asked a driver of the line of Bangui-Garoua-Boulai to contact my family and bring back my identification document. Then, I went straight to the embassy with my ten children immediately after they brought it back to me. Thus we were added to the flight to Douala.” (CMR-M-19)

3.4. Reintegration and Resettlement

Migrants’ families provided different kinds of support to their returned relatives (CMR-F-01; CMR-F-02; CMR-F-03; CMR-F-04; CMR-F-05). Some migrants were housed by their relatives, which placed an added financial burden on the household (CMR-F-01; CMR-F-02; CMR-F-03; CMR-F-04; CMR-F-05; CMR-M-10, CMR-M-20; CMR-M-21; CMR-M-23). Indeed, the budgets of these households sometimes doubled or even tripled (CMR-F-01; CMR-F-05). Until today, some family members continue to pay back debts incurred because of the accommodation of returnees, as articulated by this 67-year-old man:

“I still hand out bills to people who lent me money with the reception of my brother and his family. My income is cut off. I suffered an imbalance in the care of my family.” (CMR-F-01)

For Chadians who managed to reunite with families, they became financially burdensome, with some relatives unable to help significantly (CH-M-09, CH-M-10, CH-M-11):

“Our return causes some problems to our relatives because we added new charges to their own.” (CH-M-10)¹¹⁸

Some families enabled returned migrants to use their homes, which caused a reduction in families’ incomes because these houses were formerly rented out so as to contribute to the families’ budget (CMR-M-10; CMR-M-20; CMR-M-21; CMR-M-22):

“This return caused a disturbance to our household. We even returned to the family house. As a result, the area that was usually rented out is occupied by us, which reduces the income of the family.” (CMR-M-10)

“I face major family expenses with [my] low income. While being in CAR, I had a good flexibility [...]. Revenues are down significantly. My mother gets my help now only in a casual way.” (CMR-M-01)

Generally speaking, return has generated difficulties in migrant households, with tensions causing subsequent separation of some migrant couples (CMR-M-11). In other cases, circumstances have dictated separation, with one example of a migrant spouse moving in with in-laws because of the lack of means to keep the entire family under the same roof:

¹¹⁸ This returnee lives in Dourbali.

“Today, the household of my elder sister is separated. Her husband still lives in Bangui, and she in Ngaoundere with [the] children in our mother’s house and he visits them once a quarter.” (CMR-M-02)

Similarly difficult, the reintegration of returnees is theorised in a number of different ways. Quantitative approaches focus on the reintegration of migrants back to their homeland at a professional level. As Gaillard¹¹⁹ emphasised, when back home, the first concern of migrants is reintegration into professional life. Cameroonian returned migrants from CAR are emblematic of this trend. According to the testimonies of returned migrants, professional reintegration has proven most tenuous with the looming threat of loss of livelihoods:

“We are facing many difficulties. Now, we have to pay the rent, 15,000 XAF [EUR 23] and expenses of electricity. It is henceforth difficult to make ends meet. The truck of my husband is no more moving.” (CMR-M-05)

“I faced many difficulties. Jobs are often lacking and incomes are insignificant. My family complains. To meet up with our needs, I benefit from alms to the mosque. It is a humiliating situation for me.” (CMR-M-21)

Accustomed to steady incomes that facilitate relatively comfortable living conditions in CAR, Cameroonian returnees in particular have found it difficult adapting after years spent abroad. This is not surprising, however. Research shows that the reintegration of returnees is particularly challenging in cases where they are neither prepared nor expected.¹²⁰ Professional downgrades of interviewees highlight this situation. As indicted by Table 3, Cameroonian returnees inhabit roles that are considered subordinate to the positions they once held as employers in CAR (night watchman, motorcycle driver) (CMR-M-07; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-11; CMR-M-12; CMR-M-16; CMR-M-17).

¹¹⁹ Gaillard, A.M. (1994). *Migration Return: A bibliographical overview* (Occasional Paper, Centre for Migration Studies, Staten Island, New York), p. 63.

¹²⁰ Nkenne, J.M. (2016). *International migration and spatial changes in habitat: the case of the Cameroonian diaspora in Yaounde* (Doctoral dissertation), p. 87.

Table 3: Employment Activities of Cameroonian Migrant Interviewees in CAR and Upon Return to Cameroon

Employment Activities in CAR	Interviewees		Employment Activities in Cameroon	Interviewees			
	Number	%		Number	%	Gender	Interview Codes
Shop owners	9	39.13	Clothes seller	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-01
			Music downloader (in the street)	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-06
			Mototaximen employee	2	8.7	M	CMR-M-09
							CMR-M-10
			Dressmaker	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-16
			Intermediary in sale of beef	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-17
			Plank seller (in the street)	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-20
			Fuel seller (in the street)	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-23
			Housewife	1	4.3	F	CMR-M-19
Breeders	7	30.43	Seller of second hand clothes	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-18
			Shop seller employee	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-07
			Firewood sellers	2	8.7	F	CMR-M-08
						M	CMR-M-12
			Night watchman	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-11
			Unemployed	2	8.7	M	CMR-M-13
							CMR-M-15
Vehicle sales prospector	1	4.3	Maneuver	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-21
Housewives	2	8.7	Housewives	2	8.7	F	CMR-M-05
							CMR-M-14
Student	1	4.3	Mototaximan owner	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-02
Farmer	1	4.3	NGO worker	1	4.3	F	CMR-M-03
Artist dancer	1	4.3	Hairdresser	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-04
Fortune teller	1	4.3	Fortune teller	1	4.3	M	CMR-M-22
Total	23	100.0	Total	23	100.0	18 males; 5 females	

Source: MICIC field investigation, June – July 2016

For instance, in the Cameroon interviewee pool nine of 23 were former store-owners and/or suppliers in CAR with very well stocked shops (CMR-M-01; CMR-M-06; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-10); and seven of 23 were former cattle breeders in CAR with large flocks (CMR-M-07; CMR-M-08; CMR-M-11; CMR-M-12; CMR-M-13; CMR-M-15; CMR-M-18). They are now reduced to marginal activities which generate incomes below what they used to earn in CAR, such as firewood seller, plank seller, night watchman, shop seller employee, music downloader (CMR-M-07; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-11; CMR-M-12; CMR-M-16).

In addition to professional reintegration, where returnees resettle and to whom they return has a direct bearing on their prospects. Upon return to Chad it was difficult for Chadian migrants to reunite with their families and communities, especially those who had lived in CAR for generations (CH-M-07). Although most of the Chadian returnee interviewees could identify their origin towns/cities/villages in Chad, some were unable to establish contacts with these regions due to their long absences away from the country (CH-M-10). It appears as if they migrated without any intention to return to Chad. According to this 33-year-old female returnee, “some [people] simply refused to receive their relatives returning from CAR” (CH-M-10). Only three migrant interviewees returned to their families and communities, yet, ultimately they did not remain with these families or communities. Some returnees were judged by origin communities and households as having changed in their social mores and behaviour because they did not conform to strict practices of Islam, including adhering to dress codes and the prohibition of alcohol consumption.

Upon return from CAR, 10 out of 15 Chadian returnee interviewees were sent to rural zones in Chad like Maro, Sido, Djako, Goré, while the remaining five were sent to urban zones like N'Djaména.¹²¹ This decision was made by Chadian central government authorities after consultation with governors. Those transported by plane to N'Djaména were settled in Zafaye as were those transported by trucks in the south closer to CAR (Maro, Sido, Djako, and Goré) (CH-I-01; CH-I-04). In rural zones returnees received some acres of farming land from Chadian local authorities and seeds from humanitarian agencies and NGOs (FAO, WFP and IHDL – Humanitarian Initiative for Local Development) to begin agricultural activities, even though many of them were educated, had previously lived in urban zones like Bangui and Bozoum in CAR and were accustomed more to trade and other businesses than agriculture (CH-M-08; CH-C-01). According to all returnee interviewees, some infrastructure and basic social services were organised for returnees by humanitarian agencies such as UNICEF, WFP, Red Cross, etc., including schools, dispensaries, etc. They also received food assistance (maize or sorghum flour, rice, oil, milk, sugar, cans) and cash vouchers from the same agencies.

For returnees repatriated to Zafaye (near N'Djaména) there is no possibility of agricultural production as a means of earning livelihoods because it is an urban area with no cultivable land (CH-M-12; CH-M-13; CH-M-14; CH-M-15). Since they have not been able to access agricultural work opportunities, their situation is precarious compared to local populations, particularly because of the high cost of living in N'Djaména, as articulated by this 32-year-old male returnee:

“The problem that we faced is the fact that the assistance is insufficient; the supply was inferior to the need. I am a holder of [a] Master[s] [degree] in Economy [economics]. At the beginning, they [the Chadian state and humanitarian agencies] promised a job to me but up to now they did not employ me.” (CH-M-12)

Since the beginning of 2016, assistance to Chadian returnees from CAR has dwindled considerably because UN agencies mainly focus on the Lake Chad basin crisis and the Chadian state seems unable to fulfil returnees' needs (CH-E-02; CH-I-01; CH-I-04; CH-I-05; CH-A-01). Chadians, or individuals of Chadian descent, benefitted from evacuation by the Chadian state, but subsequently found that, upon return to Chad, support from the state waned considerably. Consequently, many Chadian returnees from CAR resorted to their former CAR national IDs and presented themselves as refugees to benefit from what they perceived as broader support (CH-A-01).

¹²¹ Republic of Chad (2014). *Global response plan in favour of Chadian CAR returnees: Emergency phase*, Draft 4, N'Djaména.

3.5. Remigration

Because of the failure of reintegration seven Cameroonian interviewees (30%)¹²² have expressed a strong desire to return to CAR, despite the atrocities and other scary images that continue to hound them (CMR-M-04; CMR-M-09; CMR-M-10; CMR-M-17; CMR-M-21):

“If I find another activity [work/employment], I could stay in Cameroon. Otherwise, I will return to CAR. The mototaximan work is hard. In Cameroon, work is hard, while in CAR, we easily make money.” (CMR-M-10)

¹²² These are the opinions expressed during the interviews with returning migrants, which is difficult to verify. However, despite the return to constitutional order, the security situation in CAR is still subject to many concerns.

4. Institutional Responses

4.1. Civil Society

Cameroonian and Chadian civil society organisations were equally active in their interventions during the CAR crisis. In fact, civil society organisations were at the forefront of the reception of migrants in both cases, although most of their interventions could not be independently verified by returnee interviewees.

Lacking sufficient financial resources¹²³, Cameroonian civil society organisations provided moral support to the large numbers of refugees and returnees entering Cameroon (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03; CMR-C-02). At Kentzou, Ngaoui and Garoua-Boulai entry points, the Cameroon Red Cross gave practical advice to returnees (CMR-C-02; CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03), including information on reception and orientation, hygiene and sanitation. The Cameroon Red Cross assisted UNHCR and IOM in the registration process when these two intergovernmental organisations were deployed at the border (CMR-I-01; CMR-I-03; CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03). While Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), a local health organisation, provided first aid (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03; CMR-C-02), the Association of Youth Muslim Volunteer of Briqueterie collected donations from Muslims and distributed them to returnees mainly in Yaounde and Garoua-Boulai (CMR-C-03). These donations consisted of money, food and clothes (CMR-C-03). Their actions were guided by the Islamic tradition of charity through the pillar of *zakat*, alms that every Muslim with minimum wealth provides in solidarity with the Muslim community:

“We are confronted with the situation faced by migrants in relation to our faith. For instance, many Muslims were persecuted in CAR, have left the country without their goods and we support them [...]. As Muslims, we naturally help Muslims. This was the case of migrant returnees from CAR [...]. We distributed food kits [rice, salt, sardines, cassava flour, etc.] at Garoua-Boulai.” (CMR-C-03)

Yes Cameroon, a CSO which has since 2008 trained youth on business plan development, management of small businesses, entrepreneurship, etc. trained CAR refugees and eight Cameroonian returnees from CAR on entrepreneurship and management of small businesses, at the office of Yes Cameroon¹²⁴ in Yaounde (CMR-C-01), as articulated by Executive Director Gilbert Ewehmeh:

“We trained eight youth on entrepreneurship. With the support of Plan [International] Cameroon¹²⁵, it will be 30.” (CMR-C-01)

In Chad, some national Chadian civil society organisations already involved in humanitarian relief contributed to crisis response, including, but not limited to: IHDL, Chadian Red Cross Committee (CRT), Catholic Relief for Development (SECADEV), Association for Development and Solidarity (ADES), Chadian Association to Promote Fundamental Freedom (APLFT), etc. APLFT was in charge of registering returnees to enable them to obtain ID cards from Chadian local administrations (CH-I-03). Newborns were automatically given Chadian birth certificates by APLFT and could later access Chadian national IDs. IHDL was involved in food and cash voucher distribution, children’s care in the sites and also conducting a project on small-scale agriculture with returnees (CH-C-04). CRT was in charge of the management of returnees’ sites in Maingama (CH-C-04) while Sido and SECADEV were in charge in Danamadja and Kobiteye, respectively (CH-C-01; CH-C-02). These organisations are well regarded by returnees even though returnees understand that their assistance is limited (CH-C-01; CH-C-02).

¹²³ European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2014), p. 9.

¹²⁴ Being a member of the Commission responsible for investigating violations of human rights committed in CAR since 1 January 2013, Gilbert Ewehmeh, Executive Director of Yes Cameroon, went to CAR in January 2014. Having established relationships with some Cameroonian migrants in CAR, they contacted him upon their return to Cameroon. Thus, eight of them received training related to entrepreneurship on the management of small businesses in order to be self-employed. They were selected only on the basis of their arrival at the Yes Cameroon office in Yaounde.

¹²⁵ Plan International Cameroon is the Cameroon branch of an international organisation that works on education, health, protection, and economic livelihoods.

The civil society organisations mentioned above participated in the management of the assistance to returnees at all levels and gained experience managing returnees during the CAR crisis. Yet, most of them face difficulties because they lack independent funding sources (CH-C-04). So the decrease in funds generated from the Chadian government and international partners is limiting their ability to assist Chadian returnees, primarily because there has been a shift in focus to the crisis in the Lake Chad basin (CH-I-04). Because of this shift in focus to Lake Chad, local civil society actors might likewise redeploy there, which would imply a lack of support for Chadian returnees (CH-C-04).

Most local civil society organisations previously mentioned also act as operators for UN agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, etc.) according to their fields of expertise and experience in water and sanitation (WASH), protection (children's care, psychosocial support, support to highly vulnerable cases, etc.), food and non-food items management, shelter setting, though these services are more available to refugees than returnees (CH-C-01; CH-C-02; CH-C-03; CH-C-04). Returnees living in the south of Chad have very close interactions with local community leaders (CH-A-01). These leaders have been contacted by regional Chadian authorities and humanitarian agencies to help settle returnees by giving them land and reserves (CH-A-01). In Maingama and Danamadja, for instance, local leaders agreed to give land to returnees without receiving compensation in return (CH-E-01). In some cases, such as in Kobiteye, there is no communal land to be given so the returnees must negotiate directly with the locals to access farmland by renting or buying (CH-E-01). According to local community dwellers, initially interactions with returnees were tense but after some meetings mediated by humanitarian organisations and government authorities the relations are rather peaceful, as articulated by this 55-year-old women's leader in Kobiteye Camp (CH-A-01):

"Conflicts often occur around the water points with kids. In case of conflict friendly settlement is favoured. In case of serious injury the leaders are obliged to send the problem to competent authorities. Until now there is no major problem with the host populations." (CH-E-01)

4.2. Intergovernmental Organisations

Intergovernmental organisations intervened at different levels and scales during the CAR crisis of 2013-2014, although most of their interventions were not corroborated by returnee interviewees. Furthermore, intergovernmental organisations appeared to have played less of a prominent role in emergency response, particularly as it relates to fulfilling the needs of Cameroonian and Chadian returnees, than civil society organisations in the two countries. Moreover, there was a lack of a coordinated cluster approach and no mechanism was put in place to handle the situation. In the absence of the Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA, ECHO asked UNHCR to take the lead and produce urgently an inter-agency humanitarian response plan for this crisis.¹²⁶

From the beginning of the crisis in CAR, UN agencies mobilised funds for Chadian returnees and assisted them through UN fundraising mechanisms (CH-I-04; CH-C-04). The IOM and UNHCR in particular evacuated migrants of varied statuses, including long-term residents of CAR with unclear national identities, refugees and stateless persons.¹²⁷ IOM and UNHCR were actively involved in the evacuation of Muslims, in addition to overseeing their relocation to safer regions of the CAR.¹²⁸ In cooperation with the Government of Chad, IOM, for example, repatriated 16,742 Chadians trapped in Bangui on 86 flights (70 flights from the Government of Chad and 16 from IOM)¹²⁹ to N'Djaména (CH-I-01). IOM also transported Chadian returnees by trucks to Goré, Sido, etc., in cooperation with Chadian authorities (CH-I-01).

¹²⁶ European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2016). ECHO factsheet – Cameroon (April), p. 2.

¹²⁷ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014b); United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (2014); Zetter, R. (2015). *Protection in crisis: Forced migration and protection in a global era*. Migration Policy Institute. Retrieved from: <http://www.migrationpolicy.org/research/protection-crisis-forced-migration-and-protection-global-era>.

¹²⁸ Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014).

¹²⁹ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014c). *Influx from the Central African Republic (CAR)* (UPDATE, May 12, 2014). Retrieved from: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/32531>.

UNHCR conducted the registration of returned migrants and CAR refugees, together with volunteers from the Cameroon Red Cross (CMR-I-03). Alongside MSF, UNHCR supplied water and provided health care to returned migrants and CAR refugees (CMR-I-03). When the first wave of people came from CAR in December 2013, there were consultations between UNHCR, MSF and the sub-divisional officer at Garoua-Boulai on how to organise the reception of people crossing the CAR-Cameroon border in large numbers (CMR-I-03; CMR-A-03). In this context, migrants and refugees benefited from registration and assistance including food, water, medical assistance (CMR-I-03; CMR-A-03).

Similarly, before settling Chadian returnees in returnee sites (Danamadja/Goré, Kobiteye/Goré, Maingama/Maro and Sido/Maro, Ndjako), UN agencies (IOM, UNHCR) registered the returnees, with all of them relinquishing their CAR identity papers and opting for Chadian citizenship because the Chadian government made efforts to repatriate them (CH-A-01). While WFP organised food assistance mainly, UNICEF focused on returnee children's protection, as articulated by this interviewee:

"When they [the returnees] arrived we first organised the systematic vaccination against anti-germ, polio, measles and we also supported the distribution of household essential articles like water bottles, soaps and blankets. Our support has been brought to child protection, especially non-accompanied children and separated children. We organised with our partners a space called 'children's space' for them to relax, play and receive sociopsychological care. We supported water and sanitation activities, by installing water adduction systems, building rubbish bins, etc. We supported education in returnees' sites and children's schooling in host communities. We supported activities in primary care and all about prenatal consultation for pregnant women with the distribution of impregnated mosquito nets. We provided medicine for caring in case of diseases. We recruited sanitation staff for the delegation of paramedic sanitation, nurses and even doctors in order to take charge of sanitation centres in the area." (CH-I-04)

While the mandate of intergovernmental organisations regarding refugees is very clear, it is not clear with regard to returnees and other non-refugees. As a matter of fact, considering that Chadian returnees are nationals of Chad, they must be taken care of by their government. So even though humanitarian agencies have been assisting returnees from the beginning of the CAR crisis, they believe the Chadian government should take over (CH-C-04; CH-I-04; CH-I-05). This is why from the end of 2015, intergovernmental assistance to returnees has dwindled, including assistance in shelter, food, non-food items, health facilities, education, WASH (CH-A-01). At the time of research in 2016, there was just very limited health assistance to returnees provided by UNICEF mainly (CH-I-04). The argument is that there are many concurrent crises, with the Lake Chad crisis deserving more attention because of its acute nature (CH-I-04; CH-I-05). Besides, there are non-intergovernmental organisations like Lutheran World Federation (LWF), International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC), etc. assisting returnees with their own funds or with funding from the UN, EU or other sources.¹³⁰ Nevertheless, Chadian returnees from CAR feel abandoned, as articulated by this returnee: "Upon our arrival, we received blankets, mats but now we are abandoned" (CH-M-14). Unlike Cameroonian returnees, it is very likely that the reintegration needs of Chadian returnees is particularly acute because of their lack of existing familial and social networks in Chad, thus their overreliance on international and government actors. Despite the efforts of humanitarian actors, however, humanitarian needs persist in all returnee sites in terms of shelter, hygiene and sanitation, health, nutrition, protection and education.¹³¹

4.3. Private Sector

Private sector actors were involved in the mobilisation of resources for returnees, although their role was limited and could not be independently verified by returnee interviewees.

¹³⁰ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2015). *Chad: Humanitarian actors' physical presence*. ReliefWeb. Retrieved from:

http://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/07042015_Presence%20physique%20des%20acteurs.pdf.

¹³¹ United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2016). *Overview of Humanitarian Needs 2016*.

In N'Djaména or at regional levels, enterprises and individual traders gave assistance in cash or in food items to Chadian returnees as they arrived in Chad (CH-C-04). Some private sector actors were used by humanitarian agencies as implementers providing cash vouchers to returnees (CH-C-04). For the returnees who did not obtain Chadian identity documents upon return, however, they have had very limited access to jobs in Chad and thus their interactions with employers and recruiters have been severely restricted (CH-I-03).

Private sector actors in Cameroon were equally as active as their counterparts in Chad. In the towns of Kentzou and Garoua-Boulai, for instance, some businessmen and donors provided returnees with blankets, clothes, food and water (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03). Indeed, Muslim notables made donations, mostly food and clothes.¹³² Muslim families with large compounds sometimes received more than 100 Cameroonian returnees and other refugees in their homes (CMR-A-01). At Kentzou, according to the sub-divisional officer Emile Belibi (CMR-A-01), Muslim traders gave 900,000 Central African francs (EUR 1,350) as well as bags of rice to returning migrants. In Douala, however, government authorities refused the proposal of some businessmen to give returnees food and items such as clothes and blankets, arguing that in the absence of a transit camp, it would not be necessary for returnees to receive support since distribution would be difficult (CMR-A-02).

4.4. States

The governments of Cameroon and Chad responded to the CAR crisis at different scales depending on their legal and political obligations to their nationals abroad, the resources and opportunity structures available to them at the time. Generally speaking, although the states of Cameroon and Chad were directly involved in the short-term evacuation and return of their nationals from CAR, long-term reintegration has proven to be more difficult.

As previously mentioned, an airlift was organised for Cameroonian migrants in CAR based on the instruction of the President of the Republic of Cameroon, and an ad-hoc committee¹³³ was established to welcome the returned migrants (CMR-A-02). This ad-hoc committee was created on the 13 December 2013 with the aim of assisting returnees and helping them to join their families (CMR-A-02). By December 2013, more than 300 Cameroonian nationals were evacuated from Bangui by their government in a special flight, with more than 1,000 Cameroonian citizens resident in CAR pleading with their national government to shield them from the violence.¹³⁴ Planes of the national airline company Cameroon Airlines Corporation (Camair-Co) and those of the army were chartered to bring back Cameroonian citizens in distress and willing to return home (CMR-A-02). Up until February 2014, the airlift brought approximately 3,937 returnees back to Cameroon.¹³⁵

At the Cameroon embassy in Bangui, Cameroonians were received after presenting their identity documents (CMR-A-02). Those who returned to Cameroon through the airlift organised by the state of Cameroon had to comply with this requirement, after which they were transported to the airport and sent to Douala (CMR-A-02). Upon arrival at the Douala airport, this category of returnees benefited from reception by the ad-hoc committee created by the head of state of Cameroon. Several actions were carried out by this committee to support Cameroonian returnees:

- Lunch ration, made of a sandwich and a bottle of water;

¹³² European Union Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (2014), p. 7.

¹³³ Presided by the Governor of the Littoral Region, assisted by his collaborators and by those responsible for health, security and social affairs services, the ad-hoc committee was set up for the reception of Cameroonian nationals from CAR through the airlift between Bangui and Douala.

¹³⁴ Kindzeka, M.E. (16 December 2013).

¹³⁵ Compiled data from local Cameroonian and international newspapers. See: Journal du Cameroun: <http://www.journalducameroun.com/>; WelcomeBack Cameroon (WBC): <https://welcomebackcameroon.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/les-droits-des-migrants-au-cameroun-sont-garantis-par-notre-constitution-et-lois-selon-pr-jean-claude-tcheuwa/>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/694-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrique--12-890046-134-lang1-index.html>; VOA: <http://www.voanews.com/content/cameroonians-stream-home-from-troubled-central-african-republic/1811339.html>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/3075-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrique--12-891410-134-lang1-index.html>.

- Medical care for more than 30 sick return migrants¹³⁶;
- Psychological care for all migrants, with psychologists mobilised by the ad-hoc committee;
- Registration of migrants in groups according to destination in Cameroon. This task was devolved to the police in charge of the reception;
- Travel arrangements for return to migrants' families.

The government's ad-hoc committee did not deem it necessary to create a transit camp since the target was to bring migrants back to their families (CMR-A-02). After each airlift arrival, migrants were welcomed, grouped by their final destinations in Cameroon and embarked on their journeys because there was no transit camp to accommodate them (CMR-A-02). Only sick returnees were retained for appropriate medical care (CMR-A-02; CMR-M-19). The ad-hoc committee rented buses of the Touristique Express Travel Agency that transported migrants to their destinations (CMR-A-02). In Douala, the ad-hoc committee gave migrants certain amounts of cash depending on their distance of travel: 25,000 Central African francs (EUR 38) was given to those who went to the Far North (Maroua, Kousseri); 20,000 Central African francs (EUR 30) to those travelling to the North and Adamawa (Garoua, Meiganga, Ngaoundere), and 15,000 Central African francs (EUR 23) to those travelling to the East (Bertoua, Garoua-Boulai) (CMR-A-02).

Assistance provided by the government of Cameroon was carried out based on the sovereign funds¹³⁷ from the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon and released on order of the head of state who established the Reception Committee of Returned Migrants from CAR to manage returnees airlifted from Bangui to Douala (CMR-A-02). Once airlifted by the state of Cameroon, migrants left for their final destinations in Cameroon; nevertheless, there was no follow-up to ensure that they actually joined their respective families (CMR-M-19).

For the migrants arriving by road in Garoua-Boulai and Kentzou, sub-divisional officers organised the reception of migrants and refugees (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03). They issued special permits to all those identified as Cameroonians who did not have identification documents (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03). People who reported being Cameroonian and not in possession of identification documents were required to give the phone number of a close relative who was then called upon to confirm the citizenship of the migrant in question (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03). After this confirmation, the migrant received a special permit of a validity of one week to allow him/her to join his/her family, as articulated by Emile Belibi, sub-divisional officer of Kentzou:

"With specific regard to Cameroonian migrants and on the basis of the simple declaration, migrants were lined up according to their respective destination. We collected information about the contact person of the family and get in touch with him [...]. When migrants could remember a telephone contact of a family member, they called the person and facilitated their return to the family." (CMR-A-01)

Other migrants had to wait for their identification documentation at the border, as articulated by this 39-year-old female migrant:

"Upon our arrival at Kentzou, I had difficulty in proving my Cameroonian nationality. My brothers had to send my national identity card from Garoua-Boulai that I left before going to CAR." (CMR-M-05)

Reception at the borders was extended only to migrants who returned by road for which the identification checks had not been completed before departing CAR, unlike those benefitting from the airlift who had been subject to identification verification at the Cameroon Embassy in Bangui, for instance (CMR-M-19; CMR-A-01; CMR-A-03).

According to the interviewees in this study, at the time of research Cameroonian return migrants received no special attention from the Cameroonian state. They had not been registered and did not

¹³⁶ After the health checks, patients were admitted in hospitals and received full support together with a daily amount of 10,000 XAF (EUR 15) for feeding. The ad-hoc committee agreed to pay for the medical costs of more than 30 people, including those suffering from diarrhea or malaria.

¹³⁷ The practice of financing emergency operations by the Presidency of the Republic of Cameroon is not subject to any disclosure about how much funds are allocated and the manner in which funds are used. Therefore, it is difficult to ascertain what the funds could have been allocated for in the absence of the CAR crisis.

receive any financial assistance from the government of Cameroon or other stakeholders (CMR-M-01-CMR-M-23). Moreover, the ad-hoc committee no longer exists (CMR-A-02).¹³⁸ From an institutional point of view in Cameroon, no policy or programme concerning the reintegration of returned migrants appeared to have been put in place by the Cameroonian state at the time of research, thus making long-term reintegration prospects uncertain for most returnees (CMR-A-02; CMR-E-01; CMR-E-02; CMR-E-03).

Unlike Cameroon, in the last decade Chad has played a role in most of the crises in CAR, and this has impacted its crisis response and relationship with Chadian nationals in CAR¹³⁹ (CH-M-10). As previously mentioned, when the 2013 crisis erupted in CAR Chadian troops were part of the CEMAC forces deployed in CAR (CH-A-01). So when the Anti-Balaka started targeting people with Chadian origins they intervened to organise the repatriation of Chadians and protect them on the journey back to Chad (CH-M-08). The Chadian state was the first to evacuate its nationals in CAR by trucks and planes (CH-M-08), and despite its meagre financial resources, the Chadian government set up an air bridge and humanitarian corridor to transport and receive Chadian returnees as well as other migrants from neighbouring countries.¹⁴⁰ Once in Chad the returnees repatriated by road were sent to transit sites in Doyaba (Sarh) and Doba before being transferred to more permanent settlements in the south where returnees still live today (CH-C-04). It is unclear how these sites were identified by the Chadian state. Those repatriated by plane were accommodated in Zafaye around N'Djaména and were still living there at the time of research (CH-I-04). In total, 130,000 returnees had been evacuated from CAR from December 2013 until the time of research¹⁴¹ by the Chadian state and IOM but many others had fled CAR and returned to Chad on their own like the Fulani herders living with their cattle (CH-M-09; CH-M-11).

Generally, the Chadian government mobilised funds and partners for humanitarian assistance. For example, CNARR (National Commission for Assistance and Reinsertion to Refugees and Returnees), a government agency responsible for managing refugees and returnees in coordination with UN agencies, worked with IOM to register Chadian returnees from CAR upon their arrival in Chad (CH-I-01). At the regional and local levels, authorities (governors, prefects, sub-prefect, districts and villages heads) also contributed to returnees' settlement and integration by organising agricultural land for them to use when and where possible (CH-A-01). With support from the UN's Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO), IHDL conducted a project to support small-scale agriculture by providing seeds, some small tools and basic training to returnees, particularly those deemed most vulnerable (CH-C-04). Land was reportedly allocated for returnees by the Chadian state and local communities for settlement and agricultural production (CH-C-04; CH-A-01). Some assistance (including shelter, food, health) was organised by the Chadian state in partnership with UN and local humanitarian organisations (UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, WHP).

A National Reintegration Plan for Returnees was elaborated in 2015 by the Chadian government, with a budget amounting to US\$ 302,838,000 (~EUR 284,644,000), however this plan has not yet been implemented and the country is facing a new influx of returnees around Lake Chad fleeing the Boko Haram insurgency in Nigeria, Cameroon, Niger and some isolated parts of the Chadian basin (CH-I-04).¹⁴² The National Reintegration Plan for Returnees proposes supporting returnees economically to enhance their resilience. With the recent sharp decline in oil prices leading to financial constraints, the Chadian government was hopeful that international partners would support the Plan but said support

¹³⁸ Compiled data from local Cameroonian and international newspapers. See: Journal du Cameroun: <http://www.journalducameroun.com/>; WelcomeBack Cameroon (WBC): <https://welcomebackcameroon.wordpress.com/2012/04/01/les-droits-des-migrants-au-cameroun-sont-garantis-par-notre-constitution-et-lois-selon-pr-jean-claude-tcheuwa/>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/694-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrigue--12-890046-134-lang1-index.html>; VOA: <http://www.voanews.com/content/cameroonians-stream-home-from-troubled-central-african-republic/1811339.html>; Panapress: <http://www.panapress.com/3075-Camerounais-deja-rapatries-de-Centrafrigue--12-891410-134-lang1-index.html>.

¹³⁹ International Crisis Group (2016a). *Chad: Between ambition and fragility* (Report No.

233/Africa). Retrieved from: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/233-chad-between-ambition-and-fragility.pdf>.

¹⁴⁰ Einsporn, H.M. (19 June 2014).

¹⁴¹ United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) (2017). Emergency Water and Sanitation Service Provision for Conflict Affected Population in the Lake region and South Chad. Retrieved from: https://ops.unocha.org/Reports/daily/CAPProjectSheet_532_103388_2017830.pdf.

¹⁴² United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (2016).

has not been forthcoming (CH-I-01; CH-C-04; CH-A-01). Based on information gathered during fieldwork it is expected that the Plan will be actualised to integrate Lake Chad basin returnees (CH-I-03). Consequently, since the beginning of 2016, assistance (shelter, food, health, education) to Chadian returnees from CAR has diminished, with the government seemingly less and less able to propose real solutions to the reintegration of its nationals returned from CAR (CH-I-01; CH-C-04; CH-A-01). As asserted by OCHA, there is “[...] gradual departure of many humanitarian actors [who are obliged to interrupt assistance for lack of funding], undermining the progress made in recent years”.¹⁴³

¹⁴³ United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF) (2017), p.2.

5. Policy Learning

The medium- to long-term implications of crisis-induced returns partly depend on the policy and institutional frameworks that exist in countries of origin, which varied in Cameroon and Chad. Whereas government and intergovernmental policy makers in Cameroon and Chad have reflected on policy prescriptions as a direct result of the crisis in CAR, some areas of policy and practice remain fundamentally unchanged.

5.1. Stakeholders

According to various stakeholders, many lessons can be learned from the management of returns to Cameroon, yet some lessons have yet to be translated into meaningful policy changes.

According to government authorities, a reliable database of Cameroonians living abroad is required to easily identify, evacuate and repatriate nationals in times of crises (CMR-A-01; CMR-A-02; CMR-A-03). Information on the numbers of returnees, their communities and place of residence would have favoured the establishment of a more rapid repatriation plan that would not only have focused on Bangui. Indeed, with the issuance of consular cards, possibly stored at the embassy for safe retrieval, the embassy would have had the precise number and places of residence of Cameroonian nationals. This would have allowed the elaboration of a global strategy of repatriation, given that many Cameroonians were living in cities other than Bangui. Nevertheless, at the time of research, there was no indication that the Cameroonian state had any intention of creating a database of Cameroonians abroad.

Prior to the CAR crisis on 21 July 2008, the Government of Cameroon decided to conduct a comprehensive review of its migration policy (CMR-E-01; CMR-A-04).¹⁴⁴ To this end, it established an inter-ministerial commission (Ministry of External Relations, Ministry of Economy and Regional Planning) to develop a new migration policy taking into account the emerging challenges posed by migration such as the protection of human rights of migrants, whether foreigners residing in Cameroon or Cameroonian migrants abroad (CMR-E-01; CMR-A-04).¹⁴⁵ Up to the time of research, however, the development of this policy remained incomplete (CMR-E-01; CMR-A-04)¹⁴⁶, signaling that the experience of CAR did not necessarily make the protection of Cameroonian migrants in crisis situations a policy imperative.

In Chad, the crisis in CAR has highlighted a relatively new situation for the Chadian state: the necessity of strategies to support its nationals living abroad even in times of peace. Apart from the Chadian embassies and consulates abroad – who are responsible for issuing Chadian ID cards and assisting Chadians facing problems with local authorities – very little effort has been made to manage the situation of Chadian migrants abroad. The CAR crisis highlighted the immensity of the plight of Chadians or people of Chadian origin living in that country: more than 100,000 have been registered by IOM as returnees in Chad since the beginning of the crisis. Assistance to returnees has dwindled due to the fact that no contingency planning for the short-, medium- and long-term has been developed to reintegrate returnees despite this being one of the CNARR's goals. The Chadian government's Global Response Plan¹⁴⁷ devised in 2015 was intended to address the gap in reintegration planning but its implementation had not started at the time of research.

Furthermore, statelessness remains one of the major obstacles of reintegration. Despite the registration of a number of Chadian returnees in Chad, many still do not have Chadian identity documents, thus limiting their ability to fully integrate in Chadian society. In response to this problem, the Chadian state and UNHCR enabled APLFT, a Chadian NGO, to record returnees thereby providing them with national ID cards (CH-I-03; CH-I-01). Given the number of Centralafrican

¹⁴⁴ Zourkaleini, Y. et al. (2013). *Shedding light on the South: Migrant profiles and the impact of migration on human development in Cameroon*. Yaounde, Cameroon: ACP Migration Observatory, p. 87. Retrieved from: https://publications.iom.int/system/files/pdf/shedding_light_en.pdf.

¹⁴⁵ Zourkaleini, Y. et al. (2013).

¹⁴⁶ Zourkaleini, Y. et al. (2013).

¹⁴⁷ The EU donated EUR 7 million to this Plan for an 18-month period, which purportedly should enable UN agencies such as the FAO, IOM, UNHCR, UNICEF and WFP to address the needs of returnees. See: https://yalna.files.wordpress.com/2016/02/1-pager-eu-stabilisation-fund-en_web_final.pdf.

nationals claiming¹⁴⁸ Chadian citizenship, however, the process of verification, registration and documentation issuance remains incomplete. For children born on Chadian soil, they are issued Chadian birth certificates. These efforts and more could ultimately enable better reintegration in terms of access to jobs or other economic opportunities.

The mass return of Chadians from CAR also enabled the Chadian state and its partners to acknowledge a policy vacuum addressing migrant returns to origin countries (CH-I-04). Indeed, repatriation is not enough. To overcome this gap, the Global Reponse Plan previously mentioned benefits from the participation of most partners cooperating with Chad on development and humanitarian affairs including UNHCR, IOM, UNICEF, etc. However, the economic crisis experienced by Chad since the fall in oil prices and the magnitude of the crisis around Lake Chad side-lined the implementation of this Plan (CH-I-03).

5.2. Other Relevant Developments

Since 2009 Boko Haram started an armed insurgency in northern Nigeria. Progressively this insurgency entered the Lake Chad basin, obliging 2.8 million persons from Cameroon, Niger and Nigeria and Chad to flee their villages and cities.¹⁴⁹ This crisis created a new emergency hotspot, thus diverting humanitarian attention from the plight of Chadian returnees from CAR. From 2010 onwards, UN agencies like UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, have thus concentrated their activities in the Lake Chad basin.

¹⁴⁸ International Organisation for Migration (IOM) (2014a).

¹⁴⁹ International Crisis Group (2016b). *Boko Haram on the Back Foot?* (Crisis Group Africa Briefing No. 120). Retrieved from: <https://d2071andvip0wj.cloudfront.net/boko-haram-on-the-back-foot.pdf>.

6. Conclusions

The 2013-2014 crisis in CAR exposed the need to strengthen the capacities of the governments of Cameroon and Chad and their inter-governmental and civil society counterparts to manage long-term mass returns of migrants ensnared in humanitarian emergencies abroad. Although it is clear that these stakeholders recognise the need to better organise their actions and strategies to protect migrants in crisis situations, their lack of political will has been particularly evident in the absence of clearly defined provisions on emergency return and long-term reintegration.

As such, the case study of CAR demonstrates a number of clearly observable, important empirical trends.

First, migrants caught in the CAR crisis were targeted not because of their ethnicity, religion, or nationality per se, but rather because of the politicisation of ethno-regional and religious differences, their perceived involvement (and the involvement of their governments) in the crisis, and their often perceived advantaged socio-economic positions in CAR.

Second, a number of migrants returned to their countries of origins on their own, receiving little to no support from external actors such as origin state governments and intergovernmental organisations. Third, the extent to which migrants are able to exploit assistance provided by origin states depends entirely on the willingness of origin states to accept the nationality of their citizens at face value, without identity documents as verification. As a case in point, whereas the Chadian state appeared more flexible in this regard, providing assistance to anyone claiming Chadian ancestry-nationality, the Cameroonian state was more rigid, insisting on the verification of identity documents for access to air evacuation. Furthermore, the extent to which return migrants are able to fully take advantage of external assistance is also contingent upon how relevant and useful the assistance is. For instance, repatriating entrepreneurial urban-based migrants to rural areas for the purpose of agricultural productivity is neither helpful nor appropriate.

And lastly, there is an urgent need to transition from ad-hoc emergency response to sustainable reintegration. Although there was short-term emergency relief and repatriation support from families, origin governments, intergovernmental organisations, civil society, and private sector actors during the CAR crisis, medium- to longer-term socio-economic reintegration has not materialised for return migrants. Moreover, sustainable reintegration for returnees would require the channeling of international resources to strengthen and support national systems.

Thus, the case study indicates an immediate need for coordination amongst a range of stakeholders involved in evacuation, repatriation, resettlement and re-integration of migrants implicated in crisis situations outside of their countries of origin. Policies and standard operating procedures need to be costed and budgeted for, with clearly delineated mandates assigned to relevant stakeholders. Origin country diplomatic missions abroad need to be fully engaged in the process of supporting their nationals, through providing easily accessible consular services beyond capital cities. Furthermore, the ability of origin governments to support their nationals abroad in crisis situations – particularly through citizenship and nationality checks that do not require original ID verification – would be significantly enhanced by reliable data on their migrant populations abroad and nationally derived migration policies with crisis and emergency response protocols. The collation of accurate data on migrants is also critical to international responses to crisis situations in which migrants are implicated. According to respondents interviewed at the level of intergovernmental organisations, the rapid mobilisation of resources to take care of returned migrants can limit the adverse impact of unexpected arrivals of return migrants on local populations and strengthen their resilience post-crisis (CMR-I-03). Thus, securing emergency contingency funding for national systems strengthening should be an imperative for governments such as Chad and Cameroon given other looming threats posed by crises in the Lake Chad Basin.

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A light gray background map showing the outlines of Europe and Africa. The Central African Republic is highlighted in a darker gray, and a specific region within it is highlighted in blue.

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC CASE STUDY

SUMMARY OF PROJECT

In 2015, the European Union (EU) launched 'Migrants in Countries in Crisis: Supporting an Evidence-based Approach for Effective and Cooperative State Action', a four-year project implemented by the International Centre for Migration Policy Development (ICMPD). This EU-funded project is a contribution to the global Migrants in Countries in Crisis (MICIC) initiative, a government-led process co-chaired by the governments of the Philippines and the United States, which shares similar goals. The project aims to improve the capacity of states and other stakeholders to assist and provide protection to migrants who find themselves in countries affected by crisis, as well as address the long-term implications of such situations. Within the project, six regional consultations with states and other relevant stakeholders have been conducted, contributing to the development of the MICIC initiative 'Guidelines to protect migrants in countries experiencing conflict or natural disaster', which provide guidance for states and other stakeholders in responding to the needs of migrants caught in crisis situations. In addition, the project also develops capacity building activities to follow up on key recommendations that have emerged over the course of the project. This report presents one case study of the Research Component of the EU-funded MICIC project, whose goal is to complement these efforts by providing policy-relevant analysis of the implications of crises for host, transit and origin countries.