

**Testimony of Acting Assistant Secretary Robert P. Jackson**

**Bureau of African Affairs, U.S. Department of State**

**House Foreign Affairs Committee**

**Subcommittee on Africa, Global Health, Global Human Rights, and  
International Organizations**

**May 1, 2014**

Thank you very much Chairman Smith, ranking member Bass, and other Members of the Committee for the opportunity to testify again before you today on this critical issue. Since I last appeared before you on November 19, we have grown more concerned with the inter-religious violence that continues between the anti-Balaka and ex-Seleka militia throughout the Central African Republic (CAR). The United States remains committed to working with the CAR Transitional Authorities and the international community to end the violence and build a transitional process leading to the establishment of a legitimate, elected government in CAR.

Since my previous testimony before you last November, Seleka leader and former CAR Interim President Michel Djotodia was forced to resign and a new transitional president, Catherine Samba-Panza, was selected. However, Djotodia's January 10 departure from office occurred only after his rule had bankrupted the government and left a path of destruction and lawlessness that pervades the entire country today. UN agencies and human rights organizations have estimated that at least 2,000 people have been killed since December and hundreds of thousands displaced since the beginning of the Seleka rebellion in late 2012.

The Seleka rebels, in the process of forcibly taking political power from former CAR President François Bozize, destroyed the traditionally amicable relationship between CAR Christians and Muslims. The Seleka armed group grew with the incorporation of foreign mercenaries, who were little more than opportunistic bandits and criminals who sustained themselves by looting, killing, kidnapping, and pillaging the CAR population, a majority of whom is Christian.

While the Seleka rebellion did not begin as a religiously-based movement intent on destroying Christian believers, the disproportionate impact of its extreme violence on the majority Christian population led to the establishment of Christian self-defense militias, known as anti-Balaka (meaning anti-machete). These anti-Balaka militias then began to engage in revenge killings first against Seleka rebels, then against presumed Seleka supporters, and then indiscriminately against Muslim civilians and Muslim religious sites.

We are particularly concerned that the imminent threat against Muslim civilians has forced many to abandon their homes and communities and seek help from UN humanitarian agencies and the African Union and French peacekeeping forces to relocate elsewhere within CAR or to neighboring countries. Just last weekend, at the urgent request of Muslim civilians in the PK12 neighborhood of Bangui, peacekeeping forces transported about 1,200 people to towns in the northern part of CAR. As soon as they departed, the remaining local population attacked and destroyed the mosque and looted the homes of those who had left. This forced removal of Muslims from their homes and communities is deeply disturbing and fundamentally alters the religious composition and character of CAR's towns and regions.

The violence unleashed by the Seleka rebellion, and then compounded by the anti-Balaka militias, may have permanently changed CAR's historic tradition of religious tolerance and coexistence. In Bangui alone, for example, an estimated 5,000 – 7,000 Muslims remain out of a previous population of nearly 100,000, and only five of 37 mosques are still standing.

We are determined and committed to end the human suffering in CAR and support a peaceful and durable resolution to the crisis in CAR. On April 9, Ambassador to the United Nations Samantha Power and Assistant Secretary of State for African Affairs Linda Thomas-Greenfield made their second visit to CAR in a span of four months. Ranking Member Karen Bass participated in the delegation's visit to CAR and witnessed firsthand the dire situation in that country. During their visit, Ambassador Power, Assistant Secretary Thomas-Greenfield, and Representative Bass met with Transitional President Samba-Panza, commanders of the African Union and French peacekeeping forces, and members of civil society to express our continued and unwavering determination to end the violence and

support the reestablishment of legitimate governance. We pledged to work with Transitional President Samba-Panza and the international community to help her administration as it addresses the enormous tasks of bringing peace and security and restoring governance to CAR. In response to her request, we will specifically work with the international community to help reestablish local law enforcement, transitional justice, and accountability capabilities to end impunity, which has contributed to continued violence against civilians.

We also pledged to work with the CAR transitional government and international community to help establish governing institutions and provide basic services. The government is currently bankrupt and unable to pay civil servants' or military salaries. We are pleased that several countries in the region, the World Bank, the European Union, and other development partners have come forward to help finance basic government services and support alternative work programs that will help put CAR citizens back to work.

We continue to work with the international community to reestablish security and protect civilians in CAR. On April 10, the United States joined the other members of the UN Security Council in unanimously adopting Resolution 2149, which establishes a UN peacekeeping operation in CAR, known as MINUSCA. While we commend the leadership of the African Union, and the efforts of the African Union MISCA force, with support from the French, we also agree with UN Secretary General Ban Ki-moon on the need for a UN peacekeeping force with both military and civilian components to address the crisis in a comprehensive way.

UN Security Council Resolution 2149 authorizes MINUSCA to have up to 10,000 military personnel, 1,800 police personnel, and 20 corrections officers. MINUSCA will build on the strong work and sacrifice made by the MISCA and French forces, as well as the European troops that are in the process of joining them in CAR. MINUSCA will have the responsibility not only to protect civilians and establish a safe environment for delivery of humanitarian assistance, but also to help support the reestablishment of governance, assist in election preparations, facilitate the disarmament and demobilization of combatants, assist in reconciliation, promote and protect human rights, and support the formation of accountability mechanisms for those responsible for human rights abuses.

The United States will continue to reinforce the MISCA mission in advance of its transition into MINUSCA in September to maintain and increase its ability to protect the civilian population. We have committed up to \$100 million to support MISCA, including by providing airlift for over 1,700 Rwandan and Burundian troops, providing non-lethal equipment, and procuring approximately 200 vehicles, in addition to the 37 we recently delivered, to increase the mobility of the troops on the ground.

We strongly believe it is important to hold accountable all individuals responsible for atrocities being committed in CAR, and we are actively working with the UN Security Council to implement targeted sanctions against political spoilers and those individuals perpetrating the violence in CAR. As Secretary Kerry previously stated, the United States is prepared to implement targeted sanctions against those who further destabilize the situation, or pursue their own selfish ends by abetting or encouraging the violence.

We are also continuing to work to address the suffering of the CAR population. The humanitarian situation in CAR remains dire, with over 628,000 individuals internally displaced and over 112,000 who have fled to neighboring countries since December 2013. Violence continues to beset interior areas of CAR, resulting in humanitarian needs that exceed the capacity of relief agencies to respond. In recent days, armed groups have launched multiple attacks in remote areas.

On April 10, the United States announced an additional \$22 million in humanitarian assistance to CAR in recognition of the increased difficulty many will face with the onset of the rainy season there. This additional funding brings our humanitarian assistance total to nearly \$67 million this fiscal year. My colleague Anne Richard, Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM), traveled to Bangui on April 7. I will defer to her for additional information about the humanitarian conditions in CAR and our response.

To support the essential work of reconciliation and peace building, we have committed \$7.5 million to NGOs to support the work of courageous CAR religious

leaders who are promoting conflict resolution initiatives to encourage peace, forgiveness, and non-violence in flashpoint areas of the country.

On April 8, U.S. Special Envoy to the Organization of Islamic Cooperation Rashad Hussain and the Department of State's Senior Advisor on CAR David Brown led an interfaith delegation of religious leaders from the United States to demonstrate solidarity among religious communities and promote reconciliation in CAR. Together, U.S. and CAR religious leaders met with Transitional President Samba-Panza to discuss bringing an end to the violence in CAR. They also visited a mosque and a Catholic church in Bangui and participated in joint meetings with Seleka and anti-Balaka representatives and youth leaders. In a show of support for reconciliation, inter-faith participants from CAR, as well as representatives from the CAR government, civil society, and armed groups, signed a communiqué renouncing violence and encouraging intercommunity and interreligious dialogue to mitigate tensions and lay the foundation for renewed peaceful coexistence in CAR.

I am pleased to announce that the Department has appointed Ambassador Stuart Symington as our Special Representative for the CAR, beginning the latter part of this month. Ambassador Symington will play a leading role in shaping and coordinating U.S. strategy toward the CAR to end the violence, address humanitarian needs, establish legitimate governance, create judicial mechanisms for ensuring accountability for those suspected of perpetrating human rights abuses, and help CAR move through an inclusive political transition process leading to democratic elections.

Representative Smith, Ranking Member Bass, and Members of the subcommittee, let me assure you that we continue to remain engaged with our international partners to address the crisis in CAR. We look forward to keeping you and the subcommittee informed of our efforts. I hope this information is helpful to the subcommittee. I am glad to answer any questions you might have.

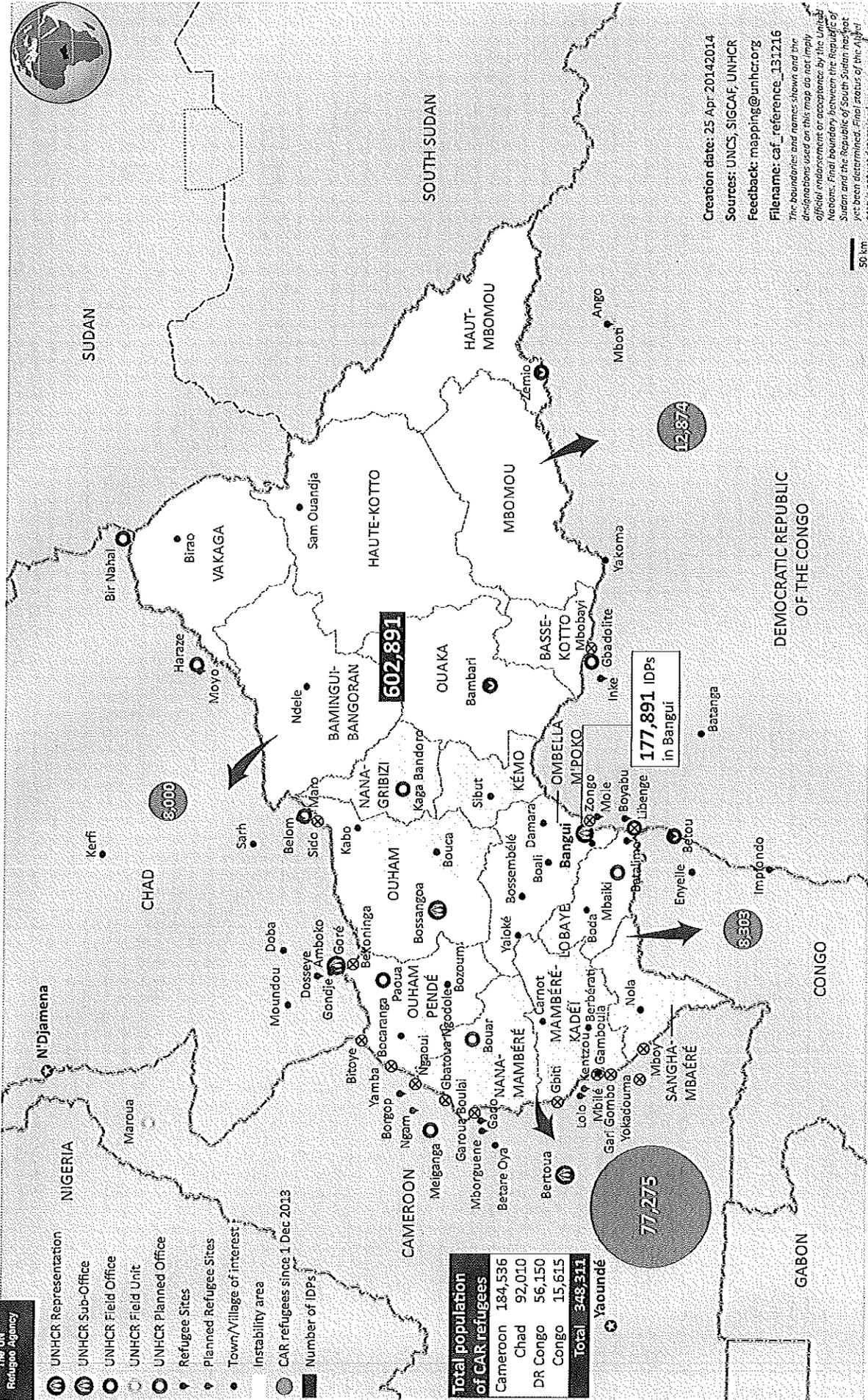
# Central African Republic Emergency Situation

as of 24 April 2014

UNHCR Regional Bureau for Africa



- UNHCR Representation
- UNHCR Sub-Office
- UNHCR Field Office
- UNHCR Field Unit
- UNHCR Planned Office
- Refugee Sites
- Planned Refugee Sites
- Town/Village of interest
- Instability area
- CAR refugees since 1 Dec 2013
- Number of IDPs



Total population of CAR refugees	
Cameroon	184,536
Chad	92,010
DR Congo	56,150
Congo	15,615
<b>Total</b>	<b>348,311</b>

Creation date: 25 Apr. 2014 2014  
 Sources: UNCS, SIGCAF, UNHCR  
 Feedback: mapping@unhcr.org  
 Filename: caf\_reference\_131216  
 The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations. Final boundary between the Republic of Sudan and the Republic of South Sudan has not yet been determined. Final status of the Abyei area is not yet determined.

50 km