



Making Peace Possible

20

CAR policymakers,  
civic leaders trained  
on DDR/SSR, strategic  
communication

3,202

Citizens engaged in arts  
activities at four project  
sites

7

U.S. government-  
funded programs in  
IMPACT monitoring &  
evaluation project

137

Individuals trained  
in peacebuilding by  
IMPACT partners during  
one quarter of 2016

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# USIP's Work in the Central African Republic

## CURRENT SITUATION

*The first peaceful and democratic election in the Central African Republic (CAR) in February 2016 opened the way for accelerating efforts to stabilize a country beset by violence since gaining independence from France in 1960. A source of diamonds, gold, oil and uranium, CAR has been riven by regional power struggles among armed groups and across borders. A United Nations peacekeeping mission has more than 11,000 personnel in the country, and U.S. military forces are advising on the pursuit of the notorious Lord's Resistance Army militant group.*

During CAR's most recent crisis in late 2012 and early 2013, rebel groups—angered by the government's neglect of the country's North and the failure to implement a peace plan from a previous civil war—formed the Séléka, or "Alliance," and seized power. The predominantly Muslim Séléka carried out attacks on civilians, spurring retaliatory assaults by primarily Christian and Animist self-defense groups known as the Anti-Balaka, or "Anti-Machete."

The scale of the violence prompted fears of genocide, and almost a million people fled their homes to other parts of CAR or to neighboring countries. Governments in the region brokered the departure of the Séléka from power and installed a transitional government headed by the country's first female president, Catherine Samba-Panza. She led a national dialogue known as the Bangui Forum—the first time in CAR's history that citizens' views were sought on the causes of conflict and paths to peace. Since his election in February 2016, President Faustin Archange Touadéra has pushed to disarm and reintegrate armed groups, but many have refused.

## USIP'S WORK

The U.S. Institute of Peace's current programs in CAR began in February 2016 and aim to help government officials understand and consider public opinion on security issues. Historically, the elites of Bangui, the capital, have governed without consulting CAR's citizens, fueling deep public discontent. USIP supports locally based projects that build on the positive, democratic experience of the Bangui Forum. The Institute also is working with six international organizations in CAR to increase information-sharing about each other's conflict-mitigation projects and improve collaboration. USIP's work in CAR includes:

September 2016

Note: Africa program numbers refer to work done from Feb-Aug 2016, IMPACT numbers refer to work done Apr-Jun 2016

## STRENGTHENING COMMUNICATION ON COMMUNITY SECURITY

Led by its Bangui-based team, USIP seeks to help CAR policymakers improve their responsiveness to citizens' needs on local security. The Institute has reached more than 3,200 people with these activities.

- ▶ USIP has trained 20 national leaders in effective two-way communication and engages them in community-based activities designed to elicit citizen views on security in four areas—the towns of Begoua, Bouar, Kaga Bandoro and Bria—selected because each typifies a distinct aspect of the conflict and continues to experience some degree of violence.
- ▶ Local activities include community dialogues led by 10 USIP-trained national facilitators, and arts projects such as filmmaking and drawing that allow groups that might not otherwise speak out to communicate their needs.
- ▶ USIP has brought international experts to Bangui to advise and engage with CAR policymakers on two of the main remaining hurdles to peace: the reform of the security sector, and the demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of ex-combatants.



*"We want peace." A civilian uses art to convey to officials her need for security in the town of Kaga Bandoro, Central African Republic*



*Locations for Communication on Community Security*

## INITIATIVE TO MEASURE PEACE AND CONFLICT OUTCOMES (IMPACT)

USIP works with six U.S. government-funded programs engaged in conflict mitigation in CAR to develop consistent assessment mechanisms that will help them share information, improve collaboration and increase their individual and collective effectiveness. The Institute facilitated workshops in which the organizations:

- ▶ Agreed on common peacebuilding objectives.
- ▶ Identified metrics to measure progress toward those goals.
- ▶ Developed simple, yet rigorous, data-collection strategies.

From April to June, USIP's partner organizations have, among other efforts, supported 17 civil society organizations in their advocacy efforts with the government and trained 137 individuals to strengthen their abilities to implement peacebuilding projects. The initiative's aim is to craft an approach to measuring collective results of peacebuilding programs that can be emulated elsewhere during a post-conflict transition.