

Central African Republic



One of the world's poorest countries, the Central African Republic (CAR) has been plagued with political turmoil and unrest since it won independence from France in 1960.

Since the country's latest round of violence began in 2013, one in five Central Africans has been forcibly displaced, contributing to a major displacement crisis that has grown in the region. International Medical Corps in CAR provides lifesaving services to internally displaced people, refugees and conflict-affected host communities in three prefectures, and remains one of the few international organizations with a presence in the country's troubled northeastern region.



Photo Credit: Patrick Meinhardt

Today, roughly 2.9 million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance and protection in CAR, while an increasing number of security incidents has affected the ability of humanitarian organizations to reach those in need.

More than half of internally displaced persons (IDPs) are children. In 2018, a growing number of unaccompanied and separated children were identified as a result of forced population displacements.

Needs are increasing not only for the displaced, but also for their host communities, which already share limited resources. Some 70% of health structures have been damaged or can no longer function due to conflict, and access to basic social services

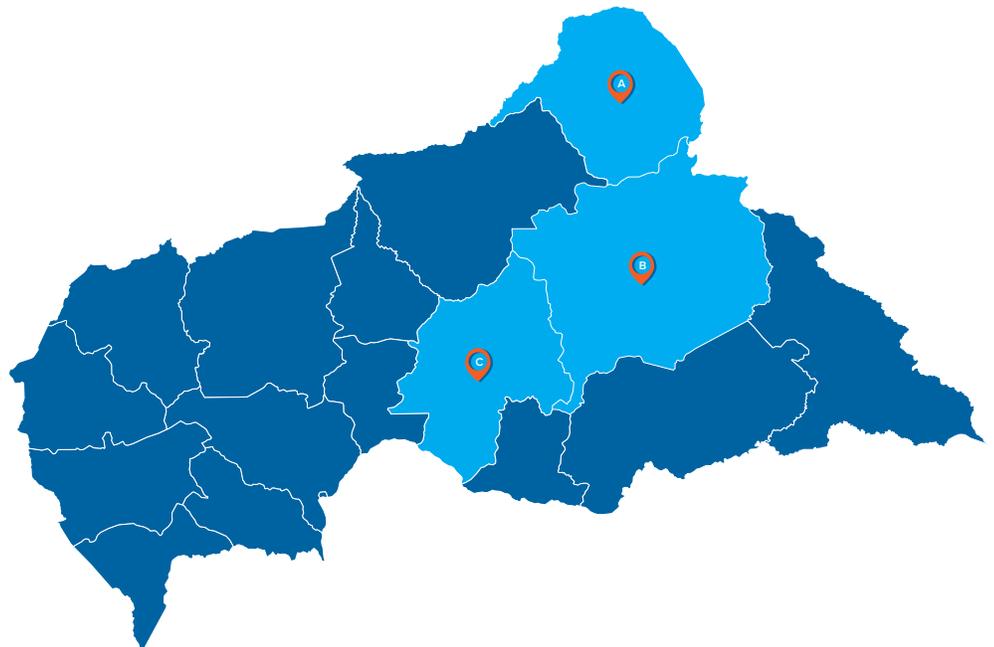
remains severely limited. Banditry is widespread and increases the difficulty of delivering commodities such as medicines and equipment to program sites, while aid organizations face being targeted by armed groups along supply roads.

International Medical Corps began working in CAR in 2007, providing services to Sudanese refugees in the Vakaga region. Today, International Medical Corps provides services in the Vakaga, Haute Kotto and Ouaka regions, including basic health services, reproductive health services, counseling and testing for HIV, treatment for acute respiratory infections, psychosocial and clinical support to survivors of gender-based violence, nutrition services and treatment for malnutrition, and child-protection activities.

Our teams work closely with the Ministry of Health (MOH) and community counterparts to design, implement and evaluate programs. To build resiliency into the national health system and ensure the long-term quality of care and services, International Medical Corps provides ongoing training and supervision for health and community actors, as well as for MOH staff.

WHERE WE WORK

- A** Vakaga
- B** Haute Kotto
- C** Ouaka



PRIMARY HEALTH CARE

International Medical Corps provides lifesaving health services through 48 health facilities and through mobile medical units that can reach the most remote communities in CAR. In 2018, we conducted 253,963 curative consultations in CAR, of which 79,668 were for children under 5 years old. Our primary healthcare services in CAR include:

- ▶ Curative and preventive consultations
- ▶ Essential drug distributions
- ▶ Integrated management of childhood illnesses, based on expanded immunization programs, prevention and care
- ▶ Prevention and response activities for common diseases (e.g., malaria, acute respiratory infection and diarrhea)
- ▶ Access to referral services, especially for pregnant women needing emergency obstetric and newborn care, and children with complicated severe acute malnutrition
- ▶ Health promotion and education
- ▶ Health systems strengthening, including disease surveillance, improvement of the management capacity of health facility management committees and joint supervisions with the Ministry of Health
- ▶ Epidemiological surveillance

NUTRITION

Approximately 1.5 million people require food assistance in CAR. The conflict has greatly affected people's ability to move freely, which diminishes their ability to grow crops, buy food and access healthcare. In these types of complex conflict situations, vulnerable populations—such as pregnant women and children under 5 years of age—are often at an increased risk of acute malnutrition. International Medical Corps' nutrition program includes:

- ▶ Community mobilization to increase the understanding, engagement and participation of the target population
- ▶ Supplementary feeding programs
- ▶ Outpatient therapeutic programs for those with severe acute malnutrition and
- ▶ Stabilization centers for those with severe acute malnutrition with medical complications

In addition, International Medical Corps conducts surveillance of malnutrition within the most affected communities to ensure individuals receive appropriate and timely treatment.

In 2018, more than 2,000 malnourished children were admitted to our outpatient therapeutic programs, where 75% were cured. To prevent further malnutrition, International Medical Corps provides community-based support to mothers, grandmothers and other community members about breastfeeding and complementary



feeding through trained “Model Mothers,” as well as community health workers, traditional birth attendants and general health staff. At the community level, Model Mothers provide education on proper nutrition and diet diversification through culinary demonstration. In 2018, nearly 65,000 caregivers were reached through Model Mothers trained by International Medical Corps in CAR.

REPRODUCTIVE, MATERNAL & CHILD HEALTH

Maternal and child healthcare services are desperately needed in CAR, where there are only 2.6 nurses and midwives per 10,000 people and maternal mortality remains high. To address this detrimental gap, International Medical Corps provides the following services:

- ▶ Antenatal and postnatal care
- ▶ Clean and safe deliveries
- ▶ Emergency obstetric care
- ▶ Integrated family-planning services
- ▶ Immunization services for pregnant and lactating women and children under five
- ▶ HIV prevention and syndromic management of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), including prevention of mother-to-child transmission of illness
- ▶ Integrated management of childhood illnesses
- ▶ Clinical management of sexual assault cases
- ▶ Distribution of essential drugs and equipment

In 2018, nearly 7,300 women delivered in an International Medical Corps-supported health facility, and more than 12,000 women received at least one antenatal consultation. More than 4,000 men and women were diagnosed with and treated for sexually transmitted infections. To expand access to these services and ensure the long-term delivery of care to reduce maternal, neonatal and child mortality, International Medical Corps provides training for traditional birth attendants and community health workers, who represent the direct link between health services and the community.

GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE TREATMENT AND PREVENTION

Gender-based violence (GBV) is pervasive in CAR. Women and girls are routinely targeted by armed groups for rape and abduction, and additionally face sexual and physical violence in their homes and communities. International Medical Corps trains medical staff on the clinical management of rape, works with local communities to raise awareness of GBV, provides basic psychosocial support, gives information on relevant available services and provides referrals as needed. We also work to build community resilience by training community health workers and protection committees, both to improve identification and referral of medical and GBV cases and to empower the communities. In 2018, we provided treatment for 1,345 survivors of GBV, and reached 33,400 people through our Social Behavior Change Communication sessions on GBV prevention.



Photo Credit: Patrick Meunhardt



CAPACITY BUILDING

By building the capacity and awareness of community groups, International Medical Corps ensures community resilience and independence, as well as the ability to manage healthcare, nutrition and GBV programs locally. In CAR specifically, this includes:

- ▶ Providing ongoing, on-the-job training for nurses, midwives and protection assistants to increase management and clinical knowledge
- ▶ Leveraging a network of community health workers and traditional birth attendants—already trusted assets in the community—to encourage the use and scope of healthcare and nutrition services
- ▶ Strengthening national health-facility, service-delivery and supply-chain systems through the support of local health-facility management committees and village health committees, as well as coordinated efforts with the Ministry of Health
- ▶ Training sessions for healthcare providers



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Since its inception 35 years ago, International Medical Corps' mission has been consistent: ease the suffering of those affected by war, natural disaster and disease by delivering vital healthcare services and focusing on training that provides the skills and tools required to foster self-reliance. This approach of helping people to help themselves is critical to returning devastated populations to self-reliance.

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