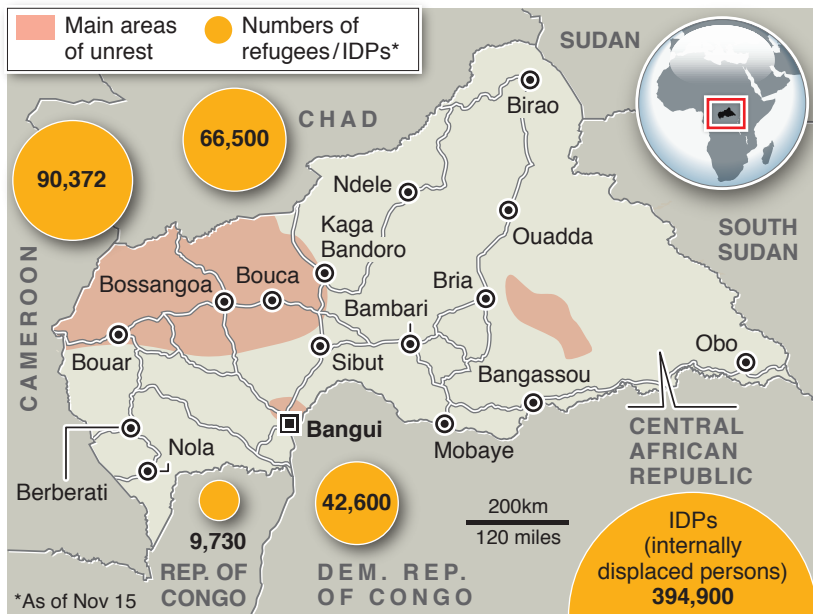


France boosts Central African Republic force

France will increase its military presence in the Central African Republic as part of an expected UN peacekeeping force, amid warnings about the potential for genocide in the near-anarchic former French colony



Central African Republic (CAR) has been in turmoil since Seleka rebel coalition seized power in March. Rebels accused by human rights groups of atrocities, including killings, rapes and use of child soldiers

UN says one-third of CAR's 4.6 million people urgently need food, protection, health care, water, sanitation and shelter. Violence has forced more than 600,000 people to flee their homes

UN Secretary-General **Ban Ki-moon** backs peacekeeping force of nearly 11,000 UN soldiers and police if crisis escalates

France already has around 400 troops in CAR – mostly protecting French nationals and airport in capital, Bangui. Numbers will be boosted to around 1,200 troops after expected UN resolution in early December

UN aims to strengthen African stabilization force, known as MISCA, which currently has 2,500 troops in CAR. Force expected to increase to 3,600 when African Union takes over in December

Additional French forces will aim to restore law and order until African force becomes fully operational – not expected before 2014