

Chasity Talley
The Calhoun High School
Letohatchee, AL
Central African, Conflict

CAR can change the unchanging

According to The World Factbook, the Central African Republic(CAR) is a landlocked country and almost in the precise center of Africa.The climate is tropical; hot, dry winters; mild to hot, and wet summers(The World Factbook). There is a population of 4,821,172 and within the population, 41.4% of the population lives in urban areas and 58.6% lives in the rural areas(The World Factbook). The Central African Republic's average farm size is between 1.5 and 2 hectares, about the size of two to three soccer fields(land-links). The terrain is a vast, flat to rolling plateau; scattered hills in the northeast and southwest(The World Factbook). Major crops include cotton, coffee, tobacco, cassava(maniac, tapioca), yams, millet, corn, and bananas; the major exports are diamonds, timber, cotton, and coffee(The World Factbook).

The Central African Republic officially became independent on August 13, 1960. As a government, it is a multiparty republic with a one legislative house. The president of this republic is President Faustin-Archange Touadéra and the head of the government is Prime Minister Firmin Ngrébada(GlobalEDGE). The country has a history of political instability,authoritarian regimes, and military dictatorships alternating with one-party rule. The violence started after the country became independent. The government and rebel groups signed a Comprehensive Peace Accord in 2008, and the government has taken steps to begin strengthening its core governmental institutions and bodies. However, opposition parties and others continue to fight for political power, and political instability remains a threat(land-links).

The Central African Republic is a sparsely populated country with the typical family size being 5, which only includes the father, mother, and children. The families' dwelling is normally a whitewashed, fire mud-brick home with wooden shuttered windows and aluminum roofs or round, mud houses with grass-thatched roofs(which must be replaced frequently because of termites). Floors are made of pounded earth, on which people sleep on mats with adults sometimes using home-made beds. A whole family lives in a single dwelling, the interior of which is divided, especially when the owners have been influenced by Western culture. Nearby may be a goat pen, but there rarely is a latrine, which are more common in urban centers. Dwellings are used primarily for storage and sleeping. However, in the six-month dry and hot season in the savannah, people frequently sleep outdoors(Hoogstraten). Family life occurs in open spaces or on a narrow ground-level verandah, and food is prepared at a family hearth situated in the front of the dwelling(everyculture).Families receive their food by hunting, fishing, and/or growing their own food(everyculture). Women traditionally are responsible for the production and preparation of food. Women also work in private holdings growing cotton and other products. Men contribute to heavy work in rural areas and constitute most of the employed workforce services(everyculture). Education is available to all family members but insufficient funding decreases the quality of teaching. Most women do not receive secondary education, collegiate level learning is more common for men than women. Healthcare is dysfunctional in every area, and at every level. Media services are unaffordable. There is an extreme water crisis—little to no access to clean water and sanitation is very poor, limited access to electricity, they have access to telephones, the roads are not good but are accessible and no access to local markets.The lack of basic infrastructure and ongoing regional and local political instability present the greatest obstacles(Land-links).

The major barriers that typical families face are the lack of basic infrastructure and ongoing regional/local political instability (Borgen Magazine). The challenge that the country of Central African Republic has is a challenge with "Conflict". Conflict in the country causes a lot of short term and long term effects on the country as a whole. The fighting began in 2013 when predominantly Muslim Seleka rebels seized power in the capital, Bangui. Mostly Christian anti-Balaka militias fought back. Violence intensified and spread last year, after a period of relative peace, as armed groups battle over lands rich in gold, diamonds and uranium. (NYTimes) Conflict in the Central African Republic has been unchanging for many years now, at least two decades. Violence has increased and spread to new provinces in 2018 as the government in Bangui remains, they are unable to extend control outside the capital. Trends of conflict/violence have been going on for a long time. Since gaining independence in 1960, CAR has experienced decades of violence and instability. An insurgency led by Seleka has resulted in the severe deterioration of the country's security, infrastructure, and heightened ethnic tensions have perpetuated a lack of adequate medical services, hindered internal migration and prevented communities from modernizing necessary infrastructure (land-links). Women suffer from slavery and rape due to the violence in the country. Men are killed and also suffer from different forms of torture and sexual violence. The elderly are tortured and/or killed. Children can also be killed or sexually assaulted during violent acts. Children are often kidnapped/stolen and many are in need of humanitarian assistance. Children lose loved ones and are left alone or they are recruited as child soldiers. (Global Conflict Tracker). CAR's high mortality rate and low life expectancy are attributed to elevated rates of preventable and treatable diseases (including malaria and malnutrition), an inadequate health care system, precarious food security, and armed conflict (Global Security Review).

Christian and Muslim communities are vulnerable to attacks by rival groups. Pre-conflict Muslim populations have been driven out of the country. The fighting in Central African Republic has carried the high risk of genocide, the United Nations has warned. Scores of mosques have been burned. Priests and other religious leaders have been killed. Many Muslims have fled the country (NYTimes). Marginalized populations are usually forced to flee. Most of the violence that occurs in the Central African Republic is because of religious and political conflict. Violence impacts the environment and people more than anything. Wildlife is put at risk, water is often contaminated and making it hard to gain access to clean water and it destroys infrastructure which makes it difficult for citizens to go to places that they need to go to through usage of roads and/or bridges. Violence in the country affects food security for citizens in the country because they are unable to go out to gather food because they are too busy hiding and it is too dangerous to use the road ways. Many crops are also destroyed during violence (BORGENT).

There have been many solutions and recommendations that have been used to attempt to end the violence in the Central African Republic. Those solutions and recommendations have changed or decreased some tragic things in the country, but violence remains a formidable challenge to end for good or decrease. Nevertheless, there are potential solutions/recommendations that can be implemented in an attempt to end the violence. Four solutions/recommendations that could be used include establishing an Arms Embargo, strengthening the capacity to adapt to climate change, research for a better understanding of the causes of the conflict, and perhaps efforts to promoting economic growth. Although these solutions/recommendations seem like a good idea, pros and cons still have to be taken into consideration. Arms Embargo will help identify and stigmatize those who violate international norms and it will reduce violent conflict. The cons of Arms Embargo is the fact that ending conflicts remains elusive. A weak enforcement, poor monitoring, and dire conditions work to undermine arm embargoes. Strengthening the capacity to adapt to climate change reduces conflict and tension by bringing people together to develop a process through participation. Building adaptive capacity to climate change could contribute to the process of reconstruction, reconciliation, and peace building within the country (CIFOR). Adapting to climate change is heavily hampered because of ongoing conflict and insecurity. There is also a limited capacity to address climate change in areas that are affected by conflict. Research for a better understanding of the conflict will promote the finding of different ways to approach peacebuilding

strategies to discover long-term solutions. Some view the personal research as dangerous and/or unrealistic. The main con is the researchers being at a high risk of being around when violence starts and potentially getting killed or badly injured. Efforts to promoting economic growth is essential because when countries are more prosperous, it increases the likelihood that they will work toward peaceful resolutions and stability. The good thing about stabilization and growth is that Economic stability enables other macro-economic objectives to be achieved, such as stable prices and stable and sustainable growth. It also creates the right environment for job creation and a balance of payments. This is largely because stability creates certainty and confidence and this encourages investment in technology and human capital. The con is the increased likelihood of economic shocks, including supply side shocks like oil and commodity price shocks, and demand side shocks like the credit crunch(Economics online).

In spite of the pros and cons of each solution/recommendation, these solutions will meet all the needs of the community. The people will be safer and will not have to be afraid to go to the market and they will be able to live their lives normally. Sexual violence will most likely cease and the torture and killings of civilians will not occur. The government will have control of the country again and the Central African Republic will be able to recover from the destruction that the decades violence caused. Health care and education will also become available and affordable because the citizens will be able to work and earn money to provide for their families. Education will also become more available and gain importance because being unsafe will no longer be something to worry about.

To solve the conflict in the country of the Central African Republic, the first propose should be an arms embargo to keep the researchers/strategists safe during their work of trying to get a better understanding of the conflict. After the plans are successful, a community meeting should be held to bring people together to talk to them about adapting to climate change. To manage and lead this project, teams of people working on every level should be strategically made ,including lay people in the community, non-profit/profit organizations, lobbyists, to the United Nations. This project will be funded by grant funding, lower level fundraising, donations, any funding would be acceptable except for those linked to corruption. The community members are responsible for participation and implementing during the process of research on understanding conflict and the process for adapting to climate change. Policies that will need to be put in place to promote sustainable growth would be: a technology policy where the government provides incentives for private firms to invest in new technology, investment in human capital by allocating more resources to education and training is widely regarded as critical to the success of developing and developed economies, reducing red tape and unnecessary regulation, and opening up markets to overseas investors, national governments providing incentives for individuals to start their own business and for small businesses to expand, Redesigning the tax and benefit system to increase the labour activity rate and encourage work and discourage idleness is clearly an important option for countries wishing to improve their supply-side performance, increase the degree of competitiveness in the micro-economy by promoting contestability, reducing barriers to entry, and by deregulating markets to encourage new entrants, encouraging the formation of new markets which exploit new technology or new trading methods, and a Long-term development of infrastructure projects is also central to the promotion of long term growth and development in a globalized environment. Better infrastructure enables output to be transported at lower cost, as well as generating jobs and other positive externalities(Economics online).The government is responsible for protection, funding, and security. Policies that would need to be in place for the project should be : No separation of Church and State therefore allowing new paradigms. Individuals who with no previous experience of violence, such as the youth, have a strong capacity and propensity to use violence simply because they have been exposed to such a culture.l(reliefweb).Policies will be taught in homes, schools, churches, workplaces, etc. to promote new changes. There will also be no violence and genuine participation. The cultural norms or behaviors that need to be considered while developing the plan is the violence that is caused by political and religious

issues. This project can be sustained by having a team of rotating researchers that keeps track of data to see what can be modified overtime. Dedication to forward thinking, change, and progress is key.

The solutions/recommendations that have been suggested may not be 100% effective, but it may indeed promote a change to this unchanging challenge. The solutions/recommendations will allow citizens to have good food security and have access to everything they need within the country without conflict. Violence will stop when there is peace between the government and armed groups.

Bibliography:

- “Central African Republic Population 2019.” Central African Republic Population 2019 (Demographics, Maps, Graphs), <http://worldpopulationreview.com/countries/central-african-republic-population/>.
- “The World Factbook: Central African Republic.” Central Intelligence Agency, Central Intelligence Agency, 1 Feb. 2018, www.cia.gov/library/publications/resources/the-world-factbook/geos/ct.html.
- “Central African Republic.” LandLinks, www.land-links.org/country-profile/central-african-republic.
- “Central African Republic: Government.” >> GlobalEDGE: Your Source for Global Business Knowledge, globaledge.msu.edu/countries/central-african-republic/government.
- “Tackling Climate Change May Lessen Central African Republic Conflict Risks - Scientists.” CIFOR Forests News, 7 Oct. 2015, forestsnews.cifor.org/18722/tackling-climate-change-may-lessen-central-african-republic-conflict-risks-scientists?fnl=en.
- “Central African Republic Armed Groups Reach Peace Deal.” Google, Google, www.google.com/amp/s/www.nytimes.com/2019/02/02/world/africa/central-african-republic-peace-deal.amp.html.
- “Water Quality in the Central African Republic.” BORGEM, 28 Aug. 2017, www.borgenmagazine.com/water-quality-in-the-central-african-republic.
- “Central African Republic.” Countries and Their Cultures, www.everyculture.com/Bo-Co/Central-African-Republic.html.
- Hoogstraten, Jan S.F. van, and Thomas E. O'Toole. “Central African Republic.” Encyclopædia Britannica, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 28 Feb. 2019, www.britannica.com/place/Central-African-Republic/The-21st-century.
- “The Central African Republic Is Facing a Humanitarian Crisis.” Google, Google, www.google.com/amp/s/globalsecurityreview.com/central-african-republic-humanitarian-crisis/amp/.
- “Targeted Sanctions: A Policy Alternative?” PIIE, 6 Sept. 2018, piie.com/commentary/speeches-papers/targeted-sanctions-policy-alternative.
- “Violence in the Central African Republic | Global Conflict Tracker.” Council on Foreign Relations, Council on Foreign Relations, www.cfr.org/interactive/global-conflict-tracker/conflict/violence-central-african-republic.
- “Stabilisation and Growth.” Stability and Growth in the Global Economy | Economics Online, www.economicsonline.co.uk/Global_economics/Policies_for_stability_and_growth.html.