

## Summary

A constitutional referendum that will allow President Touadéra to remain in power after 2025 is driving tensions in the Central African Republic. Meanwhile, the possible departure of the Russian Wagner group could lead to increased rebel attacks against government targets. The security situation remains dire in large parts of the country as armed clashes are frequent. Lastly, events in Sudan further compound the humanitarian situation in Bamingui-Bangoran, Haute-Kotto and Vakaga Prefectures. A surge in attacks targeting aid supplies is possible.

### Recent events and developments

The referendum announced for July 30, 2023, is increasing tensions in the CAR, as various actors have vowed to oppose it. On July 8, 5 individuals were arrested in Bangui for possession of weapons. Allegedly, they were Coalition of Patriots for Change (CPC) members planning to disrupt the process. This comes after the Republican Bloc for the Defense of the Constitution (BRDC) called on July 4 for nationwide demonstrations scheduled for July 14. Meanwhile, armed clashes continue. On July 4, 3 gendarmes were killed during an attack on a mining site in Sam-Ouandja, Haute-Kotto Prefecture. This comes after 6 people died in a CPC raid on July 3 in Ndiba-Molle, Nana-Mambere Prefecture. Earlier on, on June 20, clashes between CPC members and Azande Ani Kpi Gbe militants left 40 dead in Mboki, Haut-Mbomou Prefecture. In addition to these developments, violent incidents affecting aid workers remain a challenge. The UN claims that in June 2023, 4 roadside robberies targeted traveling humanitarian staff, and 1 NGO member was kidnaped in Ouham-Pendé Prefecture. In 2023, 88 incidents, including theft, robberies, and looting, have been reported.

### Impact assessment

Heightened tensions over the referendum signal that social turmoil is highly likely. Violent demonstrations in the upcoming weeks, including in Bangui, should be expected. In addition, armed attacks on polling stations and government buildings by opposed actors are also possible. This will especially be the case if Wagner mercenaries draw down their presence in the country, as recent reports indicate. Tasked with regime security since 2018, their departure might be perceived by rebels as an opportunity to scale up their attacks against a vulnerable Presidency. In any case, insecurity in large areas of the country will likely persist, as the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) seem unable to simultaneously counter the activities of the various armed groups. This situation is compounded by events in neighboring Sudan, which has facilitated illicit arms trafficking. The war in Sudan has also disrupted supply lines and led to sharp price hikes for basic commodities. The wide availability of weapons, coupled with the dire humanitarian situation, could further increase the targeting of aid supplies and facilities.

### Advice from Forth Global

- Make sure all employees traveling to the CAR undertake a three-day HEAT training prior to deployment.
- Advise staff to avoid all non-essential travel outside of Bangui. If travel is necessary, advise staff to plan their journey ahead, check the state of roads, and travel with security detail in convoy.
- Advise staff to avoid governmental buildings, demonstrations, and polling stations.
- Advise staff to abstain from commenting on the political situation in the CAR, either in person or via social media.
- Continuously monitor local news and liaise with local partners to stay up to date with any developments in the region.

### Customized advice

Please contact us for specific advice:

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