
Advocacy case studies

PEACEBUILDING IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

COUNTRY:	CAR
THEME:	Governance; migration and refugees; peacebuilding and conflict
ADVOCACY APPROACHES:	Building relationships; demonstrating good practice; government officials: educating, government officials: lobbying; working in alliances and coalitions

Tearfund’s West and Central Africa Team hosted the parliamentary visit of Baroness Berridge and Lord McConnell to the Central African Republic (CAR). The trip included visits to internally displaced persons (IDP) camps and meetings with political leaders, including the interim president, Catherine Samba Panza; Deputy Head of the UN peacekeeping force, Diane Corner; and the interfaith delegation comprising the Archbishop of Bangui, the Chief Imam and the Head of the Evangelical Church.

When they returned to the UK, both members of the House of Lords wanted to take action to promote peace in CAR, and later that year, they had the opportunity to do so. The MINUSCA UN peacekeeping mission was taking over from the EU peacekeeping force in Bangui, but had not yet reached its full capacity. An extension of the EU mission (EUFOR) was therefore seen as necessary to help ensure the protection of civilians and the long-term restoration of security to CAR. The presence of EU peacekeeping troops had been crucial to containing and limiting the impact of violent incidents from spreading in Bangui. Both peers supported the request of a coalition of NGOs (including Tearfund) to the EU and UN for the extension of the EU peacekeeping mission in CAR for three months.

Through their support and that of other members of both the House of Lords and the House of Commons, the request was approved quickly and resulted in an interim extension of the EU peacekeeping mission. This is a small victory in the context of a complex political emergency in CAR, but an important one. Our advocacy work is about building the steps to a better future. There is a long way to go, but Tearfund is committed to seeing peace and stability in CAR.