

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY OF THE STUDY ON THE CHALLENGES AND OBSTACLES RELATED TO ACCESS TO HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY (HLP) RIGHTS IN THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

Thirteen years after the onset of the crisis in the Central African Republic (CAR), the country remains highly fragile. In 2025, 2.4 million people require humanitarian assistance, while 460,000 IDPs and 740,000 refugees remain displaced, according to OCHA and ACAPS (2025). Despite the implementation of the 2024-2028 National Development Plan and the CAR-SSP, access to HLP rights continues to hinder recovery efforts. According to NRC's strategy (2022-2026), 30% of community conflicts are related to land issues, largely driven by land seizures (77.3%), lack of demarcation (74.3%), and secondary occupation (24.9%). Rural areas are the most affected. Although 79.4% acknowledge women's right to property, 10.6% condition this right on the husband. Despite CAR's ratification of the Kampala Convention (2010), IDPs still lack specific legal protection regarding land. Returns remain limited: 50% of respondents—of whom 24% are women—do not wish to return, and 90.3% perceive land governance mechanisms as inequitable. Sustainable peace requires inclusive land governance and increased funding for HLP interventions, which currently represent only 18% of the 2025 HRP.

### Summary of key findings:

#### Objective 1. Identify and assess political, legal, operational, social, and cultural barriers to accessing HLP rights (with gender- and age-related disparities)

- Return intentions: 29.2% of respondents wish to return immediately, 20.6% consider a delayed return, and 50% do not intend to return.
- Housing-related motivations: 52.6% prioritise a house/plot, 29.4% value shelter–security–services, and 18% prioritise security/services before HLP concerns.
- Property occupation: 12.7% of homes are occupied with consent, 39% without consent, 9% to 3% are uninhabitable due to damage, and 24.6% remain unoccupied.
- Boundary disputes: 74.3% report conflicts over parcel boundaries.
- Secondary occupation and illegal construction: Secondary occupation accounts for 24.9% of land disputes, while illegal construction represents 4.7% of cases.
- Women's land ownership: 79.4% state that women can own property in their own name, 10.6% condition this right on the husband, and 9.8% reject it.
- Pressure to leave: Over 80% report no threats or forced evictions.

These findings highlight significant barriers linked to land tenure security, illegal occupation, boundary disputes, and patriarchal norms limiting women's access to HLP rights.

#### Objective 2. Analyze current practices of state institutions, development/humanitarian actors (including the HLP Working Group), and identify gaps.

- Current practices: 3% rely on community support, 12% on customary authorities, 36.3% refuse to vacate their homes, while 50.1% accept evacuation.
- State involvement in land seizures: 77.3% of seizures are linked to commercial or infrastructure projects.
- Compensation: 83.2% have received no compensation, 2.6% received only promises, and 14.2% felt adequately compensated.
- Filing complaints: 61.8% take disputes to the land administration, while 38.2% prefer customary authorities.
- Conflict resolution: 84.7% recognize the role of customary/community mechanisms, while 15.3% do not.

These findings indicate limited institutional practices, heavy reliance on customary structures, and weak state-led compensation, reflecting major gaps in HLP rights restitution.

#### Objective 3. Analyze perceptions of local authorities, customary leaders, development actors, and communities (impact on stability and social cohesion)

- Role of local authorities: 70.4% believe village chiefs sell land in the absence of displaced owners; 29.6% do not share this view.
- Community involvement: 64.5% report weak involvement (30% in Nana Gribizi, 16.4% in Mambéré-Kadéï, 12% in Kémo, 3.1% in Nana Mambéré, 2.9% in Mambéré), while 35.5% recognize active engagement.

- Conflict resolution: 64.4% prioritise direct involvement of the parties, while 35.6% prioritise community mechanisms.
- Frequency of tensions: 26.8% report regular tensions, 37.3% sporadic, 0.4% rare, 23.6% none, 11.9% unsure.
- Sense of security: 65% feel very safe, 25% somewhat safe, 2.6% unsafe, 0.6% undecided.
- Participation of IDPs: 93.9% recognize active IDP involvement in conflict management; 6.1% disagree.
- Perceived fairness of mechanisms: 90.3% deem conflict-resolution mechanisms inequitable, 9.7% consider them fair.
- Impact on IDP–host relations: 27.9% see slight improvement, 21.4% significant improvement, 14.6% severe deterioration, 20.5% slight deterioration, 15.4% no change, 0.1% unsure.

These perceptions highlight widespread mistrust toward authorities and formal mechanisms, alongside strong involvement of displaced populations-revealing both persistent tensions and promising signs of social cohesion.

## Key Recommendations

### To the Government of the Central African Republic

- Domesticate and effectively implement the Kampala Convention, while operationalizing the National Durable Solutions Strategy for Displaced Persons and Returnees in CAR (2024-2025) to strengthen the legal protection of IDPs, safeguard women’s rights, facilitate property restitution, and promote social inclusion.
- Strengthen the land registry and clarify land tenure systems to prevent illegal sales, arbitrary seizures, and boundary disputes, particularly in border areas and IDP-dense zones.
- Build the capacities of local authorities in impartial mediation and inclusive land dispute resolution, integrating both customary and administrative mechanisms.
- Promote equitable access to land and property for women and youth with targeted protection measures, particularly against abusive or discriminatory practices by local leaders.
- Invest in access to essential services (including housing, water, and social infrastructures) for IDPs and returnees, to support durable, voluntary, and safe return.

### To Donors

- Increase and sustain financing for HLP interventions and systematically integrate it HLP into humanitarian planning to reduce chronic aid dependency and support sustainable reconstruction.
- Mobilize development funding for improved access to essential services in areas of return, with a focus on long-term recovery and social cohesion.
- Support the Implementation of pilot projects, targeting women and IDPs to secure land tenure and property restitution, reinforcing access to property as a lever for durable returns.

### To operational humanitarian organisations

- Continue advocacy for the domestication and application of the Kampala Convention, drawing on evidence of IDPs’ and women’s exclusion from land and property rights.
- Systematically incorporate gender, protection, and social cohesion into all HLP-related interventions, addressing specific needs of women and IDPs.
- Support local land governance and management structures, including the dissemination of good practices, particularly in securing land titles and preventing disputes linked to illegal sales or arbitrary seizures.
- Strengthen hybrid community-based dispute resolution mechanisms that combine administrative and customary approaches, particularly in areas where informal mechanisms currently resolve most land disputes.
- In the context of the humanitarian reset and the forthcoming integration of the HLP Working Group, it contributes to the development of a formalized framework with harmonized tools and procedures to ensure the systematic integration of HLP issues across humanitarian and recovery interventions and support its adoption by relevant coordination platforms.

**In sum, equitable access to housing, land, and property is central to peace, social cohesion, and durable returns in the Central African Republic. Addressing the marginalization of women and IDPs, fragile land governance, and chronic underfunding is essential. Strengthening legal security, inclusive access to land and housing, and local mechanisms will be critical to transforming resilience into lasting stability and sustainable recovery.**