

USAID-FUNDED

# COMMUNITY RESILIENCE IN CENTRAL AFRICA (CRCA) ACTIVITY

*United to protect communities  
and wildlife in Central Africa*

## COMMUNITIES IN CENTRAL AFRICA'S

Mbomou Uele Border Region (see map) have endured decades of marginalization and cyclical conflict. Armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army and poachers, exploit the region's lack of governance and porous borders by attacking civilians as they seek ivory, gold, and diamonds. Intercommunal violence between civilians, sometimes sparked by conflict over access to land, is compounded by deeply-rooted trauma and mistrust. Local communities, humanitarian actors, and wildlife conservation actors in the region have developed tools and strategies to help prevent and recover from violent conflict and exploitation. By connecting, enhancing, and expanding these efforts, CRCA is helping to build a future in which the people and wildlife of the Mbomou Uele region are linked less by the mutual threats they face and more by their shared potential to thrive.

## WHAT IS CRCA?

CRCA is a five-year, USAID-funded project that aims to strengthen the resilience of communities in the Mbomou Uele Border Region in the face of threats to the security of both humans and wildlife. Launched in October 2017, CRCA is equipping target communities with training, tools, and information to:

- Prevent and adapt to threats of violent conflict
- Participate in regional efforts to protect wildlife from armed group exploitation
- Develop safe and sustainable livelihood opportunities
- Recognize and recover from violence-induced trauma
- Peacefully transform intercommunal conflicts

CRCA is also improving regional conflict analysis and cross-border information sharing to inform civilian protection efforts and increase coordination between security actors, Peace Committees, humanitarians, and conservation actors.

## WHO IS CRCA?

CRCA is made possible with support from USAID and is a collaborative effort, led by Invisible Children, with La Commission Diocésaine Justice et Paix (CDJP), Solidarité et Assistance Intégrale aux Personnes Démunies (SAIPED), Caritas Bondo, Vision et Développement, Bria Londo, African Parks Network (APN), and African Wildlife Foundation (AWF).

## WHERE ARE WE WORKING?

The Mbomou Uele Border Region spans the prefectures of Haut Mbomou, Mbomou, and Haute Kotto in Central African Republic (CAR), and Haut Uele and Bas Uele provinces in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The region is home to multiple wildlife protected areas, including Garamba National Park and Bili Uele Protected Area in DRC and the Chinko Reserve in CAR.



 CRCA Field Offices



BRIA LONDO



## HOW ARE WE DOING IT?

CRCA builds on Invisible Children's seven-year history of implementing community resilience programs together with national partners in the Mbomou Uele Broder Region, as well as the historic investments of USAID through the Secured, Empowered, Connected Communities (SECC) project. CRCA also draws on the renowned expertise and work of conservation experts from APN and AWF.

## EQUIPPING COMMUNITIES TO PREVENT AND ADAPT TO THREATS OF VIOLENT CONFLICT

### LOCAL COMMUNICATION SYSTEMS

CRCA will expand the utility and coverage of a regional, locally-run communication network that has been managed and supported by Invisible Children and community partners since 2010. Comprised primarily of High-Frequency (HF) radios with two-way communication capabilities, this network serves as a critical connection tool and Early Warning System (EWS) between highly remote communities, many of which fall outside of existing mobile networks and have no other means for rapid and reliable communication. CRCA will connect more than 110 communities into a unified HF radio-based communication network, providing target communities with unprecedented access to life-saving information. CRCA will also integrate conservation actors into the network to promote collaboration between communities and parks, and train local HF radio operators on how to improve EWS reporting.

### PEACE COMMITTEES

Local Peace Committees have played leading roles in promoting social cohesion and developing community protection initiatives in the region. In all 110+ target communities, CRCA will establish or reinforce existing Peace Committees, equipping them to manage the local HF radio and develop and implement localized Community Action Plans (CAPs). Each CAP incorporates the unique assets of a community and addresses key vulnerabilities to protection threats. Clusters of communities that share common threats or resources will also be linked together into "Network CAPs," enhancing their ability to work together to prevent violence.

### CONFLICT TRANSFORMATION

CRCA is equipping communities with the tools to identify and mediate disputes before they escalate into violence. Highly-trained national mediators will equip key local stakeholders in target communities with mediation tools and strategies to transform conflict and build social cohesion. When necessary, the trained mediators will also rapidly deploy to communities where conflict is escalating to support intensive mediation processes.



#### BUILDING

**local awareness of the links between security and conservation**

To strengthen collaboration between communities and conservation actors to prevent armed violence and exploitation, CRCA uses familiar tools like FM radios as well as innovative platforms like Mobile Cinema to build community awareness of regional conservation efforts and how they also help promote human security.



#### EQUIPPING

**communities to develop safe and sustainable livelihood activities**

CRCA works with Peace Committees to develop localized strategies to improve the safety of civilians engaged in livelihood activities like farming and fishing. These strategies include tactics to reduce the vulnerabilities civilians face when they engage in existing livelihood activities and the integration of new, safer, and sustainable livelihood alternatives.



#### HELPING

**communities recognize and recover from trauma**

Guided by seasoned psychosocial experts, CRCA is developing community-based tools that support trauma healing at varying levels of severity. As many individuals in the region suffer from acute trauma, CRCA is providing both community-wide programming to address basic trauma needs and intensive support for high-needs individuals.



#### ENHANCING

**knowledge and coordination to prevent violent conflict**

CRCA analysts constantly review information shared through the EWS, in order to provide local, regional, and international stakeholders with regular, in-depth analysis of trends in violent conflict. With this "vertical pipeline" of information and analysis, CRCA aims to improve community protection efforts and coordination between security and humanitarian actors, Peace Committees, and conservation actors.