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The history of the Central African Republic can be divided into four distinct periods. The earliest period began approximately 10,000 years ago when nomadic people first settled, farmed, and fished in the region. This was followed by another period around 10,000 years prior, where desertification forced hunter-gatherer societies south into the Sahel regions of northern Central Africa, where some groups settled and began farming as part of the Neolithic Revolution. The domestication of African oil palm improved nutrition and allowed for population expansion, with bananas adding a crucial source of carbohydrates to the diet and being used in alcohol production. The Agricultural Revolution combined with a "Fish-stew Revolution" enabled the transportation of goods through boats and ceramic pots, showcasing artistic expression from the region's inhabitants. The Bouar Megaliths indicate an advanced level of habitation dating back to around 3500-2700 BC, while ironworking arrived by around 1000 BC likely from early Bantu cultures in southeast Nigeria and/or Cameroon. Evidence of iron metallurgy was found at Gbabiri with dates ranging from 896-773 BC and 907-796 BC, although earlier dates of 2,000 BC have been proposed for Oboui but are disputed. The Bantu Migrations saw Ubangian-speaking people spread eastward from Cameroon to Sudan, Bantu-speaking people settle in the southwestern regions of the CAR, and Central Sudanic-speaking people settled along the Ubangi River in what is today Central and East CAR. Production of copper, salt, dried fish, and textiles dominated economic trade in the region. The territory of modern Central African Republic has been inhabited since at least the 7th century by various empires, including Kanem-Bornu, Ouaddai, Baguirmi, and Dafour groups, primarily based on Lake Chad region and Upper Nile. During the 16th to 17th centuries, Muslim slave traders raided the area, with captives being sent to Mediterranean coast, Europe, Arabia, Western Hemisphere, or West African coast. The Bobangi people became major slave traders and sold their captives to Americas via Ubangi river. In the 18th century, Bandia-Nzakara peoples established Bangassou Kingdom along Ubangi river. Population migration in 18th and 19th centuries brought new migrants, including Zande, Banda, and Baya-Mandjia. European occupation of Central African territory began in late 19th century during Scramble for Africa. Count Savorgnan de Brazza established French Congo, sending expeditions up Ubangi River from Brazzaville to expand France's claims. Belgium, Germany, and United Kingdom also competed for territory. In 1875, Sudanese sultan Rabih az-Zubayr governed Upper-Oubangui, which included present-day Central African Republic. Europeans arrived in area in 1885, with French asserting legal claim through convention with Congo Free State. In 1887, France accepted possession of right bank of Oubangui River from Congo Free State. In 1890-91, de Brazza sent expeditions up Sangha River and along Ubangi basin toward Lake Chad, aiming to expand French Congo's borders. Diplomatic agreements fixed borders with Belgium's Congo Free State and German Cameroon in 1894, declaring Ubangi-Shari a French territory. In 1899, France declared border with Sudan along Congo-Nile divide, leaving France without Nile outlet. In 1900, France defeated forces of Rabih in Battle of Kousséri but did not consolidate control until 1903 when they established colonial administration throughout territory. France granted large concessions to private companies in Ubangi-Shari region in return for exploiting local resources and selling European goods. France sought to expand its concessions while promoting African development. Companies employed European and African agents who used forceful methods to coerce natives into labor. Concurrently, the French administration imposed taxes on locals and requested free labor from them. Sometimes, companies and officials collaborated in exploiting Central Africans for their benefit. French authorities rarely held anyone accountable for abuses committed by private forces or their own troops. When atrocities were reported in France, investigations were initiated, and minor reforms implemented, but conditions on the ground remained largely unchanged. In 1906, Ubangi-Shari was united with Chad; in 1910, it became part of the Federation of French Equatorial Africa. The largest revolt in the region was the Kongo-Wara rebellion, which started in the mid-1920s as peaceful opposition to European concessionary companies but turned violent in 1928 with over 350,000 natives rebelling against colonial administration. The rebellion wasn't fully suppressed until 1931. In the 1930s, cotton, tea, and coffee became important cash crops in Ubangi-Shari, while diamond and gold mining began. Pro-Gaullist French officers took control of the territory in September 1940 during World War II, but it responded to General Charles de Gaulle's call to fight for Free France. After World War II, the French Constitution of 1946 led to a series of reforms that eventually resulted in complete independence for all French territories in western and equatorial Africa. Inhabitants were granted French citizenship, and local assemblies were established. The Central African Republic Assembly was led by Barthélemy Boganda, who advocated for African emancipation. However, the French constitutional referendum of 1958 dissolved the AEF, and the assembly declared independence on December 1, 1958. Boganda ruled until his death in a plane crash in 1959. David Dacko replaced Boganda as head of government and consolidated power soon after taking office. He amended the Constitution to establish a one-party state with a strong presidency. In an election in 1964, Dacko was elected president and increased diamond production by eliminating concessionary companies' monopolies. However, he also faced growing corruption and inefficiency. In an effort to distance himself from France's influence, Dacko sought alternative alliances with the People's Republic of China by 1965. However, he had lost support from most Central Africans and was possibly planning his resignation when overthrown. On January 1st, 1966, Colonel Jean-Bédel Bokassa seized power in a swift coup, dissolving the constitution and National Assembly, and placing legislative and executive powers under the president's control. In March 1972, Bokassa extended his presidency to a lifetime term, while in December 1976, the republic became an empire with his coronation as Emperor Bokassa I. His authoritarian regime was marked by severe human rights abuses. Dacko regained power on September 20th, 1979, but his attempts at reform were unsuccessful, leading to another coup on September 20th, 1981, this time by General André Kolingba. Kolingba suspended the constitution and ruled with a military junta for four years before dissolving it in 1985 and establishing a new cabinet with increased civilian participation. Democratization accelerated in 1986 with the creation of a new political party and the drafting of a new constitution, which was ratified in a national referendum. General Kolingba became constitutional president on November 29th, 1986. However, his opponents Abel Goumba and Ange-Félix Patassé boycotted municipal elections held in 1988 due to their parties' exclusion from participating. By 1990, inspired by the fall of the Berlin Wall, a pro-democracy movement gained momentum, calling for a National Conference. Despite this, Kolingba refused to comply and detained several opponents before finally agreeing to hold free elections in October 1992 under pressure from foreign countries and agencies. The Central African Republic's transition following the overthrow of President André Kolingba in 1993 saw Ange-Félix Patassé emerge as president after winning the first round and second round with significant support from various regions. His party, the Mouvement pour la Libération du Peuple Centrafricain (MLPC), held a plurality but not an absolute majority of seats in parliament, necessitating coalition partners to govern effectively. Patassé removed several former officials from power, including military personnel and high-ranking government officials, which led to accusations of persecution against the Yakoma minority group. Despite this, the 1994 constitution was approved, though its impact on politics remained minimal. Throughout 1996-1997, growing public discontent with Patassé's administration led to three mutinies, accompanied by widespread destruction and increased ethnic tensions. The Bangui Agreements in 1997 brought together an inter-African military mission, but ultimately failed to quell the unrest. Patassé retained power through 1999, despite public outcry, until rebels attempted a coup on May 28, 2001, which was unsuccessful, though resulted in several high-ranking officials being killed. The aftermath saw militias targeting rebel groups, leading to violent clashes and destruction of homes. General François Bozizé eventually fled the country after becoming a suspect in another alleged plot against Patassé, ultimately launching a surprise attack in March 2003. The Central African Republic faced turmoil as Libyan troops and Congolese rebels failed to stop a rebellion led by Jean-Pierre Bemba, which overthrew President Ange-Félix Patassé in March 2003. François Bozizé took power and was later elected president in 2005. However, the country continued to experience instability, including the Central African Republic Bush War, which began in 2004. The conflict involved various rebel groups, including the Union of Democratic Forces for Unity (UFDR), led by Michel Djotodia. Despite efforts at peace agreements and reconciliation, violence persisted. In late 2012, a coalition of old rebel groups under the name Séléka renewed fighting, with two other groups joining the coalition. President François Bozizé requested international assistance in December 2012, but French President François Hollande declined, citing non-interference in internal affairs. A ceasefire agreement was signed on January 11, 2013, which saw Bozizé appoint a new prime minister from the opposition party. However, violence continued, and on March 24, 2013, rebel forces seized control of major structures in Bangui, including the presidential palace, leading to the departure of Bozizé's family across the river. The Central African Republic Civil War (2015–present) was a period of intense conflict in the country. By 2015, there was little government control outside of Bangui, the capital city, due to the dissolution of Séléka, which led to the formation of new militias and armed groups vying for territory. The war saw the rise of several factions, including the Popular Front for the Rebirth of Central African Republic (FRPC), the Union Pour la Paix en Centrafrique (UPC), and the Mouvement patriotique pour la Centrafrique (MPC). These factions were often ethnic in nature, with the FPRC associated with the Gula and Runga people, and the UPC with the Fulani. The conflict resulted in a de facto partition of the country between ex-Séléka militias in the north and east, and Anti-balaka militias in the south and west. In 2016, Faustin-Archange Touadéra was elected president after a peaceful election, marking a brief moment of stability. However, tensions soon arose due to competition over control of a goldmine, leading to clashes between ex-Séléka militias. The fighting primarily took place in the Ouaka prefecture, which holds strategic importance due to its location between Muslim and Christian regions. The conflict continued sporadically, with various factions vying for power and resources. Despite efforts by international organizations like France's Operation Sangaris, peace was elusive, and the Central African Republic remained a volatile region, plagued by internal conflicts and external influences. In early 2017, Bambari displaced around 20,000 people. MINUSCA intervened to prevent FPRC from taking the city. Joseph Zoundeiko, FPRC's chief of staff, was killed by MINUSCA in February after crossing a "red line". This led UPC to find new territory and spread fighting from urban to rural areas. MINUSCA relied on Ugandan and American special forces to maintain peace in the southeast as part of a campaign to eliminate the Lord's Resistance Army. By mid-2017, fighting largely shifted to the Southeast where UPC reorganized and was pursued by FPRC and Anti-balaka. In May 2017, around 15,000 people fled their homes after an attack that killed six U.N. peacekeepers - the deadliest month for the mission. Ceasefires were signed in June and October 2017, but fighting continued. By July 2018, FPRC had troops threatening to move onto Bangui. Further clashes occurred between UPC and MINUSCA/government forces in early 2019. In Western CAR, a new rebel group called Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R) formed in 2015. Self-proclaimed General Sidiki Abass claimed 3R would protect Muslim Fulani people from an Antibalaka militia led by Abbas Rafal. 3R is accused of displacing 17,000 people in November 2016 and at least 30,000 people in Ouham-Pendé prefecture in December 2016. In Northwestern CAR, around Paoua, RJ and MNLC were divided but fighting erupted after the killing of RJ leader Clément Bélanga in November 2017. The conflict displaced 60,000 people since December 2017. The history of Central and Eastern Africa is complex and multifaceted. Archaeological findings suggest that ironworking began in West and Central Africa as early as 2000 BCE. UNESCO reports have documented various prehistoric sites, including Les mégalithes de Bouar, which date back to the same period. Researchers have also studied the Nok culture, which was known for its metalwork, in the region. In terms of specific events, the Central African Republic gained independence from France on August 13, 1960. Prior to this, it was a French colony, and during that time, there were several significant events, including the Gbaya Insurrection of 1928-1931, which was led by Barthélemy Boganda. The country has also been shaped by its colonial era, with France exerting significant influence over the region. The Central African Republic's early history is marked by various empires and kingdoms, with the earliest recorded civilization being that of the Ubangi-Shari Empire. This article draws on a range of sources, including historical texts, academic papers, and online resources, to provide a comprehensive overview of the history of Central and Eastern Africa. The Central African Republic's tumultuous past is characterized by episodes of violence and power struggles. In "Sovereignty in Paris", a publication likely referring to the 1960s, the country faced challenges related to its independence. According to Diane Law's book "The Secret History of the Great Dictators: Idi Amin & Emperor Bokassa I" (2011), Central African Republic's sovereignty was impacted by external factors. The Encyclopedia Britannica notes that the country gained independence in 1960. However, internal conflicts persisted, including the ousting of President Jean-Bedel Bokassa in 1979. Frank Prial and The New York Times reported on September 2, 1981, that a rebel army overthrew Bokassa's regime. Local elections held in 2022 offered Central Africans an opportunity to expand their political space. The Norwegian Refugee Council documented the displacement of people in the region. In 2003, rebel leader François Bozizé seized power and suspended the constitution. The UN Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR) released a report detailing human rights abuses committed between 2003 and 2015. Civilians were affected by these conflicts, with reports of villages being deserted in 2007. There were also instances of violence against civilians, including a reported 20 deaths in 2004 raid on a CAR town. Peace agreements were reached in 2007 and 2012, but challenges persisted. The CAR president sought refuge in Cameroon amid ongoing turmoil and violence in the country. The situation escalated when a rebel chief announced plans to name a power-sharing government, leading to concerns about the suspension of the constitution. Meanwhile, army chiefs pledged allegiance to the coup leader, further complicating the situation. Tensions continued to rise as violence surged, with reports of executions by a rebel group and widespread human rights abuses. The United Nations launched airstrikes against rebel targets, resulting in several fatalities. Despite efforts to establish peace, the conflict persisted, with reports of massacres and mass displacement. The Red Cross discovered 115 bodies in a town, highlighting the devastating impact of the violence. As the situation continued to deteriorate, new groups emerged, including the 3R rebel group, which was accused of inflicting horrific atrocities. The UN warned of the threat of secession as the country struggled to maintain stability. Central African Republic violence drives hundreds to flee, says report

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