



# Central African Republic



# Risk Assessment Report

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## Executive Summary

In the last several decades of conflict in neighbouring countries Sudan, Cameroon, and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the international community has largely overlooked the impoverished and oppressive conditions plaguing the Central African Republic (CAR). The CAR is in critical condition, ranked 10/177 on the Failed States Index, despite minor improvement since 2011.<sup>1</sup> The floundering economy is continually volatile, critical infrastructure development is almost stagnant, and the government is weak in its ability to provide even the basic health, food and shelter necessities for people, the majority of whom live below absolute poverty levels. While international humanitarian aid is assisting the most needy, financial foreign aid is not sufficient to provide the economic, social, and political stability desperately needed. Domestic and foreign rebel insurgencies, refugee crises, food shortages, government corruption, and weak social/economic infrastructure perpetuate a state of insecurity in CAR.





## Background

The Central African Republic is a former French colony that obtained its independence in 1960.<sup>2</sup> The following three decades were marked by constant political instability, several coups d'état and misrule by military governments.<sup>3</sup> In 1965, a coup orchestrated by then army commander Jean-Bekel Bokassa marked the beginning of CAR's post-independence regime. Bokassa's rule was characterized by clientelism and nepotism, the end of which gave rise to a military regime beginning in 1981.<sup>4</sup> In 1993, Ange-Felix Patassé established civilian rule, also plagued by unrest.<sup>5</sup> Another coup in 2003 was led by General François Bozizé who established a transitional government.<sup>6</sup> Bozizé was later confirmed president after the contested May 2005 elections.<sup>7</sup> From 2004 to 2007, a bush war erupted and rebel groups became active in the North giving rise to thousands of refugees. The ongoing violence amplified when the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army conducted a raid in the CAR in 2008.<sup>8</sup> Bozizé's re-election in 2011 was mired in controversy. In August of the same year, a peace agreement was signed between the government and the Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP), the largest rebel group in the CAR. This agreement sealed the beginning of the Central African Republic's Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process.<sup>9</sup> As of October 2012, several rebel groups and the LRA are still active despite the peace agreement, raising concerns about the present humanitarian crisis occurring in the country.<sup>10</sup>

## Primary Stakeholders

Actor	Impact	Effects
François Bozizé and the Government of CAR 	Mixed	(+) Bozizé implemented the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) process in 2011 and has had some success in pacifying rebel groups. (+) After rising to power initially through a coup in 2003, Bozizé was democratically elected in 2005 and again in 2011. (-) The government lacks the capacity to secure its territory and the infrastructure to provide basic services to citizens. (-) There are frequent allegations of corruption and abuse of power by the government and presidential guard.
Joseph Kony and Lord's Resistance Army 	Negative	(-) The LRA propagate fear and insecurity through their increasing violent attacks on civilian populations. (-) The existence of Joseph Kony in the south has drawn negative attention from the international community.
Rebel Groups 	Mixed	(+) The Union of Democratic Forces for Unity signed a peace agreement with Bozizé's government in April 2007. They have not been active since then. <sup>11</sup> (+) The People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy has progressed beyond verification in the DDR process, with 4,800 of its estimated 6,000 members demobilizing. <sup>12</sup> (-) The Convention of Patriots for Justice and Peace (CPJP) are refusing to accord with DDR and are increasing attacks on civilians and border officials in the northwest. (-) Other rebel groups have refused to participate in the DDR process, accusing Bozizé of acting in bad faith and threatening to resume hostilities against the government. <sup>13</sup>
African Union 	Positive	(+) The AU has actively sought to provide armed security forces to back-up the DDR and seek rebel compliance.

## Secondary Stakeholders

Cameroon 	Mixed	(+) Cameroon is collaborating with CAR and CEMAC to improve security at borders. <sup>14</sup> (-) There are large refugee movements from Cameroon to CAR.
International Organizations 	Positive	(+) The European Union has spent \$101.7 M Euros on peace consolidation in the CAR since 2004 and is part of the DDR negotiation process. <sup>15</sup> (+) The United Nations is a member of the DDR steering committee. <sup>16</sup> (+) The International Monetary Fund and the African Development Bank both actively contribute to debt reduction and economic reforms in the CAR.
United States 	Positive	(+) The USA funds large amounts emergency humanitarian relief efforts and development aid. (+) The USA provides expertise and equipment for security operations in the hunt for Joseph Kony.
China 	Mixed	(+) China provides funding for infrastructure development in the rural parts of CAR. (-) China fuels interior and regional conflict by participating in poaching for Ivory.

Risk Assessment Indicators		CIFP Global Rank Scale: 1=low, 12=Extremely high	
Extremely High Risk	High Risk	Medium Risk	Low Risk
History of Armed Conflicts		CIFP Average Score 2006: 4.93   Volatile   Deteriorating	
<p><b>Stabilizing Factors</b>  <i>Armed conflict:</i> The 2006 Country Indicators for Foreign Policy (CIFP) Global Rank Score is 1.0, indicating a minor armed conflict with less than 1,000 battle-related deaths.<sup>27</sup> This score has been consistent since 2001.<sup>28</sup> In 2011, there were 44 battle-related deaths in CAR.<sup>29</sup> The DDR process is underway through peace agreements signed in August 2011. As of April 2012, almost 5,000 rebel members have demobilized. 10,600 combatants are still at the verification stage.<sup>20</sup></p> <p><b>Destabilizing Factors</b>  <i>Refugees produced:</i> According to CIFP data, CAR had a moderate number of refugees in 2006, with a score of 3.4. Since then, the refugee crisis has worsened. The 2011 Failed States Index score for movement of refugees or internally displaced persons (IDP) indicator is 9.7/10.<sup>21</sup> The total number of refugees originating from CAR reached 345,395 in January 2012.<sup>22</sup> In September 2012, more than 1,700 people fled the CAR streaming into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and are in urgent need of humanitarian assistance.<sup>23</sup>  <i>Refugees hosted:</i> In 2006, there was a moderately high number of displaced persons within CAR, indicated by a CIFP Global Rank Score of 6.4. This number has also increased. As of January 2012, the CAR is hosting 199,903 refugees, 8,974 of which are returning.<sup>24</sup> There remain some active rebel groups and three towns north of the capital, Bangui, were attacked in September 2012.<sup>25</sup> Also in September, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) kidnapped 55 people, half of them girls, in a raid on two villages in a remote eastern corner of CAR.<sup>26</sup></p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> The diminishing conflicts between rebels and the government because of the 2011 peace agreement have caused massive movements of refugees as people return to their homes. However, the fragile peace established in 2011 is threatened by the re-emergence of rebel activities in the north and LRA activities in the south.</p>			
Governance and Political Instability		CIFP Average Score 2006: 8.31   Volatile   Deteriorating	
<p><b>Destabilizing Factors</b>  <i>Level of democracy:</i> CAR has a weak and highly volatile democracy, according to CIFP 2006 data, and this trend has been consistent for the past five years.<sup>27</sup> While democratic elections were held in 2011, there remained some controversy that undermined public trust.<sup>28</sup>  <i>Regime durability:</i> According to CIFP data (2006), CAR has moderately low regime durability with a score of 6.8. More recent rankings, as of 2010, also place governance durability as a moderate risk.<sup>29</sup> While there has been no regime change since 2003, threats to Bozizé's legitimacy and authoritarian practices by the current government have made the regime unstable.<sup>30</sup>  <i>Restrictions on civil and political rights:</i> There is a moderately high degree of civil and political restrictions in CAR, according to 2006 CIFP data. This trend has been consistent for the past five years. According to Freedom House's 2012 Freedom Scores, CAR is a "partly free" state with limited respect for political rights and civil liberties and political domination by one party.<sup>31</sup>  <i>Restrictions on Press Freedom:</i> CAR also has a moderately high degree of restrictions on the press, with a CIFP Global Rank Score (2006) of 7.0. The press status in CAR has been consistently "not free" from 2006 to 2011. While the 2005 constitution provides for freedom of the press, authorities continue to use intimidation, suspension of outlets, and harassment to limit reporting, particularly on sensitive topics.<sup>32</sup>  <i>Corruption:</i> While 2006 CIFP data for corruption is not available, the CAR is ranked in the 20.4<sup>th</sup> percentile for control of corruption according to Worldwide Governance Indicators (0 is most perceived corruption, 100 is least). While the ranking has improved from 14.6<sup>th</sup> in 2006, CAR also has a moderate high corruption perception index and a poor state legitimacy score.<sup>33</sup></p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> The CAR is ranked 10th out of the 177 countries on the Fund for Peace Failed States Index.<sup>34</sup> The lack of transparent state leadership and political institutions is inciting grievances, as evidenced by rebel activity and political protests.<sup>35</sup> Although the 2011 elections were mostly peaceful and perceived to be fair, the political landscape is contentious and the government has difficulty maintaining order in outlying areas.<sup>36</sup> Ongoing restrictions on the media and civil/political rights increase the likelihood of violent protests.</p>			
Militarization		CIFP Average Score 2006: 2.7   Deteriorating	
<p><b>Stabilizing Factors</b>  <i>National weapons importation:</i> Weapons importation by the government is low according to the 2012 Global Peace Index.<sup>37</sup></p> <p><b>Destabilizing Factors</b>  <i>Access to weapons:</i> Weapons access is ranked as extremely high according to the 2012 Global Peace Index.<sup>38</sup> The general public is saturated with small arms predominantly due to the channels of illegal weapon smuggling by armed groups stealing remnants from failed UN missions in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo as well as from rebel dealer links in Sudan and Chad.<sup>39</sup>  <i>Total military expenditures:</i> Total military expenditure is low according to 2006 CIFP data, scoring at 2.0. However, expenditure as a portion of GDP increased significantly from 1.1% in 2002 to 2.6% in 2010, increasing from \$19.1 M to \$51.6 M in constant US dollars.<sup>40</sup>  <i>Total armed forces:</i> CAR has a low number of total armed forces, according to 2006 CIFP data. Despite the low total number, CAR armed forces account for 20% of the labour force, increasing from 3,000 to 3,150 from 2007 to 2010.<sup>41</sup> The total manpower (aged 16-49) fit for military service in 2010 was 655,875 males and 661,308 females, with roughly 54,000 able bodies per sex coming to age annually.<sup>42</sup></p> <p><b>Assessment:</b> Though some rebel groups have signed peace agreements and are subscribing to the terms of the DDR plan,<sup>43</sup> a large portion of the north is still under the control of the rebel group CPJP. Increases in military personnel and spending, in response to rebel activity, is detracting from the development of critical and social infrastructure for the severely impoverished majority of the population.</p>			
Population heterogeneity		CIFP Average Score 2006: 9.00   Stable	
<p><b>Stabilizing Factors</b>  <i>Ethnic diversity:</i> The CAR is an ethnically heterogenous nation with as many as 80 ethnic groups.<sup>44</sup> The main ethnic groups are the Bayas</p>			

33%, the Bandas 27%, the Mandjias 13%, the Saras 10%, the Mboums 7%, the M'Bakas 4%, the Yakomas 4%, and others 2%.<sup>45</sup> Ethnic relations are characterized by the relative isolation of the various groups from each other in their own villages and regions.<sup>46</sup>

#### Destabilizing Factors

**Religious diversity:** The CAR is religiously diverse, as indicated by a 2006 CIPF Global Rank Score of 9.0 for this factor. Indigenous beliefs account for 35% of the population, Protestant 25%, Roman Catholic 25%, and Muslim 15%.<sup>47</sup> There are reports of societal abuse and religious discrimination.<sup>48</sup> Muslims face consistent social discrimination because of their generally better-than-average living standard.<sup>49</sup>

**Assessment:** Although population heterogeneity in CAR is high, the risk of ethnic conflict is low. Conflict primarily occurs along political lines and relationships between ethnic and religious groups are currently stable. The risk of religious conflict, however, is higher because of recent and ongoing reports of discrimination.

### Demographic stress

CIPF Average Score 2006: 4.73 | Deteriorating



#### Stabilizing Factors

**Total Population:** CAR has a moderately low total population, according to a 2006 CIPF Score of 3.8, with 4.487 million as of 2011.<sup>50</sup>

**Population Growth:** CAR has moderate population growth (CIPF Score 4.8) with an increase from 1.8% annually in 2007 to 1.9% in 2011.<sup>51</sup>

**Population Density:** CAR has low population density, according to a 2006 CIPF score of 1.0. As of 2010, the population density is 7.1 people per square kilometre, increasing from 6.6 people per square kilometre in 2006.<sup>52</sup>

**Urban Population:** The urban population in CAR is moderate, increasing from 38% of the total population in 2006 to 39.1% in 2011.<sup>53</sup>

#### Destabilizing Factors

**Urban Population Growth Rate:** According to 2006 CIPF data, the urban population growth rate in CAR is of high concern with a score of 6.6. The 2011 urban population growth rate is 2.6 % annually, increasing from 2.1% in 2006.<sup>54</sup>

**Youth Bulge:** CAR has a moderately high youth bulge, according to a 2006 CIPF score of 7.2. This trend has stayed relatively consistent with 40.1% of the people between 0 and 14 years of age as of 2011.<sup>55</sup>

**Assessment:** Population growth rates are moderate and overall population density is low; however, the high urban population growth rate places increasing stress on already strained and limited municipal services and basic resources. The large youth bulge, coupled with poverty and social instability, can increase risks of political violence. Incited by alleged government corruption, angry youths blocked main streets, burned barricades, and vandalized monuments in the capital city of Bengui in early August this year.<sup>56</sup>

### Economic performance

CIPF Average Score 2006: 7.42 | Volatile | Improving



#### Stabilizing Factors

**GDP:** According to 2006 CIPF data, CAR has moderate GDP annual growth. While GDP in 2011 was considered low at \$2.16 B US dollars,<sup>57</sup> GDP per capita increased from \$236 US in 2009 to \$242 US in 2011 and the annual growth rate increased from -0.18% to 1.13%.<sup>58</sup>

**Foreign direct investment (FDI):** According to 2006 CIPF data, CAR has low foreign direct investment net inflows. However, the investment rate increased from 2.1% of GDP in 2009 to 3.6% of GDP in 2010,<sup>59</sup> largely due to the role of China as a new investor.<sup>60</sup>

**Official exchange rate:** CAR has a high exchange rate, as indicated by an 8.0 CIPF score (2006). The exchange rate decreased from 479.27 Central African Francs to 471.87 CFA between 2007 and 2011, with the most drastic decrease occurring from 495.28CFA=1\$US in 2010.<sup>61</sup>

**Trade Openness:** CAR has low trade openness according to 2006 CIPF data. Trade increased from 34.3% of GDP in 2008 to 37.3% in 2009.<sup>62</sup>

#### Destabilizing Factors

**Inflation:** CAR has a moderate inflation rate with a 2006 CIPF score of 4.0. The average Consumer price index increased from 137.835 in 2010 to 142.39 in 2012. In 2012, inflation increased 2.54 % from 2011.<sup>63</sup>

**Inequality:** CAR has high inequality with a 2006 CIPF Score of 9.0. The GINI Coefficient increased from 43.5 in 2003 to 56.3 in 2008.<sup>64</sup>

**Total debt service:** Total debt service is low (2006 CIPF Score 1.2). Debt service increased from 24.0% of GDP in 2009 to 37.8% in 2010.<sup>65</sup>

#### Assessment

Increasing inequality of income distribution and increasing inflation are not counterbalancing the minor increases in GDP per capita. 68.2% of the population live below the international poverty line.<sup>66</sup> Struggling populations turn to illicit alluvial diamond mining for income, fuelling regional warlords.<sup>67</sup> While FDI has increased, no stable economic or financial infrastructure has been developed, and 60% of national export earnings are still from the diamond trade.<sup>68</sup> Foreign financial credit aid has drastically reduced national debt,<sup>69</sup> but the financial system is underdeveloped leaving trade freedom low,<sup>70</sup> and corrupt spending holds the current account balance in the negative.

### Human development

CIPF Average Score 2006: 9.35 | Volatile | Deteriorating



#### Stabilizing Factors

**Access to Improved Water Source:** Although access has improved since 2006, CAR has low access to improved water sources. In 2011, 67% of the total population, 92% of the urban population, and 51% of the rural population had access to improved water source.<sup>71</sup>

**Secondary education school enrollment:** In 2001, net enrollment was 14%, increasing from 11% in 2009.<sup>72</sup>

**Access to sanitation:** CAR has low access to sanitation. In 2011, 34% of population had access to sanitation, increasing from 32% in 2007.<sup>73</sup>

**Life expectancy at birth:** CAR has one of the lowest life expectancies in the world (216/221 countries).<sup>74</sup> As of 2012, the life expectancy is 48.4 years, improving from 44.7 years in 2008.<sup>75</sup> Women's life expectancy also improved from 47 years in 2007 to 49 years in 2011.<sup>76</sup>

**Infant mortality rate:** CAR has a high infant mortality rate according to a 2006 CIPF score of 8.6. The current infant mortality rate is at 106.0 deaths out of 1000 live births, improving from 110 deaths per 1000 live births in 2007.<sup>77</sup> Despite improvements, the CAR infant mortality rate remains one of the highest in the world ranked in 5<sup>th</sup> place.<sup>78</sup>

#### Destabilizing Factors

**Maternal mortality rate:** The CAR has the 4th highest maternal mortality rate in the world.<sup>79</sup> In 2011, 890 women died during childbirth.<sup>80</sup>

**HIV/AIDS:** CAR is the 16th country in the world with the highest prevalence of HIV/AIDS.<sup>81</sup> 4.7% of the population ages 15-49 is infected.

**Health expenditures:** The CAR government spends a high percent of GDP on health expenditures, according to 2006 CIFP data, despite the decrease from 4.1% in 2007 to 4.0% in 2011.<sup>82</sup> Health expenditures per capita are also high though they have been stable for the past three years at \$18 current US dollars per capita.<sup>83</sup>

**Primary education school enrollment:** In 2009, the primary net enrollment was 66.7 %, the 6th lowest score in sub-Saharan Africa.<sup>84</sup> Public spending in education has decreased from 1.3% in 2009 to 1.2% in 2010.<sup>85</sup> The CAR ranks 159 out of 163 countries for its lowest public spending on education.<sup>86</sup>

**Assessment:** Since a degree of peace was restored in the region in 2011, over 10,000 people have returned to their homes in CAR.<sup>87</sup> Despite improvements in certain factors of human development in the previous years, the situation is fragile and could deteriorate because of the recrudescence of rebel activities and the massive movements of refugees. A major food crisis is ongoing in the CAR since June 2012. 45,000 people in the north-eastern part of the country need immediate assistance and lack basic supplies and potable water.<sup>88</sup>

**Environmental stress** CIFP Average Score: 2.67 | Stable

**Stabilizing Factors**

**Rate of deforestation:** According to 2006 CIFP data, the deforestation rate in CAR is moderately low (3.0). As of 2010, 36.3 percent of the land in the CAR is forest.<sup>89</sup> Forest area has decreased from 36.5 percent in 2005 and 36.8 percent in 2000, but the rate is stable at approximately -0.1 percent annually.<sup>90</sup> While there is growing concern for deforestation, it is not currently a destabilizing factor.<sup>91</sup>

**Arable land:** There is a low number of people per hectare of arable land, according to 2006 CIFP data. According to World Development Indicators, as of 2009, CAR had 0.45 hectares of arable land per person, slightly decreasing from 0.47 in 2006.<sup>92</sup>

**Fresh Water Resources:** CAR has a high number of cubic metres of water per capita, according to 2006 CIFP data. In 2009, CAR had 32,653 cubic metres of freshwater resources per capita, decreasing from 33,887 cubic metres in 2007.<sup>93</sup>

**Assessment:** The deforestation rate and access to freshwater and other natural resources are not currently factors of high concern in CAR. However, current trends including significant internal displacement, increasing urbanization, flooding, and the food crisis, make access to resources difficult and put strain on what resources are available. Scarcity increases the potential for political and social instability.

**International linkages** CIFP Average Score 2006: 6.52 | Volatile | Deteriorating

**Stabilizing Factors**

**Multipurpose/Miscellaneous organization index:** CAR has low membership in multipurpose organizations, according to 2006 CIFP data. The CAR is a member of the African Union, which is seeking to resolve the threat of the LRA<sup>94</sup> with support from a USA task force.<sup>95</sup>

**Economic organizations:** CAR has moderately low membership in international economic organizations, according to 2006 CIFP data. CAR is a member of 40 IGOs, mostly economic, and subscribes to one organization aimed at poverty-reduction.<sup>96</sup> Most significantly, CAR partners with the regional organization CEMAC for infrastructure development.<sup>97</sup>

**Foreign aid:** The CAR received over \$10M US in development and humanitarian aid in the 2012 fiscal year alone.<sup>98</sup>

**UN organization index:** According to 2006 CIFP data, CAR has moderately low membership in UN organizations. The UN Security Council is supportive of peacekeeping efforts.<sup>99</sup> CAR is a permanent member of five UN bodies.<sup>100</sup>

**Destabilizing Factors**

**International/Regional disputes:** 2006 CIFP data ranked CAR 6.1 indicating a moderately high number of involvement international disputes. The CAR border is extremely porous and susceptible to the inflow of arms, refugees,<sup>101</sup> and violent conflict from the multiplicity of regional conflicts.<sup>102</sup> The CAR is landlocked in the centre of the "Triangle of Death" zone, including Sudan, DR Congo, and Chad. This region has a history of civil war, authoritarian regimes, and government corruption. Recent attacks by armed rebel groups out of Cameroon reveal their willingness to take advantage of porous borders.<sup>103</sup>

**Assessment:** CAR depends on international assistance for infrastructure development and humanitarian aid. However, due to ongoing poaching practices fuelled by foreigners<sup>104</sup> and the government's inability to strike peace with rebels, the international community is putting pressure on Bozizé's government to negotiate while viewing it with decreasing legitimacy.<sup>105</sup> While international peacekeeping missions have sought to quell the raids, abductions and slaughters from the LRA, but vigilantism and acts of vengeance by the general public are increasing.<sup>106</sup> The north has also experienced large increases in refugees from Chad as a result of Chad's draught crisis.<sup>107</sup>

**Possible Scenarios for the Next Five Years**

Best Case Scenario	Worst Case Scenario	Most Likely Scenario
Bozizé and CPJP develop and implement a mutually acceptable peace agreement based on the current DDR, ending fighting in the north. African Union forces succeed in capturing and detaining Joseph Kony; the LRA withdraws, ending civilian attacks in the south. Overall internal security increases, displacing fewer people. More stable settlement contributes to the workforce and strengthens development potential. Foreign investment increases due to perceived greater legitimacy in government.	The LRA increases attacks both domestically and regionally, worsening stability and increasing violent retaliation and IDPs. The drought in Chad and continued conflict in Sudan and the DR Congo increase refugees and spillover violence in CAR. Food shortages increase and an extreme humanitarian aid crisis is declared. Rebel groups increase kidnapping and bloodshed, making political stability impossible. Bozizé's government increases military spending and stiffens population controls. Civil war breaks out between the government and rebel groups. Human and economic development cease during conflict.	Spillover violence and refugee levels increase due to regional conflicts and drought. LRA attacks on civilian populations continue in the south. Lack of funds and delays compromise the results of the DDR peace process, and active rebel dissent escalates. In response, insecurity and IDPs increase, and the need for greater humanitarian aid becomes critical. Support from the international community for political and economic reform provides minimal impact on the immediate situation, but paves the way for moderate future improvement.

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- <sup>17</sup> "CIPF Risk Indicator Definitions." Country Indicators for Foreign Policy. 2012, (12/09/21) [http://www4.carleton.ca/cifp/docs/RiskAssessmentIndicators\\_FullDescriptions.pdf](http://www4.carleton.ca/cifp/docs/RiskAssessmentIndicators_FullDescriptions.pdf), p.1.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid.
- <sup>19</sup> "Uppsala Conflict Data Program – Central African Republic." UCDP Conflict Encyclopedia: Uppsala University. 2012. [http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=31&regionSelect=2-Southern\\_Africa#](http://www.ucdp.uu.se/gpdatabase/gpcountry.php?id=31&regionSelect=2-Southern_Africa#) (12/09/21).
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