

Photographer's Death in Central African Republic Still Unsolved

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Camille Lepage Killed During Height of Conflict in 2014



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Camille Lepage in the Central African Republic in 2014.

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May 12 marks five years since the death of Camille Lepage, a French photojournalist who was killed while working in western [Central African Republic](#). She continues to be deeply missed by all who knew her and those who benefitted from her work. Camille was 26.

Camille arrived in the country in late 2013, at the height of the conflict. She had previously [worked as a photographer](#) in South Sudan. When I first met Camille in Bangui, the capital, I was struck by her dogged determination to get to where the suffering was greatest. She quickly understood the magnitude of the conflict unfolding across the country. At the time, we were trying to [sound the alarm](#) about the devastating human rights and humanitarian consequences of the escalating violence. Camille saw the situation for what it was, a [forgotten crisis](#), and wanted to help.

In the few short months that Camille was in the country, her photos put faces to the victims and survivors, capturing the fear of battle, the agony of losing a loved one, the injustice of war crimes.



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Camille Lepage's images of women from the Murle tribe waiting to receive emergency food aid in Pibor town, South Sudan, captured one aspect of the impact the conflict had on civilians.

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A fragile stability in the Central Africa Republic was forged earlier this year by a [peace deal](#) that gave high level posts to [warlords](#). But more than a million people out of a population of approximately 4.6 million are still displaced. Some are refugees in neighboring countries, while tens of thousands continue to languish in internal displacement camps. At least 2.9 million people need aid and yet the humanitarian response is [only 27.7](#) percent funded. The country has once again fallen from the world's radar.

Since Camille was killed, attacks against humanitarian workers who deliver lifesaving assistance have made the Central African Republic one of the most [dangerous places to work](#). Their services have been drastically reduced. [Impunity](#) continues to be a key driver of abuse and there has been too little accountability for war crimes. Camille's case is emblematic. The court case file, with documentation of the initial investigation into her killing, [disappeared](#) for several months last year. The file was eventually found and the investigation continues today, but at a painfully slow pace.

Five years on, as we mourn the loss of a friend of the Central African Republic, someone who sought to bring the crisis to the fore, authorities should redouble their efforts to ensure that the perpetrators of this heinous killing are finally brought to justice.
