



## Media Release

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### Post-Coup Humanitarian Crisis affects Entire Population of Central African Republic

The entire population of the Central African Republic (CAR), 4.6 million people, is affected by a severe humanitarian crisis following a coup and subsequent political instability, warned a group of aid organizations today. Immediate action must be taken by international governments to plug the approximately \$80 million funding gap said 9 aid agencies and the Archbishop of Bangui. The forgotten political crisis threatens to destabilize the whole of Central Africa.

The NGOs highlighted the alarming aspects of the humanitarian crisis which are likely to worsen with the approaching rainy season:

- Over 60,000 children and families are suffering from severe food shortages.
- Over 200,000 children and families have been forced to flee their homes over the last six months and require emergency shelter, food and medical care.
- Most health clinics throughout the country have been closed for more than 6 months, and the population is deprived of most basic services.
- Up to 1 million children are reported to be out of school and hundreds of thousands of children have missed out on nearly an entire school year due to security related closures.
- Insecurity is rife throughout the country. Looting, rape, arbitrary killings, and kidnapping have instilled fear in the population. Looting of aid warehouses has hampered the humanitarian response.
- Children, girls in particular, are exposed to a wide range of abuse, sexual and gender based violence and early marriages.
- Given the lack of services, diarrhoea and malaria are likely to take a huge toll on the 800,000 children under the age of 5.
- Thousands of children are among the ranks of armed groups and forces and children continue to be recruited. Boys and girls as young as 12 are seen at checkpoints and carrying weapons.
- There is no regular UN presence outside the capital Bangui and only about 40 UN staff in Bangui.

The Archbishop of Bangui, Dieudonne Nzapalainga said “The current humanitarian crisis is the worst the country has seen. Countries must urgently donate money to rapidly increase aid and prevent people from dying.” He continued: “The world must not close its eyes to the crisis in CAR. It borders six of the most fragile countries in Africa and threatens to destabilize the whole of Central Africa.”

In March 2013, after over three months of fighting, the Seleka rebel coalition overthrew the government and Seleka leader Michel Djotodia proclaimed himself President

Sarah Terlow, CAR Country Director for International Rescue Committee said, “The government’s ability to provide basic services to its people is extremely poor. The international community needs to step in to ensure that Central Africans have access to the basic services that people in other countries take for granted.”

The organizations called on the administration of Michel Djotodia to improve access for humanitarian agencies throughout the country, especially in rural areas. Improved security is also vital to enable the most basic services to be restored, such as the reopening of schools and health clinics.

The organizations also called on the international community to increase funding for aid. The UN estimates that CAR needs about \$130 million worth of aid but has only received donations to cover 43% of that figure.

Jean-Philippe Marcoux, CAR Country Director for Mercy Corps, said “Before the coup, the humanitarian situation in CAR was already dire. Now it’s even worse. Nations must donate now to help the country get back on its feet.”

Mike Penrose, Humanitarian Director of Save the Children, said “The Central African Republic is one of the worst places in the world to be a child, and the time for donors to give is now.”

Alain Coutand , ACF Director of Regional Operations said, “While the situation is dire, operating in CAR is feasible and possible. To prevent a further deterioration of the situation we must redouble our efforts to ensure a tangible impact for the population.”

Arvind Das, Merlin Country Director for CAR said, “Health workers should urgently return to the country. The needs are immense and Merlin has found it possible to deliver life-saving health aid. Unless more donors and NGOs return to CAR immediately, infant and maternal mortality rates could triple.”

The list of signatories are:

1. Action Contre la Faim (ACF)
2. Cordaid
3. International Medical Corps
4. International Rescue Committee
5. Mercy Corps
6. Merlin
7. Save the Children
8. Secours Catholique - Caritas France
9. War Child
10. Archbishop of Bangui, Mgr. Dieudonné Nzapalainga