

HIGHLIGHTS

- Attacks attributed to the FPR in the south-central region
- Support to people living with HIV
- The Telecommunications Cluster

Background and security

Attacks attributed to the FPR in the south-central region

From 12 to 18 March, several attacks attributed to elements of the Chadian rebellion, the Front Pour le Redressement (FPR) were reported in the south-central region. Most attacks took place in Bakala, Grimari, Ippy and Kouango.

On 19 March, it was reported that FPR rebels were still present on the Ippy/Bria road. Several incidents, mainly armed ambushes linked to FPR elements have been reported in the Ouaka prefecture over the past few weeks.

A military operation was set up to address concerns related to FPR activities in the south-central region

Humanitarian / Development activities

WFP's food distribution to IDPs in Kabo

In December 2011, a joint mission consisting of the Ministry of Agriculture, the World Food Programme (WFP), the Danish Council for Refugees (DRC) and Solidarités International, went to Kabo (north-west) to assess the humanitarian situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who arrived in the town from August 2010 to April 2011.

One of the key recommendations made by the mission was the distribution of food over a three months period (January to March 2012). The attack initiated in January on FPR positions by the Chadian and Central African armed forces, delayed the distribution process.

From 28 February to 5 March, WFP in collaboration with the Ministry of Agriculture went to Kabo to distribute food to IDPs based in sites A and B and IDPs who arrived from the Ouandago road (north-west). The mission planned to provide 194.400 tons of food to 12,000 beneficiaries. While a total of 164.380 tons of food was transported to Kabo, only 109.720 tons were distributed and the remaining 54.491 tons were stored in the WFP warehouse in Kaga-Bandoro (north-west). The 12,000 targeted beneficiaries consisted of IDPs from the Farazala, Oundago and Gondava roads that escaped violent incidents last January and sought refuge in Kabo. Nonetheless, most of these IDPs have returned to

their villages of origin while the remaining few are living with host families in Kabo.



IDPs receiving food aid. Photo credit: WFP, A. B. Makadou

Food aid distribution:

- Out of the 12,000 targeted beneficiaries, 6,703 IDPs received food assistance on sites A and B;
- Out of 194.400 tons of food initially planned, only 109.720 tons were distributed.

Contact Albert Bango-Makoudou: albert.bango-makoudou@wfp.org for more information.

Support to people living with HIV

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) ensures technical and financial support for programmes providing care and services which include Preventing Mother-to-Child Transmission (PMTCT) to HIV-affected pregnant women. The mother-to-child transmission rate in the Central African Republic (CAR) is among the highest in the world.

While antiretroviral (ARV) medications, which help prevent transmission of the disease from pregnant women to their foetuses are provided free of charge, funding for this programme is limited.

"Funding for ARV and other related services are seriously threatened. Already, some health districts have had interruptions of stock, which can lead to drug resistance in people who take antiretroviral medications." said Cecile Ndoli, a UNICEF HIV/AIDS Specialist. Few women are being tested for the disease, an essential step in the fight against HIV/AIDS. Although the government and health organizations have renewed their commitment to assist HIV and AIDS-affected populations in the CAR, significant financial and technical support are required to meet the population's considerable needs. Long-term support in the form of HIV tests, ARVs, health

counseling and assistance is necessary to care for HIV-affected families and to empower them.

Contact Cecile Ndoli: cndoli@unicef.org for more information.

IDPs in the Batangafo sub-prefecture

From 13 and 17 February, clashes between Mbararas and the self-defense group in the Ngapelé and Gbadéné villages (Batangafo sub-prefecture, north-west) and the subsequent intervention of the Central African armed force (FACA) allegedly resulted in civilian deaths and material losses in both villages. The burning of fields and houses by the Mbararas led to the displacement of people from surrounding villages towards the Bobazi, Bolhom, Gbazara, Goffo and Manu villages.

After several evaluations conducted by DRC from 2 to 29 March, about 2,000 IDPs are in need of emergency assistance in these villages.

DRC has: distributed 108 school kits to the 108 displaced children enrolled in the Bobazi school (a school supported by DRC); purified wells and boreholes in the Bobazi village and provided 6 drainable latrines to the population. Based on the "Community led total sanitation" (CLTS) approach, DRC will also provide latrines and a sensitization campaign on hygiene. These activities will be replicated in Bolhom.

DRC continues to coordinate assistance efforts in the field with Doctors without Borders-Spain. However, access to some areas remains challenging or almost impossible, especially after the Chadian and Central African joint military operation in the area.

Due to this inaccessibility, there is urgent and critical need for humanitarian assistance in the following sectors: shelter, water and sanitation, education, protection and food security.

This humanitarian crisis in the Batangafo sub-prefecture requires a prompt intervention by the humanitarian community.

Contact Lukas Rüst: protection@drc.dk for more information

Coordination

The Telecommunications Cluster

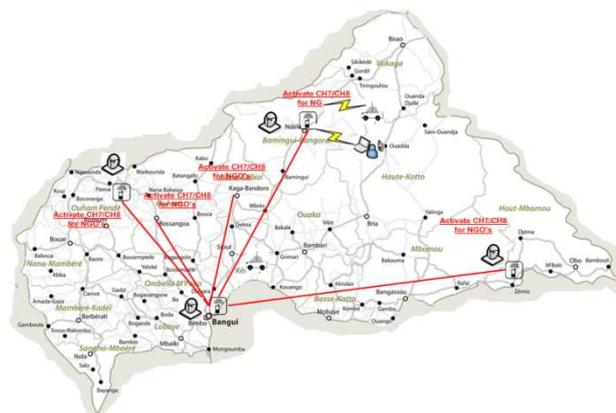
The Telecommunications Cluster is coordinated by WFP and aims to secure humanitarian operations through Information and Communications Technology (ICT). The Information Communication and Technology Working Group (ICTWG) or ICT Working Group was set up in 2010.

The Cluster provides ICT technical assistance and also strengthens the capacity of United Nations (UN) agencies and NGO partners in the CAR.

Key Achievements in 2011:

- ICT emergency management provided to UN and NGOs partners;
- Telecom assessment in M'Boki, Obo and Zémio;
- ICT support provided to UN agencies and NGOs: VSAT and Radio HF/VHF installation in compliance with UN standards; sharing radio frequencies between UN agencies and NGOs in N'délé (north-central); troubleshooting and reparation of the VSAT connection at the WFP Paoua sub-office and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA) VSAT in Ndélé;
- Organising monthly Cluster meetings;

Mapping of telecom projects funded by the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF)



2012 prospects:

- Establish a training programme;
- Negotiate a common humanitarian WiMax frequency with the national Telecommunications Regulatory Authority;
- Negotiate the implementation of High Voltage (HV) transformers with the national Energy Agency, for the humanitarian community;
- Implement a project funded by the CHF to ensure a common telecommunications network services and secure data for the humanitarian community in Bossangoa, Kaga-Bandoro, Ndélé, Paoua and Zémio.

Contact Francis Dessande: francois-dassise.dessande@wfp.org for more information.

For more information or to contribute to this bulletin, please contact:
OCHA Bangui, CAR
Laura Fultang, Information & Donor Liaison Officer fultangl@un.org
 +236 70 18 80 64
Gisèle Willybiro-Maidou, Information Assistant
willybiro@un.org
 +236 70 18 80 61