



HIGHLIGHTS

- ICRC convoy attacked between Ndélé and Ngarba
- Workshop on financial needs in the north-west
- Inter-organisation mission to Sikikédé

Background and security

ICRC convoy attacked between Ndélé and Ngarba

A convoy of the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) was attacked on Ngarba (North of N'Délé, Central-North) road by unidentified armed men on 25 November. Following the incident, NGOs working in the region have suspended movements on the roads around Ndélé until further notice, once again hindering humanitarian assistance in a region weakened by years of violence.

Humanitarian / Development activities

Workshop on financial needs in the north-west

Ministry representatives, donors to micro-finance projects and members of the early recovery and food security clusters came together on 30 November for a workshop on the financial needs of the people of Ouham and Ouham-Pendé, prefectures in the north-west of the CAR. The project, funded by the European Union and the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), was carried out by the Danish Refugee Council (DRC) in close collaboration with NGOs Echelle and Caritas/Bozoum, and more than 1,700 people from the towns participated in interviews as part of a greater understanding of their awareness of financial needs.



Participants overview during the workshop. Photo: DRC

The results of the study undertaken during the workshop show the following:

- Just over half of the people interviewed are aware of the existence of financial products (savings and

credit) and financial institutions (banks and savings banks)

- People, 78% of the cases being women, guard their saving at home or in informal channels.
- One in six people save to invest;
- One in three people have already received a credit of 165,000 FCFA from informal sources (NGOs or projects, ROSCAs, cash group, friends or relatives, etc.). The repayment period is less than 6 months and the use of funds are primarily focused on strengthening economic activities (72% of cases).
- The first financial need identified by the people is the ability to secure their savings, and the second is formal credit and third money transfers.
- 88% of respondents would like an extension of credit of around 422,000 CFCA. These amounts vary from 150,000 CFCA by Waligaras (women merchants) to 1,000,000 CFCA requested by major retailers. People receiving credit would have a repayment period of around eight months and 79% consider investing money in various projects, 10% being the construction of a house.

The results show that the people of the two prefectures are aware of their financial needs and desire strong methods for savings and access to credit. DRC has a new strategy called "Global Credit Facility," which supports microfinance through technical and financial partnerships. Future actions by DRC in microfinance will be implemented in the north-west in Paoua, Bozoum, Ndim, Ngaoundaye and Kouï. Better access to financial services should contribute to the promotion of entrepreneurship in rural areas and reduce the vulnerability of populations a key factor in the socio-economic recovery phase on the road to development.

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Coordination

Inter-organisation mission to Sikikédé

On 25 November, the United Nations (UN) Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UN OCHA), the UN Integrated Peace building office in CAR (BINUCA), the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the UN Children's Fund, international NGO Medical Corps (IMC) and national NGO NDA conducted the first inter-organisation mission to Sikikédé (north-east) since September 2010. The mission was financed and organized by OCHA, and headed by IMC. The objective of the mission was to take advantage of the availability of the BINUCA helicopter used for the Peace Caravan just weeks before to deliver medicine, seeds and education kits and to do a rapid assessment. Sikikédé experienced two significant attacks in 2011; the first on 10 April leaving at least 12 people killed, 16 injured, 65 houses burned and 465 people homeless and the second on 17 September leaving 8 people killed, 19 injured, 228 houses burned and 545 people homeless. According to

the village elders, during the violence close to 300 houses were burned and significant damage was done to the market and the schools.



Women and girls group in Haïfa. Photo: L. Bamba- UNHCR

The team landed in Haïfa, just next to Sikikédé, and did not have adequate time to visit the town or do in-depth needs assessment. However, they were able to speak with the population and the following are first glance observations and information shared by the community.

Agriculture, Food Security and Economics:

- Cultivation restricted in 2011 due to the insecurity and damage from migratory birds;
- IDP arrival put severe strain on food availability and most families eat one time per day;
- There is thought to be global acute malnutrition in children under 5; however figures were not available due to lack of screening system;
- Current prices at market reported to be 1,000 CFCA for a cup of millet, 500 CFCA for a cup of maize, 150 CFCA for a basket of green beans and 250-300 for peanuts;
- Trade sugar and soap with Chad and Sudan by the road to Harazé (Chad).

Education:

- There are seven schools: 1) Ecole Abdoura from CI to CM2 2) Ecole centre from CI to CE2 3) Ecole Ste Marie from CI to CE1 4) Ecole Pilote from CI to CP 2 5) Ecole Haïfa I from CI to CP 2 6) Ecole Haïfa II from CI to CE2 7) Ecole Kesseba from CI to CP;
- 2,310 (1,814 of which are girls and 496 of which are boys) children between 6 and 12 years are not attending school;
- Although school infrastructures do exist, many lack teachers or qualified educators.

Health:

- One health post (constructed in 2010) with one head nurse, two first-aid providers, three matrons, two health workers and one health Promoter managed by IMC;
- Stock of medicines not sufficient to cover all the needs.

Protection:

- No populations which left Sikikédé due to violence between 2006 and today have returned; However previous information shared in September stated

close to 600 people (124 families) arrived following the conflicts in September 2011;

- Reported presence of Sudanese refugees;
- People expressed fear to cultivate in their fields due to insecurity, and threat of attacks by Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement (UFDR) and movement of transhumance groups;
- The CPJP's commandant in Sikikédé confirmed that children are still present in the ranks of the CPJP; however following the signing of an Action Plan with the UN, the CPJP reaffirmed its commitment to release the children and end the recruitment of children;
- Expressed concern that some children are not attending school when they are engaged in early marriage or work on the farms with their families;
- No reported cases of Sexual Gender Based Violence and/or separated or unaccompanied children.

Security:

- Clear presence of armed Convention des Patriotes pour la Justice et la Paix (CPJP) and possibly self-defense group;
- Village elders expressed need for security from the State.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene:

- 104 latrines; some in close proximity to homes leaving risk of fecal contamination;
- Seven cleaned bore holes (six in Sikikédé and one in Haïfa); considered insufficient for 25,000 people; construction by the NGO, Triangle Generation Humanitaire (TGH);
- Women and young girls expressed the need for hygiene kits.

Recommendations: A longer more in-depth multi-sectorial evaluation and needs assessment, penetrating the town of Sikikédé is needed. The evaluation and needs assessment should take into account the coping mechanisms of the population that have allowed them to thrive with limited humanitarian assistance. The presence of children within the ranks of the CPJP still constitutes a violation of their rights and the release and integration process should be expedited so that these children may resume the life of a civilian child. Advocacy for the construction of a runway in Sikikédé, opening the possibility for regular flights which will in turn ease humanitarian access and/or rehabilitation of the road between Gordil (where there is a landing strip) and Sikikédé. See the mission report on the HDPT CAR website for more details (<http://hdptcar.net/blog/2011/11/30/inter-organisation-mission-to-sikikede/>).

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