

Newsletter

Special Edition

August 24 to September 28, 2009

Highlights

- The NGO Coopi was attacked by gunmen
- FPR forces withdraw from Nana-Gribizi prefecture
- New documentary film about orphans funded by French Development Agency (AFD)
- Workshop on the humanitarian strategy in 2010 to formulate the Coordinated Appeals Process (CAP), comprising around 70 participants

Background and security

Coopi truck attacked in Haut-Mbomou

On September 21, a truck of the Italian NGO COOPI carrying construction equipment has been attacked in the town of Kadjema between Mboki and Obo in the southeast of the CAR. According to Coopi's press release, the perpetrators of this attack were armed elements of the Ugandan rebel group the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA).

Out of eight people in the vehicle, three were killed, two wounded, while three remained missing. The injured were evacuated to Bangui on September 23rd by United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS) in collaboration with the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) for medical care. The truck was burned and had been looted by the assailants.

Following the incident, Coopi evacuated its staff in Obo, while the NGO ACTED, also present in Haut-Mbomou, has suspended its activities in the region for the time being.

The United Nations have decided to refrain from any movement in the region until further notice.

Withdrawal of FPR elements in Nana Gribizi

In a press release issued September 25, General Baba Ladd, president of the armed group Front Populaire pour le Redressement (FPR) has announced the withdrawal of all his staff from Gundava village in the prefecture of Nana Gribizi (northwestern CAR).

This withdrawal, he said, will enable the smooth running of the program of Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) in progress. No indication was given by the general regarding the future location for his troops, estimated at about 600 men.

News

National strategy for inclusive finance in CAR

On 3 September Albert Besse, the Minister of Finance and Budget, chaired the workshop on the validation of the national strategy of inclusive finance for the period 2010-2014 in the Central African Republic.

Co-funded by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the United Nations Capital Development Fund (UNCDF), the project aims to endow a national policy for the development of the microfinance sector.

"This endorsement workshop offers an opportunity for representatives of several national entities, particularly those involved in microfinance, to discuss the various aspects of this document, to make amendments, and proposals likely to rise up to the many challenges in the microfinance sector in CAR," said the Minister of Finance and Budget.

At the launch of the operational activities of the inclusive financial sector in 2008, the CAR government has reaffirmed its commitment to make microfinance one of its prime means to reducing poverty.

"This document, which is subject to the endorsement by actors in microfinance, reflects the commitment of UNDP and UNCDF to help professionalize the field of microfinance and the development of financial services benefiting low-income populations," said UNDP Country Director, Ms. Anne-Marie Cluckers.

From EUFOR to MINURCAT

On January 14, 2009, the Security Council adopted UN resolution 1861, which authorizes a military force to succeed the European Force (EUFOR) as of March 15, 2009. This force is the UN Mission in CAR and Chad (MINURCAT).

The 1,650 French soldiers who served EUFOR were gradually disengaged following the arrival of foreign UN troops.

The latest French contingents of approximately 300 soldiers now serving under the UN flag are grouped within a logistics detachment (DETLOG) stationed in Abeche (Chad) and a support detachment (DETSOUT) based in Birao, in northeastern CAR.

Interactive Radio for Justice

Interactive Radio for Justice (Radio Interactive Pour la Justice, RIJ) is a project designed to encourage dialogue between citizens, as well as national and international authorities in countries where the International Criminal Court (ICC) investigates the most serious crimes, such as genocide, crimes against humanity, and war crimes.

The RIJ project was started in the Central African Republic in January 2008. The project is currently ongoing and will work with community radio stations throughout the country to provide people with the opportunity to present their concerns to authorities.

For more information, visit www.irfj.org

Documentary film: “Helping the Orphans”

Under the agreement between the NGO Santé Sud and the Ministry of Social Affairs, National Solidarity and Family, a film, “Helping the Orphans” (“Agir pour les orphelins”), funded by the French Development Agency (AFD) has just been completed.

The goal of this film was to confront the testimony of all persons working for orphans and vulnerable children by giving them a voice.

Different areas of interventions are discussed such as health, education, the legal aspect, and the social side. Families hosting orphans talked about the challenges experienced daily in taking care of these children.

Field workers shed light on the actions and policy options for these families. Politicians speak of what has been implemented and what remains to be done in this area.

The testimonies collected so far aim primarily to identify and record all actors helping these vulnerable populations, but also to find out the exact number of children involved. Currently, each entity has established working methods that require specific coordination and joint action.



Santé Sud - Noura Wilibona and some of her foster children

This film aims to raise questions and bring the entire population, field workers, and politician to assess the work that remains to be done.

Moreover, it also hopes to raise awareness among potential donors, informing them of the difficulties encountered by the organizations helping these children.

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New WFP project: PRRO

On 4 September the Minister of Planning, the Economy and International Cooperation organized a workshop on the new project of the World Food Program (WFP), by the name Protracted Relief and Recovery Operation (PRRO), Assistance to populations affected by armed conflict in CAR and the sub-region.

Representatives of various ministries, foreign representatives, the UN agencies, as well as national and international NGOs attended the workshop.

The WFP has outlined the proposed project and hopes for further consultations with stakeholders throughout September.

PRRO intends to save the lives of people affected by conflict, improve their nutrition and food security, promote post-conflict rehabilitation, and conduct capacity building.

The project will begin next year and will end in December 2011.

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Inter-Agency Mission in Haut-Mbomou

From August 19 to September 2, a United Nations inter-agency mission visited Haut-Mbomou in south-eastern CAR. The mission was composed of the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF), the World Health Organization (WHO), UNDSS, WFP, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the United Nations Office in CAR (BONUCA), the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) and UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

While assessing the needs of the population, the mission has distributed food and non-food items to refugees, displaced persons and other victims in Mboki and Obo after they were registered by UNHCR, the National Committee for Refugees (CNR) and BONUCA.



Distribution of food to the vulnerable population

The mission report states the following:

- Security Matters

The security situation in Haut-Mbomou is marked by the presence of and attacks by LRA rebels. On August 28, the villages of Ngula, Ngoundi, Maboussou and Ngulinguili were attacked by several small groups. LRA rebels have abducted, killed, and raped civilians, and have plundered and destroyed the agricultural production in the area, forcing the villagers to take refuge in surrounding communities.

- Protection

Summary executions and kidnappings, including of children under the age of 18, were committed by LRA rebels. The attacks on villages and the destruction and looting of property are common around Obo. On August 19, 2009, three merchants from Mboki were executed by the LRA around the town of Ligoua after 10 days of captivity. On August 28, 2009, the towns of Ngouli and Ngondi were simultaneously attacked by two groups of armed men belonging to the LRA.

- Food Situation

Food is scarce in the markets in this region. The farmers cannot access their fields for fear of being caught by the LRA. Most crops were looted by the LRA or rot in the fields. The risk of a food shortage is anticipated, as many farmers said they had lost their crops this year.

- Health

Health facilities lack trained staff, drugs, materials, and equipment. The population has no access to care because of its low income, and thus can afford neither consultations nor medical care.

- Water & Sanitation

Lack of drinking water is one of the major problems facing refugees and displaced people in the region. In Mboki, refugees settled in the local school drink water from a small soiled creek. The refugees have no access to wells of the city because they do not have the 100 francs CFA (~ \$0.22) asked from each family to be able to access the water pump.

- Education

The rapid influx of local as well as Congolese refugee schoolchildren in Mboki and in Obo have led to a

precarious situation of the educational sector in the region. There is a lack of infrastructure, teachers, school supplies, and teaching materials.



Assistance to displaced people in Haut-Mbomou

The mission's recommendations:

1. Negotiations should be undertaken with government to strengthen the presence of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) so they can protect communities against attacks by the LRA in the Haut-Mbomou. (BONUCA)
2. Provide spare parts for the repair of wells and pumps in the town of Obo and Mboki to cover the contributions of refugees who take to the water pump. (UNICEF and / or the International Committee of the Red Cross)
3. Improve the capacity of health posts in Obo and Mboki with regard to training nursing personnel, as well as providing drugs and equipment to meet the health needs of refugees, IDPs and host populations. (UNHCR and WHO)
4. Improve the capacity of schools in the region so they can support local as well as refugee and displaced schoolchildren. (UNICEF)
5. Provide assistance to nearly 6,000 vulnerable people in Haut-Mbomou to cover their nutritional needs for a period of two months following August distribution. (WFP)

Coordination

CAP 2010 workshop in Bangui

The workshop on the humanitarian strategy in 2010 to formulate the Coordinated Appeals Process (CAP) was held on September 17 and 18 in Bangui.

The meeting brought together some 70 participants from UN agencies, local and international NGOs, the CAR government (Prime Minister's Office and the Ministry of Social Affairs) and donors such as the United States and the European Commission Humanitarian Office (ECHO).



A working group during the workshop

Participants discussed the current situation in CAR, scenarios for 2010, strategic objectives for humanitarian action next year, as well as criteria for the inclusion and prioritization of projects for the 2010 CAP.

The CAP workshop was organized by OCHA.

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