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Emergency appeal operations update

Central Africa Republic: Civil Unrest

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Emergency Appeal no. MDRCF017	Glide n° OT-2013-000152.CAF
Date of Launch: 14 February 2014	Expected end date: 30 November 2015
DREF allocated: 245,476 CHF Overall Operation budget: 10,556,774 CHF (1,136,640 CHF initial budget)	
Number of people affected: 2.5 million	Number of people to be assisted: 150,000 beneficiaries (30,000 families);
Host National Society Presence: Central African Red Cross (12,000 volunteers), 42 staff at the headquarters, 69 sub-prefectoral committees, 8 districts of Bangui and 117 council committees	
Red Cross Red Crescent Partners actively involved in the operation: ICRC, French Red Cross, Qatar Red Crescent	
Other partner organisations actively involved in the operation: FAO, UNICEF, HCR, FAO, UNFPA, World Vision, Concern Worldwide, Save the Children, Mercy Corps, ACORD, IOM, DRC, CNR, ACTED, "Solidarité internationale," AAH, MSF Holland, MSF Spain, MSF Belgium, WHH, ALIMA, Triangle, FLM, CARITAS, TEARFUND, PU-AMI, IMC, FAIRMED, MENTOR-Initiative, Islamic Relief Worldwide, Finn Church Aid, SOS Children's Villages, JRS, Internews, Institut Panos, Search for Common Ground, ASF, Water for Good, FSD-Swiss Foundation for Mine Action, CORDAID, INSO, MSF France, Conciliation Resources, MSF Switzerland, Plan International, AHA, Invisible Children, "Un Raggio di Luce"	

This update is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is in the process of completing the current emergency appeal which ends 30 November 2015. The Central African Red Cross will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

Summary:

The death of a taxi driver in the third district of Bangui on 26 September 2015, triggered fresh civil unrest and violence in several parts of Bangui leading to deaths, injuries and destruction of property and looting. The crisis then took a political twist with hostilities by armed groups who were reportedly demanding for the resignation of the Transitional Head of State, and the departure of French peacekeepers (Sangaris) and MINUSCA from the country. The violence left the city paralysed for five days, while the FACA and the international forces (Sangaris and MINUSCA) worked to contain the situation. Several vehicles belonging to the international agencies were stoned and/or damaged. Between 27-29 September 2015, 14 cases of day time and nocturnal looting of residences and offices of humanitarian organisations by unknown people were experienced in the neighbourhood of Sica 1 and Sica 2. For security reasons, most humanitarian expatriates, including the IFRC delegates sought refuge in secure assembly points at the MINUSCA guest house and/or at the Ledger Hotel. Given the escalation of the violence and threats towards the humanitarian community, evacuation for non-essential staff was carried out by UNHAS, ECHO and MINUSCA flights. More than 300 humanitarians and UN staffs were evacuated either to Yaoundé, Cameroon or Entebbe in Uganda. The IFRC safely evacuated four of its staff including two consultants, one Geneva based staff and a delegate.

The Transitional Head of state denounced an "attempted coup" and stressed the need to speed up the disarmament process. Elections previously scheduled to take place before the end 2015 seems unrealistic given the security situation. If elections do occur, violence is likely and results may be contested, which would further weaken the legitimacy of a newly elected president, and most probably spark protests. The situation remains unpredictable and precarious. Violent incidents are being reported in several of the provinces on daily basis. The matter is worsened by the fact that secondary effects of the ongoing crisis have not yet been addressed and tensions remain high. A report published by a local NGO¹ provided the latest figures of the crisis:

¹ La Fondation Centrafricaine pour la Sauvegarde des ressources naturelles (FOCSARENA) SYNTHÈSE VIOLENCE DU 26 SEPTEMBRE Final.pdf

- Deaths - 115 people
- Missing - 179 people
- Injuries - 431 people, (of which 301 were reported at the hospitals)
- Burnt houses - 41
- Abandoned houses- 329
- Populations displaced to camps – 26, 758 people
- Displaced populations living in host families – 17, 500 people

Access of humanitarian organisations to affected populations, particularly outside of Bangui, is severely restricted due to threats against humanitarian actors and control of the roads by armed groups (UN, OCHA).

Immediate needs of the affected people

A multi-sectorial detailed assessment led by OCHA and other humanitarian organisations to ascertain the needs of the affected populations is ongoing. OCHA reported more than 43,000 people left their homes to seek refuge in at least 40 IDPs camps in Bangui, which were already hosting displaced families of the initial and subsequent crisis. From 1-10 October, the number of newly displaced at Bangui sites fell to 23,239 as IDPs have begun to return to their home districts (OCHA). The needs of the affected people are urgent and include:

- Health needs in Mpoko airport, Benz-vi, Castors and Foursquare IDP camps. According to the NS, the Henry Dunand Health centre based at the NS headquarters is lacking medicines yet all the IDPs of the Central Mosque and the local population of the 3rd and 5th districts are using the NS health Centre because they cannot go to any other health facility due to insecurity. Anytime that such clashes occurred, the NS Health centre is always full with injured people, thus stretched.
- Food needs in Mosquée centrale, Benz-vi and Castors IDP camps.
- Non-food item needs: Tarpaulins, Ropes, Blankets, sleeping mats, Mosquito nets, Jerry cans, Buckets with lids, Kitchen sets, Solar lamps, Soaps, Hygiene kits in Foursquare, Benz-vi, Saint Jacques, Saint Sauveur and Faculté de théologie Biblique IDP camps.

The following are considered hot spots within the country:

1. Bangui (Combattant market, Gobongo, 4th and 8th districts, Boye rabe, Marabena, Avenue koudoukou, Miskine, PK5 and PK12) ;
2. Bambari, Sibut, Grimari, Ippy, Dekoa and Zangba in the Centre part of the country ;
3. Alindao in the South -Eastern part of the country,
4. Bouar in the Western part of the country;
5. Kabo in the Northern part;
6. Bossangoa – Bangui road;
7. Bossangoa – Markounda road;
8. Bossangoa – Bouca – Batangafo;

National Society response to date

The NS has put in place a coordination team based at its headquarters in PK5 and four intervention teams that are patrolling in the affected areas. The volunteers selected for this response are on standby at the NS headquarters as the situation remains unpredictable.

From the onset of the crisis, the CARC was the sole humanitarian organisation with unlimited access within the affected areas providing first aid to the injured, transporting critical cases to the hospitals for better care. The CARC volunteers have been collecting and managing dead body remains ensuring the affected families are able to conduct dignified burials.

The NS in partnership with WHO are distributing medicine to health centres located in the neighbourhoods with limited/no access due to insecurity.

- Although the CARC has played a very important role as an auxiliary to the public authorities, it has experienced several challenges, including:
- Functional vehicles to conduct interventions (one ambulance given by the Japanese Red Cross as part of contribution for the CAR emergency appeal), and fuel for continued response;
- Foodstuff for the volunteers on duty based at the NS headquarter for intervention, and financial support for the payment of volunteers' incentives and transport
- Communication issues;
- Lack of volunteers protection materials for corpses burial, disinfection material, and equipment for the digging of burial holes;
- Insufficient NFIs to distribute among the affected families (In response to the crisis, part of Spanish Red Cross restocked NFIs towards the emergency appeal were used and need to be restocked);
- WASH related challenges

Movement Coordination

On the 5 October 2015, the President of the National Society called for a Movement coordination meeting where the country's security situation was discussed and a call to support the NS was made. The President also appealed to the movement partners to activate the NS's elections contingency plan as part of preparedness for the forthcoming elections. This meeting was followed by another on 7 October 2015 which aimed to: set up Movement communication strategies in the crisis situation, and determine NS partners in order to address the current situation and prepare for future crisis.

The NS has produced a list and budget of needs for preparedness for future crisis and has shared it with its partners. Actions from partners so far include:

- Some immediate needs of the CARC are in the logistics sector for improved intervention. The IFRC has supported the NS with a pickup vehicle and 230 litres of fuel to support the response. Nine vehicles for interventions are to be provided as follows: ICRC – two pickups, IFRC - two vehicles, French Red Cross – two vehicles and Qatari Red Crescent – two vehicles. IFRC has secured a new ambulance for the National Society from funding of the Japanese Red Cross as part of the EA.
- In response to the communication problem the IFRC provided a VSAT to the NS but because of security reasons it is yet to be installed.
- The ICRC has provided 120 body bags on Sept 26. In addition, the process to acquire 200 body bags from the IFRC is underway
- ICRC has also committed to support pre-positioning of food stock and first aid stock, as well as per diems for volunteers.

To date remaining gaps include:

- It was agreed that communication remains paramount for effective response. Therefore provision of mobile phones or additional communication support is requested
 - Financial support for meals and accommodation for rescue teams, as well as additional per diems is sought.
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Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGOs) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.