

## News bulletin

17 - 24 March 2008

### Highlights

- Cameroonian troops trained to join FOMUC in Paoua
- EUFOR has achieved 'initial operational capacity' on 17 March
- Human Rights Watch on Chadian incursions in CAR territory
- Focus on water: World Water Day and water and sanitation projects in Kabo and Sam Ouandja

## Background and security

### Cameroonian troops for FOMUC

A contingent of 119 Cameroonian soldiers has completed the preparatory training in Koutaba, in western Cameroon, on 13 March to join the *Multinational Force in Central Africa (FOMUC)*. The troops will be stationed in Paoua, close to the border with Cameroon in the north-west of the Central African Republic, to back the country's armed and security forces in responding to internal difficulties, particularly criminal gangs preying on villagers.

The FOMUC has been mandated by the *Economic and Monetary Community of Central Africa (CEMAC)* to support peacekeeping in the Central African Republic. The force is made up mainly of Congolese, Chadian and Gabonese troops. Established in October 2002, its mandate runs until 2012.

### Head of MINURCAT in Bangui

The Special Representative of the Secretary-General (SRSG) for the UN Mission in the Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT), Victor Angelo, visited Bangui on 19 and 20 March, and met with the authorities of the country as well as with representatives of the five permanent members of the Security Council residing in Bangui, members of the diplomatic corps, and his counterparts of the UN system in the capital.

Mr. Angelo raised three major concerns which he intends to address immediately, including a speedy deployment of MINURCAT in Chad and the Central African Republic, the improvement of the security situation in eastern Chad and north-eastern Central

African Republic, and the development of a close collaboration between MINURCAT and all stakeholders involved in both countries. The SRSG said the Mission was planning to open a liaison office in Birao, northeastern Central African Republic. An assessment mission is expected to arrive in the area on 26 March to prepare for the establishment of the office.

For more information: [tourea@un.org](mailto:tourea@un.org)

### Initial operational capacity for EUFOR

EUFOR, the European Union military force deploying in eastern Chad and the north-eastern Central African Republic along with MINURCAT, announced on 17 March that it has officially started its one-year mission mandated by the United Nations.

With the currently available equipment and units EUFOR declared it has achieved 'initial operational capacity'. EUFOR, which will have 3,700 troops by June this year, started its deployment in January.

### Human Rights Watch on Chadian incursions

*Human Rights Watch (HRW)* reports that, since January of this year, Chadian army troops have carried out at least five separate cross-border attacks in the north-western part of the Central African Republic, mostly along the road from Markounda to Maitoukoulou running parallel with the frontier. In a press release on 19 March, the organisation further says that the Chad army killed civilians, burned villages and stole cattle. More than 1,000 people were displaced, some of them across the border into southern Chad, according to HRW.

Several of these attacks have been carried out jointly by the Chadian army and nomadic Peuhl herders. Tensions and violence occur every year between the herders and Central African farmers, whose fields are destroyed by the Peuhl cattle and whose villages are sometimes attacked. The violence of the last months is taking place in zones under the control of the *Popular Army for the Restoration of the Republic and Democracy (APRD)*.

## Current events

### Providing water in Kabo and Sam Ouandja

*Solidarités*, an international NGO, continues to provide emergency assistance to the 3,600 displaced people in Kabo with the support of *UNICEF* and the Emergency Response Fund (ERF). By the end of February, 96 latrines were built and four water wells were dug or rehabilitated.

In addition, *Solidarités* has excavated about twenty waste pits and conducted an awareness campaign to promote hygiene on the site. The ERF funds have also been used to improve hygiene conditions in Kabo town by constructing latrines in the schools and near the town market.



*Displaced boys in Kabo carrying water*

*Triangle GH*, another UNICEF partner, has rehabilitated eight wells in Sam Ouandja in the north-western province of Haute Kotto. To provide for the daily needs of the 3,000 Darfur refugees in the camp close to the town, the NGO has installed a drinking water distribution network, consisting of a tank and two water reservoirs of 5,000 liters each, which feed a range of taps.

*Triangle GH* also sunk and reinforced a pond with a capacity of 360,000 liters to feed the water network in case the Ouandja River dries up. A further 249 latrines have been built and waste pits dug in each quarter of the refugee camp. Hygiene promotion teams have sensitised the population in the town, in schools and in the camp.

### World Water Day in Bangui

"Sanitation matters" was the theme of this year's World Water Day, commemorated in Bangui on 20 March. Organized by the *General Water Directorate* (GDH) of the Ministry of Mines and Water and backed by the *World Health Organisation* (WHO), *UNICEF* and the Water Supply and Sanitation Collaborative Board, sensitisation campaigns on good hygiene practices were conducted in four of the poorest districts in the capital.

The Minister of State of Mines and Water, Sylvain Ndoutingai, pointed out that man is primarily responsible for all matters related to sanitation. "I make a specific call to NGOs and civil society organisations to fully engage with our community to support further actions to preserve our environment," said the Minister in his speech.

## Coordination

### Information meeting on SPONG, 19 March

The *Permanent Secretariat for Non-Governmental Organizations* (SPONG), a coordination mechanism of the Ministry for Planning and Cooperation, held an information meeting on 19 March. The Minister of State, Sylvain Maliko, opened the workshop. Supported by the *United Nations Program for Development* (UNDP) and the *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCHA), the workshop provided an opportunity to discuss the new partnership framework between the Government, NGOs and development partners in order to reduce poverty in the Central African Republic.

The main tasks of the SPONG are:

- Monitor compliance with the legal framework for interventions by NGOs at the national level
- Direct, coordinate and integrate the activities of NGOs into national development policies
- Facilitate collaboration between NGOs, government services and development partners
- Evaluate the impact of NGO contributions on development through periodic meetings
- Disseminate information to identify zones of operation taking into account the field presence of Government and other partners
- Ensure the substantial and financial monitoring of projects funded or implemented by NGOs

The SPONG, with support from the *European Union*, will embark on a capacity assessment of local NGOs in the next three months. Upon availability of the assessment findings, partners will be invited to develop a strategy to respond to identified weaknesses.

---

Contact us: **UN OCHA Bangui, CAR**  
 Nancy Snauwaert | [snauwaert@un.org](mailto:snauwaert@un.org) | +236 75 54 22 78  
 Gisèle Willybiro | [willybiro@un.org](mailto:willybiro@un.org) | +236 75 54 90 31