

News bulletin

21 – 28 April 2008

Highlights

- Presentation of Inclusive Political Dialogue Preparatory Committee's report
- The People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy resumed attacks in the north-west

Background and security

Preparatory Committee for the Inclusive Dialogue

On 25 April, the Preparatory Committee for the Inclusive Dialogue for Peace (CIDP) presented a report on its work to the President, François Bozizé, during a ceremony at the National Assembly in Bangui. Representatives of the diplomatic corps and international organizations were also present at this event.

During his speech, the Special Representative of the UN Secretary General, Francois Lonseny Fall, congratulated the Head of State for the impact he had on the different stages of the Committee's work. Mr. Fall also expressed his appreciation for the Committee's dedication, which led to consensus on the results contained in the final report. The Preparatory Committee was chaired by the Centre for Humanitarian Dialogue (CHD). Mr Fall also thanked the Organisation Internationale de la Francophonie (OIF), the African Union (AU) and the Committee of External Partners for the Monitoring of Politics and Development (CEPMPD) for their advice and their financial support.

"The United Nations is determined to continue its efforts towards the successful completion of this important stage in the life of the Central African nation, which we hope will promote the emergence of a lasting peace – an ideal setting for harmonious and sustainable development in the Central African Republic", said Mr Fall.

The recommendations contained in the report:

- The signing of a peace agreement between the government and the People's Army for the Restoration of Democracy (APRD);
- The signing of a general peace agreement;
- The adoption of appropriate legal and legislative measures, and the organization of municipal elections before 2010;

- The prohibition of the use of the State to ensure equal opportunities for all candidates for election;
- The updating of the 2004 electoral code in order to make it conform to the constitution of 27 December 2004 and the adjustment of the electoral districts to reflect demographic change;
- The adoption by the National Assembly in early 2009 of a new criminal procedure code and a new military justice code, as well as the establishment of the high court before the end of 2008.

As for the mechanics of the inclusive dialogue for peace, CIDP proposed 150 participants, divided between the presidential majority, the democratic opposition, other parties, civil society, governments, political-military movements, religious groups and other personalities. Finally, the CIDP recommends that the dialogue be held within 45 days of the report's submission and that it should take place over a period of 17 days in Bangui.

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The APRD resumed attacks in the north-west

A press release from the Central African Ministry of National Defense, published on 28 April, reported repeated attacks perpetrated throughout the month by the APRD.

According to the press release, on 3 April in Mann (north-west), clashes took place between the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and the APRD, killing three APRD. On 6 April, three other elements of the APRD died after attacking the FACA, who responded, in the same area. Finally, on 24 April after an attack by the APRD in the early morning against the base at Ndim, the FACA routed the opposition armed group, which then fled to the Kowone town (in the prefecture of Ouham-Pende).

The press release also mentions the Government's appeal to this movement to stop fighting, reminding its members that they have appointed a representative to the preparatory work of the inclusive political dialogue. The Government invited the APRD to abandon fighting and move towards a peaceful settlement through dialogue and consultation.

Current events

Justice accessible in remote areas

The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) through its local justice and human rights initiative (PRASEJ) is putting in place new activities in Sibut, Kaga Bandoro, Bossangoa and Bozoum in order to improve the conditions of women in detention, as well as their access to legal advice.

Women in detention in these areas will be transferred to places of detention which will be managed by women so they can be protected against abuse. Four legal advice offices with a lawyer and a legal assistant will also be involved and will provide the population counsel, guidance, information and representation.

At the end of January, judges from these regions had received a vehicle; court clerks received a motorcycle, and both received a fuel endowment. Since then, hearings have taken place in the most remote areas of jurisdiction of these magistrates, to the great satisfaction of the population.

The courts of Kaga Bandoro and Bossangoa are being constructed, and those of Bozoum and Sibut rehabilitated.

Treating malaria in CAR

Several days before the African Day of Fighting Malaria (April 25), the Ministry of Health, the *United Nations Fund for Children* (UNICEF), the Institut Pasteur and the *Global Fund* met from 17 to 22 April in Boali (95 km from capital) in order to establish the parameters of the Treating Malaria at Home (TMH) initiative.

The main objective of the new strategy is to make malaria drugs accessible to families, in order to treat any case of fever effectively within 24 hours and to avoid complications.

The adoption of four basic documents of this new strategy included:

- A plan for strengthening the treatment of malaria at home;
- Guidelines for malaria treatment at home;
- A training manual for community distributors ;
- The roadmap for (TMH).

Malaria remains the leading cause of morbidity and mortality in CAR. It affects all strata of the population, especially children under 5 years and pregnant women who constitute the most vulnerable. The management of malaria has traditionally been the prerogative of health centres, but the proportion of people who attend these courses is less than 45 per cent. Most of the population is therefore not covered by this approach.

The workshop was funded by the malaria component of the management of Global Fund programmes .

Coordination

The crop year 2008

The pre-positioning operations of seeds carried out between November 2007 and March 2008, thanks to the French Government funding and various other projects in 2007, made it possible to store 701.9 tons of seeds (180 MT of sorghum, 291 MT but, 162, 9 T peanuts and 68 T rice). In addition, 44,000 hoes and 13,000 machetes have been purchased.

Partnership contracts were signed with NGOs which required the support of the *United Nations Food and Agriculture Organization* (FAO) for the implementation of distributions of seeds in their field programmes.

Pre-positioning with NGOs is currently underway, which will allow partners to distribute seeds in time for the season.

FAO partners for 2008:

- DRC (Danish Council for Refugees) in Paoua
- ACF (Action Contre la Faim) in Markounda
- Solidarités in Kabo, Ouandago and Kaga Bandoro
- Triangle Generation Humanitaire in Birao, Ouadda and Sam Ouandja
- Mercy Corps in Bouar
- ADEM (local NGO) in M'Brès and Bamingui
- APILOD (local NGO) in Kaga-Bandoro

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