

News bulletin

3 November - 10 November 2008

Highlights

- The town of Sam Ouandja in the north-east attacked on Saturday 8 November by 40 armed men
- Village Oumba in the south-west of the country attacked by suspected Central African refugees in the DRC and Congo.
- Three vehicles carrying WFP food intercepted by the population of Boro in Bossangoa

Background and security

The town of Sam Ouandja attacked

Saturday, 8 November, the town of Sam Ouandja located in the north-east was the subject of an attack by 40 armed men.

At approximately 3am on Saturday 8 November armed men attacked the compound of the Central African Armed Forces (FACA) and the Democratic Union Force (UFDR).

The attackers originated from Am Dafock and their aim was apparently to seize the airfield of the city. The FACA and the UFDR were mobilised to resist the 5.30am the assailants fled in the direction of the Sudanese border.

During the incident two of the attackers were killed and one was captured. Several soldiers on the FACA/UFDR were also injured. However, there are no reports of civilian injuries.

Oumba, a village in the southwestern attacked

According to the police, on the 4 November the village of Oumba, some 60km from Bangui, was attacked by Central African refugees in DRC Congo and Congo. The attackers reportedly seized weapons and communications equipment belonging to the (FACA).

A contingent from the Presidential Guard, supported by local police, travelled to Ouba to investigate the case but further details are as yet unavailable.

One observer has indicated that this attack has been to draw attention to the political agenda of Central African refugees in the DRC and Congo who wish to participate in the Inclusive Political Dialogue currently underway between the government and armed opposition groups.

WFP's food intercepted at Bossangoa

On 5 November, three heavy goods vehicles loaded with food aid from *World Food Program* (WFP) travelling to Paoua were stopped by the local population of Boro in the city of Bossangoa. According to information gathered from the local population the attack was motivated by hunger of the villagers.

Of the three vehicles attacked, one was completely looted while the other two were protected by local gendarmes.

Strategic Paper for UN intervention in CAR

The recent mission of the Commission for the Consolidation of Peace who visited CARC from 30 October to 6 November and headed by the Ambassador Jan Grauls, the Permanent Representative of Belgium to the United Nations and Chairman of the Specific Commission for CAR wanted to meet with the local press on the day of his departure. Ambassador Grauls announced the development of a strategic document for the United Nations in CAR.

This document identifies priorities, assesses the efforts of the United Nations in terms of funding and identifies the gaps for more effective engagement in the country.

Ambassador Grauls also explained that the document should also serve as a platform for negotiations and advocacy between the Commission and donors and partners. The document should be used to convince donors to become more involved and/or to increase their commitment to supporting the peace process in CAR.

Reaffirming the readiness of the international community to support the CAR in its reconstruction, Jan Grauls noted that United Nations efforts would not succeed without unconditional support of the national authorities.

Current events

First visit of Joel Madden in CAR

UNICEF Goodwill Ambassador, Joel Madden, of the American rock group *Good Charlotte*, in a recent visit to CAR expressed his concern for the situation facing thousands of children in the country due to unclean water and inadequate health care, *"Come here and see these children who die just because they have no access to clean water for drinking, I can not accept that."*

For a week, with support from UNICEF CAR, the Madden, accompanied by his brother also a member of the rock band, traveled across CAR and spent time in villages in the provinces.

The Madden brothers have had the opportunity to talk to many children and families whose lives are threatened by poor water and sanitation, a vector for deadly diseases here in CAR. At Sam Ouandja, border town in Darfur, 47% of children die every year from diseases linked to consumption of dirty water and poor sanitary conditions.

In 2007, UNICEF supported dozens of projects related to water and sanitation, particularly to rehabilitate and build wells in the north, an area particularly affected by the conflict. Thanks to these efforts, all prefectures affected by violence can now benefit from programs for clean water, better sanitation and hygiene facilities. However, much remains to be done.

Although activist for years for the rights of children, the visit was the first in CAR and its first as an ambassador for UNICEF. At the end of his visit, Mr. Madden drew the Central government attention to invest more in the water sector. He also asked the developed countries and the younger generation to become more involved in the search for solutions so that diseases that can be avoided no longer exist.

"Every day children die of diseases that are preventable in CAR, caused by a lack of access to clean water," he said. *"The good news is that we can stop it now,"* he concluded.

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IMC annual report

Since June 2007, the NGO **International Medical Corps** (IMC) has established programs to primary health care in the Vakaga and the Haute Kotto prefectures.

These programs include preventive and curative consultations, particularly in the fight against malaria, diarrhea, tuberculosis, HIV / AIDS and in supporting community medicine.

Emergency obstetric care, neo-natal, an expanded program on immunization and reproductive health, have also included in IMC's programs.

The facilities supported by IMC in towns and villages in the two prefectures have been renovated and are regularly re-stocked with medicines and medical equipment. The health centers in Ouadda, Ouadda-Djalle and Sam Ouanda each now have an ambulance and have become the referral centers for emergency medical, surgical and hospital care.

In addition, IMC has also become involved in the nutrition and water and sanitation sectors IMC now supports growth monitoring for children less than 6 months old, the management of severe acute malnutrition (both in therapeutic feeding centers or at home) for children from 6 to 59 months.

In the area of water and sanitation, IMC is promoting health and treating water for human consumption, fight against waste and oral-fecal disease prevention.

The presence and activities of IMC have restored a sense of mobilization and community participation to the population affected by the conflict in the north-east. As a result of IMC's activities people in the region now have free access to health and nutritional services of quality.

Finally, the total cost of IMC's projects in CAR from June 2007 to June 2008 amounted US\$4.13 million

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