

News bulletin

17- 24 November 2008

Highlights

- Global Peace Accord Monitoring Committee adopts a DDR framework
- 487 malnourished children treated in Bossangoa
- Merlin campaign 'Hands Up for Health Workers' launched on 20 November
- Aid for 20,000 displaced people around Paoua
- CAR CAP 2009 asks for \$ 116 million

Background and security

Monitoring committee adopts DDR plan

The third meeting of the Monitoring Committee of the Global Peace Accord was held in Libreville on 19 and 20 November. Representatives of the Central African and Gabonese governments, the *Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy* (APRD), the *Union of Democratic Forces for Unity* (UFDR) and the organizations supporting the CAR peace process were in attendance.

In the final communiqué, the participants exhorted all Central African actors to strictly adhere to the modalities of the Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration (DDR) programme, and adopted the framework document on this process. The meeting participants also suggested that an awareness-raising campaign be launched for the benefit of Central African refugees in neighboring countries so as to encourage them to return to their home country.

The Committee was also informed on the progress made towards the organization of the inclusive political dialogue. President Bozizé has set the dates for the conference by decree, which will be held in Bangui from 5 to 20 December 2008.

A Moroccan ambassador in Bangui

On 11 November, Mohammed VI, King of Morocco, accredited El Alaoui Azizi, former Chargé d'affaires of the Moroccan Embassy in Bangui as the first ambassador of the kingdom in CAR. He will shortly present his credentials to the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

Current events

487 malnourished children treated in Bossangoa

The Therapeutic Feeding Centre in Bossangoa, in the north-west of CAR, has treated 487 children suffering from severe acute malnutrition between January and October of this year. Close to 90% of the patients admitted were cured. The children receive therapeutic milk and drugs, and the accompanying caretakers get food rations from the *World Food Programme* (WFP). Each child also receives a mosquito net and an additional ration of 15 days of food at the end of treatment in order to ensure full recovery.

The hospital receives FCFA 5,000 for each new admission to cover hospital expenditure and the cost of treatment in the event of medical complications. The Centre is jointly managed by Action Against Hunger, a French NGO, and the Ministry of Health, and receives funding and material support from the *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF).

As part of the nutrition programme, Action Against Hunger supports 12 health centres in the region for nutritional surveillance by giving them measuring instruments and drugs. The NGO also conducts outreach activities in the communities in a radius of 50 km around Bossangoa and treats cases of severe malnutrition within the community with plumpy nut. Since September, Action Against Hunger is implementing an out-patient therapeutic programme for severe acute malnutrition cases, from which 140 children are benefitting.



A young patient of the Bossangoa TFC

The nutritional survey conducted in the same month, at the end of the lean season, showed that the global acute malnutrition rate in the region stands at 9.1% and severe acute malnutrition at 2.4%. The crude mortality rate for children under five is 2.7 deaths per 10,000 children per day.

For more information: nut-bossangoa@cf.missions-acf.org

Hands up for Health Workers

Merlin, the international medical aid agency, on 20 November launched a two year campaign, featuring multiple articles, videos and photographs from CAR, to help address the health worker crisis in the developing world.

With a shortage of four million doctors, nurses and midwives around the world, Hands up for Health Workers calls for investment in health staff to become a global priority. The campaign appeals for funding to train the additional staff required and provide refresher training for those already working. It also asks for a regular living wage for health workers and incentives for them to work in remote or hostile environments.

Merlin has created a dedicated site to support the campaign: www.handsupforhealthworkers.org. The CAR pages on the site document the reality of working in a country where maternal mortality rates have doubled and nearly 20 per cent of children die before their fifth birthday. Merlin estimates that CAR needs at least 7,000 more health workers right now. The NGO currently supports the training of 73 health workers at 11 health facilities in Nana Gribizi, and has recently commenced training for health care workers in Nana Mambere.

For more information: cd@merlin-car.org

Aid for 20,000 displaced people

The *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC) has just completed a distribution of basic necessities to nearly 20,000 people in villages between Bozoum and Paoua and between Taleh and Bilakaré, in the Paoua sub-province of north-western CAR.

The distribution of tarpaulins, blankets, mosquito nets, buckets, soap, hoes, sleeping mats, clothing and household items was done in two phases. First, the people living along the Bozoum-Paoua road, who fled the clashes between government forces and the APRD in September, were targeted and afterwards those on the Taleh-Bilakaré road who were displaced recently further to the fighting between the self-defense groups and APRD combatants. These people lost all their possessions while fleeing.

Fearing for their safety, thousands of people took refuge in the bush and they are now beginning to return to their villages. Nevertheless, living conditions remain precarious due to the remoteness of the area and the lack of basic infrastructure.

The aid items were distributed with the help of volunteers from the Central African Red Cross Society.

In addition, the ICRC's sub-delegation in Paoua, opened in 2006, carries out activities to raise awareness of the basic rules of International Humanitarian Law among armed groups and visits people detained in connection with the conflict. The organization also provides support for local Red Cross chapters to boost their capacity to bring aid to those who need it most.

For more information: bangui.bng@icrc.org

Coordination

CAR CAP 2009 asks for \$ 116 million

On 19 November, John Holmes, Emergency Relief Coordinator, launched the Humanitarian Appeal 2009, with CAR being one of the countries covered by the appeal.

The country's *Coordinated Aid Programme* (CAP) 2009 includes 105 projects which require funding of just over \$116 million. It seeks to provide aid to 1 million Central Africans hit by the conflict. The 2009 CAP strategic priorities are: (i) deliver life-saving assistance, particularly health care and safe water; (ii) protect people struck by violence against violations of their human rights and; (iii) integrate early recovery and humanitarian action.

Download the 2009 CAP from: <http://hdptcar.net/>

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