

News bulletin

1 - 8 June 2009

Highlights

- UFDR under fire in Birao
- Former LRA members back in CAR
- World Environment Day 2009

Background and security

UFDR Birao base under attack

On Saturday the 6th of June at 6 a.m. Birao was at the centre of fighting between the *Union des Forces Démocratiques pour le Rassemblement* (UFDR, majority Goula) and armed members of the Kara community who sought revenge for the killing of one of their leaders by the UFDR.

When fighting ceased at 7 a.m., the Togolese contingent of the UN troops in Birao, the *Mission des Nations Unies en RCA et au Tchad* (MINURCAT), escorted members of NGOs based at Birao to their base on the outskirts of the town. The NGOs spent 2 nights at the base under MINURCAT protection.

All humanitarian operations have been suspended in and around the town of Birao. Reports indicate that 2 people from the Kara community died in the fighting.

Exchange of gunfire near Kabo town

On Friday the 5th of June, shots were heard for more than half an hour outside Kabo – no movements of population or impact on humanitarian activities have been reported.

Ndélé – reduction of humanitarian staff

Following tensions in town last weekend, NGOs in Ndélé town have reduced the number of humanitarian staff in the town.

News

LRA members back home in CAR

5 former members of Joseph Kony's Lord's Resistance Army were repatriated back to the Central African Republic on 2 June, accompanied by 2 officials from the Disarmament, Demobilization, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) of the United Nations Mission in DRC (MONUC). On their arrival, the 5 former LRA fighters were placed under the protection of the Central African United Nations Peace Building Office (BONUCA).

The return of these 5 individuals was made possible when they disarmed voluntarily at the MONUC base and put themselves forward for voluntary repatriation.

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'Your planet needs you'

'UN-ited against climate change' was the theme of the World Environmental Day this year.

United Nations and NGO staff organised a walk on the 6th of June to highlight environmental awareness. The walkers climbed Oubangui hill, and took in the views as well as the impact of climate change on Bangui.

Walkers followed a presentation on the 'impact of climate change on the world and on the Central African Republic' presented by Aline Malibangar from the environment and energy programme at the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP).



« World Environmental Day in Bangui »

UNDP interim Resident Representative Steven Ursino took part in the day's activities, as did CAR's Environment and Ecology Minister François Naoueyama. At the end of the walk, Mr. Ursino made an official gift of the 'International Report on Human Development 2007-2008' to Minister Naoueyama, a report which deals with climate change.

The Director General of the Environment at the Ministry pointed out that climate change is having an impact in Central Africa on rainfall, flooding and disruption in seasonal patterns.

Community radio stations in Birao and Paoua

The Central African government has initiated a community radio project in Paoua (north west CAR) and Birao (north east CAR) to provide post-conflict awareness raising for the local population, to encourage the resumption of farming as well as economic revitalisation.

As part of the project, David Bozoumna, a national community radio consultant for the *United Nations*

Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO), made a working visit to Birao on 2 June. This visit is part of the implementation stage of the project and involved meetings with local authorities and members of the management committee for the Birao radio station. Discussions also took place around the strategy for implementing the annual work plan and recruitment of producers and technicians for the station.

These radio stations aim to spread the culture of peace, the recommendations of the inclusive political dialogue as well as national reconciliation. The stations will also raise awareness about HIV / AIDS through broadcasts in French and Sango.

Health

SOS Hepatitis: Awareness and help

15 to 20% - that is the percentage of secondary school students with hepatitis A, B, C, D and E in the Central African Republic. The association 'SOS Hepatitis' was born from this high prevalence and the high rate registered during blood donations; it aims to reduce the rate of hepatitis in CAR, to provide psychotherapeutic care of patients, to raise awareness about low cost care and to encourage the population to get vaccinated against hepatitis.

The B and C viruses are most prevalent in the country and can easily develop into chronic forms such as cirrhosis. Viruses A and E can be passed by faecal-oral contact, by blood transfusion, from mother to child or by sweat, saliva and faeces. B, C and D are less well-known and are sexually transmitted.

The association provides education about toilet hygiene, proper food preparation and other practices which can reduce the transmission of viral hepatitis. The association also encourages people to go to a health centre as soon as they have a symptom – lack of response can allow the disease to spread silently, causing liver damage.

A special debate on the subject will be held on World Blood Donation Day on 14 June to create greater awareness of this risk.

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