

News bulletin

6 – 13 July 2009

Highlights

- Chad releases the rebel group CPJP's president
- 11 July : World Population Day
- Chinese support for the fight against malaria in CAR

Background and security

Release of Charles Massi, President of the CPJP

The president of the political council of the *Patriotic Convention for Justice and Peace* (CPJP), Charles Massi, was released from detention in Ndjamena, Chad, on Wednesday 8 July.

According to Chadian authorities, Mr Massi was arrested in Chad on 15 May for "intention to subvert a neighbouring country from Chad".

According to Chad's Minister of the Interior, Ahmat Bachir, "After having conducted enquiries, we have concluded that he did not have subversive intentions against the Central African Republic, and therefore he could only be released".

Mr Massi commented, "I hope that Chadian mediation will be able to further the peace process in CAR".

Current events

French support for the 2010 elections in CAR

The French Ambassador to CAR, Jean-Pierre Vidon, announced on Monday 13 July that his country will support the 2010 country-wide elections.

The announcement was made at a press conference held at the chancellery of the French Embassy in Bangui, on the eve of the 220nd celebration of the French National Day.

According to Ambassador Vidon, France is particularly committed to the staging of free, transparent and democratic elections, as they represent one of the most important elements in the process of stabilising the country and consolidating peace. This follows on from their commitment to the previous elections held 5 years previously in 2005, which permitted the conclusion of the process of constitutional transition.

For more information: Michael Deslaines, French Embassy, (236) 75 20 16 15, michael.deslaines@diplomatie.gouv.fr

Promotion of the rights of women and girls

"Invest in women and girls", was the theme for World Population Day, celebrated on 11 July.

To mark this day, the *United Nations Population Fund* (UNFPA) organised a ceremony at the National Assembly led by the Minister of Social Affairs and National Solidarity, Madame Bernadette Sayo, and attended by hundreds of people from all the districts of Bangui.

At the beginning of the ceremony, the Minister lauded Central African women for their courage and perseverance and reiterated the government's commitment to promoting women's development in CAR.

The aim of the celebration is to raise awareness amongst Central Africans of the impact of the global economic crisis on the local population, and how women can be agents of change.

A debate was organised later that day at Bangui University, during which its moderator Dr. François Banyombo emphasised the role which women play in society and concluded with a reminder that NGOs focusing on gender and women's issues must be supported, and that these organisations, mostly informal, should be re-organised formally in order to ensure better monitoring.

During the day, a documentary film on reproductive health was shown, highlighting 34 cases of obstetric fistula successfully treated in Kaga Bandoro.

For more information: Julie Imafidon, UNFPA, (236) 75 04 26 66, imafidon@unfpa.org

Health

Chinese support for the fight against malaria

On Thursday 9 July, the Chinese Embassy in CAR announced a donation of anti-malarial medication worth US\$300,000 to the country. In the ceremony, the chargé d'affaires of the Chinese Embassy, Mr Gu, assisted by the economic adviser and the head of the Chinese medical mission in CAR, presented the gift to the Minister of Public Health, André Nalké Dorogo, accompanied by members of his ministry.

The Minister went on to highlight the importance of this donation, given that malaria is the illness which affects the largest number of people in the country, and represents both the largest impact on mortality and the foremost reason for seeking medical aid. The grant will contribute to the development and growth of the country by helping to free the working population,

children and mothers from the paralysing effects of the disease.

The donated medicines will permit free anti-malaria treatment for children and pregnant women as well as the general population.

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Agriculture

ACDA: Government support for rural development

On Friday 10 July, six 4x4 vehicles were presented by the government to the *Central African Agency for Rural Development* (ACDA), in a donation worth 215 million FCFA.

The ceremony took place between the Minister of Rural Development, Fidèle Gouandjika, assisted by the Minister-delegate for animal health, Yérïma Mandjo, and the Director-General of ACDA, Honoré Feïzouré.

Mr Feïzouré expressed his gratitude to the government for this gesture, adding that, by having their own means of transport, the vehicles would make the work of his staff significantly easier. He announced that the vehicles would be stationed in the regions of Yaloké, Bambari, Paoua, Berberati and Bria.

He went on to praise the effort of certain international organisations and NGOs such as Première Urgence, the Red Cross, the *Danish Refugee Council* (DRC) and the *United Nations Food and Agriculture Organisation* (FAO) who have supported the population of Ouham-Pendé prefecture with seeds and cattle.

For the government, Minister Gouandjika announced that after this donation, a further one of 40 motorbikes would follow, of which a part was destined for the *Central African Institute for Agronomic Research* (ICRA).

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Coordination

Journalist training workshop on displacement

The United Nations *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCHA) and the *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) held a training workshop on 8 July in Bangui to raise awareness among journalists of the problem of internal displacement in CAR.

With presentations from the *Norwegian Refugee Council* (NRC), UNICEF and OCHA, the workshop focused on the rights and needs of 123,000 internally displaced people who have been forced to flee their homes due to violence.

The workshop was followed by a mission to Kaga-Bandoro from 12 to 14 July, during which a team of five journalists from Radio Ndéké Luka, Radio Africa N°1, Radio Notre Dame, Radio ESCA et the newspaper 'Le Confident') visited villages affected by violence on the Ouandago and Boto roads. Most of the villagers on the Ouandago road have returned to their homes, while on the Boto road those whose homes were burnt at the beginning of the year remain displaced in the bush.



The mission's team with the population of Fa

The field mission was organised with the help of the medical relief NGO Merlin, as well as the *United Nations Refugee Agency* (UNHCR) and the *World Food Program* (WFP). Several further missions with journalists are planned for the rest of the country to continue to highlight the plight of the displaced.

The workshop and mission to the field was organised as part of OCHA's campaign for the displaced.

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