

News bulletin

20 – 27 July 2009

Highlights

- LRA attack in Mboki, arrival of new refugees
- Coordination for food security in CAR
- Visit by the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs in CAR

Background and security

Attack by members of the LRA on Mboki, arrival of new refugees

On Friday 24 July, members of the *Lord's Resistance Army* (LRA) attacked Mboki village, 75km south-east of Obo in the far east of the Central African Republic.

At 10:00am, the group of armed men coming from the Mbomou river (the border with DRC) launched their attack on the market of Mboki, killing two traders and injuring six others. The traders, also armed, returned fire, killing three of the attackers and injuring others.

Supported by the local population, these Chadian traders followed the LRA rebels as they fled into the bush, and recovered the bodies of a further four who had succumbed to their injuries.

The 350 Congolese refugees who had fled the DRC and were already registered in Obo have now been joined by a further 248 new arrivals in Mboki, bringing the total number of refugees in the region to 598.

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Arrival of the DRC contingent of the MICOPAX peace-keeping force

22 July saw the departure of the contingent of the Republic of Congo (Brazzaville) in the peace-keeping force *Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in CAR* (MICOPAX), operating under the authority of the *Economic Community of Central African States* (ECCAS / CEEAC).

They have been replaced for the next six months by a contingent from the the *DRC Armed Forces* (FARDC), as well as a contingent of military police from Equatorial Guinea, replacing that of the departing Congolese.

The departure and arrival ceremonies took place at the MICOPAX base at Bangui M'Poko airport.

Current events

Contingency planning and rapid response in conflict and post-conflict situations

Saturday 25 July was the last day of a 5-day teacher training workshop on the culture of peace and the prevention of conflicts, which was organised by the *Programme of Education for Emergencies, and Reconstruction* (PEER) being implemented in CAR by the *UN Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization* (UNESCO) in partnership with the NGO *Japanese Centre for Conflict Prevention* (JCCP).

The workshop brought together 10 national NGOs, the Association of Women Jurists, the Central African Association for the Fight against Violence, the Islamic Foundation for Peace and Development in CAR, the Central African Youth Mission, Youth for the Protection of the Environment and Community Development, the Birao Community Radio, the Central African Human Rights Observatory, the CAR Women's Political Participation in Peace-building Platform and the Project for the Reduction of Small Arms.

The workshop was held to build and reinforce the capacities of civil society organisations and communities to anticipate, plan for and react to conflict and post-conflict situations.

The aim of the project is to contribute to the creation and strengthening of a network of local NGOs skilled at helping to prevent, respond to and resolve conflicts.

The workshop concluded by establishing a coordination team and an action plan for the following nine months, including awareness-raising, advocacy and capacity-building of community leaders to manage and mitigate conflicts in constructive, non-violent and sustainable ways. This is proposed to take place in five prefectures across the north: Ouham-Pende, Ouham, Nana-Gribizi, Bamingui-Bangoran and the Vakaga.

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Health

Yaloké to receive better healthcare

On 17 July, the Minister of Public Health André Nalké Dorogo presented medical materials to the Yaloké Health Centre, 200 km north-west of Bangui in Ombella M'Poko prefecture. The transfer was made in the presence of local dignitaries and the head of the health services for the town.

The materials included hospital beds, refrigerator, delivery tables, complete delivery kits, blood pressure metres, oxygen supply equipment, electrical generators, solar power installation, radiology equipment and more, and was financed through the partnership with the World Bank via the Emergency Project to support Health, Education and the Fight against HIV/AIDS.

Of the twelve health facilities to be provided with biomedical equipment as part of the health component of this project, the health centres of Boda, Gamboula, Bouar, Bambari, Bangassou and now Yaloké have already received their equipment. There remain the health posts of Bossangoa, Bouca, Mbrès, Dekoa, and Sibut which will receive theirs soon. The equipment for Birao has not yet been delivered.

This donation will improve the quality of healthcare provided to the local population as well as the working environment of the medical corps. During the presentation the Minister reminded doctors to ensure proper use of the material.

Responding, the town's sub-prefect thanked the Minister in the name of the local population and added that, now having the necessary medical equipment at the centre, they were missing an ambulance with which to evacuate people in emergencies.

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Coordination

Visit by the UN Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs to CAR

The Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator (DERC) and Assistant Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs Catherine Bragg visited the Central African Republic from 26 – 30 July. During her visit, she met with President François Bozizé and Prime Minister Faustin Archange Touadera. She also visited internally displaced people in and near the towns of Birao, Kabo and Paoua in the north-east, north and north-west of the country, and met with humanitarian actors.

At the end of her visit, she advocated with the authorities to ensure better access for humanitarian organisations to vulnerable populations isolated by insecurity and the bad state of the roads particularly during the rainy season.

She also stressed the need to strengthen the protection of civilians in the country. In certain areas in the north, the limited presence of security and police forces exposes civilians to serious rights

violations – often victims of the conflict between armed groups which causes them to flee their homes and seek refuge in the bush.

Ms Bragg lamented the decline in financing which humanitarian agencies are facing at a moment when humanitarian needs are increasing. For the rest of the year, humanitarian organisations still require \$48 million for the country's Consolidated Aid Programme (CAP), with which to improve assistance to the most vulnerable.

Coordination for food security in CAR

With 24 members (Mercy Corps, ACF, Solidarités, Première Urgence, ACTED, CRS, Caritas, Adem, Apilod, Jupedec, Paromel, Echelle, FAO, PAM, Coop, CICR, DRC, TGH), representatives of the state (ACDA, ICRA, ISDR, ANDE) et donors (European Union and the French Co-operation), the Food Security cluster presented their activities to the humanitarian community on 23 July.

The main objectives of this clusters are to promote better coordination at the national level of activities relating to food security being implemented by UN agencies and other stakeholders, as well as the exchange of expertise and information.

Amongst the activities undertaken by the cluster are the distribution of agricultural supplies and food, support to the livestock and market gardening sectors and the establishment of national indicators tracking food security.

Particular emphasis has been placed on cultivation of manioc (cassava) – the primary staple food of the local population – as well as the fight against diseases which afflict the crop and the distribution of more resistant varieties.

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