

News bulletin

17 – 24 August 2009

Highlights

- Humanitarian evaluation and response mission in Mboki/Obo
- DDR caravan in Bangui for awareness-raising campaign
- Arrival of UNDP country director

Background and security

Humanitarian evaluation mission in the far east

Following a recent spate of attacks by elements of the *Lord's Resistance Army* (LRA), both in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in several villages in the far east of the Central African Republic, including looting, abduction and killings, a joint mission comprising UN agencies and international and national NGOs left Bangui on Wednesday 19 August bound for Mboki and Obo.

The aim of the mission is both to evaluate current unmet needs and to deliver humanitarian aid to vulnerable people.

At the moment, the mission is in Mboki, 75km south of Obo. Initial analysis of the current situation concerning the number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and refugees present suggest a greater number than expected, and refugees continue to arrive.

A team from the *International Committee of the Red Cross* (ICRC) also left Bangui on 21 August bound for the far east.

On 17 August, a few days previously, inhabitants of Goubéré, 8km from Obo, spotted an LRA scout in the vicinity and called the Ugandan army contingent based in Obo to patrol the area. The scout was subsequently arrested and remains in detention.

Some inhabitants of Central African villages suffering from LRA attacks are believed to have fled to South Sudan.

For more information: Alexis Mbolinani, JUPEDDEC, (236) 70 98 50 02, mbolinani@yahoo.fr

Awareness-raising caravan for DDR in Bangui

On Saturday 22 August a caravan took to the streets of the capital to raise awareness and provide information on the Disarmament, Demobilisation and Reintegration (DDR) campaign, officially launched by the government on 13 August.

According to participants, the aim of the caravan is to explain the why and how of the DDR process to both ex-combattants and the general population of Bangui.

Organised by the Ministry of Communication and National Reconciliation, the caravan included banners throughout the city, and distributed T-shirts.

Current events

World Humanitarian Day celebrated in CAR

The inaugural World Humanitarian Day was celebrated on Wednesday 19 August in the capital, with a ceremony and an exhibition of UN agencies and national and international NGOs showcasing the various humanitarian activities currently being carried out in the country.



Head of OCHA's Paoua sub-office giving blood

Coordinated by the UN *Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* (OCHA), the celebration was attended by the Central African Prime Minister, Faustin Archange Touadera, the Special Representative of the Secretary-General of the United Nations, Ms Sahle-Work Zewde and the interim Humanitarian Coordinator, Ms Sitta Kai-Kai.

The day was an occasion for the general public to discover more about humanitarian work in different sectors, understand what projects are being carried out, how they are organised and financed, and how they benefit the population.

During the exhibition, films were shown highlighting the humanitarian situation in the north-west and the recent visit by the Under Secretary General for Humanitarian Affairs, Ms Catherine Bragg, allowing the people of Bangui to better understand the situation of IDPs and people living in vulnerable regions across the north.

In Paoua, in the north-west of the country, the local authorities joined the humanitarian communities in celebrating the day with various activities including donation of blood by staff and authorities to help the

regional hospital in Paoua, managed by the French division of *Medecins sans Frontieres* (MSF).

The aim of the blood drive is to help save lives in this area of the country which has seen years of military-political crises. The hospital currently has a severe shortage of blood, with 140 bags required for the paediatric ward alone. Needs are particularly high during the rainy season running from June to October, due to the elevated incidences of malaria with anemia.

For more information: Nick Imboden, OCHA, (236) 75 54 63 55, imboden@un.org

Visit of sites rehabilitated by the SSR programme

On Saturday 23 August, a delegation accompanied by members of the press and led by the Minister for Public Security Jules-Bernard Ouandé visited a number of different institutions in Bangui being rehabilitated as part of the CAR *Security Sector Reform* (SSR) programme.

The various institutions include the police stations of the 1st, 2nd, 5th and 8th districts, the Central African Anti-Drugs Office (OCLAD), the Central African Office for the Repression of Banditry (OCRB) and the Directorate of the Judiciary Police (DSPJ).

The visit concluded with a demonstration of the new patrol boat with room for up to 30 men, which will allow the police to make surveillance patrols along the Oubangui river, forming the border with neighbouring DRC.

According to the Minister, the visit highlighted both how much had already been completed, and how much there remained to do.

The SSR programme also includes, amongst other activities, the rehabilitation of prisons in major towns in other regions, and the establishment of separate prisons for women.

Coordination

Arrival of the new UNDP country director in CAR

On Monday 24 August, the recently arrived country director of the *United Nations Development Programme* (UNDP), Ms Anne-Marie Cluckers, met with her staff. Her arrival follows the departure of the previous country director late last year.

Of Belgian nationality, Ms Cluckers started her work with the UN in Tunisia more than 24 years ago. Most recently, she served as UNDP country director in Haiti under the framework of the *United Nations Mission for the Stabilisation of Haiti* (MINUSTAH), an integrated mission led by the UN's Department of Peace-keeping Operations.

For more information: Christian Aimé Ndotah, UNDP, (236) 75 50 55 45, christian.ndotah@undp.org

Humanitarian response of Shelter and NFIs cluster

The Shelter and NFIs cluster presented their activities to the humanitarian community on Thursday 20 August. Members of the cluster include UN agencies and the NGOs ACF, AMI, Caritas, COOPI, CREPA, CARC, IMC, IPHD, IRC, Mentor Initiative, Mercy Corps, NRC, Première Urgence, Solidarités and Triangle GH, with the ICRC and MSF branches as observers.

The cluster identifies appropriate indicators, develops methods for data collection, standardises the Shelter/NFIs kit used in CAR and the humanitarian assistance. Interventions are conducted throughout vulnerable regions with current particular emphasis on the north-east and the far east (the region around Obo).

Currently, contingency stocks sufficient for 37,500 people have been prepositioned in the towns of Bocaranga, Paoua and Bossangoa in the north-west, Kabo and Batangafo in the north, and Birao and Sam-Ouandja in the north-east.

During the period December 2008 to May 2009, the cluster has delivered NFIs to 67,599 vulnerable people. UNICEF has delivered 59,740 kits, UNHCR 4,575 and Triangle GH 3,244.

However, the cluster suffers both from under-funding and severe difficulties in reaching conflict-affected populations due to the extremely poor road infrastructure made worse by the rainy season.

For more information: Ibrahim Shire, UNICEF, (236) 75 57 72 72, ishire@unicef.org

For more information, please contact: **UN OCHA CAR** | **Boris Ngouagouni**, ngouagouni@un.org | +236 70.18.80.61