

HIGHLIGHTS

- CAR Government declares a cholera epidemic in the country on 10 August.
- 19 August, World Humanitarian Day celebrated in CAR. Tribute paid to fallen heroes.
- Multi-sectoral assistance including food security provided through cash and voucher projects.
- Communities take part in their own redress through the non-food items voucher system.

FIGURES

# of IDPs	384,000
# of refugees outside the country	468,000
Population in need of aid	2,3 M
Population affected by food insecurity	2,5 M

For more information, please visit www.unocha.org/car or www.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/operations/central-african-republic/ or

www.twitter.com/OCHA_CAR



Source: OCHA/Fultang

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- Targeted population receive US\$30 worth of vouchers to purchase non-food items P.6

Humanitarian Community responds to a cholera epidemic in CAR.

The CAR Government declared a cholera epidemic in the country on 10 August after samples taken tested positive for the cholera disease. As of 25 August, at least 235 cholera cases have been registered and 25 persons dead. The disease was detected in Mourou-Fleuve village, Djoukou sub-province (Kemo province) in the central region on 27 July. Reportedly, the disease was imported from the neighboring Democratic Republic of Congo where more than 60 cases and 2 deaths have been reported as of end of August. In response, the Public Health Emergency Operations Center activated its crisis unit at the Ministry of Health and the humanitarian community is actively supporting the Government's efforts to combat this deadly disease.

While commenting to the cholera epidemic in a press release, the Humanitarian Coordinator for CAR Fabrizio Hochschild said, "The UN and our humanitarian partners are fully committed to supporting the Government and local communities in addressing the current cholera epidemic. We will work together to contain the spread of the disease and to ensure that the people affected receive the necessary assistance,"

Humanitarian actors working in the sectors of health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH); led by the World Health Organisation (WHO) and the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) have set up a task force to ensure coherent and effective response to the crisis. Pre-positioned supplies are being used to provide immediate response while assessments to determine needs are ongoing. The WASH partners have set-up water chlorination points while also distributing water kits comprising of aqua tabs, jerry cans and soap among others. The health cluster is providing medical care to the people affected in the Cholera Treatment Centers. Community workers including the Red Cross and UNICEF volunteers are carrying out sensitization campaigns.

The humanitarian community is intensifying cholera sensitization campaigns including good hygiene practices countrywide. A toll-free number has been activated and remains operational for any cholera-related issues from the general public.

The Humanitarian Pooled Fund for CAR has allocated US\$1.5 million to the WASH and health response to the cholera epidemic. As most affected areas are along the Oubangui River, the Democratic Republic of Congo and CAR are coordinating response to this cross-border crisis. Access to basic social services in CAR healthcare remains challenging. The humanitarian community is providing 51% of medical services in the country.

World Humanitarian Day is celebrated in CAR

Every year on 19 August, World Humanitarian Day (WHD) recognizes the work of the aid workers who sometimes risk their lives in order to provide humanitarian assistance to the most needy around the globe. The campaign has gone from its inception in 2008 as a day to recognize humanitarian personnel and those who have lost their lives working for a humanitarian cause into a global campaign celebrating the spirit of humanitarianism, and mobilizing people to advocate for a more humane world.



August 2016. Bangui, CAR Participants observe a minute of silence in memory of fallen humanitarian heroes. Source: OCHA/Virginie Bero

the event was attended by about a thousand people. The main activities included: radio programmes, short plays, debates, games and a humanitarian fair and exhibitions. Celebrations took place in Bangui and in the regions of Nana Mambere, Nana Gribizi and Ouaka provinces.



August 2016. Bangui, CAR. Humanitarian Coordinator (L) and OCHA Head of Office (R) visit humanitarian stands and exhibitions. Source: UNDP/Jean Jona Tossa

In his speech, the Humanitarian Coordinator reiterated the tribute paid by the UN Secretary General, Ban Ki-moon to the fallen humanitarian heroes, in which he was quoted as follows. "I pay tribute to these dedicated women and men who brave danger to help others at far greater risk". In CAR, over 3,000 security incidents and 20 deaths have



August 2016. Bangui, CAR. Humanitarian photo exhibition during WHD. Source: OCHA/Laura Fultang

This year, the CAR Government and the humanitarian community joined the rest of the world to celebrate the eighth edition of the WHD under the global theme of "One Humanity". It was a unique opportunity to sensitize the population on the humanitarian activities, respect of humanitarian principles and the importance of unimpeded access to the people affected by the conflict in the country. Participants consisted of national authorities, members of the diplomatic corp, UN Representatives, beneficiaries, civilians, national and international humanitarian actors. The 19 August celebrations lasted all day and

In Bangui, the event was co-chaired by the Minister of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation, Her Excellency Virginie Mbaikoua and the Humanitarian Coordinator, Mr. Fabrizio Hochschild. During their respective speeches, they both conveyed a common message for peace and reconciliation. They also stated the need for better cooperation between humanitarian actors and national partners; to set the country on the path to development. They further stressed the need to link relief work with recovery and development work in line with the just ended World Humanitarian Summit in Istanbul.

been registered since 2013. The Humanitarian Coordinator highlighted some humanitarian gains since the beginning of the crisis. Over 480,000 people have access to emergency potable water; 170,000 people mostly internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees have received food assistance while 30,000 displaced children have access to education. He concluded with another quote from the UN Secretary General that "On this World Humanitarian Day, let us

unite in the name of humanity and show that we cannot and will not leave any one behind”.

The Humanitarian Coordinator visited the stands and exhibitions installed by humanitarian partners, and while speaking to international and national media; commended the dedication of humanitarian workers, who work in a neutral and impartial way to support vulnerable populations in CAR.

Food vouchers in CAR bring a glimmer of hope

According to the World Food Programme (WFP) and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), people in conflict-affected countries are up to three times more likely to be undernourished than those living in more stable developing countries. Conflict undermines food security in multiple ways: destroying crops, livestock and agricultural infrastructure, disrupting markets, causing displacement and creating fear and uncertainty. As for CAR, half of the country's 4.6 million people are in need of food assistance.



July 2016. Bangui, CAR Food voucher distribution.
Source: WFP/Bruno Djoyo

Food Security partners including WFP are providing assistance to the most vulnerable families in CAR through Cash Transfer Programming (CTP), encompassing a number of different mechanisms such as cash and paper vouchers, and sometimes including conditions for the assistance being provided (like cash-for-work initiatives). According to the initial stock taking exercise conducted through the Inter Cluster Coordination (ICC) and with support from the Agence Française de Développement (AFD) there are over 70 identified projects with a

cash and/or voucher component as an approach to provide multi-sector assistance – ranging from food security to building infrastructure and during emergency situation to early recovery and development. Provision of cash and/or vouchers, when appropriate, empowers the affected population to decide on their own how to meet their own needs using available local resources.



July 2016. Bangui, CAR. Madeleine exchanges her newly collected voucher for some food. WFP/Bruno

Three years of violence have taken a heavy toll on the people of CAR. In the capital, Bangui, the markets have recovered relatively quickly, however, enabling WFP to provide food vouchers. For thousands of people who have been formerly displaced or affected by the crisis, these vouchers bring a glimmer of hope and comfort.

Madeleine Wayembo lives in Bangui, with her eight children, five grandchildren, and her elderly mother. When renewed fighting erupted near her home last September, Madeleine was forced to flee to take her family to safety, like many of her neighbours in the 5th district who fled to the Saint Sauveur site for internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Madeleine and her family have since returned home but their situation remains precarious. “We have been living without any resources. Sometimes we go for two days without eating, and for three months we could not afford to buy any meat or fish,” says Madeleine - a widow and sole provider for the family. Since April, Madeleine has been receiving food assistance from WFP and its partner organization, Oxfam, in the form of food vouchers. This enables her to buy oil, manioc (a root vegetable also called cassava, a staple food in many central African diets), flour, groundnuts, meat, fresh and dried fish,

and several other items. She can cook for her family, and stock some of the items to feed her family throughout the rest of the month.

The food assistance has come at a critical moment for her family, she says. “Without this support, our situation would have become even worse,” she says. Though the vouchers can only be used to purchase certain items from markets or shops that are part of the programme, Madeleine says the freedom to choose from a range of items and buy the quantity that she needs is invaluable.

“The vouchers are like money. I can go to the market with them and buy what my family needs,” she says.

For Madeleine and her family, the vouchers bring a glimmer of hope, and the possibility to cook again a local delicacy – sticky manioc balls and fish cooked with herbs. “Thank you for coming to our home,” says Madeleine. “Thank you for this meal with my family.”

This year, WFP has provided voucher-based food assistance to nearly 60,000 people in Bangui through Oxfam and other partners.



July 2016. Bangui, CAR. Time for some smoked dried fish. WFP/Bruno Djoyo

The latest Emergency Food Security Assessment showed that more than half of the population - about 2.5 million people – faces hunger, the result of years of continuous violence and upheaval. While years of conflict have taken a heavy toll on the people of CAR, causing large-scale displacement and disrupting local agricultural production, the markets in Bangui recovered relatively quickly and are able to support the additional demand created by the vouchers. As markets start to stabilize and return to normalcy elsewhere in the country, WFP aims to increase its use of

market-based assistance to reach vulnerable populations and help the recovery of local economies.

An innovative voucher system for non-food items distribution

Humanitarian organisations are finding new ways of responding to the needs of vulnerable people affected by the CAR crisis. The need to empower the people affected by the CAR crisis is at the core of the system developed by the Lutheran World Federation (LWF) for non-food items (NFIs) distribution in the western part of the country.



July 2016. Nola, CAR. Trader in front of her stall ready to sell her goods. Source: LWF, Clémence Caraux-Pelletan

“It’s just like a market, we can choose ourselves what we need!” explains Charlotte, one of the 565 beneficiaries of the NFI Fair organized in Nola (Sangha Mbaere province) on 12 July.

On that day, 15 local traders had set up their stands and beneficiaries were busy choosing and negotiating for the items of their choice as they would do in a normal market. The only difference is that cash had been replaced by

vouchers and the “market” was set up in a football field.

Enabling beneficiaries to take an active part in their own redress

While moving away from basic distribution of ready-made kits, since 2014, LWF is ensuring that beneficiaries take an active part in their own redress. The system is simple - beneficiaries selected amongst the most vulnerable in their communities are given a voucher book containing different bills amounting to 18,000 FCFA (about US\$30). After which they are free to wander about the stalls of local traders; in search of the goods that they need and to spend as they would have in the market, using their vouchers.



July 2016. Nola, CAR. Beneficiary receiving a token for the fair at his home. Source: LWF, Clémence Caraux-Pelletan

importantly, the voucher system enables beneficiaries to be heard and considered as individuals with specific needs and desires. Through this assistance system, they are empowered; they feel dignified and participate actively in making decisions for themselves.

The items usually purchased by beneficiaries do not differ greatly from the contents of regular NFI kits. Buckets, basins, pots, mats, soap and blankets are typically amongst the goods that they take home with them. This system enables participants to choose the type and quality of the items they require. This helps in preventing them from selling goods after a distribution mostly because they received something they already had. Most

Reviving the local economy

LWF's fairs are organized with the participation of local traders, aiming to help in strengthening their businesses, making them more viable and able to play a more active



July 2016. Nola, CAR. Beneficiary with his wife and the goods purchased. Source: LWF, Clémence Caraux-Pelletan

role in re-building the local economy, which in most places, has been crushed by the crisis. Single traders however often do not have the resources to invest and come with well-furnished stands. In these cases, LWF sensitizes them on the importance of getting together and pooling resources by forming village trading cooperatives. Traders from different communities, as well as female traders are particularly encouraged to participate in order to be representative of the community and to foster gender equality and social cohesion.

This voucher system is particularly favorable in the western region of CAR (Sangha Mbaere, Mambere Kadei, Nana Mambéré and Ouham Pende provinces) due to a relatively stable security environment. The region's proximity to Cameroon also enables easy access to goods. Moreover, considering that spontaneous IDP and refugee returns are becoming more frequent in the region; these returns are increasing the humanitarian needs of host communities and returnee families who now seek to reintegrate the communities.

For more information on the NFI Fairs, contact LWF at eme.caf@lwdws.org.

Portrait of a local organization

“Arbre de vie” is a national NGO, established on 18 December 2013 and located in Bangui’s Galabadja neighborhood in the 8th district. Arbre de vie operates within the food security, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and education sectors. The NGO’s mission is to “Save and protect” the lives of populations in: conflict-affected, post-conflict, urban and rural areas.



Bangui, CAR, 15 July 2015. Distribution of kits to 40 groups. Source: Arbre de vie

The NGO’s main objectives are to promote agro-pastoral development, fight against food insecurity, promote the rights of vulnerable people, promote access to basic healthcare services, and fight against sexually transmitted diseases, HIV/AIDS, malaria and tuberculosis. It also addresses juvenile delinquency and promotes responsible sex education among youth.

Arbre de vie’s headquarter is in Bangui with branches in 10 towns: Bimbo, Bégoua and Damara (Ombella M’poko province), Gamboula, Carnot and Sosso’Nacombo (Mambéré Kadéï province), Mbrés (Nana-Gribizi province), Bakala (Ouaka province), Galafondo (Kémo province) and Batangafo (Ouham province).

In partnership with FAO, Arbre de vie implemented the 1st cycle of an agricultural program in Bangui’s 2nd, 4th, 5th, and 8th districts in July 2015. The 1st cycle of a market-gardening programme was also implemented in December 2015 at the M’Poko airport IDP site and five months later at the Ngola and Sakaye sites.

Within the WASH sector, Arbre de vie carried out a sensitization campaign on good hygiene practices and treatment of water canals in the neighborhoods of Bimbo 3&4 and Bégoua from 16 to 30 June. In September 2014, the organisation distributed NFI kits to 2,999 IDPs living with host families in Ngoulanga village.

With the support of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), Arbre de vie identified destroyed houses in Bangui’s eight districts and Bégoua town from 17 March to 20 April.

Arbre de vie’s main technical and financial partners are: the World Health Organisation, the Humanitarian Fund, FAO, HCR and the international NGO Concern.

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In brief

New initiative improves humanitarian access

Humanitarian access on the Kabo-Moyenne Sido axis (Ouham province) had been restricted since late April, following an attack on a humanitarian organisation. The implementation of a “Security Bubble” initiative, with active Force patrolling the region, has allowed humanitarian actors to resume operations, including food distribution to over 5,000 IDPs on the Cite de la Paix IDP site and to IDPs living with host families in Moyenne Sido.

Humanitarian organisations plan to resume activities after a brief suspension

Insecurity persists in Sibut (Kemo province) since 13 August after MINUSCA forces stopped a convoy of about 35 heavily armed men, 30 km south of Sibut. Following this incident, over 10 people were taken hostage by an unidentified armed group between 20 and 24 August; of whom three escaped. Local residents fear that intercommunity violence may be looming in the region; with the presence of armed groups in the bush, while security incidents have increased in the villages. Consequently, three international NGO (INGOs) working in the region temporarily suspend activities on the axis. On 26 August during a civil-military coordination meeting, these organisations decided to resume activities using the 'Security Bubble' initiative. This enables increased safety of movement on axis with access.

Persisting insecurity and financial constraints at the core of NGO departures

An INGO withdrew from the northern region due to logistical and security constraints. Meanwhile another INGO is slowly closing all its activities in CAR due to financial constraints. Local authorities and residents are concerned about the gap in healthcare provision these departures may cause. These problems are aggravated by difficult access to some regions due to poor road infrastructure. OCHA continues to advocate for strengthened security to enable unhindered humanitarian access, as well as for other organisations to come in and fill the gaps.

About 17 security incidents against NGOs in CAR

On 3 August, a truck transporting assistance for an INGO was attacked by armed men on the Batangafo-Bouca axis (Ouham province). The assailants took the passengers' money and the personal belongings. Between 1 and 15 August, at least 17 security incidents directly affecting NGOs in CAR were recorded. This is higher than the recorded 10 incidents over the same period in 2015.

1,712 households deprived of assistance due to poor road infrastructure

Poor road infrastructure continues to hamper humanitarian access, particularly during the April- September rainy season. Due to damaged roads, food distribution was suspended to 1,712 vulnerable households, or about 10,000 people, in the Gazi sub-province (Mambéré-Kadéi province) since the end of June. OCHA is supporting an initiative by the Logistics Cluster for resource mobilization to improve road access.

Over 6,000 Central African refugees have returned since January

According to UNHCR, a new wave of returns from Chad was recorded in July. The returnee families settled in Moyenne-Sido (Ouham province), a site for relocated households. Upon arrival, INTERSOS ensured their registration and highlighted that since the beginning of 2016, 112 households (440 individuals) have returned to the region. Overall, 6,597 Central African refugees have returned in 2016, from neighboring countries, the vast majority of whom (6,588) were spontaneous voluntary returns while nine cases were facilitated voluntary repatriation.

Funding situation overview

As of 31 August, the Humanitarian Response Plan requesting US\$531 is only 28 per cent funded. The newly allocated \$9 million from the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) grant will help mitigate the funding shortfall. This funding will support the further delivery of critical health and education services, access to food, emergency shelter, protection of women and girls, and water and sanitation. This grant brings CERF support to CAR and the neighboring countries since the beginning of the crisis in 2013 to \$100 million.

"The protracted CAR crisis has rendered 2.3 million people – almost half of the population, in dire need of protection and humanitarian assistance," said the Humanitarian Coordinator in CAR, Fabrizio Hochschild. "Access to basic social services

including healthcare, schools and potable water are among the priority needs of the most vulnerable people”, added Mr. Hochschild. More information on the CERF process is available on the following website: <http://www.unocha.org/cerf/resources/how-apply/underfunded-emergencies-0>

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