

HIGHLIGHTS

- In 2017, the humanitarian community will require 399.5 million dollars to meet the needs of 2.2 million Central Africans
- The increase in the number of hotspots in the Haute Kotto and Ouaka Prefectures is creating further displacements and could cause an exponential increase in the need for humanitarian assistance
- In 2016, the Humanitarian Response Plan requesting 531.5 million dollars was only 36.2% funded as of December 2016, putting the humanitarian response in a situation of chronic underfunding

KEY NUMBERS

# displaced persons	411,785
# Central African refugees	462,880
Population in need of humanitarian aid	2.2 M
Population affected by food insecurity	2 M

FUNDING

\$399.5 million

Funding required for the 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan

OCHA encourages partners and donors to report their budgeting through the Financial Tracking Service (FTS). This collective action enables the monitoring of the level of the Humanitarian Response Plan funding, analysis of the gaps and needs, and the making of appropriate strategic decisions for funding allocation. Taking part in the FTS contributes to transparency and accountability and helps to make the contribution of aid effective, efficient in a manner that respects humanitarian principles.



Summary

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2017-2019 Humanitarian Response Plan launched in Central African Republic

The Minister of Social Affairs and National Reconciliation, Virginie Baikoua, and the interim Humanitarian Coordinator, Doctor Michel N'da Konan Yao, officially launched the 2017 – 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan for the Central African Republic in Bangui on 13 January 2017. The massive presence of members of the Government, the Diplomatic Corps, representatives of the Humanitarian Country Team, national and international NGOs, media, as well as the United Nations Secretary General's Special Representative, Parfait Onanga Anyanga, highlighted the importance of this document.



©WFP/B. Ndoyo. Bangui, RCA (13 January 2017) – Left to right, Michel N'da Konan Yao, Virginie Baikoua and Parfait Onanga Anyanga officially launching the 2017-2019 Humanitarian Response Plan.

With the amount of \$399.5 million (US) for 2017, it is hoped that the basic needs of 2.2 million Central Africans will be met. Under its three strategic objectives, it is intended to save more lives, to enhance the protection of affected populations and to preserve human dignity by re-establishing access to basic social services and means of livelihood. This will be the first time that the government and the Humanitarian Country Team have developed a tri-annual plan. It will be reviewed regularly and adapted to needs. This revision will enable the identification of gap and as assessment of humanitarian funding.

The launch of the Humanitarian Response Plan gave Virginie Baikoua an opportunity to present the humanitarian situation in the CAR. For example, the second half of 2016 was marked by an increase in hotspots. The deterioration of the security situation has created new humanitarian emergencies and has exacerbated the vulnerability of more than 70,000 newly displaced persons. "It makes our protection and planning efforts difficult, and seriously hampers our humanitarian access" she emphasized.

The deteriorating security situation is happening in an "international context that is least amenable to providing funding for humanitarian actions. New crises are arising worldwide and capturing the attention of donors because of their urgency and impact on civilian populations", said Dr. Yao. In 2016, the \$531.5 million requested through the Humanitarian Response Plan was only 36.2% funded as of December 2016. This is also supported by Virginie Baikoua who said "we must continue our advocacy in order that the contributions announced in Brussels during the Conference of CAR donors on 17 November 2016 be materialized".

In order to help communities to be independent and to resist shocks, "we must continuously advocate to donors so that the Humanitarian Response Plan can be sufficiently funded to enable us to continue saving lives", she re-iterated. Similarly, Parfait

Onanga Anyanga reminded us of the clear link between humanitarian aid, post conflict recovery, development and peacekeeping. Its implementation resulting from the May 2016 Istanbul Humanitarian World Summit, will enable CAR to progress from humanitarian aid to recovery.

The Humanitarian Response Plan funding in US Dollars



Conflicts between armed groups in the Haute Kotto and Ouaka Prefectures hinder the protection of civilians

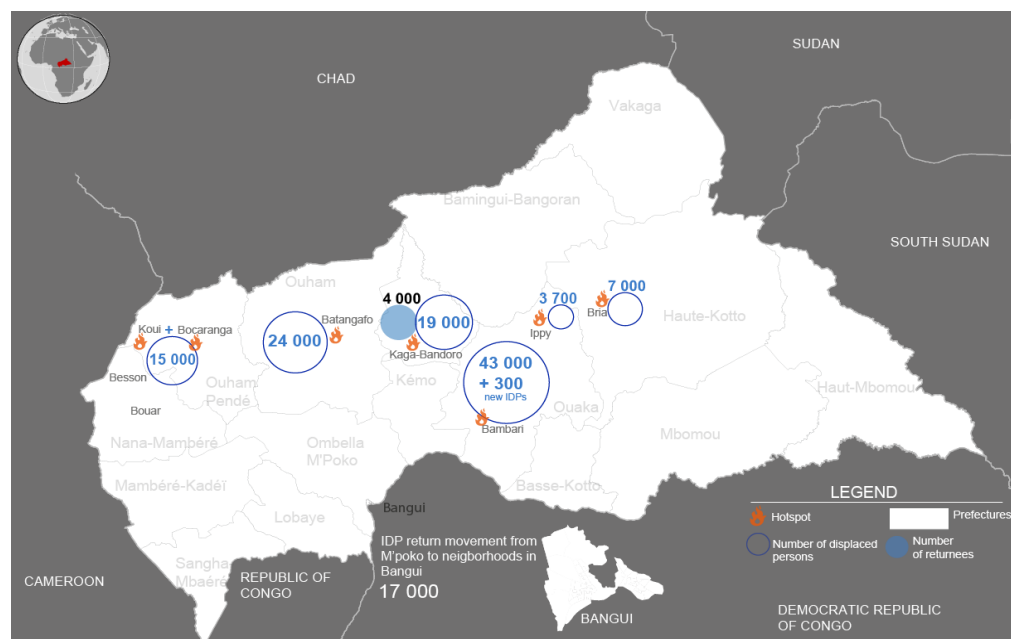
The 21 November 2016 crisis in Bria continues to have a negative impact on the humanitarian situation in the Haute Kotto and Ouaka Prefectures. Over the last two weeks in December 2016, the conflicts between rival armed are spreading into the highway between Bria and the town of Ippy situated about 100 km north of Bambari. The clashes are causing many problems for civilians and are resulting in new population displacements and new needs. Moreover, the ongoing hostilities caused severe traffic stoppage on the Bria-Ippy highway, an important route for transporting commercial goods and humanitarian supplies to Bria.

Newly displaced persons

The villages between Bria and Ippy have become empty because of fighting, threats and attacks against civilians. Several sources have reported the burning of villages and rampant looting by armed elements. Around mid-January 2017, violent clashes occurred in the Mbrouchou area (about 30km from Ippy), leading to the displacement of about 1,500 people towards Ippy. These internally displaced persons (IDPs) have added to the old case load of IDPs following previous waves of violence and security incidents in the area. This brings the number of displaced persons Ippy town to about 3,700.

More than 300 more people fleeing from the Ippy-Bria hostilities recently arrived in Bambari, while hundreds of others have been seen in the villages between Bambari and Ippy, namely in the villages of Tagbara, Boyo and Maloum.

The presence of displaced persons due to the same hostilities was reported in several villages between Bria and PK40, namely in the villages of Pananga (PK40) and Ngoubi (PK18), as well as the town of Bria.



In spite of the fragile security situation which sometimes restricts humanitarian access, displacement monitoring around the combat zone is ensured by humanitarian actors based in Bambari and Bria. Thus, health and nutrition actors in Bambari have been working to increase the capacity of the Ippy Health Centre, mainly through donations of medical and nutritional supplies from WHO and UNICEF. This allows the personnel to address the influx of displaced people in the town and to respond to some medical emergencies (such as first-aid for the injured). These actions will soon be increased with the permanent support of the NGO COHEB as part of the implementation of a Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) project in partnership with WHO. The WFP is also ready to distribute food rations to the displaced people. In addition, Bambari staff are awaiting the results of the multisectoral assessment presently being conducted by the ACTED RRM in the area before responding appropriately in the sectors of shelter-NFI (Non-Food Items) and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH). In the meantime, the government partner ANEA (Agence Nationale de l'Eau et Assainissement), in partnership with UNICEF, is currently working to restore the 5 damaged water supply sites in the town of Ippy. In Bambari, the approximately 300 newly displaced persons from the Ippy-Bria area who have settled on the Elevage site have just received NFI assistance from the ICRC. This partner also announced that it will soon provide assistance in the form of food to these displaced people. The WASH sector staff are working diligently on this site in order to deal with the continued influx of displaced persons.

As for Bria, displaced persons who continue to arrive in town receive assistance from the response team set-up by the humanitarian actors after the 21 November crisis.

The total number of displaced persons in Bria is estimated at 8,000, of whom 2,600 are on the PK3 site located near the MINUSCA base.

These displaced people are composed of those who have either fled their region because of the 21 November fighting and were unable to return home due to ongoing insecurity and fear reprisals based on the community they belong to or the newly displaced people who are running away after having been caught between armed rival groups in the surrounding area; mainly around the Bria-Ippy and Bria – Irabanda - Attongo Bakari axis (South of the Ippy/Ouaka Sub-Prefectures). In December 2016, a group of about 1,100 displaced persons was also reported to be in the village of Ngoubi, located 18 km from Bria on the Bria-Ippy axis. Similarly, to the displaced persons in Bria, the group in Ngoubi has been receiving multisectoral assistance since December from the humanitarian community in Bria. Depending on humanitarian access, assessment missions are being planned for other villages besides Ngoubi, where the presence of displaced people has been reported.

The town of Bria is increasingly being isolated

Another adverse effect of the Bria-Ippy conflicts is the isolation of Bria. The traffic disruptions on this highway (the main supply route to Bria), following the conflicts between armed groups since December 2016, combined with the heightened insecurity on the surrounding highways since the 21 November fighting, is already causing basic food shortages and soaring prices in local markets. In a press statement released on 12 January 2017 regarding the humanitarian situation, the President of the Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra, recalled "that the soaring price of basic food could lead to unrest that the Central African Republic does not need". This isolation also has a detrimental impact on humanitarian activities. Indeed, the Bria-Ippy route is also a corridor used by humanitarian convoys.

A call from the Humanitarian Coordinator to preserve humanitarian access in Bambari

In addition to the humanitarian impact which is already strongly felt in the neighbouring province of Ouaka, the ongoing hostilities on the Ippy-Bria axis, could lead to an even more disastrous humanitarian deterioration. Rumors about this eventual development are already causing the recurring tensions and fear which is forcing some residents to leave town.

In a 25 January 2017 press release, the Humanitarian Coordinator Dr. Michel Yao, called on armed groups and all non-State actors not to lose sight of the impact that a violent conflict has on an already precarious civilian situation. He urged them not to jeopardize the achievements made in the last two years, not only in terms of reconciliation and social cohesion, but also in improving the humanitarian situation. "With a population of 42,000 residents and more than 26,000 displaced persons, an open conflict in Bambari would devastate the civilians" declared Dr. Yao. Civilians have already endured the consequences of several waves of violence instigated by armed groups. "The probability of such a conflict would lead to an increasingly fragile and dangerous situation for the displaced population whose vulnerability is still, in many ways, a major concern", added the Humanitarian Coordinator.

"With its population of 42,000 residents and more than 26,000 displaced persons, an open conflict in Bambari would be devastating for civilians", Dr Michel Yao

M'Poko site closure: Fondo district returnees re-establish a normal life

More than a month after the launch of the "Noël à la maison" operation, small groups of formerly displaced persons from the M'Poko site located on the premises of the Bangui International Airport are returning to their former Fondo neighborhood in the 5th district and are restoring their destroyed homes. Launched on 15 December 2016 by the President of the Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra, the operation is renewing the hope of thousands of Central Africans who left their homes and who found refuge at the M'Poko site when violence erupted three years earlier.

The M'Poko Site was the largest one in the capital with a population of more than 28,000 displaced persons. Now, it is almost empty. Some of the displaced have returned to their former neighborhoods in the 3rd and 5th districts. Returnees to the Fondo district appear optimistic and cheerful in spite of the challenges they face. Everything has to be restored for the 3,922 families who, on 15 January 2017, chose to return to what was once their

"I decided to leave the M'Poko site and to set up my shelter in my compound until my house is built. I live with my children and my mother who is ill. It is not easy, but I prefer to be at home" Annette

©OCHA/Yaye N. SENE. Fondo, 3^e arr. de Bangui, Ombella M'Poko Prefecture, RCA (2



0January 2017) – A woman arriving at the M'Poko site with her personal belongings.

"The issue is huge. The deteriorating food situation is running the risk in my country of destroying the peace that is still so fragile. It threatens to jeopardize all our efforts at reconciliation and cohesion between the sons and daughters of the Central African Republic", underscored President Touadéra

neighbourhood more than three years ago. An estimated 12,000 people lived in Fondo before the crisis.

With smiles on their faces and building materials surrounding them, some are busy clearing properties overgrown by weeds. Others are already laying down clay bricks to rebuild damaged homes. While waiting for their houses to be livable again, Fondo residents took down the shelters they were using on the M'Poko site and are using them as shelters on empty lots. Annette, a widow with four children is a pioneer. Indeed, she was the first one to re-settle in Fondo. Proud of her courage and happy to be back home, she recounts her journey. "Just after the launch of the "Noël à la maison" operation, I decided to leave the M'Poko site and set up my tent on my property until my house is built. I live with my children and my mother who is ill. It is not easy, but I prefer to be at home", she said.

Annette's tough decision has motivated many more to come back and rebuild their neighbourhoods. In the bright sunlight, spade in hand and covered in mud, Moussa, a young man in his twenties, is making bricks for building his house. Like many other young people in the area, he has decided to bring his family back to Fondo, in spite of the less than welcoming environment.



©OCHA/Yaye N. SENE. Fondo, 3^e arr. de Bangui, Ombella M'Poko Prefecture, CAR (6 January 2017)
– Moussa and his friends are rebuilding the house where his family will live as soon as it is habitable.

Challenges remain behind the smiles and determination

After three years of living on the M'Poko site, residents of the Fondo district are putting their "displaced lives" behind them and finding pleasure again in returning home. But this is not without its challenges. Not having a real roof over their head is the first challenge they face. Three-quarters of the residents continue to live in tents as they did on the displacement site. While they wait for their homes to be completely restored, tarpaulins are providing shelters for families even though the solution is precarious.

The lack of running potable water is another problem many residents have had to deal with. A single entry point for water from the Société centrafricaine de distribution d'eau en Centrafrique (SODECA), serves all district residents. The wells are not functional due to a lack of maintenance or contamination from the presence of human remains. According to some of the local residents, wells were used as burial sites during the crisis.

In addition to having water, sanitation and hygiene needs, returnees are faced with food and nutrition insecurity. In order for families to survive and while waiting for better times, some women have planted vegetable gardens on their property. Others have chosen to invest part of the money received from the Government to assist in relocation by launching small revenue generating enterprises. These are basically selling food supplies, tobacco and various items.

At the same time, many children no longer have access to education. At the M'Poko site, they were able to take part in the activities of Espaces temporaires d'apprentissage et protection d'enfants (ETAPE). This break in their schooling comes at a poor time when families are hoping to return to normal living conditions. There are also no health facilities in the area. This affects particularly women, children and the elderly.

In addition to the lack of basic social services, community consultations held by the Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), has highlighted the needs of those in shelters. In the majority of cases, families continue to live under tarpaulins while they wait for their homes to be restored. Protection was another important issue raised. Indeed, self-defense militia groups move freely in the district and sometimes rob returnees of their meagre belongings.



©OCHA/Yaye N. SENE. Fondo, 3^e arr. de Bangui, Ombella M'Poko Prefecture, CAR (20 January 2017)
– The only source of water in the district supplying the bare minimum.

Having learned from past experience, reconciliation and social cohesion have become mantras for the returnees. Properties belonging to Muslims were cleaned up as instructed by the district Head. "They can return anytime they wish. We have no problem with them", said one resident.

Indeed, life is returning to normal in Fondo, but there is still a lot to do. Concerned about the heightened vulnerability still affecting the overall returnees in the district, the humanitarian community is already at work conducting a multi-sectorial assessment in order to provide assistance adapted to needs.

President Touadéra calls on the international community not to forget or ignore the crisis in the Central African Republic

In December 2016, the World Food Program (WFP) announced that, as of January 2017, it would not be able to supply food aid due to lack of financial resources. This interruption in the supply has been aggravated by the degradation of the security situation which has led to more than 70,000 newly displaced persons between September and December 2016. The WFP, a key player in the battle against food and nutritional insecurity, generally provided aid to 400,000 people, 140,000 of whom are displaced and 9,900 are refugees.

Faced with this critical situation, the President of the Republic, Faustin Archange Touadéra published an appeal calling on the humanitarian community not to forget or ignore the crisis in the Central African Republic.

"The issue is huge. The deteriorating food situation is running the risk in my country of destroying the peace that is still so fragile. It threatens to jeopardize all our efforts at reconciliation and cohesion among the sons and daughters of the Central African Republic. In this context, a spike in the price of basic foodstuffs could cause unnecessary disruptions in the Central Africa ", stated Archange Touadéra.

Among the newly displaced persons in Kaga Bandoro, Bria and Bambari, 36,800 are affected by food insecurity in the Central African Republic.

To address this emergency, the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator, Stephen O'Brien, approved the allocation of 6 million dollars to the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), or more than 3.5 billion CFA francs to enable the World Food Program (WFP) to come to the aid of vulnerable populations.

The CERF allocation means that about 3,596 tons of food supply and coupons will address emergency food needs for 4 months. In Bria and its surrounding area, about 12,800 people are affected, 10,000 in the Bambari and Grimari region and 14,000 in the Kaga Bandoro area will receive vital assistance. In December 2016, the Emergency Humanitarian Fund reserve for CAR had already planned to allocate a million dollars to the response.

The 65% of Central Africans whose means of livelihood is agriculture were unable to plant in 2016 due to food insecurity. Moreover, it should be noted that in 2017, 1.6 million Central Africans are still in need of humanitarian assistance. For example, only in the prefecture in Mambéré-Kadeï, 335,822 persons are affected by insecurity, of which 179,006 are in severe food insecurity. In the neighbouring Ouham-Pendé Prefecture, 8% of the population suffers from severe food insecurity and 48% of them are affected by moderate food insecurity.

"The results of the last Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA 2015), conducted nationally, showed that about half of the people in CAR (49%), are affected by food insecurity and close to 15 percent of the population, or 750,000 people, suffer from severe food insecurity" indicated a WFP data collection report (mVAM).

Promoting food and financial independence for women

The Central African Republic's economy depends on the primary sector. Before the crisis, the agricultural sector involved 70 % of the active population and represented 50% of the du Gross Domestic Product (GDP). In spite of very favorable weather conditions, agricultural production is never sufficient to meet the needs of the population. One political and military crisis after another has put an end to this sector which is so vital for the rural population, who does not always have access to imported foods. Women and children are most affected by food and nutritional insecurity. One woman, Marie Olive Gloria Gbougba, who is aware of the issue, has decided to make it her cause.

To promote food independence for women, in November 2008, she created the NGO Genre, paix et développement (GEPAD) (Gender, Peace and Development) in Kpangba, located 15 kilometers from Bangui. Some twenty women and men from the village immediately joined her in the initiative.

On a one-hectare lot, GEPAD is beginning to see its first agricultural products with the planting of cassava, sweet potatoes and 1,200 feet of yams. The commercialization of the first harvest allowed the group to have a better financial base and to enlarge the lot. So in 2009, 1,500 feet of planted yams produced a bountiful harvest which was sold to public institutions such as the Complexe pédiatrique de Bangui, the Béal Camp Mess and the UNDP canteen.

As a result of its successes, GEPAD has obtained the partnership of the Lutheran Evangelical Church and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) which will provide seeds.

They will be distributed to organization members for their own use and for sale. Thus, GEPAD will have achieved the double goals of food self-sufficiency and financial independence for its members.

The NGO's growth, that seemed so promising, was interrupted in 2013 during the last political and military crisis. Cultivations were vandalized and property was stolen. It rose again out of its ashes in 2015 with even more determination. With the support of the FAO, and starting in 2016, GEPAD increased its aid and expertise to 1,500 groups of cultivators in the Ombella M'Poko Prefecture, namely in the Landjia, MBoko and Possel region where cultivating kits containing tools and seeds were distributed. In this same region, it also provided training to 2,000 kit recipients on cultivating techniques, and to 120 community liaison personnel to help cultivators with their daily tasks.

The GEPAD NGO also provides assistance in the eight districts in Bangui, as well as in Bégoua and Bimbo. Thanks to the FAO support, 576 agro-pastoral groups received cultivating kits. The NGO is planning to provide assistance to all the towns in the Central African Republic. Part of this objective has already materialized as GEPAD now has antenna offices in Bambari in the Ouaka Prefecture, Dékoa in the Kémo and in the Nana Gribizi prefecture. In Ouham, GEPAD has a focal point in Batangafo, Paoua in Ouham, and Boda in the Lobaye.

This desire to cover the entire country is not without its challenges. "Insecurity, the lack of logistics, and the delay in



©GEPAD. Raising awareness at the Damara axis in the Ombella M'Poko Prefecture

receiving funding from partners represent major difficulties", stated the president, Marie Olive Gloria Gbougala.

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Good news: Concern Worldwide innovates with a lower cost drilling technique

With a population of about 10,000, the town of Kouango centre (the Ouaka Prefecture, some 200 km South-West of Bambari) has 9 sites of drinking water taps. The international standard for a population this size is 20 drilled sites. In spite of the unstable security situation in the Ouaka Prefecture since the 21 November 2016 conflicts between rival armed groups, some commendable initiatives are underway in Kouango Centre to ensure that the population has access to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

The international NGO Concern Worldwide (CWW), revolutionized manual well drilling thanks to a technique called " Village Drill", after the November 2016 crisis.

The technique costs 25% less than that of the mechanical drilling method. Because of this, at least 5 to 7 wells can be drilled in less time. Three new wells are now being drilled in Kouango Centre to provide 1,500 persons with access to drinking water. This new initiative will reduce the pressure on the use of existing tap water sites which often break down because of over-use.



©VWW. Kouango, Ouaka Prefecture – Workers renovate drilling equipment with the help of the "Village Drill" innovative technique.

This innovative technique which should be widely used in the CAR, is a real bonus for solving the problems of well drilling. A few organizations working in this sector have already shown an interest in adopting the technique.

Thanks to funding provided, CWW is planning to drill 28 wells in 2017. Some 14,000 people in the Kouango Sub-Prefecture will benefit from these. Indeed, this is one of the sub-prefectures most in need of drinking water. Access to drinking water is estimated to be 5% and one water tap site is used by 9,777 people (the standard is 500 people). The wells drilled

by Concern Worldwide in 2017 will increase access to drinking water from 5% to 22%. When the number of drilled wells are combined with the number of repaired wells and the protected sources being constructed by Concern Worldwide, access to drinking water in the sub-prefecture could increase up to 50% in 2017.

This partner has been providing assistance in CAR since 2014 in the WASH and food security sectors and the enhancement of means of livelihoods, as well as health and nutrition in communities affected by the crisis. CWW opened its base in Kouango in July 2015.

In Brief

End of cholera and Monkey Pox epidemics in the Central African Republic

On January 4 2017, the Ministry of Public Health and Population announced the end of the epidemics of cholera and Monkey Pox in the Central African Republic. Thanks to the concerted effort of humanitarian personnel and health authorities, these two epidemics were brought under control just in time. The cholera epidemic was declared on August 10, 2016 in Djoukou and in Zawara, located in the Kémo Prefecture in the heart of Central Africa and in Bangui. A total of 266 cases were recorded, with 21 deaths. The Monkey-Pox epidemic was declared on September 22, 2016 in the villages of Dalakere and Réou 4 and 5 in the sub-prefecture of Mingala in Basse-Kotto, 19 cases were recorded.

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