



West and Central Africa: Flood preparedness and response; Appeal extension; Focus on activities in the Central African Republic

Emergency appeal n° MDR61003
Operations update n° 3
4 December, 2008

This Emergency Appeal has been extended to the end of March, 2009, to cover response activities in the Central African Republic (CAR) and other countries in Central Africa as needs arise. There is no budget extension to the appeal as all activities can be included in the existing budget.

Period covered by this update: 8 October to 18 November, 2008.

Appeal target (current): CHF 1,082,233 (USD 989,244 or EUR 689,320).

Appeal coverage: 58%; [click here to go directly to the updated donor response report, or here to link to contact details](#)

Appeal history:

- This Emergency Appeal was initially launched on a preliminary basis on 11 July 2008 for CHF 750,000 for 2 months to assist 47,500 beneficiaries.
- Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF): CHF 483,047 was allocated from the Federation's DREF to support the National Societies and contingency stocks.
- Operations Update no. 1 was issued on 14 August, 2008.
- The Appeal was revised and extended on 11 September 2008, bringing the overall appeal budget to CHF 1,082,233 (USD 983,845 or EUR 670,111), and extending the operation through the end of November 2008.
- The Appeal was again revised on 4 December to extend the operation to the end of March 2009.



Treatment of a water point in Nola, Central African Republic

Summary: Climate predictions of especially heavy rains for the 2008 rainy season in West Africa were realized, with rainfall reaching 500 mm per day and flooding affecting river bank regions in Togo, Benin, Senegal, Gambia and Liberia. The climate forecasts now predict heavier than normal precipitation for certain zones of Central Africa for the months of October-December 2008. These heavy rains have already begun to appear, particular in the Central African Republic (CAR). This appeal therefore is being extended to support the National Society in the CAR and others in the Central Africa region to respond to flooding as additional countries are affected.

Additional countries are affected by smaller-scale flooding. Serious flooding has also affected

Cameroon and Chad and a separate appeal was launched for these two countries to assist 1,290 families in Chad and 2,946 in Cameroon. The emergency stocks in Yaoundé provided by that appeal has been used to support these National Societies.

The Red Cross Society of the CAR, with support from the International Federation, has been providing humanitarian assistance to 795 beneficiaries affected by the floods caused by the torrential rainfall during August, September and October. The National Society has procured non-food items (NFI) and has mobilized its volunteers and staff in the affected communities to distribute the items to the most vulnerable families. To prevent the potential outbreak of epidemics, trained Red Cross volunteers have been carrying out health education and good hygiene practice dissemination in the target communities.

This appeal has been extended to the end of March 2009; a Final Report will be made available by the end of June 2009 (three months after the end of the operation).

[< here to link to a map of the affected area; or here to view contact details>](#)

The situation

The African Centre of Meteorological Applications for Development (ACMAD) climate forecast for Central Africa for October to December 2008 states that in general, the sub-region will be characterized by normal to excess rainfall. The figure below shows the rainfall forecast for the period in the sub-region.

- **Zone I** covering the coast of Cameroon, Equatorial Guinea, Gabon and Congo will be characterized by normal to excess rainfall.
- **Zone II** covering the centre of southern Cameroon, north-east Equatorial Guinea and Gabon, through the centre of the Congo and southern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) will be characterized by normal rainfall.
- **Zone III** covering the north and east of Cameroon, the far north of the Congo, CAR, central and eastern DRC will be characterized by normal to excess rainfall.

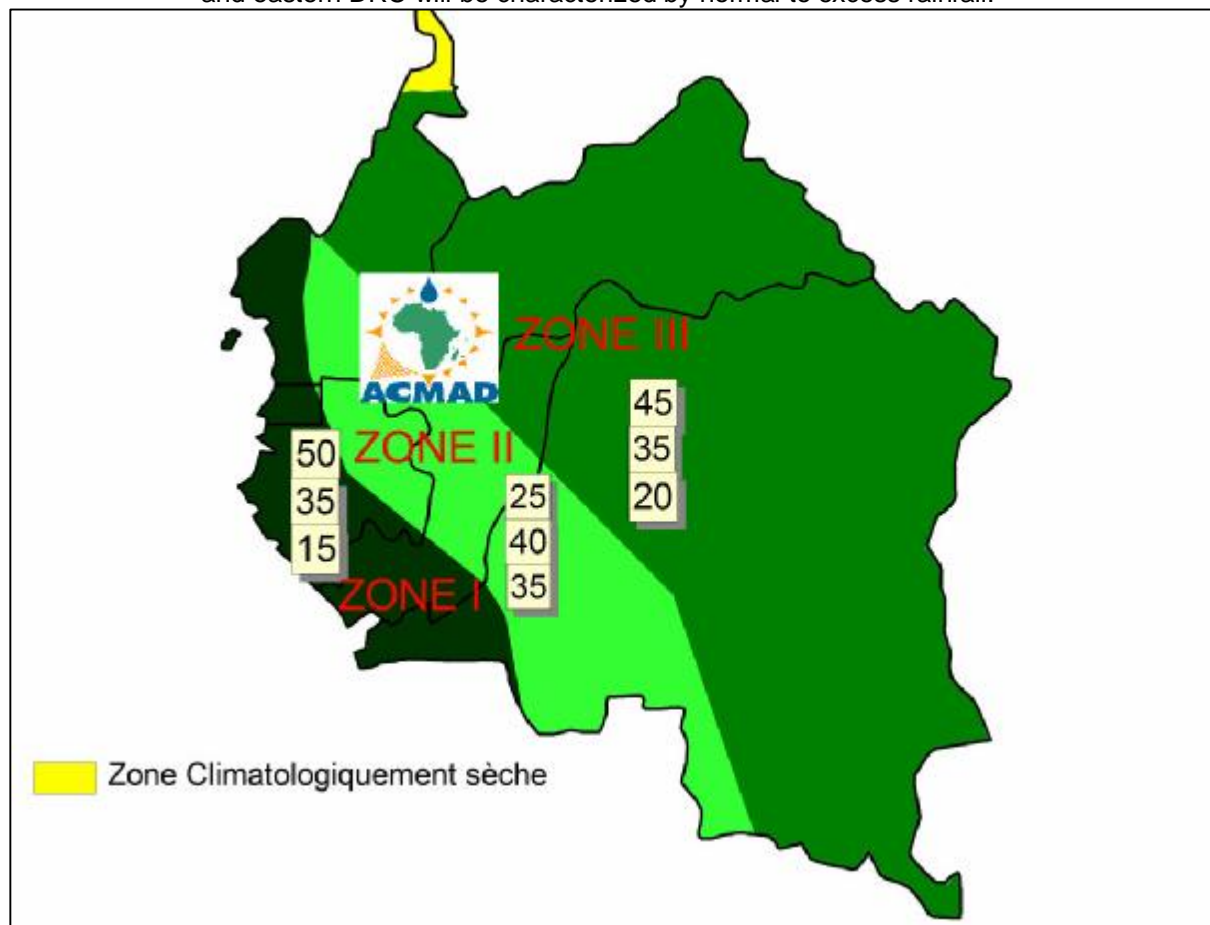


Figure: Precipitation Forecast for the period October, November, December 2008 in Central Africa. ACMAD.

Key	
Percentage likelihood of:	
A	Above-normal rainfall
N	Near-normal rainfall
B	Below-normal rainfall

Zone I is predominately a forest region with a high capacity for water absorption and is traversed by rivers which can evacuate the water (as in Gabon). Due to river flows, cities in Zone I are affected by rains originating in both zones I and III. Zone III however, which has a high probability of excess precipitation, is historically affected by floods in urban settings, leading to urban disasters. Recent examples include floods in Douala (Cameroon), Pointe Noire and Brazzaville (Republic of Congo) and Kinshasa (DRC). Floods in Brazzaville and Kinshasa are due both to flash/heavy rains and to the increase in the level of the Congo River, as areas of both cities are below river level and become flooded when the river reaches its highest point.

In Central Africa the flood season often starts in October and lasts until January and this year floods have already taken place in Cameroon, Chad, and the Republic of Congo. The Zone has now received a request for assistance from Congo, Brazzaville, and is supporting the National Society through the West and Central Africa Floods preparedness and response appeal. To enable the Zone to support National Societies, including the CAR National Society with small and medium scale floods, we are proposing the extension of this appeal until March 2009. The next update will provide more information about the action / assistance provided to date to the respective countries.

Central African Republic

In the CAR, heavy rains fell in the Mambere Kadei Prefecture from 2-3 August, resulting in floods and a landslide in Berberati, an area located 600 km north west of Bangui, the capital, along the border with Cameroon. The zones that were most affected were Ndembo and Batali, in the 6th and 3rd subdivisions of Bangui, respectively. According to the results of an evaluation conducted by Red Cross volunteers of the Berberati local committee, the landslide killed three children, affected 51 families and left 795 people homeless. One hundred fourteen (114) houses were also destroyed, 31 partially and 83 completely. Six CAR Red Cross volunteers were injured as they tried to save vulnerable people and remove the corpses that had been buried by the landslide. This was because of a lack of protective equipment.

In Berberati the immediate flood emergency has passed, but there are continuing landslide and erosion problems, large ditches left by water paths, and hygiene and sanitation problems. Access to clean water is difficult in some districts because of an insufficient number of potable water distribution points. Water points have been contaminated by flood waters and the content of destroyed latrines. Children below the age of five are living under life threatening conditions. In Nola six neighbourhoods were flooded, but in this region the immediate emergency has passed.

Floods this year have caused significant damage in several other localities. External support is required to enable the CAR Red Cross to provide additional assistance to the most vulnerable affected people.

Coordination and partnerships

Local government authorities accompanied Red Cross volunteers and authorities during the evaluation of the situation in the field. The Representative of the Ministry of Social Affairs who was part of the evaluation team has sent a report to his Ministry. Apart from that, the only actor assisting people affected by the floods and landslides in the field is the CAR Red Cross Society, with the support of the Federation through an RDRT member deployed for the operation.

During this operation a working session was held with the mayor and sub-prefect committee to ensure that they have access to information regarding different aspects of the response, and to ensure their support and cooperation.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The overall Zone strategy for the 2008 flood season is based on "**Early Warning – Early Action**". The prediction received at the Zone level from ACMAD and Columbia University IRI was shared with National Societies and DM focal points in flood prone countries. This information was made understandable for communities and sent to Red Cross and Red Crescent branches, local partners and local authorities.

All actions are based on the early warning system in place in each country. Trained volunteers in each flood prone country organized awareness campaigns and helped communities to undertake the appropriate community-based actions to reduce the impact of the floods.

The Zone has also deployed an RDRT member to support the National Society to distribute NFIs and food items to beneficiaries, to create and implement a distribution plan, to carry out volunteer training and to monitor and report on the Red Cross' proposed plan of action.

Red Cross volunteers have also been trained on flood management, specifically on the role of volunteers in disasters, the PHAST approach, techniques for water source treatment and on dealing with diseases related to water and hygiene. In total 46 volunteers were trained (24 in Berberati and 22 in Nola). This provides the National Society with an added value in flood preparedness and response. Methods to develop a seasonal calendar and risk maps have been explained to the trainees.

Progress towards objectives

Relief distributions (food and basic non-food items)	
Objective: Contribute to improving the living conditions of 795 persons (159 families) affected by flood in Berberati, Nola and Ngaoundaye through the distribution of non-food items.	
Expected results	Activities planned
159 families have each received non-food items, including mats, soap and blankets.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchasing the non-food items to be distributed (blankets, mats, buckets and soap) and transporting them to the flood-affected localities. Distributing the non-food items to identified 159 families. Reporting on the distribution. Monitoring the situation to verify any further needs.

Progress: In CAR, stock locally procured included: 200 blankets, 200 sleeping mats, 2,100 bars of soap (400g), and buckets. Both the NFI and operational costs for distribution are covered by the West and Central Africa Flood preparedness appeal.

All the items planned have been purchased, but so far, only half of them have been distributed; i.e. 100 blankets, 100 mats and 100 pieces of 400g-soap. These items have been distributed to 95 families, i.e. 59% of targeted families, 75 families in Berberati and 20 in Nola. The remaining stock is planned for distribution in the Ngaoundaye region; this distribution will be carried out in collaboration with the ICRC because of the presence of rebels in the Ngaoundaye region.

Water, sanitation, and hygiene promotion	
Objective: Facilitate the access of 95 flood-affected families to potable water, and promote hygiene and sanitation rules on their behalf.	
Expected results	Activities planned
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The flood management capacities of the Red Cross volunteers in Berberati and Nola are built through training and learning-by-doing. At least 75% of the population in Berberati and Nola have access to potable water Gutters are cleaned in Berberati and Nola At least 90% of the population in Berberati and Nola are sensitised to hygiene and sanitation rules and respect them. The intervention capacities of the local Red Cross committees concerned are built through the provision of relief and sanitation materials. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Purchasing sanitation kits and transporting them to affected localities. Training and/or retraining Red Cross volunteers on water treatment. Treating water points, cleaning gutters and draining waste water. Sensitising the population to hygiene and sanitation rules. Advocating for other partners involvement in the operation. Reporting on water and sanitation activities.

Progress:

- 46 volunteers have been trained on disaster management, the PHAST process, water treatment techniques, and water-borne, hygiene related diseases in Berberati and Nola.
- After the training, practical exercises were conducted on a few water wells to ensure good mastery of the techniques. Thereafter, the volunteers have been divided into four groups to continue the work within the communities.
- 18 water wells in Berberati and 209 water wells in Nola have been disinfected.
- Purchase of sanitation kits (15 pairs of gloves, 7 wheelbarrows, 15 picks, 15 shovels, 15 rakes, 15 pairs of boots)
- Purchase of 8 volunteer first aid kits
- Sanitation kits (wheelbarrows, shovels, boots, picks, gloves, rakes) were provided to local committees of Nola and Berberati and to enhance their operational capabilities for community based sanitation activities.

Sanitation Kits distributed

	Berberati	Nola	Total
Wheelbarrow	4	3	7
Pick axe	10	5	15
Shovel	10	5	15
Rake	10	5	15
Gloves	10	5	15 pairs
Boots	10	5	15 pairs
Volunteer first aids kit	5	3	8

Challenges:

- There is a real hygiene and sanitation problem in the affected localities and intensified sensitisation efforts are required to enable the populations to adhere to and involve themselves in community-based sanitation activities.
- The awareness of the communities needs to be raised regarding the risks surrounding them, as well as on the need for them to get involved in mitigation activities.
- The presence of rebels in the Ngaoundaye prevented the training of volunteers in this region.



Offering of sanitation equipment to the mayor for the Prefect of Berberati



Furnishing of a kit to a head of household

National Society Capacity Building and Impact

All relief and sanitation materials have been purchased locally and put at the disposal of the local Red Cross committees for distribution. The experience of this response and RDRT assistance will strengthen the capacity of the National Society to intervene in subsequent operations. This operation has also strengthened CAR Red Cross volunteer capacity and enhanced the visibility of the National Society by demonstrating their relief capacity.

Regional Issues

A portion of the Spanish Agency for International Development Cooperation (AECID) stock in Dakar, labeled with Spanish Red Cross stickers, has been distributed in Gambia and Senegal in response to floods (see earlier appeal documents for details). The Danish Red Cross has replenished a portion of sub-regional contingency stocks depleted by this operation: 7,200 jerry cans, 2,500 tarpaulins, and 8,000 blankets.

The British, Canadian, German, Japanese, and Netherlands Red Cross Societies have all provided generous financial support through this Federation Emergency Appeal. The Finish Red Cross announced their support to replenish a portion of the stock.

USAID Senegal also provided support to the operation in Senegal through the Federation. Funding of 50,000 USD was provided to complete assistance provision to flood affected communities in terms of health training and NFI stock transport and distribution costs.

How we work

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The International Federation's activities are aligned with its Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.
- Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.
- Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.
- Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.

Contact information

For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:

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[<click here to return to the title page>](#)