

INFORMATION BULLETIN



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: MILITARY CONFLICT

19 December 2002

Information Bulletin N° 1/2002

Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) allocated: CHF 45,000

This Bulletin is being issued based on the needs described below reflecting the information available at this time. Working in close coordination with the ICRC, the Federation has released CHF 45,000 from its DREF to pursue essential sanitation and rehabilitation activities. Depending on the evolving nature of the situation, an appeal may be launched to request further assistance.

The Disaster

The Central African Republic has again entered a period of political turmoil and conflict provoked by a failed coup attempt. The impact has had a disproportionate impact on the civilian population and vulnerable groups. At one point, up to 150,000 inhabitants of Bangui and the immediate vicinity had fled their homes and taken refuge in safer suburbs in the south or in the bush. Of those, at least 6,000 remain displaced.

The most affected areas of Bangui include the 4th and 8th arrondissement and the neighbourhood of Begoua. There is a high risk and concern over the sanitation conditions, contamination, and the occurrence of epidemics such as cholera and typhoid.

***Government,
humanitarian, and Red
Cross/Red Crescent
Action***



The Government has released the equivalent of approximately 16,000 EURO to the Ministry of Health to retrieve and bury bodies. Because of the severe shortage of medicines, MSF has been supplying medicine to the main hospital of the town and to the surrounding dispensaries and UNICEF has supplied emergency kits. WFP has distributed food in Bangui and has been attempting to gain access to distribute food where people have taken refuge.

Since the early stages of the crisis which started in October, the Red Cross of the Central African Republic (CAR RC) been active in providing humanitarian assistance to the affected population. The CAR RC is a member of the Crisis Cell of the Health and Sanitation Commission and has mobilised its volunteers who have been active in exhuming and reburying corpses since receiving the necessary materials such as disinfectants and protective gloves.

The ICRC is lead agency for the Movement in the CAR, and has supported the following activities which have been performed by the CAR RC:

- sanitation of over 200 wells.
- distribution of non food items such as tarpaulins and kitchen sets to over 3,000 persons.
- psycho-social support by trained volunteers for traumatised persons.
- protection and promotion of IHL.

The Needs

In co-ordination with the Crisis Cell and in liaison with the ICRC and other humanitarian agencies, the CAR RC intends to pursue the following activities:

- hygiene and sanitation activities in targeted districts.
- population sensitisation and IEC on the basic hygiene rules for disease prevention (community-based primary health)
- First Aid for victims and referral to health centres.

The selection of these activities are justified by the following:

- during this emergency phase 30 volunteers have been mobilised full-time to assist in the hygiene, sanitation, and water rehabilitation activities and will be carrying out their services to the affected population.
- health, sanitation, prevention of epidemics; the inadequate disposal of bodies risks contaminating water systems, a problem which can have dramatic consequences for the health of the communities where 62% of the population have no direct access to safe drinking water.
- health education to the displaced population living in overcrowded makeshift accommodation and in the bush where they have taken refuge.
- complement the medical assistance to hospitals and health centres in the periphery of the city and assist in distributions of medicines and medical items given by the ICRC and other agencies (UNICEF, COOPI , MSF etc) and work close to the communities (ARCHI 2010 methodology). Many Red Cross volunteers are part of the affected communities and have a clear understanding of the needs and play an important role in basic health and sanitation preventive measures. Red Cross teams are sensitizing the population in preventive actions and guiding cases to referral centres for medical treatment. This community approach also puts in place an alert system for early epidemic warning.
- the need for First Aid training.

According to independent reports, 111 women were raped during the October fighting in Bangui. These victims are currently receiving care from MSF-Spain. The Red Cross may assume a more active role in this, and work with existing partners who are providing long-term therapy for HIV victims in Central Africa.

The national society has requested the Federation to reinforce its actions with technical and financial support to cover:

- feeding 30 volunteers for 30 days.
- feeding 5 coach/coordinators and two drivers for 30 days.
- contribute to fuel, car maintenance and repair of the vehicle fleet of the CAR RC during the operation.
- purchase of 6 motorcycles for the head of the local branches.
- purchase of stretchers.

For further information, please contact Roger Bracke, Head of the Regional Office in Yaoundé (00237 993 49 20) or Terry Carney, Desk Officer for Central Africa (0041 22 730 42 98 Fax 41 22 733 0395; email terry.carney@ifrc.org

All International Federation Operations seek to adhere to the Code of Conduct and are committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (SPHERE Project) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

*For support to or for further information concerning Federation operations in this or other countries, please access the Federation website at <http://www.ifrc.org>.
For longer-term programmes, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal.*

John Horekens
Director
Division of External Relations

Bekele Geleta
Head
Africa Department