

# **CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: REFUGEES FROM THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO**

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## ***The Disaster***

Following the outbreak of fighting in the northwestern Equator Province of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) in late-December and early-January, an estimated 7,000 refugees crossed the river seeking refuge in the capital city Bangui. The refugees have been registered, and provided shelter and assistance in a transit camp as well as in town, pending their transfer to a more permanent site in Bossangoa, a city situated 300 kilometres from Bangui. The transfer is however delayed due to technical and operational constraints.

## ***Latest events***

A coordinating committee consisting of the government, UNHCR, WFP, MSF, UNICEF, UNDP, and the Central African Red Cross Society (CARCS) has been formed, and an evaluation of the present situation in the camp in Bossangoa revealed specific needs in water management, hygiene, and general cleaning. Some 1,500 refugees returned to Zongo and Gemena in the DRC after the regular army re-took control of those areas, but 500 soon returned to Bangui claiming a lack of security in their areas of origin. The Ministry of Public Works is in the process of clearing the Bossangoa site where the refugees will eventually settle. UNICEF is constructing a pit well, while UNHCR is providing logistics support and arrangements for the assistance operation.

## ***Red Cross/Red Crescent Action***

{ **Assistance:** CARCS initiated the assistance operation. On January 19, the National Society appealed for support to assist 5,000 of the most vulnerable persons.

{ **Food distribution:** Food is being distributed to 3,055 refugees in the transit camp. The daily ration is equivalent to 2 000 kcal, made up of canned fish, bread, beans, cereals (rice and wheat flour), oil, sugar, and salt. WFP is providing the majority of the quantity of cereals and salt, and all of the sugar and vegetable oil. The total amount of food distributed to date is:

Item	Quantity
Canned Fish	497 kg's

Beans	673 kg's
Rice	5,090 kg's
Vegetable Oil	200 litres
Sugar	295 kg's
Salt	16 kg's
Wheat Flour	3,100 kg's

- { **Non-food item distribution:** CARCS emptied their emergency stocks and distributed 20 plastic sheets, 15 tents, 47,2 kg of soap, 10 baby kits, and 500 blankets to the refugees.
- { **First aid:** the Red Cross is stationed at points of entry to provide daily treatment to those in need. 5 wounded persons were transferred to the teaching hospital. 5 women have delivered babies at the Red Cross maternity hospital. 2 WHO emergency kits were sent by the Federation to the National Society in February.
- { **Sanitation:** Red Cross volunteers clean the camp in Bangui twice a week, while 30 volunteers are assisting in preparing the Bossangoa site with latrine construction.
- { **Logistics:** 3 pick-ups have been repaired to service the field operation.

## ***Outstanding Needs***

The available quantities of non-food items are insufficient to meet the needs: blankets (1,000), sleeping mats (5,000) and mosquito nets (5,000) are still urgently required. The Federation has transferred CHF 93,761 from the DREF, which will cover half of the total needs. The Spanish Red Cross has submitted an application to ECHO for further assistance. If this request is accepted by ECHO, all the needs will be met.

## ***External Relations***

The coordinating committee is meeting once a week.

## ***Conclusion***

The assistance operation has effectively provided the refugees with much needed support during this initial interim period. Additional support is urgently awaited in order to continue the activities.

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