

Information bulletin



International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Central African Republic: Floods

Information Bulletin no. 1
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This Bulletin is being issued for information only; based on an initial assessment of the situation and needs, some 6,081 people have been affected, but the Federation has determined that external assistance is not required, and is therefore not seeking funding or other assistance from donors at this time.

[<Click here to view the map of the affected area>](#)



Joint Federation/Central African Red Cross Society assessments are ongoing in Bangui and Bossangoa.

The Situation

Since July 2007, heavy rains have continued in the eight sub-divisions of Bangui – the capital of the Central African Republic (CAR) – and in Bossangoa, a town located 305 km from Bangui. Meteorological forecasts indicate that the rains are likely to continue into October. As from 11 August 2007, the heavy rains have caused flooding in various localities, resulting in serious material damages. Houses have been partially or fully destroyed and many people have been made homeless. The displaced people are exposed to diseases because water wells have been contaminated by floodwater and sewage from destroyed latrines; there is a lack of clean and safe drinking water.

According to an assessment carried out by the Central African Red Cross Society (CARCS), with support from the Federation's Representation in Central Africa Sub-zone, the extent of material damages is increasing on a daily basis. The National Society estimates that over 6,000 persons have been affected in Bangui alone, with 225 houses completely destroyed and 1,812 people rendered homeless. The Red Cross has established that about 38 per cent of the affected people are children who are now exposed to harsh weather and are at risk of contracting diseases such as malaria, hepatitis E, typhoid and intestinal worms.

Table 1: Number of flood affected people in the most affected sub-divisions of Bangui**

Locality	No. of family heads	No. of dependents	Men	Women	Children		Displaced persons
			> 15 years	> 15 years	F	M	
2 nd sub-division	485	3,952	1,253	1,441	655	603	1,442
4 th sub-division	153	1,156	210	323	431	192	317
5 th sub-division	46	289	40	74	90	85	53
Total	684	5,397	1,503	1,838	1,176	880	1,812

**Source: Joint CARCS/Federation assessment (9 September 2007)

Inhabitants of the affected localities are among the poorest in the country, with over 47 per cent being children. Additionally, these populations live in a poorly maintained environment with limited and unplanned basic facilities; they face serious hygiene, water and sanitation problems which makes them vulnerable to preventable diseases. There is a need to address these issues urgently so as to prevent outbreaks of water and vector borne diseases.

Table 2: Human casualties and material damages in the most affected sub-divisions of Bangui**

Localities	Human casualties		Material damages			
	Injured persons	Deaths	Houses completely destroyed	Houses destroyed partially	Damaged latrines	Water wells contaminated
2 nd sub-division	-		160	438	2,300	1,700
4 th sub-division			47	39	1,415	835
5 th sub-division		1 (2-year old child)	18	40	2,320	1,987
Total		1	225	517	6,035	4,522

**Source: Joint CARCS/Federation assessment (9 September 2007)

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Regular exchange of information has been maintained between the Bangui local Red Cross committee and the Federation's Regional Representation for Central Africa in Yaoundé (Cameroon), through the National Society's national headquarters. Central African Red Cross Society authorities conducted a rapid assessment mission in Bossangoa on 15 August 2007. The initial assessment, however, did not adequately determine the needs of flood-affected people.



The six-month old baby pictured above had been carried away by floodwaters; luckily she was rescued at the Lipia 4 neighbourhood.

To get a vivid picture of the situation on the ground and to understand better the needs of affected people, a joint Federation/CARCS assessment began on 6 September 2007. The assessment findings will help in determining what action should be taken in response to the flood situation. Preliminary findings indicate that the majority of losses registered are material losses; houses have been completely or partially destroyed, kitchen utensils and other household materials (such as beds and accessories) have been swept away while crops have been washed away.

Immediate needs include non-food items (such as blankets, tarpaulins, mosquito nets and cooking utensils), water treatment chemicals (for disinfecting water wells) and latrines. Provision of these needs will prevent water and vector borne diseases in the affected localities and help the affected people to recover their human dignity.

However, whatever kind of assistance provided to the flood-affected people, there is a need to develop a sanitation programme for the affected localities. Such a programme will ensure sustainable prevention of flooding in the future. To that effect, sanitation and first aid equipment need to be put at the disposal of Red Cross volunteers to enable them to clean gutters and to remove garbage that has been abandoned on the highway thereby preventing smooth drainage of rainwater. The Central African Red Cross Society will develop a common policy for mobilizing and sensitizing the populations to the need of digging and cleaning gutters. However, this exercise will be done by members of the community, with the support from Red Cross volunteers, in November after the rains have stopped.

A joint Federation and CARCS assessment in Bossangoa started on 11 September 2007. Once the assessment is completed, the CARCS and the Federation will know the right course of action to assist the populations affected by floods in the area.

Action of the Government and other partners

From the onset of the rainy season and resulting flooding, the Government of Central African Republic called upon partners to assist flood-affected people whose numbers have been increasing as the rains continue. In response, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) pledged to donate mats, tarpaulins, mosquito nets, cooking kits, chlorine tablets and drums of water to vulnerable persons.

As regards sanitation work and cleaning of gutters, the government has received support from the European Union for the implementation of THIMO III and TAG projects. Once the projects are complete, they will contribute to preventing flood disasters in Bangui. However, the projects are focusing only on the main streets of Bangui; poor drainage systems in inner streets also need to be addressed.

Based on information from the Red Cross, the Member of Parliament for the second sub-division of Bangui donated XAF 20,000 to 25 families whose houses have been completely destroyed. The financial support will enable the families to pay up to two-months rent. The parliamentarian also donated XAF 15,000 to the families whose houses are partially destroyed and XAF 5,000 to heads of families whose houses have been flooded.

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.

For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

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

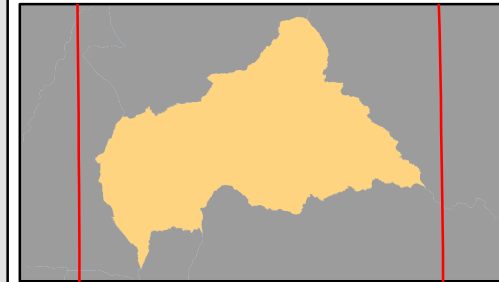
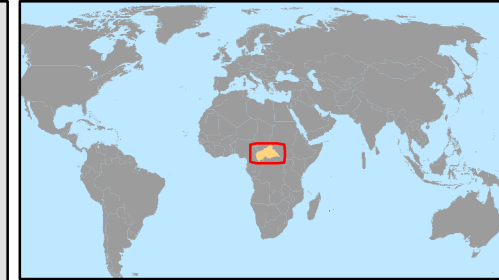
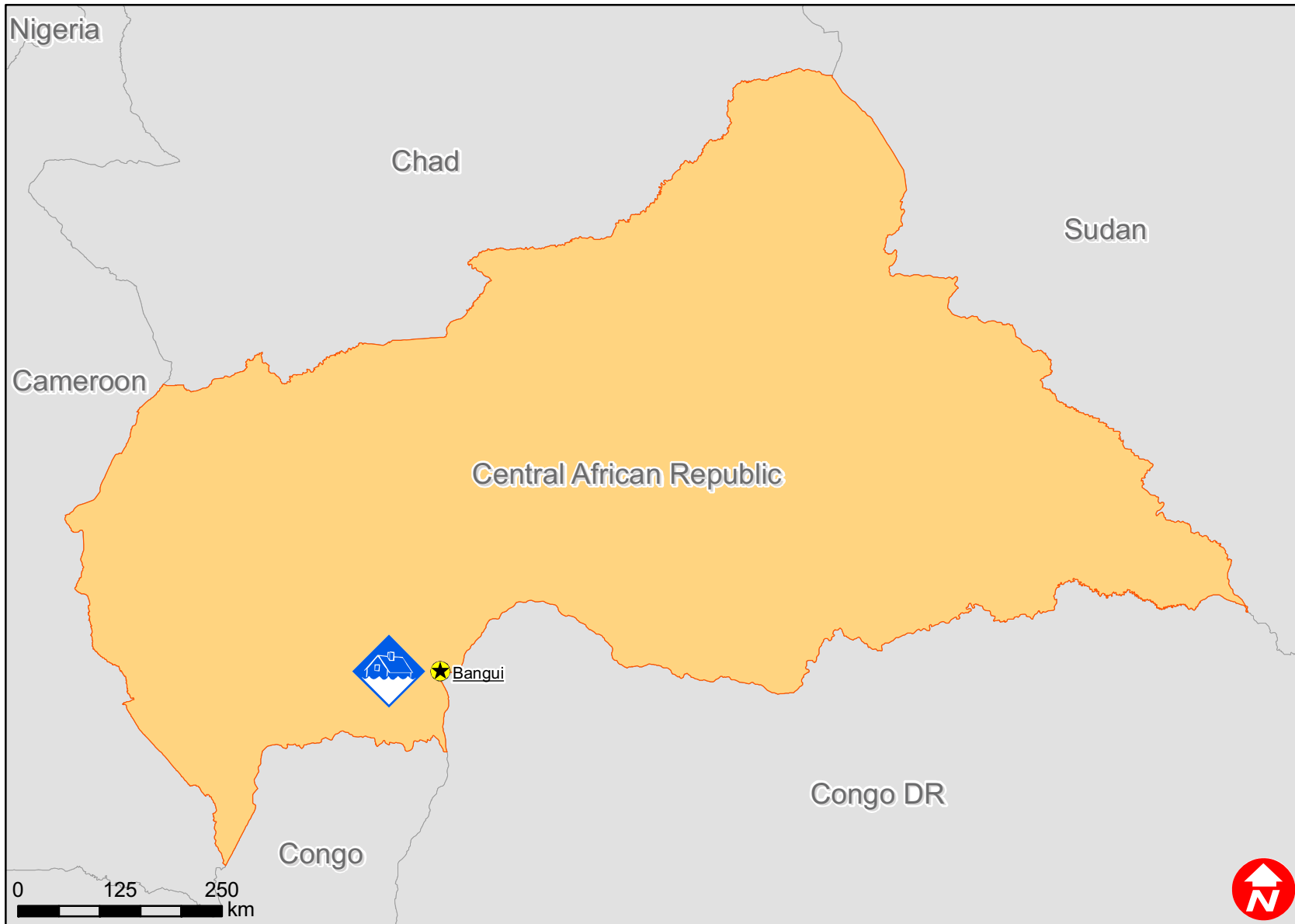
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[<Map below; click here to return to the title page>](#)



Central African Republic: Floods



Heavy rains have caused flooding in various localities, causing serious material damages. Houses have been partially or fully destroyed and many people have been made homeless. The displaced people are exposed to diseases and there is a lack of clean and safe drinking water. Additionally, water wells have been contaminated by floodwater and sewage from destroyed latrines.



Floods in Bangui



Capitals