

Central African Republic: Floods 1996

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period covered: October - December 1996

The context

Seven people died, 1,500 more were left homeless and large amounts of property and fields were destroyed in three regions of the Central African Republic by unusually heavy rains in September 1996. In addition, wells and sources of drinking water were polluted.

The affected regions were the city of Batangafo at 500 km north of Bangui, Kouango 400 km east of Bangui, and Kaga-Bandoro, 380 km north of the capital.

Red Cross/Red Crescent action

Volunteers of the Central African Red Cross Society (CARCS) accompanied the Minister of Social Affairs to Kouango and Kaga-Bandoro to establish what assistance was needed. The President of the Red Cross also visited the stricken areas.

Red Cross volunteers distributed 550 blankets and 58 bales of used clothes and deployed 700 tents for people who had their homes destroyed in the floods. Most of these items were donations from sister societies, but the first 50 blankets were taken from CARCS emergency stocks. CARCS also assisted on the health front and distributed food aid. The Federation released CHF 25,000 from the Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) in order to enable CARCS to purchase food aid and medicines.

The distribution in Batangafo and Kaga-Bandoro was carried out in November 1996, and in Kouango in early December. This was due to a general shortage of fuel in late November because of the consequences of a mutiny, which took place at the same time in Bangui.

Relief Distributions

Item	Batangafu (1,000 families)	Kaga-Bandor (600 families)	Kouango (350 families)	total (1,950 families)
Blankets	250	200	100	550
Tents	636	45	19	700
Used clothes	30 bales	20 bales	8 bales	58 bales
Rice	1,500 kg	1,500 kg	500 kg	3,500 kg
Vegetable oil	200 l	200 l	-	400 l
Salt	20 bags	20 bags	15 bags	55 bags
Seeds	250kg (groundnuts, maize)	250kg (groundnuts, maize)	-	500 kg
Chloroquine	125 doses	200 doses	50 doses	375 doses
Mebendazole	125 doses	200 doses	50 doses	Mebendazole

Not all the needs of the people could be met because of a shortage of funds, especially for medical care and food. The distributions were very effectively carried out by CARCS staff and volunteers of local branches. For the medical care, CARCS health posts and government services were used.

Outstanding needs

As CARCS exhausted their stocks of tents and blankets to meet the immediate needs of the homeless, these stocks need to be replenished.

Barbara Petersen
Desk Officer
Africa Department

Bekele Geleta
Director
Africa Department