

unicef 

Central African Republic

Monthly Report

**September 2008**

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## Table of Acronyms

Acronym	Description
ACF	Action Contre la Faim
HIV/AIDS	Human Immunodeficiency Virus/Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome
APRD	Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy
BONUCA	United Nations Peacebuilding Office in the Central African Republic
CAP	Consolidated Appeals Process
CAR	Central African Republic
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
CIDA	Canadian International Development Agency
CREPA	Le Centre Régional pour l'Eau Potable et l'Assainissement à faible coût
DDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration
DGH	Direction Generale de l'Hydraulique
DRC	Democratic Republic of the Congo
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid Office
ERF	Emergency Response Fund
GDP	Gross Domestic Product
ICRC	International Committee of the Red Cross
IDPs	Internally Displaced Persons
IMC	International Medical Corps
IRC	International Rescue Committee
JUPEDEC	United Youth for Environmental Protection and Community Development
LRA	Lord's Resistance Army
MICOPAX	Mission for the Consolidation of Peace in Central Africa
MRM	Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
NIDs	National Immunization Days
NFIs	Non-Food Items
NGO	Non-Governmental Organisation
NRC	Norwegian Refugee Council
OCHA	United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
PDDR	Disarmament, Demobilization and Reintegration Programme
SGBV	Sexual and Gender-Based Violence
Sida	Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency
UFDR	Union of Democratic Forces for Unity
UNAIDS	Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS
UNCT	UN Country Team
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund
WASH	Water and Sanitation

## Summary

- A \$14.8 million grant was given by the African Development Bank to support CAR's Second Economic Development Programme and to help alleviate the country's food crisis.
- A breakaway faction of the UFDR attacks and loots a village near the border with Sudan.
- Polio and Tetanus vaccination campaigns target nearly 1.1 million residents.
- The Common Humanitarian Fund allocates \$2.8 million for 16 projects to benefit Central African residents.
- The Steering Committee of the Peace Fund allocates \$5.7 million for 11 projects.
- UNICEF convenes a training session with NGOs and the government on family reunification and tracing.
- UNICEF completes a State of Knowledge report on the extent of abuses of children's rights.
- UNICEF rehabilitates schools in anticipation of the new school year.
- 100 wells repaired in Ouham Prefecture.

## The Central African Republic



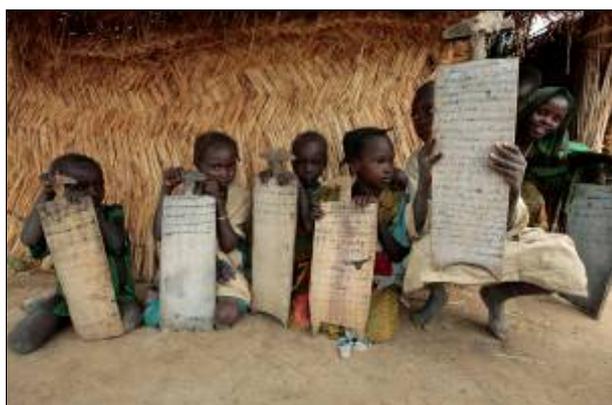
This report highlights UNICEF's actions in the Central African Republic in September 2008. It covers programmes throughout the country. This report does not summarize every activity undertaken. Instead it provides a sample of UNICEF's programming achievements and constraints in working in CAR.

# Humanitarian Overview

## Country Summary

The Central African Republic's (CAR) political history since independence from France in 1960 has been marked by brutal dictatorships, unsteady and opportunistic interference from France, revolts and coups.

In recent years, residents of the country's north have become increasingly victimized by armed groups, including rebel factions, gangs of armed bandits and the government army itself. These tensions have resulted in the displacement of more than 300,000 people and the near-complete decimation of the already under-developed infrastructure.



Children in the north of the CAR © UNICEF CAR/2008/Holtz

Current figures estimate that of the one million people in CAR affected by conflict, 108,000 have fled into neighbouring Cameroon, Chad and Sudan, and 197,000 are internally displaced. In return, CAR has received thousands of refugees from the neighbouring conflicts in Sudan and Chad.

Landlocked and encircled on three sides by countries in the midst of long-running wars, CAR is suffering from a multi-faceted crisis of ongoing waves of violence coupled with steep poverty. All this is creating a significant negative impact on the lives of women and children.

Bandits, known in CAR as 'Zaraguinas' or 'Coupeurs de Route', frequently disrupt traffic and prevent the delivery of humanitarian aid. Banditry, rather than political conflict or military operations, is now the principal cause of human suffering in CAR. These bandits roam the dangerous northern areas of CAR, assaulting and killing travellers and villagers, kidnapping women and children, looting property and

burning homes. The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that up to a third of the 300,000 Central Africans forced from their homes in the past several years fled from bandits.

Despite some modest improvements over the past few years, the situation of children in CAR continues to be of great concern to UNICEF. With an infant mortality rate of 106 per 1,000 and an under-5 mortality rate of 176 per 1,000, the country has some of the continent's worst child survival indicators. An estimated 38% of the country's under-5s suffer from Global Chronic Malnutrition, while a further 10% suffer from Global Acute Malnutrition. In addition, the HIV prevalence (6.2%) is the highest in the region. More than 75% of the population is without access to adequate sanitation facilities, which means that preventable diseases are easily spread.

UNICEF works closely with its partners to improve these indicators and enhance human welfare.

## Core Country Data

Indicator	Value
Population	4,302,360
Human Development Index Rank	171 of 177
People affected by violence	1,000,000
Refugees in Chad, Cameroon and Sudan	108,000
Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)	197,000
GDP per capita	\$380
Life expectancy at birth	40(m), 45.7(f)
Infant Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	106
Child <5 Mortality Rate (per 1,000)	176
Maternal Mortality Rate (per 100,000)	1,102
People living on below US\$1/day	67.0%
Population without access to safe water	73.9%
Children fully immunized	32.0%
HIV overall prevalence	6.2%
Global Acute Malnutrition	10.1%
Global Chronic Malnutrition	38.0%
Primary School Enrolment (net)	55.5%

## Political Summary

The National Assembly adopted the general amnesty law on 29 September, 2008, which was one of the pre-conditions for the start of the political dialogue process. The new law protects government officials and rebel movements from persecution for all crimes committed after 15 March 2003.

The amnesty law is seen as an important element of a plan to bring together CAR's warring factions.



Children waiting around in the CAR's interior © UNICEF CAR/2008/Holtz

Former politicians, however, including ex-president Ange-Félix Patassé, Jean-Jacques Démafouth, coordinator of the APRD and Martin Koumtamadji alias Abdoulaye Miskine of the FDPC are singled out in the Amnesty. They would be pardoned for the misuse of public funds or murder.

The APRD, whose fighters operate in the northwest of the country, had signed a peace deal earlier this year as part of the government's bid to hold an Inclusive Political Dialogue. The political dialogue aims to bring together rebels, civil society, opposition politicians and the government to end years of war and chaos.

The APRD launched their movement in 2003, after the coup that brought President François Bozizé to power.

CAR continues to have a modest UN security presence. On September 24, 2008, the UN Security Council unanimously extended the mandate of the United Nations Mission in Central African Republic and Chad (MINURCAT) until 15 March, 2009. The reason for doing this is to try to create the conditions for a voluntary, safe and sustainable return of refugees and displaced persons.

The Council will decide by 15 December, 2008, on the deployment of a UN force to succeed EUFOR, whose departure is planned for 15 March, 2009. In September, President Bozizé pleaded with the UN General Assembly to revise the scope of MINURCAT's mission in light of this.

Numerous incidences of sexual violence have been features of the chaos in CAR. In September, The Victims Trust Fund of the International Criminal Court (ICC) launched a €10 million appeal to donors to assist victims of sexual violence living in countries in the region, including the CAR. Funds raised will go to about 50 programmes in the region and should be available in 2009.

On 19 September, five months after a national seminar on security sector reform (SSR), Prime Minister Faustin Touadéra chaired the second meeting of the SSR sectoral committee, whose aim was to revitalize the implementation of the operational recommendations adopted at the national SSR seminar held in Bangui in April.

At the end of August, a ceremony was held at the National Police Academy of Bangui to honour 70 new Central African police officers. François Fall, Special Representative of the UN Secretary General in CAR, presented the officers, who completed training this year, with their diplomas. The recipients included 20 Chief Inspectors who graduated from the Judicial Police course, 30 officers who completed the training in the professional code of ethics and 20 civil servants who attended the General Intelligence course. The new officers were trained as part of BONUCA's mandate to strengthen the operational capacity of security services in CAR.

## Insecurity

The security situation in CAR remains unstable. While Bangui is relatively safe, areas outside the capital are lawless and violent.

A clash was reported between FACA and the APRD in Mboya, a village between Marali and Bouca. One rebel was killed. The APRD have threatened reprisals against a FACA military base 40 km from Marali.

These groups clashed several days later along the road between Kokoui and Markounda. No casualties were reported.

In late September a group of 20 rebels attacked Am Dafok, a town 70 miles east of Birao, near the border

with the Darfur region of Sudan. Inhabitants fled and the rebels thereafter looted the village. The rebels belong to a break-away faction of the UFDR. They are allegedly led by Oumar Sodiham, and broke ranks when the UFDR agreed to launch a political dialogue with President Bozize.



On September 3, a contingent of about 100 government army and presidential guard soldiers clashed with fighters of the APRD on the Bozoum-Paoua road. Seven APRD members were reportedly killed. The army contingent is currently stationed in Paoua.

The home of an international staff member working for UNICEF in Bangui had his home burglarized. The stolen item was eventually returned.

## General Funding

CAR continues to rely heavily on international support. The Steering Committee of the Peace

Building Fund allocated \$5.7 million to fund 11 projects in CAR. The

money will be dispersed following this formula: demobilization, disarmament and reintegration of child soldiers (\$2 million for UNICEF); women-led projects strengthening communities (\$1.4 million); community-based food security projects (\$600,000); and reconciliation support in the North-West (\$1.7 million).

The [Common Humanitarian Fund](#) has allocated \$2.5 million to fund 16 priority projects in the CAR. Most of this money is allocated to help displaced people and children.

About \$2.8 million has so far been pledged to the fund by Ireland, the Netherlands, Norway, the United Kingdom and Sweden. Roughly a quarter of this money has been reserved for the cash-strapped humanitarian air service, which would otherwise have had to halt operations. Between January and September, the Air Service ferried 2,227 humanitarian workers to 18 cities and villages. Some funds have also been given to a project to repair roads and bridges in conflict areas, so that aid can effectively be delivered to the hardest-hit people.



Children in a classroom. © UNICEF CAR/2008/Holtz

## Programme Updates

### Education

Most activities in September focused on the challenge of getting children and schools prepared for the new school year. UNICEF addressed three significant challenges.

First, UNICEF made large donations of equipment to schools in and around Bassangoa and Kaga Bandoro. Altogether 1,600 benches, 12,905 school manuals, 300 school kits (benefiting about 27,000 children) and 40 ardoisine boxes (which are like new blackboards) were distributed to schools.

The benches were assembled locally. Learning materials were also distributed following school registration.

The second part of UNICEF's efforts focused on supporting existing schools by spurring them to improve their learning environments.

Since many schools outside of Bangui rely on teachers who don't receive salaries from the state, UNICEF worked with community leaders and local educational authorities to suggest possible financial and non-financial compensations for these teachers. These kinds of local-level discussions were held throughout Ouham, Kemo, Nana Gribizi and Haute Kotto prefectures.

These discussions also focused on urging communities to pay more attention to the upkeep of schools. UNICEF suggested that schools be built with brick and that classes be held in buildings instead of sheds or straw constructions.



UNICEF assists dozens of schools throughout CAR © UNICEF CAR/2008/Holtz

Another topic was the need for parents to obtain birth certificates for their children. Under an agreement reached with authorities in various prefectures, the cost of a birth certificate has been lowered from 7,000 to 8,000 CFA (about \$15.50) to 1,000 CFA (about \$2.25). This success is the result of a long-running advocacy campaign initiated by UNICEF throughout CAR that addressed the reality that birth registration costs were too expensive for the overwhelming majority of families.

UNICEF also held meetings with the Ministry of Education where it urged authorities to improve their parent-teachers training system. UNICEF is advocating for a standardized system for Parent-Teachers. Such a program would lead to the awarding of certificates for those parent-teachers who complete trainings.

### Health and Nutrition



UNICEF assisted health center © UNICEF CAR/2008/Holtz

September was a busy month for vaccinations. Almost 1.1 million women between 15 and 49 were targeted to receive tetanus vaccinations. This was the year's third round of vaccinations.

The 3<sup>rd</sup> round of the National Polio Immunization Campaign was also carried out. About 750,000 children under 5 years of age were treated.

The success of both vaccination campaigns – how people were reached – will be known until final tally are prepared in late October.

In November UNICEF will launch the country's first-ever mosquito net campaign. Over 740,000 nets will be distributed throughout the country. An initial shipment of 200,000 arrived in September.

A training for nurses was held in Nana Mambere prefecture. The training dealt with nutrition screening and was attended by 27 local nurses.

Throughout September a health survey, carried out by UNICEF and the NGO ACF, was carried out in Ouham prefecture. The results will be compiled by the end of October.

## Water and Sanitation

In an effort to support getting children back to schools, the water and sanitation infrastructure of some schools in Ouham prefecture were upgraded.

Also in Ouham prefecture, about 100 wells were repaired. These wells are used every day by about 57,000 residents.

In Nana Gribizi prefecture, 30 latrines were dug, 30 hand-washing facilities were installed and 15 water reservoirs were built to provide water for about 10,000 children attending five schools. Elsewhere in the prefecture, four boreholes and three wells were built.



Girl at a pump in CAR © UNICEF CAR/2008/Holtz

The government's Direction Generale d'Hydraulic (DGH) drilled and installed hand pumps on 7 sites in Nana Gribizi (2) and Kemo (5) prefectures. The DGH

and Triangle GH completed a pumps repairation training for 17 local technicians in Vakaga prefecture.

### **Promoting Hygiene to Protect Health**

About 17,000 residents of Nan Gribizi prefecture were given lessons on safe hygiene practices. These trainings were part of ongoing efforts to educate residents on the importance of maintaining good hygienic standards.

### **HIV/AIDS**

UNICEF received about \$967,000 from UNITAID to spend over two years to purchase drugs and medical equipment for women and children suffering from HIV. These items will be channeled through the Ministry of Health and will be distributed for free nationwide.

A conference was held in late September in Cameroon to create a plan for a coordinated regional response to the spread of AIDS and HIV. A similar meeting will be held in Bangui in November to develop a national plan focused on preventing the spread of HIV among youths. That meeting will be attended by UN agencies, NGOs and the CAR government.

## NFIs and Shelters

About 5,000 sheets, 20,000 blankets, 2,000 cooking sets, 15,000 jerry cans, 100,000 boxes of soap and 6 water tanks were requisitioned.

UNICEF will distribute these supplies in Haute Kotto and Vakaga prefectures, areas that were recently devastated by flooding.

## Protection

### **DDR of Child Soldiers**

Family tracing and the reunification of children with their parents is a large emphasis of UNICEF's project in CAR. To fulfill this mandate a training was held in Bangui and 35 employees of NGOs and of the government attended this three-day session. The training offered lessons in the prevention of violence, psychosocial care and child social reintegration. The workshop was organized by UNICEF CAR in collaboration with the NGO Save the Children and with UNICEF's Regional Office.

### **Monitoring and Reporting**

UNICEF has also been working to educate military forces working in CAR. In September it held training

session on child protection, human rights, the Paris Practices and international humanitarian law with 180 soldiers. These soldiers were drawn from three national contingents that make up MICOPAX – Chad, Congo and Cameroon.

A training session for those who will give similar workshops to CAR's Presidential and Republican Guard was also begun. This force numbers about 1,000 and may represent the group that has recently been responsible for committing the most crimes against children. Therefore the training for those who will directly train these soldiers will be different and harder-edged than other similar sessions.

UNICEF continues to monitor human rights abuses against children, including the recruitment of children into armed groups. To this end, the Child Protection team has completed a State of Knowledge study (called for under the UN Security Council resolution 1612).

This study was completed is considered the first and compulsory step for establishing a monitoring and reporting mechanism within CAR. The consultant examined existing capacities and the gaps in gathering and analyzing data on the six categories of children's rights. That study identifies where new data collection mechanisms are needed. UNICEF and its partners have about 60 people throughout the country that monitor rights. Yet because there is no security or neutral pressure capable of protecting informants, the mechanism has so far not been properly functioning.

UNICEF shared the study's findings with the UN and NGO community. In general, it revealed all the armed groups operating in CAR regularly violate the rights of children.

One important outcome of a reliable system for determining when the rights of children have been violated is that it will provide real examples of abuses and so will help enable UNICEF and its partners to lobby the government and other armed actors.

The MRM is being established in CAR and the Monitoring and Reporting Working Group has been accepted by the UN Country Team. The group will be co-chaired by the SRSG-CAR and the UNICEF Representative.



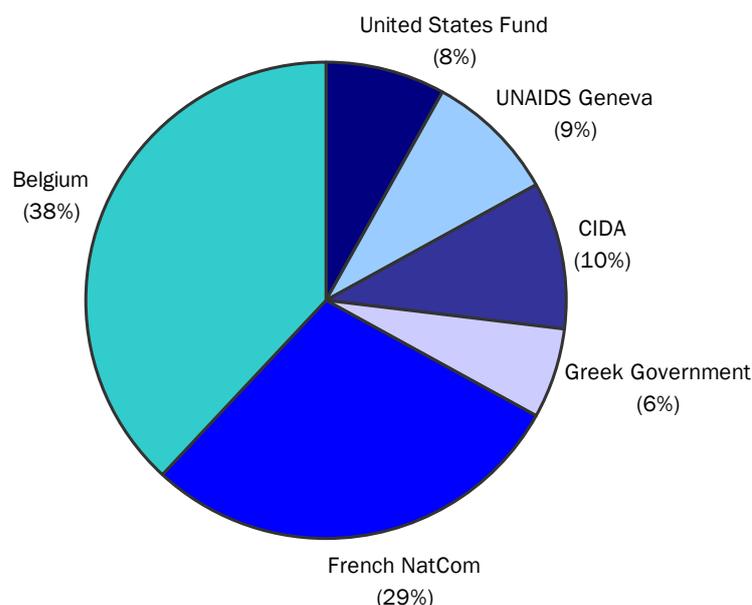
Children at a school in northern CAR © UNICEF CAR/2008/Holtz

## UNICEF CAR Funding

### CAP Funding Status at end of August 2008

Appeal Sector	Requirements (US\$)	Funds Received (US\$)	Unmet Requirements (US\$)	Unfunded
Education	3,500,000	2,350,000	1,150,000	33%
Health and Nutrition	6,499,985	530,256	5,969,729	92%
NFIs and Shelter	835,000	0	835,000	100%
Protection	1,316,900	539,268	777,632	59%
Water and Sanitation	1,425,255	1,307,638	117,617	8%
Cross-Sectoral	N/A	350,492	N/A	N/A
Monitoring/Evaluation	N/A	322,141	N/A	N/A
<b>Total:</b>	<b>13,577,140</b>	<b>5,399,795</b>	<b>8,177,345</b>	<b>60%</b>

### Funding Received in September 2008



UNICEF would like to express its gratitude to donors who have recently contributed to the Consolidated Appeals Process (CAP). Your donations have significantly improved the ability of UNICEF CAR to respond to the needs of some of the country's most vulnerable women and children. UNICEF hopes that this support will continue in the future so that we can expand our programmes to areas where they are most needed – most notably **Health and Nutrition**, **NFI's** and **Protection**, for which funding is most lacking.

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