



PRESS RELEASE

Central Emergency Response Fund Allocation to the Central African Republic
24 July 2020

The Central Emergency Response Fund allocates US\$ 5 million to NGOs to scale up direly needed COVID-19 response in the Central African Republic.

Bangui, 24 July 2020 - The Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) has allocated US\$ 5 million to the NGOs International Rescue Committee (IRC), International Medical Corps (IMC), the Alliance for International Medical Action (ALIMA) and Médecins d’Afrique (MDA) to scale up the COVID-19 response in the Center, East and North of the Central African Republic, where the selected NGOs have been implementing life-saving programs for years. While the response to COVID-19 in the capital Bangui and the western regions of the country, where the epidemic started, have been scaling up, the rest of the country still has low levels of response capacities, notably for treating patients and maintaining adequate water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities to prevent the spread of the virus.

This funding is part of a global CERF envelope of US\$ 25 million intended for NGOs working on the front line and implementing life-saving activities in the health and WASH sectors, with the International Organization for Migration (IOM) serving as the grant manager. It is aligned with the priorities set forth in the COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan. With 4,590 cases of COVID-19, including 58 deaths as of 22 July and one of the most fragile health systems worldwide, the Central African Republic is facing growing humanitarian needs that largely exceed the existing response capacity. 2,6 million people - more than 50% of its population - need humanitarian assistance, only a third of the population has access to clean water, while only 31.7% of the funds required for the 2020 updated humanitarian response plan have been met to date.

The allocation received will help provide assistance to 220,000 vulnerable people, including 87,000 displaced persons living in dire sanitary conditions conducive to spreading the virus. The funds will enable the construction, rehabilitation and equipment of 19 isolation and treatment centers for COVID-19 patients, while improving surveillance mechanisms. Medical staff will be recruited, medicines and supplies purchased. In addition, psychosocial support will be provided to COVID-19 patients and their families.

“The choice to fund these NGOs illustrates the need for innovation and pragmatism, because these organizations are already on the front line and can scale up their response in record time”, explained François Batalingaya, Head of OCHA in the Central African Republic. Traditionally, CERF funds are reserved for United Nations agencies, which can then partner with NGOs. But COVID-19 serves once again as a reminder of the need to constantly adapt the humanitarian response to the changing context to make the best use of limited resources.

Being one of the fastest and most effective ways to ensure that urgently needed humanitarian assistance reaches people caught up in crises, CERF enables humanitarian responders to deliver life-saving assistance whenever and wherever crises strike. Since its establishment in 2005, the CERF has allocated US\$ 128,4 million in support of the humanitarian response in the Central African Republic from 2006 to 2018, contributing to alleviate the suffering and save lives of millions of crisis-affected people. This allocation will also remain complementary to the ongoing multi-sectoral COVID-19 response efforts aiming at improving communication, awareness-raising and overall access to WASH, including with the envelope of US\$ 5,3 million allocated by the Central African Republic Humanitarian Fund in May 2020.

For more information, contact

Maxime Nama, Head, Public Information Unit, namacirhibuka@un.org; +236 70 12 24 43
Francois Batalingaya, Head of Office, francois.batalingaya@un.org, + 236 70 60 10 66

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