CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION AND URGENT FUNDING REQUIREMENTS

[ HNO LIGHT ]
Update as of 27 March 2019

Credit photo/ L. Fultang
This document is produced on behalf of the Humanitarian Country Team and partners and it represents a light update of the 2019 Humanitarian Needs overview.

This document provides the Humanitarian Country Team’s shared understanding of the crisis, including the most pressing humanitarian need and the estimated number of people who need assistance. It represents a consolidated evidence base and helps inform joint strategic response planning.

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KEY FIGURES

CAR total population | People in need | Internal displaced persons | Urgent Funding
4.6M | 2.9M | 655K | $165.6M (by end of June 2019)

Of the CAR total population:

- Female: 63%
- Children: 51%

2.9M PEOPLE IN NEED

Protection | 2.3M
Health | 2.2
Food Security | 2.1
WASH | 1.9
LCS* | 1.4
CCCM/ES/NFI** | 1.4
Education | 1.3
Nutrition | 1.0

$165.6M URGENT FUNDING REQUIREMENTS (by end of June 2019)

Food security: 100M
- Food security: 15M
- Education: 15
- Health: 14
- Nutrition: 9.5
- WASH: 8
- LCS: 6
- Logistics: 4
- Protection: 3.5
- ETC: 0.6

*LCS - Livelihood and Community Stabilization
**CCCM - Camp Coordination and Camp Management; ES - Emergency Shelter; NFI - Non-food Item

NB: Logistics and ETC are support services clusters.
DETERIORATING HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

CENTRALITY OF PROTECTION

Sixty-five sectoral and multi-sectoral assessments conducted by humanitarian actors over the last six months (from September 2018 to February 2019) indicate a further deterioration of the humanitarian situation in the country, particularly in the greater South-Eastern regions. In the last six months (violence has resumed in the sub-prefectures of Bria, Batangafo, Alindao, Bangassou and Amada Gaza. A resurgence of inter-communal tensions was observed in Bangassou (Mbomou), Ippy (Ouaka), Tagbara (Ouaka), Batangafo (Ouham) and Alindao (Ouaka). These attacks caused, in addition to forced displacement, the death and wounds of hundreds of innocent civilians. IDP sites in Alindao, Batangafo and Ippy were burned, leaving hundreds of people homeless and totally destitute.

Following the Khartoum dialogue which was held from 24 January to 2 February 2019, a peace agreement was signed between the Government and 14 armed groups on 6 February 2019. While the Peace Agreement appears to bear the promise of a brighter future for affected civilians, 2.9 million people remain in need of humanitarian assistance and protection.

Civilians continue to pay the highest price of continued violence. According to the Protection Cluster, between October and December 2018¹, 4,981 protection incidents were reported in the 9 prefectures out of the 16 where protection monitoring was conducted (Nana-Mambéré, Mambéré-Kadéi, l'Ouham-Pende, Nana-Gribizi, Ouham, Ouaka, Kémo, Haute-Kotto, plus the Bangui area), i.e. more than 1,600 incidents per month, above the 1,000 monthly average in the first nine months of 2018.

The 2P tool² shows that the increasing trend of protection incidents is attributable to continued violence in the areas of Ippy (Ouaka) and Mbres (Nana-Gribizi), which have steadily ranked as high priority for protection throughout 2018, as well as the increase in the priority of areas such as Bria (Haute-Kotto), Kaga Bandoro (Nana-Gribizi), Alindao (Basse-Kotto), and Batangafo (Ouham), among others.

In addition to the difficult living conditions resulting from forced displacement, the presence of armed elements on sites continues to generate high protection risks for IDPs, including illegal taxation, GBV, arbitrary arrests, killings and recruitment.

According to the GBV sub-cluster, throughout 2018, 10,055 cases of GBV were reported; including 1,621 cases of rape, 348 cases of sexual assault, 3,131 cases of physical assault, 2,350 cases of denial of resources, 2,452 cases of emotional abuse and 153 cases of forced marriage. Out of the total cases, 786 conflict-related sexual violence incidents were reported, affecting 570 women, 11 men, 202 girls, and 3 boys. The vast majority of such incidents were perpetrated by armed groups (781), while the remaining 5 were perpetrated by the armed forces. With weakened institutions, the very limited availability of services, the intimidating position of perpetrators and the feeling of impunity, access to legal and judicial services remains problematic, with 23 per cent of the survivors benefitting from such services.

From September 2018 to January 2019, 4,118 people (86.6% adults and 13.4% children) were victims of GBV, 31% from which were IDPs. With 52% of female IDPs and 67% of children among IDPs, women, girls and boys remains the most vulnerable and at greatest risk of GBV, including SEA as well as early marriage and female genital mutilation. With new IDPs and the volatile security situation in several villages on the axes – such as connected to Bria, Zemio and Batangafo, among others – the GBV sub-cluster estimates that 12,500 people are at risk of sexual violence.

Children across the country continue to be exposed to protection risks, such as family separation, the recruitment and use of children by armed groups, GBV, exploitation and other harmful practices such as the accusation of witchcraft, female genital

¹ Protection monitoring data for January and February 2019 is not yet available due to delays in partners' deployments.
² The ICC developed the 2P tool as part of the 2019 HNO. It measures the frequency of protection prioritization of specific locations over time agreed upon by all protection actors in CAR. Ref Annex I
muttulation and the early marriage. Between October and December 2018, 913 grave violations against children were reported (in line with the monthly average of 2018), affecting 75 children, 63 per cent boys and 37 per cent girls. More specifically, 19 cases of killings were recorded, alongside 13 cases of sexual violence and 12 of recruitment and use of children in armed conflict. Such violations were overwhelmingly committed by armed groups.

At least six attacks affecting the health system have been recorded in the sub-prefectures of Alindao, Bakouma, Kaga Bandoro, Bangassou over the last six months. Medicines/drugs have been looted or vandalized. This situation reduced the capacities of health facilities to ensure medical care for the affected people (e.g. Bakouma). Breaks in stock of PEP kits are also a concern (e.g. in Kaga Bandoro, Zemio, etc.).

Insecurity remains a major challenge for the education of conflict-affected children. Since September 2018 to February 2019, 363 schools were reported as closed including 234 attacked or occupied. Since 2017, over 100 attacks against the education system have been reported. As an example, six schools have been looted and destroyed in Tagbara and Seko (Ouaka) on 21 March during armed clashes between armed groups; while five schools have been looted and burned in Batangafo (Ouham) on 30 and 31 October.

Key triggers

More people on the move

1 Central African out of 4 is living outside of his home. The number of internally displaced people has increased from 621,035 in August 2018 to nearly 656,000 in February 2019, which represents a 15 per cent increase. Nearly one third is in 76 IDP sites, while over 445,000 IDPs are living with host families.

During the same period, UNHCR recorded an increase of more than 14,000 Central Africans who fled to neighbouring countries, from 576,000 to 590,000, thus representing a 2.4 per cent increase.

During the third quarter of 2018, following attacks, several IDP sites were set on fire in Batangafo, Alindao and Ippy, amongst others. This situation has led to the total destruction of their property plunging them into a more precarious situation than before. In addition, following the resurgence of violence, some sites have seen their size rise sharply, aggravating the vulnerability and precariousness of the IDPs who are living there. This is the case of the PK3 site in Bria, Kaga-Bandoro, Bakouma/ Bangassou and Zemio. The living conditions of IDPs remain very precarious and access to essential services. The Emergency Food Security Assessment (EFSA) conducted in December 2018 revealed that IDPs in sites (75%), returnees (68%) and displaced persons in host families (66%) remain the population groups most affected by food insecurity.

Against a backdrop of continued conflict and insecurity, conditions for comprehensive and sustainable returns are still precarious. The main impediments to a sustainable return of IDPs and refugees remain insecurity and protection, as well as access to basic services and legal support, including housing, land and property (HLP). Small scale and temporary returns of IDPs took place in 2018, with some 261,000 returnees reported, primarily due to an improvement of the security situation in some specific areas, especially in Paoua (Ouham-Pende) with 80,000 returnees, also favoured by the kick-off of the agricultural season. After Ouham-Pende with 122,000 returnees, Mbounou (48,000) and Ouaka (38,000) represent the major return areas. The increase in the number of returnees in the Ouaka prefecture is also the result of the closure of the Sangaris and Cotonnerie sites in Bambari town.

However, in the relatively more stable areas where populations are starting to return, protection concerns represent a major obstacle to durable solutions, with people returning to homes which have often been looted, destroyed or occupied. In addition, new displacements – i.e. returnees who have to leave their homes again – and secondary displacements – i.e. IDPs who are further displaced to another location – are phenomena that are as common as they are difficult to track, adding to the complexity of the dynamics of population movements.

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3 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism (MRM), December 2018
4 Monitoring and Reporting Mechanism
More people go hungry

The December 2018 National Food Security Assessment (ENSA) results indicate that some 2.1 million people, nearly half of the 4.5 million people living in the CAR face hunger; i.e. nearly a 10 per cent increase from September 2018. This overall represents an increase of people in a state of food insecurity to 50% in 2018 compared to 45% in 2017. More than 66% of the food insecure population are found in Basse Kotto, Nana Gribizi, Haut Mbomou, Ouaka, Ouham Pendé and Ouham prefectures. The most affected groups are IDPs on sites and in host communities. The current level of food consumption is the lowest ever reached in the country since 2009, with the exception of 2016.

In addition, the results of the SMART survey conducted during the last quarter of 2018 reveal alarming rates of severe acute and chronic malnutrition among children under 5 years of age. At the national level, the overall nutrition situation has shown some deterioration with Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 7.1 per cent and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rate of 2.1 per cent – above the 2 per cent emergency level set by WHO – and a chronic malnutrition (MC) rate of 37.7 per cent among children under five, which is beyond the emergency threshold of 30 per cent, compared to the national nutrition SMART survey conducted in 2014 (GAM:6.6 per cent; SAM:1.9 per cent; MC:40.8 per cent).

This critical situation of chronic malnutrition has persisted for almost 20 years in the country (EDS, 1995) with serious consequences, such as delayed cognitive development and school performance, increased mortality, low capacity for adult production and the loss of economic growth.

The SMART survey found that 10 prefectures out of the 16 prefectures in the country have a SAM rate above the critical threshold of 2 per cent and all the prefectures, except Bangui and Ouham, have a chronic malnutrition rate above the critical threshold of 30 per cent. Urgent treatment and nutrition support is needed for 31,169 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM), who are at risk of death, and 39,462 with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).

Multiple and simultaneous epidemic outbreaks

While humanitarian actors, in particular health and WASH partners, are responding at scale, access and funding challenges, compounded by weak governmental capacity and the absence of development programs continue to hamper the curbing of the spreading of multiple epidemics.

As a result, the CAR is currently undergoing several epidemics, including viral hepatitis E in the health districts of Bocaranga-Koui and Ngoundaye (Ouham Pende Prefecture), bloody diarrhoea in the Nana Gribizi Prefecture, measles in Paoua (Ouham Pendé Prefecture) and Kabo (Ouham Prefecture), Monkey pox in Boda and Ippy (Ouaka) and Rage at Sibut (Kemo Prefecture). The alert threshold for cerebrospinal meningitis has been reached in two locations of the country (Bouar and Kaga Bandoro respectively in Nana Mambere and Nana Gribizi Prefectures). As of 18 March 2019, in Bocaranga and Ngoundaye, 171 people were affected by viral hepatitis E, including 1 death; 119 people were bitten by dogs suspected of rabies, 2 of whom died of rabies in Sibut; 57 cases of bacterial meningitis were notified in Bouar (30 cases) and Kaga Bandoro (27 cases) including 11 deaths. The ongoing outbreak of bloody diarrhea in Somboké, Dossokou and two IDP sites in Kaga Bandoro has already affected 311 people, including one death. 5 confirmed cases out of 14 suspected of measles were recorded respectively in Paoua and Kabo in March, 92% of which were children under 5 years; no deaths were reported.

Only 9.6% of households have access to improved toilets throughout the country. In several areas, such as Bocaranga, Paoua, Bria, Bouca, Kaga Bandoro, Bangassou, Zoungoun, both IDPs, returnees and host communities continue to use unprotected sources of water because the majority of boreholes and pumps are broken or non-functional. During recent assessments, WASH partners also identified significant and widespread gaps in terms of sanitation facilities. For instance, the SMART survey indicates that half of the households at the national level have access to potable water, with the most affected prefectures being Mbomou, vakaga, Sangha Mbaere, Basse Kotto, Mambere Kadei, Ouaka and Ombella M’Poko.
Less access to diversified and affordable essential goods

In 2018, CAR ranked second last (187 out of 188) in the Human Development Index (2018). Vulnerable populations have inadequate, poorly diversified and insufficient food consumption. This vulnerability is accentuated by the economic situation of these households as well as a stagnation of households’ income. This is deeply concerning as about half of Central African families spend most of their income on food, up to 75 per cent in some areas. Insecurity, poor road infrastructure and armed violence continue to hamper the availability, the competitiveness and the affordability of essential goods. Traders continue to suffer from limited freedom of movement, stock shortages, robberies and force closures (such as in Bambari in November 2018). To the same extent, their customers are also exposed to illegal taxation and other protection incidents. For similar reasons, markets also continue to lack integration.

According to WFP, more than half of key informants (57%) reported less availability of grain in January 2019 compared to the previous month. At the national level prices of monitored commodities remained fairly stable from November 2018 to January 2019, with the exception of the price of cassava (+7%) and beans (-20%). However, more pronounced price changes were recorded at the local level due to persistent insecurity and spikes of armed violence. For instance, the increase in the cassava price in Bambari – after a relatively stable trend since July 2018 – could be attributed to the violence that affected the area in January 2019. Similarly, the prices of cassava, maize and rice between December 2018 and February 2019 in Batangafo were considerably higher than the national median due to violent clashes and the subsequent temporary market closure in the area. To the same extent, insecurity in Kaga Bandoro and the influx of IDPs from Bakouma to Bangassou might explain the increases in maize price, respectively 129% and 175% between November 2018 and January 2019 (mVAM), which represent the two highest increases the country.

Unhalted incidents against humanitarian workers

CAR is one of the most dangerous operating environment for humanitarian workers in the world. 2 humanitarian workers have been killed in the first two months of 2019. Security incidents directly affecting humanitarian organisations and workers reached a total of 396 in 2018, i.e. more than one incident per day and an increase of 20 per cent compared to 2017. Between September 2018 and February 2019, over two thirds of the incidents involved armed robberies, carjacking or looting. The percentage of threats or physical aggression has further increased in the first two months of 2019 with 23.7% compared to 18.9% in 2018.

Several mobile clinics in areas with difficult access had to be suspended during the last six months in areas such as the axes around Bria (Haute Kotto), Obo (Haut Mbomou), Kaga Bandoro (Nana Gribizi), Kouango, Ippy and Bambari (Ouaka).
The high level of insecurity, the fragmentation of armed groups, the poor infrastructure (roads, bridges, ferries and airstrips), compounded by widespread impunity, pose severe access challenges both for civilians and for humanitarian workers. Entire regions with acute needs, such as the South-East, are de facto cut off and hard to reach.

In addition, delays with custom clearance procedures and blockages on key supply routes have further hampered the influx of life-saving supplies and the replenishments of life-saving stocks, thus affecting hundreds of thousands of people in need.

**Continued transhumance-related, localised tension**

Transhumance is an essential component of the economy and culture in sub-Saharan Africa. In CAR, livestock accounts for 12.7% of national GDP and 35% of agricultural GDP. Transhumance movements between CAR and Chad are among the largest in the world. The CAR herd is estimated at 4 million head and transboundary transhumance should concern hundreds of thousands of cattle. Nomadic pastoralists move cyclically along various corridors, both inside and outside and across borders, in search of pastures for their livestock. These movements are often accompanied by conflict, of varying magnitude, with sedentary populations and also impact on local communities involved in other livelihood practices.

CAR herding is characterized by a global livestock exploitation rate estimated at about 11 per cent and a substantial contribution to foreign trade with an estimated export of about 25 per cent of national production. Livestock is a socio-economic sector whose development is an essential factor in improving people's living conditions both for its economic and nutritional importance.

CAR has witnessed an upsurge in agro pastoral conflicts since 2013 and following the proliferation of armed groups along the transhumance zones that have exacerbated tensions between farmers and herders, which has contributed to triggering more and more violent conflicts within communities. Border communities bear a large part of this burden, as conflict dynamics often delay traditional movements, forcing livestock to remain in place for long periods of time, depleting scarce resources and exacerbating tensions between communities. The crisis has also disrupted the mechanisms of conflict resolution between pastoralists and farmers. The volatile security situation in the agro pastoral regions has seriously affected the intercommunity cohesion that allowed amicable conflicts related to transhumance on the basis of traditional models of governance and have had a significant impact on the mobility of pastoralists and their herds, compromising transhumance and reducing access to livestock markets. This has hindered the country's economic development. In addition, herd mobility difficulties increase pressure on natural resources and exacerbate tensions between farmers and pastoralists resulting in inter-community conflict.

Between November 2018 and February 2019, several incidents related to transhumance were reported in the sub-prefectures of Bouar, Carnot, Ngaoundaye, Paoua, Kouï, Bocaranga in the prefecture of Mamberé-Kadei.
OVERVIEW

Between September 2018 and February 2019, the situation has deteriorated in several parts of the country (Ouaka, Haute Kotto, Basse Kotto, Mbomou, and Haut Mbomou). In addition to recurrent incidents linked to the transhumance, violations of the civilian and humanitarian character of IDP sites and armed clashes have led to increased displacement and the need to boost the emergency response to those affected by multiple shocks. As a result, the number of people in need identified has increased to 1.46 million i.e. 8.2%, with now over 702,000 men; 760,00 women. Data disaggregation by age shows over 731,000 children under 18 years, 672,000 people between 18 and 59 years and 58,500 people over 60.

IDPs on 76 sites have no shelter and essential household items (NFI), further exacerbating the extreme vulnerabilities and living conditions. The dry season has also negatively impacted several areas, such as Kaga Bandoro, Lapago, Bambari, Pombolo – Alindao, as thousands of IDPs suffered from fire incidents on site. IDPs have been displaced more than once, thus losing every time all their belongings. Similarly, local communities and host families continue to be under pressure due to the influx of IDPs and lack of decent and adequate shelter and non-food items, causing increasing vulnerability.

Recent evaluations undertaken in the past six months on some official IDP sites highlighted alarming multi-sectorial gaps, the lack of training and capacity building for site managers, the lack of respect of the civilian and humanitarian character of sites, and the weak capacities by communities to maintain infrastructure, thus highlighting complete dependence on external aid to survive. Vulnerable people, IDPs, returnees, and host families, continue to be exposed to the risks of harsh weather conditions, insecurity, diseases due to lack of sufficient emergency shelters.

Spontaneous and small scale returns of IDPs and refugees, also prompted by the recent Peace agreement, in pockewrks of areas in the West, Center and East of the country, are coupled with major difficulties in terms of local reintegration due to the loss of their belongings, protection incidents and the total or partial destruction of their property.

If funding is not urgently received by the end of June, critical “life-saving” activities will not be implemented. For instance, the deployment of CCCM actors will not be possible. Capacity-building activities for sectoral committees, including monitoring activities, needs and gaps analysis, as well as the profiling of displaced populations will not be undertaken, thus preventing the improvement of the living conditions of the affected populations and thereby increasing protection risks. Urgent funding is also required to provide a flexible response and to preposition contingency stocks to improve shelters and NFIs in response to continuous and multiple shocks.
ÉDUCATION

OVERVIEW

The education system, already fragile before 2012, continues to suffer from the terrible consequences of the crisis which severely hampers access to, and quality of, learning opportunities for children and young people.

Almost all the prefectures have been directly affected by the conflict, resulting in the destruction and / or loss of education facilities and materials, the deterioration of school infrastructure, the displacement of qualified teachers and the absence of decentralized education authorities of the Ministry of Primary, Secondary, Technical and Literacy Education (MEPSTA). The crisis has also deepened gender inequality in terms of access to education as well as girls’ vulnerability to exploitation and abuse. Children affected by the crisis are at higher risk, including of recruitment into armed groups, criminality, sexual exploitation and abuse, early marriage and early pregnancy. Between September 2018 and February 2019, 363 schools were reported as closed including 23 attacked and/or occupied. In total, more than 100 attacks against the education system have been reported since 2017.

Most national teachers have left their posts as they have not been paid and due to insecurity in many regions. As a result, 60 per cent are community teachers with little training, most of whom remain in hotspot areas and they do their best to provide basic education and child protection. Recruitment and teacher training has been disrupted, further obstructing the deployment of qualified teachers. The joint humanitarian needs assessment for Education, conducted by cluster partners in early September 2018, reported that approximately 1.3 million children and adolescents (aged 3-18, 28 per cent of the overall population) need assistance. This situation has been further aggravated by the resurgence of conflicts, resulting in the displacement of almost 290,000 pre-schools, primary and secondary school children, approximately 116,000 of whom are reported as school dropouts. Nearly 200,000 displaced children need to be assisted in order to have access to education in existing schools and in adapted school structures such as Schools and Learning Centres. In addition, 220,000 children and young people from most vulnerable groups, such as returnees and some minority/marginalized groups, are also in need of education assistance. Areas such as Mambéré Kadéi, Ouham, Pendé, Ouham, Nana Gribizi, Kémo, Bamingui Bangoran, Ouaka, Haute Kotto, Basse Kotto, Mbomou, Haut Mbomou remain priorities; in the past six months the south-eastern areas have experienced additional shocks and have been identified as key hotspots for Education in Emergency.

If US$ 15 million are not received to support education in emergency, more than 300 schools will remain closed. More than 420,000 children (3-18) will not have access to education and protection in the targeted zones. Almost 7,000 young people (14-18) will be at risk of recruitment or re-recruitment due to a lack of vocational training opportunities for their community reintegration. Many displaced people will not benefit from school (re)integration due to limit infrastructures and lack of qualified teachers. In addition, almost 300 localities will not develop a risk reduction local plan and school’s safety.
OVERVIEW

Telecommunications and power infrastructure are almost non-existent in all localities across the country, except in Bangui and in areas where UN agencies and NGOs are operating to support humanitarian partners.

The ETC has been filling major gaps in connectivity since 2014 by providing common internet and security communications services in Bangui, Bouar, Paoua, Bossangoa, Kaga-Bandoro, N’Dele, Bambari, Bria and Alindao.

The need for common ETC services is a priority in key locations, such as Batangafo, Amada Gaza, Gamboula, Zemio and Obo.

With the exception of Bangui, a recent Telecommunications Security Standards (TESS) mission identified extreme shortages of GSM coverage in cities across the country. Where GSM coverage exists, it is unreliable and provides limited coverage. This demonstrates an urgent need to extend telecommunications coverage by installing VHF radio networks, to support the safety and security of humanitarians on the ground. The security telecommunications upgrades require a budget of US$ 300,000 to implement the TESS mission recommendations in 14 common humanitarian hubs across CAR.

Accountability to the affected population

The ETC’s Services for Communities (S4C) carried out an assessment mission in January 2019. The assessment team surveyed approximately 270 people living in IDP sites and host communities in Bria, Bangassou and Kaga Bandoro to identify the information that matters most to affected populations, understanding if and how they access information, the technological means of information and communication available to communities, as well as challenges to accessing information.

Based on the assessment mission, the ETC aims to improve communities’ access to IT services, to information on humanitarian assistance and to communication channels with humanitarian workers. For this purpose, US$ 300,000 are urgently needed to implement the following recommendations:

To provide affected populations with reliable voice connectivity services—In most of the assessed areas, women were found to have much lower rates of accessibility to mobile phones than men. Although paid calling facilities are available in some areas, poverty and a lack of confidentiality in the spaces provided means that women face additional barriers to using these paid facilities. Setting up free calling services for affected communities will enable men and women (especially unaccompanied women) to utilize the service. Free calling booths can further improve communities’ access to humanitarian hotlines. This intervention would require local buy-in and reliable voice services to ensure that the facilities are trusted and used.

To utilise innovative technologies to improve two-way communication with humanitarians: In the absence of wide mobile phone ownership among affected communities, humanitarians need to deploy innovative mechanisms to collect, record, log and follow up on individual complaints and information flow between communities and humanitarians. Although the commitment of UN partners to community engagement and accountability is strong, UN and NGO agencies are overwhelmingly lacking in expert technical capacity in emergency humanitarian information services delivery.

Unless the required funding for these ETC activities is received by June 2019, it is foreseen that life-saving communications to humanitarians and affected populations will be negatively impacted.
FOOD SECURITY

OVERVIEW

Despite the assistance provided, the food security situation remains worrisome and continues to be of serious concern. The December 2018 National Food Security Assessment (ENSA in French) results indicate some 2.1 million people, nearly half of the 4.5 million people living in the Central African Republic, are food insecure, showing an increase from the 1.9 million of the IPC data in September 2018. Compared to 2017, the overall food insecurity increased by 5 per cent points, from 45 per cent in 2017 to 50 per cent in 2018.

Persistent insecurity in the country and repeated displacement of the population are the main causes affecting households’ access to food and livelihoods, thus significantly disrupting livestock, fishing and agricultural activities. This results in a precarious food and nutritional security situation of affected households.

The 656,000 IDPs (living in site and host communities) are the most affected category by food insecurity, suffering from additional pressure on already limited food resources.

While the share of households facing severe food insecurity has halved, from 15 per cent in 2015 to 10 per cent in 2017 and 7 per cent in 2018, those facing moderate food insecurity have increased from 35 to 43 per cent. The prefectures of Basse Kotto, Nana Gribizi, Haut Mbomou, Ouaka, Ouham Pendé and Ouham show the highest prevalence of food insecurity. Among the areas with a large food insecure population, the most noteworthy are the prefectures of Ouham Pende, Ouham, Ombella Mpoko, Ouaka, Basse Kotto and Mambere Kadei.

Vulnerable populations have inadequate, poorly diversified and insufficient food consumption. This vulnerability is accentuated by the economic situation of these households as well as the stagnation of households’ income. This is deeply concerning as about half of Central African families spend the majority of their income on food, and even up to 75 per cent in some areas. Support to households’ agricultural activities and value chain rehabilitation are key activities for the reduction of food insecurity, the generation of socio-economic development, resilience and peace.

The comparative analysis of the evolution of food consumption shows a deterioration compared to the last survey conducted in December 2017. The current level of food consumption is the most deteriorated ever reached in the country since 2009, with the exception of 2016.

The ENSA results also demonstrate a gradual depletion of assets of vulnerable people at national level and an increased use of coping strategies which weaken their capacity to resist to future shocks.

Funding of US$ 100 M will provide assistance to reduce the level of food insecurity and support the resilience of communities affected by the recurrent crisis in the country.
OVERVIEW

The 2019 HNO estimated 2.1 million people in need in the health cluster. In the last 6 months (September 2018 to February 2019), a slight increase in needs occurred, in spite of the response delivered by health sector partners.

Health remains one of the areas where needs remain considerable due to persistent constraints to access to health services and new outbreaks of epidemic-prone diseases, such as Hepatitis E epidemic, Monkey pox, Yellow fever as well as outbreaks of whooping cough, malaria and bloody diarrhoea. It should be noted that no serious security breach has been reported since the peace agreement was signed on 6th February 2019. However, the humanitarian situation remains worrisome in several areas of the CAR due to persistent insecurity and attacks against civilians, rising crime, which continue to affect civilian populations and humanitarian efforts to support the revitalization of the health system.

Evaluations conducted by health sector partners in certain areas after temporary lack of access (Haut-Mbomou, Mbomou and Basse-Kotto) have made it possible to identify new needs. In these areas, essential emergency health services (preventive, promotional and curative) including sexual and reproductive health, care of the wounded, control of communicable and non-communicable diseases, child health, and mental health must be assured on an ongoing basis. These populations also need to be protected against new threats such as the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD), which continues to plague the DRC with high risks of spread into CAR. Added to this are the recurrent attacks against the healthcare facilities. At least six attacks against healthcare facilities were recorded in the sub-prefectures of Alindao, Bakouma, Kaga Bandoro and Bangassou. Based on all of these factors, the number of people in need is estimated at 2.2M, an increase of 7% compared to the survey conducted in September 2018.

By the end of June, nearly 436,074 vulnerable people will not have access to curative, preventive and promotional healthcare services due to the absence of emergency healthcare services, including care of the wounded, implementation of the minimum reproductive healthcare system, the management of common diseases, and emergency mental health care. Nearly 300,000 people exposed to epidemic risks may be affected with consequences in terms of death, suffering and destruction of the economic and social fabric. A gap of US$ 14 million will have to be covered to meet this need. Finally, it is necessary to liaise current needs with the ongoing funding of partners working in healthcare, most of which will end in June 2019 and whose procurement measures with State structures are not guaranteed.
LIVELIHOOD AND COMMUNITY STABILISATION

OVERVIEW

Several acts of violence against civilians (destruction of IDPs sites in Batangafo, Alindao, Ippy) and humanitarian personnel, leading in some cases to the interruption of activities, have been observed between September 2018 and February 2019. However, during the period cluster partners deliver response accordingly to their capacity.

In September 2018, the cluster estimate humanitarian needs overview 2019 to 1.4 million people are in need of livelihood and early recovery. During this review after deduction of people covered in six months, we still have the same 1.4 million people as a result of population movements, particularly targeting returnees and refugees and host community. Young men and women represent 46 per cent of the population in need, divided between the different categories of affected people (displaced, returnees, repatriates and host population).

Evaluations conducted during the period by partners, inter agency show that people want to be resilient and asked for incomes generating activities, cash for work (maintain road, bridge, socioeconomics infrastructures) and vocational training to postpone the condition in which there are living for few years. This demand is more observe on axes where most of the time, the service deliver does not reach there and focused in town because of security.

In terms of geographical areas, several needs are highlighted as show on the maps with the severity 3, 4 and 5 in Bouar, Berberati, Carnot, Gamboula, Amada Gaza, Bocaranga, Koui, Paoua, Markounda, Batangafo, Kabo, Bamingui, Mbères, Bambari, Ndélé, Alindao, Kouango, Mobaye, Satéma, Mingala, Ippy, Mbomou and Haut Mbomou. In these locations, it is possible to put in place programs to stabilize the community. Some locations that have received an influx of returnees (Bouar, Berbéri, Paoua, Bambari, Bangassou) have an acute need of boosting income generating activities.

Stabilizing populations require a holistic approach and greater complementarity between actors. Investments are further needed to foster stabilization and promote resilience and social cohesion in the country. For the next three months, it is important to inject US$6 million based on HRP 2019 for the sector. In the absence of increased funding and robust recovery activities, the level of vulnerability will continue to deteriorate.
Humanitarian access to populations affected by the crisis remains a major challenge due to several factors, the most important of which are insecurity, violence against humanitarian actors, deterioration of infrastructure and a generally weak market capacity (transport and storage) available in the country. Although the dry season has favoured a slightly improved accessibility to some regions, past and upcoming rainy seasons have led and will continue to lead to the overall degradation of the infrastructure network in the country. Only 2.5 per cent of the total road network is paved and hundreds of bridges and ferries are either severely damaged or completely impassable.

From May to September 2019, rising water levels, flooding and strong river flow will severely contribute to the damage and/or the destruction of bridges, ferries and airstrips used. The lack of rain barriers, water diversion measures and other flood prevention strategies on main routes leads to the continued degradation of the road network. This, combined with security access issues, obliges humanitarian actors to heavily rely on air transport, resulting in extremely high intervention costs, most notably in Mboomou and Haut Mboomou, but in general in the Eastern regions. Landing strips, essentially made of clay, will deteriorate rapidly. The delivery of aid often requires the use of heavy trucks. However, the degraded crossing structures will no longer allow for the passage of vehicles or trucks, which as a consequence, will slow down humanitarian response activities in the most affected areas. These conditions also result in high transport costs.

A 35 MT truck (average NFI distribution size for the RRM programme) from Bangui to Paoua (distance 513 km) can cost between US$ 3,300 and US$ 4,300. A 25 MT truck from Bangui to Alindao (505 km away) can however cost between US$ 3,800 and US$ 4,300. Where road access is not possible, the use of air transport for such a distribution may cost up to approximately US$ 20,000 per flight rotation depending on the destination and the type of aircraft.

The volatility of the security situation is a second major factor that exponentially complicates the delivery of humanitarian assistance by land. The combination of physical and security access constraints force humanitarians to turn to the use of air transport as the only way to meet the needs of the most affected people in a timely manner. In order to access landlocked geographical priority areas and to allow prepositioning of life saving relief items ahead of the rainy season, it is crucial to maintain an emergency air cargo as well passenger service accessible to all humanitarian actors operating in areas with difficult road access. However, the funds for emergency cargo airlifts for example are already exhausted since end February 2019 and the project is currently on hold until new funding is secured.

LOGISTICS

OVERVIEW

Humanitarian access to populations affected by the crisis remains a major challenge due to several factors, the most important of which are insecurity, violence against humanitarian actors, deterioration of infrastructure and a generally weak market capacity (transport and storage) available in the country. Although the dry season has favoured a slightly improved accessibility to some regions, past and upcoming rainy seasons have led and will continue to lead to the overall degradation of the infrastructure network in the country. Only 2.5 per cent of the total road network is paved and hundreds of bridges and ferries are either severely damaged or completely impassable.

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The nutrition situation for children in the CAR has continued to deteriorate. The crisis has negatively impacted the healthcare services and limited their capacity to provide adequate care and treatment for children suffering from acute malnutrition. The prevalence of acute malnutrition has continued to increase particularly in areas with a high level of insecurity and a limited access to essential social services.

The results of the national nutrition SMART survey conducted between September and October 2018 revealed alarming rates of severe acute and chronic malnutrition among children under five. At national level, the overall nutrition situation in CAR has shown some deterioration with Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rate of 7.1 per cent and Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) rate of 2.1 per cent – above the 2 per cent emergency level set by WHO – and a chronic malnutrition (MC) rate of 37.7 per cent among children under five which is beyond the emergency threshold of 30 per cent, compared to the national nutrition SMART survey done in 2014 (GAM:6.6 per cent; SAM:1.9 per cent; MC:40.8 per cent).

Additionally, the SMART survey indicated that 10 out of the 16 prefectures in the country, have a SAM rate above the critical threshold of 2 per cent as compared to 7 out of 16 prefectures in 2014 – and all the prefectures outside Bangui and Ouham have a chronic malnutrition rate above the critical threshold of 30 per cent. It is expected that without urgent action, the number of acutely malnourished children could further rise in the coming months, this increase would be driven mainly by growing food insecurity, decreasing access to safe water and sanitation, and declining availability of health services. Moreover, the critical situation of chronic malnutrition has persisted for almost 20 years in CAR (EDS, 1995) with serious consequences such as delayed cognitive development and school performance, increased mortality, low capacity for adult production and the loss of economic growth.

Partners have noticed a reduction of needs during the last 6 months from 1,048,377 to 918,670 people. However, urgent treatment and nutrition support is needed for 31,169 SAM, who risk death without immediate treatment, and 39,462 with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). Additionally, an estimate 49,162 pregnant or lactating women (PLW) are also acutely malnourished making them vulnerable to maternal mortality and varied morbidities that will negatively affect their infants. Moreover, an estimate 540,438 children aged between 6-59 months are in need of micronutrient supplementation and 209,202 children aged from 6-23 months are in need of blanket supplementary feeding. Furthermore, partners have confirmed that 53 health facilities offering nutrition services have closed due to security concerns affecting the catchment area of more than 103,000 children under five.

The Nutrition Cluster estimated that over two-thirds of the nutrition sector projects will be underfunded by the end of June 2019. There is an urgent gap of US$ 9.5 million. Unless met, the funding gap will severely impact the effective scaling up of nutrition response in the country.
OVERVIEW

Priority areas remain the same as those identified in the 2019 HNO. However, the severity has increased in some areas due to higher protection risks and threats caused by armed elements’ activities as well as the transhumance. The severity rank has increased from 4 to 5 in Alindao (Basse-Kotto) and Bangassou (Mbomou), from 3 to 4 in Yalinga (Haute-Kotto), Bakouma (Mbomou) and Mbrès (Nana Gribizi), and from 2 to 3 in Gadzi (Mamabéré-Kadé).

The multiplication of protection priority areas is related to an increased risk of GBV and difficult access to healthcare services for survivors, in operational environment that is precarious also for humanitarian actors. Women and children (girls and boys), who are primarily responsible for collecting water and wood for domestic use, are exposed to violence and/or abduction by armed elements. The destruction and/or the contamination of water points during conflicts increases the distance and the time to collect water, which further exposes women and children to different forms of GBV, including rape, sexual and physical abuse, sexual exploitation and abuse, denial of resources etc. From September 2018 to January 2019, 4,118 people (86.6% adults and 13.4% children) were victims of GBV, 31% from which were IDPs. With 52% of female IDPs and 67% of children among IDPs, women, girls and boys remains the most vulnerable and at greatest risk of GBV, including SEA as well as early marriage and female genital mutilation.

With new IDPs and the volatile security situation in several villages on the axes – such as connected to Bria, Zemio and Batangafo, among others – the GBV sub-cluster estimates that 12,500 people are at risk of sexual violence.

As for child protection, while the improved security situation in some areas resulted in an increased demand for support to demobilization and reintegration, in other areas the deterioration of the security context increased the risk of violence against children, including the separation from family and their use by armed groups. From September 2018 to February 2019, child protection actors had managed to support the demobilization of 898 children (243 girls) from armed groups in CAR. 73 per cent of the demobilized children (136 girls) who in Paoua (Ouham-Pendé), who are still waiting for reintegration. Activities of armed groups have increased the number of unaccompanied children and children associated with armed groups and forces (CAAGF) in the area of Batangafo and in the southeastern part of CAR, including Mingala, Zangba and Alindao (Basse-Kotto), Bakouma, Bangassou, Ouango and Rafai (Mbomou), as well as Djemah, Obo and Zemio (Haut-Mbomou), where more than 27,000 children among IDP and host communities – including 14,000 girls – are in need of protection. The access to the above-mentioned areas is still challenging because of the security conditions and the considerable presence of armed groups.
the Vakaga, needs slightly decreased, compared to September 2018, thanks to the response delivered in the last six months.

The return of IDPs – both spontaneous and assisted – highlights the need for adequate protection monitoring in the return areas, so as to ensure that returnees will have access to existing essential services and that they will also be able to convey alerts on time when needed. As of end of February 2019, the Commission of population movement (CMP) reported 261,000 returnees. Between January and February 2019, the CMP has reported 3,800 returnees. Some of the return areas such as Kembé, Pombolo, Mobaye and many villages on the axes are not yet covered by protection monitoring. Communities’ protection mechanisms will need to be reinforced.

The cluster and its sub-clusters considered the existing technical and human capacities within the country as well as access constraints, including the upcoming raining season, in order to estimate the financial gaps as well as the partners’ disbursement capacity.

If child protection actors do not mobilize US$ 876,000 by June 2019, 598 children associated with armed groups and forces (30% girls) will be exposed to re-recruitment. Additionally, 411 unaccompanied and separated children (45% girls) will be exposed to abuses, violence and exploitation, including sexual exploitation, while 13,500 children (50% girls) will have their psychosocial distress worsen and could require specialized healthcare.

If general protection actors do not receive US$ 1,100,000 by June 2019, protection monitoring and response will not be implemented in return areas and other priority areas such as, Ippy (Ouaka), Mingala and Mobaye (Basse-Kotto), Bakouma and Rafai (Mbomou), as well as Djemah, Obo and Zemio (Haut-Mbomou), affecting approximately 300,000 people including IDPs, returnees and hosted communities.

If GBV actors do not mobilize USD 1,500,000 by June 2019, 8,000 survivors will not receive holistic care including medical, psychosocial, socio economic and legal support in Batangafo (Ouham), Kaga-Bandoro (Nana Gribizi), Bambani (Ouka), Zemio (Haut-Mbomou), Bakouma and Bangassou (Mbomou).
WATER SANITATION HYGIENE

OVERVIEW

Of the 1.9 million people in need, 306,000 received WASH assistance between September 2018 and February 2019. The most affected groups are IDPs, returnees, and host families – many of whom continue to depend on life-saving humanitarian aid.

Thanks to the combined efforts of humanitarian and development actors, more than 150 water points have been rehabilitated and 40 new water points have been built. Access to sustainable water has been improved for more than 184,000 people, particularly in some IDP sites (such as in Bria, Alindao, Kaga-Bandoro) and in some urban centres (such as Batangafo, Kabo Mobaye). In Bria, the gravity-fed network designed by OXFAM will be operational in March and provide displaced and host people with access to sufficient quantities of quality water within reach. At the same time, more than 179,000 people have had access to sanitation facilities. However, several challenges remain. Access to drinking water remains difficult in most areas, particularly for the 700,000 people living in the South-East (Haut Mbomou, Mbomou, Ouaka), the Centre (Nana-Gribizi and Kemo) and the North-West (Ouham-Pendé). In terms of sanitation, most of the emergency latrines in IDP sites need to be rebuilt or rehabilitated due to the unmet conditions for durable returns of IDPs to their localities of origin. With regard to health, several cases of waterborne diseases continue to be reported. An outbreak of Hepatitis-E has been ongoing in the Bocaranga-Koui health district (3 sous-prefectures) since October 2018 and it is spreading to Ngaoundaye (Ouham-Pendé). As of 17 March, 131 confirmed cases have been reported, including 4 new cases in late March. At the same time, 43 cases of bloody diarrhoea have been reported in the central zone (such as Kaga-Bandoro - Dissoukou axis).

In view of the above factors, as well as the deteriorating humanitarian situation in some parts of the country, including the South-eastern and Centre areas, the need for WASH response activities has increased. Furthermore, the responses provided to displaced people, particularly those living on IDP sites, must be maintained in coordination with CCCM actors. The WASH response should be reinforced together with health and nutrition actors to prevent and effectively halt waterborne diseases and poor hygiene conditions. The most acute needs are located in the South-East (Upper Mbomou, Mbomou, Lower Kotto and Ouaka), the Centre (Nana Gribizi and Ouham) and the North-West (Ouham Pendé) of the country. However, due to the concentration of IDPs, the low rate of access to latrines, the sub-prefectures of Amada Gaza, Carnot, Grimari are also priority for humanitarian WASH interventions. In a context marked by epidemics and health warnings (Ebola, cholera, etc.), insecurity with its corollary of population movements, the drying of traditional wells and even sometimes boreholes during the dry season, it is urgent to continue intensifying the WASH response in priority areas. If nothing is done by the end of June, there is a risk of further spread of waterborne diseases both within the country and in neighbouring countries. As a result, the nutritional situation is likely to deteriorate, endangering the lives of children and the most vulnerable pregnant and lactating women. The Cluster WASH urgently needs 8 millions USD to provide assistance to people in need.

PEOPLE IN NEED

1.9M

BY SEX

49% men
51% women

BY AGE

50% Children (<18 years)
46% adults (18-59)
4% elderly P (>59)

URGENT FUNDING BY END OF JUNE:

US$8M
ANNEX I – 2P Tool (January-December 2018)*

*The objective of the 2P is to show priority areas for protection measures to be implemented, based on: 1) the frequency by which each area has been raised/ reported during protection related fora, and 2) the number of people in need of protection in the area. The 2P helps all protection actors promote protection priority areas where: 1) Advocacy efforts must be raised across all sectors, including with the Force (high priority); 2) Presence and scale up are necessary and to curb protection risks and incidents (medium priority); and 3) Monitoring is key to either lower the protection risks (low priority and watching brief) or to conduct an initial assessment of the protection needs as no actor is present (blind spot).
WEB PLATFORMS
unocha.org/country/car
car.humanitarianresponse.info

SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORM
@OCHA_car