

MINOR EMERGENCY



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC: FLOODS

no. 05ME048
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In Brief

CHF 46,000 (USD 36,170 OR EUR 29,610) HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) TO RESPOND TO THIS OPERATION. UNEARMARKED FUNDS TO REPAY DREF ARE ENCOURAGED.

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For longer-term programmes please refer to the Federation's 2005 Annual Appeal for Central African Republic, no. 05AA034 – http://www.ifrc.org/cgi/pdf_appeals.pl?annual05/05AA034.pdf.

The situation

Unprecedented torrential rains that fell in Bangui, Central African Republic (CAR) for nine hours during the night of 6 to 7 August 2005 caused unexpected floods which to date have left over 14,517 people homeless. Its consequences were particularly serious in the town's overpopulated neighbourhoods because:

- The temporary structures in the neighbourhoods were built in haste and were weak to withstand the effects of the floods.
- The localities are occupied by unemployed persons who live under miserable conditions. The neighbourhoods do not have potable water points so the population uses water from wells, located close to latrines, for cooking, drinking and other domestic use. The populations, thus, consume infected water and are exposed to waterborne diseases- including typhoid, cholera, diarrhoea and hepatitis E.

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- Waste and stagnant water found everywhere in the localities provide ready breeding places for mosquitoes. It should be noted that malaria is the leading cause of infant mortality in Central African Republic.

Official data indicates that three out of ten persons in Bangui do not have access to potable water. Consequently, the floods have deprived majority of the populations of their sole water sources - traditional water wells. In addition, septic tanks overflowed and their contents poured into the wells and stagnant water ponds. The risk of epidemics has increased and a resurgence of malaria is likely to occur.

Distribution of human and material casualties

Localities	Human Casualties		Material Casualties		
	Wounded	Deaths	Houses completely destroyed	Houses completely flooded	Other
1 st subdivision	2	0	10	40	1 case of fracture
2 nd subdivision	0	0	87	174	0
3 rd subdivision	0	0	39	36	0
4 th subdivision	0	0	38	76	0
5 th subdivision	0	1	129	257	0
6 th subdivision	5	0	446	378	1 case of malaria
7 th subdivision	0	0	125	186	Loss of kitchen utensils
8 th subdivision	0	0	72	142	
Begoua	0	0	37	42	
Che-Boeing	0	0	7	14	
Bimbo	0	0	92	183	
Total	7	1	1082	1528	

Source: Central African Red Cross Society volunteers

According to weather services, the rain will continue falling until September/October. More damage might be registered in the already-affected neighbourhoods, with a likelihood of extending to other localities.

Red Cross action taken so far

On the onset of the floods, the Central African Red Cross Society¹ deployed volunteers to assess the situation in the field. Data was collected by the volunteers trained in first aid, data collection during disasters and in the use of evaluation sheets. Other partners are solely relying on the results of the evaluation carried out by Central African Red Cross Society's volunteers.

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) delegation in Bangui has availed logistics support in form of vehicles for the assessment teams and provided 500 blankets to reinforce the stock the Federation intends to give to 1,100 affected people. On the other hand, the French Red Cross has pledged to reinforce the sanitation kit of the Federation with a package of EUR 4,000.

¹ Central African Red Cross Society website- <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=44>

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The needs

Though earlier indicators showed a dire need for food assistance, after a second evaluation it became clearer that essential emphasis of the Red Cross intervention should be on sanitation. Sanitation activities are among the solutions with a lasting effect as they will reduce the vulnerability of the populations during the rain season. Subsequently, the most urgent needs are:

- Blankets, cooking utensils, soap, and clothing.
- Well-furnished Water/Sanitation kits to enable volunteers to effectively carry out the cleaning of gutters and the drainage of waste water- with the participation of affected communities.
- Training.

Food assistance will be provided by other partners working in the area.

Victims per locality as at 18 August 2005

Locality	Number of family heads	Number of dependents	Men	Women	Children	
			≥ 15 YRS	≥ 15 YRS	Boys	Girls
1 st subdivision	50	94	44	44	4	2
2 ^d subdivision	261	2349	466	708	507	668
3 ^d subdivision	75	775	163	156	215	241
4 th subdivision	114	708	141	213	250	104
5 th subdivision	386	2021	303	607	877	234
6 th subdivision	824	4041	1025	1345	1001	670
7 th subdivision	311	1204	245	368	392	199
8 th subdivision	214	1694	304	561	409	420
Begoua	79	341	100	59	90	92
Che-Boeing	21	243	67	118	35	23
Bimbo	275	1047	208	315	220	304
Total	2610	14517	3066	4494	4000	2957

Source: Central African Red Cross Society volunteers

Coordination

The Central African Red Cross Society, being a seating member of the National Disaster Commission, is monitoring the development of the situation. The president of the national society has been appointed chairperson of the committee in charge of managing funds for the flood disaster response operation.

The prime minister of the Central African Republic visited the affected areas after an initial visit by the minister of Family, Social Affairs and National Solidarity, accompanied by a Central African Red Cross Society team. The Central African Republic first lady also visited the sixth subdivision and gave a contribution of XAF 300,000 (CHF 710,650) towards the disaster response operation.

The United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) has promised to put a stock of 18,000 jerry cans at the disposal of the national society's volunteers. Meanwhile, UNICEF and the World Health Organisation (WHO) have pledged to jointly monitor the health situation of the victims and provide impregnated mosquito nets.

The Federation's Central Africa sub-regional office, in Yaoundé, is providing technical support to the national society. The office is also closely liaising with the ICRC and the French Red Cross.

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Plan of action

Goal: The vulnerability of the populations affected by floods is reduced.

Objective: 800 families affected by the floods have received non-food aid and their accommodation and living conditions have been improved.

Expected Results

- Minimum cooking kits are distributed to the 800 most vulnerable families that live in temporary shelters and have lost all or part of their cooking utensils
- The 800 most vulnerable families have been given a minimum of basic materials to help reduce their dependence
- Volunteers have mobilised the populations in the affected neighbourhoods to carry out sanitation activities- including the cleaning of gutters to ease drainage of waste water
- 90% of water points have been chlorinated and the populations have access to potable water
- Volunteers have assisted the communities in carrying out hygiene and sanitation activities in their neighbourhoods, under the supervision of local coaches
- 45 Central African Red Cross Society's volunteers have received Water/Sanitation training

Activities to achieve the objective

- Distribution of cooking utensils to the 800 most vulnerable families
- Provision of kits comprising of soap and blankets to the 800 most vulnerable families- especially pregnant women, children and the elderly
- Promotion of individual hygiene through door-to-door hygiene and sanitation sensitization campaigns.
- Rehabilitation and chlorination of water wells
- Training of 45 volunteers in water and sanitation to ensure permanent sensitization in their respective communities

Scope of operation

This operation is expected to cover the three-month period until 16 November 2005 and will assist 4,500 beneficiaries directly.

Items will be distributed to the beneficiaries by the Central African Red Cross Society's volunteers.

A list of the most vulnerable families has been established on the following criteria:

- Families whose houses have been completely destroyed
- Families with children of tender age
- Families with heavier charges
- Pregnant women
- The elderly

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