

## News bulletin

20 - 27 October 2008

### Highlights

- Second meeting of the global peace accord Monitoring Committee in Libreville
- Report on human rights by BONUCA
- \$1.2 million allocated by UNESCO for education
- Mission to improve United Nations' coordination in Bangui from 25 to 30 October

## Background and security

### Second meeting of the Monitoring Committee

The Monitoring Committee of the global peace accord started its second meeting in Libreville on 24 October. The Central African governmental delegation is led by its Communications and Dialogue Minister, Cyriaque Gonda. Jean-Jacques Démafouth leads the delegation of the *Popular Army for the Restoration of Democracy* (APRD). Djanib Grebaye represents the *Union of Democratic Forces for Unity* (UFDR), while the political opposition is represented by Henri Pouzère of the *Union des forces vives de la nation* (UFVN).

Rebels and political opposition alike demanded the revision of the general amnesty law promulgated by President Bozizé on 14 October. According to the rebel and opposition leaders, this amnesty law does not facilitate the start of the peace dialogue. They demand more protection for rebel leaders and the fighters of the different armed groups.

### Diamond buyers under fire

The Central African government withdrew the permits for exporting mining products of eight of the ten companies officially licensed to buy gold and diamonds. The new measure, coming into force for an unknown duration, is one of the actions aiming at combating fraud in the mining sector, according to the Minister of Mines, Sylvain Ndoutingai.

## Current events

### Report on human rights

The *Office of the United Nations in the Central African Republic* (BONUCA) published an analytic

report on the evolution of the human rights situation in the country. The report describes violations of the right to life, physical integrity, liberty and fair justice. The human rights violations documented in the report are for the most part attributed to government defense and security forces. According to BONUCA, cruel, degrading and inhuman treatment takes mainly place in prisons. In conflict-struck areas, soldiers are accused of summary executions during military operations.

In a public reaction to the report, President Bozizé declared that the reported facts are old and exaggerated.

### \$1.2 million for education

The *United Nations Organization for Education, Science and Culture* (UNESCO) on 15 October signed an operational plan worth \$1.2 million with the Ministry of Education to support the implementation of its sector strategy. The project will help build the capacity of the Ministry, particularly of the Secretariat charged with the coordination of the implementation of the education strategy and the Directorate of School buildings so that they can supervise the rehabilitation and construction programme included in the strategy. The new Resources Directorate, also part of the operational plan, will be charged with the career management of new contract teachers.

The project, financed by the Italian government, will further strengthen the literacy and non-formal education mechanisms of the Ministry and will re-launch school radio and television.

On the same day, UNESCO donated computer, photocopying and audio-visual equipment worth \$30,000 to the High Council for Communication. The apparatus should help the Council in its regulatory functions. As part of this collaboration, two workshops are scheduled to explain the role of the Council and familiarize media professionals and the civil society with the institution.

Benoit Sossou, the UNESCO representative based in Yaoundé, Cameroun, who had come to Bangui for the occasion, also handed over equipment to a community radio, Espace Linga Tere.

For more information: [h.cron@unesco.org](mailto:h.cron@unesco.org)

### Télécoms Sans Frontières in CAR

*Télécoms Sans Frontières* (TSF) sent a team to CAR to support the work of the *International Rescue Committee* (IRC), an American NGO. TSF will install

high frequency radio links to connect IRC's offices in Bangui to those in Bocaranga and Kaga Bandoro, situated respectively 500 and 350 kilometers from the capital to facilitate coordination of the NGO's operations. TSF will also equip its vehicles with radio systems to ensure staff security and enable communication from the remotest areas of the country.

IRC helps people affected by the conflict, particularly the most poor and the displaced who are returning to their villages of origin, by providing support in the health, environmental health, protection and education sectors.

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### Second evaluation of ERF projects

A second evaluation of projects funded by the *Emergency Response Fund* (ERF) took place in the beginning of October. An evaluation team visited six projects in Paoua and Markounda in the north-west of the country.

Using ERF funds, *Cooperazione Internazionale* (COOPI) distributed 5,000 agricultural kits and food of the *World Food Programme* (WFP) to as many households. *Première Urgence* distributed agricultural kits to 12,393 households and food rations to 14,000 families.



Vegetable garden in Markounda

Action Contre la Faim managed to distribute 2,811 agricultural kits, seeds and food to 13,549 people in Markounda. The Central African Association for Family Well-being conducted 2,083 medical consultations and 179 HIV tests.

The *United Nations Children's Fund* (UNICEF) installed an internet connection service, open to all humanitarians, at the United Nations base in Paoua, and WFP set up telecommunications equipment

which allows following the movements of field missions in real time so as to ensure their security.

The evaluation team found that all projects have largely or entirely met their objectives and that they contributed to improving the living standards of the people affected by the crisis and by violence.

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## Coordination

### UN team works on improving coordination

A 15-member United Nations inter-agency mission arrived on 25 October in Bangui to study how to improve the coordination and coherence of the world body's work in the country.

BONUCA announced that the assessment team will meet with Government officials, the UN country team, civil society representatives and members of the diplomatic community during its week-long visit.

The inter-agency assessment team will draft recommendations for the Security Council on how to integrate United Nations activities in CAR.

### New NGO staff

Jorge Jimeno joined Mentor Initiative, an english NGO, as Program Director. He is based in Paoua. Contacts: [jorge@mentor-initiative.net](mailto:jorge@mentor-initiative.net) | 75 52 08 46 Th. 88 21 65 10 72 502

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