

Central African Republic HUMANITARIAN CRISIS ANALYSIS 2020

4 February 2020

Each year, Sida conducts a humanitarian allocation exercise in which a large part of its humanitarian budget is allocated to emergencies worldwide. The allocation and subsequent disbursement of funds takes place in the beginning of the year to ensure predictability for humanitarian organisations and to allow for best possible operational planning. In an effort to truly adhere to the humanitarian principles, Sida's humanitarian assistance is grounded in the four humanitarian principles, and in particular **impartiality**, with its compelling urge to ensure that humanitarian action is carried out based on **"needs alone"**, giving priority to the **"most urgent cases of distress"**. Therefore, Sida's allocation methodology is grounded in several objective indicators such as; the *scale* of humanitarian needs (number of people in need), the *severity* of humanitarian needs (including food insecurity/IPC levels), the number of people targeted for the humanitarian response, the *financial coverage* of the respective humanitarian appeal, *national capacities* to respond and underlying risks, as well as distinct indicators related to *forgotten crises*. Sida also strongly supports the humanitarian coordination structures. Besides this initial allocation, another part of the humanitarian budget is set aside as an emergency reserve for sudden onset emergencies and deteriorating humanitarian situations. This reserve allows Sida to quickly allocate funding to any humanitarian situation throughout the year, including additional funding to the Central African Republic.

For 2020, the Central African Republic (CAR) is allocated an initial 88 MSEK. Close monitoring and analysis of the situation in CAR will continue throughout the year and will inform possible decisions on additional funding.

1. CRISIS OVERVIEW

1.1. Type of crisis

The Central African Republic (CAR), is one of the world's poorest countries, ranked number 188 out of 189 countries in the Human Development Index list 2018, 119/119 on the Global Hunger Index, 188/189 on the Gender Inequality Index and with an overall INFORM risk index of 8.6/10, CAR is the second most vulnerable country in the world. It is a forgotten and protracted crisis that has faced instability since its independence from France in 1960. The situation has worsened particularly since a coup d'état in 2013, when Michel Djotodia led the almost entirely Muslim Séléka rebel coalition to seize power and oust President François Bozizé, prompting the Christian Anti-Balaka militia to rise to counter it. The combination of armed violence, political, socioeconomic and climatic factors in CAR has produced staggering humanitarian needs including widespread gender-based violence, food insecurity and displacement that the international community is struggling to address.

Underlying causes of the conflict include public frustration caused by a failed democratisation process, unsuccessful demobilisation, disarmament and reintegration of combatants, and lacking security sector reform. In addition, CAR has suffered from longterm economic hardship, with approximately 71 percent of the population estimated to be living below the poverty line of 1.9 USD per day in 2018. This has resulted in a trap whereby the violence has degraded capacities for economic development, and the low levels of economic development conversely fuelling grievances spurring violence. Moreover, the country's armed forces remain largely unfunctional and dependent on international support, including the UN peacekeeping mission MINUSCA that was deployed to CAR in 2014. The deployed number of MINUSCA personnel as of September 2019 is 14 742, and its mandate has been renewed until 15 November 2020. However, there exists a vacuum of governmental presence that has enabled the emergence of non-state armed groups – including several affiliated to the Séléka and the Anti-Balaka – who currently are estimated to control 80 percent of the country's territory. Moreover, CAR is rich in natural resources such as oil, gold, diamonds, uranium and timber, and struggles to control these have exacerbated the violence.

In February 2019, a *peace agreement* was signed between the government led by president Faustin-Archange Touadéra and 14 armed groups. It is the eighth peace agreement to be signed in seven years, but it was reached after more extensive preparations for talks and with greater international support than previous ones. Despite some localised improvements in security conditions, contributing to internally displaced person (IDP) returns to areas of origin, sporadic armed conflicts continue to result in civilian deaths, generate population displacement, and exacerbate humanitarian needs in CAR. In May, the armed group Return, Reclamation, Rehabilitation (3R) conducted attacks in three villages in Ouham-Pendé prefecture's Paoua sub-prefecture, resulting in at least 42 deaths and displacing an estimated 16 000 people. In early September, clashes between armed groups in Vakaga's prefecture's Birao city resulted in 38 deaths and displaced an estimated 20 000 people, generating large-scale humanitarian needs in a formerly calm, remote region of the country. In the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for 2020 it is noted that extreme violence against civilians has increased in 2019 with an average of 539 protection incidents per month having been reported between January and August, even though the total number of attacks targeting civilians and the number of clashes between armed groups has decreased. There is a significant risk the security situation could deteriorate in the run-up to the presidential,

legislative, regional and municipal *elections* scheduled for 2020 and 2021, but also due to the resurgence of localised and intercommunal conflicts. As a result, *the humanitarian situation is expected to worsen*.

With regards to *displacement*, approximately 1.2 million people, representing one quarter of the population, are estimated to be displaced as of 30 September 2019. Of these, 600 000 people are IDPs, while 602 000 have sought refuge in neighbouring countries, mainly Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Chad. However, return movements have accelerated by 41 percent in 2019 compared to 2018. An estimated 360 000 people have returned to their places of origin as of 1 September 2019. Following tripartite agreements signed by UNHCR and the governments of CAR and its three neighbouring countries, Cameroon (hosting more than 287 000 CAR refugees), DRC (hosting more than 172 000 CAR refugees) and Republic of Congo (hosting more than 31 000 CAR refugees), the returns of refugees could have a significant impact on the socio-economic situation in the communities of origin. A heightened weight on basic services such as schools, health centres, water points as well as markets could quickly become a source of conflict between host communities and those displaced and/or returnees.

Displacement has affected almost the entire country, with 96 percent of sub-prefectures hosting displaced persons. IDP figures are the highest in the central and eastern parts of the country (for example in Ouaka and Haute Kotto prefectures), as well as in the capital Bangui. People are mainly driven from their homes as a result of conflict, including attacks on IDP camps and the burning of houses. In addition, climatic factors such as torrential rainfalls and floods have also resulted in population movements. For example, floods starting in October 2019 in and around Bangui, as well as in Ouaka, Basse Kotto, Lobaye, Vakaga, Nana-Gribizi, Mbomou and Ouham prefectures, have displaced over 100 000 people.

High levels of *food insecurity* prevail in most of the country. Out of a total of 71 sub-prefectures, it is estimated that 8 sub-prefectures (Obo, Zémio, Bria, Ndjoukou, Ippy, Kouango, Batangafo and Kabo) are in a state of Emergency (IPC Phase 4), and that 47 sub-prefectures are in a state of Crisis (IPC Phase 3). In total, 35 percent of the population is estimated to be severely acutely food insecure (IPC level 3 or more), including 10 percent in a state of Emergency. During the lean season between May and August 2020, without food assistance, these levels are expected to increase, with 47 percent of the population becoming severely acutely food insecure. In part, this is a result of rising commodity prices. In the last quarter of 2019, the price of commonly consumed foods such as cassava and maize rose steeply, while some cereals were no longer available in several markets. Unavailability of essential services has also contributed significantly to the resurgence of epidemics that had previously been eradicated, putting more people at risk. Moreover, about 75 percent of the population in CAR depend on the agricultural sector to cover their food consumption, support their livelihoods, and to secure a significant share of their income. Despite playing a predominant role in the sector, only 3 percent of women are formally employed and have access to bank services.

The Central African population is very young with almost half of the population (46 percent) younger than 18 years and approximately 52 percent female. The *weak educational system* is therefore another reason for alarm, with 69 percent of classrooms in the country lacking qualified teachers and being taught by so-called 'community teachers' (*maître-parents*) nominated by the communities. Only 43 percent of children registered in primary school are girls and it is estimated that half a million children are not going to school at all, exposing them to multiple protection risks, which for girls translates into sexual abuse and exploitation as well as early and forced marriage, while for boys relates to trafficking and recruitment by armed groups. The youth are particularly affected by the destruction of the socio-economic fabric, the weak educational system and the lack of vocational training. It is estimated that less than one in three youth can read and do mathematics (29 percent) and 44 percent are unemployed.

A final prominent feature of the humanitarian situation in CAR is the widespread, endemic and normalised *sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)*, which is exacerbated by a prevailing culture of impunity for perpetrators. Between January and July 2019, 7 243 SGBV cases were recorded, which represents a 19 percent increase of the monthly average compared to 2018. Furthermore, it is expected that cases are significantly underreported, in part because the reporting system GBV Information Management System (GBVIMS) merely covers 40 percent of the country. Rape and sexual slavery have been used as weapons of war, and insufficient access to medical assistance and unsafe abortion practices put pregnant women's lives at risk.

1.2. Geographical areas and affected population

The estimated number of people in need for 2020 in the HRP is 2.6 million, representing more than half of the estimated total population of 4.6-4.9 million people in CAR. Given the decrease of 300 000 compared to the HRP for 2019, the HRP funding requirements have decreased from 430.7 million USD in 2019 to 387.8 million USD in 2020. The number of people in acute need, however, has increased from 1.6 million to 1.7 million. Geographically, almost the entire country is affected and have multidimensional needs as a result of the conflict, climatic conditions, as well as the political and socioeconomic environment. The most severe needs are mainly in the north, east and central parts of the country¹.

¹ A map of the needs can be found in the Humanitarian Needs Overview for 2020, accessible at www.reliefweb.int.

1.3. Critical assumptions, risks and threats

For 2020, the INFORM risk index ranks CAR second in the world after Somalia, with a score of 8.6 out of 10. There also exist significant challenges related to corruption, with CAR scoring 26 out of 100 on Transparency International's Corruption Perceptions Index in December 2018.

Another prominent risk is the persisting level of *impunity*. Despite the peace agreement signed in February 2019, armed groups - and to some extent state actors - continue to commit killings, kidnappings, arbitrary arrests and detentions, and engage in cruel, inhumane and degrading treatment, as well as extortion, looting, destruction or appropriation of property. Of 1389 human rights violations recorded between August 2018 and July 2019, 95 percent were perpetrated by armed groups and 5 percent by state actors. A Special Criminal Court was established in June 2015 to indict militants having committed crimes, and for the first time, two alleged Anti-Balaka chiefs have appeared in front of the International Criminal Court in The Hague. Although substantial challenges remain, these efforts constitute unprecedented steps to address the prevailing culture of impunity that has been one of the largest impediments to justice in the country. The major risk this work brings about is that the pursuit of justice might undermine the prospects for peace. One example of the result of this precarious balance is that stipulations related to justice in the peace agreement were made weak in order to appease the demands by the signatories. A recent development is the return to CAR of the two former presidents who initiated the still ongoing civil unrest, François Bozizé and the one who overthrew him in 2013, Michel Djotodia. Although both have been issued arrest warrants for alleged abuse, their return from exile during this election year demonstrates that those responsible for serious crimes feel untouchable. Their presence could, nonetheless, give the government and its partners an opportunity to break with the past. Prosecuting alleged crimes and holding leaders accountable could end the impunity that has driven so much violence and death over the past seven years.

An important risk is that the *humanitarian principles may not be safeguarded* in an extremely politicised environment, particularly in the run-up to the elections in 2020 and 2021. Access is mainly threatened by the risk of political instrumentalisation of humanitarian action, constant insecurity affecting humanitarians, as well as physical access (roads, bridges and absence of adequate infrastructure in several prefectures). Moreover, a new law was signed in 2019 governing the work of the international NGOs. There is a risk that certain provisions of this law could hinder the smooth implementation of humanitarian actions.

Another risk relates to persistent *intra- and inter-communal tensions*, particularly concerning repatriated people facing challenges of peaceful coexistence with the communities in the areas of return and in cases where they are confronted with illegal occupation of their land and property. In most of the concerned communities, women feel particularly vulnerable and insecure. Particular attention must be given to women to take them away from poverty and the exposure to exploitation and violence.

Another risk is related to *insufficient funding* for the humanitarian community to reach people in need. The HRPs have historically been largely underfunded (52% funded in 2018, 43% in 2017, 38% in 2016, 53% in 2015). As of December 2019, the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan requirement of USD 430.7 million has been funded at 69 percent. The funding requirement identified for the HRP for 2020 is 42.9 million USD less than for 2019 and consequently the risk of insufficient funding is expected to be lower, assuming a consistent level of funding. Nevertheless, it will be necessary to accelerate the operationalisation of humanitarian-development nexus efforts in order to begin addressing structural needs.

A final risk is associated with the *seasonal variations in violence*, mostly related to the rainy season obstructing access for armed groups to many parts of the country and thereby lowering the number of protection incidents during these periods. Accordingly, coinciding with the end of the rainy season, November has seen an upsurge of direct confrontations between armed groups, as well as between the Central African Armed Forces and armed groups, leading to suspensions of movements of humanitarian actors impacting the humanitarian response. The end of the rainy season also translates into the start of the transhumance, a seasonal migration of pastoralists across the northern border with Chad, which in recent years has led to heightened security and protection risks as the pastoralists tend to bear arms. There have also been reports of a substantial augmentation of sexual and gender-based violence incidents during the transhumance movements.

The combination of the security situation, funding shortages and corruption risks, as well as substandard quality of infrastructure, is likely to negatively impact the ability of the humanitarian community to assist the most vulnerable during 2020.

1.4. Strategic objectives and priorities of the Humanitarian Response Plan

The 2020 Humanitarian Programme Cycle (HPC) is underpinned by the largest humanitarian data collection exercise in CAR since 2016, including multi-sector needs assessments conducted across all sub-prefectures as well as country-

wide market assessments, with the latter informing cash programming. The 2020 Humanitarian Response Plan for CAR focuses on ensuring i) an adapted and integrated multisectorial response; ii) better quality, quicker and further reaching interventions; iii) an agile and close coordination; and iv) reinforcing inclusion and monetary interventions. Priority will be given to respond to three critical humanitarian consequences: i) physical and mental well-being (affecting 1.7 million persons); ii) living conditions (affecting 2.6 million persons); and iii) protection (affecting 2 million persons). The HRP identifies the most vulnerable categories of persons as women, children and people living with disabilities within displaced or repatriated populations.

2. IN COUNTRY HUMANITARIAN CAPACITIES

2.1. National and local capacities and constraints

Despite the peace agreement signed in February 2019, insecurity continues to be a major concern and armed groups have a very strong hold on the country. Although the government has shown interest in having a central role in coordinating international response and is responsible for the National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding (RCPCA) 2017-2021, the capacity of the central government to respond to the crisis remains limited and mostly concentrated in the capital as long as the State lacks control of major parts of the national territory. The government's capacity is also hindered by a chronic insufficiency of funds, governance challenges as well as pertinent inequalities in the division of resources and public service supplies. Only one in two government officials is currently in place, and very few are willing to be deployed to insecure regions. The government's involvement in the humanitarian response is limited and there is a lack of public condemnation of violence and security incidents against humanitarian organisations.

Civil society in CAR is characterised by fragmentation and most Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are political in nature, with limited capacity to assist in any principled humanitarian response. The CAR Humanitarian Fund (CARHF) has continued to provide funding for capacity development of national non-governmental organisations (NNGOs) through collaboration with international non-governmental organisations (INGOs). A total of 14 NNGOs currently receive funding from the CARHF, representing 26 percent of a total of 53 partners funded through the CARHF. Local civil society is nevertheless relatively dynamic and an important feature of the resilience of the population. A quarter of the population (23%) report being member of an association or socio-economic group. Most recently, during the violence registered in September in the northern-most part of the country in Birao, it was the local associations and communities that provided the first response and organised the site.

At the community level, there are many challenges related to displacement, lack of basic social services, lack of access to markets and/or employment, violence and impunity, and negative coping mechanisms are common. On a national level, two-thirds of households (68%) reported using at least one negative coping strategy in the past 30 days and 15 percent had adopted an emergency survival strategy, such as begging, selling their house or plot of land, or engaged one member of the household in an illegal or risky income generating activity. Internally displaced persons living in sites/camps or returnees reportedly engage more often in negative or risky behaviour when they do not have enough food or money. Nevertheless, the Central African population exhibits important resilience behaviours such as positive community dynamics and mechanisms for self-help, negotiation and traditional conflict resolution. More than 50 percent of the population perceive community chiefs as the most trust-worthy source of information and 58 percent of men and 50 percent of women trust the local traditional justice systems more than the formal justice sector.

2.2. International operational capacities and constraints

The Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) leads the humanitarian work in CAR with the support of OCHA and eleven clusters headed by United Nations (UN) agencies. Since 2014, the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) manages the in-country Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) through which three INGOs (ACTED, ACF and Solidarité International) are responsible for rapid needs assessments and initial response to sudden onset crises. Sweden funds the in-country RRM along with ECHO, Switzerland and USAID/OFDA. The same year, the INGO Coordination Committee (CCO) was founded and financed through NRC by the USAID/OFDA, Switzerland and ECHO. The CCO has registered 45 INGOs operating in CAR as well as three observers (MSF, ICRC and French Red Cross), and has a General Assembly every six months during which a new Executive Committee is elected that is composed of 10 NGOs. The CCO is part of the Humanitarian Country Team as well as the Inter-Cluster Coordination Group.

The Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Directorate General of the European Commission (ECHO) and the USAID/OFDA have field offices in Bangui whilst other donors rely on field visits from their headquarters (HQs) or regional hubs to monitor and gather information on the situation, making donor coordination difficult. Other donors active in CAR include Switzerland, DFID, Germany, Canada, Belgium and Ireland.

All major UN humanitarian agencies and international humanitarian NGOs are present in CAR. However, high staff turnover and/or lack of staff on the ground as well as limited humanitarian access constitute significant challenges.

National administrative and legal frameworks may affect the implementation, in particular for international NGO partners. Development actors include the World Bank and the EU Bêkou Fund, as well as the recently established Durable Solutions Working Group, led by UNDP and UNHCR.

2.3. International and regional assistance

The major humanitarian donors to CAR in 2019 were the following: USA (39.3%) with a focus on logistics support, relief commodities and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities; Germany (10.2%) with a focus on food and multi-sectoral assistance; ECHO (7.7%) with a focus on food assistance, emergency health and nutrition, emergency WASH, shelter and non-food items, protection, Education in Emergencies (EiE), support to pastoral and agricultural activities and livelihoods, coordination, security and logistics; United Kingdom (5.1%) with a focus on emergency assistance and community managed projects; and Sweden (4.7%). Canada, Switzerland, Ireland, Belgium, France, Denmark and Norway contribute to the humanitarian assistance in CAR with an annual budget ranging from Euro 5 to 8 million per country. All these countries mainly intervene in multi-sectoral, food, health, nutrition, protection and WASH sectors towards IDPs, returnees and host communities. In 2019, 12 donors contributed to the Humanitarian Fund (CARHF) in CAR: United Kingdom, Germany, Ireland, Denmark, USA, Belgium, Sweden, Canada, Switzerland, Jersey, Luxembourg and Republic of Korea. As of December 2019, the 2019 Humanitarian Response Plan requirement of USD 430.7 million has been funded at 69 percent.

2.4. Access situation

The access situation in CAR remains a significant challenge for the humanitarian community, although it has improved compared to 2018. However, merely 2.5 percent of roads are paved and armed groups man illegal checkpoints in violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL) regarding the provision of access for humanitarian relief to civilians in need. Several organisations rely heavily on the services provided by the United Nations Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) operated by WFP.

CAR remains one of the most dangerous countries for humanitarians to operate in, and the peace agreement signed in February has not managed to bring about improvements related to the security situation in the country. Furthermore, between January and December, 5 humanitarian workers were killed and 42 injured, compared to 23 injured during the same period 2018. A total of 306 incidents related to humanitarian personnel were registered in 2019. They are mostly concentrated in the central prefectures of CAR, with the number of security incidents in Kaga-Bandoro prefecture alone amounting to 50. Burglary, robbery and intrusion account for 56 percent of incidents. Continued insecurity in several cities and axes of the country has led to suspensions of movements of humanitarian actors impacting the humanitarian response. Four organisations temporarily suspended their humanitarian activities in October and November. However, the Deputy Emergency Relief Coordinator noted that the access situation has improved in certain areas of the country and called for development agencies to increase their programming where possible.

During 2019, humanitarian organisations have managed to reach 1.1 million people of a total of 1.7 million targeted. This represents an increase of 57 percent compared to 2018, which is a result of enhanced access and increased humanitarian funding.

3. SIDA'S HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE PLAN

3.1. The role of Sida

The initial allocation from Sida to partner organisations working in CAR will increase with 7 MSEK to 88 MSEK for 2020, compared to 81 MSEK for 2019. The reason for this is to align Sida's humanitarian funding to the global humanitarian outlook for 2020.

The aim for Sida is to promote a humanitarian response in line with the humanitarian principles. Sida will also engender agility of the humanitarian response in CAR through support to the Humanitarian Fund (CARHF). As of December 2019, Sida is the 5th largest donor to the Humanitarian Response Plan and 7th largest donor to the CARHF, and is a sitting member of the fund's Advisory Board. Sida maintains that the response in CAR will need to remain flexible and adjusted to the evolving needs in a highly volatile context. The programme-based support provided to the International Rescue Committee (IRC) and the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) is an effort to provide such flexibility, as Sida believes that the needs should govern the humanitarian response. Support to the UNICEF-managed Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) in CAR also provides means with which to respond quickly to rapidly onset crises. Furthermore, Sida is providing support to the Swedish Civil Contingencies Agency (MSB) for the construction of four office and residential accommodation facilities located in Berberati, Bangassou, Bria and Kaga-Bandoro. This initiative will engender decentralised organisational presence in the country and facilitate improved access to affected populations.

As Sweden does not have an Embassy in CAR, the Swedish Embassy in Kampala is responsible for following developments in the country. Sida will maintain close dialogue with the Embassy as well as with other donors supporting

the humanitarian response in CAR throughout 2020. Moreover, Sida continuously engages in dialogue with humanitarian partners in the field as well as at capital-level, and monitors each partner's adherence to gender marker codes, promotion of resilience and accountability, as well as their capacity to contribute to the protection of people affected by the crisis irrespective of their sector-specific expertise. Specific attention will be given to the situation of vulnerable groups, including women and girls with disabilities to strengthen their autonomy and protect them from physical and psychological violence.

Following the political momentum that the peace process has engendered, the coming years mark a critical window of opportunity to change the course of development in CAR. The resilience of affected populations is worn down as the conflict continues, and the persistent lack of justice in CAR has left many in disbelief in the formal justice sector. If the current ambitions do not translate into change for deprived people and the momentum is not successfully capitalised on, there is a significant risk of the peace process collapsing altogether, with CAR remaining stuck in a protracted crisis similar to the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo or Afghanistan. There is a need for the government to act in order to dismantle the prevailing war economy and offer genuine and formal alternatives for people to sustain their livelihoods. For this to be possible, the international community also needs to capitalise on existing opportunities and swiftly provide development assistance as well as support for strengthening institutional capacities. Sida will closely monitor the work related to these areas during 2020. Should ambitions not materialise, Sida will consider strengthening resilience support to CAR through humanitarian funding channels in order to impinge on the work towards more sustainable outcomes.

3.2. Response Priorities 2020

It is Sida's assessment that the situation in CAR is likely to remain very fragile and insecure during 2020 with frequent outbreaks of violence and continued displacements of the population. There is a need for better field coverage and presence by humanitarian actors despite the dangerous and volatile environment. Protection will be central and there is a particular need for protection of displaced populations, children at risk, and to address Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV). Humanitarian needs will remain acute with regards to food security, shelters and non-food items, education, health, nutrition and access to water and sanitation.

Distinguishing between whether needs are acute or chronic in nature remains challenging, as chronic needs oftentimes are acute as well. Furthermore, the organisational presence is generally stronger in the central and western prefectures where higher numbers of people in need reside (according to the HRP for 2019). However, needs are generally more severe in the central and eastern prefectures (according to the HNO for 2020). For this reason, Sida will closely monitor the capacity of the humanitarian community to attune the response according to *both* severity and number of people in need across the country in 2020. The humanitarian fund is a central mechanism in this regard. For example, the fund allocated 4.7 million USD to Haut-Mbomou (the most eastern prefecture) between January and November 2019 where the needs were severe and the organisational presence weak.

Moreover, implementing organisations in CAR have called for increased collaboration amongst donors in order to coordinate the work of the donor community more effectively. For this reason, Sida will work to strengthen dialogue with colleagues from other donor agencies – for example Switzerland, the UK, USAID/OFDA and ECHO – in coordinating the humanitarian response onwards.

Finally, Sida will monitor developments related to the upsurge of confrontations and ongoing violence, particularly in Bria, Bambari, Kaga-Bandoro and in the northern Birao sub-prefecture closely and engage in dialogue with implementing partners and other donors as necessary. All programming and delivery of humanitarian assistance should be conflict sensitive and follow the principle of do-no-harm.

3.3. Partners

Action Against Hunger (ACF): Sida will support ACF to respond to needs related to health, nutrition, and mental health and care practices (MHCP) in Basse-Kotto prefecture, including in IDP sites. In Alindao and Mingala sub-prefectures in Basse-Kotto, ACF is one of three nutrition and health actors, and the only actor working with mental health. ACF will also assess needs of, and work to assist, affected people living in the sub-prefectures of Kembé, Satema, Mobaye and Zangba.

CAR Humanitarian Fund (CARHF): The CARHF is a key financing mechanism for flexible humanitarian support in CAR. It facilitates the tailoring of humanitarian responses to needs throughout the year, both with regards to crisis-related developments as well as the geographical funding coverage. Between January and December 2019, the CARHF had funded 117 projects targeting 1.7 million beneficiaries. Sida is a member of the Advisory Board together with the UK and Switzerland and will maintain this engagement in 2020 in order to promote principled humanitarian assistance reaching the most vulnerable.

International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): ICRC will work to provide multi-sectoral support to civilians, people deprived of their freedom, as well as people who are wounded and sick. ICRC is an important protection partner to Sida in CAR with capacity to maintain access to areas where it is often obstructed. Part of the work will also entail working with authorities and weapon bearers to promote adherence to international humanitarian law (IHL).

International Rescue Committee (IRC): Sida will provide programme-based support to IRC to address protection needs related to affected populations (including SGBV), prevent and treat communicable diseases such as malaria and diarrhoea, help people generate income and assets (including through cash grants and cash for work activities where relevant), and prevent negative coping strategies. The assistance will be provided in Ouham-Pendé prefecture, with prioritisation given to Bocaranga, Kouï and N'gaoundaye sub-prefectures.

Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC): Sida will also provide programme-based support to NRC to continue operating in Bamingui-Bangoran, Nana-Gribizi, Kémo, Ouaka, Mambéré-Kadéï and Basse-Kotto. Depending on access, needs and available resources, NRC might venture into Mbomou and/or Haute Kotto prefecture, where an increase of repatriates from DRC has been observed over the past few months. NRC will provide support related to education, information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA), shelter and non-food items (NFI), water sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and food security. In addition, NRC will engage in humanitarian mediation and community protection targeting IDPs, returnees and host communities.

United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA): OCHA is a central actor regarding the coordination of the humanitarian response, and its ability to work with decentralised coordination has improved in recent years. Furthermore, it remains important to ensure OCHA maintains the capacity to supply humanitarian organisations and donors – many without representation in CAR – with frequent analysis and results reporting.

Oxfam: Sida will provide a top-up of its support to the multi-year project 2018-2020 currently being implemented by Oxfam in Paoua sub-prefecture in north-western CAR. It entails humanitarian response work as well as activities linking relief rehabilitation and development (LRRD). Focus areas are emergency food security and vulnerable livelihoods (EFSVL), WASH and protection (including SGBV).

Plan International: Sida will support Plan International to respond to the education and child protection needs (including SGBV) in Kaga-Bandoro, Nana-Gribizi prefecture, and Zémio, Haut-Mbomou prefecture. The project builds on the ongoing Sida-funded multi-year project (1 May 2018 to 31 April 2020) in Kaga-Bandoro, whilst extending the geographical scope to Zémio sub-prefecture. According to the HNO for 2020, Zémio is the only sub-prefecture in CAR ranking 5 out of 5 on the severity scale of needs related to physical and mental wellbeing. Furthermore, only 11 percent of schools are open and functional in Zémio and 75 percent in Kaga-Bandoro. Currently, Cooperazione Internazionale (COOPI) is the only actor working with protection in Zémio.

United Nations Humanitarian Air Services (UNHAS): Managed by the World Food Programme (WFP), UNHAS provides vital air services to humanitarian organisations operating in CAR, facilitating access to some of the otherwise most inaccessible areas. Between January and November 2019, 57 flights were conducted to 7 destinations – mainly in the eastern parts of the country – assisting 20 organisations. It is expected that the services provided by UNHAS will be in high demand throughout 2020.

UNICEF Rapid Response Mechanism (UNICEF RRM): Another key financing mechanism is the RRM managed by UNICEF, which is designed to monitor humanitarian action and crisis-related developments, conduct multi-sector assessments (MSA) and respond with NFI and WASH-interventions in cases where there is no capacity on site. The RRM programme targets for 2020 are to reach 225 000 newly crisis-affected people with essential household items, 100 000 people with WASH interventions, and 25 000 people with cash transfers.

SIDA's HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO THE CENTRAL AFRICAN REPUBLIC IN 2020		
(88 MILLION SEK)		
Recommended partner for Sida support	Sector/focus of work (incl. cross sectoral/ multi-purpose programming) and response modalities (e.g. in-kind, services, CVP or a mix)	Proposed amount
ACF	Health, Nutrition, MHCP	10
CARHF	Multi-sectoral	15
ICRC	Multi-sectoral	10
IRC	Protection, Health, Livelihoods	8
NRC	Education, Livelihoods, ICLA, Shelter/NFI, WASH	8
OCHA	Coordination	6

Oxfam	EFSVL, WASH, Protection	5
Plan International	Child Protection, Education	7
UNHAS	Logistics	9
UNICEF-RRM	NFI, WASH	10
		Total: 88

3.4. Strategic funding in protracted crises

Oxfam was one of several partners who requested funding for multi-year projects in 2018 but is the only one that is implementing a 3-year project which will continue in 2020 (3 MSEK). The project integrates WASH, Emergency Food Security and Vulnerable Livelihoods (EFSVL), Protection and Gender support for women, men, girls and boys affected by the conflict in the Ouham-Pendé prefecture through humanitarian response and recovery/LRRD activities. The multi-year format reinforces livelihoods and capacities to respond to future shocks for beneficiary households and improves its impact on the target households by capitalising on lessons learned and the cost-effectiveness ratio. The multi-year format also anchors actions undertaken in the community, offering considerable guarantee of improvement of the resilience of communities in the supported villages, and makes it possible to gradually and continually reinforce the capacities of local actors, developing an expertise transfer plan over the medium or even long term.

For Sida, the year 2020 is considered a bridge year in terms of multi-year funding. For this reason, no new multi-year projects will be initiated. This does not reflect a deprioritisation of multi-year funding as such.

3.5. Synergies and Nexus

Sweden does not have any development cooperation with CAR but there are three main areas that will be monitored in relation to synergies and the development-humanitarian nexus. First, the HRP continues to refer to the National Plan for Recovery and Peacebuilding (RCPCA) 2017-2021, but it has faced substantial delays in implementation since its launch. Nevertheless, Swedish humanitarian funds are funding a two-year aid effectiveness secondment through MSB to the RCPCA secretariat in order to strengthen capacity to effectively manage development funds for recovery activities in CAR, as well as support increased coherence between humanitarian assistance, peacebuilding and development cooperation, which in the long term can lead to strengthened resilience in the country. The secondment has recently entered into its final year.

Second, the HRP was developed in alignment with ongoing recovery and development efforts such as the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) and the EU Békou Trust Fund, launched in 2014, linking humanitarian and development actions and supporting the resilience of the population by focusing on three main areas: basic services, reconciliation, economic recovery and job creation. Third, UNDP and UNHCR are currently leading the recently established Durable Solutions Working Group, which has identified two geographic 'convergence zones' in which strategic efforts will be made to use the return of refugees and IDPs for community development. These two convergence zones are located in north-western and south-eastern parts of CAR. Sweden will closely follow the development of action plans in this regard.

In general, the humanitarian community in CAR is committed to integrating resilience transversally into sectoral activities in order to guarantee a link with durable solutions and development.

Reference Documents

ECHO's Humanitarian Implementation Plan (HIP) – Central Africa, 2020, Version 03/10/2019

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OCHA Infographics

Reliefweb