GENERAL SITUATION

Security in Bangui continues to deteriorate. Heavy fighting started on the evening of 19 December, mostly in the northern neighborhoods, and continues almost on a daily basis. The Red Cross reported 71 people killed in the period of 20 to 24 December, and 40 people were killed on 25 December alone, as well as six peacekeepers from MISCA.

The fighting in the Bangui neighborhoods have triggered a new wave of displacement and have reduced the likelihood of a rapid return. 370,000 people are now displaced in 55 IDP sites in Bangui alone, up from 214,000 IDPs on 17 December. There is urgent need for health services, sanitation, non-food items (NFIs) and child protection.

The situation in Bossangoa remains tense. Tensions rose sharply between the anti-Balaka and elements of the MISCA forces took place on Dec 22 after a Congolese peacekeeper was killed. According to unconfirmed reports several suspects subsequently arrested by FOMAC were beaten to death.

UNICEF team members on the inter-agency mission this week to north western CAR have reported 874 burned houses in the corridor between Bozoum and Bocaranga, especially in the town of Ngoutere.

Humanitarian access and response remains constrained by the security situation in Bangui and throughout the country. This is creating a bottleneck for humanitarian operations by road in and out of Bangui.

In the last week the UNICEF Immediate Response Team team-leader and sectoral team members arrived in Bangui. A dedicated WASH Cluster Information Manager has also arrived.

UNICEF RESPONSE HIGHLIGHTS

The OCHA-coordinated Multi-Cluster Initial Rapid Assessment (MIRA) exercise is now underway in 7 zones covering Bangui and the North West. Data analysis of findings will take place from 1-3 January followed by presentation to the Humanitarian Country Team for validation from 5 January. UNICEF teams are participating in the Bouar, Kaga Bandaro and Bossangoa-based MIRAs and UNICEF-led clusters are involved at all stages of the preparation, analysis and validation.

Child Protection
- MISCA has responded positively to UNICEF request to step up security in Transit and Orientation Centers (CTOs) managed by COOPI.
- A list of 14 military cantonment sites has been given to UNICEF as a necessary first step to facilitate the identification of children associated with armed groups prior to their release. Given the highly volatile security situation in Bangui, it has been agreed, that release and transfer of children associated with armed groups to CTOs will only happen when their security and safety is fully guaranteed.
- Given the high number of children, a second Child Friendly Space will be opened at the Airport IDP site in partnership with Save the Children.

Education
- In light of the increased number of displaced population entering the Don Bosco site in Bangui, the establishment of Safe and Learning Spaces for Children is being prepared.
Health and Nutrition
- In Bangui UNICEF boosted the capacity of the St Paul Archeveché site health facility with a complete medical kit sufficient to care for 10,000 people.
- At least 593 of the 960 children under 5 severely malnourished, who interrupted their treatment following the outbreak of violence and displacement in Bangui have been traced and readmitted to rehabilitation services after a concerted effort by UNICEF and ACF.

WASH
- The UNICEF-supported repair work of the Bossangoa water station that will enable supply through the SODECA water network has begun on 22 December, with completion expected next week. UNICEF and partners ACF and MSF have been producing and providing water trucking to IDPs in Bossangoa since October.
- In Bangui, four defecation fields and 28 additional latrines have been constructed, now totaling 116 new latrines this month in 10 sites.
- 6,000 people at that Padre Pio IDP site in Bangui have benefitted from soap distribution.

RAPID RESPONSE MECHANISM (RRM)
- Since 6 December, RRM has intervened in 15 IDP sites in Bangui where pressing needs were identified. In addition it has provided NFIs to cover needs of patients in 12 health facilities.
- 16,200 m2 of sheltered areas for the most vulnerable have been provided by RRM partners in sites where people slept in the open. These spaces are designed to cover the needs of 1,650 of vulnerable children, elders and pregnant women.
- 3,700 IDPs at Elimes Church in Bangui received blankets and plastic mats provided by UNICEF through RRM partner ACTED.
- 2,500 malaria patients, malnourished children and pregnant women will benefit from bednets provided to the MSF health facility at the Airport IDP site.

INFOCOM
- Press release on malnutrition in CAR: **UNICEF: Urgent action needed to prevent child deaths from malnutrition in Central African Republic**
  [http://www.unicef.org/media/media_71646.html](http://www.unicef.org/media/media_71646.html)

SUPPLY AND LOGISTICS
- Movement of vehicles and supplies to and from Bangui is severely constrained due to violence to the north of the city. This is affecting the dispatch of supplies from Bangui.
- Bottlenecks experienced in recent days for the transfer of stock from the airport warehouse due to security in the airport vicinity have eased in recent days allowing UNICEF to remove supplies safely.

FUNDING
- The 2013 UNICEF CAR appeal is only 53% funded by the last week of the year. UNICEF’s appeal of $62 million for 2014 reflects a continued deterioration in the situation for the children of CAR and overwhelming humanitarian needs.
- To meet the constantly growing challenges, the humanitarian community has finalized a 100-day plan for priority humanitarian action in the CAR. This plan requests US$152 million
to immediately and rapidly scale-up operations and to increase the provision of protection and life-saving assistance to people in need of urgent care. This plan will be carried out within the framework of the Interagency Strategic Response Plan which was recently launched.

For further information, please contact:

Souleymane Diabaté  
Representative  
Central African Republic  
sdiabate@unicef.org

Judith Léveillé  
Deputy Representative  
Central African Republic  
jleveillee@unicef.org

Linda Tom  
Communications Specialist  
Central African Republic  
ltom@unicef.org