

# UNICEF Situation Update

## Central African Republic (CAR) Refugee Crisis in DRC

### 20 March 2015

#### Highlights

- Since November 2014, there has been a new influx of refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) into the health zones of Bosobolo and Bili in Equateur province's Bosobolo. UNHCR and local authorities have estimated the number of new arrivals at more than 19,000 refugees; some 88,000 refugees CAR are already living in the DRC.
- UNHCR is finalizing agreements with local authorities for the creation of an official refugee site in Bili with an initial capacity of 15,000 people. There are already three other official refugee camps in the province although nearly half of the current CAR refugees live in host communities outside the camps. As with all refugee relocation operations, movement by refugees to the future Bili camp site will be fully voluntary. UNHCR estimates that the relocation operation to Bili will take 14 weeks once operations are started.
- Inter-agency evaluation missions (UNICEF, WHO, UNHCR, UNFPA, World Vision, UNHCR's health partner ADES, National Program of Nutrition PRONANUT and the Provincial Division of Health) have been conducted in the spontaneous sites where the refugees are currently living in host communities as well as to the future camp site in Bili Health Zone. Based on these assessments, the humanitarian actors and local authorities are designing a response plan including a mapping of on-going and planned interventions.
- UNICEF's estimates at over 3.3 M USD the funds needed to support partners in the responding to the priority needs of refugees and host communities. This includes multi-sectoral response in the areas of Health, WASH, Education, Child Protection, Nutrition, and Non Food Items.
- Initial investigations reveal that malnutrition rates are high among both refugee children and local population. At least 600 children in the area are currently enrolled in malnutrition programmes; this includes treatment by UNICEF partner, World Vision, with UNICEF supplies for children suffering from Severe and Acute Malnutrition (SAM): 50 children at present including both refugees and local community children. UNICEF has providing 36 tons of nutritional supplies (Plumpy Nut, and therapeutic milks F75 and F100) to the government partner's PRONANUT in the district capital, Gbadolite.
- Since early February, UNICEF has provided 6 tons of WASH supplies to UNHCR including bladder tanks, pumps, chlorine, water purification supplies (PUR and aquatabs), and soap. Over 524 refugee families have received Aquatabs from UNICEF via ADES in Sidi zone.
- The schooling of most refugee children has been disrupted and very few of the newly arrived refugee children have access to education.
- ADES and MSF mobile clinics have registered cases of sexual violence, and warned that many cases remain unreported.

## **Situation Overview**

Since March 2013, the DRC has been hosting some 88,000 refugees who have fled the crisis in the Central Africa Republic. The vast majority of these refugees live in remote areas in DRC's Equateur province. To date, about half of the refugees live in three organized refugee sites and the other half with host families and communities.

Since November 2014, increased insecurity and violence in the Kouango area in CAR has led to new influxes of refugees into the health zones of Bosobolo and Bili in Equateur province's Nord Ubangi district. UNHCR and local authorities estimated in February 2015 the number of new arrivals at more than 19,000 refugees since November 2014. UNICEF assessments to the newly affected areas also indicated that the new arrivals have joined other refugees living with host communities some of whom have been in the DRC for over a year. While the security situation in the areas hosting refugees is calm, security in the areas along the Ubangi river border remains a concern.

Given the volatility of the situation near the CAR/DRC river border and the concentration of these new arrivals and older caseload refugees in this new area, UNHCR and the local refugee authority in DRC (CNR) are finalizing arrangements on the creation of a new refugee site in Bili. UNHCR estimates the relocation will take up to 14 weeks, once the site is officially approved and relocation commences. In the meantime, refugees in the area who are interested in relocating sooner have been given the option to move to the previously established Inke camp.

## **Humanitarian Needs**

Given the remoteness of the area and the lack of basic services already in the region, the situation of the new refugees in the Equateur province is worrying. The first group of new refugees arrived in November 2014 and have been primarily assisted by local host communities before current relief efforts by aid agencies were mobilized. Most of the new arrivals are living in spontaneous self-settled sites in and around other existing settlements of refugees who arrived earlier. These sites are anywhere from 50 to 116 kilometres from the proposed relocation refugee camp under construction in Bili. As the relocation effort will take over three months, improving living conditions for refugees and host communities in their current situation is the current priority with a focus on health, WASH, and food security/nutrition. Despite the plans for the relocation of many refugees to Bili camp, it is expected that many refugees will stay in the spontaneous sites and in host communities closer to the border.

## **Inter-Agency Collaboration, Coordination, and Key Partnerships**

All coordination for the current relief efforts are centred in the city of Gbadolite and lead by UNHCR. UNICEF's initial response is organised through UNHCR and existing partnerships with government counterparts like PRONANUT.

## UNICEF Response and Plans

### Nutrition

UNICEF has contributed to the nutrition response for the CAR refugee crisis since 2014 in 3 health zones (Libenge, Zongo, Gbadolite). Previous activities included support to nutritional surveys (with WFP and UNHCR), the provision of therapeutic foods and anthropometric equipment, and capacity building in managing Severe and Acute Malnutrition (SAM).

Over the last two months, following the influx of new refugees in Bili and Bosobolo health zones, the nutritional response has been scaled up. Support to nutritional coordination efforts is followed up by the coordinator of PRONANUT in collaboration with the UNICEF's Equateur office. Care of Severe and Acute Malnutrition will be ensured by the positioning of 36 tons of therapeutic food and other materials provided by UNICEF to PRONANUT in order to assist refugees in Bili and Bosololo. As mentioned above, as of today, 600 children are being treated for malnutrition in the area; 50 of them are suffering from Severe and Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and being treated with UNICEF supplies.

### Health

UNICEF is working with government partners, UNHCR, WHO, MSF, and other actors to undertake a comprehensive vaccination campaign in the affected area. UNHCR medical teams report that vaccination rates among refugees were extremely low and coverage rates in the areas where they are arriving is at around 50%.

### WaSH

UNICEF has provided basic Water, Sanitation and Hygiene supplies for new refugees in host community along the Ubangui River for almost 24 500 persons, including more than 4,400 children (0-5 years). UNICEF plans to contribute to the construction or rehabilitation of 25 water point and 2,450 latrines in host communities; hygiene promotion activities; and construction or rehabilitation of water and sanitation facilities in 4 health centres.

### Education

In order to respond to the education needs of the newly arrived refugee children (estimated at over 6,400 in primary school age, 50% girls) and those already presents (estimated at over 14,000 in primary school age, 50% girls in sites and in host communities), UNICEF is closely monitoring the situation. The refugee children already present before the new influx and the schools hosting them benefitted from an earlier distribution of school materials (school-in-a-box and recreational kits) for the current school year. An order of additional materials (Early Child Development kits, school-in-a-box and recreational kits) will be shipped to Equateur for the refugee crisis.

### Non-Food Items

UNICEF has 500 Non-Food Item (NFI) family relief kits scheduled to arrive in Equateur province in April. Although UNHCR has not preliminarily identified NFI as a significant gap, UNICEF will have these stocks pre-positioned for potential response if needed.

## Protection

UNICEF plans with its partners to set up “Child Friendly Spaces” for refugee children, in and out of camps. UNICEF’s partners will teach parents and teachers how to recognise and help children showing signs of distress.

## Funding

UNICEF is requesting for \$3,377,838 to respond to the needs of refugees and host communities in DRC of which \$2,423,979 are need to address most critical needs through July 2015.

Appeal Sector	Requirements	Funds received	Unmet Requirements	Funding gap
Heath& Nutrition	623,845 USD	0 USD		623,845 USD
Education	280,645 USD	0 USD		280,645 USD
Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)	675,544 USD	0 USD		675,544 USD
Child Protection	1,088,388 USD	0 USD		1,088,388 USD
Shelter and non-food items	709,416 USD	0 USD		709,416 USD
<b>Total (including 8% of recovery cost)</b>	<b>3,377,838 USD</b>	<b>0 USD</b>		<b>3,377,838 USD</b>

For further information, please contact

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