



Resurgence of violence in Bangui: People trapped, humanitarian workers targeted

On the morning of September 26, violence suddenly returned to the PK5 neighborhood after the murder of a young Muslim motorcycle taxi driver. **Despite regular tensions** in this neighborhood, the MINUSCA Peacekeeping Mission intervened very late, and with resentments still present in the population, the situation took an extremely violent turn. The peacekeeping force's lack of anticipation and quick reaction contributed to the deterioration of the security situation, with outbursts of punitive and opportunistic violence. Since then, daily fighting and community resentment have evolved into political demands with speeches that accuse the entire international community of being responsible for the current crisis.

1. Deliberate attacks against humanitarian organizations and state structures with a consequent disruption of access to basic services, especially health centers.

Alongside the recurring violence in Bangui, a dozen humanitarian organizations, both national and international, were victims of looting, in offices and homes, sometimes with brutality towards employees who were attacked.

- Beyond looting as an "economic" opportunity, looting was also observed that demonstrated a will to destroy NGO's intervention and response capacity.
- Due to the lack of access for ambulances, there was a failure to recover bodies and transfer the wounded, many of whom had to reach health centers on their own, braving insecurity and barricades.
- Due to insecurity, those who were already hospitalized sometimes preferred to leave the health centers despite the risks, as was the case for ¾ of the patients at the Pediatric Center of Bangui.
- At the start of the school year, schools could not open their doors. Some have become sites for Internally Displaced Persons (IDP), such as Benzvi school, and they may not be able to open for several months.

2. Worsening humanitarian situation, while NGOs are denied access.

Humanitarian consequences, particularly with regard to new displacement of populations, are dramatic, while the majority of organizations have had to suspend their activities or limit them to a minimum and evacuate a part of their staff.

- In Bangui, **the number of IDPs has nearly tripled in just 4 days of violence**. According to estimations, there could be more than **69,980 IDPs of which 61%¹ are newly displaced**. This figure is even higher than in January (50,398). Since then, more than 23,000 IDPs had been

¹ OCHA CAR Flash Update 4 – September 30, 2015

able to return home thanks to the accompanying work conducted by humanitarian actors. Unfortunately, this work has now been reversed.

- The IDPs have occupied known sites such as Mpoko, which is again filled to maximum capacity with more than 19,000 newly displaced. However **7 new sites**² have also been created *ad hoc* where water infrastructure and sanitation are inadequate or non-existent.
- So far, it is impossible to access the IDP sites to assess their needs and prepare assistance since the roads are still not secure. In this situation the population finds itself hostage: without protection or humanitarian assistance.

3. The deteriorating situation is also affecting the provinces.

While Bangui is currently affected most by the violence, this state of paralysis has very rapid consequences in the provinces as they are heavily dependent on the capital.

- Growing tensions and eruptions of violence are occurring in the provinces in Kaga Bandoro, Bouar and Bambari causing many displacements and fleeing to the bush.
- Activities are mostly suspended by humanitarian actors because of the degree of insecurity.
- To date, humanitarian NGO bases located in the provinces find themselves in a state of concern vis-à-vis their available reserves in cash and fuel. They are cut off from supplies from Bangui since the main roads are not secured by the MINUSCA forces and all domestic flights are suspended.

The resurgence of violence has the effect of a real loss of progress to many months back in terms of humanitarian needs, social cohesion, IDPs who had returned home, and also humanitarian actors' capacity for responsiveness. Humanitarian NGOs sound again the alarm: the forgotten crisis in the Central African Republic on the international stage coupled with an ineffective response to new outbreaks of violence point to a very dark future for a population already battered and extremely vulnerable.

We are calling for :

- The international community as a whole to strongly and publicly condemn the attacks and violence against humanitarian organizations.
- All parties to the conflict to respect the neutrality and impartiality of humanitarian workers, and to facilitate at all times the carrying out of their mission. Health facilities, as well as all structures necessary for the survival of the population (water infrastructures, etc...) must be preserved and respected by all in accordance with International Humanitarian Law.
- The MINUSCA to perform its role of securing and protecting the population by demonstrating anticipation and responsiveness.
- The international community – which gathered at the UN in New York- to seriously strengthen their response and support to the ongoing crisis in CAR and immediately increase its aid to help reconstitute resources and stocks which are essential to ensure response capacity. Emergency assistance to IDPs must be set up and a real contingency plan defined with financial commitment for the long term.
- All stakeholders to defend, promote and respect the distinction between political action and humanitarian intervention. This is essential to stop the confusion faced by NGOs because of the strong resentment against the international community.

² OCHA CAR Flash Update 5 – October 2, 2015