The Central African Republic (CAR) is a land-locked country which has been afflicted by successive coups and waves of conflict, culminating in the 2013 crisis with unprecedented levels of violence. Three years after the first peaceful democratic elections (2016), violence continues to grip the country. As a result, hundreds of thousands of people – one in four - in the CAR are still internally displaced and face chronic food insecurity.

Poverty remains stubbornly widespread and high. The country ranks 188 out of 189 countries in the 2018 Human Development Index with 75 percent of the population living under the international poverty line. Basic services are non-existent and in many areas, people are depending entirely on humanitarian aid for basic services and livelihood opportunities. CAR has a population of about 4.7 million people, more than half of which needs food assistance. Reflecting the gradual deterioration of the humanitarian situation, the number of people in need of humanitarian assistance increased by 21 percent, from 2.4 million in 2018 to 2.9 million in 2019.

WFP operations are focused on life-saving interventions, to preserve food and nutrition security for the most vulnerable crisis-affected people. WFP helps communities by distributing food – including specialized nutritious foods, supporting smallholder farmers in restoring and enhancing their productive assets as well as building resilience to future crises. WFP maintains a crisis response operation while simultaneously supporting recovery programmes in areas of relative security and providing Government capacity strengthening. WFP has been present in C.A.R since 1969.

**In Numbers**

- 2,489 mt of food distributed
- US$ 1.18 m cash-based transfers disbursed
- US$ 36.4 m six month (October - March 2020) net funding requirements
- 569,216 people assisted in September 2019

**Operational Updates**

- In September 2019, WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 569,216 people – 63 percent of the planned beneficiaries for the month – with a total of 2,489 mt of food and USD 1.18 million through cash-based transfers (CBT).
- WFP provided specialized nutritious food to 8,684 children aged 6-23 months for the prevention of acute malnutrition, 7,896 malnourished pregnant and lactating women and children aged 6-59 months for the treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM).
- Through food assistance for assets (FFA) activities, WFP assisted 157,000 beneficiaries to reinforce the resilience of communities and households recovering from crises.
- Since 1 September, approximately 30,000 people have fled their homes following clashes between two armed groups in Birao in the north-east of the Country. As an immediate response, WFP launched a three-month response plan and conducted an airbridge operation to transport food to assist the newly displaced people. WFP distributed 36 mt of specialised nutritious food and 17 mt of complete food baskets to 12,165 beneficiaries. WFP’s airbridge operation and food assistance is continuing in Birao. However, funds are urgently needed to cover the cost of airlifting more food items to Birao.
- WFP is in the final stages of concluding a field level agreement (FLA) with the Norwegian Refugee Council in CAR to ensure the protection of beneficiaries during food distributions. This arrangement will also ensure that the staff from WFP and its cooperating partners receive training on protection issues.
- WFP continued to provide logistical support to the humanitarian community in CAR. The Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS), managed by WFP, transported 1,854 passengers and 26 mt of essential cargo for humanitarian community. The top three most travelled destinations included BAMBARI, Bria and Paoua. In addition, UNHAS also transported 67 mt of WFP food commodities from Bangui to Birao with a dedicated cargo flight.
Monitoring

- A Food Security Phase Classification (IPC) analysis has been conducted from 26 September to 5 October and data collection for the Enquête Nationale de la Sécurité Alimentaire (ENSA)/ National Food Security Assessment is ongoing. The Food Security cluster is also working on the humanitarian Needs Overview (HNO) to lay the foundation for a coherent and efficient response. The results of these assessments will help inform the planning of assistance for next year.

- The results of the Post Distribution Monitoring (PDM) conducted in July shows that 86 percent of beneficiaries are satisfied with the food assistance provided by WFP. 67 percent of beneficiary households indicated that distributions of food and voucher exchanges are transparent and fair. The outcome indicators also show that 72 percent of households have adequate food consumption, 23 percent are at risk of falling into poor food consumption (borderline) and 4 percent have an inadequate food consumption range. In addition, two out of three households (65 percent) continue to develop strategies to cope with their dietary difficulties. PDM surveys help WFP to reinforce accountability and improve programming.

Advocacy

- Efforts to increase visibility of the CAR crisis and WFP operations are ongoing: social media publications (#CARcrisis), press releases and interviews. Follow links for more information:

  - https://twitter.com/WFP_WAfrica/status/1167141016295661569?s=19
  - https://twitter.com/WFP_WAfrica/status/1173572638138150914?s=19
  - https://twitter.com/WFP_WAfrica/status/1176569368510676487?s=19
  - https://twitter.com/WFP_WAfrica/status/1175550672993075250?s=19
  - https://twitter.com/WFP_WAfrica/status/1167141016295661569?s=19

Challenges

- In response to the situation in Birao and due to inaccessibility of roads to the area, WFP can only deliver the various commodities via air. This remains the only current means for delivering food until the end of the rainy season by mid-November.

Funding

- The operation is facing serious funding shortfalls with a high risk that WFP will be unable to deliver food and nutrition assistance to vulnerable families. In past months, the lack of funding has prevented WFP from providing a full month food ration to the beneficiaries.

  - USD 36.4 m is needed to provide food and nutrition assistance to some 600,000 people for the next six months (October - March 2020). Furthermore, USD 5 million is urgently needed to continue airlifting food to Birao to assist the newly displaced population.

Donors

Canada, European Commission, France, Germany, Luxembourg, Norway, Republic of Korea, Sweden, Switzerland, UN Country Based Pooled Funds, USA