European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations

Central African Republic

Introduction

Six years after the crisis broke out in December 2013, the situation in the Central African Republic (CAR) remains extremely worrying. Violence between armed groups and against civilians, targeting schools, health facilities and sites hosting internally displaced people, has forced thousands of people to flee. As a result, a quarter of the population is either internally displaced or living as a refugee in neighbouring countries. The European Union supports those most affected by providing food, healthcare, emergency shelter, water and sanitation, and protection of civilians. In February 2019, a peace deal was signed between the CAR government and 14 armed groups, people continue to be affected by violence.

What are the needs?

There are around 2.9 million people in the CAR who are in need of humanitarian assistance. 1.2 million people have had to flee for their safety, either within the CAR itself or to neighbouring countries. 1.8 million people are short of food to meet their needs and nearly 38 percent of the children under the age of five suffer from chronic malnutrition. One third of school-age children are out of school. A weak health system in the CAR means that there are also considerable needs when it comes to access to healthcare.

Humanitarian organisations deliver assistance in a difficult and dangerous environment. Insecurity and lack of transport infrastructure hamper humanitarian access. Humanitarian workers remain a target for armed groups and criminals. In 2018, seven aid workers lost their lives while on duty, while 396 security incidents against aid workers were recorded.

A funding gap exists between humanitarian needs and the internal humanitarian response in the CAR, and the Humanitarian Response Plan remains underfunded. Given this shortfall in international aid, the EU considers the CAR crisis to be one of the crises forgotten by the international community.
How are we helping?

The EU and its Member States are the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in the CAR. In 2019, the EU is supporting humanitarian action in the CAR with a funding of €18.85 million. EU humanitarian aid in the CAR has reached over €202 million since 2014.

EU humanitarian aid primarily focuses on covering the needs of the vulnerable people, providing them with food, healthcare, emergency shelter, water and sanitation, education, and protection. Relief assistance is provided to internally displaced people, host communities and refugees, who mostly rely on humanitarian assistance for their survival.

The EU funds food assistance, short-term livelihood and agricultural support, and free access to primary healthcare services with a focus on life-saving interventions. Projects seeking to improve the protection of civilians also receive EU support. They include the prevention of sexual violence, medical, psychosocial, and legal support to victims, and actions offering a protective and educational environment for children.

To respond to the sudden displacement of people, the EU funds the rapid response mechanism. Its purpose is to monitor the humanitarian situation, deliver essential items (such as soap, jerry cans, cooking utensils, mattresses, and blankets) and provide access to water, sanitation and hygiene to those who had to leave everything behind and flee their homes quickly.

The EU also supports humanitarian coordination, the security of humanitarian workers and the UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS) that enables the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a country where violence is rife and transport infrastructure is poor.

The crisis in the CAR also has an impact on neighbouring countries, with 593,000 Central African refugees hosted mainly in Cameroon, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Chad. Their prolonged stay puts pressure on the local host communities and their already scarce resources. In these neighbouring countries, the EU delivers humanitarian assistance to both the host communities and Central African refugees.