EU and UN mobilise half a billion dollars to save lives in Central African Republic

Nearly half a billion dollars was pledged at a high-level meeting on the humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic today, as donors rallied to help the stricken country in response to a dramatically deteriorating situation.

The meeting, organised in Brussels today by the European Commission and the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs, heard pledges of support from the European Commission, EU Member States and other international donors including the United States of America, the World Bank and the African Development Bank.

A new overall figure of humanitarian assistance was announced at the meeting of €150 million, together with a further contribution of nearly €200 million in stabilization and development funds. This brings total support pledged at the meeting to €366 million, equivalent to $496 million.

This funding will scale up both the immediate live-saving interventions and short to medium-term assistance.

The European Commission is increasing its support by €45 million. The aid targets the most acute needs of the population such as shelter, food, health, protection, water, sanitation and hygiene.

"Central Africans are enduring a major humanitarian tragedy and their suffering is truly appalling. The international humanitarian community assembled in Brussels today is determined to reinforce assistance and provide urgently needed aid to the most vulnerable", said Kristalina Georgieva, EU Commissioner for International Cooperation, Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Response.

"I am deeply disturbed by the impact of the crisis on ordinary people in CAR. The brutality, violence and sectarian nature of the crisis concerns us all. The UN's humanitarian agencies and NGO partners are scaling up their presence across the country and are delivering as fast as security and access conditions allow - under the leadership of a Senior Humanitarian Coordinator - following the declaration of CAR as one of our highest level emergencies", said UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Valerie Amos.

"Through the successful mobilisation in Brussels today, 90% of the funding requirements estimated by the United Nations will be covered. This is a decisive moment in the face of the dramatic humanitarian crisis in the Central African Republic", said France's Deputy Minister for Development Pascal Canfin.

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The humanitarian community's gathering in Brussels coincides with the meeting of EU foreign ministers at the Foreign Affairs Council to discuss an increase of the EU security presence in CAR. A quick restoration of stability and order is critical to ensuring humanitarian access to the affected populations.

"Security and protection of civilians and aid workers raise serious concerns. We call on all parties to allow humanitarian organisations to operate unhindered", emphasized Commissioner Georgieva and UN Under-Secretary General Amos.

The high-level meeting on humanitarian action in the CAR brought together representatives from the UN family, NGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent movement, EU Member States, other donors and the African Union.

Background

The Central African Republic ranks among the world's poorest countries and has been embroiled in a decade-long armed conflict. The surge of violence in December 2013 exacerbated this situation and today half of the 4.6-million-strong population is in need of immediate aid. Almost a million people have been internally displaced, half of them in the capital Bangui alone. More than 245 000 Central Africans have sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

The EU is the largest provider of relief assistance to the country, with €76 million in 2013. Humanitarian aid from the European Commission has tripled last year to €39 million. The Commission has organised repeated airlift operations into the country to facilitate the deployment of relief material and personnel. A team of European humanitarian experts in the field is monitoring the situation, assessing the needs and overseeing the use of funds by partner organizations.

The European Union also provides development assistance to support the response to the basic needs of the most vulnerable people. Between 2008 and 2013, around €225 million were allocated to the country through the different financial instruments (€160 million through the 10th European Development Fund (EDF), including €23 million mobilized in December 2013 to better adapt to the circumstances on the ground, and €65 million through the EU budget).

In addition, given the immediate needs, the European Commissioner for Development, Andris Piebalgs, announced last December the mobilization of an additional €10 million from the European Development Fund for the humanitarian assistance to the CAR.

A support of €50 million to African-led International Support Mission in the CAR (MISCA or AFISM-CAR) through the African Peace Facility (APF), was also announced by Commissioner Piebalgs last December. These funds will contribute to the country stability and the protection of local population, creating the necessary conditions for the deployment of humanitarian aid and for the reform of the security and defense sectors.

Subject to an on-going evaluation of the current needs, the EU also stands ready to support the electoral process in the CAR in the future and recovery.

For more information


The European Commission's humanitarian aid and civil protection: http://ec.europa.eu/echo/index_en.htm
Commissioner Georgieva's website: