



ICRC | Central African Republic: Renewed violence in capital and throughout the country

1 September 2014 Although security had apparently been improving in Bangui, fighting between international forces and armed men erupted in the Kilometre 5 district of the capital on 19 and 20 August. Among the many casualties was a Central African Red Cross driver and first-aid worker who was shot and killed while evacuating casualties.

"Throughout the country, civilians continue to bear a heavy burden because of the conflict and reprisal attacks aimed directly at them," said Jean-François Sangsue, head of the ICRC delegation in the Central African Republic. "Once again, we are calling on all parties to the conflict and on the international forces in the country to take all feasible measures to spare the civilian population and to facilitate the work of Red Cross personnel striving to help the people of the Central African Republic."

Tensions remain high in the capital, and there are concerns that further incidents could take place. Many displaced people in areas near Kilometre 5, fearing reprisals, have taken refuge within the Church of the Holy Saviour, where conditions were already very difficult. Fear is also being felt by displaced people accommodated in the city's Central Mosque, which is situated in the area where fighting took place.

Tensions are also very high in Bambari, where fighting in the middle of the city between two factions of the same armed group resulted in many casualties on 25 and 26 August. Civilians, already traumatized by clashes that occurred in July, are filled with fear and alarm. At this point it would appear very difficult for things to return to normal. Those who had only recently returned to their residences quickly turned back to the sites accommodating displaced people. The removal of injured people has been made difficult by the tenuous security situation. The ICRC did however manage to provide the city's hospital with fuel to help it to provide care for the wounded and the sick.

"People who are wounded or sick, whether they be civilians or combatants, and regardless of which side they belong to, must be protected by the parties to the conflict," said Mr Sangsue. "In addition, the wounded and the sick must be safely evacuated and treated."

The city of Batangafo, in the north-western part of the country, remains paralysed. All economic activity has been at a standstill since clashes between armed groups and fighting involving multinational forces took place on 30 July. Even the farmers are without access to their fields. On 26 August, ICRC staff went to Farazala to assess the situation of people displaced from Batangafo and determine what their needs are and what kind of aid should be provided.

In Boda, 115 kilometres west of Bangui, inter-community violence that has shaken the city since 21 August has resulted in casualties and in the displacement of hundreds of people.

People in other cities of the Central African Republic, especially in the Kaga Bandoro and Bambari areas, continue to live in fear of being attacked by armed men.

"Our staff are striving to respond to the most urgent needs," said Mr Sangsue. "In addition, we are maintaining a dialogue with everyone involved in the hostilities, and also with community and religious leaders, with the aim of raising awareness of – and improving adherence to – the basic principles of international humanitarian law."

Between 7 July and 20 August, in cooperation with the Central African Red Cross Society, the ICRC:

- provided curative care for more than 7,000 patients in Bangui and in the Kaga Bandoro area, and performed more than 130 operations in Bangui;
- evacuated 15 sick people and transferred four patients from the country's interior to Bangui's Community Hospital;
- upgraded two health-care centres in the Kaga Bandoro area;
- supplied clean drinking water every day to more than 20,000 displaced people at Bangui's airport, and also to more than 11,000 people in Kaga Bandoro and nearly 20,000 in Bambari;
- delivered clean drinking water every day to Ndélé and its hospital for more than 10,000 people;
- provided household essentials for more than 18,500 people;
- supplied food aid for almost 25,000 displaced people in Bangui, and for more than 400 displaced people on the road between Bambari and Ippy;
- reunited with other family members six children who had been separated from them by the conflict;
- raised awareness of the basic principles of international humanitarian law among more than 400 members of various weapon-bearing groups and among nearly 150 community and religious leaders.

In addition, ICRC staff visited 560 detainees to make sure that the treatment they were receiving and the conditions in which they were being held met international standards.