



IEDA Relief Event Report Central African Republic
Official opening of the Bouar remand center
Prefecture of Nana-Mambéré
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Prepared by Christian BAGALWA
Information Management Officer
IEDA Relief Central African Republic

Summary

With the aim of contributing to the restoration of the authority of the State and peace in rural and urban areas in Central African Republic, IEDA Relief in a partnership with the MINUSCA, rehabilitated the remand center of Bouar, which had closed its doors since 2013. The rehabilitation of this building was done through the QIP (*Quick Impact Project - Projet à Impact Rapide*) mechanism, an initiative from the criminal office of the MINUSCA.



The Context

The history of CAR is marked by sudden changes in the regime, but the taking over by the rebel group Séléka¹ on March 24th 2013 created a context of exacerbated violence and great instability never seen before due to the almost complete destruction of the State².

The degradation of security linked to this crisis has caused great disorganization of the national economy, sparing no sector: stockbreeding (-55%), agriculture (-35,1%), services (-31,6%), industry (-20,8%) and silviculture (-17%). Transportation by land and by air remains extremely dependent on the level of security of sensible sites (such as the airport, the Bangui-Cameroun route and petrol stations)³ by international forces.

Several houses and state buildings were destroyed among which prisons, which were vandalized and which gave the opportunity to detained people to flee.

Such was the case of the prison in the city of Bouar which was abandoned since the 2013 crisis, following the abuses committed by armed groups who profited from freeing prisoners and stealing furniture and other materials.

Prisoners were kept in cells in conditions that violated the minimal principles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights⁴. These cells were located in three (3) places in the city of Bouar among which: the Gendarmerie, the Brigade and the Police.

The reduced number of the cells and the low-quality building materials used also facilitated frequent evasions among which massive ones took place in August and September 2014. Twenty-two (22) other prisoners escaped in October 2015⁵.

According to the situation report on the Rights of Men in Central African Republic, the independent expert *Marie-Thérèse Keita Bocoum* quoted: « *The conditions of detention in Central African prisons do not generally answer to the international norms and are often inhumane. First necessity goods such as food and clothes or medication are insufficient and inadequate and are often confiscated by penitentiary authorities. Even if several efforts are made to improve this, mainly in Bangui, there is no centralized file on the total number of prisoners in Central African Republic. In Bangui, men and women are kept in different chambers. In other cities, they are detained in the same buildings, sometimes in different cells. Some other times, detained minors are kept with adults, and people provisionally*

¹ *La Seleka* (« Coalition » en sango), parfois orthographiée *Séléka*, est une coalition constituée en août 2012 de partis politiques et de forces rebelles opposés au président centrafricain François Bozizé.

² <http://www.diplomatie.gouv.fr/fr/dossiers-pays/republique-centrafricaine/presentation-de-la-republique-centrafricaine/>

³ *IDEM (Note²)*

⁴ *SMR – Standard Minimum Rules for the Treatment of Prisoners and UDHR – Universal Declaration of Human Rights*

⁵ <http://afriquenewsinfo.net/2015/10/02/centrafriqueun-autre-cas-devasion-a-bouar-apres-celui-de-la-prison-centrale-de-ngaraqba/>

detained are kept with those who have already been sentenced⁶.»

Considering the lack of enclosures around prisons, most dangerous prisoners in particular the members of armed groups, are taken to Bangui by the MINUSCA to the Ngaraba prison as a measure of precaution, but which is currently overpopulated.

Thus, following the request of authorities in Bouar, the directives of the Ministry of Justice after a mission to the field in December 2014 and the instructions of the MINUSCA from October 2014, the project of rehabilitation of the prison in Bouar was consolidated with a partnership between IEDA Relief and the MINUSCA.

Rehabilitation works started on June the 26th 2015 and aimed at creating a provisional detention site that would comply with international norms, contribute to the prevention of illnesses and to the promotion of human rights in the prison environment, and increase the prison hosting capacities.

In addition to this, the rehabilitation done by IEDA Relief, allows for a progressive decentralization of the State authority, the re-opening of the site to serve as a place of detention for prisoners, with the aim of reducing the risk of systematic transfer of dangerous prisoners to the Ngaraba prison in Bangui, and includes the local population in this efforts, in particular groups of young people from different neighborhoods and communities with the aim of social cohesion.

Rehabilitation works mainly consisted on sanitation and reinstalling the entire plumbing system, redoing the electrification of the entire prison, repairing the foundations and of the cracking on the walls with measured mortars, the building of improved fireboxes in the kitchen, the construction of a septic tank in armed concrete, rehabilitation of the ceiling reinforced with metal bars, the carpentry on the doors and windows of the administration offices and the installations of protection grids as well as other security mechanisms, redoing the pavement, rehabilitating and reinforcing the roof, rehabilitating the kitchen, redoing the rendering and painting of the building.

IEDA Relief also received the support of the Ministry of Justice, which actively took part in the making of this project, by visiting the site and providing advice. The catholic church also provided assistance in the project, more particularly in relation to the works around the manufacture of metallic doors.

Development of the Launching

The launching of the Detention Center in Bouar was done in February 2016, by the President of Central African Republic, Ms. Samba-Panza represented by the Minister of Agriculture, Marie Noëlle Koyara.

La MINUSCA, IEDA Relief, the Police and Gendarmerie Departments and the population of Bouar were present to receive the public and participate to this ceremony that marks the beginning of NGO implications, of the Peacekeeping Mission in CAR in the process of

⁶ *Rapport de l'experte indépendante sur la situation des droits de l'homme en République centrafricaine, Marie Thérèse Keita Bocoum, A/HRC/30/59, du 24 Juillet 2015, Point IV. C., p.18 Cfr. : http://www.un.org/ga/search/viewm_doc.asp?symbol=A/HRC/30/59*

restoration of the State's Authority, the restoration of peace and security on these prefecture.

In his speech, Jean-Claude Nyakura, Representative of IEDA Relief and current Head of Office in Bouar, thanked the MINUSCA for their frank collaboration in the execution of this project and underlined IEDA Relief's availability to continue working in other future projects of rehabilitation of the buildings of the State.

IEDA Relief also rehabilitated the Court of Appeals in BAMBARI, as well as the sub-prefecture and the police station in PAOUA, through the partnership with MINUSCA, and has recently signed a new agreement for a waste recovery and transformation project in the BOUERAB neighborhood, for the production of gaz. This BIOGAZ project falls within the fight against climatic change.

Des photos sur l'évènement



Intérieur de l'ancien bâtiment de la Maison d'arrêt de Bouar.





Intérieur de la Maison d'arrêt de Bouar après sa restauration.



Visite guidée faite par le représentant d'IEDA Relief à Bouar au nom du Chef de Mission en Centrafrique, pour les locaux réhabilités.



Discours prononcé à la préfecture de la Nana-Mambéré à Bouar.



Mme. La Ministre félicite le Représentant de IEDA Relief, en présence de la Chef de Bureau de la MINUSCA Bouar (à gauche), de l'ambassadeur de France (à droite), du Préfet de la Nana-Mambéré (à l'extrême droite) et autres cadres du gouvernement.