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Gombahignonri Kouassi, UN Volunteer from Cote d'Ivoire, Radio Producer, MINUSCA at work providing public information on COVID-19 in Bria, Central African Republic. UNV, 2020

Fighting COVID-19 through public information in the Central African Republic

From Bangui, the Central African Republic's capital, to Bria, Kaga-Bandoro, Bouar or Bambari; UN Volunteers are assigned as public information officers in radio stations with the United Nations Multidimensional Integrated Mission in CAR (MINUSCA) to inform the public about the COVID-19 global outbreak.

In the Central African Republic, radio broadcasts are a useful means to share public information, especially to the most remote populations. UN Volunteers assigned with the MINUSCA's radio are on the frontline to raise awareness about the COVID-19 pandemic. These dedicated UN Volunteers share current up-dates on COVID-19 via radio programmes, while advocating for prevention and protection measures.

In a context where a high percentage of the population is illiterate, radio shows are an essential way to reach as many people as possible, especially during a health crisis where people should stay home. UN Volunteers make sure that information and advocacy messages are broadcasted in the most adapted and suitable way for local populations.

Francois Gombahignonri KOUASSI from Cote d'Ivoire, UN Volunteer Public Information Officer assigned to Briam, started, as soon as the first case of COVID-19 was announced in CAR, a biweekly chronicle called **"STOP! CORONAVIRUS!"** for the UN mission's radio. His initiative aims to help listeners discover more about COVID-19 and its consequences, but also to promote ways to avoid its spread within communities. Francois conducts interviews with medical and demography experts working with WHO, MINUSCA's medical section, UNFPA and children protection officers from UNICEF. These experts share useful information and tips for self-protection to a wide public audience.

In CAR, radio broadcasts are also the most efficient means to raise awareness and fight stigma arising from the pandemic, especially in remote areas such as Bambari. Alou DIAWARA, a UN Volunteer from Mali, gives his best to reduce people's anxieties by gathering and spreading testimonies from patients cured from COVID-19.

“ Due to cultural habits, it has been hard to make people understand that they should not shake hands anymore.” Alou Diawara, UNV Radio Producer in Bambari, CAR.

Similarly, the messages conveyed through MINUSCA's radio by Honorine NIARE from Cote d'Ivoire, UN Volunteer Public Information Officer serving for MINUSCA in Bouar and her colleagues go from full awareness raising about the virus to spreading UN information and government's protection measures.

Through their assignments, these UN Volunteers provide, on a daily basis, quality and verified information to the majority of the population and contribute to the COVID19 response.

There are currently 297 UN Volunteers serving in Central African Republic, out of whom 248 with MINUSCA.

 West and Central Africa

• COVID-19 • Coronavirus

Sustainable Development Goal: [SDG 3: Good health and well-being](#) [SDG 17: Partnerships for the goals](#)