

WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE

Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, Democratic Republic of the Congo

8 October – 14 October 2019



Operational context and protection situation

Ituri Province

During the reporting period, armed confrontations and attacks continued to endanger civilians, mostly in Mambasa and Djugu territories. In Djugu, the upsurge in violence was observed after a period of relative lull in fighting, and despite recent timid steps toward reconciliation. Most reported human rights violations were lootings (69 cases), arson (24), injuries (19), and sexual violence (13), with 199 incidents documented overall. Armed clashes between the army and presumed elements of a prominent armed group took place in Kasoko, along an essential axis for Ebola Emergency Response Teams, in Mambasa Territory. Estimations of recent displacement caused by these clashes are of some 229 households from Kasoko and neighboring Mbopi, towards relatively calmer areas in Mambasa Territory. At the same time, IDPs in inaccessible areas of Djugu Territory face staggering humanitarian needs related to sexual and gender-based violence, child protection, education and health. Reports of sexual violence, torture and arbitrary arrests were attributed to unidentified gunmen and to alleged elements of state armed forces.

BACKGROUND: Since 6 June, generalized violence has led to massive new displacements in Ituri Province. UNHCR and IOM recorded over 110,000 new arrivals in IDP sites in Djugu, Mahagi and Irumu territories between 31 May and 20 June. OCHA estimated that 360,000 people were displaced by the recent crisis; some 145,000 towards IDP sites and the rest (215,000) in host communities. **As displacements have continued, Ituri's Site Management and Coordination Working Group (CCCM) now estimates that almost 227,000 people are staying in 87 IDP sites.** Outside of Bunia, the largest concentrations of IDPs are found in Drodro, Rho, Fataki, Kasenyi and Tchomia, in Djugu and Irumu territories. In Mahagi territory, there is a large concentration of IDPs in Ramogi. **Spontaneous returns of an estimated 1,575 people who had fled to Uganda were observed,** according to partner INTERSOS, but UNHCR is not able to establish exact numbers. UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 4,567 incidents between January and September 2019 in Ituri Province.

North Kivu Province

The security and protection situation in North Kivu remained of concern. In Rutshuru Territory, the proportion of human rights violations committed by state armed forces against civilians has further increased compared to recent weeks. Province-wide, 60% of the 125 violations recorded were perpetrated by army elements. Clashes between rival armed groups continued in Masisi and Rutshuru territories, displacing at least 776 households (4,464 individuals), most of whom are staying in schools and churches, and are in need of urgent multi-sectoral assistance. Some 20,000 recent IDPs are also staying in the town of Oicha (Beni) in precarious conditions, some sleeping in schools and most lacking access to water and sanitation. In the Nobili area on the Ugandan border, returns of IDPs to the town of Kamango continued to be reported, with an estimated 4,570 returned. The President of the DRC visited Beni on 10 October, highlighting the fight against armed groups and Ebola as priorities.

BACKGROUND: Since 30 March, and with a sharp intensification as of 7 May, attacks against civilians and military outposts by members of a prominent armed group led to significant displacements from the town of Kamango towards the town of Nobili (Beni territory). **By 24 June 94,612 displaced people (15,991 households) had been registered in Nobili and 9 surrounding localities, but displacements continued: the Nobili crisis committee recorded 6,329 newly-displaced households between June and August. The exact number of IDPs currently in Nobili is not known, but the return of some 4,500 IDPs was observed.** In host communities in other territories of North Kivu, OCHA estimates that over 67,000 were displaced in May and June, while arrival numbers into several IDP sites have been significant. During July, UNHCR and the National Refugee Commission (CNR) recorded 5,256 new IDPs (1,225 households) in 8 IDP sites in Masisi, with the most (2,754 persons) having arrived to Bukombo site. UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 7,813 protection incidents between January and September 2019 throughout the Province.

Immediate needs

Ituri Province

- **Health:** IDPs' access to appropriate healthcare in displacement-affected areas, and overwhelmed health facilities remain of serious concern. Child mortality rates are high.
- **Shelter:** IDPs outside established sites and in host families live in precarious conditions, exposed to abuse. Despite ongoing shelter construction, the lack of space remains a challenge. Strengthened advocacy is needed for local authorities to grant more space.
- **Food assistance** is urgently needed, and the looting of fields left behind in areas of origin compounds food insecurity.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are still needed, namely clothes and kitchen sets.

- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** conditions in most sites and in host families are below standard. Women and girls lack access to menstrual hygiene services and products, and to reproductive health services.
- **Access to education** is still hindered by host communities' limited capacity to enroll IDP children in school; there are not enough teachers and available classroom space. The majority of IDP children do not go to school.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** risks are high, namely sexual exploitation, early forced marriage, and the use of sex as a source of income.
- **Protection:** Ongoing violence exposes populations to several protection risks: killings, lootings, rape, abductions and others. Peaceful coexistence between communities is a major challenge. A lack of child-friendly spaces (especially outside of Bunia), and high numbers of unaccompanied minors, exacerbate child protection needs.

North Kivu Province

- **Shelter:** IDP sites under UNHCR coordination in Masisi Territory do not offer sufficient or adequate shelter, pushing IDPs towards host families. As arrivals to the sites continue, shelter needs are still increasing. Around Nobili (Beni Territory) UNHCR assistance addressed critical shelter needs, but new displacements (at least 6,329 households since June) created additional needs. In Oicha (Beni Territory), 84 recently-displaced households are still sleeping in a school. UNHCR is assessing both situations with a view to intervene.
- **Education:** In the Nobili area, no humanitarian actor is positioned in education. In several localities in Masisi, Lubero, and Beni territories, school closures were observed because of ongoing conflict.
- **WASH** conditions need urgent support in IDP sites in Masisi and Rutshuru territories, and in Nobili where needs were exacerbated by recent floods. Water availability is a serious concern for the many IDPs in Oicha.
- **Health** services need to be strengthened to respond to overwhelmed facilities, prohibitive treatment costs, and simultaneous measles and Ebola epidemics.
- **Food assistance** is critically needed, particularly for those who lost their livelihoods to conflict but also for those living in managed IDP sites.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)**, for those living with host families as well as in IDP sites, are needed.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** remains widespread, as armed groups in Masisi use it as a weapon of war. Despite referrals to medical structures, legal follow-up is virtually non-existent, perpetuating impunity.
- **Protection** needs are enormous: physical security for civilians in and around IDP sites; community-based protection for local and IDP communities to participate in solutions and response mechanisms; peaceful coexistence; protection for vulnerable youth and women; and birth registration to prevent statelessness are some of the most pressing needs.
- **Child protection** needs are pronounced in northern North Kivu, with many orphaned or unaccompanied children around Beni, or children who recently left armed groups and face reintegration issues in Lubero.

UNHCR's response

Ituri Province

- **CCCM:** Ituri's Site Management and Site Coordination (CCCM) Working Group monitors population movements in and out of sites, after reported attacks in IDP sites in Djugu between 16 and 22 September. Altogether, 675 households (2,874 people) coming from Drodoro, Bule, Rho, and Luko/Bule sites, in Djugu Territory, were registered in sites in Bunia (ISP and General Hospital) and in the neighboring locality of Lopa.
- **Registration:** A new IDP registration has started in sites managed by UNHCR, which helps improve humanitarian programming. A total of 4,654 households (17,473 persons) were registered so far in IDP sites in Bunia (ISP and General Hospital), and registration will continue in the following weeks.
- **Peaceful coexistence:** Intercommunal tensions have been reported as one of the causes of ongoing violence in Ituri Province. UNHCR is fostering dialogue with displaced people living in host families to identify protection needs.
- On 9 October, UNHCR and other humanitarian actors organized a workshop with 37 Lendu community leaders. The Lendu community was severely affected by violence, but humanitarian actors have so far had extremely limited access to areas where they sought refuge. Burned and looted villages, killings, abductions, and destroyed public buildings (including schools and hospitals) were reported by many participants. Reported protection incidents included sexual violence used as a weapon of war, torture, and arbitrary arrests. The community's main assistance needs are related to SGBV prevention and mitigation, child protection, education, and health. UNHCR recommends joint humanitarian assessment missions to investigate human rights violations, and better document these needs.
- **Community-based protection:** UNHCR, in collaboration with partners Caritas and AVSI, trained three community-based protection structures in Drodoro (Djugu Territory). Awareness-raising on SGBV was also carried out in schools in Komanda, Idohu and Bwnasura (Irumu Territory) as part of the same project.
- **Protection monitoring:** A total of 199 protection incidents (mostly lootings and injuries) were reported during the period, compared to 178 incidents last week. This 10% increase is due to armed confrontations between the army and rebel groups, as well as attacks against civilians, mostly in Djugu and Mambasa territories.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** A total of 13 cases of rape were reported (11 girls and two women). Among them, 10 survivors were referred to medical facilities for emergency treatment within 72 hours. The alleged perpetrators are civilians, one unidentified man, one bandit, and one element of the national army.

North Kivu Province

- **Community-based protection:** Community-based protection structures (trained by UNHCR and partner Caritas) finalized two community-based protection plans in Minova and Kalungu. These plans identify protection risks faced by communities and propose local solutions to them.
- **Peaceful coexistence:** These same community-based protection structures were involved in resolving six resource-related conflicts during the week. They also conducted a high number of awareness-raising workshops on peaceful coexistence, the prevention of SGBV and Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA), and “positive masculinity,” reaching thousands of participants in seven localities of North Kivu. Lastly, the structures are currently involved in mapping opportunities for “Quick Impact Projects” to increase peaceful coexistence.
- **Shelter:** Some 14 family shelters were completed for returned IDPs in Rutshuru, Masisi and Lubero territories during the week, bringing the total to 1,447. To respond to growing shelter needs in IDP sites, 80 emergency shelters are under construction in Kalinga site, 49 of them completed. Altogether 848 emergency shelters are planned before year-end in two IDP sites that have seen many new arrivals: Kalinga (300) and Bukombo (548). UNHCR’s shelter project also includes the rehabilitation of an elementary school (currently occupied by IDPs) in the displacement-affected town of Oicha. This will facilitate IDPs’ access to education and promote peaceful coexistence.
- **Non-food items (NFIs):** In and around Nobili, UNHCR distributed tarpaulins and NFIs (mats and jerry cans) to 202 recently-displaced IDP households living in schools, so they could relocate to emergency shelters, and so teaching could resume. Patients in some overwhelmed health centers received the same NFIs.
- **Protection monitoring:** Between 4 and 10 October, 125 human rights violations (including extortions, lootings, bodily harm and SGBV) were recorded, affecting 101 men and 22 women. This week, 60% of the violations were attributed to the army, which is a larger proportion than last week, while armed groups accounted for 22%. Civilians were most affected in Rutshuru Territory, where the army are stationed for military operations, and in Beni.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV):** Five cases of rape (four in Masisi, one in Beni) were recorded and referred to medical facilities for emergency treatment, including the provision of (PEP) kits within 72 hours. The perpetrators were civilians (1), bandits (2) and members of armed groups (2), with one victim as young as three.

UNHCR’s presence

- UNHCR’s Sub-Office in Goma covers North Kivu and Ituri Provinces, as well as supervising operations in South Kivu Province. The Goma Sub-Office oversees all of North Kivu while a much smaller Field Unit (in Bunia) manages operations for Ituri. Both emergencies have so far been covered by a small team in Ituri, and by staff of the Goma Sub-Office on mission. This solution however is cost-ineffective, puts additional burden on human resources and complicates security management in a volatile area of responsibility.
- To meet growing needs in the northern part of North Kivu – including Ebola preparedness needs and emergency response –, as of September 2019 the operation is opening a Field Unit in Beni, with seven planned staff. This will help meet expectations of the Humanitarian Country Team and of the SRSG for UNHCR to play an active role in contributing to addressing the many challenges of this part of the Province. In addition, to face the dramatically worsened humanitarian situation in Ituri since early June 2019, the Bunia Field Unit has been strengthened with additional staff in Protection, Security, Reporting and Drivers. Further staff in Programme, Shelter and Field are expected between now and the end of the year; however needs still outpace available human resources.

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