

# WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE

## Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, Democratic Republic of the Congo

1 - 11 July 2019



### Operational context and protection situation

#### Ituri Province

Following military offensives by the Congolese national army (FARDC), armed violence has decreased in much of the Ituri province. As an indication of this de-escalation, the main road axis from Bunia to Mahagi has been reopened. Nonetheless, sporadic armed attacks and killings persist and the security situation remains volatile, which limits humanitarian access to many displacement sites. The government's strategy is to station police forces for several months in communities reclaimed by FARDC, a situation that will require monitoring. As of mid-week, humanitarian evaluations had been conducted in more than two-thirds of the affected localities. Outside of Bunia, the largest concentration of Internally Displaced People (IDPs) appear to be in Drodro, as well as in Rho, Kasenyi and Tchomya in Djugu territory. In Mahagi territory, there is a very large concentration of IDPs in Ramongi, although according to recent reports people have begun to return. Displaced people are also arriving in new areas such as Haut-Uele province, and remote areas in Ituri province, where UNHCR is present but currently only providing humanitarian assistance to South Sudanese refugees. Since 9 July the Head of UNHCR's Sub-Office in Goma, Marie-Hélène Verney, is in Bunia to meet with key actors - such as the provincial Governor, OCHA, and UNHCR partners - in order to guide and coordinate the humanitarian response.

**BACKGROUND:** Since 6 June, a flare-up of generalized violence between the Lendu and Hema communities has led to massive new displacements in Ituri province. UNHCR and the International Organization for Migration (IOM) recorded over 110,000 new arrivals in IDP sites in Djugu, Mahagi and Irumu territories between 31 May and 20 June. In addition, tens of thousands of people are staying with host communities; however, with little access to many affected areas, uncertainty persists around these figures. During the month of June 8,647 people fled to Uganda according to UNHCR's Uganda office, nearly doubling the number of daily crossings as compared to May 2019. Some of the affected areas of Ituri province are Ebola-hit.

#### North Kivu Province

The situation in North Kivu remained volatile during the week under review, as all territories continued to experience armed conflict and cyclical displacement. In Masisi territory the situation continued to deteriorate, with attacks from irregular armed groups systematically targeting Rwandan refugees and causing displacement. The United Nations Emergency Response Coordinator for Ebola, David Gressly, welcomed on 8 July the decline in cases of the Ebola epidemic. The Ebola response has now moved its HQ to the town of Butembo, with new cases still reported daily eleven months after the start of the current outbreak. In Beni territory, following the displacement of some 95,000 people to Nobili on the Ugandan border in May, smaller scale displacements continued. Almost all the displaced in and around Nobili are now staying with host families. Humanitarian access remains a challenge given the area's distance from Goma, and persistent insecurity between Beni and Nobili despite FARDC presence. Progressive returns were observed around Kamango over the last week, where a local community chief returned on 7 July. However a deadly attack on 9 July has halted further returns.

**BACKGROUND:** Since 30 March, and with a sharp intensification as of 7 May, attacks against civilians and military outposts by presumed members of rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), led to significant displacement from the town of Kamango towards the town of Nobili (Beni Territory), near the DRC border with Uganda. As of 24 June, 94,612 displaced people (15,991 households) had been registered in Nobili and in 9 surrounding localities.

### Immediate needs

#### Ituri Province

Humanitarian needs are overwhelming, including in the capital and the territories of Djugu and Mahagi. Needs assessments by UNHCR and other humanitarian actors indicate that the following needs are critical:

- **Shelter:** many IDPs are sleeping in the open or in public buildings, exposed to elements and to potential abuse. The lack of shelter in the rainy season compounds risks (especially health-related) for the most vulnerable.
- **Health:** mass displacements are occurring in an Ebola-affected area (and prone to other disease outbreaks including measles and malaria), exacerbating already systemic health needs. Health facilities everywhere are overwhelmed; in IDP sites as well as communities, frequent child deaths are recorded due to a lack of medical care and malnutrition.
- **Food assistance:** WFP has started food distributions in select locations (Kasenyi), but needs are overwhelming.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are a need expressed by IDPs everywhere; some of them also report needing clothes.

- **WASH** conditions are particularly dire in the most overcrowded IDP sites and in collective structures. Women who lack access to female hygiene products are disproportionately affected.
- **SGBV**: due to overcrowding, women and girls are at high risk of sexual and gender-based violence. Women in IDP sites report having to resort to survival sex to cover their most basic needs. Girls and women are not sufficiently aware of their rights and have no access to PEP and dignity kits.
- **Protection**: The high influx of newly displaced persons creates tensions between previously and recently displaced persons, with discriminatory access to facilities and services for the newly displaced. Registration and/or “fixing” are also urgently needed, particularly in the 61 IDP sites that are now found throughout Ituri.

### North Kivu Province

- **WASH**, specifically hygiene, remains the most pressing need. While water availability in the Nobili area has increased and sanitation projects are ongoing, no actor is currently positioned for a hygiene response.
- **Health**: a measles epidemic has been declared in and around Nobili. The Health Ministry has made over 25,000 doses of vaccines available to the Health Zone, and between 24 and 29 June UNICEF carried out a vaccination campaign that reached over 33,000 children. Health needs remain severe, with local facilities overwhelmed.
- **Food assistance**: WFP has transported food aid to Nobili, and distributed it between 5 and 13 June. It had to end the distribution once its supplies were exhausted. UNHCR has been advocating for WFP’s return since 13 June.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)**: while both UNHCR through its partner CARITAS, and the RRMP rapid response mechanism have assisted vulnerable households with NFIs, needs still remain. 16,000 households received NFIs through the RRMP between 24 and 29 June, while UNHCR is gearing up for its next distribution in the Nobili area.
- **SGBV**: Several cases of rape, including of minors, have been reported; but important gaps remain regarding the prevention of SGBV and for judicial and psycho-social response.
- The most significant outstanding **protection needs** are community-based protection to promote the participation of communities and the displaced in response mechanisms and solutions; protection targeting vulnerable youth and women; and birth registrations to prevent the risk of statelessness.

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## UNHCR’s response

### Ituri Province

UNHCR’s strategy is to focus efforts in a few key sites/communities in coordination with other partners, trying to avoid dispersing its limited resources in too many areas. With resources immediately available, UNHCR will focus on the new IDP site to be opened in Bunia for up to 10,000 persons; the site of Kasenyi on the shore of Lake Albert (an entry/exit point to Uganda) and surrounding communities, and Drodro Centre where up to 90,000 people are living in schools or churches. Further locations will be added if funds become available.

- In **Bunia**, UNHCR has committed to provide **emergency shelters for an initial 2,000 families**, providing plastic sheeting, plastic rolls and expertise. This will be done in collaboration with IOM (site planning and WASH) and CARITAS (site management). In addition, UNHCR will **build an additional 173 shelters in the ISP site of Bunia**, and will begin a distribution of NFIs early next week.
- In **Kasenyi**, UNHCR will **provide 600 emergency shelters** through its partner CARITAS, starting next week.
- In **Drodro**, UNHCR plans to build **2,100 emergency shelters**.
- In all these localities, UNHCR will **reinforce its community-based protection activities** around the sites with its new partner AVSI, with activities focusing on the participation of IDP men, women and youth; conflict reduction; identification and assistance to the most vulnerable, especially women at risk or victims of sexual exploitation; and **reinforcing existing coping mechanisms**, including access to land for agriculture.
- UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, conducts **protection monitoring** to the extent that the territory is accessible and human resources are available, and (on a limited basis) provides individual referrals for victims of SGBV. Protection monitoring will continue, and will be reinforced especially along the shores of Lake Albert and in return areas, as these areas become accessible.
- UNHCR conducted several **focus group discussions in displacement sites**, with a specific focus on girls and women, to inform its response and **expand its community-based protection through establishing IDP committees** in displacement sites. The focus groups conducted with women in particular highlighted **the need for female staff to be available on the ground**, and for awareness-raising on rights and referral mechanisms.
- More NFIs have arrived from North and South Kivu provinces, allowing UNHCR to gear up for **rapid response in the most critical locations**, notably the Bunia sites (the new site and the ISP site); in Drodro which has received the highest number of new displacements; and around Kasenyi. The NFIs available in Bunia as of 11 July are:

Item	Sanitary Napkins	Plastic Tarpaulin 4X5m	Plastic Tarpaulin 4X50m	Sleeping mat	Fleece Blanket	Soap Bar	Mosquito nets	Jerrycan 10l	Bucket 3l
Quantity	15'833	10'376	399	5543	4346	4245	1070	12'020	339

- UNHCR's partnership agreement with CARITAS in Bunia has been revised to **allow for the partner's immediate deployment to Kasenyi** to provide emergency shelters. Other agreements are under review, including those of INTERSOS for protection monitoring and AIRD for logistics.

#### North Kivu Province

- Since the beginning of UNHCR's response, **2,500 vulnerable IDP households (19,222 people) received NFIs: tarpaulins, sleeping mats and jerry cans**. This enabled those among them who stayed in public buildings (schools, churches) to relocate within communities in Nobili, **allowing primary and secondary schools to be freed up** for exams. UNHCR also assisted close to **900 vulnerable host community households** with NFIs.
- Further NFIs have arrived to Nobili from Uganda, and the **distribution of 10,000 sleeping mats and 10,000 tarpaulins to 5,000 households** is planned between 9 and 15 July. Additional NFIs will be used to reinforce health infrastructure in the area.
- Protection monitors** have been deployed into the area by UNHCR and partner INTERSOS since 23 May. A small UNHCR team on the ground ensures **protection by presence**.
- With support from UNHCR, **10 sub-committees of displaced people, and 2 protection committees** were set up in the 10 displacement locations in and around Nobili.
- UNHCR works on **strengthening the preventions of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA)**, and conducted evaluations to **prepare the implementation of complaint procedures** for cases of sexual exploitation and abuse.

#### 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 –, the operation plans to open a Field Unit in Beni. 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 country. In addition, to face the worsening situation in Ituri, the Bunia Field Unit will be strengthened with staff including Protection, Information Management, Field and Supply.

#### Contacts

**David Nthengwe**, Senior Regional External Relations Officer, UNHCR's Regional Representation in Kinshasa, DRC, [nthengwe@unhcr.org](mailto:nthengwe@unhcr.org), tel: +243 817 009 484

**Marie-Hélène Verney**, Head of Sub-Office, UNHCR Sub-Office Goma, DRC, [verney@unhcr.org](mailto:verney@unhcr.org), tel: +243 822 560 471

**Gloria Ramazani**, External Relations Associate, UNHCR Sub-Office Goma, DRC, tel: [ramazang@unhcr.org](mailto:ramazang@unhcr.org), tel: +243 812 686 039