

Operational context and protection situation

Ituri Province

During the reporting period, a relative calm was observed in Ituri Province. Attacks and killings targeting civilians continued, but on a smaller scale, in localities of Djugu and Irumu territories. UNHCR recorded 127 protection incidents in Ituri Province. This number could actually be higher, although difficult to record as some localities remain inaccessible. Overall, armed violence has decreased in much of Ituri Province compared to July. However, police is still coming under attack and armed assailants continue to pose a serious security threat in Djugu Territory. Confrontations between the army and unidentified armed men in the Mbau area, Tsokpa village, Dz'na group, in Walendu Pitsi Sector were also recorded since 18 August. The army reportedly took control of this area on August 21, but some civilian homes, schools, and health facilities were reportedly burned during the clashes. On 17 August, some 375 displaced people were forced to leave a church where they had been seeking shelter since 10 June. Some of them are now scattered in host families, and others in unfinished houses. The displaced are still reluctant to return to their home villages because of insecurity. Those who sleep in unfinished homes are exposed to bad weather and human rights violations, including sexual and gender-based violence. Several road axes in Djugu Territory remain too insecure, or require MONUSCO escorts to access. Humanitarian actors advocated for the opening of a MONUSCO base to facilitate access to the Jiba-Linga axis, and the base will open soon, some 4 km from Jiba.

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 now estimates that 360,000 people were displaced by the recent crisis; some 145,000 towards IDP sites and the rest (215,000) in host communities. Outside of Bunia, the largest concentrations of IDPs are found in Drodoro, Rho, Fataki, Kasenyi and Tchomia, in Djugu and Irumu territories. In Mahagi Territory, there is a large concentration of IDPs in Ramogi. In June, 8,647 people also fled to Uganda according to UNHCR's Uganda office, nearly doubling the number of daily crossings compared to May 2019.

North Kivu Province

Overall, the security situation in North Kivu remains extremely volatile. Masisi Territory is particularly affected. Armed groups continued targeting civilians, protection actors, but also Rwandan refugees living in the Territory. As a direct consequence, displacement continues. The Ebola epidemic continues, with its epicenter in Beni and confirmed cases in Goma. In Beni Territory, armed groups dramatically intensified their attacks against civilians and government forces during the reporting period. In Nobili, near the Ugandan border (Beni Territory), violence has caused further displacements, and flooding has affected the displaced in the past week. Rutshuru Territory also witnessed killings over the past two weeks. In Rushaki, Rutshuru Territory, an armed group reportedly asked the population to evacuate the area because they were planning an attack against another armed group. A similar message was sent to the population of Kyaghala by yet another armed group who allegedly planned an attack too. The continuous, almost province-wide deterioration of the security situation since the second half of July is severely limiting humanitarian access.

BACKGROUND: Since 30 March, and with a sharp intensification as of 7 May, attacks against civilians and military outposts by members of rebel group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), led to significant displacements 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 9 surrounding localities, but displacements continue. In host communities OCHA estimates that over 67,000 were newly displaced in May and June, while arrival numbers into several IDP sites have been significant. During July alone, 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. In Masisi the security situation has deteriorated sharply since the beginning of the year, with 1,593 protection incidents, including 577 murders, recorded by UNHCR between January and June 2019.

Immediate needs

Ituri Province

- **Health:** the displacement area is Ebola-affected, exacerbating already-systemic health needs. A measles epidemic is spreading out, with insufficient vaccines and overwhelmed health facilities. Child mortality rates are high.
- **Shelter:** many IDPs are still sleeping in open areas or in public buildings, exposed to elements and to abuse. Despite the ongoing shelter construction work, the lack of space remains a high challenge and requires to strengthen advocacy towards local authorities to grant more space.

- **Food assistance** is urgently needed as WPF is out of stock. The looting of fields left behind in areas of origin further exacerbates food insecurity.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are urgently needed, including clothes.
- **WASH** conditions in the most overcrowded locations (Drodro, Kasenyi) is below standards. Women and girls lack access to feminine hygiene products, menstrual hygiene services and reproductive health services.
- **Education** is needed due to schools closures, notably in Drodro and Kasenyi, as IDPs use classrooms for shelter.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** risks are high due to overcrowding and the use of survival sex, notably in Bunia.
- **Protection:** there are tensions between “newer” and “older” waves of displaced persons. Newly-displaced people are facing discrimination to access facilities and services. Peaceful coexistence between ethnic communities is another major challenge.
- **Child Protection:** A lack of child-friendly spaces and the many unaccompanied minors create child protection needs.
- **Registration and “fixing”** urgently needed in most IDP sites to establish exact displacement numbers.

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- **Shelter:** IDP sites under UNHCR coordination in Masisi Territory do not offer sufficient adequate infrastructure, pushing IDPs towards host families. Around Nobili (Beni Territory), UNHCR assistance contributed in addressing part of the shelter needs, but new displacements (also caused by recent flooding that affected 838 households) created additional needs.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are critically needed for those living with host families, as well as in IDP sites.
- **Health** services need to be strengthened to respond to overwhelmed facilities, prohibitive treatment costs, and simultaneous measles and Ebola epidemics.
- **Education** is needed as around 3,000 children in Masisi Territory did not finish the last school year due to conflict and displacement.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)**, remains high as armed groups are using SGBV as a weapon of war in Masisi Territory.
- **WASH** conditions need support in IDP sites in Masisi and Rutshuru territories and in Nobili, where needs were exacerbated by recent floods.
- **Food assistance** is critically needed, particularly for those who lost their livelihoods to conflict, but also for those living in managed IDP sites.
- **Protection:** the most significant needs are community-based protection, to promote the participation of both local and IDP communities in response mechanisms and solutions; peaceful coexistence; protection of vulnerable youth and women; and birth registrations to prevent statelessness.

UNHCR’s response

Ituri Province

- **Bunia:** UNHCR is **reinforcing Camp Management and Monitoring** in two IDP sites in Bunia.
- **Kasenyi:** During the week of 15-22 August, UNHCR and its partner CARITAS **continued the construction of 40 planned collective hangars**, to respond to the arrival of some 4,300 IDPs in Kasenyi. So far, **21 hangars** are already occupied by 252 households, with each hangar hosting 12 families. The remaining hangars will be occupied when latrines are finalized. In addition, almost **333 individual shelters out of the 600 planned** were finalized by UNHCR and partner CARITAS, and are now occupied by families in Kasenyi. These shelters, added to the hangars, will host up to 5,400 IDPs, which includes the “older” wave of displaced people.
- There is a **problem of access to drinking water** on the IDP site CE 39. Urgent advocacy is required for the Wash Cluster to appoint a WASH actor for water supply.
- The **distribution of non-food items (NFIs)** continues in Kasenyi, where 1,219 households were reached out of a total of 1,631 targeted. The distribution of feminine hygiene items to women of reproductive age has reached 759 beneficiaries out of the 1,117 targeted.
- **Drodro:** The **construction of 39 collective hangars** is ongoing by UNHCR and its partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). The transfer of IDPs to the finalized hangars is scheduled for the week commencing on 26 August. UNHCR’s partner DRC is continuing the **identification of IDPs staying with host families**, with a view of developing a list of beneficiaries to receive shelter assistance.
- **Ramogi:** UNHCR **completed a “fixing” exercise in Ramogi** (Mahagi Territory) to establish a verified list of IDPs and assess their needs based on their living conditions. Results are currently being analyzed.
- **General:** Since the second half of July, UNHCR’s partners AVSI and CARITAS have **identified 17 community-based protection structures** along various road axes in Djugu, Irumu and Mambasa territories. UNHCR and partners provided capacity-building to six structures as of 10 August.
- **Tchomia:** UNHCR and INTERSOS conducted joint border monitoring mission to Tchomia, to assess the scale of returns of Congolese refugees from Uganda, as some are spontaneously returning. Authorities confirmed that there is small-scale movement back, but that porous borders make it difficult to control. The returnees are mostly

undocumented because they lost their papers. They are referred to local authorities for document clearance. Migration authorities are counting individuals and identifying their sex, but a more systematic registration method is needed.

- UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, **conducts protection monitoring in accessible areas**, and provides referrals to some victims. **206 protection incidents** were recorded in Ituri Province.

North Kivu Province

- **Nobili:** UNHCR and its partner INTERSOS conducted a **protection analysis that highlighted tensions between ethnic groups**, mainly due to perceptions of unequal access to humanitarian assistance.
- **UNHCR helped setting up 10 sub-committees of IDPs** in the 10 displacement locations in and around Nobili. They received capacity-building and are active in registering new displacements.
- **General:** **156 members of five community-based protection structures in Masisi Territory were trained** on their role of community mobilization, reporting of protection incidents, referral and participation to a better protection environment. Another structure referred seven unaccompanied children to State Social Services to allow them to receive adequate care.
- **Masisi:** Two community-based protection structures **reunited two unaccompanied children** with their parents in Kitshanga, **referred a rape victim** to relevant care services, and successfully advocated for release of two IDPs who had been arbitrarily-arrested.

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 is opening 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 is being strengthened with staff including Protection, Information Management, Field and Supply.

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