

WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE

Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, Democratic Republic of the Congo

30 August – 5 September 2019



Operational context and protection situation

Ituri Province

During the reporting period, clashes continued between different armed groups, affecting the local population. Three people were killed on 26 August and another wounded by unknown assailants with machetes in a village about 10km from Mongbwalu commune, Djugu Territory. According to local sources, the presence of assailants was reported in several parts of Djugu Territory. On the night of 1 September, unidentified gunmen raided Kpatiz village, mainly inhabited by IDPs and returnees. Three people were killed including two children, animals were stolen, and two huts were burned down. Fearing for their safety, about 300 households from Kpatiz village and neighboring localities (Loyi and Lokpa) spent the night in the bush. In addition, local population movements from the village of Bulinia to the town of Boga, 14km to the west in Irumu Territory, were reported on 4 September, due to fears of a possible attack. Recurrent clashes between the Congolese army and different armed groups are creating deep fears among IDPs.

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 Drodro, 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. Sporadic clashes between the Congolese army and armed groups continue inside Petit Nord, especially in Rutshuru, Masisi and Walikale territories. Armed groups continued targeting civilians and protection actors, as well as Rwandan refugees. As a direct consequence, displacement from conflict-affected areas into host communities and IDP sites continues. The current epicenter of the Ebola epidemic is once again in Beni. In Beni and surrounding areas, intensified armed group presence and criminal activities continue, impacting negatively the population. Several incidents were reported during the week under review, including armed group attacks on national police, lootings, burglaries and kidnappings. In Butembo, criminality persists with the spreading presence of a militia. Rutshuru Territory faces a scale-up in fighting between armed groups, including against the Congolese army. Those armed conflicts continue to be a security concern along road axes. In addition, unidentified individuals threatened the WHO's Ebola monitoring and decontamination team in Butembo town on 31 August. The continuous, almost province-wide deterioration of the security situation since the second half of July is severely limiting humanitarian access. Access for UNHCR is still possible but under severe challenges.

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 1,960 protection incidents, including 90 murders, recorded by UNHCR between January and July 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 due to the fact that a significant amount of food cannot be distributed because of poor quality. Food assistance is also limited with the looting of fields left behind in areas of origin that further exacerbates food insecurity.

- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are also urgently needed, including the need for clothes.
- **WASH** situation 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. An urgent need of clothing has also been identified.
- **Education:** due to schools closures, notably in Drodro and Kasenyi, 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.

North Kivu Province

- **Shelter:** IDP sites under UNHCR coordination management 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. During the reporting period, Nobili's Humanitarian Coordination Team shared an alert referring to the occupation of schools and churches by 655 IDP households a few days before the start of the school year
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)**, for those living with host families as well as in IDP sites are critically needed.
- **Health** services need to be strengthened to respond to overwhelmed facilities, prohibitive treatment costs, and simultaneous measles and Ebola epidemics.
- **Education**, as 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 situation needs 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. Two additional collective hangars will be constructed in the coming weeks on the ISP site, in order to decongest the Administrative Hangar, occupied since June by 123 households from the new wave of displacement.
- The 12-hectare area that will host **the new Kigonze site**, in Bunia, was already flattened by MONUSCO under IOM monitoring, and 30 latrine pits were dug by MONUSCO.
- **Kasenyi:** On 2 September, Oxfam finalized the construction of **228 latrines and 48 showers** across the IDP sites of Anuarite, Parish, CECA20 and CE39. Water remains a challenge, especially for the CE39 and CECA20 sites.
- After the distribution of Non-Food Items (NFIs) to the 1,505 newly-displaced households and 891 women and girls of reproductive age living in sites in Kasenyi, UNHCR assessed the needs in other sites and planned an NFI distribution over the next three months, based on inventories from the month of August.
- **Drodro:** The construction of **39 collective hangars** is ongoing by UNHCR and its partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). Out of the 39 planned, 26 have already been finalized and 189 displaced households were transferred to these collective hangars. This allowed to free up the school classrooms where they had settled. However, there are still classes occupied by displaced families. With the start of the new school year, a more sustainable solution is needed for these families. Some 345 local families were identified as hosting displaced families in need of shelter.
- On 4 September, 6.5 tons of NFIs made up of 1,080 sheets and 27 rolls of plastic tarpaulins were transported to Fataki for the finalization of the 39 hangars under construction in Drodro, and of 360 emergency shelters for IDPs settled in schools in Bule and Fataki.
- **Loda:** An assessment mission was conducted on 4 September to **evaluate return intentions and protection issues**. Four focus group discussions were organized with men, women, boys and girls aged 12 to 17. Women flagged their reduced freedom of movement, the degraded condition of their shelters, and the lack of covered latrines. Nevertheless, women did not seem to want to relocate because, for fear of making off-site movements. Survival sex was also reported as a growing practice among girls.

- **Bule:** The **construction of emergency shelters** began on 2 September with the completion of 54 so far. The supply of sticks remains a challenge that could delay activities.
- **General:** UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, conducts **protection monitoring** in accessible areas and provides **referrals** to some victims. From 25 to 31 August 2019, INTERSOS recorded 287 protection incidents, compared to 203 incidents in the previous period, an increase of 84 incidents (56% of which were attributed to ADF against 20% in the previous period). Following repeated attacks by militia groups in this area, about a hundred people are in displacement in the locality of Bwanasura and Luna, since June. In addition, 99 protection incidents were recorded between 31 August and 5 September.

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:** During the reporting period, 79 people participated in two **sensitization sessions on the causes of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** in Nyabiodo, in Masisi Territory. These sessions were organized by the community-based protection network supported by UNHCR.
- **During the reporting period, 84 family shelters were constructed** for returnees and IDPs in Masisi and Rutshuru territories. In total, 722 were completed so far, out of the 810 planned. In addition, 348 emergency shelters will be distributed in the Bukombo and Kalinga IDP sites. The rehabilitation, furnishing and equipping of four classrooms at Mwangaza Primary School is planned, so that IDP children of school age can attend classes. The aim is to promote peaceful coexistence between IDPs and locals, as this rehabilitation also benefits the host population.
- The CCCM Cluster is preparing to support the **return or local integration** of IDPs living in various sites in Rutshuru Territory. UNHCR will provide voluntary return attestations to those leaving the sites. To date, 54% of the population interviewed stated that they would like to settle locally (around the sites) and 21% wanted to return.
- Eight cases of SGBV (3 in Masisi, 4 in Lubero and one in Nobili) were documented by protection monitoring and were referred to emergency medical facilities, where they Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits within 72 hours. Of these cases, 4 survivors were minors between 10 and 15 years old. The alleged perpetrators are members of armed groups, armed bandits, and civilians.

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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