

# WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE

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

6 – 13 September 2019



### Operational context and protection situation

#### Ituri Province

During the reporting period, armed violence and insecurity escalated: there was a 40% increase the number of incidents reported, in comparison to the previous week. Killings (9), lootings, abductions of children and of displaced people (40), and rapes of women and young girls (10), were perpetrated by armed groups and non-identified armed men in Djugu, Mambasa, and Mahagi territories. Criminal activities by an armed group have intensified in Mambasa Territory. On 9 September, a member of the army (FARDC) was killed in a presumed armed group attack in the village of Baiti. In Djugu Territory, incursions in Nioka and Lokpa localities led to the displacement of 2,160 people towards host communities and sites near Drodro and Rho. A military position was attacked by non-identified men in the village of Djukri. Six people (including four children) were killed and 13 were injured during an attack by non-identified assailants in an IDP settlement in the village of Luko, in Bahema Badjere Chiefdom. Two people were decapitated, and 26 abducted in an armed incursion in the village of Lokpa. Ongoing violence increases the vulnerability of displaced populations who are seeking refuge in churches, schools, and hiding in the bush for several days. The lack of functioning health infrastructures in areas of displacement poses serious public health risks for the communities.

**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 and unpredictable. Sporadic clashes between the army (FARDC) and armed groups continue in the interior of Petit Nord, especially in Rutshuru and Masisi territories. Armed clashes between the army and a presumed militia in villages in Lubero Territory has led to the mass forced displacement of 11,896 people. The majority are women and children who are staying in host families, and are facing staggering protection needs. School activities are paralysed due to ongoing violence in Rutshuru and Lubero territories. Armed groups continue to target civilians and protection actors, while Rwandan refugees living in the territory are also targeted. The current epicenter of the Ebola epidemic is once again in Beni. In Beni Territory, intensified militia presence and criminal activities in Beni town and surrounding areas continue, negatively impacting the population.

**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 the open or in public buildings, exposed to elements and to abuse. Despite ongoing shelter constructions, the lack of space remains a challenge and requires stronger advocacy for local authorities to grant more space.
- **Food assistance** is urgently needed as WPF is out of stock, while the looting of fields left behind in areas of origin further exacerbates food insecurity.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are urgently needed, including the clothes and plastic sheeting (tarpaulins).

- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** conditions in the most overcrowded locations (Drodro, Kasenyi) is below standard. Women and girls lack access to feminine hygiene products, menstrual hygiene services and reproductive health services. There is an urgent need for clothing.
- **Education** is needed due to school 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 in accessing 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 in Masisi Territory do not offer sufficient or adequate infrastructure, pushing IDPs towards host families. Around Nobili (Beni Territory), UNHCR assistance addressed parts of the shelter needs, but new displacements (also caused by flooding that affected 838 households) created additional needs. In the reporting period, Nobili’s Humanitarian Coordination Team issued an alert on 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:** Some 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 use 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; the protection of vulnerable youth and women; and birth registrations to prevent statelessness.

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## UNHCR’s response

### Ituri Province

- **General:** UNHCR is **reinforcing Camp Management and Monitoring** in Ituri Province. The list of IDP sites and number of displaced people in Ituri Province was updated and submitted to local authorities and OCHA for validation.
- A total of 1,124 displaced households (304 in Telega, 546 in Kasenyi, and 274 in Bembeyi, Bunia) received **non-food items (NFIs)**, including plastic sheeting, mats, blankets, laundry soap, mosquito nets, and jerrycans during UNHCR-led distributions. Women and girls received dignity kits composed of sanitary pads and toilet soap.
- UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, conducts **protection monitoring** in accessible areas, and provides referrals to some victims. Some 248 incidents (lootings, killings, abductions and forced labor) were reported this week; a 40% increase from last week (100 cases more), affecting 52 women, 31 girls, 156 men, and 8 boys.
- In terms of **sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)**, 10 cases of rape were reported against 9 girls and one woman. Four girl survivors were referred to medical facilities for emergency management and were provided Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits within 72 hours. The alleged perpetrators were civilians, bandits, and non-identified men.
- **Drodro:** A UNHCR content mission composed of a professional photographer and UNHCR External Relations focal points visited IDP sites in Drodro to cover the current living conditions and strengthen fundraising and advocacy.
- **Kigonze** (new site in Bunia): The chronogram of activities for the official opening of Kigonze site was finalized and submitted to local authorities and OCHA.
- **Bule:** the construction of an additional 154 individual emergency shelter (114 near a primary school in Bule and 40 in the new N’gele site) is underway.

### North Kivu Province

- **General:** A total of **178 shelters were finalized** throughout displacement-affected areas in North Kivu Province: 27 in Masisi territory, 69 in Lubero Territory, and 82 Rutshuru Territory.
- During the reporting period, **UNHCR’s protection monitoring** recorded 231 human rights violations (lootings, injuries, killings, abductions), including SGBV, which affected 180 men and 33 women.

- Some 5 cases of **SGBV** (1 in Masisi, 1 in Rutshuru, and 3 cases in Lubero) were documented and referred to medical facilities for emergency management, including the provision of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits within 72 hours. Of these 5 cases, 4 survivors were minors aged between 14 and 17.
  - **Beni**: UNHCR and its partners the Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés (CNR) and Caritas **trained four IDP committees** in Beni on protection, and their roles and responsibilities. A total of 47 people were trained, including 5 members of local authorities.
  - UNHCR and partners launched a **peaceful coexistence** project in Beni, which aims to facilitate IDPs' access to community fields. Some 20 hectares were made available by local authorities in the initial phase of the project.
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### 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 SRSB 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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