

# WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE

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

23 September – 30 September 2019



### Operational context and protection situation

#### Ituri Province

The reporting period was marked by armed clashes between the DRC army and armed groups in Mambasa, Djugu and Irumu territories. Overall, 131 protection incidents including killings, lootings, extortion of property, abductions, injuries, and rapes were reported mostly in Mambasa and Irumu territories. This week, there were no reported attacks on IDPs sites in Djugu Territory, due to intensified army patrolling. However a significant movement of already-displaced people in Djugu continued towards IDP sites in the territory and in Bunia, Ituri's provincial capital. Estimations of forced displacement linked to violence in Djugu Territory are of some 750-800 households. A first-of-its-kind meeting was held between a provincial government delegation and members of an armed group, heavily involved in the latest waves of violence in Djugu Territory. The armed group's leader presented his requirements to lay down arms, which include amnesty and integration in the national army. In southern Irumu Territory, lootings perpetrated by presumed members of an armed group remained of concern. However, most elements are participating in a demilitarization programme led by the government, with MONUSCO's support.

**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. In June, 8,647 people fled to Uganda according to UNHCR's Uganda office, nearly doubling the number of daily crossings compared to May 2019. **UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 4,567 incidents between January and September in Ituri Province.**

#### North Kivu Province

The protection situation in Lubero and Masisi territories remained of extreme concern during the week. Lubero was most affected by human rights violations committed against civilians, with 167 recorded cases, as a result of the army and armed groups clashing. An armed group attacked health facilities, kidnapping staff and looting supplies. Displacements continued in the territory continued with over 305 households. The majority are women and children staying in host families, with staggering protection needs. In Masisi Territory, a national and a foreign armed group continued to affect civilians. In Rutshuru Territory, infighting between factions of an armed group caused fresh population movements. Armed conflict also continued in the northern part of Beni Territory between the army and an armed group, with at least 5 soldiers killed in 48 hours. Despite this, timid returns of IDPs to their areas of origin were observed around Nobili, even though these movements may be cyclical. The Ebola epidemic's epicenter is in Mambasa Health Zone near Beni, with four new cases recorded between 16 and 22 September.

**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. By 24 June 94,612 displaced people (15,991 households) had been registered in Nobili and 9 surrounding localities, but displacements have since continued: **the Nobili crisis committee recorded 6,329 newly-displaced households between June and August.** 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 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. **UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 7,813 protection incidents between January and September 2019 throughout the Province.**

### Immediate needs

#### Ituri Province

- **Health:** Access to appropriate healthcare in displaced 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 for 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 standards. Women and girls lack access to menstrual hygiene services and products, and to reproductive health services.
- **Education** is still hindered by host communities' limited capacity to enroll IDP children in school; there are not enough teachers or available classroom space. The majority of IDP children do not go to school.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence** risks are high, with survival sex used as a source of income, notably in Bunia.
- **Protection:** Ongoing violence exposes populations to several protection risks: killings, lootings, rape, abductions among others. Peaceful coexistence between communities is a major challenge. There are tensions between newer and older waves of displaced persons; the recently-displaced are facing discrimination in access to facilities and services. A lack of child-friendly spaces (especially outside of Bunia), and many 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. Around Nobili (Beni Territory), UNHCR assistance addressed parts of the shelter needs, but new displacements (at least 6,329 households since June) created additional needs. Ahead of the new school year, Nobili's Humanitarian Coordination Team issued an alert on the occupation of schools and churches by IDPs.
- **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 did not finish the last school year due to displacement. In the Nobili area, no humanitarian actor is positioned in education. In several territories (Masisi, Lubero, Beni) education is disrupted because of ongoing conflict, or because of IDPs occupying classrooms.
- **WASH** conditions need urgent support in IDP sites in Masisi and Rutshuru territories (especially in Masisi where IDP numbers have increased); and in Nobili where needs were exacerbated by recent floods.
- **Food assistance** is critically needed, particularly for those who lost their livelihoods to conflict and 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** remains widespread, as armed groups in Masisi use SGBV as a weapon of war.
- **Protection** needs are enormous: the physical security of civilians living in and around IDP sites; increased community-based protection to promote the participation of both local and IDP communities in the search for solutions and response mechanisms; peaceful coexistence; the protection of vulnerable youth and women; and birth registrations to prevent statelessness are some of the most pressing.

---

## UNHCR's response

### Ituri Province

- **Community-based protection:** UNHCR and partners Caritas and AVSI provided training on community protection to two community structures in Fataki (Djugu), three IDP committees, and three community structures in Linga (Djugu). Four community structures were selected, and three IDP committees (including in the site of Rho, which was attacked by assailants last week) were formed in Drodro (Djugu).
- **Shelter:** Some 220 emergency shelters were built to benefit 412 IDP households (2,229 people) in Drodro and Bule. Some 255 additional IDP households (1,267 people) were identified as in need of shelter in Bule and Drodro. Schools and churches in Kasenyi (Irumu) and Drodro and Bule (Djugu) were vacated thanks to UNHCR's shelter assistance. The priority is to decongest sites in Bunia by relocating IDP families to the new Kigonze site.
- **Protection monitoring:** UNHCR and partner INTERSOS conducts protection monitoring in accessible areas, and provides referrals to victims where possible. From 22 to 28 September, lootings (49), extortions of property (10), bodily harm (29) and rapes (8) were reported mostly in Mambasa and Irumu territories. Some 131 protection incidents were documented overall, compared to 140 incidents the previous week, which represents a slight decrease of 6%, mostly due to intensified military patrolling.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** Eight cases of rape were reported (seven girls and one woman). Six survivors were referred to medical facilities for emergency treatment, including the provision of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits within 72 hours.
- **Statelessness:** UNHCR conducted focus group discussions with IDPs in Ituri to assess the challenges they face when registering their children's births. Most IDPs lost their documentation while fleeing, and the legal procedure for new documents is either lengthy or non-existent. Overall unawareness of birth registration deadlines exposes children to the risk of statelessness.

### North Kivu Province

- **Community-based protection:** UNHCR and partner Caritas trained two IDP committees in Kasindi and Nobili on IDP protection and their roles and responsibilities, so that they can start creating community-based protection plans.

Two such protection plans were finished elsewhere in North Kivu (Kanyabayonga and Nyanzale); they identify the main protection risks faced by communities, and propose solutions.

- **Peaceful coexistence:** Following the launch of a peaceful coexistence project in two localities of Beni Territory, which aims to facilitate IDP's access to community fields, a similar project was launched in Rutshuru and Masisi. Some 1,200 beneficiaries are targeted by partner ANTP-PP; they received agricultural inputs and farming tools.
- **Shelter:** During the week, 57 family shelters were finished for returned IDP households in Rutshuru, Masisi and Lubero territories, bringing the total to 1,425 out of 1,700 planned (84%). To respond to shelter needs created by recent arrivals into IDP sites in Masisi and Rutshuru, 80 emergency shelters were under construction in Kalinga site. In the Nobili area, UNHCR distributed tarpaulins to 202 recently-displaced households who were occupying schools, so that they could build emergency shelters and allow teaching to resume.
- **Protection monitoring:** Between 20 and 26 September, 326 human rights violations (including extortions of property, bodily harm, abductions and SGBV) were recorded, affecting 218 men and 108 women. Due to intensified armed conflict, there was a marked increase in violations committed by armed groups in Lubero Territory.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** Four cases of SGBV were documented by protection monitoring, and referred to medical facilities for emergency treatment, including the provision of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits within 72 hours. All four victims were minors aged between 13 and 16.
- **Statelessness:** UNHCR conducted focus group discussions with IDPs in North Kivu to assess the challenges they face when registering their children's births. One surprising finding was that in Ebola affected-areas, civil registry documents are often destroyed along with the rest of an Ebola patient's belongings for infection-control purposes; such measures have the unintended side effect of increasing the population's vulnerability to statelessness.

---

## 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 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.

---

## Contacts

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

**Alexandra Stenbock-Fermor**, Associate External Relations and Reporting Officer, UNHCR's Regional Representation in Kinshasa, DRC, [stenbock@unhcr.org](mailto:stenbock@unhcr.org), tel: +243 822 253 121

**Nandor Gergely**, Associate Reporting Officer, UNHCR SO Goma, DRC, [gergely@unhcr.org](mailto:gergely@unhcr.org), tel: +243 812 287 781

**Carlinda Lopes**, Associate Reporting Officer, UNHCR FU Bunia, DRC, [lopesc@unhcr.org](mailto:lopesc@unhcr.org), tel: +243 815 768 152

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

---