

Operational context and protection situation

Ituri Province

Armed violence and mass displacements are ongoing in many part of Ituri where humanitarian access remains extremely limited as a result of armed conflict. A first inter-agency (OCHA, WFP, UNHCR, UNICEF) evaluation mission took place in some of the affected areas in the territory of Djugu between 26 and 29 June. The DRC's Resident / Humanitarian Coordinator and OCHA's country director visited Ituri on 24 and 25 June, requesting UNHCR's involvement in protection, shelter, and site management/coordination. On 30 June, the President of the Republic of the DRC also visited Djugu to take stock of the situation and discuss with provincial officials and the security forces. In the provincial capital of Bunia, the population of the two existing Internally Displaced People's (IDP) sites has more than doubled in two weeks and a new site is under development. Outside of Bunia, the largest concentration of IDPs appear to be in Drodro, in Rho where a spontaneous site of some 18,000 people has formed next to a MONUSCO base, and in Kasenyi and Tchomia, on the shore of Lake Albert.

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 Internally Displaced People's (IDP) sites in Djugu, Mahagi and Irumu territories between 31 May and 20 June. In addition, over tens of thousands of people are staying with host communities; however, with little access to many affected areas, uncertainty persists around these figures. 7,500 people have so far fled to Uganda according to UNHCR's Uganda office, mostly by crossing Lake Albert. Some of the affected areas of Ituri province are Ebola-hit.

North Kivu Province

IDP sites have so far not been subject to attacks, but nearby areas have been targeted by armed groups; the security situation in Nobili remains calm but unpredictable. Following the displacement of some 95,000 people to Nobili in the territory of Beni on the Ugandan border in May, there have been a series of smaller scale displacements in Beni territory. Almost all the displaced in and around Nobili now stay with host families. Humanitarian access remains a challenge given the area's distance from Goma, and insecurity between Beni and Nobili (notwithstanding FARDC presence on certain roads). In the territory of Masisi, the situation continues to deteriorate, with attacks from irregular armed groups systematically targeting Rwandan refugees and causing large-scale displacement. The Ebola response has now moved its HQ to the town of Butembo, with new cases still reported daily 11 months after the start of the current outbreak in North Kivu.

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 towards Nobili (Beni Territory), near the border with Uganda. As of 24 June, 94,612 displaced people (15,991 households) had been registered in Nobili and in 9 surrounding localities. Insecurity and displacement affect all territories of North Kivu province.

Immediate needs

Ituri Province

Humanitarian needs are overwhelming, including in the capital, in the territory of Djugu and of Mahagi. So far, few needs assessments have been possible outside of Bunia, but first assessments 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), exacerbating already systematic health needs. Health facilities everywhere are overwhelmed; in IDP sites as well as communities, child deaths have been recorded on a daily basis due to a lack of medical care.
- **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.
- **SGBV:** due to overcrowding, women and girls are at strong risk of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence.
- **Protection:** The crisis continues to increase tensions between communities, and persons with specific needs are especially vulnerable in times of generalized violence, calling for urgent identification and referrals.

North Kivu Province

- As of 26 June, a multi-sectoral team composed of UNICEF and its partners (DRC, Mercy Corps and Save the Children) was carrying out **an evaluation of the response in Nobili**. It highlighted most severe needs in **health and WASH**.
 - **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 across the board remain severe, with local facilities overwhelmed.
 - **Food assistance**: WFP has transported food aid to Nobili, and distributed it between 5 and 13 June. WFP 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 mechanism between 24 and 29 June, while UNHCR is gearing up for its next distribution in the Nobili area.
 - The most significant outstanding **protection needs** are SGBV prevention and response, monitoring of protection incidents and referrals of victims, 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

- In Bunia, at the request of the Provincial Governor, preparations are underway **to open a new IDP site** on the outskirts of the city - to replace the existing so-called "hospital site" due to its close proximity with an Ebola Treatment Centre. While IOM has taken on most of the site planning, UNHCR will support with plastic sheeting. Meanwhile, UNHCR is working on strengthening **site management/coordination capacity** in existing IDP sites; starting with the so-called "ISP site" in Bunia whose population has more than doubled.
- UNHCR has moved **NFIs** from North Kivu and South Kivu to Ituri, with more expected to arrive soon. This will allow for **rapid response in the most critical locations**, notably (1) the Bunia sites (the new site and the ISP site); (2) in Drodro which has received the highest number of new displacements; (3) in Kasenyi, a gateway to Uganda where more than 20,000 are staying in collective centers; and (4) at the request of the RC/HC, around Rho, close to a MONUSCO military base where more than 18,000 displaced have gathered. Emergency shelter activities are due to start the week of 8 July.

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** of the most vulnerable **host community households** with NFIs.
 - UNHCR is awaiting **the arrival of further NFIs**, and planning a distribution to **5,000 additional households**.
 - **Protection monitors** have been deployed into the area by UNHCR and partner INTERSOS since 23 May, and their monitoring work continues. They participated in the now-complete **registration of IDPs** along with the Norwegian Refugee Council and WHH. 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. On 30 June the IDP committees were trained on their role, with a particular focus on how they can spearhead **community-based hygiene** efforts.
 - On 27 June UNHCR held a meeting with all protection actors in Nobili (INTEROS, DRC and CARITAS) to identify outstanding **protection gaps** and establish a work plan for addressing them.
 - **Coordination** in Nobili is ensured by **UNHCR** and (as of late June, following WFP's exit) **the Danish Refugee Council**. The multi-sectoral response is carried out in close collaboration with local authorities. As of 30 June, UNHCR, UNICEF, DRC, INTERSOS, CARITAS, AIRD, WHH and Save the Children were present in the area.
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UNHCR's presence

- UNHCR's Sub-Office in Goma covers the provinces of North Kivu and Ituri, as well as supervising operations in South Kivu. 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.
- In order 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 further staff including Protection, Information Management, Field and Supply.

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