

Emergency Update on Volcano Nyiragongo

#6 | 24 August - 20 September 2021

Highlights

- According to local authorities in Goma, **4,044 houses and 130 fields were destroyed** by the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo on May 22, 2021.
- **UNHCR distributed plastic sheeting to 4,535 displaced households** living in collective centres in Masisi Territory, North Kivu Province.
- **93 shelters** in Kanyaruchinya site, Nyiragongo territory, **were destroyed by heavy winds and rain** on August 23, 2021.



UNHCR staff and members of the government discuss the planning of a site to host displaced people near Goma, North Kivu Province © UNHCR/Pepe Sakouvogui

Situation Overview

- The eruption of Mount Nyiragongo on 22 May and earthquakes in the following days have destroyed over 4,044 houses and 130 fields according to government estimates. Over 364,000 individuals fled to the surrounding areas of Sake, Minova, Kiwanja in Rutshuru, Bukavu, as well as to Rwanda, among which most have since then returned home.
- In Nyiragongo area, about 28,508 persons affected by the volcano eruption are currently being hosted in five collective sites (Bujari, Mujoga, Kanyaruchinya, Kayembe and Kanyanja schools) coordinated by local authorities. The living conditions remain precarious, and the populations are in need of shelter, clean water, food and other assistance.
- 7,146 people (1,264 households) remain displaced outside Goma in the Territories of Masisi and Rutshuru, according to the protection monitoring carried out by UNHCR's partner INTERSOS. In recent weeks, 3,021 persons (604 households) have returned to Goma, due to ongoing violence and conflict in the displacement areas.
- Displacement caused by the eruption has worsened the already dire living conditions for local communities in Masisi and Rutshuru Territories, who accommodate hundreds of displaced families who have fled their homes because of conflict.
- Heavy rains at the end of August have damaged hundreds of homes and destroyed livelihoods and fields affecting at least 1,500 displaced persons and exacerbating the already existing vulnerabilities of the

volcano's survivors and their hosts. 93 shelters built in the Kanyaruchinya site by the authorities were also destroyed by winds and heavy rains and are currently being repaired.

- UNHCR is working with state actors to biometrically register affected populations and in site planning, taking into account the specific needs of the persons affected by the eruption, including host communities and displaced people.

Preparedness and response

PROTECTION

- The estimated 7,146 people (1,264 households) who remain displaced outside Goma in the Territories of Masisi and Rutshuru are mostly unable to return due to the lack of financial means to pay rents in Goma and to the lack of transport means. According to protection monitoring conducted by UNHCR's partner INTERSOS, some have expressed that they fear another possible volcanic eruption, and others have chosen to integrate into the host community.
- 97 internally displaced families who were still staying in Sake in a private accommodation have been relocated to Nyiragongo, as the house owner requested a rent, but the hosted persons did not have the means to pay. They now live in a school in Kayembe, which is managed by the government.
- During August and the first week of September, UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, recorded 288 protection incidents in Rutshuru and Masisi Territories, in the areas hosting persons who have fled the eruption. These include attacks against civilians, killings, kidnappings and illegal taxes at checkpoints or roadblocks. Violence against civilians continues as armed groups' members - who have surrendered in the context of the state of siege - have reportedly targeted local populations for economic reasons
- 25 survivors of Nyiragongo volcano with specific needs in Sake and Rutshuru, have received cash for protection, in order for them to access medical services or to reunite with their families in Goma.
- UNHCR is supporting local authorities in Bwito and Bwisha, Rutshuru Territory to strengthen their capacity to respond to the new influx of IDPs in the context of the volcano eruption. Both communities already accommodate tens of thousands of IDPs who have fled conflict prior to the eruption and have now received an additional 28,600 persons following the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo, exacerbating their already dire living conditions. In their development plans, they now take into account the needs both of IDPs and host populations, to reduce the potential tensions between local communities and IDPs.

SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRI)

- UNHCR, through its partner AIDES, distributed plastic sheeting to 4,535 displaced households living in collective centres in Masisi after they fled clashes between armed groups and the military in August. The increase in fighting is linked to the implementation of the state of siege, which has led to an increase in forced displacement.
- UNHCR and the authorities are working on the opening of a third site, Busumba, in Nyiragongo territory, which will be able to accommodate those who owned a house but lost it. The administrative questions are still ongoing with the authorities. UNHCR will construct shelters and latrines, in coordination with the authorities, who will allocate land for the construction. Protection measures will also be put in place to prevent sexual exploitation and abuse, including through training partners involved in programme implementation, dialogue with the affected population on the topic and its risks, and the provision of complaints and feedback mechanisms.

Clusters and Coordination

- On 13 September, a meeting was held between the humanitarian community and state actors in Goma, including UNHCR and the representative of the Ministry of Humanitarian Action in charge of the management of the volcano's IDPs, in order to present the operational plan in preparation for sustainable solutions and the transfers of the victims to the sites provided.
- So far, there are nearly 1,250 shelters completed including 939 shelters built by the government at Kanyaruchinya site, and 250 shelter built by International Federation of the Red Cross (IFRC). No one has moved into these sites, but the relocation is underway. IDPs who are living in collective centres and those who lost their houses will be given priority, according to the government.

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