

# WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE

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

8 - 15 August 2019



### Operational context and protection situation

#### Ituri Province

A relative calm was observed in Ituri Province during the reporting period. Attacks and targeted killings continued, but on a smaller scale, in the localities of Djugu and Irumu. UNHCR recorded 226 protection incidents in Ituri Province. This number is likely to be higher, although UNHCR is having difficulties recording incidents as some localities remain inaccessible. Overall, armed violence has decreased in much of Ituri Province compared to June, although police is coming under attack, and armed assailants continue to pose a serious security threat in Djugu Territory. Reinforced security measures in some localities have allowed the return of some 3,000 displaced persons to their areas of origin in Mahagi Territory. On 12 August, the army took back control of the village of Linga, some 45 km from Kpandroma in Djugu Territory, which had been controlled by an armed group since 25 June. However, elements of the army were accused of killing nine persons and burning 75 houses in that village, upon their arrival. On 14 August, the convoy of the Vice Governor of Ituri Province was ambushed by unidentified gunmen in Dhedho, 6 km east Linga, in the Bahema North Chiefdom. The Vice Governor was coming from the locality of Jiba on an official mission to raise awareness on peaceful coexistence and on returns to areas of origin. Several road axes in Djugu Territory remain too insecure, or require MONUSCO escorts to access.

**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 Drodoro, 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

The security situation in North Kivu remains extremely volatile. Masisi Territory is particularly affected; armed groups continue to target civilians and protection actors, while Rwandan refugees living in the Territory are also targeted. As a direct consequence, displacement from conflict-affected areas into host communities and IDP sites continues. The Ebola epidemic continues unabated, with its current epicenter in Beni, and confirmed cases in Goma that have increased pressure on the response. In Beni Territory, armed groups dramatically intensified their attacks against civilians and government forces during the reporting period. In the Nobili area, on the Ugandan border (Beni Territory), deadly armed group violence caused further displacements, and flooding has affected the displaced in the past week. Other territories (Rutshuru) also witnessed armed killings over the past two weeks. In Rushaki (Rutshuru Territory) an armed group reportedly asked the population to evacuate the area, as it was planning an attack against another armed group. A similar message was reportedly sent by yet another armed group to the population of Kyaghala. The continuous, almost province-wide deterioration of the security situation since the second half of July is severely limiting humanitarian access, with all field missions suspended until further notice.

**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 to 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. Arrivals into several IDP sites have also been significant; in July alone, UNHCR and the National Refugee Commission (CNR) recorded 5,256 new IDPs (1,225 households) in 8 IDP sites in Masisi Territory, with the most (2,754 persons) having arrived in Bukombo site. In Masisi Territory, the security situation has deteriorated sharply since the beginning of the year, with 1,593 protection incidents, including 577 murders, recorded by UNHCR between January and June 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 ongoing shelter construction, lack of space remains a challenge. Strengthened advocacy is required for local authorities to grant more space.

- **Food assistance** is limited, while the looting of fields left behind in areas of origin further exacerbates food insecurity.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are urgently needed, including clothes.
- **WASH** levels in the most overcrowded locations (Drodro, Kasenyi) are below standards. Women and girls lack access to feminine hygiene products, menstrual hygiene services and reproductive health services.
- **Education** is needed due to schools closures, notably in Drodro and Kasenyi, where 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 and 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.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)**, for those living with host families as well as in IDP sites, are critically needed.
- **Health** is a major gap, given 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 use SGBV as a weapon of war in Masisi Territory.
- **WASH** is needed 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.

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## UNHCR's response

### Ituri Province

- **Bunia:** UNHCR is **reinforcing Camp Management and Monitoring** in two IDP sites in Bunia.
- **Kasenyi:** During the week of 8-14 August, UNHCR and its partner CARITAS **finalized 22 collective hangars** out of the 40 planned, to respond to the arrival of some 4,300 IDPs in Kasenyi. **17 hangars** are already occupied by 204 households, as each hangar hosts 12 families. The remaining five hangars will be occupied when latrines are finalized. Almost **200 individual shelters, out of 600 planned**, were finalized by UNHCR and partner CARITAS, and were occupied by families in Kasenyi. The shelters and hangars will host up to 5,400 IDPs (including older caseloads).
- **Drodro:** The construction of **25 collective hangars** was ongoing by UNHCR and its partner the Danish Refugee Council (DRC). UNHCR partner DRC conducted a **verification exercise** for IDPs living with host families, in preparation for a shelter intervention.
- **Ramogi:** UNHCR **completed a “fixing” exercise** in Mahagi Territory to establish a verified list of IDPs and assess their needs based on their living conditions. Results are currently being analyzed.
- **General:** Since the second half of July, UNHCR's partners AVSI and CARITAS **identified 17 community-based protection structures** along various roads in Djugu, Irumu and Mambasa territories. UNHCR and partners provided capacity-building to six structures as of 10 August.
- UNHCR, through its partner INTERSOS, **conducts protection monitoring in accessible areas**, and provides referrals to some victims. **206 protection incidents** were recorded in Ituri Province.

### 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:** **156 members of five community-based protection structures in Masisi Territory were trained** on their role of community mobilization, reporting of protection incidents, referral and participation to a better protective environment. Another structure referred seven unaccompanied children to State Social Services to allow them to receive adequate care. Through its partner INTERSOS, UNHCR **conducts protection monitoring** in accessible areas,

and provides referrals to victims. Between January and June 2019, 1,593 protection incidents, including 577 murders, were recorded in North Kivu Province.

- In cooperation with AIDES, UNHCR **distributed tarpaulins to 500 IDP households** (3,119 persons) in Mweso, Masisi Territory. In addition, **1,700 shelter construction kits and 170 tool kits** were distributed for returned IDPs in Masisi, Lubero and Rutshuru territories to build their own semi-durable shelters. As of 31 July the project was 64% complete, with nearly 11,000 IDPs living in finished shelters.

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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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