

WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE

Ituri and North Kivu Provinces, Democratic Republic of the Congo

14 September – 22 September 2019



Operational context and protection situation

Ituri Province

During the reporting period, attacks targeting villages and IDP sites continued. Killings, lootings, abductions, injuries, and cases of rapes were reported mostly in Djugu and Irumu territories. The protection environment for civilians is of extreme concern in Djugu Territory, following the resurgence of attacks in Drodro, Bule, and in the spontaneous site of Rho. Ongoing violence in Djugu, and fear of further attacks, led to a significant movement of already-displaced people towards the localities of Katoto and Lopa, as well as to Bunia, the provincial capital of Ituri, and neighbouring Iga Barrière. Estimations of forced displacement linked to last week's violence in Djugu Territory are of some 750-800 households. During the same period, there was a decrease in incidents perpetrated by armed groups in western Mambasa Territory, due to intensified army patrols. As of September, the CCCM Cluster estimates that nearly 227,000 displaced people are staying in 87 IDP sites across Ituri Province, many of them without assistance.

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 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. As displacements continued in September, the CCCM Cluster estimates that almost 227,000 people are staying in 87 IDP sites across Ituri. 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 remained volatile. Sporadic clashes between the national army and armed groups continued, especially in Rutshuru and Masisi, and Nyiragongo territories. Armed clashes between the army and a presumed armed group in Lubero Territory, led to the forced displacement of 11,896 people between 6 and 13 September, according to UNHCR's partner INTERSOS. The majority are women and children who staying in host families, with staggering protection needs. On 18 September, the Chief of Staff of a prominent armed group was killed by the Congolese army in Rutshuru Territory, and more than twenty farmers were kidnapped by presumed said armed group in Kisharo. School activities were still paralysed due to ongoing violence in many areas of Rutshuru and Lubero territories. In Masisi Territory, the past week was marked by mass displacement in the Bashali Mokoto area, following a land conflict in which an armed group became involved. Armed groups continued targeting civilians (including Rwandan refugees) and protection actors. In Beni town and surrounding areas, intensified armed group presence and criminal activities continued, 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 a rebel group led to significant displacements from Kamango to 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 in 9 surrounding localities, but displacements continue. In host communities, OCHA estimates that over 67,000 were newly-displaced in May and June, while arrivals into several IDP sites have 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, with the most having arrived to Bukombo site (2,754 persons). In Masisi Territory, security has deteriorated sharply in 2019, with 1,960 protection incidents, including 90 murders, recorded between January and July.

Immediate needs

Ituri Province

- **Health:** The displacement area is Ebola-affected, exacerbating already-systemic health needs. A measles epidemic is gaining grounds, 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 in several areas, the lack of space for emergency shelters remains a challenge. Strengthened advocacy is needed for local authorities to grant more space.
- **Food assistance** is urgently needed, while the looting of fields left behind in areas of origin further exacerbates food insecurity.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are urgently needed, including clothes and plastic sheeting.
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** conditions in the most overcrowded locations are below standards. Women and girls lack access to menstrual hygiene services and products, and reproductive health services.

- **Education** is needed due to school closures, notably in Drodro and Kasenyi, as IDPs use classrooms for shelter.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence** 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. The more recently-displaced are facing discrimination in access to facilities and services. Peaceful coexistence is another major challenge.
- **Child Protection:** There is a lack of child-friendly spaces and many unaccompanied minors.

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 needs, but new displacements (also caused by flooding that affected 838 households) created additional needs. In September, 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 displacement.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence** remains widespread, as armed groups use SGBV as a weapon of war in Masisi.
- **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:** Some of the most pressing needs are; the physical security of civilians living in and around IDP sites; community-based protection to promote the participation of local and IDP communities the response; peaceful coexistence; protection of vulnerable youth and women; and birth registrations to prevent statelessness.

UNHCR's response

Ituri Province

- UNHCR is reinforcing **Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM)** in Djugu Territory. Thanks to CCCM partners' advocacy, local authorities have agreed on the relocation of new arrivals to the new site of Kigonze, under construction in Bunia.
- At the **new site of Kigonze** in Bunia, UNHCR, in collaboration with OIM, will accelerate site planning and shelter construction to accommodate new arrivals. The delimitation of space for new emergency hangars is underway.
- **Shelter:** UNHCR's partner DRC built six community hangars in Drodro during the week under review. Another 230 family shelters are also under construction; 80 in Drodro and 150 in Bule.
- **NFIs:** A UNHCR-led non-food item (NFI) distribution benefited 621 displaced households in Telega. They received plastic sheeting, mats, blankets, laundry soap, mosquito nets, and jerry cans. Women and girls received menstrual hygiene kits composed of sanitary pads and soap.
- **Protection Monitoring:** UNHCR and partner INTERSOS conduct protection monitoring in accessible areas, and provides referrals to victims where possible. From 15 to 21 September, 33 killings, 38 lootings, 13 abductions, 14 injuries and 6 rapes were reported in Djugu and Irumu territories. By comparison, 248 incidents were reported the previous week, a decrease mostly due to the decrease in rebel group activity in Mambasa Territory.
- **SGBV:** Six cases of rape were reported (four girls and two women). Four survivors were referred to medical facilities for emergency treatment, including the provision of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits within 72 hours.

North Kivu Province

- **Community-Based Protection:** In Beni, UNHCR and partners CNR and Caritas trained four IDP committees on protection and their roles and responsibilities. A total of 47 people participated, including five representatives of local authorities.
- With the support of the Bambu community protection structure, a peaceful march was organized by 128 women from various local associations to demand peace and the end of sexual violence against women.
- **Peaceful Coexistence:** A peaceful coexistence project in Mabalako and Musienene, Beni Territory, was launched to facilitate IDPs' access to community fields. Some 650 beneficiary households, out of 800 planned, have so far been identified. Identification is ongoing.
- Some 848 school students (393 girls and 455 boys), as well as 1,199 men and 1,812 women from local communities participated in awareness-raising activities on peaceful coexistence, organized in several localities of Lubero, Nyiragongo and Rutshuru territories to celebrate **International Peace Day** on 21 September.
- **Shelter:** During the week under review, 66 IDP shelters were finalized in Masisi, Lubero, and Rutshuru territories.
- **Protection Monitoring:** UNHCR and partner INTERSOS conduct protection monitoring in accessible areas, and provide referrals to victims where possible. During the reporting period, 140 human rights violations (lootings, injuries, killings, abductions and cases of SGBV) were perpetrated against 64 men, 19 boys, 35 women and 22 girls.

- **SGBV:** Six cases of rape (four girls and two women) were documented by protection monitoring. Four survivors were referred to medical facilities for emergency treatment, including the provision of Post Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits within 72 hours. Two survivors did not benefit from medical follow-up due to the distance from health structures.
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UNHCR's presence

- UNHCR's Sub-Office in Goma covers North Kivu and Ituri Provinces, and supervises 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.
 - 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 as of September 2019, 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 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. Additional staff in Programme, Shelter and Field are expected between now and the end of the year; however needs still outpace available human resources.
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