

# WEEKLY EMERGENCY UPDATE #16

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

15 October – 21 October 2019



### Operational context and protection situation

#### Ituri Province

Armed confrontations continued to endanger civilians during the reporting period, mostly in Irumu and Djugu territories. Most reported human rights violations were injuries (30), forced labor (29), lootings (28) and sexual violence (10), with 185 incidents documented overall. Returns of IDPs to their areas of origin were observed, due to a lull in fighting in certain areas of Djugu Territory after the latest peak of violence in June 2019. An estimated 2,528 displaced households now returned to 14 villages in the Dhendo community, while 1,459 returned to 16 villages in Linga community, according to OCHA. Peace and reconciliation efforts continued in Djugu Territory; during the reporting period, community leaders signed an agreement with the Provincial Government, positioning themselves against assailants' activities. Attacks against Ebola Emergency Response Teams and health facilities intensified recently, and remain of concern in Mambasa Territory. Lootings by presumed elements of an armed group in search of food for survival also continued to be reported in southern Irumu Territory.

**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 to host communities. As displacements 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. Spontaneous returns of an estimated 1,575 people who had fled to Uganda were observed, but UNHCR is not able to confirm exact numbers. UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 4,567 incidents between January and September 2019 in Ituri Province.

#### North Kivu Province

The security and protection situation in North Kivu remained of concern during the week. Between 11 and 17 October, 239 human rights violations (mainly extortions, lootings, bodily harm and SGBV) were recorded by UNHCR's Protection Monitoring; an increase of almost 90% compared to the previous week. OCHA estimates that over 147,000 people have been displaced since January 2019 in the Bwito and Bashali Mukoto health zones, in Masisi and Rutshuru territories. That represents close to 15% of the total population. In northern Beni Territory, the town of Oicha is home to some 20,000 recent IDPs, many of whom still live in precarious conditions in spontaneous IDP sites or schools. Most IDPs in Oicha lack access to water and sanitation. Peaceful coexistence between IDPs, host communities and indigenous populations in the area is complicated by limited access to basic resources. Around Nobili on the Ugandan border, returns of IDPs to the town of Kamango and surroundings have been reported since 4 October, now in large numbers. Some 95,000 IDPs (out of an estimated total of 112,000) would have returned according to OCHA, and now face needs in their return areas. A DRC Humanitarian Fund allocation is foreseen to address their urgent needs in nutrition, health and protection.

**BACKGROUND:** Since 30 March, and with a sharp intensification as of 7 May, attacks against civilians and military outposts by members of a prominent armed group led to significant displacements from the town of Kamango towards the town of Nobili (Beni Territory). By 24 June 94,612 displaced people (15,991 households) had been registered in Nobili and 9 surrounding localities, but displacements continued: the Nobili crisis committee recorded 6,329 newly-displaced households between June and August. Until recently, OCHA put the estimated total number of IDPs in the area at around 112,000. In other territories of North Kivu, OCHA estimates that over 67,000 were displaced towards host communities in May and June alone, while arrivals into several IDP sites have been significant. In July, 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). UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 7,813 protection incidents between January and September throughout the Province.

### Immediate needs

#### Ituri Province

- **Protection:** Persistent violence in parts of the province exposes populations to several protection risks: killings, lootings, rape, abductions and others. Peaceful coexistence between communities remains a major challenge.
- **Child protection:** A lack of child-friendly spaces (especially outside of Bunia), and high numbers of unaccompanied minors exacerbate child protection needs.

- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** risks are high: sexual exploitation, early forced marriage, and the use of sex as a source of income are consistently reported by women in focus group discussions.
- **Shelter:** IDPs outside established sites and in host families still live in precarious conditions, exposed to abuse. Despite ongoing shelter construction, the lack of space remains a challenge. Strengthened advocacy is needed for local authorities to grant more space.
- **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 standard. Women and girls lack access to menstrual hygiene services and products, and to reproductive health services.
- **Access to education** is hindered by host communities' limited capacity to enroll IDP children in school; there are not enough teachers or classroom space. The majority of IDP children do not go to school.

### North Kivu Province

- **Protection** needs are enormous: physical security for civilians in and around IDP sites; community-based protection for local and IDP communities to participate in solutions and response mechanisms; peaceful coexistence; protection for vulnerable youth and women; and birth registration to prevent statelessness, are some of the most pressing.
- **Child protection** needs are pronounced in northern North Kivu, with many orphaned or unaccompanied children around Beni, or children who recently left armed groups and face reintegration issues in Lubero.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** remains widespread, as armed groups in Masisi use it as a weapon of war. Despite referrals to medical structures, legal follow-up is quasi non-existent, perpetuating impunity.
- **Shelter:** IDP sites under UNHCR coordination in Masisi Territory do not offer sufficient or adequate shelter, pushing IDPs towards host families. As arrivals to the sites continue, shelter needs are still increasing. In Oicha (Beni Territory), at least 84 recently-displaced households are sleeping in a school. Shelter needs are also further exacerbated by cyclical displacements, for example in Masisi and Rutshuru territories.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)**, for those living with host families as well as in IDP sites, are needed.
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)** conditions need urgent support in IDP sites in Masisi and Rutshuru territories. Water availability is also a serious concern for the many IDPs in Oicha (Beni Territory), endangering peaceful coexistence with local communities.
- **Education:** In several localities in Masisi, Lubero, and Beni territories, schools close regularly because of conflict. After waves of displacement, IDPs who are not sheltered by host communities also tend to occupy classrooms.

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## UNHCR's response

### Ituri Province

- **Registration:** A new registration exercise is underway in 12 IDP sites managed by UNHCR, intended to provide more data on individual needs and vulnerabilities. Results will help UNHCR improve humanitarian programming in the sites. A total of 11,010 persons (2,581 households) were registered in IDP sites in Irumu Territory so far (Kasenyi, Telega and Bembei), and registration will continue in the following weeks.
- **NFIs:** A total of 617 households received non-food item kits (blankets, mosquito nets, jerrycans, sanitary pads and soap) during the week. Among them, 243 households also received plastic sheeting for emergency shelter in Kpangba site (Djugu), while 227 households received hygiene kits in Venyo site (Djugu).
- **Protection** (community-based): UNHCR, in collaboration with partners Caritas and AVSI, built the capacity of Complaints Management Committees in Komanda and Bwanasura IDP sites. Awareness-raising sessions on Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV) were also held in IDP sites in Komanda Bey and Bwanasura (Irumu Territory).
- **Protection** (monitoring): A total of 185 protection incidents (mostly lootings and injuries) were reported during the period, compared to 199 last week. Peace and reconciliation efforts continued, but the situation remains volatile due to armed confrontations, as well as attacks against civilians, mostly in Djugu and Mambasa territories.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** A total of 10 rape cases (8 girls and two women) were recorded during the period. Among them, six survivors were referred to medical facilities for emergency treatment within 72 hours.

### North Kivu Province

- **Protection** (community-based): Community-based protection structures continued to conduct awareness-raising workshops on peaceful coexistence, the prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA) in school settings, the prevention and response to SGBV, and "positive masculinity." Several thousand participants were reached across most territories of North Kivu (in particular in Nyiragongo, Masisi and Rutshuru). In addition, the structures rely on radio spots and local theater groups to spread their messages. They are involved in mapping opportunities for "Quick Impact Projects" to increase peaceful coexistence, and are assisting UNHCR in targeting vulnerable beneficiaries for upcoming cash interventions.
- **Protection** (monitoring): Between 11 and 17 October, 239 human rights violations (including extortions, lootings, bodily harm and SGBV) were recorded, affecting 191 men and 55 women. This is an almost 90% increase compared to the previous week (125 incidents), with a larger proportion of violations attributed to armed groups (44%). The

most affected territories were Masisi (91 cases), where the situation deteriorated again compared to previous weeks, and Rutshuru (76 cases).

- **Shelter:** UNHCR's shelter project, implemented by partner AIDES in North Kivu, is nearing completion. A total of 1,653 transitional shelters out of 1,700 planned for returned IDP households are complete (or 97%). In parallel, shelter response in IDP sites is ongoing; 80 emergency shelters are under construction in Kalinga site, with 49 completed. Altogether 848 emergency shelters are planned before year-end in two IDP sites in Masisi Territory (Kalinga and Bukumbo), where respectively 300 and 548 IDPs have arrived due to conflict. The shelter project also includes the rehabilitation of a primary school occupied by IDPs in the displacement-affected town of Oicha.

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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 –, 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 contributing to 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.

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