

# EMERGENCY UPDATE

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

16-29 December 2019



### Operational context and protection situation

#### Ituri Province

The protection of civilians remained of concern in Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi territories due to insecurity caused by unidentified armed men, as well as national army elements (FARDC). On 20 December, unidentified armed men attacked three villages in the Walendu Tatsi Sector, Djugu Territory, killing a dozen of people which led to an important forced displacement towards Tchomia on the Shore of Lake Albert. In Mahagi territory, in the Mokambu Chiefdom, two IDP women were raped by four armed men on 22 December on their way to the fields. The survivors were referred to a medical health center in the area. Some 238 households (1,183 individuals) fled, fearing a potential attack by armed men in Lokpa, Masikini, Budza and nine other localities during the reporting period. They fled towards Nioka and the IDP site of Rho (15 households) in Djugu Territory. In addition, another 140 households (709 individuals) fled the health zones of Tchomia and Bambu, Djugu territory, towards Ludjo, Wadd'a, Bunia and to Uganda after clashes between armed men and the FARDC in the health zones of Fataki and Tchomia.

**BACKGROUND:** Since 6 June 2019, generalized violence 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 72 IDP sites, 12 of them coordinated by UNHCR, and housing over 82,000 individuals (17,000 households). Outside of Bunia, the largest concentrations of IDPs are found in Drodro, Rho, Fataki, Kasenyi, Tchomia and Ramogi, in Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi territories. Overall, some 929,821 people are displaced throughout the Province according to the *Comite de Mouvement de Population (CMP)*, a mixed committee made up of Government and the national and international Humanitarian community. UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 8,100 human rights violations between January and December 2019 in Ituri Province.

#### North Kivu Province

The security and protection situation in Beni Territory remained fragile and volatile during the reporting period. More than four raids perpetrated by presumed Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) elements and one by presumed Mai-Mai were documented. 44 civilians were killed, and 14 others seriously injured, increasing fear within the population. A presumed ADF attack on Kamango on 15<sup>th</sup> December led to a massive displacement of people towards Nobili and the surrounding villages of Kalera and Kahondo. Initial estimates by local authorities rise to 24000 households, or up to 130,000 newly displaced individuals, some of whom had recently left Nobili to return to their areas of origin following the earlier 2019 displacement. Congolese Army officials (FARDC) indicated significant progress in the Sokolo 1 military operations and control of one of the most important presumed ADF sites, commonly known as "Kazaroho" since December 13. Large fields of banana, cassava and cannabis were discovered. The spokesperson of the Army also presented 37 presumed elements of the ADF from various nationalities who were captured, during a press briefing held on 23 December, bringing the total to 521 people captured on different front lines since the launch of FARDC operations on 30 October. In Masisi Territory, armed groups continued to target civilians in the Bashali-Mokoto chiefdom, reducing their movement. Access to fields and other essential services is restrained. Military clashes between armed groups forcibly displaced 599 households of 2,583 individuals from Bikunche, Miko, Bindobondo and Kirimo localities towards Muraba, Kilambo, Nyakabasa, Rugogwe, Kalengera and Busumbu in Masisi Territory.

**BACKGROUND:** According to the CMP, over 1.5 million IDPs are located in North Kivu Province as of 25 December 2019. The vast majority (94%) live with host communities, while some 90,263 reside in 22 IDP sites coordinated by UNHCR or IOM. Displacements are mostly cyclical, with numerous causes including armed conflict, human rights violations committed by armed groups and state armed forces, land conflicts, inter-ethnic violence, illegal exploitation of mineral resources, and others. Between March and early June 2019, attacks against civilians and military outposts by a prominent armed group led to significant displacements from Kamango to Nobili (Beni Territory). OCHA estimated that 112,000 IDPs were located in the Nobili area. As of late October, it was thought that most of them have returned. However, a new massive forced displacement was generated from 15<sup>th</sup> December onwards, of up to 24,000 households (130,000 individuals).

In Masisi and Rutshuru territories, OCHA reports that over 67,000 people were displaced towards host communities in May and June alone, while arrivals into several IDP sites have been significant. UNHCR's Protection Monitoring system documented 13,396 human rights violations between January and December 2019 throughout the Province.

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## Immediate needs

### Ituri Province

- **Protection:** Persistent violence exposes populations to several protection risks: killings, lootings, rape, abductions and others. Peaceful coexistence between communities remains a major challenge.
- **Child protection:** The 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) against minors is on the rise.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** risks are high, including sexual exploitation, survival sex, and early forced marriage, as consistently reported by women.
- **Shelter:** IDPs outside established sites still live in precarious conditions, exposed to abuse. Despite ongoing shelter construction, the lack of space remains a challenge. Advocacy is needed for local authorities to grant more space.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are still needed for many IDP families, 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 products and to reproductive health services.
- **Access to education** is hindered by host communities' incapacity to enroll IDP children in school, notably due to limited teachers and classroom space. 72% of children aged 6 to 12 and living in UNHCR-coordinated IDP sites are out of school. This requires advocacy for relevant partners to intervene.
- **Statelessness:** 95% of children aged 0 to 4 who live in UNHCR-coordinated IDP sites do not have birth certificates, which exposes many to various human rights abuses.

### North Kivu Province

- **Protection** needs are enormous, including physical security for civilians in and around IDP sites, and for those on the run; community-based protection for host and IDP communities to participate in responses; peaceful coexistence; and protection for vulnerable youth and women.
- **Child protection** needs are pronounced in northern North Kivu, with many unaccompanied children, frequent kidnappings and child recruitment by armed groups, or former child soldiers facing reintegration issues.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV)** remains widespread. Women are reticent to report incidents due to stigma and exclusion, thus incidents are underreported. Despite referrals to medical facilities, legal follow-up is quasi non-existent, perpetuating impunity. Displaced girls and women experience disproportionately high risks and are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) and survival sex. As many IDPs live in squalid conditions, their sexual and reproductive health and hygiene needs are generally unmet.
- **Shelter:** IDP sites under UNHCR coordination in Masisi Territory do not have sufficient shelters, which has forced some IDPs towards host families. UNHCR is therefore reinforcing shelter support in sites. In Beni Territory the situation has become particularly dire considering recent mass displacements, with an unconfirmed number of IDPs sleeping in the open air. In Masisi and Rutshuru territories, shelter needs are exacerbated by cyclical displacements.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs)** are urgently required for newly-arrived IDPs around the towns of Oicha and Beni.
- **Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH):** There are urgent needs in IDP sites in Masisi and Rutshuru territories. Water scarcity and the increasing number of IDPs in Oicha and Beni are endangering peaceful coexistence with local communities. The WASH situation is particularly affecting girls and women, as crowded toilets and the lack of water pose higher risks for them.
- **Education:** In several localities in Masisi, Lubero, and Beni territories, school closures are regular because of conflicts. IDPs who cannot find shelter in host communities also tend to occupy school classrooms, disrupting classes.

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## UNHCR's response

### Ituri Province

- **Protection:** During the reporting period, 183 households (869 individuals) were relocated from the General Hospital site to the new IDP site of Kigonze in Bunia. 56 IDPs households who were staying in classes of a school in Bule were also relocated to the UNHCR's coordinated site of Plaine Savo.
- UNHCR's site management partner Caritas organized awareness session for 898 IDPs' households living in the site of Ramogi on the rational use of the multi-purpose cash assistance distributed by WFP during the reporting period.
- **Shelter:** 65 emergency shelters were under construction in the IDP site of Lala in Bule by UNHCR's partner DRC. 134 other shelter were under construction in Kikonze site by Caritas.
- **Non-Food Items (NFIs):** During the reporting period, UNHCR distributed 183 kits composed of mats, blankets, jerrycans, laundry soaps and menstrual hygiene kits in the new displacement site of Kigonze, in Bunia.
- **Community-based protection:** Community-based protection structures continued awareness-raising on prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), peaceful coexistence and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). 770 people were reached including 221 in Komanda, 119 in Biakato, 198 in Lwemba and 232 in Ndalya.
- **Protection monitoring:** UNHCR and partners recorded 586 human rights violations between 16 and 29 December. There is an increase compared to previous weeks due to the activism of the presumed Mai Mai elements and other

armed men in the territories of Mambasa and Djugu. Civilians endured lootings, kidnapping, killings, injuries and physical assaults, and extorsions. The most affected territories were Djugu, Irumu and Mambasa.

- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** 24 cases of SGBV committed against 18 minors and six adults were documented by the Protection Monitoring implemented by UNHCR partner INTERSSO. 16 cases were referred to medical services with 72 hours and the survivors benefited from the Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP kits).

### North Kivu Province

- **Shelter:** During the reporting period, UNHCR's partner AIDES continued the construction of 366 emergency shelter in the health zone of Mweso, as well as in IDP sites of Bweru (180), Bibwe (126) and Mpati (60), Masisi Territory. In response to the recent population movement due to armed clashes between armed groups in the territory, UNHCR targeted 1,477 households that will benefit from NFI distribution.
- **Community-based protection:** UNHCR and partner Caritas provided multi-purpose cash assistance to 197 people with specific needs, specifically women at risk of sexual exploitation in Kitchanga, Masisi Territory. Each household received \$150.
- Awareness-raising sessions continued on peaceful coexistence, positive masculinity, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA), referral mechanisms and the prevention of SGBV. 11,922 people were reached in Beni, Masisi, Rutshuru and Lubero territories in North Kivu Province, as well as in Kalehe Territory in South Kivu. Radio messages were also broadcasted.
- As part of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) around Nyanzale, Rutshuru Territory, the construction works of a communal market in Kibirizi were completed while the primary school is still under construction. UNHCR and Caritas provided cash assistance to 80 households of IDPs, returnees, Rwandan refugees and the host community in Kitchanga (50) and the health zone of Birambizo (30), Masisi and Rutshuru territories. The beneficiaries were trained by Caritas on income generating activities and each household received an amount varying between \$30 and \$50 depending on activities they chose.
- **Protection monitoring:** Between 16 and 29 December 2019, 584 human rights violations (mainly extortions, looting, killings, and physical assaults) were recorded in North Kivu Province. The most affected territories during the reporting period were Beni, Masisi and Lubero.
- **Sexual and Gender-Based Violence (SGBV):** Seven cases of rape committed against four minors and three adults were identified by community-based protection structures and referred to the Katsiru and Kasoko Health Centers in Rutshuru Territory.

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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 North Kivu while a smaller Field Unit in Bunia manages operations for Ituri. Both emergencies were initially covered by a small team in Ituri, and by staff of the Goma Sub-Office on mission. This solution however is cost-ineffective 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 has opened a Field Unit in Beni as of October 2019, and the Goma Sub-Office is being reinforced with permanent and temporary staff. 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, Supply, Shelter, Programme, CCCM and Drivers. Further emergency response staff (Field and Protection) are expected between now and the end of the year; however, needs still outpace available human resources.

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