

ITURI, NORTH KIVU AND SOUTH KIVU PROVINCES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

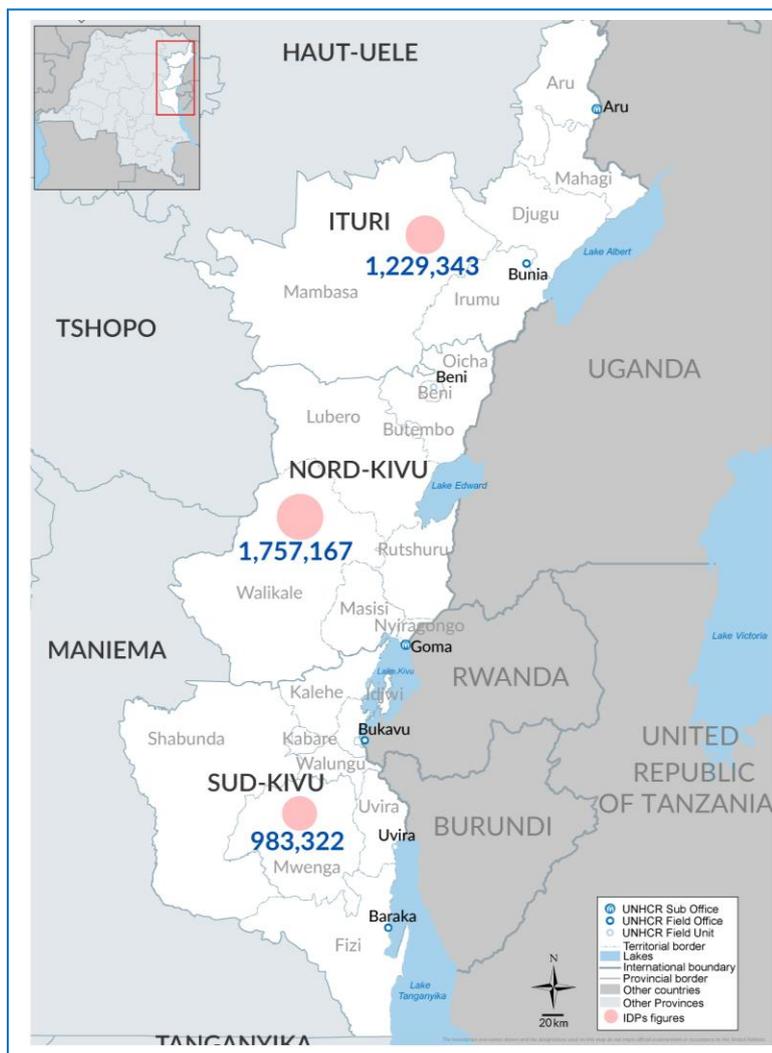
31 March – 13 April 2020

MAIN HIGHLIGHTS

UNHCR and partners completed a **multi-purpose cash distribution to 2,279 vulnerable households headed by women**, in three displacement sites in Bunia, Ituri Province. The distribution was spread over more than a week to limit large gatherings of persons, in line with COVID-19 prevention protocols.

Since 19 March, **timid return movements of 165 displaced households** have been observed from the Nobili area, North Kivu Province, to areas of origin in and around Kamango. Some reports describe the movement as “go and see” visits, possibly fuelled by border closures linked to COVID-19.

UNHCR and partner AIDES assisted displaced households in building their own shelters in Fizi Territory, South Kivu Province. So far, **947 out of 1,000 planned shelters were completed**, while reconstruction was ongoing for the remaining 53 that were destroyed by heavy rain.



KEY INDICATORS

Nearly 4 M*

Persons are internally displaced in Ituri (1.2 M), North Kivu (1.7 M) and South Kivu (983,322) provinces.

88%

Of all IDPs in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces are accommodated in host families (3.5 M IDPs).

267,000

IDPs are hosted in displacement sites coordinated by the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) Working Group, while at least 65,000 persons reside in informal sites.

**Ituri figure as of February 2020; North Kivu figure as of January 2020; South Kivu figure as of February 2020. All are estimates subject to fluctuation.*

Operational context and protection situation

Ituri Province: Clashes between the CODECO armed group and the DRC’s army intensified in Djugu Territory. Due to the security situation, the road between Bunia and Aru is no longer accessible for humanitarian workers, cutting off displaced persons from vital assistance. An estimated 2,000 families have fled Djugu Territory in the first half of April, mostly towards displacement sites in and around Bunia. Displacement sites are however already overcrowded, and there is no further capacity to safely receive new arrivals. During the weekend of 4-5 April, armed groups staged attacks in the outskirts of Bunia city. This increased worries about security in displacement

sites, among inhabitants of the Kigonze and ISP displacement sites. This also impacted UNHCR's operations in the sites, such as planned distributions of core relief items.

North Kivu Province: In Beni Territory, the security situation continued to be marked by the activism of the ADF armed group and other armed elements, as well as by the offensive launched by the DRC's army to neutralize them. Civilians continued to be the victims of human rights violations and forced displacement, due to attacks and fighting in Beni and Lubero territories. In Rutshuru Territory, the military leader of the Mai-Mai armed group surrendered to the army with about 100 of his men. The army now occupies localities abandoned by the Mai-Mai, and there are reports of human rights violations against civilians, which are followed-up on by humanitarian actors.

South Kivu Province: There has been an increase in reported human rights violations in South Kivu Province, as a result of armed groups targeting local populations in Shabunda, Kalehe, and Mwenga territories. In several locations in Fizi, Uvira, and Kabambare territories, local populations have been the victims of serious human rights violations committed by armed groups, including kidnappings, killings, rape and lootings. In some cases, staff of international NGOs were targeted. In Kabambare Territory, attacks by combatants have intensified, including repeated acts of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), resulting in population movements towards Fizi Territory. In Uvira Territory, clashes between the Mai-Mai armed group and other militias led to the displacement of over 300 households. The army-led military operation against armed groups also caused displacement, as soldiers reportedly harassed civilians whom they suspected were members of armed groups.

UNHCR's response

Ituri Province

 **PROTECTION** In partnership with the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), 14 new community-based humanitarian committees were established in Djugu and Mahagi territories. These committees are a vital source of information both for UNHCR and for the communities, and allow UNHCR to keep direct contact with communities, even during COVID-19 related movement restrictions and access restrictions linked to insecurity.

UNHCR referred 662 separated and non-accompanied children, identified in displacement sites under its management, to UNICEF and ICRC for family tracing and reunification. The referral process has been simplified to allow more rapid reunifications. Separated children are especially vulnerable during the COVID-19 outbreak, given the likely increase in operational restrictions for UNHCR and other actors to assist them.

 **SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)** In Irumu Territory, UNHCR's partner Caritas built 108 new individual emergency shelters at the Telega displacement site. In Bunia, Caritas also helped build four new community hangars at the overcrowded ISP displacement site, for displaced persons who arrived recently.

With its partner DRC, UNHCR built 126 individual emergency shelters at the Tsukpa displacement site in Djugu Territory. These shelters are for newly arrived persons who have been living in crowded conditions, sharing emergency shelters with existing inhabitants. 336 more shelters are under construction.

In Mahagi Territory, an area that is difficult to access for humanitarians, UNHCR and its partner DRC provided emergency shelter construction material to 800 displaced households. Teams of workers recruited among the displaced and local communities will assume the construction works, under the supervision of DRC.

 **WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)** In Djugu Territory, UNHCR's partner DRC built 20 individual latrines in Lala displacement site. The latrines are crucial to improve sanitary conditions in the site, also to prevent of propagation of COVID-19, of which two cases were confirmed so far in Ituri Province.

 **CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)** Considering overpopulation in almost all displacement sites in Ituri Province, as well as poor WASH, shelter and health standards, the CCCM Working Group, co-lead by UNHCR and IOM, shared an advocacy note with the local inter-agency committee (CLIO) to mobilize funds and prepare a coordinated response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

 **CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)** As part of its community-based protection project, UNHCR and its partner, the Caritas-AVSI consortium, completed an unconditional, multi-purpose cash distribution to vulnerable households headed by women. Originally, the distribution was planned in several areas of Djugu Territory, but instead, due to security reasons, 2,279 households at the Bembeyi, Kigonze and ISP displacement sites were assisted. The distribution was spread over more than a week to limit large gatherings of persons, in line with COVID-19 prevention protocols.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- COVID-19 prevention and response need to be strengthened, especially in terms of sensitization activities for displaced persons located in hard to reach areas. WASH needs are particularly high in displacement sites and host families, and a response is urgent to prevent the spread of COVID-19.
- According to UNHCR's estimations, at least 100 displaced families, who were registered by UNHCR, remain at the Hospital General displacement site in Bunia, along with a number of new arrivals. Currently, no new shelters are available to proceed with their transfer to Kigonze site, due to a lack of funding.
- At the ISP displacement site in Bunia, 8,390 persons (1,461 families) arrived since March, and remain unregistered and without shelter, core relief items or cash assistance. They only have access to the site's already-overwhelmed infrastructure, such as latrines. As the rainy season is starting, shelter is the most urgent need, especially for children, as a protection against weather conditions.

North Kivu Province

 **PROTECTION** Since 19 March, timid return movements of 165 displaced households began to be observed from the Nobili area, Beni Territory, to areas of origin in four locations in the Kamango area. Some reports describe the movement as "go and see" visits, which may also be fueled by the closure of the border with Uganda due to COVID-19. The border closure affects food supplies and business activities in Nobili, as the town is only accessible through Uganda due to insecurity.

Thanks to advocacy from community-based protection structures in Masisi Territory, five illegal roadblocks have been removed by the Administrator of the Territory. Roadblocks often constitute hotspots for extorsions and other forms of human rights violations.

Radio messages about the protection of displaced persons and the prevention of COVID-19 were broadcast by a community-based protection structure on a local radio in the locality of Kirumba. The messages were then picked up and reran by other radios in the localities of Kitchanga, Nyabiondo and Minova. An estimated 40% of the population of each area was reached.

 **CBI** On 3 April, UNHCR and its partner INTERSOS launched a mobile money cash distribution for nearly 6,000 displaced persons in the towns of Beni and Butembo. COVID-19 preventive measures were reinforced during the distribution. Most beneficiaries said they would use the assistance to rent decent accommodations, or to carry out income-generating activities. After the first days of distribution, it was decided to use a hopscotch game scheme for beneficiaries to apply social distancing measures.

 **CCCM** In Oicha town (Beni Territory), 120 displaced households moved into 20 communal hangars built by UNHCR's partner AIDES. They were also sensitized on COVID-19 and on preventive measures.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Around 10,000 IDPs in Kasindi and Masango, Beni Territory, have not received any humanitarian assistance since their arrival in March 2019 and in early 2020. Many live with and rely on already-impooverished host families, while others resort to informal economic activities to survive.
- In Nobili, urgent WASH needs persist since January. Over 100,000 IDPs are gathered in locations with barely any infrastructure, posing significant risks amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

South Kivu Province

 **PROTECTION** In Fizi and Uvira territories, community-based protection structures, supported by UNHCR's partner AVSI, adapted their awareness-raising strategy by limiting groups to 5-15 people and using door-to-door techniques. In addition to SGBV and child protection, the structures raised awareness on COVID-19 prevention measures, reaching a total of 870 displaced and host community members so far. The structures also relayed protection and COVID-19 prevention messages through three live radio broadcasts and 12 reruns.

 **SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV)** Community-based protection structures continued to raise awareness and refer protection cases, using adapted door-to-door and reduced group techniques. Radio messages on SGBV were broadcast on local radios, and survivors were referred to medical structures in the areas of Kimbi-Lulenge and Nundu, Fizi Territory.

As part of Quick Impact Projects, UNHCR and partners completed a cash distribution for 108 women and girls at risk of SGBV in Ndunda and Rusabagi, Fizi Territory. All 108 women and girls also received a training to start their own income-generating activity.

 **CHILD PROTECTION** In Uvira Territory, displaced and local members of community-based protection structures, supported by UNHCR's partner the Caritas-AVSI consortium, spread messages on the prevention of family separation using door-to-door techniques. These structures also raised awareness on the importance of birth registration via radio broadcasts in Uvira and Fizi territories.

Protection Cluster

- During this COVID-19 period, the Protection Cluster established alternative communication mechanisms to ensure continued collaboration between protection actors in South Kivu Province. This includes WhatsApp groups and virtual Cluster meetings. Cluster members are collaborating to continue to provide services, while adopting the necessary COVID-19 prevention measures.

 **SHELTER AND CRIS** UNHCR and partner AIDES continued to assist displaced households in building their own shelters in Kikonde and Kazimia, Fizi Territory. So far, 947 out of 1,000 planned shelters were completed in both locations. Reconstruction is ongoing for the remaining 53 shelters that were destroyed by heavy rain.

 **WASH** As part of the aforementioned shelter project in Kikonde and Kazimia (Fizi Territory), also 775 latrines were constructed.

 **CBI** As part of its community-based protection project, UNHCR and its partner, the Caritas-AVSI consortium, completed the distribution of unconditional multipurpose cash to the remaining vulnerable displaced and host community households in the Kimbi-Lulenge area, Fizi Territory. The households were absent during the original distribution and now all 180 planned households have been assisted.

Identified needs and remaining gaps

- Shelter support is needed for displaced and host families, especially in case of confinement measures amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.
- In South Kivu Province, where there are no official displacement sites, shelter is one of the most immediate needs for displaced persons, particularly to decongest informal sites and alleviate overcrowding in host families.
- Urgent WASH support is needed for displaced and host families, especially in terms of access to clean water and latrines.
- With intensified conflict in territories hosting displaced persons, there is an elevated risk of SGBV. Providing a holistic response for survivors constitutes a major gap, especially in terms psychosocial support.

Background

- Since 6 June 2019, generalized violence led to massive new displacements in **Ituri Province**. 230,357 persons fled their homes between June and November 2019. In total, 1.2 million persons are displaced in the Province, according to the Commission de Mouvement de Population (CMP), a commission made up of Government and humanitarian agencies. The majority reside in host communities (83%), while some 220,000 have fled towards 87 displacement sites. Some 177,000 persons live in 55 displacement sites coordinated by the CCCM Working Group, while the remaining lives in informal sites.
- Over 1.7 million displaced persons were located in **North Kivu Province** as of January 2020, according to the Commission de Mouvement de Population. As reported by OCHA, an estimated 436,000 persons fled their homes between September 2019 and January 2020. The vast majority of displaced persons in North Kivu (1.67 million) live with host communities, while almost 90,000 reside in 22 displacement sites coordinated by the CCCM Working Group.
- Intercommunity violence in the Highlands of **South Kivu Province** has led to widespread displacement in Fizi, Mwenga and Uvira territories. Clashes between various communities, armed groups and the DRC's army have worsened since March 2019 and resulted in the forced displacement of at least 322,000 persons. In Kalehe Territory, clashes between the DRC's army and CNRD rebels, which intensified in October 2019, have forced 72,000 persons to flee, bringing the total to almost 1 million internally displaced persons in South Kivu, according to OCHA. 97% of all displaced persons reside in host families, while a minority have gathered in informal IDP sites (in Kalehe Territory).

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 smaller Field Unit in Bunia manages operations for Ituri. To meet growing needs in the northern part of North Kivu – including Ebola preparedness needs and emergency response – the operation opened a Field Unit in Beni in October 2019, and the Goma Sub-Office is being reinforced with permanent and temporary staff.

External Relations

As of 14 April 2020

Donors for UNHCR operations in DRC in 2020

United States of America (6.2 M) | Sweden (3.1 M) | European Union (1.6 M) | Canada (0.72 M) | Japan (0.56 M) | United Nations Foundation (0.32 M) | International Olympic Committee (0.23 M) | UNAIDS (0.03 M)

Major donors of regional or other funds with soft earmarking 2020

United States of America (13.9 M) | Germany (8.4 M) | Sweden (6.9 M) | Canada (3.7 M) | Finland (3.3 M) | Private donors Australia (2.1 M)

Major donors of un-earmarked funds in 2020

Sweden (76.4 M) | Norway (41.4 M) | Netherlands (36.1 M) | Denmark (34.6 M) | United Kingdom (31.7 M) | Germany (25.9 M) | Private donors Spain (20 M) | Switzerland (16.4 M) | Private donors Republic of Korea (10.5 M)

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