

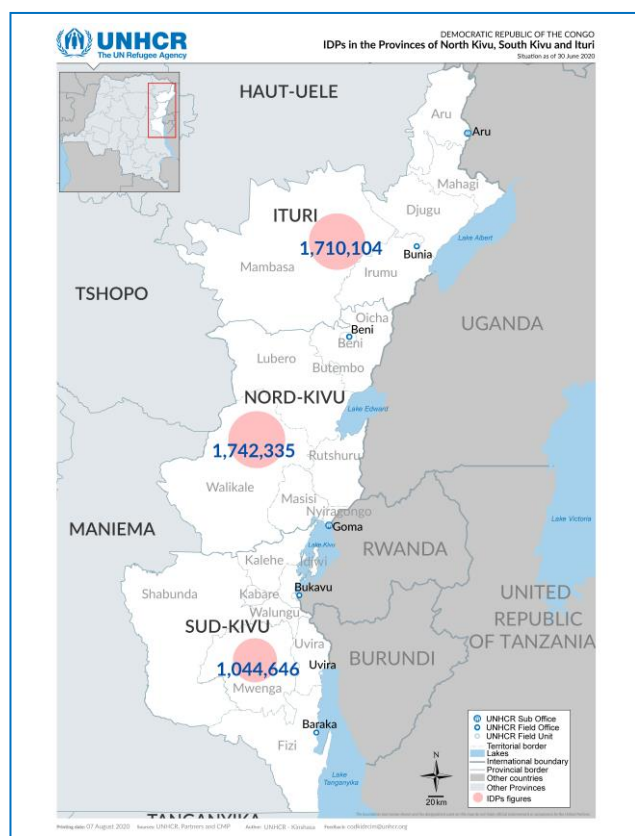
ITURI, NORTH KIVU AND SOUTH KIVU PROVINCES DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

22 June – 6 July 2020

UNHCR distributed 101,777 bars of soap to refugees, asylum seekers and IDPs in Eastern Congo and continued to raise awareness with communities to prevent SGBV and improve knowledge about COVID-19.

The humanitarian situation continues to aggravate in the east of the DRC. Attacks against civilians by armed groups and in some cases attributed to the Congolese army continue to uproot thousands of families.

Uganda temporarily opened its border allowing 3,000 displaced Congolese persons to seek protection and asylum across the border. UNHCR has coordinated their transfer ensuring respect of COVID-19 preventive measures.



KEY FIGURES

Over **4.5M***

Persons are internally displaced in Ituri (**1.7M**), North Kivu (**1.7M**) and South Kivu (**1M**) provinces.

95%*

Of all IDPs in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri (4.2M)

Over **305,000**

IDs are hosted at CCCM coordinated IDP sites, while about 65,000 persons are resided at spontaneous sites.

* Due to continuous population movements these figures change regularly and are only an estimate.

Operational context and protection situation

Ituri Province: Over the month of June, protection incidents in Mahagi Territory have decreased by over 80 per cent compared to May (from 581 to 94 incidents). The military operations carried out by the Congolese military (FARDC) in Mahagi Territory against CODECO militia in April and May made it possible to secure several villages and areas. However, whilst overall protection incidents ascribed to FARDC elements have recently decreased, the FARDC was reportedly responsible for a third of all protection incidents involving injuries of civilians. Djugu Territory remains the most affected area of fighting and related protection incidents involving physical injuries and the destruction of property (mainly houses and farms) which prevents thousands of IDPs from returning.

In an effort to address attacks by armed groups in Ituri, the Congolese government and the FARDC are facilitating peace talks between former militia leaders who were recently released from prison and CODECO militia who are active in the Province. Although these negotiations are underway, CODECO's attacks are continuing unabated. Between 1 and 3 July, Uganda temporarily opened its crossing points at Golajo and Mount Zeu along its border with Ituri Province's Mahagi Territory. This allowed 3,000 Congolese persons that had been displaced by CODECO attacks on 17 and 18 May in War Palara chieftdom in Mahagi Territory to safely cross the border and seek international protection. In Uganda they will first be quarantined for 14 days as a COVID-19 prevention measures before being transferred to UNHCR refugee camps.

North Kivu Province: The humanitarian situation continued to aggravate in the province, particularly in the Beni, Masisi and Rutshuru Territories as armed conflict and human rights violations continue to uproot thousands. 1,834 protection incidents were documented by UNHCR's partner INTERSOS in June (including 148 SGBV cases), affecting Lubero and Masisi Territories in particular. In Masisi Territory, the absence of security actors exposes the local population to protection risks, while armed groups also impose illegal fees on the local populations.

In Beni Territory, civilian populations continue to be victim of retaliation attacks by alleged Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) elements in the Halungupa and Oicha areas. There is a very weak humanitarian presence in the area due to the bad security situation. On 22 June, one MONUSCO soldier was killed on the road between Beni and Butembo in an ambush attributed to the ADF. UNHCR and other actors have put their activities on hold in the area until a security assessment is made.

South Kivu Province: Armed conflicts have increased in the province, particularly in the Highlands in Mwenga and Fizi Territory. The reinforcement of the FARDC presence in Batali and Bamuguma areas in Fizi Territory has contributed to positively improve the protection situation in these areas, leading to a decrease of incidents during the second half of June. However, incidents perpetrated by some FARDC elements against the civilian population accused of collaborating with armed groups have been reported too. In South Kivu, 409 protection incidents have been reported by UNHCR's protection monitoring partner INTERSOS from 19 June to 3 July 2020 affecting particularly Fizi, Shabunda and Mwenga Territories. The most common incidents involved physical assault and extortion. There have been significant population movements from the Fizi Highlands towards spontaneous IDP sites in Mikenge, Mwenga Territory and Bijombo in Uvira Territory.

UNHCR's response

Ituri Province



PROTECTION UNHCR-supported community-based protection (CBP) groups have continued information sharing campaigns on the prevention of COVID-19, SGBV and child protection, reaching 5,028 persons during the reporting period, including both IDP and the host communities in Djugu and Irumu Territories.

Through engaging local communities, information on COVID-19 and its prevention can reach places where UNHCR currently has no access. UNHCR supports and guides community groups and community members from a distance. Following the increased awareness, community members have started to request assistance to install hand-washing stations in public spaces, such as markets or displacement sites.



SHELTER AND CRIS UNHCR continued soap distribution for IDPs in displacement sites and host communities to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. From 1 to 3 July 12,613 persons received soap, reaching 23,748 so far. The distributions are accompanied by awareness-raising on COVID-19 prevention measures. UNHCR plans to continue the distribution to all the sites under its coordination and where the security situation permits physical access.

UNHCR and its partner Caritas also proceeded to register the newly arrived IDPs in the sites. The registration of displaced persons in sites is crucial to provide the basis for multi-sectorial assistance by humanitarian actors and ensuring protection of IDPs in the site.

Protection Cluster

On 2 July, UNHCR as leader of the Protection Cluster participated in a multi-sectorial evaluation mission in Tchomia, Djugu Territory and Kasenyi, Irumu Territory where recent floods along the shores of lake Albert displaced almost 11,000 persons. Many persons have lost their houses and belongings, including personal identification documents. Others have also lost their fishing boats and hence their livelihoods. In addition to shelter and core relief items (CRIs), the most urgent protection needs are awareness-raising on SGBV as many people, including women and girls, are sleeping out in the open without any protection, as well as holistic care for SGBV survivors.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- The COVID-19 prevention and response capacities of national and international health and humanitarian actors need to be strengthened. Ituri Province's third confirmed case of COVID-19 comes from Muzipela quarter in Bunia. The same area also houses three displacement sites. The reinforcement of COVID-19 prevention activities in these sites is therefore a priority.
- Limited humanitarian access due to poor security, leave displaced persons and local populations vulnerable as no humanitarian assistance has reached them for months. Food assistance to prevent malnutrition, notably for children, is amongst the most urgent need expressed by the communities.
- Newly displaced persons that have arrived in displacement sites across the province are in urgent need of multisectoral assistance. The construction of new shelters in overcrowded sites is crucial, especially during the rainy season.

North Kivu Province



PROTECTION Members of community-based protection groups, supported by UNHCR continued to raise awareness of the risks associated with COVID-19 and on the prevention of SGBV in Lubero, Masisi and Rutshuru Territories, reaching over 9,100 persons during the reporting period.



CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT UNHCR and its partners collected the intentions of return of IDPs residing in the 13 IDP sites under UNHCR coordination in North Kivu. At the same time, assessments were conducted to identify persons with specific needs, which enables UNHCR and other actors to better respond to individual needs. As part of the fight against COVID-19, UNHCR is working with local authorities to decongest sites and promote durable solutions such as the integration of IDPs in the local communities or return to their area of origin.



SHELTER AND CRISIS UNHCR and its partner AIDES are identifying additional beneficiaries of shelter support in the territory of Rutshuru. So far, 2,381 out of 4,000 planned emergency shelters have already been built in Rutshuru and Masisi Territories.

UNHCR and partners continued the large-scale soap distribution for IDPs in displacement sites and host communities to help prevent the spread of the coronavirus. 67,312 persons in 13 IDP sites under UNHCR coordination received soap during the reporting period. The distribution was accompanied by awareness-raising on COVID-19 prevention measures.



SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV) Community-based protection groups supported by UNHCR's and Caritas identified three SGBV survivors in Beni and Masisi Territories. All survivors were referred to health center where they received appropriate medical care.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- There is a lack of latrines and WASH infrastructure in UNHCR coordinated sites, while the majority of the sites are overcrowded. Due to continued violence, IDPs cannot return home to most places of origin. UNHCR is working with local authorities on the identification of land on which IDPs can build and settle temporarily.
- There is an absence of protection actors in some areas which hampers the effective protection of IDPs, and others affected by armed conflicts. Particularly survivors of Sexual and Gender-Based Violence remain vulnerable without adequate care.
- Many of the newly displaced remain without any support, while the needs are multiple, including shelter support, access to clean water, health services and urgent support is needed for malnourished children.
- In Bwito Chiefdom, the displacement of an estimated 80,000 persons has led to urgent multisector needs, especially in terms of shelter, child protection and protection of women and girls at risk of SGBV. Access to clean water further remains a challenge which is pivotal to help reduce the risk of COVID-19.
- Closure of schools related to COVID-19 prevention measures may have increased child recruitment by armed groups, according to school authorities in Masisi Territory. Additional support is needed to ensure continuity in education and child protection in areas affected by armed conflict.

Protection Cluster

- Following the Protection Cluster mission conducted in late May 2020 in the Bwito Chiefdom, Rutshuru Territory, to assess the protection situation of civilians, an action plan was developed, and several humanitarian actors have positioned themselves to respond to the situation. Advocacy is ongoing with the FARDC, the MONUSCO and the Protection Working Group to respond to the need of installing governance and security institutions and the need to strengthen the protection of civilians after the withdrawal of armed groups following military operations conducted by the FARDC.

South Kivu Province

PROTECTION Community-based protection groups supported by UNHCR's and AVSI have continued to raise awareness about COVID-19 prevention, child protection, SGBV and peaceful cohabitation, reaching over 3,524 IDPs and host community members in Fizi and Uvira Territories through small group sessions, door-to-door visits, and using megaphones. UNHCR's partner AVSI has begun mapping available services for SGBV survivors and victims of other protection incidents in Fizi and Uvira Territories. AVSI also identified 90 ambassadors of positive masculinity who received training and will share information in their communities.

UNHCR's partner INTERSOS mobile protection team conducted a mission in the village of Lutunkulu in Walungu Territory to assess the situation regarding three waves of population movement recorded in the area. Some 3,845 households were displaced following armed clashes between Raiya Mutomboki militiamen.



CHILD PROTECTION One of the information-sharing sessions carried out by community-based protection groups reached 328 host community members and 253 IDPs in Fizi Territory on child rights.



SEXUAL AND GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE (SGBV) UNHCR's partner INTERSOS documented 13 SGBV cases perpetrated against civilians in Fizi, Kalehe, Shabunda and Kalehe Territories. Nine survivors were referred to a health center where they received PEP Kit treatment and other appropriate care. Community-based protection groups reached 2,150 host community members, IDPs, and refugees on themes related to SGBV prevention and mitigation.



SHELTER AND NFIS As part of UNHCR's shelter project for IDPs in Fizi Centre, Fizi Territory with partner AIDES, UNHCR has so far supported the construction of 103 out of the planned 300 IDP households with construction kits and training to build their own shelters.



CASH ASSISTANCE Post-distribution monitoring (PDM) is currently underway for the IDP households that received cash-for-shelter as part of the UNHCR and AIDES shelter project in Kazimia and Kikonde, Fizi Territory that served 1,000 households. UNHCR has identified 1,000 households affected by the floods in Uvira to receive cash assistance that will cover three months of rent in order to reduce over-crowding in informal sites hosting

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