

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Displacement in Nyiragongo and Rutshuru, North Kivu



KEY PRIORITIES

+340,000

PEOPLE DISPLACED
(SINCE MARCH 2022)

30%

OF THE TERRITORY
UNDER M23 CONTROL

Risk

OF CHOLERA OUTBREAK

NATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

- Division of Social Affairs
 - CAJED, AVUDS
- International Committee of the Red Cross and Red Cross DRC
 - MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade

INTERNATIONAL RESPONSE CAPACITY

- UN agencies (WFP, UNICEF, OCHA, UNHCR, UNFPA)
- International NGOs (Save the Children, Médecins Sans Frontières, World Vision, HEKS/EPER, Solidarites International, Action Aid)

CRISIS IMPACT OVERVIEW

- Since March 2022, the armed group March 23 Movement (M23) has been launching offensives in North Kivu in Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Since 20 October, the conflict has considerably escalated, and attacks between M23 and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) have been constant. The conflict is particularly affecting Rutshuru territory in North Kivu, which is close to the border with Rwanda and Uganda. The fighting escalated on 26 October, resulting in large-scale displacement within Rutshuru and further south in Nyiragongo (UNICEF 27/10/2022). The clashes have taken place in several locations within Bwisha, Bwito, and Rutshuru communes in Rutshuru territory. M23 has gained control of three villages within Rutshuru territory (ACLED 03/11/2022).
- Since March 2022, hostilities in the region have displaced at least 340,000 civilians (OCHA 23/11/2022). Between 20 October and 14 November, the uptick in conflict displaced at least 188,000 people. Most IDPs (128,000 people) are in Nyiragongo territory, spread across Kanyaruchinya, Kibati, and Munigi health areas (UNICEF 21/11/2022).
- At least ten civilians have died as a result of the hostilities, and kidnappings have also been reported (USAID 22/11/2022). On 23 October, clashes between M23 and the FARDC killed nine civilians (The Citizen 30/10/2022; Xinhua 28/10/2022). As at 25 October, at least 37 civilians were injured in Rutshuru territory (OCHA 25/10/2022). Approximately 679,000 people will need assistance as a result of the fighting in the territory (OCHA 23/11/2022). In the first week of November, civilians organised demonstrations in Goma (the capital of North Kivu) supporting the FARDC in their fight against M23 and Rwanda's alleged support to M23 (DW 18/11/2022; ACLED 17/11/2022; France 24 01/11/2022).
- The needs are high across all sectors, especially shelter, health, and protection (OCHA 23/11/2022 and 25/10/2022).

ANTICIPATED SCOPE AND SCALE

- M23 is likely to keep seeking control over Rutshuru territory, and clashes between the group and FARDC are likely to increase (DW 02/11/2022; France 24 02/11/2022).
- Approximately 679,000 civilians will need assistance as a result of the fighting in the territory (OCHA 23/11/2022).
- The hostilities are displacing people across the border into Uganda. An average of 500 refugees from DRC have fled to the neighbouring country. COVID-19 cases have been identified, and overcrowded conditions are likely to cause the spread of other diseases (Monitor 15/11/2022). Between January and early October 2022, 71,000 Congolese refugees crossed into Uganda (VOA 03/10/2022). Further violence and insecurity will escalate cross-border movement to Uganda, where refugees' humanitarian needs are likely to increase.
- COVID-19 cases have already been identified among Congolese refugees in Uganda, and other diseases are likely to spread because of overcrowded conditions (Monitor 15/11/2022). Displacement and the increase in the number of people in shelters create a high risk for the spread of diseases, such as cholera and COVID-19 (DW 18/11/2022; UNICEF 14/11/2022).

HUMANITARIAN CONSTRAINTS

- Between March–November 2022, 26 conflict incidents directly affected humanitarians (OCHA 23/11/2022). These incidents injured two members of the UN peacekeeping mission and set two vehicles of the mission on fire near Goma (SOS Media Burundi 02/11/2022; UN 02/11/2022).
- There is a lack of humanitarian presence in Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories because of insecurity. 80% of the areas under M23 control remain inaccessible to humanitarian responders. The road between Goma and Rutshuru remains closed because of clashes between armed forces and groups (USAID 22/11/2022; DW 18/11/2022). Rangira, Rokoro, and Rwanguba localities are said to be under M23 control.
- Insecurity also constrains the gathering of information. 18 journalists have had to leave Rutshuru territory because of threats to their lives (MONUSCO Twitter 03/11/2022).

HUMANITARIAN NEEDS

Shelter

An estimated 49% of IDPs are taking refuge with host families (OCHA 23/11/2022). Over 88% of IDPs in Nyiragongo are in overcrowded collective centres and improvised sites, forcing them to sometimes sleep outside. Shelters provide limited access to basic services, such as drinking water, toilets, primary healthcare, and education (UNICEF 21/11/2022 and 14/11/2022; OCHA 15/11/2022). Most IDPs are in three zones: 128,000 people are in Nyiragongo, over 85,000 in Lubero (in Kayna and Kibirizi health zones), and 37,000 in Tongo (in Bambo and Birambizo health zones) (UNICEF 21/11/2022).

Food security and nutrition

According to the Integrated Food Security Phase Classification (IPC), an estimated 26.4 million people in DRC will be acutely food-insecure in July–December 2022. The regions of Rutshuru and Nyiragongo are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity levels, with people only marginally able to meet food needs (ECHO 19/10/2022; IPC 18/10/2022). In Rutshuru, over 350,000 people face IPC 3 food insecurity levels, while 70,000 face Emergency (IPC Phase 4) levels. In Nyiragongo, over 139,000 people face IPC 3 levels, and almost 40,000 face IPC 4 levels. These numbers are likely to remain the same in Rutshuru in 2023, but in Nyiragongo, the number of those experiencing IPC 3 levels is expected to decrease by 25%, and those experiencing IPC 4 levels by 5% (IPC 18/10/2022). Many displaced people have had to leave behind their recently harvested food stocks. Violence and insecurity have hampered people's access to markets for food and limited their opportunities for agricultural production (NWA 07/10/2022). Continuing insecurity and subsequent displacement will further aggravate the food security situation. The large number of displaced people in Nyiragongo is also likely to overwhelm host communities' food access, which is already limited and affected by high food prices.

Between April–July 2022, the number of severely malnourished children at the main hospital in Nyiragongo nearly tripled from 17–49 (NWA 07/10/2022). Since June, the Goma-Nyiragongo zone has experienced a sharp deterioration in the food situation because of the continuous arrival of displaced people from Rutshuru, poor harvests (as crops have been poorly maintained during the displacement period), and theft (WFP 30/06/2022).

Livelihoods

Armed groups have disrupted the transportation of food, causing a shortage of certain products, such as beans. The closure of the border because of tensions between the two countries is severely affecting traders from DRC and Rwanda. Products have become harder to find, and prices are likely to increase (DW 18/11/2022 and 07/11/2022). Violence is depriving people of their regular activities, leading to a drop in agricultural production. Approximately 70% of the employed DRC population works in agriculture, mostly for subsistence, meaning the disruption to their activities directly affects their income (USAID accessed DD/MM/2022; DW 11/09/2022).

Education

The clashes have closed at least 611 schools, and almost 46,000 children (46% of whom are girls) lack access to education in Nyiragongo territory as a result of the conflict (OCHA 23/11/2022; UNICEF 21/11/2022). Over 250,000 children in Lubero, Nyiragongo, and Rutshuru territories do not have access to education because of hostilities (OCHA 23/11/2022).

Protection

North Kivu, along with Ituri, is among the provinces with the highest number of verified grave violations against children (UNICEF 17/10/2022). Increased military operations have worsened children's exposure to grave violations, such as their recruitment into armed groups. In Lubero, Nyiragongo, and Rutshuru territories alone, an estimated 19,900 children are in need of protection. Between 20 October and 15 November, over 3,260 unaccompanied children were identified in these territories, only 191 of whom had been reunited with their families. The others are awaiting reunification. Between 8–14 November, 62 gender-based violence survivors (including 18 girls) were identified in Nyiragongo. During that same period, in Rutshuru and Nyiragongo, 18 children were associated with armed forces and groups and needed protection (UNICEF 21/11/2022; OCHA 15/11/2022). IDPs and refugees face protection risks sleeping outside because there are not enough shelters (UNICEF 21/11/2022). There are IDPs staying in health zones under M23 control. M23 has completely dismantled and looted the IDP site Rwaswa II in Kiwanja, which hosted around 24,000 IDPs. The group has forced the population to return to their villages (UNICEF 07/11/2022).

Health and WASH

Many people in Rutshuru have sustained injuries from shelling and violence and need urgent medical care (UNICEF 27/10/2022). 33 health areas are inaccessible because of security constraints, and access to medicine and health centres is limited (OCHA 23/11/2022). People with chronic and immune diseases are at risk, with displacement interrupting their treatment. The situation could have severe implications for mothers living with HIV. There are currently over 1,150 people living with HIV in need of treatment in North Kivu, including 102 pregnant women and 46 children (UNAIDS 02/11/2022). Refugee camps are in poor conditions, and cholera is spreading (DW 18/11/2022).

AGGRAVATING FACTORS

Cholera outbreak

The Government has declared a cholera outbreak in South Kivu, and there is a high risk of the outbreak spreading to North Kivu (JAMBO RDC 21/11/2022). As at 27 October, four cholera cases were confirmed among the displaced population in Kanyaruchinya, Nyiragongo territory (UNICEF 27/10/2022). Between January–June 2022, the average number of cholera cases increased by 53% compared to the same period in 2021. North Kivu was one of the most affected provinces, with roughly 20% of the total suspected cases (UNICEF 17/10/2022). Precarious living conditions and limited access to clean water will likely increase the number of cases in the region.

Displacement

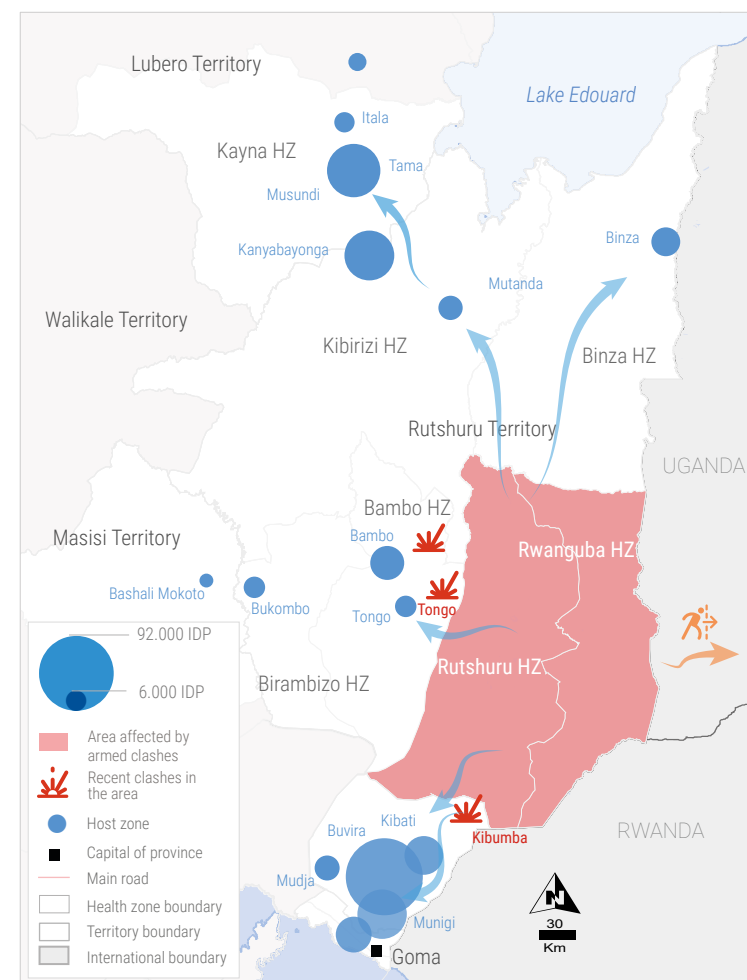
There are over 5.5 million IDPs in DRC. In North Kivu alone, there are at least 1.9 million displaced people (OCHA 19/08/2022, UNHCR 27/05/2022; Radio Okapi 17/02/2021). The constant clashes between armed forces and groups keep increasing the number of IDPs and people affected, overwhelming already limited humanitarian aid.

Political instability

In June 2022, because of the uptick in violence in DRC, leaders of the East African Community agreed to intervene in the conflict by sending a regional force to DRC (Al Jazeera 21/06/2022; VOA 21/06/2022). The Government of DRC has accused Rwanda of helping M23 gain control over North Kivu so the country can extract the province's resources. DRC has expelled the

Rwandan Ambassador, and civilians have held protests in the streets of Goma against the neighbouring country (Reuters 31/10/2022). Rwanda and DRC attended peace talks in Uganda on 23 November, where Rwanda denied any alliance with M23 and agreed that there is a need for a ceasefire and de-escalation of conflict in DRC. Regardless, clashes in the country remain (Africanews 24/11/2022; France 24 23/11/2022). Uganda will join Kenya and Burundi in deploying troops to DRC to support the FARDC (Al Jazeera 21/11/2022; Reuters 03/11/2022).

AREAS AFFECTED AND DISPLACED PEOPLE AS AT 22 NOVEMBER 2022



Source: OCHA (23/11/2022)