

# UGANDA

## DRC Refugee influx

On 18 December 2017 violence escalated in Ituri and Nord Kivu provinces of north-east Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), causing displacement and an increased refugee influx into Uganda. At least 7,185 refugees have crossed into west and southwest Uganda. Refugees are being relocated to Kyangwali settlement and the Malembo C site in Hoima district, and Kyaka II settlement in Kyegegwa district. Cross-sectoral response must be strengthened as humanitarian resources and capacities are strained due to the increase in arrivals.

### NEED FOR INTERNATIONAL ASSISTANCE

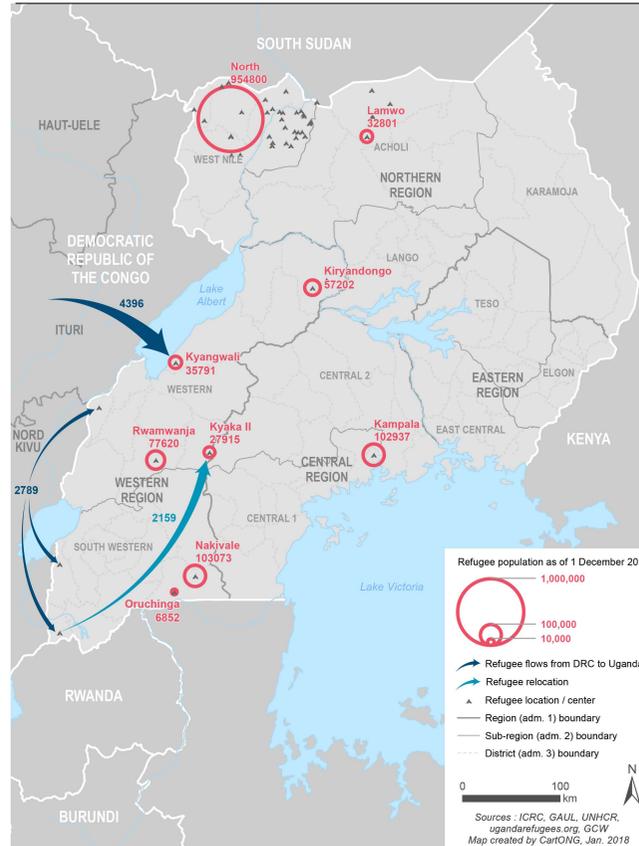


### IMPACT



### Limitations

Information on the refugee influx and the situation of the refugees is largely based on inter-agency emergency reports. There has been little media coverage.



## Anticipated scope and scale

**Further refugee arrivals are expected** as people are currently waiting to cross Lake Albert and trend of crossings over land in southwest Uganda will likely increase. Violence in DRC is likely to continue and lead to further displacement. Cross-sectoral assistance will be needed for all further arrivals at the transit points and at the refugee settlements. There is a risk of arrival points congesting due to high numbers of arrivals.

## Key priorities



**WASH**  
not meeting emergency standards



**Health**  
current facilities overstretched



**+7,185 refugees**  
**+ more waiting to cross**

## Humanitarian Constraints



Humanitarian access to refugee arrivals in Uganda is good. There will likely be complications when trying to reach those who remain on the DRC side of the border waiting to cross.

## Crisis impact

Since 18 December 2017, refugee arrivals from DRC into Uganda have been increasing.

Refugees from Ituri and Nord Kivu provinces, northeast DRC, crossed with fishing boats over Lake Albert into Uganda, where they arrived at Sebagoro and Nsonga in Hoima district, west Uganda (UNHCR 29/12/2017). From 18 December to 8 January, over 4,300 refugees took this route to Uganda and all have been relocated by UNHCR to the Kagoma reception centre at Kyangwali refugee settlement (UNHCR 09/01/2018). Before relocation, refugees are registered (Monitor 28/12/2017).

Refugees are also crossing from North Kivu province, DRC, at the land border points in Kisoro, Kanungu, and Bundibugyo districts in southwest Uganda (UNHCR 05/01/2018). 2,789 registered refugees crossed this way between 18 December and 8 January (UNHCR 09/01/2018). Refugees are being relocated away from Nyakabande transit centre in Kisoro district: 2,159 have been relocated to Kyaka II settlement in Kyegegwa district (UNHCR 09/01/2018). 47 people were relocated to Rwamwaja settlement in Kamwege district (UNHCR 29/12/2017). Rwamwaja, which hosts over 77,600 refugees, is at full capacity (UNHCR 22/12/2017; UNHCR 01/12/2017). Around 2,119 refugees remain at Nyakabande (UNHCR 09/01/2018).

Since the recent influx to Uganda began, arrivals to southwest Uganda have been increasing, with 329 people arriving on average per day between 31 December and 4 January, while arrivals across Lake Albert have been decreasing (UNHCR 09/01/2018).

An unknown number of refugees also arrived at reception centres without being registered (UNHCR 22/12/2017).

This recent refugee influx is a result of rising insecurity. Since 18 December, there have been increased inter-communal clashes between Hema and Lendu in Djugu territory in Ituri region (Radio Okapi 20/12/2017). Attackers burned down houses in over 20 villages, and attacked locals with firearms and machetes (UNHCR 27/12/2017; UNHCR 22/12/2017). Fighting also increased between Mayi-Mayi militia and DRC government troops and Mayi-Mayi violence against civilians in North Kivu also intensified (UNHCR 05/01/2018).

**WASH:** Water and sanitation needs have been reported in Kyangwali settlement, Hoima district. As of 27 December, the daily supply of drinking water per person at Kagoma reception centre was 10 litres per day, which is below the SPHERE standard of 15 litres per person per day (UNHCR 27/12/2017). UNHCR reported on 2 January that refugees in Malembo C site near Kyangwali received almost 15 litres/person/day, but that an additional 20,000 litres was needed to meet the SPHERE minimum standard (UNHCR 02/01/2018; UNHCR 09/01/2018).

As of 2 January, 10 communal latrines had been constructed. An additional 175 latrines, 200 bathing facilities, and 200 hand-washing stands are needed (UNHCR 02/01/2018). The construction of 125 communal latrines is ongoing (UNHCR 05/01/2018).

**Health:** Many refugees arriving in Uganda are in need of health assistance. As of 27 December, over 155 new arrivals at Lake Albert received health and nutrition consultations. Cases of malaria were most commonly reported amongst those assessed (UNHCR 27/12/2017). The Malembo C Health Centre II at Kyangwali is stretched beyond capacity (UNHCR 05/01/2018).

Both DRC and Uganda are affected by cholera. In DRC Nord Kivu is one of the most affected provinces with over 14,000 suspected cases and at least 124 deaths in 2017 (Actualite 23/12/2017). In Uganda, an outbreak has been affecting Kasese district, with a low number of cases also being registered in Kisoro (WHO 05/01/2018). Cross-border population movements risk further spread of the disease.

**Protection:** On the DRC side of Lake Albert, refugee families are being separated (UNHCR 27/12/2017). Armed groups are reportedly forcibly recruiting young men (UNHCR 27/12/2017).

An unknown number of people wanting to cross into Uganda are stuck in Ituri, who lack the financial means to pay for the journey. Armed groups in DRC are charging “exit fees” and the price to cross Lake Albert has reportedly increased to over 20,000 Ugandan Shillings per person (UNHCR 05/01/2018). Armed groups are reportedly trying to prevent people from fleeing into Uganda (UNHCR 29/12/2017).

Refugees crossing over Lake Albert face physical protection risks. They are crossing the lake in makeshift fishing boats (UNHCR 22/12/2017). There is a high risk of these boats sinking.

There are protection concerns for survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), of which at least six have been identified so far (UNHCR 27/12/2017).

**Shelter and NFIs:** Significant destruction of shelter was reported in regions of origin in DRC (Radio Okapi 20/12/2017). Shelter assistance for refugees would be needed if they return to DRC. In Uganda, refugees are in need of shelter upon arrival. Continued shelter assistance is needed in order to avoid overcrowding. Nyakabande transit point has reportedly been congested due to over 2,000 refugees staying at the centre (UNHCR 22/12/2017). The next relocations away from the transit point are scheduled for 11 January (UNHCR 09/01/2018).

**Food security:** Some of the DRC refugees arriving in Uganda potentially have been affected by food insecurity in their country of origin. Over 113,700 people, which is

about 2.2% of the total population, are facing IPC Phase 4 (Emergency) in Irumu territory, Ituri, as of November (OCHA 08/11/2017).

## Vulnerable groups affected

80% of new arrivals at Lake Albert are women and children (UNHCR 27/12/2017).

Among the arrivals, 60 unaccompanied minors and separated children were identified between 18 and 26 December, as well as six survivors of SGBV (UNHCR 27/12/2017). As SGBV is often underreported, numbers of affected people are likely to be higher. Refugees arriving in southwest Uganda reported that attacks on the civilian population perpetrated by armed groups in Nord Kivu included rape (UNHCR 09/01/2018).

## Humanitarian and operational constraints

Access and presence of humanitarian organisations are generally good in Uganda. The overall refugee response in Uganda, which primarily focuses on the South Sudan crisis, is underfunded by 61% (UNHCR 02/01/2018). In case of a further increase of the refugee influx from DRC, there is a risk of international response capacities becoming stretched (UNHCR 22/12/2017).

## Aggravating factors

### Cholera

There is a cholera outbreak ongoing in Uganda, which affects Kasese district on the border to DRC. Since 25 September 2017, a total of 225 suspected cases have been reported, of which 17 are confirmed, and four people have died (CFR: 1.8%). As of 5 January 2018, another outbreak affects Kisoro district, where two suspected and one confirmed case have been registered so far (WHO 05/01/2018).

A cholera outbreak also impacts DRC, with Nord Kivu being among the most affected provinces in 2017 (Actualite 23/12/2017). Cross border population movements risk further spread of the disease.

## Contextual information

### Displacement in DRC

During 2017, the humanitarian situation in the DRC deteriorated as violence increased in several regions, including Nord Kivu and Ituri (ACAPS 30/11/2017). Over 1.9 million people were internally displaced in 2017 in DRC, bringing the total number of IDPs over 4.3 million (OCHA 13/12/2017).

## Drivers of current conflict in Nord Kivu and Ituri

The province of Nord Kivu is affected by armed conflict that involves Mayi-Mayi groups, which are local and community-based militias, the militant group Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), as well as government forces and UN troops (IBT 29/10/2016 ; RFI 09/10/2017).

In Ituri province, in Djugu territory, the security situation has been deteriorating since mid-December 2017 as clashes between Lendu and Hema communities have increased. Local authorities have requested government assistance to help calm the situation (Radio Okapi 20/12/2017).

## Refugee population in Uganda

Even before the current influx started, Uganda already hosted the region's largest refugee population, with nearly 1.4 million refugees. As of 1 December 2017, the majority of refugees originated from South Sudan (over 1 million), with some 231,000 originating from DRC. Other major refugee populations include Burundians (approximately 40,000), Somalis (approximately 36,000), and refugees from Rwanda (approximately 15,000) (UNHCR 01/12/2017).

The refugee population is likely to increase in 2018, possibly to over 1.8 million (UNICEF 27/12/2017). Generally, in host districts, basic services are overstretched (UNICEF 27/12/2017).

As of 31 December 2017, Uganda hosted 242,406 refugees from DRC, up from 231,504 on 1 December 2017 (UNHCR 05/01/2018; UNHCR 01/12/2017). 46,600 refugees arrived from DRC during 2017 (UNHCR 05/01/2018).

Before the current influx, the total refugee population of Kyangwali settlement stood at 35,791, and 27,915 refugees were hosted at Kyaka II settlement (UNHCR 01/12/2017).

## Key characteristics

**Demographic profile:** The total population of Uganda in 2017 is estimated at 37.67 million people including 9.61 million in Western region and 642,400 in Hoima district (City population 26/11/2017).

**Food security:** In Western region 8% of the population is facing Stressed (IPC 2) food insecurity while the rest of the population is in Minimal food insecurity (IPC 1) (IPC 15/11/2017).

**Nutrition levels:** 33% of children under 5 are affected by stunting and 5% by wasting (USAID 08/02/2017).

**Health statistics:** The infant mortality rate is 56.1 deaths/1,000 live births. The maternal mortality rate is 343 deaths/100,000 live births (World Factbook 01/2018). Across the country, 55.2% of the population has received all basic appropriate vaccination including polio and measles vaccine. 97.3% of pregnant women received antenatal care from a skilled provider (UBOS 03/2017).

**WASH statistics:** 79% of the population have access to improved drinking water (95.5% of urban, 75.8% of rural population). 19.1% of the population have access to improved sanitation facilities (28.5% of urban, 17.3% of rural population) (World Factbook 01/2018).

**Literacy levels:** 78.4% of total population is literate (World Factbook 01/2018).

## Response capacity

### Local and national response capacity

At the national and local level, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is coordinating the response jointly with UNHCR. Daily inter-agency meetings are taking place in Kyangwali (UNHCR 27/12/2017). OPM is carrying out the registration of refugees at Kyangwali (UNHCR 22/12/2017).

The Ugandan Police Marine Forces have increased their presence on Lake Albert in order to prevent boating incidents (UNHCR 22/12/2017).

The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) was launched in Uganda in March 2017 (UNHCR 18/12/2017). It is aimed at supporting refugees as well as host populations and encourages self-reliance and resilience (UNHCR 19/12/2017).

### International response capacity

28 UNHCR partner organisations are present in Kyangwali, and 17 are active in Kyaka II (UNHCR 20/12/2017).

UNHCR and African Initiative for Relief and Development have been relocating refugees from the landing sites at Lake Albert to Kyangwali settlement, and from Nyakabande transit centre in southwest Uganda to Kyaka II settlement (UNHCR 22/12/2017; UNHCR 05/01/2018).

Action Africa Help is medically screening refugees at Kyangwali (UNHCR 22/12/2017). UNHCR conducts protection screenings to identify refugees with specific needs (UNHCR 22/12/2017). WFP provided dry-food rations to the refugees in Malembo C, and UNICEF is available to provide vaccinations (UNHCR 02/01/2018; UNHCR 22/12/2017). Action Africa Help and African Initiatives for Relief and Development have been constructing 150 communal latrines at Malembo C at Kyangwali, 25 of which are finished at 5 January (UNHCR 05/01/2018). In the Kyangwali area, UNICEF is planning to distribute zinc tablets

and oral rehydration salts as a measure to prevent cholera (UNHCR 29/12/2017). In Kyala II, UNICEF distributed water purification tablets and soap bars (UNHCR 29/12/2017).

At Malembo C, Kyangwali settlement, some 4,068 refugees have been allocated plots of land and have received shelter assistance and non-food items by UNHCR, including blankets, mosquito nets, and kitchen utensils (UNHCR 02/01/2018; UNHCR 05/01/2018; UNHCR 29/12/2017).

As further arrivals from DRC are expected, UNHCR and partners are working on the construction of improved transit and reception centres (UNHCR 22/12/2017).

## Information gaps and needs

Further people are reported on the DRC side of Lake Albert waiting to cross into Uganda. The number is unknown.

Some refugees crossed into Uganda without being registered at the border points or at the landing sites on Lake Albert. There are no figures or information on needs available for these refugees.

Missing data on food security for the new refugee arrivals.

There is little information on pre-existing vulnerabilities of refugees.

Lack of information regarding specific needs of refugee population inside refugee settlements.

## Lessons learned

- Accessing livelihoods is an essential need - agricultural interventions provide food security and helps creating a peaceful atmosphere between refugees and host community members (UNHCR 15/05/2017).
- In 2014, over 200 refugees returning from Uganda to DRC were killed when a boat sank in Lake Albert, and up to 18 December, the route over the lake had not been used since by larger numbers of refugees (UNHCR 22/12/2017; BBC 24/03/2014).
- The development of child friendly spaces for psychosocial and life skills services as well as the strengthening of community structures of protection can facilitate the effectiveness of the referral pathways for vulnerable children including Unaccompanied and Separated Children (UNHCR 15/05/2017).
- Bio-metric registration is essential for effectively managing the needs of refugees (UNHCR 15/05/2017).

# Uganda : Refugee movements from DRC to Uganda since 18 December 2017

