

**DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO: HUMAN SUFFERING AND NEEDS  
INCREASE SIGNIFICANTLY IN NORTH KIVU CHAOS**

(Goma/Kinshasa, 31 May 2012) Close to 100,000 people have been uprooted from their homes by the recent wave of violence in the eastern Congolese province of North Kivu, prompting renewed calls for better measures to protect civilians and more aid for distressed families.

Since the beginning of April, thousands of families in North Kivu have had to flee for their lives, in the wake of violence borne out of desertions from the national army as well as ongoing military operations to bring under control illegal armed groups. It is estimated that some 74,000 people are now displaced in the Masisi, Lubero and Rutshuru territories, and several thousand more have found refuge in and around the provincial capital Goma. The crisis has spilled over into neighboring South Kivu where some 33,000 have fled in recent weeks. UNHCR, the UN refugee agency, said this week that close to 21,000 have crossed into neighbouring Rwanda and Uganda. The displaced people face many pressing needs: how to feed their children; where to find enough clean water; how to avoid contagious diseases such as cholera and measles.

“The chaotic situation families are facing is disastrous - many of them have been displaced many times before. We call on all parties to the conflict to respect human rights and international law and to spare civilians from the violence. It is essential that this crisis be resolved quickly because families need peace and protection. UN agencies and NGOs are ready to help, but we urgently need unimpeded access to the people,” said Humanitarian Coordinator Fidele Sarassoro today.

Since the beginning of the North Kivu crisis, much of the humanitarian assistance has been delivered to the more easily accessible IDPs in camps around Goma and to the refugees living in Rwanda and Uganda. They are only the most visible victims of the current conflict. Thousands have sought refuge in very remote and difficult-to-reach areas like forests and have not yet received aid. Aid organizations expect that those people need health care and emergency education, water and sanitation as well as food, basic household items, and shelter.

“There is no shortage of capacity, the issue for us is access and money so that we can roll out more aid,” said Sarassoro, the most senior international humanitarian official in DR Congo.

Earlier this year, the United Nations and partners appealed for US\$718 million to respond to humanitarian needs in DRC in 2012. However, aid organizations estimate that current funding levels will not allow a sustained response if the crisis persists.

More than two million people are currently displaced in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

*For further information, please call:*

OCHA Kinshasa: **Yvon Edoumou**, +243 97 000 3750/ +243 82 242 6342, [edoumou@un.org](mailto:edoumou@un.org); **Medard Lobota**, +243 99 290 6633, [Lobota@un.org](mailto:Lobota@un.org)

OCHA New York: **Amanda Pitt**, +1 917 367 5126, mobile +1 917 442 1810, [pitta@un.org](mailto:pitta@un.org);

OCHA press releases are available at <http://www.unocha.org> and [www.facebook.com/UNOCHA](http://www.facebook.com/UNOCHA)