



UNHCR

United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés

SITUATION REPORT N°1 – Congolese refugee influx into Uganda 7 November 2008

HIGHLIGHTS

- **SOME 10,470 REFUGEES CROSSED INTO UGANDA FLEEING THE CONFLICT IN NORTH KIVU**
- **APPROXIMATELY 7,000 PEOPLE ARE SETTLED IN 12 VILLAGES AROUND BUSANZA BORDER POINT, KISORO DISTRICT, HOSTED BY THE LOCAL COMMUNITIES**
- **1,670 REFUGEES ENTERED THROUGH ISHASHA BORDER POINT IN KANUNGU DISTRICT. ON THEIR REQUEST, UNHCR TRANSFERRED THEM TO NAKIVALE REFUGEE SETTLEMENT, IN ISINGIRO DISTRICT**
- **IN ADDITION TO THE 1,670 REFUGEES FROM ISHASHA, NAKIVALE RECEIVED 1,800 REFUGEES COMING DIRECTLY FROM DRC SINCE THE BEGINNING OF AUGUST, BRINGING THE TOTAL NUMBER OF NEW ARRIVALS IN NAKIVALE TO 3,470**

Situation Overview

There are two main entry points for the Congolese refugees arriving in Uganda: Busanza, in Kisoro District, and Ishasha, in Kanungu District.

The approximately 7,000 refugees who are self-settled along the DRC border in Kisoro originate from villages at walking distance from Uganda and seem to be reluctant to move to Nakivale refugee settlement (some 350 km from the border). The two main reasons are that they want to return to their homes as soon as the situation normalizes in DRC and that they want to be able to access their houses to check on their properties and get food supplies at least twice a week. The Government and other Humanitarian Organizations are concerned about inadequate capacity of existing health centres, food, water and sanitation facilities in the host community to meet the needs of the host community and of the growing number of Congolese refugees along the border.

The profile, condition and needs of the refugees coming across through Ishasha border point are very different. The 1,670 arrived in Ishasha approached the district authorities and the UNHCR team in Kanungu immediately upon arrival to ask to be relocated to Nakivale refugee settlement. In Nakivale, the Government of Uganda, supported by UNHCR, provides free education and health services, clean water, shelter and a plot of land where the refugees can settle and cultivate food. WFP provides food to all the new arrivals and all the refugees who cannot

Through Ishasha have been displaced for over two months within DRC. From their villages, they moved to IDP camps and, when these camps were attacked by rebel factions at the end of last week, they decided to move to Uganda.

The rate of the influx of refugees coming from DRC into Uganda has slightly decreased in the past three days. While between Wednesday 26th October and Tuesday 4th November, an average of 500 Congolese refugees crossed into Kanungu and Kisoro daily, since Wednesday the 5th of November, Uganda received only 120 new arrivals.

Reports from DRC indicate a population movement of internally displaced in DRC towards the areas bordering Bundibujjo/Kasese districts. UNHCR is therefore in daily contact with border and district authorities in that area.

Humanitarian Response

MSF France has established a permanent presence at the border since the beginning of October. The agency has already supplied additional drugs and medical materials to three health Centres in Busanza area, while continuing to monitor the health situation. MSF has also facilitated medical referrals from Ishasha and Busanza health centres to the Kisoro District Hospital.

The Uganda Red Cross has been hosting in its compound in Kisoro refugee families who

expressed the wish of moving to Nakivale, while they were waiting for 24-48 hours the commercial busses hired by UNHCR for their transport. The organization has distributed Non Food Items (20 sauce pans, 20 jerry cans, 49 cups, 50 plates, 25 bars of soap, 50 spoons and 1 bale of blankets) provided by UNHCR for these families.

The Uganda Red Cross has started tracing and family reunification activities for the un-accompanied minors, separated children and other refugee families in need.

UNICEF has deployed a full-time staff in Kisoro and is supporting the Ministry of Health (MoH) and national routine immunization authorities on provision of vaccines (focus on polio and measles) and essential drugs (Emergency Drug Kits) to health facilities. UNICEF is also advocating with MoH and WHO on availing PEP Kits and Indoor Residual Spraying (malaria prevention and control).

For what concerns Water, Sanitation and Hygiene UNICEF is conducting technical assessment at border area to identify minimum essential needs for existing facilities (including basic rehabilitation).

UNHCR has established a presence in both Kanungu and Kisoro District on Saturday 1st of November. A regular transportation system has been established between the border areas and Nakivale refugee settlement. UNHCR is also undertaking a mass information campaign to inform the Congolese arrivals in Kisoro that assistance is available at the Nakivale refugee settlement. An additional component of the mass information campaign, to be undertaken jointly with UNICEF, will address the need to maintain good hygiene practices, particularly as local water and sanitation facilities are already overstretched, to avoid the risk of a cholera outbreak.

In agreement with the Government of Uganda, UNHCR will establish a Transit Centre in Nyakabanda, close to Kisoro town, to provide shelter and assistance to the refugees who wish to be transferred to Nakivale.

UNHCR has also pre-positioned in Kisoro Non Food Items (plastic sheeting, jerrycans and blankets) for 10,000 people, to be distributed in case a reception centre will be established in Nyakabanda.

If the influx into Ishasha increases, a similar transit centre might be established in Kanungu.

Assessments:

- The Office of the Prime Minister, UNICEF, WFP and UNHCR conducted a joint assessment mission to Kisoro from the 28th to the 30th of October. Several recommendations in the various sectors of protection, health, water, sanitation, food security, child protection and SGBV are being followed-up on by various agencies;
- A joint WHO/UNICEF/UNHCR mission went to assess the medical needs in Nakivale and at the border areas from the 6th to the 9th of November;
- A GBV assessment mission from UNFPA will visit the border areas starting on Monday 10th

Coordination

UNHCR and the Office of the Prime Minister are coordinating the development of a contingency and action plan, in the event of a large scale influx of up to 100,000 refugees.

On Wednesday 5th the first coordination meeting was organized and all the agencies present decided to develop a matrix that indicates: 1) what is needed and where 2) what is already available in terms of funds, expertise, items 3) what would be missing and how much funds the humanitarian community should appeal for.

For more information, please contact:

Roberta Russo
External Relations Officer
UNHCR Kampala
+256772700991
russo@unhcr.org