



Cross-border Displacements: Spill-over from the Crises in Eastern DRC

Update on the regional implications of humanitarian developments in North Kivu and Ituri

4 November 2008

FLASH-POINT NORTH KIVU

The upsurge in hostilities from late August to early November 2008 in North Kivu Province in eastern Dem. Rep. of the Congo (DRC), mainly between Government forces (FARDC) and the Tutsi rebel group CNDP, have triggered displacement of some 230,000 people (OCHA) which add to an existing IDP population of estimated 800,000 in the province from previous hostilities. Many of those newly displaced were already IDPs, others have been uprooted from their local communities.

Recent weeks have been increasingly difficult for providers of humanitarian assistance in North Kivu but early this week a UN aid convoy dispatched from Goma reached Rutshuru, one of the towns now under CNDP control. The convoy was escorted by UN peacekeepers and carried health supplies to local health centers.

Meanwhile, armed actors have been circulating at two IDP camps located some 10 km north of Goma and the camps have been largely deserted in a panic by its residents. Camps in the town of Rutshuru have been found almost empty of their residents, and many shelters burned to the ground. It remains unclear where the camp residents have gone.

Roughly half of the newly displaced are in managed camps or spontaneous IDP sites inside the province with a high concentration of camps around the provincial capital, Goma. Others are hosted in local communities mainly in Rutshuru, Masisi and south Lubero territories. Tens of thousands are still on the move in search of safety and several thousand have sought refuge in mainly Uganda but also in Rwanda.

North Kivu –Uganda

Population movement: Approximately 9,500 Congolese have entered Uganda since the beginning of August 2008 (UNHCR Uganda). Of these, an estimated 3,500 people have arrived in southwestern Uganda in the past week alone, with 2,500 individuals received in Kisoro District and 1,000 in Kanungu District (Ishasha). Some 3,000 of the new arrivals have been relocated to Nakivale refugee settlement in Isingiro District, while 6,500 are being hosted in 12 villages in Kisoro District, along the DRC border.

Response: UNHCR, with support from UNICEF and WFP, and the Uganda Red Cross Society are responding to the situation. MSF and Save the Children also have teams in or en route to the area. UNHCR is providing transport to the settlement and has established a presence in Kisoro to facilitate monitoring of and response to the situation. World Food Programme Uganda is pre-

positioning 500 tons of food - enough to feed 30,000 people for a month - at key spots along their likely path.

Humanitarian concerns: Humanitarian organizations and government authorities are concerned about inadequate capacity of existing shelter, health centres, food, water and sanitation facilities in the host community to meet the needs of the growing number of Congolese refugees along the border. Continued conflict in eastern DRC could mean further increase in the caseload. Uganda is currently host to 146,407 refugees, out of which 48,606 are of Congolese origin.

North Kivu -Rwanda

Population movement: Due to the ongoing insecurity in Goma, 1,211 refugees have crossed the border into Rwanda, but have not sought the assistance of UNHCR. A large number have already returned to Rutshuru, DRC (UNHCR-Rwanda).

Response: Those who remain in Rwanda are being housed at a school outside the border town of Gisenyi, and have been assisted by local authorities and the Rwandan Red Cross. The refugees have expressed the desire to return to DRC when the situation stabilizes. WFP is pre-positioning food at the Nkamira transit centre in Gisenyi.

Humanitarian concerns: As a ceasefire in North Kivu is still holding, there is no expectation of massive movement of population from DRC to Rwanda. However, renewed clashes around Goma could trigger such a movement.

North Kivu-Burundi

Population movement: As of 31 October, there have been no reports of extraordinary population movements from DRC towards Burundi linked to the events in North Kivu.

Humanitarian concerns: Should the conflict in North Kivu spread further south towards Bukavu in South Kivu, it is likely that Burundi may be a preferred destination for eventual asylum seekers (the majority of the IDPs are Hutu).

Preparedness measures: The inter-agency contingency plan for Burundi is currently being updated with the participation of the Government, UN agencies, NGO partners and donors.

FLASH-POINT ITURI

In northeastern Ituri District, Orientale province, the Ugandan Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has killed at least 52 people, abducted 159 children and 10 adults, and displaced at least 17,000 in September alone (MONUC). In response, the DRC Government, supported by the Peacekeeping force MONUC, began deploying some 1,100 troops near LRA bases in September. On 1 November, a LRA attack on the town of Dungu, near DRC's border with Sudan, forced 50,000 to flee.

Ituri-Sudan

Population movement: 2,316 DRC refugees have arrived in Sakure, Gangura and Ukou in Western Equatoria State (UNHCR).

Response: MSF-Spain is providing health services to refugees in Gangura and Sakure. WFP has completed food distribution in Gangura.

Humanitarian concerns: The DRC-Southern Sudan border region remains vulnerable to LRA attacks and refugees are not safe in the area.

NOTE ON COORDINATION

OCHA-DRC and its sub-offices in Goma (North Kivu) and Bunia (Ituri) remain the main platform for in-country humanitarian coordination in eastern DRC. OCHA RO-CEA in Nairobi has provided surge capacity support to OCHA-Goma and monitors the humanitarian developments with a special focus on cross-border and regional aspects of the crises.
