



Humanitarian Action in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Weekly Bulletin, 25 January 2013

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HIGHLIGHTS

- Over 50,000 cholera cases, 1,300 deaths, recorded during the last two years
- North Kivu: Protection of civilians severely tested amid increased abuses by armed men
- 973 tons of food distributed to more than 100,000 displaced people in and around Goma

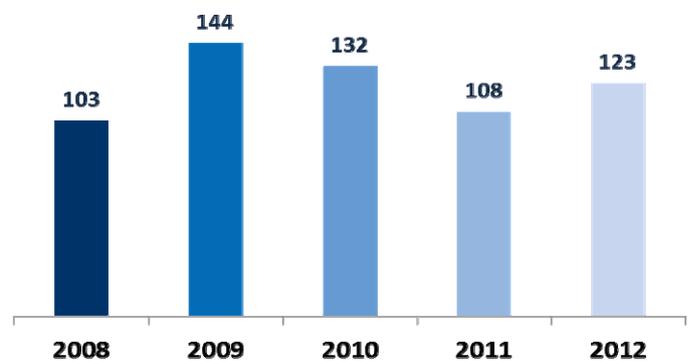
General Overview

North Kivu: Protection of civilians continuously tested by armed men

The protection of civilians in North Kivu Province remains a major concern as abuses continue to be reported. Over the past few days, over 2,000 children, while on their way to school, are being forced to pay money to armed men in the Busumba and Mpati areas in the Territory of Masisi, education and protection specialists have reported. Still in Masisi, accusations are mounting against FARDC soldiers who have been allegedly levying illegal taxes and forcing civilians, including internally displaced people from official IDP camps, to carry military hardware or work for them. Further north in Oicha, Beni Territory, humanitarian sources have reported that 30 children aged between 14 and 17 years have been missing since 1 January, an act attributed to armed men based in neighbouring Province Orientale. Years of instability have made the province very insecure for civilians and for aid workers.

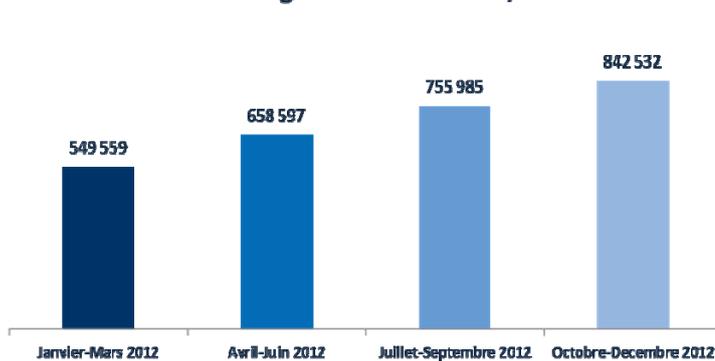
An estimated 914,000 people are displaced in North Kivu since 2009, 50 per cent since April 2012 when fighting started between the national army and the M-23 armed movement.

Security incidents against aid workers in North Kivu, 2008-2012



South Kivu: Increasing vulnerability in Mulamba, Walungu Territory, as thousands of IDPs turn up

Total IDP figures in South Kivu, 2012



An estimated 25,000 displaced people have arrived in Mulamba and its surroundings in the Territory of Walungu following recent fighting between the DRC military forces (FARDC) and the armed group Raia Mutomboki. The vast majority of IDPs are staying in host families, with an average of 10 people per staggering host households, stretching the absorption capacities of their livelihoods to the limit. In addition to emergency shelter, priority needs are food and essential household items, primary healthcare, and water, hygiene and sanitation (WASH), according to the findings of an OCHA-led mission. Numerous exactions against civilians are reported, including looting, illegal taxing and torching of houses by

soldiers of the national army who accuse civilians of complicity with the Raia Mutomboki. Humanitarian actors are preparing a number of interventions within the framework of the Rapid Response to Population Movements (RRMP). An estimated 910,000 IDPs are scattered throughout the province.

Humanitarian Needs and Response

Over 50,000 cholera cases recorded in past two years, meeting calls for more concerted efforts

- Around 52,900 cholera cases – 1310 deaths – have been recorded throughout the country over the past two years, cholera specialists confirmed during a two-day meeting aimed at taking stock of the response to the water-borne disease. In 2012, over 30,700 cases with 709 deaths; in 2011, there were 22,233 cases and 603 deaths. The meeting, organized by the World Health Organization (WHO) and the Congolese health ministry, recommended a number of steps to better control and treat the disease. These include strengthening of intra-

hospital hygiene, flexible funding, strengthening of the epidemic surveillance mechanisms and communication systems; the creation of an emergency fund and the systematic funding of provincial contingency plans; the construction of standardized cholera treatment centres (CTC), among others. The workshop concluded that the cholera epidemic in the western part of the country has been well responded to, resulting in a substantial decrease of cases and reduction in mortality, whereas the vast majority of cholera cases are currently reported in the endemic, eastern part of the country and Katanga's inner lakes region.

The importance to recognize cholera as a real risk and to involve other sectors into the response, as well as the importance of management of the transition into longer term action, was stressed by all the participants. The National Plan for the elimination of cholera 2013 – 2018 which is about to be finalized, should draw more funding by development partners, in order to achieve better preparedness and longer term action in view of sustainable reduction of cholera cases, especially in the east of the country, where ongoing violence continues to pose the main challenge to more effective cholera response.

Over the past two years, only Kasai Occidental and Kasai Oriental provinces, recorded no cholera cases. Insufficient access to clean water, especially in rural areas, poor adherence to basic hygiene practices, a dysfunctional health system and a desolate sanitation system are a few of the factors that encouraged the spread of the disease.

973 tons of food distributed this week to more than 100,000 IDPs in and around Goma

- Since 21 January, the World Food Programme (WFP) and partner NGOs World Vision International (WVI) and CARITAS distributed 973 tons of food to over 102,000 people in IDP sites and Mugunga III camp in the Goma area. The 15-day-ration is the third of its kind since the M-23 temporarily seized Goma in mid-November 2012. In Lubero Territory, WFP and CARE International started a cash and voucher distribution on 25 January for some 40,000 conflict-affected IDPs and members of host communities in the Kinigi, Kibabi and Kirumba sites in South Lubero. The IDP families will receive a transfer value of \$60 per household and each host community household will receive \$30 to cover 2 months of food ration, bringing the total transfer value up to \$340,000. The displaced people have been fleeing their villages since October 2012 due to conflict and insecurity caused by the activity of the Raia-Mutomboki armed group and presumed FDLR fighters.

Measles: More than hundred cases in two weeks in Equateur while the epidemic persists in Maniema

- 116 cases of measles of which 11 deaths were reported from 01 to 13 January 2013 in the Djolu Health Zone in the north-western province of Equateur. The United Nations Children Fund (UNICEF), in collaboration with the Provincial Health Inspection and WHO, has prepared 45 emergency measles kits to be prepositioned at 32 affected health zones throughout the province. However, the dispatch of the kits faces serious logistical challenges due to poor road access to the affected Health Zones. In 2012, over 50 per cent of Equateur's 69 health zones were affected by measles.

In the Maniema province where 1,692 measles cases were recorded last year, humanitarians are worried about the disease's persistence in the Kabambare, Lubutu Obokote and Punia health zones. Since the beginning of the year, 68 cases of which three deaths have been reported so far in Bikenge, in the Kunda Health Zone. As is the case with cholera in the eastern part of the country, measles continue to plague the country, affecting thousands of people annually. In response to this, 55 health zones with epidemic outbreaks have been envisaged for mass vaccinations of children between the ages of 6 months to 14 years countrywide since November 2012. Mass vaccination campaigns funded by WHO have recently been completed in 10 health zones in Province Orientale.

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