Violence, conflict and hunger continue to drive displacement in the Great Lakes region. In May and June, more than 360,000 people were uprooted in north-eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), bringing the number of internally displaced people (IDPs) country-wide to 4.8 million. Meanwhile, refugees from the broader region have continued to flee to Uganda, with more than 78,000 new arrivals from the DRC (nearly 47,100), South Sudan (more than 27,100), and Burundi (over 4,500) in 2019. In August, Burundi and Tanzania signed a bilateral agreement to accelerate the return of Burundian refugees. UNHCR has reiterated that any returns must be safe, dignified, voluntary and informed in line with the Tripartite Agreement previously signed between UNHCR, Tanzania and Burundi. Since September 2017, UNHCR has assisted in the voluntary return of more than 74,000 Burundian refugees.

There are now 17.8 million severely food insecure people in the region who need urgent assistance. Of these, 15.6 million people are in the DRC, where hunger continues to be driven primarily by conflict and displacement. In Uganda, harvests were 30 per cent below average, driving a rise in food insecurity, particularly in the Eastern region.

Alongside the Ebola Virus Disease (EVD) outbreak in the DRC, the region is facing outbreaks of measles, cholera and malaria. By mid-October, over 3,200 EVD cases, including 2,150 deaths, had been reported in the DRC, while Uganda confirmed 4 cases in Kasese District in June (3) and August (1). In September, cases of an undiagnosed illness were reported in Tanzania. Nearly 205,000 cases of measles have been recorded across the region, including: more than 203,000 in the DRC, where more than 4,000 deaths have been reported, nearly all of them children; and almost 1,600 cases in Uganda, including six deaths. Cholera is also affecting the region, with nearly 21,000 cases and 374 deaths in the DRC and a new outbreak with over 400 cases in Burundi, mainly in Bujumbura. In Burundi, more than 6.2 million cases of malaria have been recorded in 2019, including over 2,300 deaths.