

Alert Note

Uganda Influx of DRC (Democratic Republic of the Congo) Refugees
(27 July 2022)

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Forum: ACT Uganda Forum

Type of emergency: Influx of DRC Refugees

1. The nature of the emergency								
Since 28 th March 2022, violence in Eastern DRC from fighting between a rebel group (M23) and DRC government forces (supported by MONUSCO ⁱ and East Africa Community forces) has resulted in over 50,000 persons fleeing from DRC's North Kivu and Ituri provinces into neighbouring Uganda districts.								
2. The impact and scale of the emergency								
The event is categorized as a level 2 medium level emergency classified by UNHCR (United Nation Higher Commission for Refugees) as level 2. Despite the declaration of Emergency Level by UNHCR, Government of Uganda and other partners, so far only 4% of the required resource is funded out of USD 47.8M appeal. The total number of refugees recorded until July 2022 are shown below:								
i) geographical areas and characteristics								
Number of Refugees per District								
District in SW Uganda	January 2022	February 2022	March 2022	April 2022	May 2022	June 2022	July 2022	Total
Bundibugyo	602	7340	1109	246	132	94	62	9,585
Hoima		101						101
Kasese	5	4		1182	67	37		1,295
Kikuube		532	1357	485	780	840	266	4,260
Kisoro	346	411	3014	17040	6702	8066	3540	39,119
Ntoroko		8						8
Total	953	8,396	5,480	18,953	7,681	9,037	3,868	54,368
Source: UNHCR and Office of the Prime Minister Registration Report, July 2022								
Geographical areas: Busunga, Bunagana and Impondwe districts (Southwestern Uganda region)								
The refugee populations, that are not relocated to settlements, are currently being hosted by two border districts of Bundibunyo and Kisoro.								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The distance from DRC to Bunagana border is in walking distance while the distance from Kisoro to Nyakabande holding centre is 6kms which explains the reasons for the spontaneous back and forth movement of new arrivals to risky areas of war. Distance from Bunagana town in DRC to Kisoro town is 100kms. This is the same arrangement with Busamba withholding centre in Bundibugyo district. On the other hand, Busumba, Bundibugyo population: 128,900 females and 134,900 males giving a total of 263,800 people (UBOS report, 2020) In Kasese Bubukwanga transit centre the population as of May 2022 is 81 individuals (42 males, 39 females) with 44% as children and 56% as adults. 								
ii) numbers and characteristics of people affected (disaggregated by gender, age, ethnicity etc where possible)								
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> According to UNHCR and Office of the Prime Minister registration report, as of mid-July 2022, the total number of new arrivals in Uganda since the start of 2022 is 79,274 (24,004 from South Sudan and 55,270 from DRC). The same report indicates that 38,949 individuals of 19,943 households have been received at the holding and transit centres at Nyakabande Kisoro district since 28th March 2022. Whereas the total population at the both the holding and transit centre was estimated at 17,764 individuals i.e. 2,177 at the transit centre and 15,587 at the holding centre 37,55 females of the above population fall under 0-4 years, contributing to 20.2% of the total population whereas 4,680 males fall under 5-11 years constituting 21.7% of the above total population. 4430 male and 2940 female falling between the age 12 – 17 years constitute 18.9% of the total population. 8094 male and 6411 females falling between the age of 18 – 59 years constituting to 37.2%, 335 male, 425 female between the age of 50+ years 								

constituting 2.0%. there for the daily total population for males stands at 21634 (55.5%) males and 17325 females constituting 44. 5%.

- From 28th March 1217 UAM (842M, 375F) have been registered.
- 497 have been reported as separated children of which 208 are male and 289 are female
- Other children identified with other protection risks are 193 (85 male, and 109 are females)
- 60.8% of the population are children 0-17 years of age while 39.2% are adults
- Ethnicity: they are refugees of Congolese origin. these are Congolese (tribes)

iii) **how the people have been affected (destruction, displacement, effects on homes, livelihood etc – quantitative data if possible)**

- The ongoing fights in DRC has forcefully displaced the above-mentioned population from their country of origin, homes, and villages.
- Many report death of their loved ones, loss of loved ones and property, family separation, disruption of social networks, separation of children and close to 1,330 cases of gender-based violence have been reported and majority of the incidences are happening from the country of origin and during flight.
- It has caused Mental, Neurological and Substance use (MNS (Mental, Neurological and Substance)) conditions with both common disorders and conditions on 2037 (415m, 1622 Females) individuals.
- Spontaneous arrival has exacerbated lack of humanitarian services such as food, emergency livelihoods, water supply, hygiene and sanitation, and basic protection services at the reception/holding centers and the situation is getting worse among vulnerable POCs such as women and children. As a result of unavailability of funding and continuous influx, accessibility to essential services is now a critical problem.

iv) **short- and long-term consequences for the people (including livelihoods, protection etc)**

- The young people might decide to join the existing armed groups which might prolong this conflict and displacement driven humanitarian crisis.
- Increase in common mental health conditions (of different forms such as depression, trauma, anxiety etc) and negative coping mechanisms of the young people particularly women and young people
- Deterioration of health conditions due to stress, malnutrition, and increased likelihoods of disease outbreak
- Loss of education & future leadership and permanent erosion of livelihoods systems
- Disruption of family relationships including family conflicts, separations,
- Increased vulnerability of 2037 registered to be living with common mental disorders and MNS condition well as 1330 case of GBV (Gender Based Violence).
- Competition over scarce resources among refugees with their host communities and deterioration of peaceful co-existence.
- Latest report indicate increase in despair and despondency highlighting back and forth back to unsafe villages in Bunagana. As a result of inadequacy of supportive services such as WASH (Water Sanitation and Hygiene), shelter, housing, bathing facility, sharing latrines.
- Inadequate access to the shelter facilities/sanitary materials has increased GBV cases, undermine protection and dignity for women and girls in the settlement

3. Local and national capacity

The government has an open-door policy for the asylum seekers and refugees and refugees are free to move within the community. The government has allocated land to the refugees and through its structures, providing security. The local area has limited health facilities, schools and water sources and local leaders are community volunteers supporting human resource capacities. Initially twenty partners attempted to support the refugee crisis, but some have left the operations due to a lack of funds to support the needs.

Uganda has a disaster preparedness plan and an emergency response plan in place and national and international organizations are already providing emergency assistance (WASH, food, health, protection, and shelter services) but significantly constrained by funds. The UN (United Nations) and other INGOs have advocacy resource mobilization and fund-raising initiatives.

4. Key needs and gaps

According to the latest UNHCR/OPM weekly emergency SITREP (Situational Report) update released on 14th July 2022, the following are identified as critical gaps.

i. Food

The World Food Program is attempting to provide food rations – while most of the other refugee’s rations have reduced to 60%. Several other NGO (Non-Governmental Organizations), INGOs and UN agencies are attempting to support - however the response plan has only been funded at 4%.

ii. WASH

There is an inadequate water supply, poor hygiene and sanitation practices, and lack of solid water management both at reception centres and settlements where new arrivals are being relocated. Water supply is below the Sphere Standard and requires more water tracking & construction of more water reservoirs and extension of water pipelines at reception centres and drilling of handpump boreholes at settlements.

Due to inadequate latrine facilities, open defecation is common, posing the risk of water borne disease outbreaks. Solid water management is the other concern that needs to be addressed through community awareness raising and provision and construction of solid waste management kits and pits, respectively.

iii. Reception centres management gaps

Reception centres are overcrowded and operating beyond their capacity. For instance, the holding capacity at Nyakabande transit centre, Kisoro district, is overstretched. Its capacity is 7,200 but currently has 17,466 individuals. Therefore, there is a need to increase the capacity of reception centres by providing additional shelter and other relevant facilities such as latrines, water supply, health facilities and hot meals services).

iv. Protection assistance gaps

Women and children account to 84% of the population, and with such high numbers of vulnerable persons, there is a need to enforce protection measures.

For example, it is recorded that the prevalence of GBV and child separation is high with at least 1,253 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) who need immediate assistance at Kiso reception centre. Provision of need-based protection supports are rarely met because of funding limitations. Despite increasing demand for MHPSS (mental health and psychosocial support) support in Kisoro, LWF was forced to interrupt its MHPSS services to POCs due to unavailability of funding.

v. Support to livelihood

There is a need to establish livelihood support in several ways including multipurpose cash transfers and various other ways of supporting refugees to re-establish their livelihoods.

vi. Non-food items

Since most of the refugees did not come with many household items during their flight, there is a need to support them to resettle through the provision of Jerrycans, kitchen sets, basins, hygiene kits (sanitary kits and soaps) and shelter kits (plastic sheets, shelter poles etc.). Neither UNHCR nor other partners can provide these non-food items due to low funding.

Please indicate whether you are considering:

	Indicate your intention with an X below
Rapid Response Fund (<i>intended for small and medium scale emergencies</i>)	
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	X

Capacity details of forum members with the intention to respond are given below.

ACT Member	Geographical focus	Sectors of expertise	Support required	Estimated Budget range
LWF	Kisoro, Nakival, Kyangwali, Rwamwnja	Emergency Response Protection, MHPSS support WASH, Emergency livelihoods Shelter, NFI support	Financial	USD 250,000
HEKS/EPER (SCA)	Rwamwanja/ Chaka/Nakivale/Rubondo or any other as appropriate	Conflict transformation/Peace Building	Financial	50,000 US\$ for 6 months per settlement
DanChurchAid (DCA)	- Kisoro district (Nyakabande Transit/Holding	Cash-Based Transfer (CBT), Energy and Environment, Emergency livelihoods	Financial	USD 200,000

	Centres, Bunagana border area), - Isingiro district (Nakivale refugee settlement)			
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5. Potential responses

ACT Uganda forum member LWF will implement Emergency Response Protection, MHPSS support, WASH, Emergency livelihoods, Shelter and NFI support. HEKS will support Conflict transformation/Peace Building, while DCA will support in a Cash-Based Transfer (CBT) program, Energy and Environment and Emergency livelihoods. The three requesting members have experience in supporting refugee operations in Uganda. LWF is UNHCR multisector implementing partner in Uganda for three decades and supports South Sudanese refugee response in northern Uganda. LWF Uganda is present in South-West Uganda responding to DRC refugees. (CASH, PSS, WASH). We however lack the resources to expand further to provide relief to these new arrivals coming or increasing day on day along the border in Kisoro District.

ⁱ MISSION DE STABILISATION DE L'ORGANISATION DES NATIONS UNIES EN RD CONGO