

Alert note

Response to Congolese Influx, Tanzania, 21st July 2023

Completed by: Kellen Machibya (Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service)

Date completed: 21st July 2023

Forum: ACT Tanzania Forum

Type of emergency: Emergency response to Congolese refugee influx

Date of emergency (if rapid onset): N/A

1. The nature of the emergency

Over the past three and a half months, there has been a sudden surge in the number of asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) arriving in Tanzania, from Masisi and Rutshuru territories in North Kivu. The two locations are currently occupied by Congolese Revolution Army (M23), Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC), Mai Mai and other non-state armed groups who control towns in the same area. Civilians are now caught between groups of combatants and according to some recent peace agreements, it is expected that M23 have agreed to relocate from these areas, but this is not the first time, and these agreements are yet to materialize.

Currently, asylum seekers are travelling from these territories and resting at Goma before proceeding to Tanzania via Bukavu and Uvira. Pastors, priests, fishermen, and good Samaritans are supporting asylum seekers at night with means of transport- boats to Kigoma from Uvira, Makobola and Baraka. Upon reaching Lake Tanganyika shores in Tanzania during night to morning hours, some transporters organized by pastors are taking them to the Ministry of Home Affairs (MoHA) Kigoma Office and mostly recently to UNHCR office and Immigration posts in Kasulu and Kigoma.

As of 19th June 2023, 11,764 Congolese asylum seekers arrived in Tanzania via Kigoma and Kasulu borders, out of which 11,531 have been registered by UNHCR as refugees and relocated to Nyarugusu refugee camp. The government stand has been for the refugee emergency response in Kigoma to be a transit location and temporary and to settle refugees in Nyarugusu camp.

2. The impact and scale of the emergency

Currently the influx of refugees from DRC is a medium-term emergency with majority of asylum seekers coming from Masisi and Rutshuru territories in North Kivu-DRC and settling in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp in Tanzania. The current number of new arrivals on average are 20 persons according to information shared in the last Inter Agency Coordination meeting held on June 29th June 2023 in Kasulu.

ACT Tanzania Forum members are alert and closely following the situation in DRC as it may continue to be more complex as the country anticipates holding its general election in December 2023.

There are already a total of 11,764 Congolese refugees already received in Kigoma region with its disaggregated by age and gender as provided below.

Population Planning Group:	<i>Congolese Refugees (New influx) in Kigoma Region</i>					
Sub-group (if applicable)	<i>Congolese Refugees in Nyarugusu Camp</i>					
Age Group	Male		Female		Total	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
0-4	1,176	10	1412	12	2,588	22
5-11	1,413	12	1294	11	2,707	23

12-17	941	8	824	7	1,765	15
18-59	1,882	16	2235	19	4,117	35
60 and >	235	2	354	3	589	5
Total:	5,647	48	6,117	52	11,764	100

UNHCR has reported that due to the spike in violence in the Eastern Province of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. Initial interviews with recent asylum seekers during the needs assessment regarding the reasons for their flight are:

- Civilians are sometimes accused of participating in the war by hosting opponents and fear being targeted by armed groups and FARDC (Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo /Forces armées de la république démocratique du Congo).
- Civilians especially young men fear being forcefully recruited by the armed groups for domestic work and to provide transport of ammunitions and other goods looted by armed groups.
- Civilians are moving out of DRC due to generalized violence. Young women fear sexual violence.
- Civilians are also moving out to avoid rampant looting and killing by combatants on their assets.

More than 1 million Congolese have sought asylum, in Uganda, South Africa, Burundi, Tanzania, Zambia and Angola (Democratic Republic of the Congo Refugee Crisis Explained, June 23, 2023)

Refugees are likely to be highly dependent on humanitarian assistance in Tanzania, as refugees are not allowed to leave refugee camps to work or trade. As a result, refugees have fewer opportunities to make a living or contribute to their livelihoods.

Protection Risks- life for refugees in the camp can exacerbate several protection risks for vulnerable groups such as unaccompanied / separated children, older persons, persons living with disabilities among other vulnerable groups.

It is likely that gender-based violence can occur and many require psychosocial support due to the traumatizing experiences they have gone through.

Refugees also lack other essential needs like access to water, education and health care and depend on humanitarian support to meet their basic needs.

3. Local and national capacity

Tanzania has an encampment policy and refugees in the camps are restricted from engaging in income-generating activities and no market is allowed to operate within the camps.

To cope, refugees in Nyarugusu and other refugee camps in Tanzania are substituting their food by keeping low scale vegetable kitchen gardens to improve and complement their dietary needs. Others are engaging in micro businesses in secret to help them survive.

To deal with the upsurge of refugees from DRC, there is one reception centre and six hostels may be used in the future to act as reception centres.

The UN cluster system has not been activated. Currently, UNHCR current partners with Project Partnership Agreements (PPA) active in 2023 are providing assistance in the following areas:

1. Medical Teams International (MTI) has set up a tent at the Ministry of Humanitarian Assistance office and is undertaking a medical screening of all the new arrivals and referring those in need to hospitals in the town. MTI are also providing Psychological First Aid (PFA) and counselling to the new arrivals.
2. Danish Refugee Council is protecting vulnerable children and supporting Gender Based Violence (GBV) response.
3. UNHCR is identifying vulnerable groups including lactating mothers, unaccompanied elderly, chronically ill, just to mention a few and supporting them with medical services including Post Exposure Prophylactic (PEP).

4. Norwegian Refugee Council has erected temporary shelters and worked on improving WASH facilities at MoHA office and reception centers(National Milling Corporation ground) in Kigoma.
5. African Initiatives for Relief and Development is deploying buses and trucks to ease transport.

Nonetheless, despite the presence of systems on ground, limited resources have been mobilized and the overall response has yet to reach the required standard and humanitarian assistance is still required.

4. Key needs and gaps

Based on the recent rapid assessment done by Tanganyika Christian Refugee Service (TCRS), but also from the information received through UNHCR updates provided in the interagency meeting, the most pressing needs are:

- Psychosocial support
- Immediately life serving support which may include supplies such as.
 - o Detergents (latrine cleaning kits) for latrines/bathrooms cleanliness
 - o Soap for bathing, hand washing and washing of clothes.
 - o Dignity kits for women menstrual hygiene
 - o Jerry cans for water collection and storage
 - o Environmental cleaning kits
- General water storage tanks, preferably OXFAM tanks sized 70m³ to 90m³
- Water taps (these for replacing of older/damaged taps) in the existing network.
- Family shared latrines for refugees in newly relocated spaces and
- Individual household latrines for the settled families and replacement of full ones.
- Healthcare
- Food

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>)	X
Appeal (<i>intended for large scale emergencies</i>)	

If you indicate an intention to launch an appeal, the secretariat will activate an Emergency Steering Committee meeting within two working days on receipt of this alert.

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
TCRS	Kasulu district in Kigoma region	WASH, Nonfood items and Psychosocial support	Financial support	150,000 USD

5. Potential responses

TCRS operates in the affected region and has experience in responding to emergencies and disasters by providing relief services such as food and non-food items, WASH, and psychosocial support to affected communities since its establishment in 1964 up to-date. On the side of refugees, TCRS assisted the government and UNHCR in humanitarian refugee relief operations who fled from neighbouring countries

since 1964 to 2019. TCRS has been taking over charge of camp management comprising of such activities as storage (warehousing) and distribution (logistics) of food and non-food items, providing water and sanitation services and facilities, operating primary, secondary and post-secondary (vocational training and adult education) schools, constructing residential and communal shelters, encouraging income generating activities, advocating action against SGBV, promoting improved agricultural and environmental practices, promoting HIV/AIDS awareness, facilitating transportation and voluntary repatriation and offering logistical support to the various humanitarian and governmental agencies working in and around the camps.

Through ACT Alliance Tanzania forum, TCRS provided 66,645 pcs of clothes for men, women and children to UNHCR as a donation.

Based on the rapid need assessment done, TCRS is intending to provide support in areas of WASH, NFIs and psychosocial support, to be provided in Nyarugusu camp where the refugees are being relocated to from Kigoma upon their arrival in the region.

According to UNHCR, the set target population for this year (2023) is 25,000 refugees which we are also looking into them benefiting from these planned interventions.