

Central Africa Republic: Violence drives thousands of refugees into neighbouring DR Congo, says UN agency

The United Nations refugee agency is calling for urgent support for thousands of people arriving in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) after fleeing conflict in south-eastern Central African Republic (CAR).

According to the [Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees](#) (UNHCR), at least 7,000 people – most of them women and children – have reached DRC over the past week.

“The [speed of arrivals](#) and the very limited humanitarian presence in the area mean that people urgently need increased support,” said William Spindler, a UNHCR spokesperson, told media at the regular news briefing in Geneva.

The latest numbers are an addition to [more than 180,000 people](#) who have sought refuge in the remote Kanzawi village in DRC’s northern province of Bas-Uele.

Of particular concern, said Mr. Spindler, is the situation of elderly people, pregnant women and others with specific needs. There is only one water source in the village, forcing people to drink from the river. Most of the refugees are sleeping in the open, others in public buildings.

In response, UNHCR has worked to improve community infrastructure in some villages and towns that have taken in a large number of refugees, including drilling new wells, supporting local schools and health centres and providing shelter to the extremely vulnerable CAR refugees

It is also supporting the registration of refugees and providing them with necessary documents.

This response, however, has been hit by lack of resources.

“Our own capacity for an emergency response is severely stretched, with our DRC operation funded at \$1.6 for every \$10 needed,” said Mr. Spindler.