

EU releases additional aid as crisis in Democratic Republic of Congo's Kasai worsens

The European Commission has announced additional humanitarian aid of €5 million to help scores of people in urgent need of assistance in the Democratic Republic of Congo's conflict-torn provinces of Kasai.

This funding brings EU humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable people in the Democratic Republic of Congo to almost €28 million since the beginning of the year.

"The European Union is extremely concerned by the current humanitarian crisis in Kasai, causing horrible suffering to so many people. The funding we provide today will help for the very first time in this region our humanitarian partners to respond to the most urgent needs of those affected by the conflict. But ultimately, it is only by laying down arms and restoring peace that all those caught in this conflict will be able to return home and rebuild their lives," said Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos **Stylianides**.

The situation in the Kasai has been increasingly deteriorating over the last months, with now 8 provinces and 2.6 million people affected by conflict.

Over 1.3 million people are currently internally displaced, with some 35 000 new cases reported during May alone. Since the beginning of the year, an average of 8 000 people per day have been displaced.

The EU funding announced today will help meet the most urgent needs of these internally displaced persons, the majority of whom are women and children. It will help respond to their protection needs, provide lifesaving assistance including water and sanitation, shelter, health and food assistance. It will also enhance humanitarian partners' logistics capacity in a country where access is often problematic due to poor infrastructure and high insecurity. It is estimated that the EU-funded interventions would reach approximately 200,000 beneficiaries.

Background

The DRC is one of the poorest countries in the world. Despite its abundance in natural resources, it is ranked 176th out of 188 in the 2016 [Human Development Index](#). Its complex humanitarian crisis is characterised by violent armed conflicts, but also by malnutrition, epidemic outbreaks and vast numbers of forcibly displaced people.

Some 3.7 million people currently live displaced within the country, which also hosts more than 460 000 refugees with an ongoing influx of people fleeing the conflict in South Sudan.

Since August 2016, a complex emergency quickly developed in the Kasai, causing additional forced displacement, and drastically worsening the food security situation in the affected provinces. According to the World Food Programme, 42% of the population in Kasai are currently not meeting their food needs.

The EU has been providing humanitarian assistance to the Democratic Republic of Congo since 1994. Over the last past 5 years, more than €200 million have been allocated to provide humanitarian assistance to the most vulnerable. An amount of €620 million in development funding has also been allocated for the period 2014-2020, focusing mainly on health, environment and sustainable agriculture, infrastructure, as well as governance and the rule of law.

The Commission also operates a dedicated [humanitarian air service called 'ECHO Flight'](#), which guarantees safe and fast transports of humanitarian personnel and supplies to remote locations in DRC.