

Emergency food distributions launched to assist thousands displaced by conflict in DR Congo – UN agency

16 August 2017 – Food assistance will be provided to food insecure people displaced by conflict in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), says the United Nations food agency.

The World Food Programme ([WFP](#)) and its partner World Vision have launched an emergency operation to provide food assistance to 42,000 food insecure people who, due to conflict, have fled their villages in the country's Kasai and Kasai Central provinces.

"We launched this emergency response as soon as funds became available," [said](#) Claude Jibidar, WFP Representative and Country Director in DRC, in a press statement.

"We targeted the most vulnerable among the vulnerable, and our access to these displaced people also depend on security conditions. However, with nearly one and a half million displaced people in the Kasai region, additional donor support is essential for WFP to scale up our operations and reach more vulnerable displaced people," he added.

WFP plans to assist 25,000 displaced persons in Kasai Central and 17,000 people in the Kasai province in the coming days, the statement elaborated. However, WFP urgently requires \$17.3 million to support the operations scale-up from September to December 2017.

"Food distributions have started in the town of Tshilumba with further distributions scheduled this month. As part of this effort and where safe access is possible, WFP and the Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)) continue to identify the most vulnerable displaced people in areas identified with high levels of food insecurity, as determined in a recent food security study," [said](#) WFP.

According to its recent [food security assessment](#), WFP said that in the last year, the number of people in need of urgent humanitarian food assistance in the DRC rose by 1.8 million from 5.9 million to 7.7 million.

"In conflict-ridden areas, more than 1.5 million people are facing 'emergency' levels of food insecurity, leaving many with no option but to sell everything they have while skipping or reducing their meals," the statement outlined.

In addition to food distributions, WFP is leading the Logistics Cluster, which provides technical and logistical support to humanitarian organizations and has been operational in the Kasai region since June.

"Mobile warehouses have been built to store food and non-food items,

while several trucks have been sent to Kasai and Kasai Central to transport food and supplies,” said the statement.

To meet the huge needs of displaced people in hard-to-reach areas, since June the WFP-led UN Humanitarian Air Service has expanded its support, positioning an aircraft in Kananga in Kasai Central on a permanent basis and flying three times weekly to Tshikapa, Kasai – making those most in need more accessible to humanitarian organizations.

Scores of people have fled their villages due to the conflict that broke out in the Kasai region in August 2016.

According to the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), there are some 1.4 million internally displaced people across the Kasai provinces. Additionally, more than 31,000 have fled into neighbouring Angola.

“With up to 3.8 million people displaced in total, the DRC is home to the largest population of internally displaced people in Africa,” underscored the statement.

The sharp deterioration in people's food security is mainly attributable to displacement caused by an upsurge in conflict and pest infestation in crops across the country. WFP continues to coordinate with FAO and other partners to serve the most vulnerable people in the Kasai region, as well as in other parts of the country.

[UN chief condemns deadly terrorist attacks in Borno State, Nigeria](#)

16 August 2017 – Condemning a series of terrorist attacks in north-eastern Nigeria, United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has called for those responsible for these “repeated heinous acts” to be brought to justice.

In a statement from his spokesman late Tuesday, the Secretary-General extended his deep condolences to the Government and people of Nigeria, and wished those injured a speedy recovery.

“He calls for those responsible for these [repeated heinous acts](#) in Nigeria and neighbouring countries to be swiftly brought to justice,” according to the statement.

Mr. Guterres reiterated the UN's solidarity and support to the Government in its fight against terrorism and violent extremism.

The Secretary-General also renews the commitment of the United Nations to support efforts within the framework of the counter-terrorism initiatives of the Lake Chad Basin Commission, the spokesman said referring to an intergovernmental organization comprised of the eight countries near Lake Chad.

The Security Council met yesterday to discuss the African-led force on terrorism that has been set up in the Sahel by the so-called Group of Five (G5), which includes Nigeria, along with Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali and Mauritania. The joint task force is operational, but faces a number of challenges, including funding.

[Security Council told African-led force on terrorism in the Sahel operational but challenged](#)

15 August 2017 – The joint task force by the so-called Group of Five (G5) Burkina Faso, Chad, Mali, Mauritania and Niger to tackle the threat of terrorism in Africa's Sahel region is now operational, but a number of challenges remain, including funding, the United Nations Security Council was today told.

The creation of the G5 Sahel Joint Force has the potential to make a significant contribution to efforts already under way to stabilize the region, the Assistant Secretary-General for Peacekeeping Operations, El-Ghassim Wane, [told](#) the 15-member Council in New York.

But we must also be realistic about the challenges that remain and the issues that remain to be resolved. The success of the Joint Force depends as much on deepening this regional partnership and on the applicable policy framework, as on the determination of its members to achieve its operationalization, and the unfailing support of their international partners.

Mr. Wane said the Joint Force offers a unique opportunity to respond to regional challenges, but only if other aspects and cases of instability in the region are addressed.

Addressing the root causes of instability in the Sahel requires going beyond military action and tackling the governance gap, chronic poverty and unemployment, climate change and financing for development, he said.

Abject poverty, fast population growth, climate change, recurrent food and nutrition crises, armed conflicts and violence converge dangerously and undermine the lives and assets and future prospects of millions of families

across the Sahel region, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)) has said. More than 30 million people face food insecurity, one in five children under the age of five suffers from acute malnutrition and at least 4.9 million are displaced by the effects of conflicts.

Speaking to the Security Council, the senior UN official also noted the need to tackle cross-border crime and to impose targeted sanctions, as well as to create a political strategy to guide the activities of the Joint Force and align them with the Malian peace process and other regional initiatives.

He noted also that the Joint Force should work closely with the recently established working group of the Executive Committee on the Sahel chaired by UN Deputy Secretary-General Amina Mohammed and the African Union's peace and security architecture.

Among the greatest needs are funding, Mr. Wane said praying the five Member States for contributing funds to the project.

Those joint contribution, combined with the European Union's pledged contribution, as announced by Commissioner Federica Mogherini in June, amount to €108 million, or 25 percent of total requirements.

While generating pledges and contributions to meet the requirements of the Joint Force will be critical, the setting up of transparent, coordinated and effective funding will be equally as important, Mr. Wane said, noting the planned meeting in September hosted by German and French Defence Ministries to discuss further opportunities to support the Joint Force.

The Joint Force is ready to conduct its first coordinated operations along Mali's borders with Nigeria and Burkina Faso in October, with greater capacity in spring 2018.

A written report on the workings of the Joint Force is expected in October.

Visiting injured 'blue helmets' in Mali

Meanwhile, in Mali today, the Head of the UN Mission, Mahamat Saleh Annadif, along with the Malian Prime Minister and governmental officials, visited the UN camp in Timbuktu and met with the wounded following yesterday's attacks on UN camps in Douenza and Timbuktu.

A UN peacekeeper, a Malian soldier and a member of the Malian gendarmerie were killed, along with six Malian contractors in the attacks. A number of other people were also wounded.

The UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission in Mali ([MINUSMA](#)) said the situation in Timbuktu today is calm but tense, with the presence of a large number of Malian security and defence forces.

UN humanitarian team activated in Nepal in wake of severe floods and landslides

15 August 2017 – The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) has been activated in Nepal to support response efforts in the aftermath of severe floods that have hit the nation, the office of the [United Nations Resident Coordinator in the country](#) has said.

According to a [humanitarian update](#) issued by the office, as of 11:00 AM local time, 14 August, at least 66 people – including children – have been killed, 35 are missing, and many have been displaced following large-scale flooding and landslides in the wake of the worst rains to strike Nepal in 15 years.

The full extent of the disaster is not yet known [as] many affected areas remain inaccessible due to damaged roads and bridges, read the update.

It also noted that rapid assessments are being conducted in the impacted districts and that initial reports show that power and Internet connectivity has been disrupted in some areas and transport infrastructure has been damaged. A major airport located in Biratnagar city (in the south of the country) has been completely inundated.

There is also growing concern for water-borne diseases and health facilities in at least two districts (Mahottari and Banke) have been completely flooded.

Anecdotal information from the field indicates that a significant number of pregnant and lactating mothers, disabled and other vulnerable groups are affected, the update added.

The disaster comes at a time when the landlocked Asian nation was struggling to recover from the 2015 earthquakes. Some five of the 27 affected districts are also earthquake-affected, while four of them were hit by floods a year prior, the update mentioned.

The UN Resident Coordinator's office also noted that the impact of the current floods could be exacerbated by pre-existing social and economic disparities, with some of the affected districts having the lowest Human Development Index ([HDI](#)) scores in the country.

Experience from the 2014 floods that affected Banke, Bardiya, Dang and Surkhet [districts] indicates that in [areas] where malnutrition is already a concern, the onset of such an emergency can have a sudden and severe impact on malnutrition rates, added the humanitarian note.

[‘Dramatic’ rise in Central African Republic violence happening out of media eyes, warns UNICEF](#)

15 August 2017 – The Central African Republic (CAR) has spiralled into violence and remains one of the worst countries in the world to be a child and – right now there are few eyes looking at them and few hands trying to help, the United Nations children’s agency said today.

“The past year, and especially the last quarter, has seen a [dramatic increase in violence](#),” Donaig Le Du, spokesperson for the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF), told reporters at the regular press briefing in Geneva.

“There are now an estimated 600,000 internally displaced people, up from 440,000 at the end of April – a big increase in the past 2-3 months,” she continued, pointing out that 600,000 was the April 2014 count, right after the peak of the crisis.

“And there are still 480,000 CAR refugees in neighbouring countries. So out of an estimated population of a little over five million, one in five is either a refugee or displaced, half of them children,” Ms. Le Du added.

UNICEF noted that as the country spirals into violence, Bangui, the capital, is quiet.

“The roads are bad, and with the rainy season and insecurity, it becomes nearly impossible to travel. There is limited cell phone coverage,” the spokesperson explained.

She gave the example of six Red Cross volunteers whose deaths were not reported until after took two weeks after they were killed in Gambo earlier this month.

Two-thirds of the country is controlled by armed groups

Beyond Bangui, two-thirds of the country is controlled by armed groups.

“In the cities and villages that were recently affected by violence, that means that schools are closed. That teachers don’t dare to go to schools. Several NGOs [non-governmental organizations] have retreated, which means no health care. Supplies are looted – at one health centre, solar panels were stolen from solar fridges for example, which means no immunizations,” Ms. Le Du elaborated.

Horrendous reports on children’s rights violations have surfaced over the past months and weeks.

¶ Precise numbers are impossible to know but we know for a fact that children have been killed; there have been incidents of sexual violence, and that recruitment into armed groups is happening. But there are less direct violations with lasting consequences ¶ having to flee or take refuge in the bush; having no education or health care, she said.

One specificity of the CAR conflict shows little fighting between armed groups, which instead attack civilians on the other side and increasingly target the UN Multidimensional Integrated Stabilization Mission ([MINUSCA](#)) and humanitarian actors.

An open letter to the UN Secretary-General from major international NGOs identifies the CAR as the most dangerous country in the world to deliver humanitarian assistance ¶ with the world's highest level of violence against humanitarian workers, accounting for one-third of all incidents targeting aid workers.

The CAR is also the world's least developed country, placing 188th out of the 188 countries on the Human Development Index.

¶ But the world cannot abandon CAR's children ¶ and right now there are few eyes looking at them and few hands trying to help,¶ Ms. Le Du concluded.

As of end-July, UNICEF's \$46.3 million humanitarian appeal for CAR children was 42 per cent funded. Having been revised up to \$52.8 million, it now has a 63 per cent funding gap.