

[DR Congo: UN refugee agency sounds alarm as displacement sees no end in Kasai region](#)

14 July 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency has alerted the humanitarian community about the violence and continued displacement of civilians in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) from the Kasai region where the estimated number of displaced people now exceeds 1.3 million.

“Delivering assistance and protection to internally displaced people is a huge challenge, given the size of the area impacted – the Kasai region is about the size of Germany – but has difficult road conditions and lacks security,” [said](#) William Spindler, spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), at the press briefing in Geneva.

The conflict in the Kasai region, which started in late 2016 between a local traditional leader – the Kamuina Nsapu – and state authorities, continues to expand, with other armed groups springing up and committing severe human rights abuses against civilians.

Mr. Spindler noted that during recent missions to two provinces bordering the main conflict region, Kwilu and Lualaba, UNHCR’s team met some extremely vulnerable new arrivals.

“Many said that they spent weeks fleeing through the dense forest without food, drinking water, medicine or clothes and saw people dying on the way, including women and children,” he said.

He warned that the risk of sexual abuse and exploitation makes the situation particularly worrying, as many children and women fled on their own and some unaccompanied minors are without proper foster care arrangements.

The majority of those displaced are being accommodated by host communities, despite limited resources.

UNHCR is strengthening its response on the ground, closely working with national partner organizations to distribute more than 267,000 hot meals daily in five provinces affected by the displacement, namely Kasai, Kasai Central, Kwango, Kwilu and Lualaba.

A first distribution of essential household items to some 20,000 vulnerable people in Lualaba province will also start in the coming days, Mr. Spindler said.

[Guterres condemns deadly attack on Israeli police officers in Old City of Jerusalem](#)

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14 July 2017 –

United Nations [Secretary-General](#) António Guterres has condemned this morning's deadly attack by three assailants that left two Israeli police officers dead and leaving a third one injured in the Old City of Jerusalem.

In a statement attributable to his spokesperson, the Secretary-General warned that this incident has the [potential to ignite further violence](#). He called upon all to act responsibly to avoid escalation.

To that end, Mr. Guterres welcomed the swift condemnation of the attack by Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas and the assurances by Israeli Prime Minister Benjamin Netanyahu that the status quo at the holy sites in Jerusalem will be respected.

The sanctity of religious sites should be respected as places for reflection, not violence, added the statement.

According to media reports the deadly attack took place near the holy site known as the Temple Mount and as Haram al-Sharif.

The thoughts and prayers of the Secretary-General are with the families of the victims, and he wishes a speedy recovery to the injured, it adds.

[UN warns of worsening hunger in East Africa amid third consecutive failed rainy season](#)

14 July 2017 – The third consecutive failed rainy season in East Africa has seriously eroded families' resilience, and urgent and effective livelihood support is required, the United Nations agricultural agency has warned.

According to an alert released today by the Food and Agriculture Organization ([FAO](#)), poor rains have worsened hunger and left crops scorched, pastures dry

and thousands of livestock dead.

This is the third season in a row that families have had to endure failed rains – they are simply running out of ways to cope, said FAO's Director of Emergencies Dominique Burgeon in a news release. Support is needed now before the situation rapidly deteriorates further.

Families are simply running out of ways to cope

The most affected areas, which received less than half of their normal seasonal rainfall, are central and southern Somalia, southeastern Ethiopia, northern and eastern Kenya, northern Tanzania and northeastern and southwestern Uganda.

Increasing humanitarian need

The number of people in need of humanitarian assistance in these five countries, currently estimated at about 16 million, has increased by about 30 per cent since late 2016.

In Somalia, almost half of the total population is lacking reliable access to a sufficient quantity of affordable, nutritious food.

Read more on: [UN urges 'reboot' of drought responses to focus more on preparedness](#)

The food security situation for pastoralists is of particular concern, in Ethiopia, Kenya and Somalia, where animal mortality rates are high and milk production from the surviving animals has declined sharply with negative consequences on food security and nutrition.

When we know how critical milk is for the healthy development of children aged under five, and the irreversible damage its lack can create, it is evident that supporting pastoralists going through this drought is essential, said Mr. Burgeon.

Poor crop prospects

In several cropping areas across the region, poor rains have caused sharp reductions in planting, and wilting of crops currently being harvested. Despite some late rainfall in May, damage to crops is irreversible.

In addition, fall armyworm, which has caused extensive damage to maize crops in southern Africa, has spread to the east and has worsened the situation.

Cereal prices are surging, driven by reduced supplies and concerns over the performance of current-season crops. Prices in May were at record to near-record levels in most markets and up to double their year-earlier levels.

[Despite some humanitarian progress in Eritrea, UN relief official urges continued aid to tackle hunger](#)

13 July 2017 – The humanitarian situation in Eritrea – which is quite isolated and off the media radars – is “on a positive trajectory” but international donors need to give malnourishment and food insecurity continued attention, a senior United Nations relief official today said.

Back from a three-day fact finding trip to the east African country, John Ging, Director of the Operational Division at the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs ([OCHA](#)), told journalists in New York that food and security remains a key concern there.

“Eighty per cent of the population depends on subsistence agriculture. The country is susceptible to harsh climatic conditions, especially what we saw with El Nino,” he said.

He noted that half of all children under the age of five in Eritrea suffer from stunting, and 39 per cent are underweight.

“We have to work very actively in that particular area to make sure we are addressing those who are suffering,” said Mr. Ging, noting an extensive programme to aid children in the country run by the UN Children’s Fund ([UNICEF](#)).

Among other concerns, he mentioned the need to lower infant mortality, to provide people with greater access to clean drinking water and to improve sanitation.

Eritrea, which has a population of roughly 3.5 million, sits at number 179 out of 188 countries on the UN’s Human Development Index, which measures indicators such as life expectancy and education.

The UN is assisting at nutritional feeding centres and health clinics, and has helped Eritrea achieve “a lot of progress” on the universal development goals.

“I don’t want to overstate the progress – it is significant because it is on a positive trajectory – but we have a long way to go,” Mr. Ging said.

He noted the “modest” appeal under way for \$328 million over the next five years to sustain and build on these programmes. The previous programme was 83 per cent funded.

“The momentum is there but there is a long way to go, so we have to give

attention so it continues on that trajectory,” he reiterated.

[UN envoy calls on Security Council to further support fight against terrorism in West Africa, Sahel](#)

13 July 2017 – Amid rising terrorism and violent extremism in West Africa and the United Nations envoy for the region called on the Security Council to further support national and Regional efforts to combat this “serious threat”, including strengthening the UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel.

The efforts of the region’s States towards broader development, increased investment, improved infrastructure and job creation are being undermined by factors of insecurity “both traditional and new,” warned Mohamed Ibn Chambas, the head of the UN Office for West Africa (UNOWAS).

Terrorism and violent extremism, which aggravate humanitarian crises and erode the integrity of the region’s States, have exacerbated traditional threats in West Africa and the Sahel region, which includes Mali, Mauritania, Cameroon, Burkina Faso, Senegal, Nigeria and Niger and Chad.

“These factors, combined with climate change, youth bulge and unemployment and unchecked urbanization constitute veritable push factors underpinning the surge in irregular migration and human trafficking,” he explained to the Council.

In the Sahel, the envoy continued, instability in Mali continues to spread into north-eastern Burkina Faso and western Niger, as evidenced by the recent deadly attacks in the border areas between these three countries. In the Liptako-Gourma region, which links Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, the past month has been marked by an intensification of terrorist activities and violent extremism, including coordinated cross-border attacks on border crossings.

The leaders of those three countries met in Niamey on 24 January, and announced the formation of a multinational security force. The announcement came in the context of ongoing discussions on the operationalization of the G5 Sahel Joint Force (FC-G5S), an initiative that also includes, in addition to Mali, Burkina Faso and Niger, Chad and Mauritania. He called on the Security Council to further support the national and regional initiatives of the Sahel States against violent extremism and terrorism.

Turning to the situation in the Lake Chad Basin, Mr. Chambas said that despite the remarkable efforts of the Multinational Joint Force against Boko Haram, recent attacks demonstrated that the terrorist group remains a

“serious threat” to the region. The mode and sophistication of these attacks, he added, suggest that the terrorist group has benefited from reinforcements.

The attacks, the UNOWAS chief stressed, have “devastating humanitarian consequences” in the Lake Chad Basin, where 5.2 million people, many of whom are displaced, are in a vulnerable situation.

At the same time, the threats posed by extremists and terrorist groups should not obscure other traditional threats to security in the region, such as the rise of inter-communal tensions in several countries, including clashes between herders and farmers. Also of concern is the intensification of smuggling, cross-border crime and human trafficking in areas where State structures are scarce.

“This insecurity,” he said, “also extends to the Gulf of Guinea, where piracy is increasing.”

In view of these threats, he considered that the [UN Integrated Strategy for the Sahel](#) presents an effective multidimensional response to streamline efforts and reduce duplication between the various initiatives in the Sahel.

In that context, Mr. Chambas said he is ready to continue working with the States of the region to strengthen justice, the rule of law, security reform and national reconciliation.