

In DR Congo, UN aid chief says world must 'not let down' millions of people in need

21 July 2017 – Wrapping up a four-day mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the United Nations humanitarian chief today urged the world not to forget the DRC, and called for scaled-up relief funding to help millions of people suffering from violence, diseases, and malnutrition.

I urge and encourage the international community not to let down the millions of people in need in the DRC. How many more lives do we need to step up? said UN Emergency Relief Coordinator Stephen O'Brien in a press release on the visit.

Some 3.8 million people are now displaced within the DRC. An appeal for \$748 million launched earlier this year has so far received less than 25 per cent of funding, the lowest level in the past 10 years.

Separately, a \$64.5 million emergency appeal was made for the Kasai crisis. To date it has only received 11 per cent.

This is not just insufficient it is unacceptable for the global community to leave this very real suffering of the Congolese people unaddressed just because of a shortage of money, stressed Mr. O'Brien, who is also the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs.

During two days of travel outside of the capital, Kinshasa, Mr. O'Brien visited some of the communities most affected by the massive crisis, including Tshikapa in the Kasai region, where a year of conflict has led to serious human rights abuses and displaced some 1.4 million people.



Stephen O'Brien, Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, visits Moni, once a site for internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of Congo. It used to host 12,000 people, but after fighting broke out on July 4th 2017, shelters were burned down and people fled. Photo: OCHA

The violence in the five provinces that make up the Kasai region has also pushed thousands of children out of school. Some 600 cases of sexual-based violence have been reported since last year, while several schools and health clinics have been commandeered into temporary shelter for the displaced.

In the Komba IDP site, I met young Mangasa Kalone who told me how she was almost burned alive when her village was attacked, Mr. O'Brien highlighted.

He also visited a school compound where NGOs are providing protection and

recreational activities to some 1,000 unaccompanied minors. "I am deeply concerned for the health of these children, many have been stunted by malnutrition," he said.

He also held talks with a wide range of actors in North Kivu and South Kivu, two of the traditional hotbeds of humanitarian needs.

In Kinshasa, he met with the Congolese Prime Minister, Bruno Tshibala, the ministers for interior and humanitarian affairs, representatives of donor countries, and senior officials of UN agencies and of the peacekeeping mission, known for its French acronym MONUSCO.

In addition to the 3.8 million IDPs, the country is dealing with a steady flow of refugees from neighboring Burundi, the Central African Republic and South Sudan.

"All we need now is the funding," Mr. O'Brien concluded.