

Massive underfunding hampering relief efforts for the displaced in DRC and Zambia – UN agency

1 December 2017 – With millions displaced within the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and thousands more forced to flee across the border into Zambia, the United Nations refugee agency is appealing for urgent resources to make sure that relief programmes – hanging on by threads – do not collapse.

“The number of refugees fleeing militia violence in south-eastern DRC and arriving in [Zambia has crossed the 12,000 mark](#) – with more than 8,400 arrivals in the last three months,” Babar Baloch, a spokesperson for the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters at a regular news briefing in Geneva Friday.

In addition, according to refugee accounts, [more than four million people are displaced inside the DRC](#), and there are fears that many more could be forced to flee the country as fighting is intensifying.

The worst affected are women and children, who form about 80 per cent of the refugee numbers, and there are reports of civilians being killed, women being raped, private property looted and houses torched.

However, assistance programmes in both countries are “hugely underfunded” added Mr. Baloch, noting that of the \$236.2 million required in the DRC, only \$54.6 million has been received so far, while in Zambia, only \$13.6 million has been received.

“In both cases, this is less than a quarter of what is needed,” he expressed.

According to the UN refugee agency, most of the people displaced from the DRC into Zambia hail from the Haut-Katanga and Tanganyika provinces of the and many among them crossed into the Zambian province of Luapula (which borders the DRC on three sides).

People are also crossing into other northern and north-western provinces of Zambia. In total, the country hosts over 65,000 refugees, including some 33,000 from the DRC.