

UN aid chief urges international support to tackle 'spiralling humanitarian needs' in DR Congo

As fighting in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) has forced 4.5 million people to flee their homes over the past year and left more than 13 million in need of humanitarian assistance, the United Nations Emergency Relief Coordinator has called on the international community to urgently address the crisis.

"We heard their [heart-wrenching stories](#), their descriptions of what they need, but also their hopes and their stories of resilience and courage in the face of unimaginable challenges," said Mark Lowcock, who is also the UN Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, wrapping up his visit to the country with Sigrid Kaag, Minister for Foreign Trade and Development Cooperation for the Netherlands.

With humanitarian needs having doubled since last year, more than 4.6 million Congolese children are acutely malnourished, including 2.2 million severely acute cases. Moreover, epidemics are spreading – counting the worst outbreak of cholera in 15 years.

"What we know is happening in many parts of the country, doesn't need to persist if we work together," continued Mr. Lowcock. "Every vulnerable Congolese family deserves all our support to rebuild their lives."

Mr. Lowcock and Ms. Kaag Tuesday travelled to Kalemie in the south-eastern province of Tanganyika where they visited the Katanika displacement site and spoke with some of the over 13,000 people who live there, having fled ethnic violence.

Ms. Kaag joined a group of women, including survivors of sexual violence, to listen to their experiences, needs, and hopes for the future. In Katanika, as in most Congolese provinces affected by displacement, women and children make up the majority of the severely affected people.

They also travelled to the Kalunga displacement site, which, since November 2016, has received nearly 3,500 displaced families. Humanitarian partners there have established education; water and sanitation; and agricultural to help meet the needs of displaced people.

On Monday, Mr. Lowcock and Ms. Kaag met with Jose Makila Sumanda, acting Prime Minister, and Bernard Biando Sango, Minister of Solidarity and Humanitarian Action and discussed the impact of insecurity on aid operations.

The Government representatives said they would facilitate the work of humanitarian organizations and reduce tariffs for humanitarian imports, including medicines and food

Humanitarian partners require nearly \$1.7 billion this year to address humanitarian needs in the country, including for 4.5 million internally displaced people. On 13 April in Geneva, the European Commission, the Netherlands and United Arab Emirates will co-host the first-ever DRC humanitarian donor conference.