

UN refugee agency sending urgent relief items for Congolese civilians fleeing to Angola

21 April 2017 – The United Nations refugee agency is shipping tents, mosquito nets and other essential relief items to Angola, where some 9,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have fled this month alone.

Refugees reported fleeing [attacks from militia groups](#), who are targeting police, military officials, and civilians who they believe are supporting or representing the Government, Babar Baloch, spokesperson at the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees ([UNHCR](#)), told reporters at the UN's Geneva Office.

The refugees are fleeing from the Kasai region, a formerly peaceful area that turned violent in mid-2016, forcing more than one million civilians to run away.

The new arrivals are terrified and still fear for their lives and mentioned they do not have any immediate plans to return home, Mr. Baloch said. Some parents have reportedly sent their children across the border, worrying they would be forcibly recruited by the militias if they had stayed in the DRC.

The UN agency expressed particular concern about the situation of children, many of whom are arriving malnourished and sick – suffering from diarrhoea, fever and malaria.

Those fleeing into Angola continue to arrive mainly in Dundo, the capital of north-eastern Luanda Norte Province.

UNHCR is sending an additional emergency team to the town tomorrow, to support relief efforts.

There are concerns that the situation will worsen as Angola's wet season peaks in April, further complicating living conditions and the health of refugees, particularly women, children, the elderly and the disabled.