

14 September 2011

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

IDPs need further assistance in context of continued attacks and insecurity

There were an estimated 1.7 million internally displaced people (IDPs) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as of July 2011, the vast majority of them in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu. This included over 128,000 people newly displaced in the first quarter of 2011. Most fled their homes to escape fighting between rebel groups and the Congolese armed forces, while others were victims of direct attacks and violence perpetrated by the warring parties or by other armed individuals. The UN peacekeeping mission has provided some support to the army in its fight against rebel groups, and has led short operations too.

One million people were displaced during 2009, during major military operations against rebel groups in the Kivus and subsequent retaliatory attacks against civilians by these groups. Meanwhile, a million people reportedly returned home in 2009 and 2010. Displacement peaked in 2003, with an estimated 3.4 million people forced from their homes, most of them in the east of the country.

As national and international attention is focused on the presidential elections scheduled for the end of November 2011, the security situation in the eastern part of the country remains volatile due to the presence of foreign and local armed groups.

In 2011, non-state armed groups in the Kivus were able to retake old positions and cause renewed attacks against civilians, including the killing and rape of IDPs, as army units were removed from entire zones already prone to insecurity to be brought together for training before their redeployment, leaving their inhabitants without any protection. Due to heightened insecurity, the rate of return slowed down in mid-2011, compared to previous months.

A number of national and international organisations are attempting to meet the needs of IDPs and returnees. The scale of the international assistance has grown steadily, but has reportedly remained far from adequate to meet the magnitude of the needs. Humanitarian agencies have struggled to respond to the emergency needs of IDPs and other vulnerable people who are often in remote areas, in the context of ongoing military operations and increased attacks against their staff.



Humanitarian needs remain high due to continuing armed conflicts and general insecurity. An estimated 1.7 million people are displaced. Millions of people live in fear and rely on humanitarian assistance for survival.¹

TOTAL:
1.7 million IDPs (as of 31 Mar 2011)^a
817,250 returnees (1 Oct 2009- 31 Mar 2011)^a

Equateur Province

Inter-ethnic clashes in Equateur province led to massive displacement in late 2009 and 2010. The situation has recently calmed down with an on-going reconciliation process.¹ Over 120,000 refugees are still settled in neighbouring Congo.²

Area with Enyele communities

Angola Border

Some 70,000 Congolese were expelled from Angola from January 2010 to January 2011 with reports of rapes, physical torture and sexual violence. Humanitarian partners providing basic assistance to the most vulnerable insist that expulsions be carried out in dignity and according to international human rights law.¹

Border with expulsions

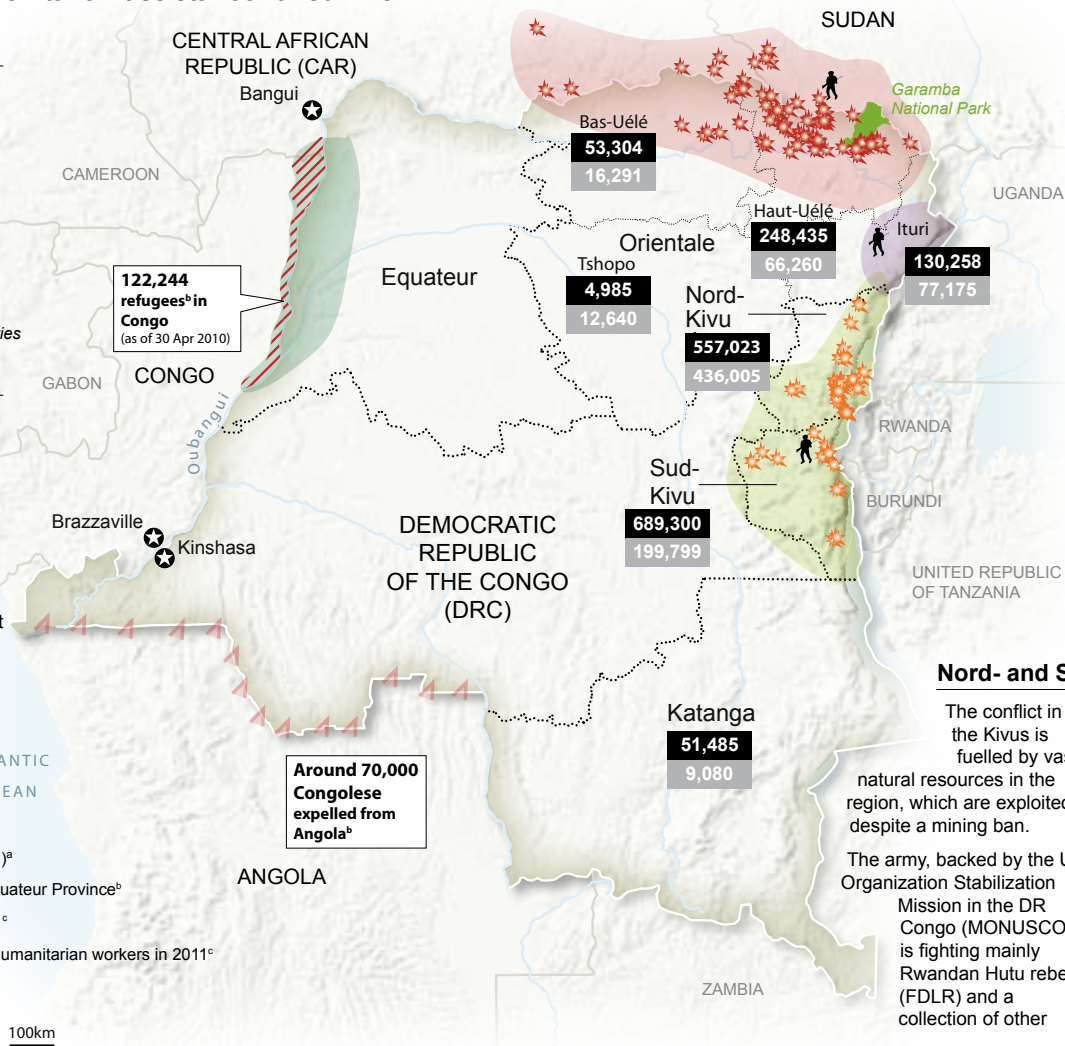
Number of IDPs (as of 31 Mar 2011)^a

Number of returnees (1 Oct 2009 - 31 Mar 2011)^a

Area with refugees from Equateur Province^b

LRA-related attacks in 2011^c

Security incidents against humanitarian workers in 2011^c

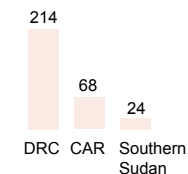


Bas- and Haut-Uélé Districts

The Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) is a rebel group movement formed in 1986 against the Government of Uganda.³ Driven out of Uganda and later Southern Sudan, the LRA operates from the Garamba National Park in DR Congo since 2005, attacking civilians in the Orientale province. LRA is also present in CAR and

Southern Sudan.⁴ Violent attacks are still on-going.¹

Number of LRA attacks in 2010⁵



107 children abducted in 2010⁶

Area with Lord's Resistance Army

Ituri District

The Ituri conflict started as a land dispute between the agriculturalist Lendu and the pastoralist Hema and was particularly intense between 1999 and 2003. Although overall security has improved over the past years, armed groups remain active in the area.⁶

Area with Front de Résistance Patriotique en Ituri (FRPI) and Front Populaire pour la Justice au Congo (FPJC)

Nord- and Sud-Kivu Provinces

The conflict in the Kivus is fuelled by vast natural resources in the region, which are exploited despite a mining ban.

The army, backed by the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in the DR Congo (MONUSCO), is fighting mainly Rwandan Hutu rebels (FDLR) and a collection of other

insurgents, with both rebel and army elements being accused of international humanitarian law violations and human rights abuses, including mass rape.⁶

198 attacks against humanitarian actors in 2010¹

Forces Démocratiques de Libération du Rwanda (FDLR) and other insurgents

Disclaimer:
 The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on all maps do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

Creation date: 26 May 2011

Data sources: UNCS, RGC, USGS, Natural Earth, OCHA and Commission of Population Movement, UNHCR, OCHA/Humanitarian Partners and UNDS.

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Source: UN OCHA

More maps are available at www.internal-displacement.org

Background to displacement and recent developments

Between 1996 and 1997, and again between 1998 and 2003, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) suffered two major wars. Civilians bore the brunt of the violence, as rebel groups with links to neighbouring states competed for control of large areas of eastern DRC. In 2008 it was estimated that 5.4 million people had died as a result of the country's conflicts between August 1998 and April 2007, the majority of them of infectious diseases, malnutrition, and neonatal and pregnancy-related conditions (IRC, 11 January 2008).

Of the estimated 3.4 million people forced from their homes by the end of the second conflict, many returned home following the withdrawal of foreign armies and the establishment of a transitional power-sharing government in mid-2003.

In 2006, Joseph Kabila was elected president in the country's first multi-candidate vote in over 45 years. Most internally displaced people (IDPs) were unable to vote, either because of the security situation or because they had lost their electoral cards or had them stolen by armed groups (OCHA, 15 August 2006; NRC, April 2006). The next Presidential elections are scheduled for November 2011.

Despite these political milestones, violence and displacement have continued as the government fights militias in a bid to re-establish its authority across the east of the country.

In January 2008, the government signed a cease-fire agreement in Goma with 22 armed groups, including the National Congress for the Defence of the People (*Congrès national pour la défense du peuple*, or CNDP), a rebel group whose stated objective was to protect the country's Tutsi minority, and community-based Mai Mai militia groups often organised along ethnic lines operating in North and South Kivu. One of the agreement's provisions was to support the return of

IDPs (DRC, 23 January 2008). The governments of DRC and Rwanda also made joint commitments to disarm the Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (*Forces démocratiques pour la libération du Rwanda*, or FDLR), a Hutu force that included some of the perpetrators of the 1994 genocide in Rwanda, in a separate agreement signed in Nairobi in November 2007. The group continued to be active in the eastern provinces of North and South Kivu.

In 2009, the improvement in relations between the Congolese and Rwandan governments was followed by operations by the army against the FDLR in North and South Kivu, with logistical support from MONUC, the UN peacekeeping mission in DRC. The army also clashed with Mai Mai militias, and both groups responded with widespread attacks on civilians, prompting massive displacement. At the end of 2010, the International Crisis Group reported that the humanitarian situation in the Kivus had deteriorated, and instances of extreme violence had multiplied (ICG, 16 November 2010). By mid-2011, the army had scaled down its operations against rebel groups in the Kivus, and the FDLR was reported to be militarily weaker, with large numbers of fighters demobilising (Oxfam, 27 July 2011).

Members of both the army and rebel groups have reportedly been involved in the illegal exploitation of natural resources including gold, coltan and diamonds, and the smuggling of goods and weapons. Each of these activities has contributed to further human rights violations, insecurity and displacement (SIPRI, 5 August 2011; UNSC, 29 November 2010; GW, 31 July 2009). The final report by the UN Group of Experts on the DRC also documented how rebel groups had forcibly driven out populations in areas of Masisi Territory, North Kivu, in order to take over their land (UNSC, 29 November 2010).

In mid-2011, international attention was focused on the upcoming November elections. It was not

clear whether IDPs would be able to vote in their areas of displacement, and some IDPs were reportedly worried that they might be forced to travel to unsafe areas to cast their vote (RI, 28 July 2011).

Estimates of IDP numbers

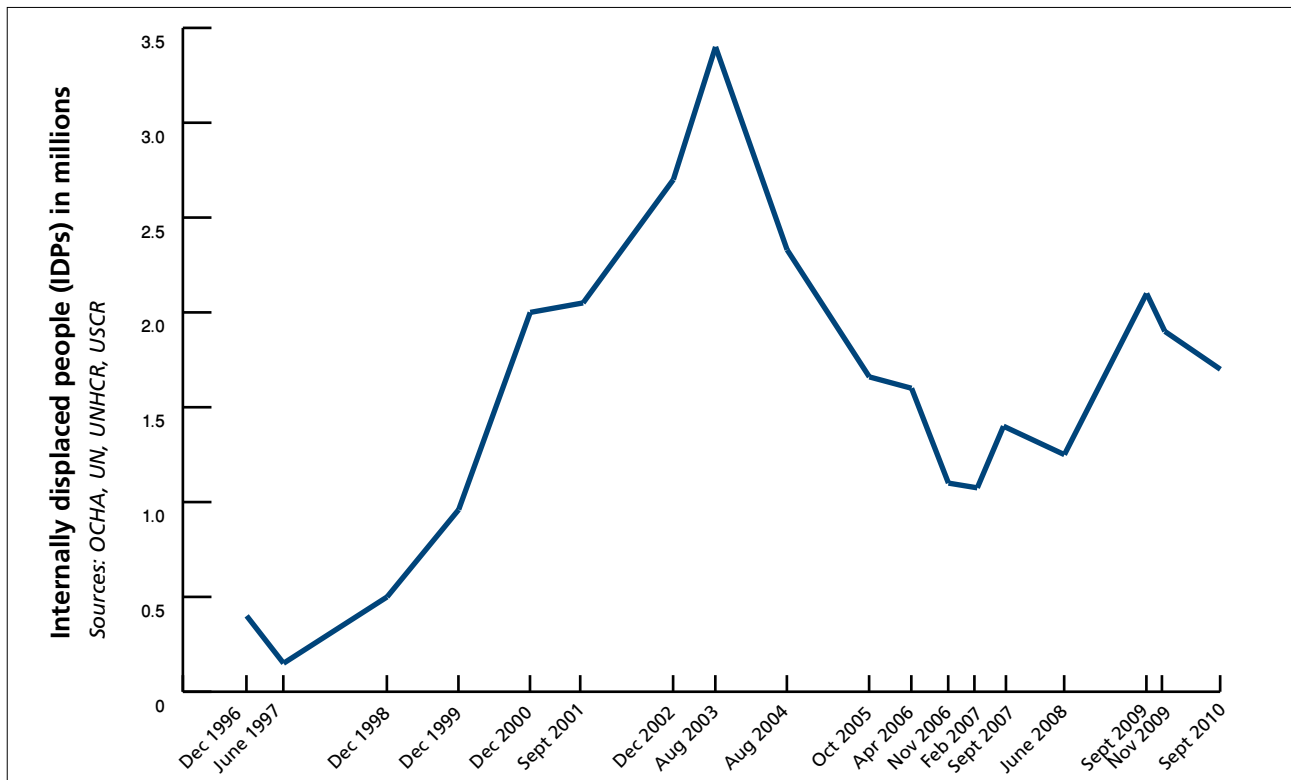
It should be noted that estimates of IDP numbers may vary considerably, given that there are no common procedures or methods of analysis among the organisations gathering data, and insufficient resources dedicated to data management (OCHA, September 2010). Information collection efforts have been complicated by the fact that most IDPs are outside formal camp settings.

There were at least 1.7 million IDPs in eastern DRC as of July 2011, including over 128,000 people newly displaced in the first quarter of the year (OCHA, 21 July 2011). While still high, the rate of

displacement was lower in 2011 than in previous years. Around one million people were reported to have returned home in 2009 and 2010 (OCHA, 13 October 2010; 14 October 2010). The rate of return slowed in 2011 amid continued insecurity. In North Kivu, the vast majority of IDPs had been displaced since 2009, when large-scale military operations against the FDLR started (OCHA, 18 July 2011). In South Kivu, an estimated 600,000 people returned home between mid-2010 and mid-2011, while as many others were newly displaced (OCHA, 4 June 2011)

Most IDPs have been displaced several times, and with communities increasingly unable to cope with the influx of people, several hundred thousand IDPs in North Kivu have built makeshift settlements, or taken refuge either in dilapidated buildings, in spontaneous settlements, or in 31 formal camps managed by international NGOs under the coordination of the UN Refugee Agency

Fig 1. Scale of forced displacement in DRC, 1996 - 2010



(For the graph's sources, see full profile, IDP figures by year)

(UNHCR) (UNHCR/UNOPS, 30 June 2011). The percentage of IDPs in North Kivu in formal and informal camps increased from five to 35 per cent in 2008, but that figure had fallen to 17 per cent by 2011. The rest were staying with host families or sleeping rough in the forest (Unicef/CARE, 27 April 2008; OCHA, 18 July 2011).

Recent displacement movements by province

North Kivu: People have continued to flee sporadic attacks by armed groups including the FDLR, the Allied Democratic Forces/National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF-NALU) which is primarily based in the Beni territory of North Kivu, various Mai Mai groups and the recently-formed Council of Congolese Revolutionaries (*Conseil des révolutionnaires congolais*, CRC) (OCHA, 18 July 2011 and 5 July 2011). Clashes between the army and the ADF-NALU, which had resulted in the temporary displacement of some 100,000 people in mid-2010, were continuing in July 2011 (Radio Okapi, 6 July 2011; UNSG, 8 October 2010).

South Kivu: People continued to flee attacks by the FDLR and Mai Mai groups in mid-2011 (OCHA, 13 July 2011). The FDLR continued to target villages in South Kivu, stealing cattle and looting houses; this prompted the displacement of many villagers (OCHA, 6 July 2011). Tens of thousands of people had to flee their homes in the province in mid-2011, particularly in Kalehe and Shabunda territories, either in anticipation of attacks or following attacks against civilians by the FDLR, or to escape fighting involving local self-defence groups which had taken up arms against the FDLR in the absence of state protection (OCHA, 12 August 2011).

Orientale: Since mid-2008, Uganda's Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has attacked communities in the Haut Uele and Bas Uele districts of Orientale Province, killing and abducting civilians and looting their property in reprisals following military operations against it. The LRA has caused significant displacement not only in DRC but in the Central

African Republic and Southern Sudan. In June 2011, it reportedly killed 26 people in 53 separate attacks, and displaced some 11,000 people from April to June 2011 (UN News Centre, 6 July 2011; OCHA, 1 July 2011). As of October 2010, the LRA was reported to have killed 2,000 people, abducted more than 2,600 and displaced over 400,000 across the region (UNHCR, 15 October 2010).

Remnants of militia groups in Ituri carried out sporadic attacks against civilians, causing some displacement (IRIN, 20 June 2011). Meanwhile, according to OCHA, serious human rights violations by Congolese security forces in parts of Orientale Province prompted many nomadic herders known as "Mbororo" to flee to areas considered safer or to leave the country (OCHA, 21 July 2011; MSF, 24 January 2011).

Katanga: The number of IDPs in the province tripled during the first half of 2011. In April, over 50,000 people were reportedly in six IDP camps in the region of Kalemie, after fleeing FDLR attacks in zones known for their gold resources (Radio Okapi, 18 April 2011). Another 16,000 people in the province later fled clashes between the army and a Mai Mai group (Radio Okapi, 26 July 2011).

Main protection issues

Physical security and integrity

Many areas, particularly in the east, are not under government control and the weak, badly-equipped and ill-trained army is engaged on numerous fronts against various armed groups with limited success (Clingendael, May 2011). Since 2003, the government has sought to integrate some militias into the ranks of the army, but the process has been hindered by corruption and by the unwillingness of former militias to join the army's established chain of command.

In October 2010, the Congolese army started reconfiguring its forces in the Kivus into regi-

ments, which were brought together to attend training programmes before their redeployment (IPI, 16 May 2011). To this end, army units were removed simultaneously from insecure zones, leaving their inhabitants without any protection from the FDLR and other armed groups, which then recaptured old positions (RI, 28 July 2011; Oxfam, 28 July 2011).

In this context, attacks involving the killing and rape of IDPs and other civilians have continued. Members of both the army and rebel groups have also continued to commit other human rights violations and abuses, including sexual exploitation, abduction, forced conscription of children, looting, plundering of crops, illegal taxation and general harassment. For example, the abduction and killing of IDPs were reported in June 2011 in Beni territory, North Kivu, as IDPs returned to their fields during the day (OCHA, 18 July 2011). Many IDPs are based in remote areas, making them more vulnerable to abuses. Some internally displaced women had reportedly resorted to prostitution in order to support their families (RI, 28 July 2011).

Commanders of government soldiers and rebel fighters have let their subordinates commit widespread sexual violence, to scare the civilian population into submission or punish them for allegedly supporting enemy forces, or simply to provide troops with gratification. In July 2011, Medecins Sans Frontières reported an increase of mass rape of civilian populations in South Kivu (MSF, 3 July 2011). UN investigations into two mass rapes perpetrated in mid-2010 and the end of 2011 in North Kivu by non-state armed groups highlighted that most of the victims still seemed severely traumatised months after the events, and that they had not received the medical assistance they needed (OHCHR/MONUSCO, 6 July 2011 and 22 July 2011).

The forced recruitment of children continued in eastern DRC in 2011. Most of the child fighters

rescued from rebel groups and the army were reportedly subsequently re-recruited (UNGA, 11 May 2011). UNICEF reported in 2008 that internally displaced children in North Kivu, particularly those separated from their families, were at particular risk of being recruited, and also of being raped or exploited (UNICEF, 14 November 2008). In April 2011 the UN Secretary-General reported that children continued to be present in the army's ranks, while 73 per cent of children separated from armed forces and groups had been recruited more than a year beforehand (UNSC, 23 April 2011, paras 37-38).

Impunity has remained pervasive. While millions of IDPs, and other men, women and children have suffered as a result of the violence, only a handful of perpetrators have ever been brought to justice (AI, 10 August 2011).

Basic necessities

The vast majority of IDPs and returnees have very limited access to health centres and schools, or to clean water, food, seeds, tools, clothes or building materials. Many IDPs have been unable to farm, and those that have been able to have risked having their crops plundered. The protracted conflict and the displacement it has caused have been identified as the main causes of food insecurity in the east (OCHA, 6 October 2010, "Kivus"). A major challenge is that those who need the most assistance are increasingly among communities in very remote and insecure areas (OCHA, 15 June 2011).

IDPs' precarious living conditions and lack of access to clean drinking water have left them particularly vulnerable to infectious diseases such as cholera, measles and bubonic plague. A cholera epidemic affected several thousand people in DRC in 2011, including in Orientale Province where there are many IDPs (OCHA, 27 July 2011). IDPs have little access to health centres, due to their absence and the costs of care, and these centres are in any case generally poorly staffed and equipped.

Durable solutions

Insecurity still reigns in many of the areas where people have been displaced from, preventing them from returning home. Ethnic tensions and also housing, land and property issues continue to stand in the way of safe return for many. In view of the November elections, there is some concern within the humanitarian community that people might be put under pressure to return home prematurely. Humanitarian organisations have raised concerns about the limited support provided to IDPs to help them integrate locally or resettle elsewhere if their areas of origin remain insecure (IDMC/NRC, May 2011).

National response

Measures adopted by the central government and provincial authorities have fallen far short of meeting IDPs' needs. For years the government has been unable to control its vast territory effectively or to provide basic services to IDPs or others (Clingendael, May 2011). It has made the Ministry for Solidarity and Humanitarian Affairs responsible for IDPs, but there is no policy or legislation to further its aims, and the Ministry has rarely provided direct assistance to IDPs. The government has ratified the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in Africa's Great Lakes region, which came into force in June 2008, and in doing so committed to incorporate the Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement into national law. It also signed the African Union Convention on IDPs in 2010, but had not ratified it as of mid-2011. In their March 2010 report to the UN Human Rights Council, seven UN special rapporteurs and representatives emphasised that the Congolese government had neglected its responsibilities to protect and assist IDPs and returnees (UN HRC, 8 March 2010, paragraph 111).

International response

UNSC resolutions

In May 2010 the UN Security Council (UNSC) replaced the mandate of MONUC with that of the UN Stabilisation Mission in the Congo (MONUSCO). This followed the government's request for MONUC's drawdown and a progressive shift towards post-conflict stabilisation and consolidation (UNSC, 28 May 2010). In June 2011, the mandate of MONUSCO was extended for a year. The UNSC tasked MONUSCO with supporting the preparations for the November elections, in addition to its responsibilities to protect civilians. While most provisions are not specific to IDPs, the resolution said it "condemns... [...] forced displacement" (UNSC, 28 June 2011).

In 2008, the UNSC sought, through Resolution 1807, to freeze the assets of perpetrators of forced displacement and serious violations of international law in DRC and to ban them from travelling abroad. It renewed these and other measures until November 2011 through Resolution 1952, while noting with great concern the persistence of violations against civilians including killing and displacement.

Humanitarian coordination and assistance

Since 2006, UN agencies and international NGOs have worked to make relief efforts more effective by coordinating their response in "clusters". The protection cluster (led by UNHCR) and the reintegration and community recovery cluster (led by UNHCR and UNDP) are particularly relevant to IDPs. An inter-cluster evaluation found that the clusters had made an overall positive impact in eastern DRC (Binder, de Geoffroy, Sokpoh, April 2010). However, an evaluation of the European Commission Humanitarian Aid Office (ECHO)'s actions in DRC found that "although protection is presently recognised as the first priority, the overall response from the international community, despite its scale, is far from responding to the magnitude of the needs" (DARA/ECHO, 19 October 2010).

Indeed, humanitarian agencies have struggled to respond to the emergency needs of IDPs and other vulnerable people who are often in remote areas, in the context of ongoing military operations and increased attacks against their staff. Some 105 security incidents involving humanitarian organisations were reported in DRC during the first half of 2011, slightly fewer than in the same period in 2010, but close to twice the estimate for the first half of 2009 (Radio Okapi, 19 August 2011; UNSG, 8 October 2010). The absence of roads and the wide dispersal of IDPs also hamper the delivery of support.

In 2009, the government launched a transition plan for eastern DRC, the Stabilisation and Reconstruction of Former Armed Conflict Areas in Eastern Congo (STAREC). This was supported by the International Security and Stabilisation Support Strategy (ISSSS) which had been developed by the UN and its partners (DRC, June 2009). One of the objectives of the ISSSS is to facilitate the return and reintegration of IDPs and refugees, by addressing priority social needs and restoring basic social services and infrastructure; by promoting employment generation and agriculture; and by facilitating local reconciliation and resolving conflicts linked to housing, land and property issues.

In parallel, the humanitarian community has issued annual Humanitarian Action Plans (HAPs), which are funded through a multi-donor mechanism called the Pooled Fund, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and bilateral donors. While the HAPs aim to respond to immediate needs, the ISSSS aims to address the structural causes of conflict (ODI, 12 August 2011). The coordination between the two plans has been at times difficult, according to local observers.

Humanitarian assistance to DRC grew six-fold between 2002 and 2010, from \$98 million to \$585 million, according to OCHA's Financial Tracking Service (ODI, 12 August 2011). Nonetheless, the HAPs have remained under-funded, and the

shortfall has reportedly translated into inadequate assistance and resulting protection risks to IDPs. According to Refugees International (RI), many IDPs have had to return to rebel-controlled territory despite the dangers this entailed, because they could no longer remain with host families that had no means of supporting them. RI has also called on the UN Humanitarian Coordinator to re-focus on displaced people in DRC. It said that "the Congolese government's insistence on focusing on stabilisation in the east has resulted in a lack of attention to the ongoing humanitarian crises in the east, particularly those linked to displacement" (RI, 28 July 2011).

The Rapid Response to Movements of Populations (RRMP) mechanism managed by UNICEF and OCHA provides emergency assistance, based on vulnerability criteria, to IDPs outside camps and their host communities, returnees and populations affected by sudden-onset disasters (OCHA, 8 July 2010). In North Kivu, the UN Office for Project Services (UNOPS) and its partners have developed a data centre for IDPs in camps, to better target assistance (<http://www.dc4idp.org/htdocs/>). Other international organisations including the UN Human Settlements Programme (UN-HABITAT) and the Norwegian Refugee Council have carried out emergency mediation of land conflicts and early reconciliation activities.

Note: This is a summary of IDMC's internal displacement profile on the DRC. The full profile is available online [here](#).

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About the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre

The Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre (IDMC) was established by the Norwegian Refugee Council in 1998, upon the request of the United Nations, to set up a global database on internal displacement. A decade later, IDMC remains the leading source of information and analysis on internal displacement caused by conflict and violence worldwide.

IDMC aims to support better international and national responses to situations of internal displacement and respect for the rights of internally displaced people (IDPs), who are often among the world's most vulnerable people. It also aims to promote durable solutions for IDPs, through return, local integration or settlement elsewhere in the country.

IDMC's main activities include:

- Monitoring and reporting on internal displacement caused by conflict, generalised violence and violations of human rights;
- Researching, analysing and advocating for the rights of IDPs;
- Training and strengthening capacities on the protection of IDPs;
- Contributing to the development of standards and guidance on protecting and assisting IDPs.

For more information, visit the Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre website and the database at www.internal-displacement.org

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