

Flygtningenævnets baggrundsmateriale

Bilagsnr.:	980
Land:	Den Demokratiske Republik Congo
Kilde:	Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
Titel:	Eastern DRC situation. Regional external update #3
Udgivet:	14. februar 2025
Optaget på baggrundsmaterialet:	1. april 2025

EASTERN DRC SITUATION

14 February 2025



A young girl collects water at an IDP camp in Goma before the latest fighting, which has once again left 350,000 displaced people without shelter. ©UNHCR/Blaise Sanyila

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The situation in Eastern DRC remains extremely tense and insecure**, with widespread reports of criminality- including mob violence- taking place in the city and its immediate surroundings.
- **Leaders of East African Commission and SADC blocs met for a [joint summit](#) on 08 February** to find a solution to a conflict in eastern Congo.
- Heavy artillery shelling and looting from recent fighting have **destroyed 70,000 emergency shelters around Goma and Minova in North and South Kivu**.
- Global Protection Cluster (GPC) has issued an urgent [Protection Alert for South Kivu](#), warning of mass displacement and severe human rights violations as clashes intensify.
- UNHCR issued a [Protection Brief](#) highlighting mass displacement, **targeted attacks on civilians, and severe human rights violations, including rape, assaults, looting, forced labor, and forced recruitment**.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with governments and partners in neighbouring countries, continues to **update interagency contingency plans and maintain a state of readiness to support any new arrivals**. We also call for the right to seek asylum to be upheld, ensuring those fleeing violence can access protection and assistance.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- **The situation in Eastern DRC remains extremely tense and insecure**, with widespread reports of criminality- including mob violence- taking place in the city and its immediate surroundings. Heavy artillery shelling and looting from recent fighting have [destroyed 70,000 emergency shelters](#) around Goma and Minova in North and South Kivu, leaving 250,000 internally displaced people (IDPs) without a roof over their heads.
- After a brief lull in fighting following the **East African Community (EAC) and Southern African Development Community (SADC) joint summit**, clashes have intensified in recent days, particularly in Kalehe (South Kivu) and Lubero (North Kivu).
- On 14 February, the **Global Protection Cluster (GPC) has issued an urgent [Protection Alert](#) for South Kivu, warning of mass displacement and severe human rights violations as clashes intensify**. Civilians are increasingly targeted, with reports of rape, assaults, looting, forced labour, and forced recruitment, while a growing influx of displaced people into Bukavu and movements further south are expected. The GPC called for immediate action to strengthen civilian protection in Kalehe and Bukavu, ensure unimpeded humanitarian access, and guarantee the safe passage of those fleeing conflict.
- **In South Kivu, over 50% of humanitarian organizations providing critical support to survivors of sexual violence report being unable to reach those in need due to insecurity and continuous displacement**. Meanwhile, in North Kivu, the destruction of health facilities and overcrowded hospitals raise serious concerns about the spread of infectious diseases, including cholera, malaria, and measles.
- UNHCR issued a [Protection Brief](#) highlighting **mass displacement, targeted attacks on civilians, and severe human rights violations, including rape, assaults, looting, forced labor, and forced recruitment**. The brief emphasizes the urgent need for strengthened civilian protection, unimpeded humanitarian access, and safe passage for those fleeing conflict.
- On 9 February, non-state armed groups (NSAG) issued a 72-hour ultimatum for displaced persons in sites west of Goma to leave and return to their areas of origin. **According to [OCHA](#), approximately 100,000 return movements have been recorded from Goma towards Masis, Rutshuru and Nyiragongo**. Following advocacy by UNHCR and partners, the directive was later reversed, with reports indicating that site dismantling has stopped and returns will be voluntary.
- **In North Kivu, five of the 17 IDP sites have been destroyed, while the remaining 12 have been partially dismantled**. The situation remains highly fluid, with some displaced persons reportedly returning to the sites. According to [WFP](#), as of 7 February, up to **62% of the estimated 900,000 IDPs living in these sites** before the crisis may have since left. Additionally, **88 of the 140 identified collective centres along the Kanyaruchinya axis** have been destroyed.
- **Schools and universities in and around Goma remain largely closed**. A recent analysis by the [Education Cluster](#) found that nearly 1,500 schools in North Kivu have shut down due to ongoing hostilities. At least 64 schools across the two provinces are being used as collective centres to host IDPs, while at least 52 schools are reportedly occupied by armed groups. As of the end of January, **almost 800,000 children across the two provinces were affected by school closures**
- A recent [WFP](#) analysis shows a **significant decline in food security for displaced families in Goma**. Between 4-7 February, nearly three-quarters (71%) of the displaced households assessed reported poor food consumption, a sharp rise from 13% in December 2024.
- The Global Protection Cluster has released **key [advocacy messages](#) to promote the protection of civilians, ensure humanitarian access to vulnerable populations and prevent escalating protection risks**.

- **The 2025 Humanitarian Response Plan for the DRC requires \$2.5 billion, but only 7% of the needed funds have been secured so far.** Without adequate funding, access to life-saving aid—including shelter, healthcare, and protection—will be severely constrained, further exacerbating the suffering of vulnerable populations. UNHCR needs \$226 million to carry out its operations in DRC this year, but less than 10% of the required funding has been secured.

Regional Updates

- UNHCR, in coordination with governments and partners in countries neighboring DR Congo, is closely monitoring the situation **as the conflict spreads, particularly in South Kivu, pushing toward the provincial capital, Bukavu**, home to 1.3 million people. While cross-border movements to Great Lakes countries remain limited, there are unverified reports of people moving toward Zambia and Angola, which are still being verified. On 12 February, UNHCR received reports of 200 people arriving in Namibia, stating they fled violence in eastern DRC. Verification and registration are ongoing, and further details on their profile and route are yet to be established.
- The total number of those newly arrived since the beginning of the year in [neighboring countries is 1,833](#).

Country	Number of Individuals
Burundi	638
Rwanda	289
Tanzania	44
Uganda	593
Zambia	269
Total	1,833

Rwanda

- **UNHCR is conducting daily check-ins at key border crossings to monitor movements and assess needs as people flee violence in eastern DR Congo.** At the Nkamira Transit Center in northwestern Rwanda, near the North Kivu border, new arrivals receive basic assistance, including clothing and hygiene items. Meanwhile, at the Kijote Transit Center in western Rwanda, near the South Kivu border, Rwandan returnees who had previously sought refuge in DR Congo are also receiving essential support.
- While new arrivals remain low, protection **interviews reveal harsh living conditions in Goma and the urgent need to scale up humanitarian assistance to prevent further displacement.** Meanwhile, border points around Goma remain open.

Uganda

- **Uganda continues to receive asylum seekers, with 508 individuals arriving from the Goma area.** The majority (495 people) entered through Nyakabande Reception Center in southwestern Uganda, near the Bunagana border, while 13 arrived via Matanda Reception Center, which serves those crossing from eastern DR Congo into western Uganda.
- **The main reason for fleeing is reportedly rampant looting and mistreatment of civilians by armed men in Goma.** Throughout the weekend, partners remained in contact with border officials to monitor movements and share information. The total registered arrivals from DRC in 2025 is 6,777 individuals.

Burundi

- **The past week (3-9 February) saw the highest weekly arrivals, with 152 new asylum seekers.** The Cishemere Transit Centre, now hosting 1,304 people, has exceeded its 1,000-person capacity, further straining resources. UNHCR remains in close coordination with local authorities and is closely monitoring the rising trend in arrivals.
- On 10 February, **UNHCR convened a meeting with 32 representatives from the government, UN agencies, NGOs, and the ICRC to review the existing contingency plan.** Throughout the week, working group discussions were held to refine the plan further.

Tanzania

- Arrivals to Tanzania remain relatively small. **Since the escalation of fighting in Goma on 26 January, 34 individuals have sought safety in Tanzania.** The Government of Tanzania and UNHCR joint visit to border entry points has been pushed forward and will commence from 24 February 2025.

Republic of Congo

- On 10 February, UNHCR participated in a coordination meeting with other UN agencies in Gambona to discuss the response to the 3,231 individuals who crossed into the district on 23 January following inter-communal violence in Bolobo Territory, Mai-Ndombé Province, western DRC. So far, **303 individuals have been pre-registered at the Bouémba site**, but the recent influx has further strained **humanitarian access and basic services** in the area.
- Reports suggest **the situation in Bolobo is stabilizing**, and **UNHCR continues to monitor developments** with local authorities.

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