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CRISIS in DRC alarming rates of sexual violence in North Kivu

Advocacy Brief

10,339 survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) accessed services in North Kivu between Jan-Mar, 2023; 66% of whom were raped*

Ongoing clashes between armed groups in the North Kivu province of the DRC have led to the internal displacement of millions of women and girls forced to seek shelter in makeshift camps that have inadequate supplies of basic needs such as food and water. Lack of livelihood opportunities and an overall lack of security has contributed to an increase in GBV. No place is safe. Women and girls have been sexually assaulted outside of the camps while collecting firewood and water, and are largely unprotected inside of the camps, living in shelters made of tarps and other found debris. There has been a **91% increase in reported GBV cases in North Kivu between 2021 and 2022 (Jan- Dec)***.

Women are adopting negative coping strategies due to food insecurity. Desperate to earn money to feed their families women have been forced to engage in transactional sex as well as being exposed to other forms of GBV such as physical violence and sexual exploitation and abuse. Women and girls reported taking out loans to buy basic goods; unable to pay them back they are forced into a form of sexual slavery with the debtor. There is a proliferation of brothels in and around the camps that "hire" adolescent girls; these are **children who are raped and exploited on a daily basis** in exchange for money.**

Members of the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR) in DRC, the coordination mechanism for GBV service provision led by UNFPA, have been urgently trying to scale-up services in and around the camps in North Kivu but inadequate funding has severely limited their scope. Only 23% of the GBV response plan is funded; **\$16M now needed to protect women and girls**. A recent mapping exercise revealed that out of the 10 camps assessed, only 4 had basic health and psychosocial support services for survivors. There is also a need for cash and voucher assistance so that women and girls can meet their basic needs.

Priority Needs



Political and administrative authorities must actively uphold the Government decree ordering the closure of brothels in and around Goma and the IDP camps.



All sectors, particularly shelter, WASH, child protection, food security and camp management need to mitigate GBV risks to reduce women and adolescents girls exposure to sexual violence



\$16M urgently needed to "scale-up" GBV prevention and response services, including cash and voucher assistance, in and around the camps in Goma and the Nyiragongo territory

*Incident data is collected by service providers at specific collection points and then validated by the Government before it is published. Therefore, these figures are merely a snapshot and there are most likely many more survivors who did not seek treatment.

**GBV risks were identified during FGDs with women and girls, KII and safety audits carried out by GBV AoR in IDP sites around the city of Goma and in Nyiragongo territory from 30 May to 2 June 2023