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MONTHLY DISPLACEMENT REPORT EASTERN DRC – MAY 2026

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CRISIS ANALYSIS
— DR CONGO —



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1. Continued significant displacement in a context marked by insecurity and localised crises

In May 2026, population movements remained significant in eastern DRC, with 61,767 displaced and returnee households recorded. South Kivu accounted for the highest number of movements, followed by Ituri, North Kivu, Maniema and Tanganyika. Although overall movements decreased compared with April, these dynamics remained closely linked to persistent insecurity and localised crises.

South Kivu and North Kivu remained the main displacement hotspots, driven by clashes involving AFC/M23, the FARDC, Wazalendo groups and other local armed actors. In Ituri, continued ADF attacks triggered further population displacement, while in Maniema and Tanganyika, movements were mainly linked to flooding, customary tensions and land-related conflicts. Most displaced households settled close to their areas of origin, often with host families, increasing pressure on already vulnerable communities.

Returns were also observed, mainly in Uvira territory, South Kivu, following a relative improvement in the security situation after M23 forces withdrew from some localities. However, these returns remain fragile and could be reversed by the persistence of armed violence, residual insecurity and unmet humanitarian needs in areas of return.

2. Displacement Dashboard

May 2026 | Operational Overview

 **61 767**

registered displaced families

 **-44 %**

monthly trend in relation to April

 **6 769**

households in transition returning

Most impacted province
South Kivu

Primary reception mode
Foster families

Primary climate driver
Flooding in Maniema

Primary return zones
Uvira

Primary catalysts of the conflict

- M23–FARDC/Wazalendo confrontations ADF assaults FARDC/Wazalendo–Ngumino/Twirwaneho confrontations
- Intercommunal conflict in Tanganyika.

Primary information deficit

A comprehensive needs assessment has not been conducted for the reported alerts.

3. Provincial distribution

May 2026 | Projected displaced households and individuals

61 767
registered displaced families

306 910
estimated population

South Kivu
most affected province

≈70 %
Several of the households mentioned are located in South Kivu.

Summary table by province

Volumes documented in May 2026

Province	Displaced families	Estimated population
1 South Kivu	43 062	215 310
2 Ituri	7 604	38 020
3 North Kivu	6 519	32 595
4 Maniema	3 519	17 595
5 Tanganyika	678	3 390
Total	61 382	306 910

Analytical reading

South Kivu comprises the overwhelming majority of the reported displaced households, significantly surpassing Ituri and North Kivu. The provinces of Maniema and Tanganyika exhibit markedly lower figures.

Distribution of Displaced Households

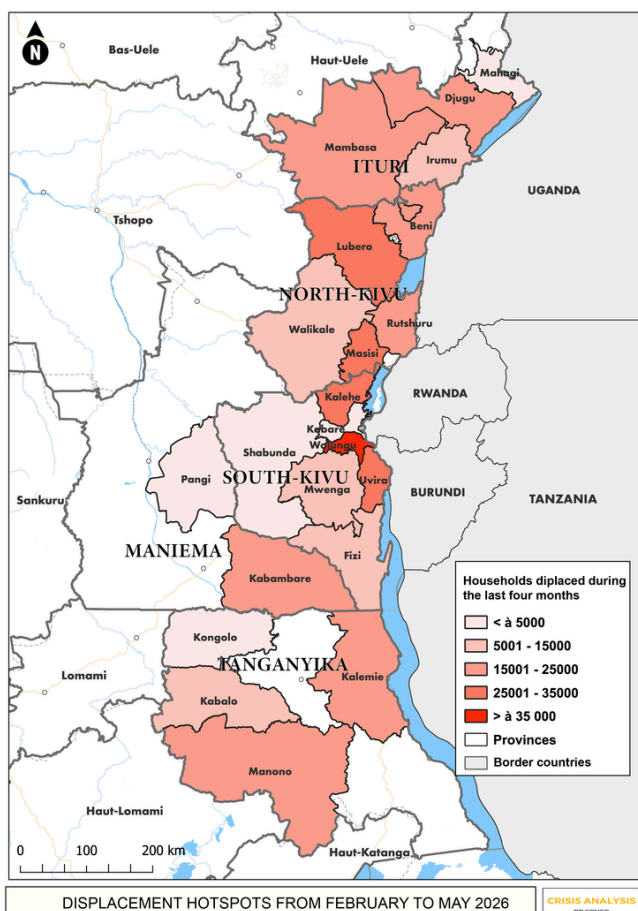
Provincial Ranking



Supplementary indicator

5.0 estimated individuals per displaced household

4. Displacement hotspots from February to May 2026



Map 1. This map identifies the main displacement hotspots between February and May 2026, with the highest concentrations recorded in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika.

5. Methodology

This report is based on displacement alerts reported in May 2026, triangulated through humanitarian sources, local networks and partner updates. The figures presented are estimates of household movements recorded during the month, rather than the total number of internally displaced persons. Despite triangulation efforts, access constraints, insecurity, delays in assessments and the risk of double counting may affect their accuracy. These figures should therefore be treated as provisional operational estimates.

CAT-DRC also classifies security incidents using a humanitarian access impact score ranging from 1 to 6, which measures their effect on operations. Scores of 4 to 6 indicate a severe impact, particularly in cases involving ambushes, clashes, attacks, village looting or certain natural disasters. This system helps track the most affected areas, the actors involved and the evolution of access constraints.

6. Overall Analysis

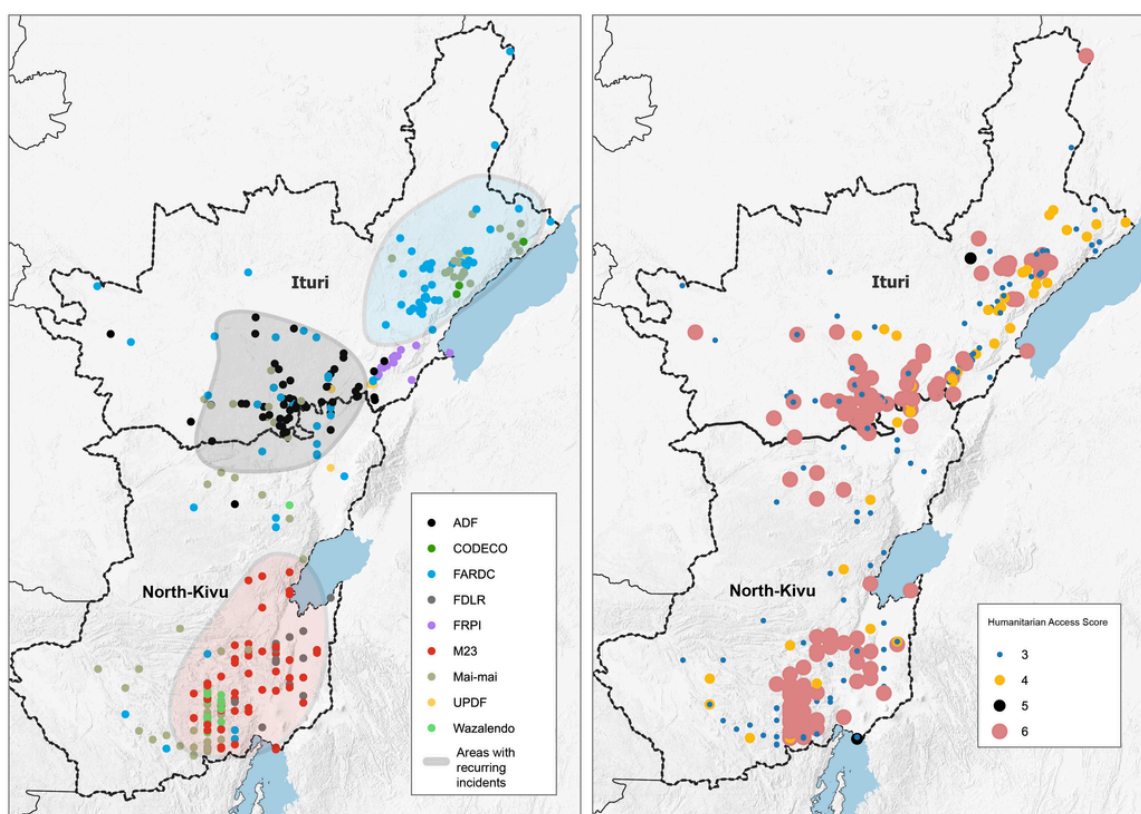
Armed conflict remains the main driver of displacement, despite localised returns in May 2026

In May 2026, population movements in eastern DRC continued to be driven primarily by armed conflict, while also being affected by localised natural hazards and community tensions. South Kivu and North Kivu remained the main displacement hotspots, due to ongoing clashes involving the M23, the FARDC, Wazalendo groups and other local armed actors. In Ituri, repeated ADF attacks against civilians continued to trigger significant population movements, particularly in Mambasa territory. In Maniema and Tanganyika, displacement was more closely linked to flooding, customary disputes, and land-related and intercommunal tensions.

Although some areas, notably in Uvira territory, recorded return movements linked to a relative improvement in the security situation, the overall context remained highly volatile. The displacement observed during the month reflects the continued impact of armed violence, the vulnerability of populations to climate-related shocks, and the fragility of local conflict-resolution mechanisms. The predominance of hosting arrangements with host families across several provinces also highlights the growing pressure on host communities and the persistence of significant humanitarian needs in affected areas.

Overview of incidents in May and impact score on access

In May 2026, humanitarian access in eastern DRC remained severely constrained, with 1,615 security incidents recorded across North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, Tanganyika and Maniema. In Ituri, the ADF and community-based armed groups, including CODECO-URDPC, Zaïre/CRP and FRPI, continued to pose significant risks of attacks, abductions, ambushes and extortion, particularly in Irumu and Mambasa. In North Kivu, M23-related clashes around Rubaya, in Masisi territory, further heightened insecurity and movement restrictions. In South Kivu, armed criminality, clashes and reported drone strikes in Kabare, Mwenga and Fizi continued to hamper mobility, operational safety and access to vulnerable communities.



Map 2. Distribution of incidents by armed actor and humanitarian access score, May 2026

7. Provincial Analysis

South Kivu Province

Armed clashes remained the main driver of displacement.

South Kivu recorded the highest number of displaced and returning households in May, with 43,062 households affected. Movements were mainly concentrated in the territories of Kabare, Uvira, Kalehe, Walungu and Fizi. This trend was primarily linked to continued clashes involving the AFC/M23, the FARDC, Wazalendo groups and other local armed groups, particularly in the Kalehe highlands, Ziralo, Mulamba, Minembwe and the Ruzizi Plain.

Armed violence, protection violations and fears linked to the security vacuum continued to drive displacement, while a relative improvement in the security situation in parts of Uvira supported some return movements. Flooding in Uvira town also contributed to displacement during the reporting period.

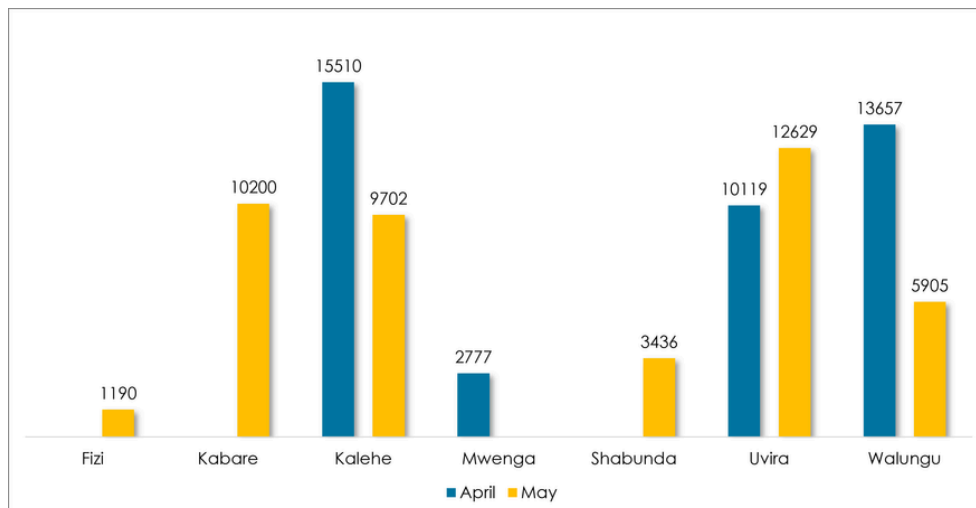
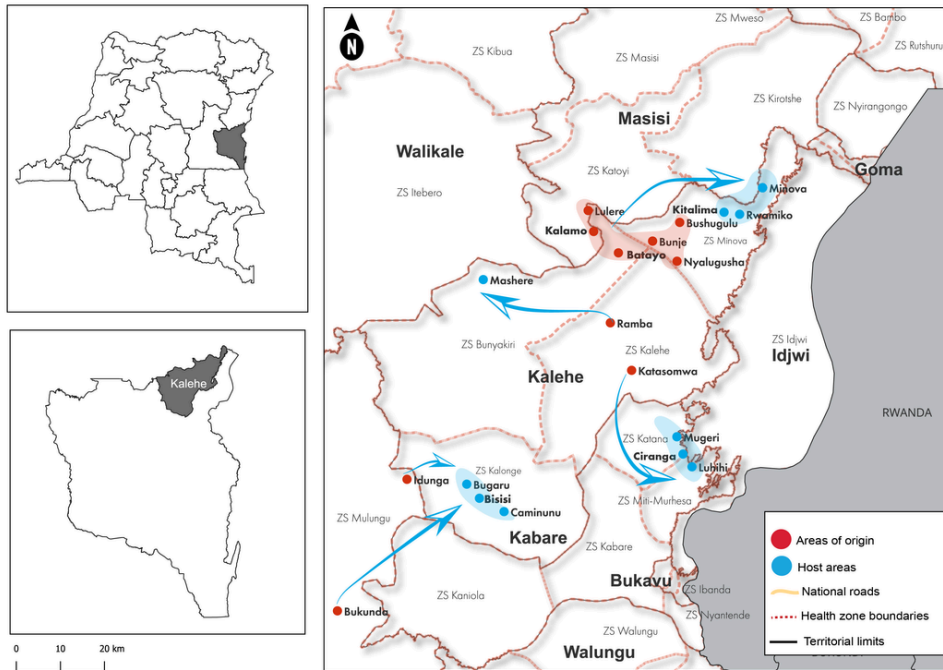


Chart 1. Trend in the number of displaced households during the previous and current months.

Kalehe Territory : Persistent insecurity drives large-scale displacement

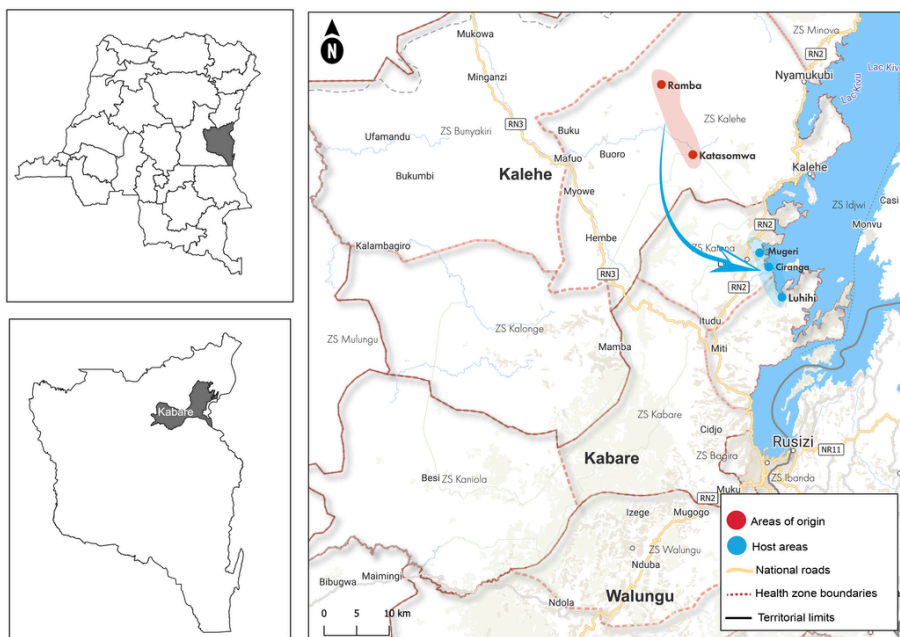
Kalehe Territory recorded the displacement of 9,702 households, mainly towards the health zones of Minova (5,533 households), Bunyakiri (2,816 households) and Kalehe (1,352 households).

These movements are linked to the deteriorating security situation, particularly clashes between the Ngandu and Kasaluka factions and the Katabilalo armed group in Mulungu Health Zone, Shabunda Territory, as well as recurrent fighting between Wazalendo groups and AFC-M23 forces in several localities of the Ziralo groupement. This violence has forced many households to flee to safer areas.



Map 3. Population movements in Kalehe Territory

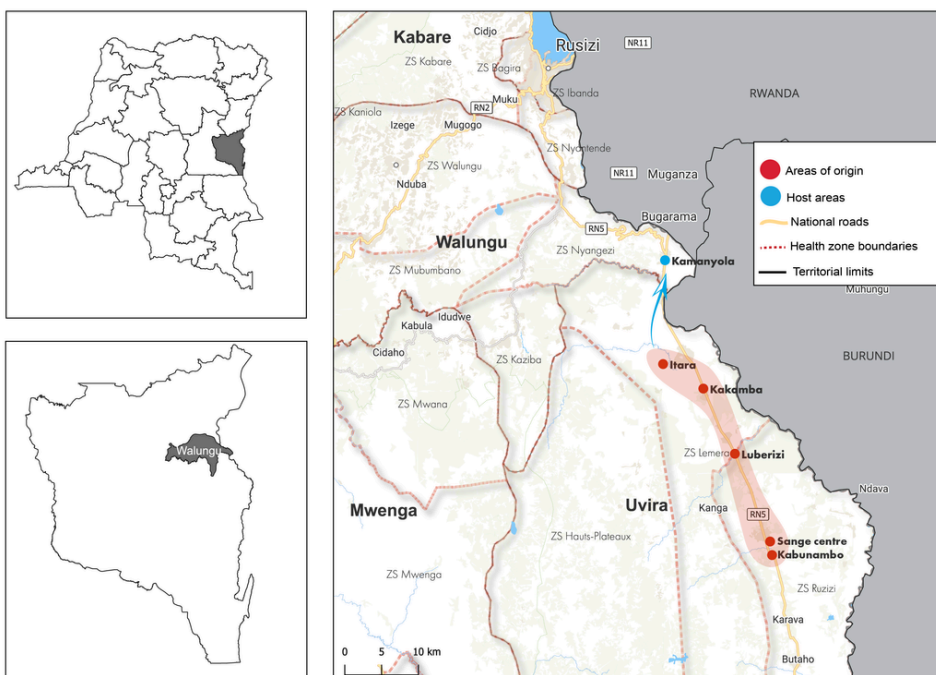
Kabare Territory : influx of displaced households fleeing violence in the Kalehe highlands
 Kabare Territory recorded the displacement of approximately 10,200 households in May, who were received in the Katana Health Zone. These movements were driven by repeated clashes between the M23 and Wazalendo groups, supported by the FARDC, in the highlands of Kalehe.



Map 4. Population movements in Kabare Territory

Walungu Territory : Armed clashes and security vacuum drive displacement

During the reporting period, approximately 5,905 households were displaced in Walungu territory, primarily towards the health zones of Nyangezi (3,600 households) and Kaniola (2,305 households). These movements were driven by clashes between the Rai Mutomboki Maheshe faction and the M23 in Mulamba groupement, as well as fighting between the VDP/Wazalendo and the M23 in the Plaine de la Ruzizi and Bafuliru chiefdoms. Fears linked to the security vacuum following the withdrawal of the M23 from several localities, including Sange Centre, Kabunambo, Luberizi, Bwegera and Itara, also contributed to these population movements.



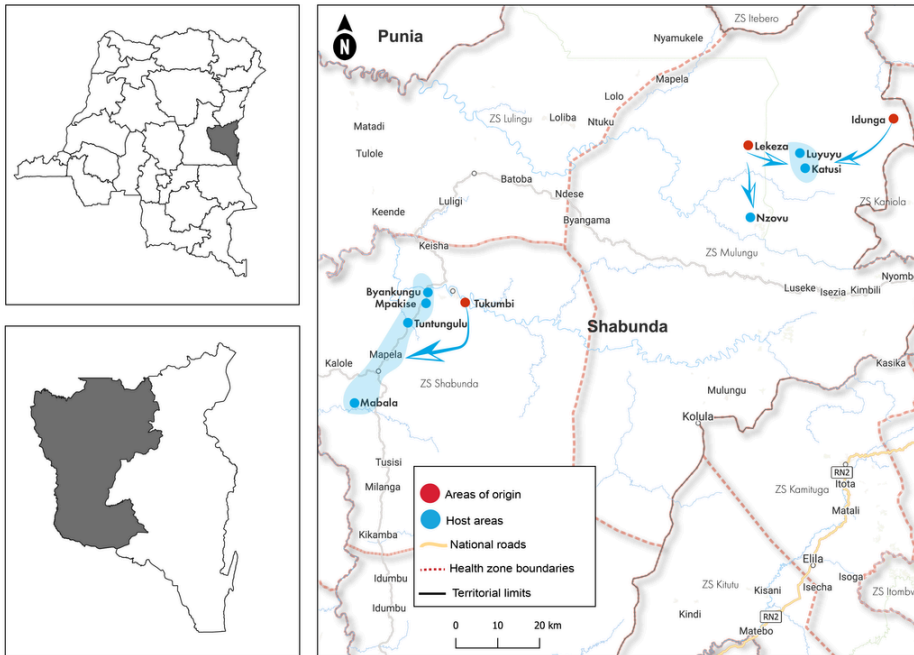
Map 5. Population movements in Walungu Territory

Shabunda Territory : Armed violence and rivalries between Wazalendo factions trigger new displacement

In May, Shabunda Territory recorded the displacement of approximately 3,436 households, mainly towards the health zones of Mulungu (2,888 households) and Shabunda (547 households).

These population movements were primarily driven by the deterioration of the security situation in several localities across the territory. In particular, the attack on the Kyendenkutu mining site, located in Bangoma groupement in Shabunda Health Zone, forced many households to flee towards the localities of Mugala, Byankungu, Mpakise, Kizikibi, Mabala and Tuntungulu.

Separately, clashes were reported between Wazalendo factions under the coordination of Justin Mabala, active along the Kimbili–Kigulube axis in Shabunda, and Wazalendo elements originating from Nindja Chieftdom in Kabare territory. The violence occurred in the localities of Lekeza and Idunga, in the Bamunguba-Sud groupement, and triggered population displacement towards Lwigi, Luyuyu, Katusi and Nzovu, in the Mulungu health zone.



Map 6: Population movements in Shabunda Territory

Uvira Territory : Fighting, flooding and improved security shape displacement and return dynamics

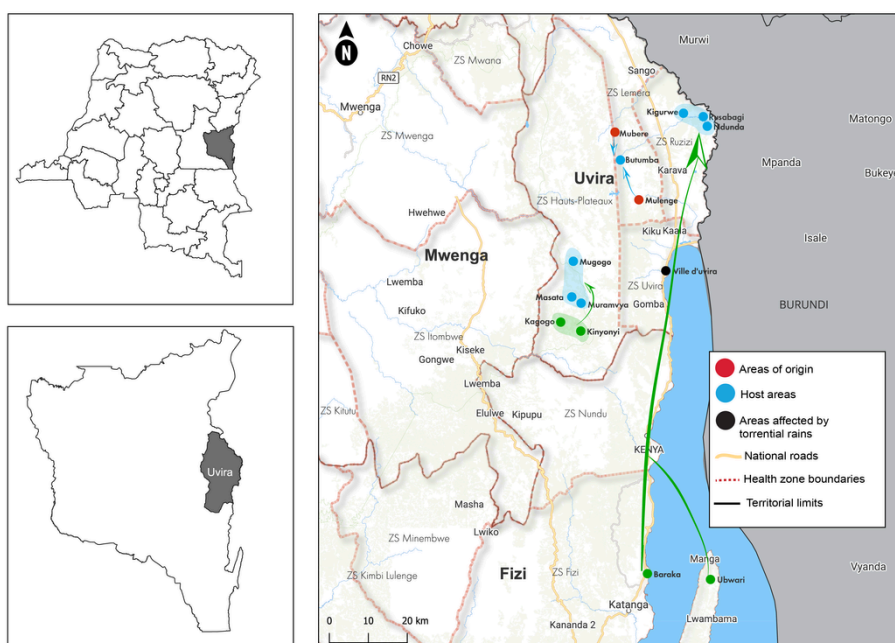
Uvira recorded population movements estimated at 12,629 households, including 5,860 newly displaced households and 6,769 returnee households. Newly displaced households primarily settled in the Ruzizi and Uvira health zones, while returns were mainly reported in the Ruzizi and Hauts-Plateaux health zones.

New displacement was largely driven by the intensification of clashes between the FARDC and allied forces, on the one hand, and M23 combatants, on the other. These clashes were accompanied by several serious violations of international humanitarian law in the localities of Mubere, Nakiyinga and Mulenge, located in the Lemera health zone.

In addition, heavy rainfall recorded on 1 May 2026 caused the Kalimabenge River to overflow, triggering significant flooding in Uvira town and further contributing to population movements during the reporting period.

Returns concern, on the one hand, households that fled the April clashes between the FARDC/Wazalendo and the M23/Twirwaneho armed groups in the villages of Kagogo and Kinyonyi, located in the Hauts-Plateaux Health Zone. These households have gradually returned to their areas of origin, notably Muramvya, Mugogo and Masata.

On the other hand, households from the towns of Uvira and Baraka, the Ubwari Peninsula, as well as refugees repatriated from Burundi, have returned to the villages of Kigurwe, Rusabagi and Ndunda in the Ruzizi Health Zone. These return movements are mainly linked to the relative improvement in the security situation following the withdrawal of AFC/M23 elements between 10 and 11 May 2026.

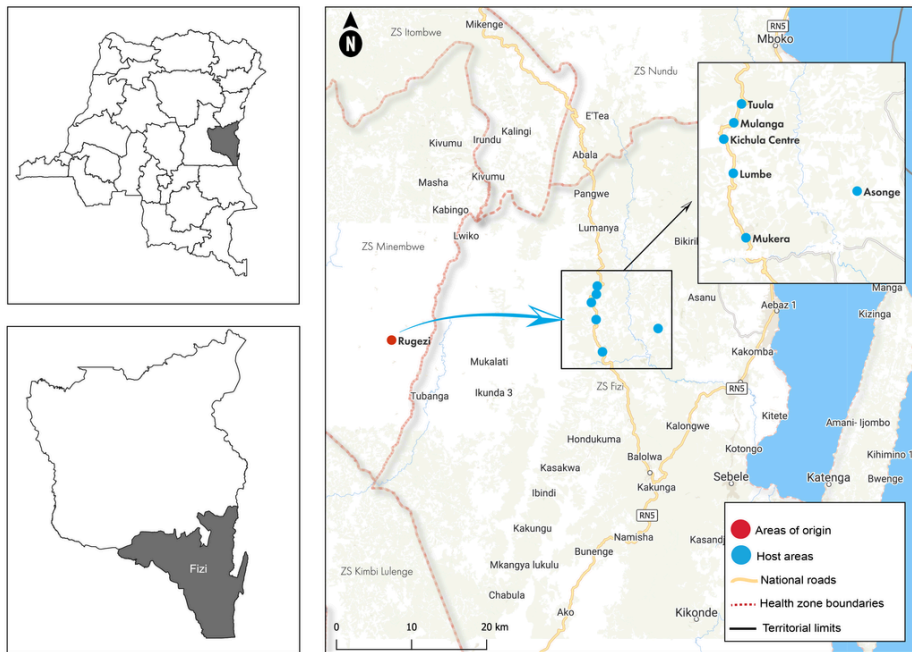


Map 7. Population movements in Uvira Territory

Fizi Territory : Clashes in Minembwe trigger new displacement towards Fizi Health Zone

A total of 1,190 households have been displaced to Fizi Health Zone. These population movements are mainly linked to clashes between Gumino-Twirwaneho fighters, allied with the M23, and Wazalendo elements supported by the FARDC in Rugezi locality, located in Minembwe Health Zone.

The displaced households have sought refuge in several villages across Fizi Health Zone, including Mukera 1, Mukera 2, Asonge, Bibombe, Kichula Centre, Kichula 1, Kichula 2, Lumbe, Mahelo, Mulanga, Namtumbwa, Pékin, Trois Maisons and Tuula. According to OCHA, the majority of these displaced families are currently being hosted by host families¹.



Map 8. Population movements in Fizi Territory

Ituri Province

ADF attacks continue to drive population displacement:

In Ituri, population movements recorded during May were primarily driven by the resurgence of ADF attacks against civilians. Mambasa territory alone recorded the displacement of 7,604 households, mainly in Mandima Health Zone. Repeated attacks in several localities across Mandima and Mabalako forced affected households to flee to areas perceived as safer, including Biakato Mines, Biakato Mayi and Babombi. This trend confirms the persistence of insecurity as the main driver of displacement in this part of the province.

By contrast, no significant displacement linked to the Ebola virus disease outbreak was reported during the period, including in Irumu and Djugu territories, which host several of the main transmission hotspots. However, Ituri remains the epicentre of the outbreak declared on 15 May 2026, accounting for the vast majority of confirmed cases nationally. Mongbwalu, Rwampara, Bunia and Nyankunde health zones are among the most affected, while the recent expansion of the outbreak to Komanda, Logo, Rimba and Mambasa health zones points to a risk of indirect impacts on population movements and humanitarian access in the coming weeks.

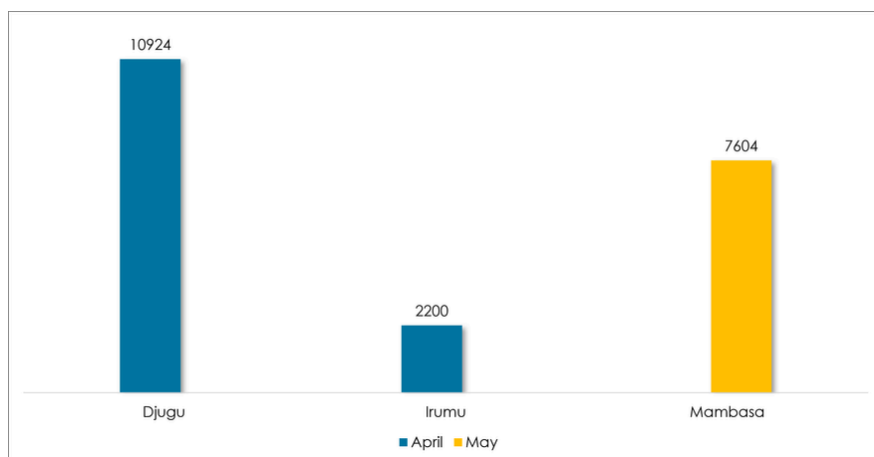
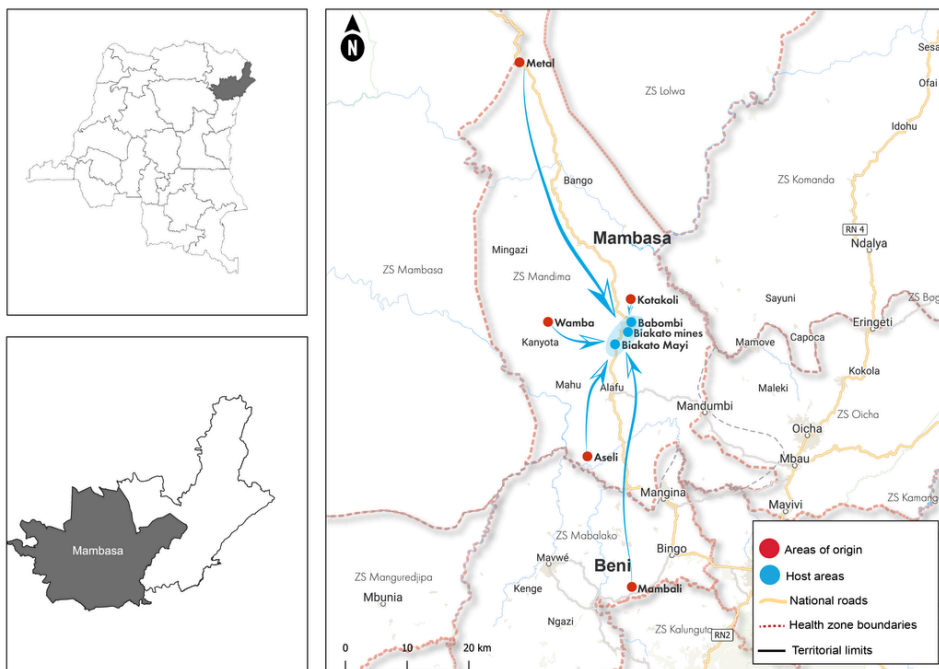


Figure 2. Change in the number of displaced households between the previous month and the current month.

Mambasa Territory: New wave of displacement following ADF attacks

ADF attacks in Belu Central, Aseli, Bangolo and Mutango, in Mandima Health Zone, as well as in Kasoko and Mambali, in Mabalako Health Zone in Beni Territory, have led to the displacement of 7,604 households. Affected populations have mainly sought refuge in Biakato Mines, Biakato Mayi and Babombi, in Mandima Health Zone, underscoring the continued impact of insecurity on population movements.



Map 9. Population Movements in Mambasa Territory

North Kivu Province

Armed violence and persistent insecurity continue to drive displacement:

North Kivu recorded 6,519 displaced households in May. Displacement was mainly reported in the territories of Masisi and Beni, driven by clashes between the M23 and Wazalendo, ADF attacks against civilians, airstrikes around Rubaya, and heavy rainfall in the Watalinga chiefdom

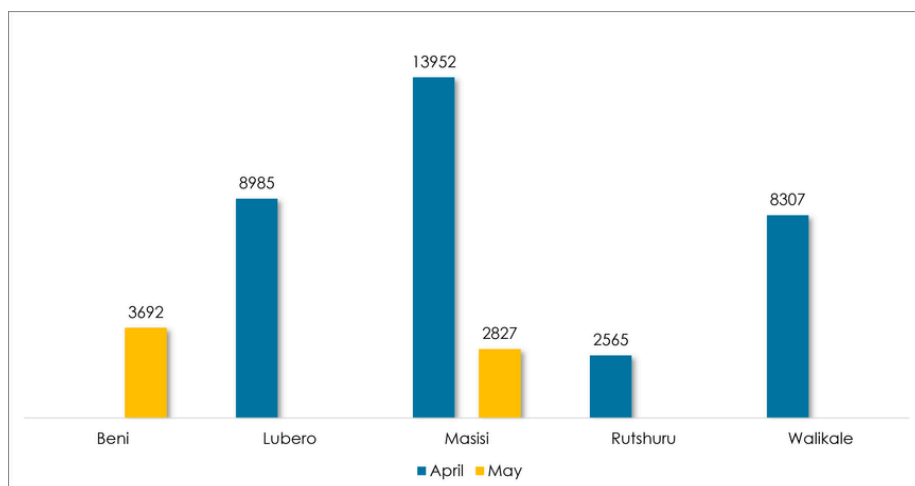
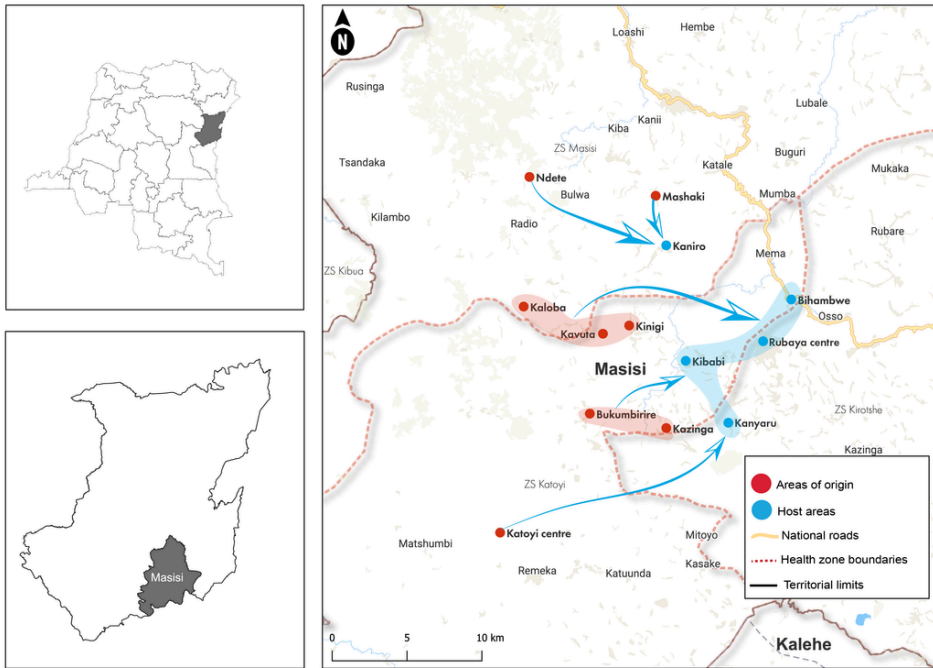


Chart 3. Month-on-month change in the number of displaced households.

Masisi Territory : Clashes in Katoyi and air strikes trigger new displacement

Masisi recorded the displacement of approximately 2,827 households, mainly in the Katoyi Health Zone. These population movements are attributed to clashes between Wazalendo elements and M23 fighters across several villages in the Katoyi sector. The situation was further compounded by FARDC drone air strikes targeting the town of Rubaya, which contributed to additional displacement.

Affected households mainly moved towards Kanyaru, Kibabi/Buporo, Rubaya Centre, Bihambwe and Kaniro, all located within Katoyi Health Zone. According to OCHA, most displaced households are being hosted by families, while others are sheltering in collective centres.



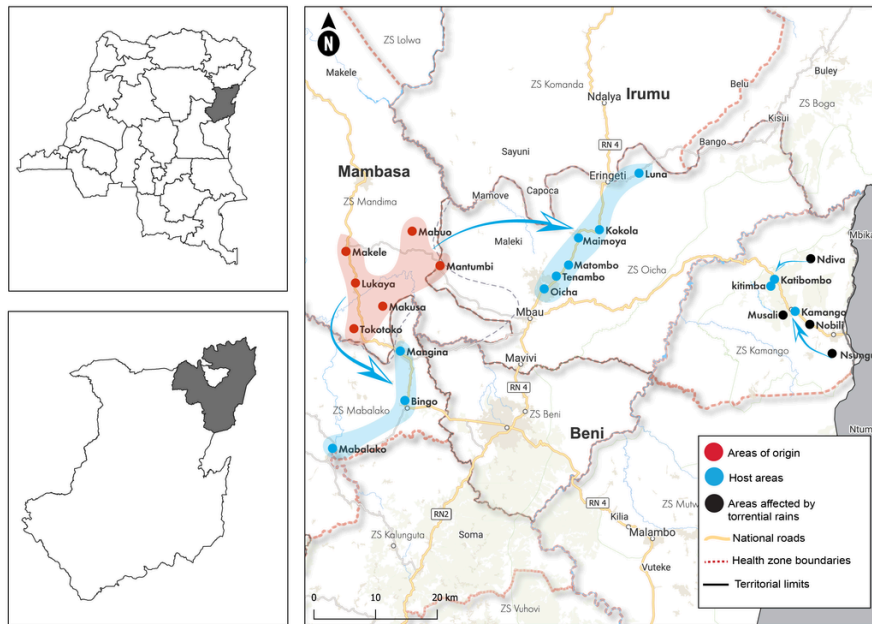
Map 10. Population movements in Masisi Territoryi

Beni Territory: ADF attacks and adverse weather conditions drive population displacement

Beni Territory recorded the displacement of approximately 3,692 households, mainly in the health zones of Kamango with 1,845 households, Mabalako with 846 households, and Oicha with 1,001 households.

These population movements were primarily attributed to ADF attacks against civilians in several localities of Mandima Health Zone, in Mambasa Territory, including Makumo, Lukaya, Mantumbi, Makele, Mabuo, Makusa and Tokotoko. In addition, heavy rainfall in the Watalinga Chieftdom also contributed to the displacement observed during the reporting period.

Displaced households mainly moved towards Oicha, Tenambo and Maimoya in Oicha Health Zone; Mangina, Bingo and Mabalako in Mabalako Health Zone; and Kamango and Kitimba in Kamango Health Zone, where they sought improved security and more stable living conditions.



Map 11. Population movements in Beni Territory

Maniema Province

Natural disasters and customary tensions are driving displacement:

In Maniema, 3,904 households were displaced in May, mainly in Kabambare Territory. These population movements were triggered by flooding caused by heavy rainfall and strong winds in the Banyabemba groupement, as well as by violence linked to a succession dispute between customary authorities in the Babuyu sector.

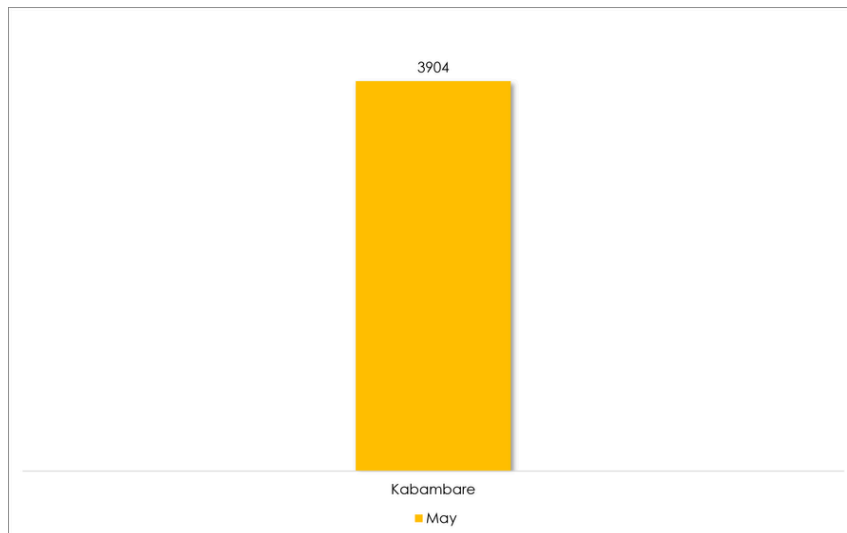


Figure 4. Change in the number of displaced households between the previous month and the current month.

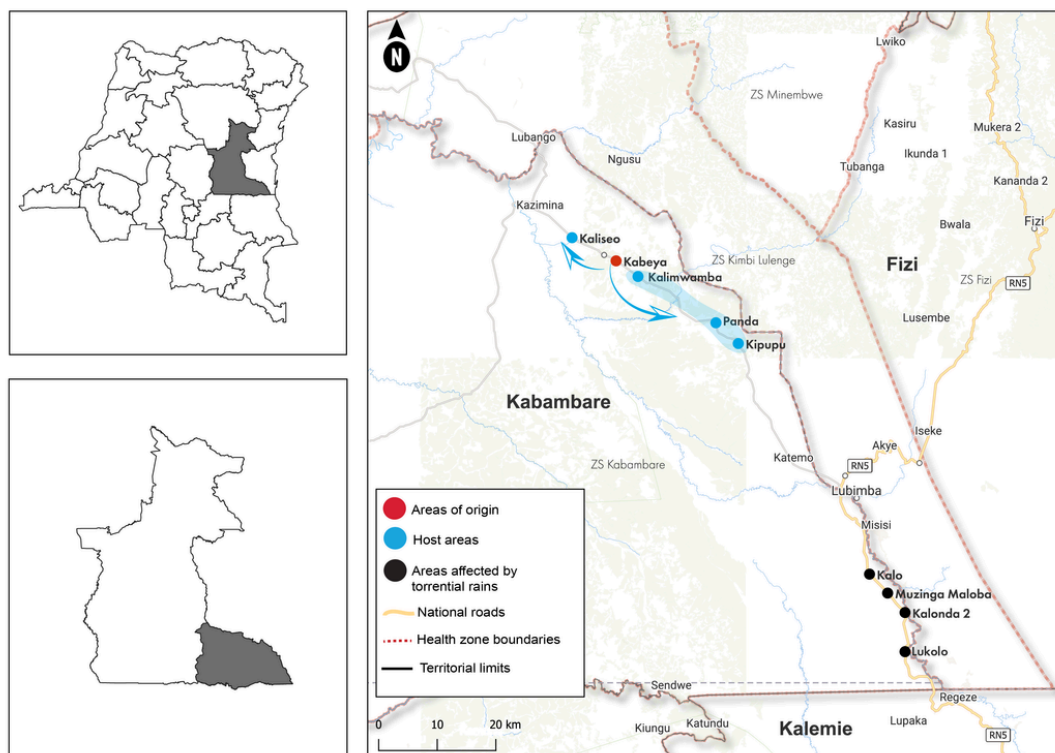
Kabambare Territory : Flooding and Customary Tensions Trigger Population Displacement

During May, Kabambare Territory recorded population movements estimated at 3,904 households, mainly within Kabambare Health Zone.

These displacements were driven, in part, by heavy rainfall accompanied by strong winds that struck Banyabemba groupement on 18 May, causing significant flooding in the localities of Kako, Muzinga Maloba, Kalonda 2 and Lukolo. According to reported information, the severe weather destroyed at least 2,658 homes, injured 47 people and resulted in four deaths. Most affected households found refuge with host families.

The floods also caused substantial damage to health infrastructure, particularly at the Muzinga Maloba community care centre, where essential medicines and medical equipment were damaged or lost.

In addition, tensions linked to a succession and power dispute between supporters of two customary chiefs in Babuyu sector escalated into violence, triggering further population displacement. Affected households mainly moved towards the localities of Kalimwamba, Kalindika, Kaliseo, Kimanu Kahoho and Panda, all located within Kabambare Health Zone.



Map 12. Population movements in Kabambare Territory

Tanganyika Province

Land disputes and intercommunal tensions driving displacement:

In Tanganyika, 678 households were displaced during May, mainly in Kongolo territory. These population movements were triggered by intercommunal clashes in the Bena Nyembo chiefdom.

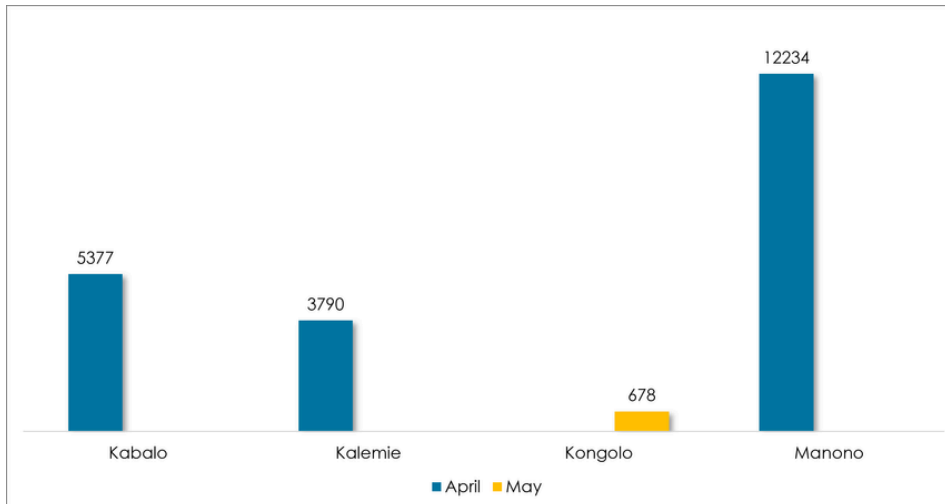


Figure 5. Month-on-month change in the number of displaced households

Kongolo Territory : Land dispute and intercommunal clashes trigger displacement

In Kongolo Territory, intercommunal clashes linked to a land dispute took place from 13 to 15 May between residents of Kapalayi and Buzilange villages, in the Bena Nyembo chiefdom. The violence led to the displacement of 678 households to the villages of Kitungwa, Kagoya, Kibala and Buyovu, located in the Mbulula Health Zone.

7. Outlook: Key Issues to Monitor in May 2026

Population displacement is expected to continue across eastern DRC in June, driven by persistent insecurity hotspots. In South Kivu and North Kivu, the evolution of clashes involving the M23, the FARDC, Wazalendo groups and other local armed groups is likely to remain the main trigger of new displacement, particularly in Kalehe, Walungu, Uvira, Fizi, Masisi and Beni territories.

In Ituri, ADF attacks against civilians continue to pose a high risk of further population movements, particularly in Mandima Health Zone and along areas bordering North Kivu and Ituri. The security situation in areas that have recently recorded returns, notably Uvira, will also need to be closely monitored to assess the sustainability of these movements and the risk of secondary displacement.

Community tensions, as well as land-related and customary conflicts that have driven displacement in Maniema and Tanganyika, also remain important risk factors to monitor. Particular attention should be paid to the combined impact of insecurity, climatic shocks and growing pressure on host communities, which could further aggravate humanitarian needs and limit prospects for sustainable returns among displaced populations.

Acronyms and overview of armed groups:

ADF (Allied Democratic Forces) – The ADF is a Ugandan Islamist armed group originally opposed to the Ugandan government. Its members fled to the DRC in the 1990s, where they were reportedly supported by President Mobutu against Uganda. The group arrived in Beni Territory around 1996, following the deployment of the Ugandan army in eastern Congo as part of efforts to overthrow Mobutu. In 2003, the ADF began adopting more extremist interpretations of Islamic scripture. In April 2019, it declared itself part of the Islamic State's Central Africa Province, alongside the Islamic State's branch in Mozambique.

CODECO (Coopérative pour le développement du Congo / Cooperative for the Development of Congo) – CODECO is an armed group active in Djugu Territory, Ituri Province, composed primarily of members of the Lendu community. The area has long been affected by violence and intercommunal tensions, mainly between the Hema and Lendu communities. These tensions are rooted in divisions inherited from the colonial period, during which land was reportedly allocated to Hema pastoralists at the expense of Lendu farmers.

CRP (Convention populaire pour la révolution / Popular Convention for the Revolution) – The CRP is an armed movement created by Thomas Lubanga, a former warlord who was convicted by the International Criminal Court in 2012. The movement claims to seek the liberation of Ituri from Kinshasa's governance and to address sociopolitical inequalities.

EH Tool (Event Horizon Tool) – The EH Tool is a platform developed by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) to support humanitarian response. It is an integrated tool designed to assist humanitarian crisis management through data analysis and risk visualisation.

FARDC (Forces armées de la République démocratique du Congo / Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo) – The FARDC are the official armed forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

M23 (March 23 Movement) – The M23 is an armed group operating in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, primarily in North Kivu Province. Established in 2012, the group takes its name from the 23 March 2009 agreement signed between the Congolese government and the former rebellion of the National Congress for the Defence of the People (CNDP).

MONUSCO (United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo) – MONUSCO is a United Nations peacekeeping mission established by the UN Security Council in 2010. It succeeded MONUC, the United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, which was created in 1999.

Nyatara CMC (Coalition of Movements for Change) – Nyatara CMC is a movement composed mainly of Nyatara groups and Congolese Hutu militias, which have at times been described as potential local partners or allies of the FDLR.

OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs) – OCHA is the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. Established in 1991, its mandate includes coordinating the international humanitarian response to crises, including armed conflicts, natural disasters and protracted emergencies.

VDP (Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland) – The VDP, also commonly referred to as Wazalendo – a Swahili term meaning “patriots” – refers to a constellation of non-state armed groups encouraged by the Congolese government to support the FARDC in securing certain areas, particularly against the M23. In September 2023, Kinshasa formalised the creation of the Volunteers for the Defence of the Homeland by integrating selected fighters from Wazalendo groups in North Kivu, with the aim of establishing them as an official auxiliary force distinct from other Congolese armed groups. In practice, however, the terms “VDP” and “Wazalendo” continue to be used interchangeably by actors on the ground.



CRISIS ANALYSIS
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Crisis Analysis Team - RD Congo

We provide timely, relevant, accurate and inclusive data-driven analysis to help teams and programmes make informed decisions. We identify, explore and analyse the links between sociopolitical, economic and cultural dynamics in crisis- and conflict-affected areas of eastern DRC. Our objective is to inform the humanitarian and development community on how to better adapt programming to the needs of affected populations.

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