

Democratic Republic of the Congo



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	About 1,700,000
Percentage of total population	About 2.5%
Start of current displacement situation	1996
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	3,400,000 (2003)
New displacement	At least 400,000
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, deliberate policy or practice of arbitrary displacement, human rights violations
Human development index	168



As of the end of 2010, 1.7 million people were internally displaced in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) by various conflicts which had killed several million people since the mid-1990s. Several hundred thousand people abandoned their homes in 2010, adding to the estimated million who were forced to flee during 2009. Meanwhile, a million people reportedly returned home between mid-2009 and the end of 2010.

The new displacement in 2010 was caused by fighting between militia groups and Congolese armed forces supported by the UN, as well as by attacks and violence against civilians by all the parties to these conflicts.

An estimated 510,000 people were displaced in North Kivu and 750,000 in South Kivu at the end of 2010. The army conducted operations against the Hutu Democratic Liberation Forces of Rwanda (FDLR) in North and South Kivu, sometimes with the support of UN peacekeeping troops. However, FDLR fighters operating with other armed groups such as the Mai Mai reoccupied several areas of North Kivu and stepped up attacks on civilians in both provinces. Hundreds of thousands of people were displaced, and tens of thousands of people also fled from South Kivu to Katanga Province.

In North Kivu, army operations against the Allied Democratic Forces – National Army for the Liberation of Uganda (ADF -NALU) resulted in the displacement of up to 100,000 civilians, most of whom had returned by the end of the year. The return of ethnic Tutsi refugees from Rwanda to areas of North Kivu also continued to lead to tensions with other ethnic groups over resources.

In Orientale Province, attacks in Lower Uele and Upper Uele Districts by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), and in Ituri District by local militias, also led to significant displacement in 2010. Almost 400,000 people were internally displaced in the province at the end of the year. In addition, in the western Equateur Province, over 47,000 people remained displaced after fleeing inter-communal clashes at the end of 2009.

Across eastern DRC, many members of the minority Batwa group were displaced from the forests by rebels hiding from government troops. They have been particularly vulnerable as they face widespread discrimination by other ethnic groups.

IDPs are dispersed in rural and urban areas, where they have either supported themselves or relied on the limited resources of hosts. However, with communities increasingly unable to cope with the influx of people, IDPs in North Kivu have also been forced to take refuge in dilapidated buildings or in camps managed by international NGOs under the co-ordination of UNHCR. Some 72,000 IDPs were in 31 camps in North Kivu at the end of 2010.

The killing and rape of IDPs and other civilians continued at a horrifying rate in eastern DRC in 2010. The UN reported 15,000 rapes in DRC in 2009, but many more have gone unreported. Both rebel groups and poorly trained and barely-paid government forces attacked civilians, to defeat historic enemies and also to secure territory in order to benefit from agricultural land and the extraction of natural resources. Women and children remained at great risk of sexual violence. Displacement and the breakdown of communities have also made children more vulnerable, leaving them easy targets for forced recruitment.

The justice system has seldom provided justice; in 2010, OHCHR highlighted that the vast majority of perpetrators of the most serious violations of human rights and international humanitarian law committed in DRC between 1993 and 2003, including forced displacement, had not been brought to justice.

Most IDPs and returnees have lacked access to basic services such as health centres, schools and roads, and to clean water, food, seeds, tools, clothes and materials to build houses. The protracted conflict and displacement have been identified as the main causes of food insecurity in eastern DRC. The conflict has also led to the disruption of education for many children.

Many IDPs have sought to integrate in their place of displacement or settle elsewhere. Tens of thousands are believed to have resettled, particularly in towns, following the destruction or occupation of their villages. However, only return movements have been formally monitored. Return has not always proved sustainable, as renewed clashes have often forced people to flee again. However, in a 2010 survey, most returning IDPs in North and South Kivu reported that better security had

prompted their return, and that they had been able to recover their former homes.

DRC has ratified the Great Lakes Pact and signed, but not ratified, the Kampala Convention. The government has made the Ministry for Solidarity and Humanitarian Affairs responsible for IDPs, but it has had no impact and there has been no legislation to support their protection. A report submitted by seven UN experts to the Human Rights Council in 2010 found that the government had neglected its responsibilities to protect and assist IDPs and returnees.

In May 2010, MONUSCO replaced MONUC, the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world, with a mandate directed more towards post-conflict stabilisation. Both MONUSCO and MONUC have been criticised, particularly by international NGOs and the media, for failing to protect IDPs and other civilians. Following a mass rape in the Walikale region of North Kivu, MONUSCO undertook to review the way it protects civilians. While the conflict continues unresolved, the UN and the government launched in 2010 two transition plans for eastern DRC, focusing on security, stabilisation and reconstruction.

Humanitarian agencies and local NGOs have struggled to respond to the needs of IDPs and other vulnerable people in a context of ongoing military operations and increased attacks against humanitarian workers. Some 120 security incidents involving humanitarian organisations were reported during the first half of 2010, twice the number reported during the same period in 2009. International agencies have increasingly delivered assistance through local NGOs and particularly the Cath-

olic Church and its network. Most local organisations work with almost no money in incredibly dangerous conditions.

The size of the country, the absence of roads and the wide dispersal of IDPs have hampered the delivery of support. Unicef and OCHA share a system to provide needs-based emergency assistance to IDPs and their host communities, returnees and populations affected by sudden-onset disasters. International organisations including UN-HABITAT and NRC have carried out emergency mediation and reconciliation activities to support returns. Local NGOs have offered counseling and assistance to IDPs and other vulnerable people.

The UN introduced the cluster system in 2006. The protection cluster (led by UNHCR) and the reintegration and community recovery cluster (led by UNHCR and UNDP) are particularly relevant to IDPs. An April 2010 evaluation found that clusters had led to improved coordination of humanitarian activities in the east, but that decision-making and coordination were still focused in Kinshasa. The DRC Humanitarian Action Plan received \$558 million in 2010, significantly below the \$694 million donated in 2009, despite the continuing humanitarian needs in the east.

In September 2010, an OCHA/JIPS study of IDPs living outside camps in North Kivu found that organisations dedicated only very limited resources to gathering data on IDPs, and that they had no common methods of surveying or analysis. OCHA also carried out a comprehensive profiling exercise in Lubero territory, home of the majority of North Kivu's IDPs, which led to a lower estimate of the number of IDPs there.