

# Democratic Republic of the Congo – Complex Emergency

SEPTEMBER 30, 2023

## SITUATION AT A GLANCE

<b>102.3</b> MILLION	<b>26.4</b> MILLION	<b>6.4</b> MILLION	<b>1.1</b> MILLION	<b>522,319</b>
Population of the DRC	Population in Need of Assistance	Number of IDPs in the DRC	Congolese Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in Nearby Countries	Refugees and Asylum-Seekers in the DRC
<i>UN – August 2023</i>	<i>UN – September 2023</i>	<i>UNHCR – August 2023</i>	<i>UNHCR – September 2023</i>	<i>UNHCR – September 2023</i>

- The IASC extended the System-Wide Scale-Up for eastern DRC through December 31, facilitating relief actors’ continued mobilization of additional resources and staff in the conflict-affected region. However, funding shortages continue to hinder scale-up implementation. The USG remains the largest donor of humanitarian assistance in the DRC, providing nearly \$486 million in FY 2023.
- Relief actors call for expanded protection support in conflict-affected communities—particularly in eastern DRC—where reported GBV, grave violations against children, and other protection incidents have increased markedly during 2023.
- Armed group violence resulted in civilian deaths and displacement in eastern DRC’s Ituri and North Kivu provinces, as well as in Kongo-Central and Kwango provinces in the west, during August and September.



<b>TOTAL U.S. GOVERNMENT HUMANITARIAN FUNDING</b> For the DRC Response in FY 2023	USAID/BHA <sup>1</sup>	\$553,332,659
	State/PRM <sup>2</sup>	\$71,565,105
	<b>Total</b>	<b>\$624,897,764</b>

*For complete funding breakdown with partners, see detailed chart on page 6.*

<sup>1</sup> USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (USAID/BHA)

<sup>2</sup> U.S. Department of State’s Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (State/PRM)

## KEY DEVELOPMENTS

### IASC Extends System-Wide Scale-Up Through December

The Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC)—the highest-level coordination body in the UN system—approved a three-month extension of the ongoing System-Wide Scale-Up in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) on September 14. The extension of the scale-up, which the IASC activated on June 16 in response to escalating humanitarian needs resulting from eastern DRC’s security crisis, facilitates the continued mobilization of additional resources and staff for response efforts, particularly for populations affected by North Kivu’s March 23 Movement (M23) crisis and worsening armed group violence in neighboring Ituri. The IASC identified food security, health, protection, and nutrition as priority sectors for the nearly 5.5 million people targeted under the scale-up, which will continue through December 31. USAID/BHA staff continue to engage with UN and nongovernmental organization (NGO) partners in North Kivu’s capital city of Goma to discuss the scale-up’s progress and efficacy, including identifying how USAID/BHA resources can help address outstanding gaps in line with IASC priorities and supporting humanitarian advocacy amid the crisis. However, USAID/BHA partners report that lack of funding is hampering efforts to adequately scale up operations and provide tangible results for assistance recipients. As of September 30, donors had contributed only 35 percent of the UN’s \$2.3 billion funding requirement as identified in the 2023 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for the DRC. The U.S. Government (USG) remains the largest humanitarian assistance donor in the DRC, providing nearly \$486 million during FY 2023. USG contributions also accounted for more than 50 percent of funding to the 2023 HRP for the DRC as of late September, according to the UN.

### Relief Actors Highlight Worsening GBV Climate Across Eastern DRC

Health actors have raised concerns that an increase in reported gender-based violence (GBV) cases in 2023—associated with increased armed group violence, insufficient shelter conditions in internally displaced persons (IDP) camps, and limited livelihood opportunities, among other economic and insecurity-related factors—could be indicative of the DRC’s worst GBV crisis in decades. Between January and June, nearly 35,000 GBV survivors accessed support services in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu, although the actual number of survivors is likely far higher due to access and reporting constraints, as well as stigma and fear of social consequences from reporting, according to the UN. The presence of armed groups—whose members often perpetrate GBV—presents a barrier to both humanitarians providing and survivors accessing care, and many survivors are hesitant to report due to concerns of retaliation, according to relief actors. Moreover, the GBV Area of Responsibility (AoR)—the country-wide coordination mechanism for GBV interventions in humanitarian settings led by the UN Population Fund (UNFPA)—reported that insufficient access to food, safe living spaces, and water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) infrastructure in Ituri’s Kigonze and Rhoe IDP sites was increasing the risk of GBV and other protection violations for women and girls in the sites as of August. The GBV AoR’s findings in Ituri reflect similar experiences among women and girls in IDP sites across North Kivu, and likely other provinces, due to the presence of armed actors, resource scarcity, and unsafe living conditions. Urgent food security needs—coupled with a lack of livelihood activities—among IDPs sheltering in sites throughout eastern DRC have also prompted women to engage in harmful coping mechanisms, such as survival sex in brothels and other establishments, to purchase food and other basic resources, while young girls are subjected to sexual exploitation. Relief organizations have called on donors for additional resources to implement GBV prevention and response activities and reiterated the importance of integrating GBV risk mitigation measures in all humanitarian interventions.

## **IDP Returns Outpace Displacement in North Kivu Despite Sporadic Violence**

Between June and August, approximately 267,000 people returned to their areas of origin in North Kivu despite an increase in clashes between M23 elements, other armed groups, and the Armed Forces of the DRC (FARDC) that generated civilian casualties, elevated protection risks, and displaced an estimated 81,000 people across the province, according to the UN. Despite sporadic violence across North Kivu, individuals have primarily chosen to return due to a critical lack of adequate basic services, humanitarian assistance, and shelter in IDP sites, particularly near Goma, and a relative lull in armed group hostilities in some areas of the province since July, relief actors report. However, returnees also face challenges including heightened protection risks due to limited assistance and persistent, unpredictable violence. Recently, clashes between M23 actors and local armed groups in the Bwito township of North Kivu's Rutshuru Territory—the territory with the greatest number of returnees in North Kivu—resulted in 11 civilian deaths and the robbery and burning of at least 20 homes on August 7, according to international media and the UN. Despite return movements between June and August, nearly 2.4 million people—many of whom urgently require food, protection, and shelter support—remained displaced in North Kivu as of August, according to the UN.

## **Violence Leads to More Than 700 Civilian Deaths in Ituri in Since January**

Armed group violence across Ituri—particularly in Djugu, Irumu, and Mahagi territories—resulted in at least 50 civilian deaths during the first two weeks of September, bringing the total number of civilian deaths to 700 since January, the UN reports. Persistent attacks have driven mass displacement across the province, with armed clashes displacing approximately 26,000 people in Mahagi's Angumu Health Zone between August 30 and September 3 alone, according to the UN. Recently, Cooperative for the Development of Congo elements—a militia affiliated with the Lendu ethnic group—attacked several villages in Djugu hosting members of the rival Hema ethnic group on September 8, resulting in at least 13 civilian deaths and injury to several others, according to local media. Overall, armed group attacks in Ituri continue to generate displacement and protection violations, including abductions and GBV incidents; limit humanitarian access; and prevent the return of IDPs to their areas of origin, according to the Protection Cluster.<sup>3</sup> IDPs and returnees in Ituri remain the population most affected by protection violations and in urgent need of food, household items, and shelter support.

## **Persistent Shelter Shortages Increase Risks for IDPs in Eastern DRC**

The current shortage of shelters for IDPs in Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu exposes many of the nearly 5.8 million IDPs in the provinces to environmental hazards and health and protection risks, according to the UN. In North Kivu's Nyiragongo Territory, heavy rains and flooding destroyed more than 370 shelters housing more than 1,800 people in the Bushagara IDP site in mid-September. The rainy season, which typically occurs between September and December and regularly results in flooding, will likely further deteriorate shelter conditions—generating food, protection, and WASH needs as a result—if IDP sites do not receive emergency shelter assistance imminently, the UN reports. Furthermore, North Kivu authorities had ordered the closure of nearly 110 collective centers, including schools, in Masisi and Nyiragongo territories as of August, necessitating the relocation of more than 226,000 IDPs in the coming months. The use of schools as collective centers places IDPs and host communities in competition for space and resources at these facilities, hinders educational development, and presents protection risks as adults and children share confined spaces and children unable to attend school face exposure to armed group recruitment, the Shelter Cluster reports.

<sup>3</sup> The Protection Cluster is the coordinating body for humanitarian protection activities, comprising UN agencies, NGOs, and other stakeholders.

## Intercommunal Violence in Western DRC Exacerbates Protection Risks

Intercommunal violence between the Teke and Yaka communities remains elevated across western DRC and continues to exacerbate the protection risks civilians face. On September 17, suspected elements of the Mobondo militia group—allegedly affiliated with the Yaka community—attacked Kimvula Territory’s Final village in Kongo-Central Province resulting in at least 18 civilian deaths, according to regional media. The attack in Kimvula followed a similar attack in Kwango that resulted in at least ten civilian deaths on August 10, along with others in Kwilu and Mai-Ndombe provinces in recent months, underscoring the risk of violence amid sustained hostilities between the two communities in the region. The most recent attack—which occurred only 120 miles southeast of the DRC’s capital city of Kinshasa—represents an expansion of the Teke–Yaka conflict outside of Kwango, Kwilu, and Mai-Ndombe. Overall, conflict between the Teke and Yaka ethnic groups in the three provinces resulted in more than 3,000 civilian deaths between June 2022 and June 2023, the UN reports.

### KEY FIGURES



**\$379.9  
Million**

In dedicated USAID/BHA support for emergency food assistance programming in FY 2023



**11**

Number of USAID/BHA partners implementing critical nutrition programs in the DRC



**\$15.3 Million**

In dedicated USAID/BHA support for health programming in FY 2023

## U.S. GOVERNMENT RESPONSE

### FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

USAID/BHA partners, including the UN World Food Program (WFP), continue to provide emergency food assistance to host community members, IDPs, refugees, and other populations at risk of acute food insecurity in the DRC. With nearly \$379.9 million in USAID/BHA funding in FY 2023, NGO and UN partners are providing cash transfers for food, food vouchers, and in-kind food assistance—including U.S.-sourced commodities—to help households meet their basic food needs. WFP provided cash transfers to approximately 1.7 million people and in-kind food assistance to an estimated 1.1 million individuals between January and July.

USAID/BHA has provided nearly \$28.9 million in FY 2023 to help partners identify and treat acute malnutrition. To support improved food security and nutrition outcomes in the longer term, UN agencies and NGO partners are also distributing tools and seeds to bolster household agricultural production and conducting awareness campaigns on dietary needs and infant and young child feeding best practices. USAID/BHA partner the UN Children’s Fund (UNICEF) provided nutrition counseling to nearly 87,400 mothers and caregivers of children ages two years and younger in August. USAID/BHA funding also aims to strengthen the coordination of nutrition and food security interventions and ensure critical assistance reaches the most vulnerable populations.

### HEALTH

USAID/BHA has provided approximately \$15.3 million in FY 2023 to support NGO partners to expand community access to free primary health care services in areas of high displacement. Such support includes increasing the availability of essential medicines and supplies, providing health worker training, and supporting disease surveillance and response efforts. Notably, USAID/BHA supports the procurement, distribution, and training in the use of post-exposure prophylaxis kits, bolstering the clinical management of

rape in health facilities across five provinces. USAID/BHA also funds health messaging efforts, encouraging the adoption of recommended health and hygiene best practices to prevent the spread of communicable diseases such as cholera. USAID/BHA partner UNICEF reached more than 110,000 individuals in August with cholera prevention kits including oral rehydration solution, soap, water cans, and water treatment products. Additionally, State/PRM partners support primary health care—such as maternal and child health care and procurement of essential equipment and medicines—for refugees from neighboring Central African Republic (CAR) in the DRC’s Nord-Ubangi and Sud-Ubangi provinces. With State/PRM support, the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) enabled 17 hospitals to conduct more than 6,300 operations and 20 primary health care centers to conduct nearly 198,000 consultations and provided physical rehabilitation services to conflict-affected populations in the DRC from January to June.



17

Number of USG partners implementing protection programs in the DRC

## PROTECTION

While protection considerations are integrated into all USG humanitarian programming, USG partners also support the provision of critical protection services in conflict-affected areas of the DRC. USAID/BHA has provided more than \$15.8 million in FY 2023 funding to help partners implement protection activities in the country, including the establishment of safe spaces for children and survivors of GBV and the provision of child protection and psychosocial support services, among other activities. State/PRM partner the Office of the UN High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) provides GBV prevention and response activities, including mental health and psychosocial support services and sensitization for refugees and host communities on sexual violence, exploitation, and abuse. UNHCR’s interventions also include transformative programming focused on changing attitudes—including among men and boys—that condone violence against women and girls at the community level. ICRC, with State/PRM support, provided livelihood and psychosocial support to more than 3,800 people—including more than 1,700 survivors of sexual violence—between January and June.



**\$27.3 Million**

In dedicated USAID/BHA support for shelter and settlements programming in FY 2023

## SHELTER AND SETTLEMENTS

USG partners play a leading role in constructing emergency shelters for displaced individuals and managing IDP and refugee camps in the DRC. With nearly \$27.3 million in FY 2023 funding, USAID/BHA partners provide shelter assistance to IDPs and returnees in crisis-affected areas of the DRC. USAID/BHA partners also provide longer-term shelter solutions for returnees in more stable areas, paired with legal assistance to help families secure land for farming and habitation in areas where IDPs resettle. Additionally, State/PRM partner UNHCR had supported the construction of at least 6,100 emergency shelters at IDP sites across eastern DRC—including more than 2,640 at the Rusayo II site near Goma—as of June 2023, and continues to lead advocacy with local authorities to secure additional

land to expand sites and improve residents' conditions.



## \$57.9 Million

In dedicated USAID/BHA support for WASH programming in FY 2023

### WASH

USAID/BHA has provided approximately \$57.9 million in FY 2023 funding to support WASH activities countrywide, improving access to safe drinking water and sanitation infrastructure to help reduce the spread of infectious diseases like cholera. USG-supported activities include constructing and rehabilitating WASH infrastructure, such as handwashing stations, latrines, showers, and water points; distributing hygiene kits and other essential WASH commodities; and transporting emergency water reserves to IDP and refugee sites. Additionally, ICRC improved WASH conditions for approximately 429,000 individuals between January and June through interventions including delivering safe drinking water and expanding water networks to IDP sites near Goma and providing chlorine treatment materials to city water authorities.

### CONTEXT IN BRIEF

- Despite the implementation of a peace agreement in 2003, fighting between forces loyal to the Government of the DRC and various armed entities, including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, M23, Mai Mai elements, and militias affiliated with the Hema and Lendu ethnic groups, continues to contribute to high levels of insecurity and population displacement in eastern DRC.
- Violence, restricted humanitarian access, poor infrastructure, forced recruitment into armed groups, and reduced access to agricultural land and traditional markets have contributed to the deterioration of humanitarian conditions in several parts of the DRC, triggering widespread internal displacement and refugee outflows.
- Since March 2022, renewed clashes between the FARDC and M23 in Rutshuru have displaced hundreds of thousands of people within North Kivu and to South Kivu, straining humanitarian capacity in areas receiving IDPs. IDPs are facing significant disease and protection risks due to inadequate access to shelter and other emergency assistance, particularly in the outskirts of Goma, where many people have fled following the escalation of conflict in October 2022. Relief organizations also report severely restricted access to M23-controlled areas of North Kivu, where access to basic services and food is likely limited.
- On October 4, 2022, U.S. Chargé d’Affaires Stephanie Miley renewed a declaration of humanitarian need for FY 2023 due to ongoing complex emergency conditions in the DRC.

### USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE DRC RESPONSE IN FY 2023<sup>1</sup>

IMPLEMENTING PARTNER	ACTIVITY	LOCATION	AMOUNT
<b>USAID/BHA</b>			
ABCCom	Food Assistance—Local, Regional, and International Procurement (LRIP); Shelter and Settlements	North Kivu	\$1,000,000
ACTED	Agriculture; Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food, LRIP; Humanitarian Coordination, Information Management, and Assessments (HCIMA); Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Bas-Uélé Province, Ituri, Maniema Province, Nord-Ubangi, North Kivu, South Kivu, Sud-Ubangi, Tanganyika Province	\$22,511,884

African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD)	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Ituri, North Kivu	\$3,499,959
Alliance for International Medical Action (ALIMA)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Ituri, North Kivu	\$3,500,000
Association Locale Pour Le Développement Intégral (ALDI)	Food Assistance–LRIP	Ituri	\$493,140
Caritas Development Goma	Shelter and Settlements, WASH	North Kivu	\$500,000
Catholic Relief Services (CRS)	Agriculture; Disaster Risk Reduction Policy and Practice; Economic Recovery and Market Systems (ERMS); Food Assistance–Cash Transfers for Food, Food Vouchers, LRIP; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Kasai-Central Province, Tanganyika	\$14,492,214
Concern	Agriculture; ERMS; Food Assistance–Cash Transfers for Food, Food Vouchers, LRIP; WASH	North Kivu, Tanganyika	\$13,596,031
DAI	HCIMA	Countrywide	\$250,000
DanChurchAid	ERMS, Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	North Kivu	\$6,225,000
Doctors of the World	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	South Kivu	\$4,500,000
GiveDirectly	Multipurpose Cash Assistance (MPCA)	North Kivu	\$1,452,132
International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC)	Food Assistance–LRIP	North Kivu, Tanganyika	\$14,500,000
iMMAP	HCIMA	Countrywide	\$940,978
Implementing Partner	HCIMA	Haut-Katanga Province, Haut-Lomami Province, Ituri, Maniema, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika	\$1,500,000
International Organization for Migration (IOM)	HCIMA, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika	\$20,000,000
International Rescue Committee (IRC)	Health, Nutrition, Protection	Ituri, North Kivu, Tanganyika	\$7,284,369
Mercy Corps	Agriculture; ERMS; Food Assistance–Cash Transfers for Food, Food Vouchers; HCIMA; MCPA; Protection; WASH	Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika	\$22,183,673
Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC)	Protection, Shelter and Settlements, WASH	Ituri, North Kivu, Tanganyika	\$4,158,521
Oxfam	WASH	Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika	\$5,000,000
People in Need	Agriculture, Health, MPCA, Nutrition, WASH	South Kivu	\$3,000,000
Programme de Promotion de Soins de Santé Primaires	WASH	North Kivu	\$500,000
Première Urgence Internationale (PUI)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	North Kivu	\$7,000,000
Rebuild Hope for Africa	Shelter and Settlements	South Kivu	\$1,000,000
Samaritan's Purse	Agriculture; Food Assistance–Cash Transfers for Food, Food Vouchers, LRIP; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Ituri, Haut-Uélé Province, North Kivu, Tshopo Province	\$17,813,222
Save the Children Federation (SCF)	Health, Nutrition, Protection, WASH	Ituri, North Kivu	\$5,000,000
Swiss Church Aid (HEKS)	Agriculture, ERMS, WASH	Maniema, South Kivu	\$2,500,000
Tearfund	Agriculture, WASH	Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu	\$5,916,931
Transcultural Psychosocial Organization (TPO)	Food Assistance–LRIP; WASH	South Kivu	\$1,000,000
UNICEF	Nutrition–U.S. In-Kind Specialized Nutrition Products	Équateur, Ituri, Kasai Province, Kasai Central, Kasai-Oriental Province, Kwango Province, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika	\$12,481,440
	HCIMA, MCPA, Protection, WASH	Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu, Tanganyika	\$24,366,357
UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA)	HCIMA	Countrywide	\$1,250,000
UNFPA	HCIMA, Protection	Countrywide	\$2,599,869
WFP	Food Assistance–U.S. In-Kind Food Aid	Countrywide	\$186,742,640
	Food Assistance–Cash Transfers for Food, LRIP; HCIMA; Nutrition	Bas-Uélé, Ituri, Haut-Katanga, Haut-Uélé, Kasai, Kasai Central, Kasai-Oriental, North Kivu, Nord-Ubangi, South Kivu, Sud-Ubangi, Tanganyika	\$99,000,000

	Logistics	Countrywide	\$7,000,000
Welthungerhilfe (WHH)	Agriculture; Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food; MPCA; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	North Kivu	\$3,748,193
World Relief International (WRI)	Food Assistance—LRIP; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	North Kivu	\$4,000,000
World Vision	Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food, LRIP; WASH	North Kivu	\$20,000,000
Logistics Support			\$656,686
Program Support			\$169,420
<b>TOTAL USAID/BHA FUNDING</b>			<b>\$553,332,659</b>
<b>STATE/PRM</b>			
ICRC	Agriculture; Camp Coordination and Camp Management; Education; ERMS; Food Assistance—Cash Transfers for Food, Food Vouchers; HCIMA; Health; Logistics Support; MPCA; Protection; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Countrywide	\$23,900,000
UNHCR	Education, ERMS, HCIMA, Health, Logistics Support; MPCA; Protection; Shelter and Settlements; WASH	Countrywide	\$44,970,105
WFP	Multi-Sector Assistance	Countrywide	\$695,000
World Vision	Health, Protection	Nord-Ubangi, Sud-Ubangi	\$2,000,000
<b>TOTAL STATE/PRM FUNDING</b>			<b>\$71,565,105<sup>2</sup></b>
<b>TOTAL USG HUMANITARIAN FUNDING FOR THE DRC RESPONSE IN FY 2023</b>			<b>\$624,897,764</b>

<sup>1</sup> Year of funding indicates the date of commitment or obligation, not appropriation, of funds. Funding figures reflect publicly announced funding as of September 30, 2023.

<sup>2</sup> State/PRM total does not include the \$39.6 million in FY 2023 funding for Congolese refugees in neighboring countries, which increases the total USG emergency funding for the DRC complex emergency in FY 2023 to approximately \$664 million.

## PUBLIC DONATION INFORMATION

- The most effective way people can assist relief efforts is by making cash contributions to humanitarian organizations that are conducting relief operations. A list of humanitarian organizations that are accepting cash donations for disaster responses around the world can be found at [interaction.org](https://www.interaction.org).
- USAID encourages cash donations because they allow aid professionals to procure the exact items needed, often in the affected region; reduce the burden on scarce resources, such as transportation routes, staff time, and warehouse space; can be transferred very quickly and without transportation costs; support the economy of the disaster-stricken region; and ensure culturally, dietarily, and environmentally appropriate assistance.
- More information can be found at:
  - USAID Center for International Disaster Information: [cidi.org](https://www.cidi.org)
  - Information on relief activities of the humanitarian community can be found at [reliefweb.int](https://www.reliefweb.int).

USAID/BHA bulletins appear on the USAID website at [usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work](https://www.usaid.gov/humanitarian-assistance/where-we-work)