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Upsurge of violence in Rutshuru territory, DRC

Flash Update
27 October 2022

Highlights

- After a period of relative calm the last few months, fighting restarted since last week and has significantly intensified since 26 October.
- While 200,000 people were already displaced since July 2022, over 35,000 people are reportedly newly displaced in Rutshuru territory worsening already acute humanitarian needs. Approximately 6,500 reportedly fled to Uganda.
- Despite the very volatile and unpredictable environment, UNICEF and partners continue to provide assistance to the most vulnerable in Rutshuru and Nyiragongo territories

Situation Overview

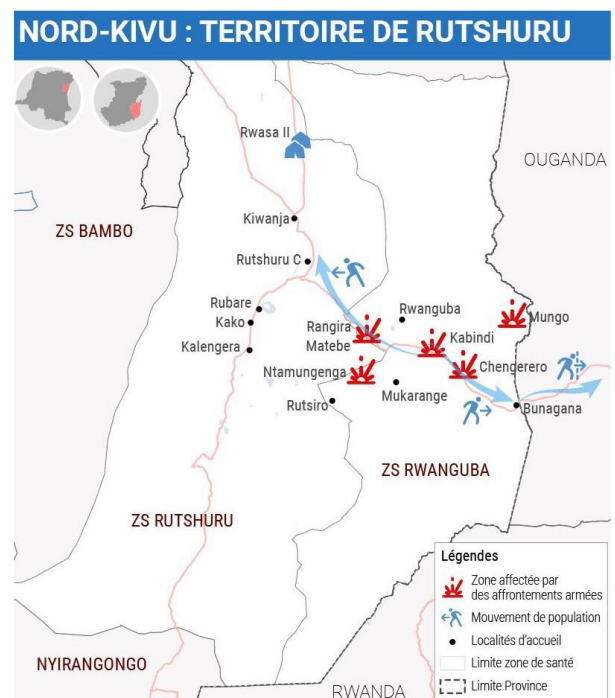
On Thursday 20 October, clashes between the FARDC and the M23 resumed in the Rangira-Rwanguba region of Rutshuru territory in the North Kivu province.

On Wednesday 26 October, fighting intensified and clashes continue to be reported in Rutshuru territory with use heavy weapon leading to massive population displacements. While an estimated 200,000 people were already displaced since the latest violence in July 2022 in different sites in Rutshuru and Kiwanja, as well as in host families in Kalengera, Rugari, Ntamugenga, Rumangabo, OCHA estimates that over 35,000 people are newly displaced in Rutshuru territory. Approximately 6,500 reportedly fled to Uganda.

UNICEF through its network of partners present on ground was able to gather the below information of the current situation.

Security context :

- On Wednesday 26 October, long-range artillery was used between FARDC and M23
- MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade is deployed to secure the RN2 axis between Goma and Rutshuru. The Bugari crossroads on the RN2 south of Rutshuru, which gives access to the Bunagana axis, is still under FARDC control, contrary to rumors circulating on social networks.
- Many rumors are circulating about the occupation of Rwanguba (bridge), Rangira, Rokoro by the M23 and possible progress to Rutshuru centre.



Source : OCHA, 26 October 2021

- Given the very volatile situation, many humanitarian actors preventively left Rutshuru area.

Humanitarian situation:

- Following this upsurge of violence, important population movements are reported worsening the existing acute humanitarian needs in Tongo, Kiwanja, Kiseuro, Kisharo, Rutshuru centre, Kanyabanonga and Kanyaruchinya. 72 wounded people were taken care of by MSF in Rutshuru
- In Rutshuru territory:
 - Since 20 October, some 4,910 households reportedly arrived in Tongo.
 - The population of the Rwaso 2 site has reportedly begun to move towards Kanyabayonga (on the Kiwanja - Lubero axis).
 - Part of the population of Rutshuru center and Kiwanja is allegedly moving preventively towards Goma and Kiseuro (Kiwanja-Ishasha axis).
 - In Ntamugenga, after intense shelling on Wednesday 26 October, part of the population reportedly moved to Kako and now probably to Tongo and Rubare. Many wounded people arrived at the reference health center of Ntamugenga. Some people were also displaced to the Institut Nzirimo, the Primary school of Ntamugenga and the religious sister's convent of Ntamugenga. There has been no fighting in Ntamugenga for 48 hours.
 - Internally displaced people from Rubare, Kako, Ntamugenga and Kalengera are reportedly now moving towards Goma, Tongo, Rugari.
- In Kanyaruchinya, Nyiragongo Territory (10km north Goma):
 - Approximately 305 households have arrived since Friday from Rubare, Tamugenga, Kako, Matebe, Kalengera, Rugari (Rutshuru territory). A constant influx of people was observed during the mission of the inter-cluster today to which UNICEF participated. Families are coming by motorcycle with children arriving first followed by their parents. About 10 unaccompanied children have already been identified.
 - Displaced people are mainly concentrated at the school EP Mboga and are then redirected to 24 reception sites (schools, churches, other)
 - Over the past two weeks, 4 confirmed cholera cases have been reported among the displaced population

UNICEF's Response

From the first days of the crisis in April 2022, UNICEF has been responding to the humanitarian needs with a response in WASH, child protection, non-food item distribution, health and nutrition, emergency education in the territories of Rutshuru and Nyiragongo. Despite the very volatile and unpredictable environment, UNICEF and partners continue to provide assistance to the most vulnerable displaced affected by this crisis in Rutshuru/Kiwanja and to the various locations where the displaced are currently located and where more are moving to.

In Kanyaruchinya, UNICEF is currently working with child protection partners to identify and take care of the unaccompanied children that arrived in the past few days. In addition, the CATI team has also been deployed around the cholera cases to prevent any spread of the epidemic.

UNICEF has already mobilised its internal emergency resources to monitor the situation on the ground and provide an initial response. Estimates are still being made but a large increase in numbers is expected in the coming days with therefore an urgent need for funding to address most urgent basic needs of displaced population.

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