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Flooding in Kalehe
territory, South Kivu,
DRC

SitRep # 1

4– 13 May 2023

Highlights

- Heavy rains resulted in massive flooding and mudslides in Bushushu and Nyamukubi in Kalehe territory in South Kivu province
- More than 400 people have been killed, while over 2,500 people are still missing of which at least 800 school-aged children. Several hundreds of children have been separated from their families or have been orphaned. About 3,000 houses have been damaged, and basic social services have been destroyed in the two localities.
- With the destruction of the public water network in the two localities, the risks associated with lack of access to clean and safe water are worsening. The impact of the crisis on children and women is multi-faceted with serious concerns about the protection and well-being of children in affected areas, including those who have been separated from families and caregivers. Damaged roads and bridges are hindering the provision of humanitarian aid.
- UNICEF and partners continue to provide multisectoral lifesaving assistance to affected children and their families despite the challenging operational conditions.

Situation Overview

Following heavy rains and violent wind on 2 and 4 May 2023, the Lukungula, Kabushungu, Nyamukubi, Chishova and Kanuynyi rivers burst their banks causing flooding and mudslides that partially destroyed the localities of Nyamukubi and Bushushu in Kalehe territory in South Kivu province.

According to the latest estimates of 13 May from the Provincial Health Division (DPS) and the Humanitarian Affairs Division (DIVAH), 402 people are dead while 2,536 people remain missing. Led by the Red Cross of the DRC, the search for bodies and their retrieval for dignified and safe burials is still ongoing.

Around 3,000 houses have been damaged, of which 1,200 have been destroyed. The public water networks in Nyamukubi and Bushushu are almost totally destroyed, putting the population at risk of waterborne diseases, especially considering the risks related to unrecovered dead bodies. While most of the affected population staying out in their home villages, the International Organization for Migration's Displacement Tracking Matrix (IOM-DTM) estimates that 299 households, representing 1,495 people have relocated to neighboring localities (Kanyunyi, Rambira, Mwada, Ihusi).¹

¹ IOM-DTM, EVALUATION RAPIDE – SUIVI DES URGENCES (ETT), Dashboard #113, 5-9 May 2023

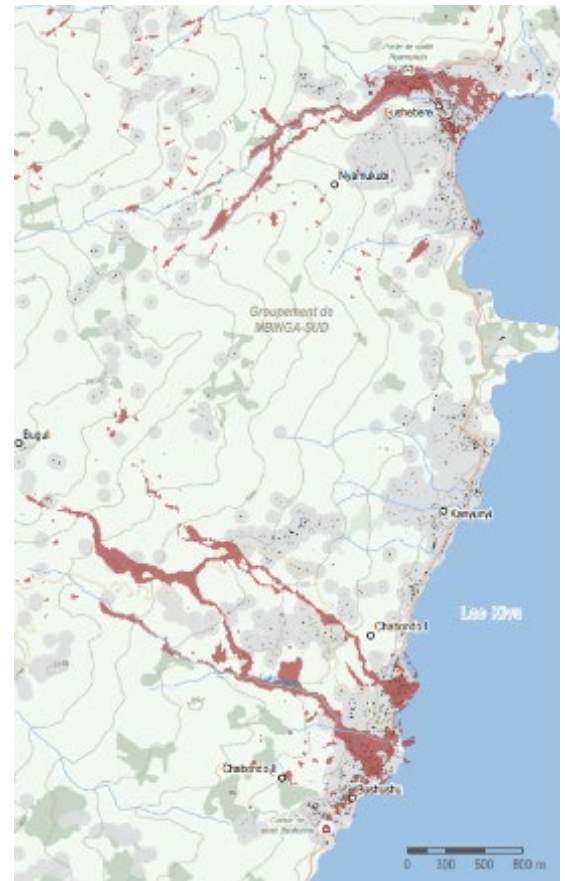
The intervention of many health humanitarian actors, notably MSF and the Red Cross movement – the Local Committee of the Red Cross, the South Kivu Red Cross and the International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) – has facilitated the transfer of 41 severely injured people, including 10 children, to the General Referral Hospital in Bukavu. In addition, 81 injured people were admitted to local health centers (Kalehe Reference Hospital, Bushushu and Nyamukubi Health Centers, Nyamukubi Mother-Child Center). Twenty-two patients have died since reaching the healthcare facilities. Three private health centers were destroyed by the disaster, and all prevention activities – including vaccination and pre-natal consultations – have halted in the two affected areas. Other local healthcare facilities have received enough medicines to treat lightly injured people in recent days. Support for medical staff and to ensuring the facilities have clean and safe water is still needed.

The impact of the flooding on communities is multi-faceted, especially on children and women, with serious concerns for the protection of children. UNICEF and partners have started the process to identify, verify and reunite with their families several hundreds of children who have been separated from their families, or children who have been orphaned. The disaster has had a significant impact on the mental and psychosocial health of the children, many of whom are traumatized by the loss of their parents, others and peers as well as by the destruction of their homes. The peculiar vulnerability of these displaced children puts them at an increased risk of violence, sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. Four cases of gender-based violence have already been reported and assisted.

A total of 21 schools have been affected. As many as 800 school-aged children are still missing, and 10 teachers or school staff are reported dead. One school is being used as a morgue. While school activities have restarted in schools in Nyamukubi, schools in Bushushu are still in a period of mourning and have not resumed activities.

Access to Nyamukubi remains difficult due to the mudslide that cut off National Road 2 between Bushushu to Nyamukubi, additionally isolating the population in need.

The government is evaluating the possibility of relocating the affected persons who lost their homes in 2 potential sites. These two options are still under discussion.



Map 1: Areas affected by the flooding in Kalehe territory (Source: REACH)



UNICEF's Response

Since the start of the crisis, UNICEF has been providing humanitarian assistance to meet the emergency, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), child protection, health, nutrition, education and shelter needs of the affected population. The emergency WASH response, supported by the UNICEF Rapid Response (UniRR) UniRR and Case Area Targeted Interventions (CATI) programmes and partners, is assisting the affected population in the two localities in its entirety – i.e. those who are directly affected as well as host communities.



On 13 May, UNICEF shipped to Kalehe a total of 15 tonnes of WASH and health supplies for the affected population and social services facilities, especially health centers, to mitigate the risks of an epidemic outbreak. Another shipment, including non-food items such as tents is expected in the beginning of next week.



Infection Prevention Control (IPC) / Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH)

Four cholera CATI teams² (Red Cross South-Kivu and AIDES) have deployed to Bushushu and Nyamukubi to support the following activities:

- Search for buried bodies, and provision of safe and dignified burials
- Installation of 16 chlorination points in Bushushu and Nyamukubi, (eight in each location)
- Distribution of water-purifying products to affected people
- Installation of water bladder, onion tank and two 45m³ pumps in Bushushu
- Sensitization of local communities to good hygiene and clean water practices

While to date no suspected cases of cholera have been reported in the two localities, active and passive surveillance activities are on-going to help prevent any cholera outbreak.

In addition, during the reporting period, UNICEF has focused its first response on emergency water activities, including:

- Supply of infection prevention control items and protective items for medical staff in Bushushu and Nyamukubi health centers (buckets, soap, boots, and jerrycans)
- Supply of 100 kg of chlorine for Bushushu and Nyamukubi health centers and to support dignified and safe burials



Rapid response (UniRR)

In coordination with the other NFI and WASH first responders, UNICEF and its partners AIDES have started preparing to distribute about 4,000 NFI and WASH kits.



Child Protection/Gender-Based Violence

UNICEF and the Division of the Social Affairs for South Kivu³, in partnership with ACAD, have started to identify, verify and reunite children who have been or remained unaccompanied by or separated from their families, including the children who have been orphaned, and providing them with essential child protection services.

UNICEF immediately established welcoming and listening spaces as well as mobile and static child-friendly spaces to provide psychosocial support to children in need. UNICEF is ensuring child protection actors are coordinating to establish a case management system for the referral of children to the services they need. In doing this, UNICEF is working closely with the social and para-social workers and local communities in the affected areas.

² Cholera Case Area Targeted Interventions

³ DIVAS



Health

UNICEF supported healthcare facilities by delivering two obstetrics kits and medicine supplies, while several health kits are being stored in Bukavu in case of growing need.



Education

UNICEF has identified possible sites for the installation of Temporary Learning Spaces, in coordination with the local education authorities. Education teams are collaborating to establish spaces for children that will include both education and child protection activities.



Nutrition

UNICEF and its partner AFPDE are providing nutrition support in the two areas and will be bringing in additional supplies in coming days.



"We were in the house," says Judith. "We heard mountains and rocks collapsing. Only my little brother and I were able to save ourselves but my parents and brothers all died in the house. We weren't able to save anything."

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