Overview

The eruption of Mount Nyiragongo on the evening of May 22, 2021, and the two lava flows have affected Kimbumba park as well as Buhene and Kibati in the North-East of Goma, DRC. More than 20,000 people from Goma have fled Saké, 25 km north-west of Goma on the day of eruption. 32 people have died as a direct result of the eruption (either burned by the lava or asphyxiated by fumes), including three children, while 40 have been reported missing1.

As of 26th of May, it is estimated that the eruption directly affected 20 villages within the groupements of Kibati, Munigi and Mutaho, representing 3,629 burned houses2. This results in around more than 20,000 displaced population. (about 4,500 households according to OCHA).

More than 195,000 people, according to the WASH cluster3, might have difficulty in accessing safe water due to a disabled water reservoir and 25,000 persons had already their water access cut off, while access to electricity was cut off in large parts of Goma city. Seven schools (five primary schools4 and two secondary schools) have been affected. 1,957 students and 49 teachers have been affected at primary school level and while 447 students and 72 teachers are affected at secondary school level5. It has also been reported that 38 health centers (including ten in Goma Health Zone, 19 in Karisimbi Health Zone and nine in Nyiragongo Health Zone) have been affected by the volcanic eruption6.

Between 3,000 and 5,000 people crossed the border into Rwanda from Goma, while at least 25,000 were displaced in Sake on 22 May7. From May 23, a large majority of the displaced people from Sake and Rwanda have started make their way back home to Goma. The returnees have found damaged houses and water and electricity shortages.

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1 Source: OCHA, Sitrep #2, May 26, 2021
2 Source: OCHA Sitrep #2, May 26, 2021
3 Source: WASH Cluster, Joint Needs Assessment Report, May 25 2021
4 Four primary schools and equipment have been destroyed by the lava flows while one is occupied by IDPs (Internally Displaced Person).
5 Source: UNICEF, 25 May 2021
6 Source: UNICEF, 25 May 2021
7 Source: UNICEF and Red Cross joint needs assessment, 23 May 2021.
There is also risk that the displacement to Sake through Nyiragongo, an area prone to cholera outbreaks where at least 19 suspected cases have been recorded in the last two weeks and where positivity rates show one of the most dynamic cholera transmissions in eastern DRC, might increase the spread of cholera to new areas, and cause major risk of cholera epidemic resumption in the urban area of Goma, as people are heading home again. Eventually, there is a concern of food supply, considering that the road between Goma and Rutshuru has been cut off following the eruption. Airport of Goma and Bukavu are closed, limiting logistics access.

During the evacuation on the day of eruption, many children have gone missing. As of 26 May, 939 non-accompanied children have been identified, of which 686 non-accompanied children have been reunified, while 142 children have been placed in transitional foster families, 78 children are in transit accommodation centers and more than 170 families are still looking for lost children.

The increasingly frequent seismic activities, which began on May 23rd and are predicted to continue for the next days or weeks, also constitute a concern, in that it will weaken the structure of the houses, some of which have already started to collapse, and thus make the humanitarian situation worse, while causing further stress on a population that is already traumatized.

During the night of May 27, the government decided to evacuate ten neighbourhoods (Majengo, Mabanga Nord, Mabanga Sud, Bujovu, Virunga, Murara, Mapendo, Mikeno, Kayembe, Le Volcan) towards Sake, thus increasing the humanitarian risks. Indeed, this evacuation will mean the displacement of approximately 400,000 people including 282,000 children and should have far-reaching consequences in terms of NFI (Non-Food Item), child protection, risks related to cholera, health and nutrition. Depending on the situation evolution, the humanitarian consequences will have to be reconsidered for the households that fled their home in evacuated districts.

**UNICEF’s Response**

**Psychosocial Support and Child Protection**

UNICEF, in partnership with the North Kivu Division of Social Affairs (DIVAS), the Red Cross and Change the Word have so far identified 939 non-accompanied children who were placed in host families or three transit centres while waiting to be reunited with their family.

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8 Source: UNICEF, 26 May 2021

9 The transit centres are: Thalitha, Mouvement International des droits de l’enfant, de la femme (MIDFEHOPS), and Centre d’enfants et appui aux vulnérables (CEAVU).
Out of the 939 children: 686 have already been reunited with their families; 142 were placed in host families (preferred option); 78 were placed in the 3 transit centers. UNICEF-trained psychologists have provided psychosocial support to 50 children hosted in the three transit centres and 129 children host families. UNICEF is mobilizing NFI (non-food item) and hygiene support for the children accommodated in the transit centers as well as in host families.

**Water, Hygiene and Sanitation (WASH) and Cholera response**

UNICEF donated 45 kg of chlorine to Action contre la Faim (ACF), to provide access to chlorinated water to 1,300 households, representing 7,800 people. In addition, in view of the evacuation of all the neighborhoods affected by the lava, UNICEF, in coordination with the WASH cluster and the government, has decided to redirect all of its emergency actions to Saké and other areas hosting displaced people to allow the installation of emergency toilets and access to chlorinated water through water trucking.

In addition to seven water points that were already operational in Sake, four others have just been installed today including three in Kaduki health zone and one in Sake health zone. In Kibati, a suspected case of cholera was detected in a group of 164 internally displaced families who are living in six classrooms where only two latrines are available. Following this detection, cholera kits, which include soap, aquatabs and buckets, were distributed to all these families by the Red Cross, in partnership with UNICEF.

Problems linked to water were signaled by the evaluation teams in Sake: the water used by the displaced population is from rain collection, while the dust of the lava forbids any treatment of the water by aquatabs (after test, no chlorine was present in the water), while the only sanitation point is an open-air latrine.

The cholera situation is expected to deteriorate further due to the new mass displacement of an estimated 400,000 people, including 28,000 children, from Goma to Saké and the Rwandan border, which began during the night of May 27 and concerns the ten neighborhoods to the east of Goma.

**Risk Communication and Community Engagement (RCCE)**

UNICEF-supported U-Report has set up a Volcano Information Center, which as of 25 May, was consulted by more than 5,200 people who proactively sought information by sending the word VOLCAN by toll-free SMS to 101. More than 4,500 people (87%) who visited the information center immediately shared this information with friends and family. In total, a Volcano Alert SMS was sent to 299,142 U-Reporters in the North Kivu Province.

**Health and Nutrition**

UNICEF has implemented Performance-Based Financing as a way to improve the health system's performance in the Health Zones affected by the volcano eruption (Goma, Karisimbi and Nyiragongo). Through this approach, UNICEF pays an ‘incentive’
to health centers who have exceeded specific targets. This directly benefits patients (children under 5, pregnant and nursing women) who only pay a ‘ticket’ between USD 2 and USD 10 for services such as medical consultation, delivery, purchase of medication, laboratory exams.

UNICEF and its partners supports the care of 2,980 children under the age of five suffering from malnutrition, as well as of the nutritional status of 12,000 pregnant and lactating mothers and their children under the age of two in hospitals in the most affected Health Zones, namely Nyiragongo, Goma, Karisimbi and Kirotsh.

### Funding Requirements

On May 27, UNICEF is publishing a flash appeal for the affected children and their families by the volcanic eruption crisis and its consequences, with a period of six months and with a budget of $6 million.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Sector Appeal</th>
<th>Requirements (USD $)</th>
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<tr>
<td>Rapid Response</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>WASH</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cholera</td>
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<td>Health</td>
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<td>Nutrition</td>
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<td><strong>Child Protection</strong></td>
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<td>Education</td>
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<td>C4D</td>
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<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>$6,139,187</strong></td>
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</tbody>
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### Operations

The Goma-Rutshuru road is inaccessible from Kibati, due to lava over a distance of nearly two kilometers, hindering access to supplies from several territories in North Kivu (Rutschuru, Lubero, Oicha, Beni and Butembo). The airport of Goma and Bukavu are still closed until further notice, while as of May 27, the boats are no longer allowed on Kivu Lake, while road traffic westward to Sake and Bukavu is very slow due to the large number of evacuating people on the road, both by car and on foot. All these situation poses constraints for our humanitarian operation.

As of May 25, 2021, more than 50% of the staff and their dependents have already been relocated to the cities of Bukavu, Sake and Rwanda. 20 essential staff members are staying in Goma to continue immediate UNICEF emergency response.

### External Media

1) **Social media**

In the early hours of the eruption, UNICEF called on the population to be vigilant and seek advice by texting the word VOLCAN. Following the population movements observed in Goma, UNICEF called on the population to respect the directives of local authorities. The days after the eruption, UNICEF communicated on the humanitarian situation and its emergency response, particularly in the area of child protection. Multimedia material has been made available on WeShare.

2) **English-speaking media coverage**
UNICEF’s Contacts in DRC

<table>
<thead>
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