



PROTECT PEOPLE IN KASAÏ

THE GLOBAL PROTECTION CLUSTER CALLS FOR IMMEDIATE ACTION to protect people in Kasai, Kasai Central and Kasai Oriental provinces, in the Democratic Republic of Congo where 1.27 million civilians have been forcibly displaced from the 3 Kasais, as well as neighboring provinces such as Kwilu, Lomami, Lualaba and Sankur. The displacement is the result of clashes between militia groups and the Congolese armed forces, but also between militias and self-defense groups and between rival militia groups, and intercommunity tensions. Daily displacement is now estimated at an average rate of 8,000 persons. Over 140,400 people are known to have returned to find their homes and resources looted or destroyed, and over 20,000 Congolese have fled to Angola.

Although the crisis has affected 2.4 million, and over 1.2 million people have been identified requiring urgent humanitarian assistance only 352,000 of the most vulnerable persons are receiving support. Host families or communities where IDPs search refuge are increasingly strained after many weeks of sharing scarce resources in a context of rising prices and diminishing access to basic services.

Alarming protection concerns and human rights violations of affected populations, including IDP's and host communities have been repeatedly and increasingly reported, entailing a high risk of transformation of the conflict into an inter-community conflict. UN reports have documented the existence of 40 mass graves in the Kasais and according to official accounts from health facilities, at least 400 civilians have been killed. In Kananga city only, 38 executions have been perpetrated against civilians as well as 23 cases of physical violence and/or mutilation. Most civilians in areas affected by the conflict are at risk of serious human rights violations, including physical mutilation and death, sexual violence, arbitrary arrests and detention in inhumane conditions of adults and minors. The Lack of physical access and pre-existing services impedes the development of adequate referral pathways, and most health centers are no longer supplied with basic drugs and equipment, the majority of them having been looted during the conflict.

Children are particularly impacted as they face higher risk of loss of life and severe injuries (in Kananga hospital, 90% of the bullets' injuries are reported to be on children or young adults), widespread use by non-state actors involved in the conflict, family separation, and various forms of exploitation. In addition, looting, occupation and destruction of schools as well as threats on/killings of teachers deprive many children of a safe access to education.

Overall, security and humanitarian access remain major challenges to the humanitarian community's deployment and response to this alarming emergency.

THE GPC RECALLS THAT ALL PARTIES TO THE CONFLICT have obligations to protect civilians in line with international human rights and humanitarian standards, including the Convention on the Rights of the Child.

THE GPC URGES PARTIES TO:

- Respect the principle of distinction in International Humanitarian Law and ensure that civilians are protected against attacks and the effects of hostilities;
- Allow civilians safe and unhindered access to humanitarian assistance;

THE GPC URGES ALL HUMANITARIAN ACTORS TO:

- Monitor protection incidents in all affected areas, using adequate early warning mechanisms;
- Refer protection cases (unaccompanied children, SGBV victims, etc.) for multi-sectoral assistance;
- Ensure the respect of “Do No Harm” principles through continuous collective monitoring of the response;
- Take advantage of the national cluster coordination system put in place under the leadership of the Humanitarian Coordinator in the DRC.

Finally, the GPC calls on the donor community to provide appropriate financial support for an efficient response to the most urgent protection needs in the areas affected by the Kasai crisis.