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Project on Internal Displacement

December 2014



NOW WHAT? THE INTERNATIONAL
RESPONSE TO INTERNAL
DISPLACEMENT IN THE DEMOCRATIC
REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

AUTHORED BY:

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Front Cover Photograph: Portrait of a woman at Bompata Encampment for internally displaced persons in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (UN Photo, Marie Frechon, March 11, 2007).

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ACRONYMS

ADF	Allied Democratic Forces
CCCM	Camp Coordination and Camp Management (Working Group)
CERF	Central Emergency Response Fund
CHF	Common Humanitarian Fund
CMP	<i>Commission Mouvements de Population</i>
CNR	<i>Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés</i>
CPIA	<i>Comité Provincial Inter-Agences</i>
DDR	Disarmament, demobilization and reintegration
DFID	Department for International Development (UK)
DRC	Democratic Republic of Congo
DSRSG	Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General
DTM	Displacement Tracking Matrix
ECHO	European Commission's Humanitarian Aid and Civil Protection Department
ERF	Emergency Response Fund
FARDC	Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo
FDLR	Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda
FIB	Force Intervention Brigade
FTS	Financial Tracking Service
HAP	Humanitarian Action Plan
HC	Humanitarian Coordinator
IDPs	Internally displaced persons
IDMC	Internal Displacement Monitoring Centre
IOM	International Organization for Migration

IRC	International Rescue Committee
ISSSS	International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy
M23	March 23 Movement
MONUC	United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC
MONUSCO	United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC
MSF	<i>Médecins sans Frontières</i> / Doctors without Borders
NGOs	Non-governmental organizations
NFI s	Non-food items
OCHA	Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs
OHCHR	Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights
RRMP	Rapid Response to Movements of Population
SGBV	Sexual and gender-based violence
SRS G	Special Representative of the Secretary-General
SRP	Strategic Response Plan
STAREC	Stabilization and Reconstruction Program of Armed Conflict Zones
RC	Resident Coordinator
UNFPA	United Nations Population Fund
UNHCR	United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
UNICEF	United Nations Children's Fund

INTRODUCTION

Assessing the assistance and protection conditions of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) as compared to a decade ago is a tricky task. As with nearly everything in the Great Lakes region, paradoxes abound and answers do not come easy. While there is a strong temptation to assess the situation as either “better” or “worse” than it was ten years ago, it would be very hard to make a definitive assessment either way. In some ways and for some IDPs, conditions are surely better than in the past; in other instances, conditions may be worse or have changed very little. Even though the protection of IDPs has been at the heart of international actions to protect civilians in the country for years, IDP numbers and their considerable vulnerability have persisted with almost no progress in either preventing new displacements or arriving at durable solutions for uprooted people.

There is no doubt that the continual presence of international organizations in DRC over the last decade has helped to save lives and alleviate suffering. In a country scoring at the bottom of the Human Development Index (HDI) year after year¹ and estimated to have lost well over 5.4 million people between 1998 and 2007 alone as a result of the crisis,² it goes without saying that vulnerability in DRC is pervasive. Without the presence of international organizations, the humanitarian situation could surely have been more dire. Unfortunately, results of the long-term international efforts in the country have failed to progress beyond the narrowest of humanitarian objectives, and even then, the emergency response has never been able to adequately address the vast needs of war-affected populations.

During the whole of international interventions in DRC, humanitarian outcomes for IDPs have been seriously hampered by recurring conflict and a national government both unable and unwilling to provide assistance to those affected by it. Factors internal to the humanitarian system have also influenced the results of aid efforts. Despite a constant presence in the country for years, humanitarian interventions have often been inconsistent and too meager to tackle the immense and diverse needs of vulnerable groups in DRC. At the same time, humanitarian actors have not been sufficiently agile to provide truly rapid emergency assistance for the newly displaced nor adequately diversified to offer alternatives to traditional inputs as a means to support the autonomy of IDP communities surviving in a situation of chronic crisis.

Further to the challenges of the humanitarian endeavor, international military and political efforts to bring an end to the conflict have had their share of impediments as well. After some 15 years of deployment under the auspices of a progressively reinforced mandate, the UN peacekeeping forces of MONUSCO (formerly MONUC) have been unsuccessful in neutralizing the multiple armed factions party to the conflict and have struggled to effectively protect the millions of civilians caught in the crossfire. International efforts at the political level have been equally ineffective. National and regional peace accords have routinely been signed and violated by DRC and its neighbors. During the period of the latest agreement, *The Framework for Peace, Security,*

¹ DRC scored 186 out of 187 in 2014, see <http://hdr.undp.org/fr/content/human-development-index-hdi-table> for a full listing of Human Development Index countries.

² International Rescue Committee. *Mortality in the Democratic Republic of Congo: An Ongoing Crisis*, 2007, http://www.rescue.org/sites/default/files/migrated/resources/2007/2006-7_congomortalitysurvey.pdf Current mortality numbers are unavailable as the IRC 2007 survey was the last of its kind conducted.

and Cooperation for the DRC and the Region, signed in February 2013, armed groups have remained active and fighting has continued unabated.

Against the backdrop of what have been two long and hard decades for DRC is a tentative optimism among the people who live and work in the eastern provinces. The fragile peace that has followed the defeat of the March 23 Movement (M23) by MONUSCO's Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) in late 2013 accompanied by the spontaneous return of many IDPs to pockets of security is real. What is more, it seems to be taking hold, at least in certain zones of the East. In a country where things are known to change very rapidly, however, the question on everyone's mind is: "Will the peace last?" For many pragmatic observers, the definitive answer is no. Whilst a significant number of Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) troops have been demobilized, the majority of fighters remain active and new recruitments are reportedly underway.³ At the same time, the M23 is just one of myriad armed groups active in Eastern Congo. Observers worry about the potential for renewed fighting in the area stretching from Dungeni in Province Orientale to Pweto in southern Katanga.

The potential for renewed fighting and new displacements is not the only humanitarian concern on the table. A lack of vision and funding for the kinds of activities best suited to assist people in a situation of protracted displacement are also preoccupying. Although there is a growing dialogue among humanitarians about stepping up activities both to support the voluntary return of certain IDPs and to reinforce the indigenous coping strategies of people who cannot return, there is little agreement about what these return and resilience-boosting activities might look like, who would lead them, and how they would be funded. The international community finds itself in an increasingly trying situation, neither operating in a traditional emergency context nor moving towards a more transitional setting wherein development actors could take over. Donors would seem increasingly weary of the longstanding international approach of simply "treading water," but at the same time, too risk-averse to try something new. Tighter and tighter budgets are also affecting ideas about what best to do to address the protracted crisis. Funding in DRC has fallen consistently since 2009 and has taken a particularly sharp dip in 2014.

It is the purpose of this paper to review the assistance and protection conditions for IDPs in DRC relative to what they were a decade ago. A more specific objective of the paper is to consider whether the key elements of the 2005 Global Humanitarian Response Review,⁴ notably leadership support for the Humanitarian Coordinator role, introduction of improved coordination through the Cluster Approach, and the establishment/expansion of pooled funding mechanisms for faster, more flexible money, have had a discernable impact on the conditions of IDPs in the countries under review. What is clear from an analysis of the situation in DRC is that humanitarian action and the UN humanitarian reforms more precisely are only one part of a much larger architecture required to respond to the needs of vulnerable people in a protracted

³ See Enough Project letter outlining the common concerns of a number of humanitarian observers regarding the MONUSCO-led disarmament, demobilization and reintegration (DDR) process in DRC at <http://www.enoughproject.org/blogs/enough-project-other-ngos-world-bank-effective-ddr-program-needed-congo>.

⁴ United Nations. *Humanitarian Response Review*. Commissioned by the UN Emergency Relief Coordinator and the Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs, August 2005, <http://www.humanitarianinfo.org/iasc/downloaddoc.aspx?docID=4910&type=pdf>.

situation of displacement. For this reason, the analysis will consider the range of initiatives – political, military, humanitarian and development – undertaken in DRC to protect and assist IDPs.

The case of internal displacement in DRC is one of three being examined under the auspices of this Brookings study. The other two field case studies are Colombia and Somalia. The methodology employed for the DRC case study included a comprehensive desk review, a two-week field mission to Kinshasa and Goma, key informant interviews with representatives of UN agencies, MONUSCO, INGOs, the Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement, civil society organizations, government ministries, and IDPs themselves. In total, some 43 key informant interviews were conducted under the auspices of the case study. In addition, approximately 65 IDPs were asked for their opinions about displacement conditions during a series of focus group discussions and individual interviews in camps and communities.

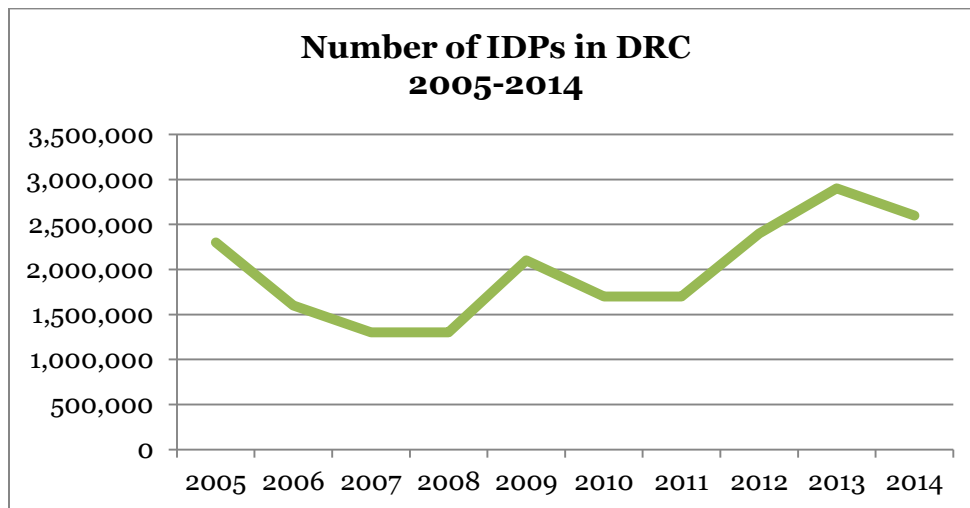
Table 1:

Participants to the study	
International IDP experts	04
Humanitarian donors	01
UN humanitarian actors	17
INGOs	08
Red Cross/Red Crescent	01
National NGOs	04
National government officials	07
UN peacekeepers (MONUSCO)	01
IDPs	65
TOTAL	108

OVERVIEW OF DISPLACEMENT IN DRC

For nearly two decades, large numbers of people in DRC have been displaced from their homes, often repeatedly, as a result of persistent conflict. The waves of violence have been so chronic over the years that they have created a culture of displacement that has touched nearly every inhabitant living in the eastern provinces. As of September 2014, there were an estimated 2.7 million IDPs in DRC.⁵ Although figures have fluctuated, the number of IDPs has generally hovered around the two million mark for over a decade. The all-time largest number of IDPs recorded in Congo was 3.4 million at the end of 2003. At the end of 2013, the number of IDPs again rose (to 2.9 million), but this figure has since diminished and now stands at 2.6 million. To give some sense of the scale of the problem globally, it can be noted that DRC has the fifth largest IDP population in the world, behind Syria (7.6 million), Colombia (5.7 million), Sudan (3.4 million) and Nigeria (3.3 million).⁶

Table 2:



Source: UN. *Humanitarian Action Plans for the Democratic Republic of Congo (2005-2014)*⁷

The recurring conflict across eastern Congo has been caused by inter-ethnic tensions, power struggles over the control of natural resources and land, the proliferation of armed groups, many of which are foreign, and the interference of DRC's neighbors in the situation in the East.⁸

Table 3:

The Three Congo Wars		
1996-1997:	<i>First Congo War</i>	<i>Mobutu forced from power by Kabila-led rebel groups supported by Rwanda, Uganda, and Angola</i>
1998-2003	<i>Second Congo War</i>	<i>Fighting between the new government and multiple rebel forces. Involvement of nine African nations and some 20 armed groups. Widespread plundering of gold, diamonds, timber and coltan.</i>
2003-present	<i>Third Congo War</i>	<i>Conflict continues despite peace talks in 2002 and the formation of a coalition government. The conflict is driven by ongoing power struggles between the FADRC, FDLR and other armed militias and the trade in conflict minerals.</i>

During the course of the conflict in DRC, the multiple armed groups and militias operating in the eastern provinces, including FARDC, have never made sufficient distinction between civilians and combatants. What is more, they have regularly preyed on civilian populations, committing arbitrary killings, raping and kidnapping women, pillaging villages, and forcibly recruiting children to their forces. Civilians regularly report being subjected to abuse and harassment. People are taxed for protection and transit and are forced to carry supplies for armed groups.⁹

In light of the acute instability in DRC, people have been forced to flee their homes regularly and repeatedly. The overwhelming majority of uprooted people are located in the five eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Katanga, Orientale, and Maniema. As of mid-2014, over 861,000 IDPs were in North Kivu, over 618,000 in South Kivu, over 582,000 in Katanga and an additional 467,000 and 185,000 in Orientale and Maniema respectively. Further to the large number of IDPs in the country, there are continual movements of refugees both to and from Congo. As of mid-2014, some 440,000 DRC citizens found refuge in neighboring countries while another 113,000 refugees were hosted by DRC.¹⁰

⁹ Medecins sans Frontières. *Everyday Emergency: Silent Suffering in Democratic Republic of Congo*, 2014, p. 23, https://www.msf.org.br/sites/default/files/everyday_emergency_report_eng.pdf.

¹⁰ OCHA, Humanitarian Snapshot, September 2014, map (in French).

Map 1: Internal Displacement in DRC, September 2014

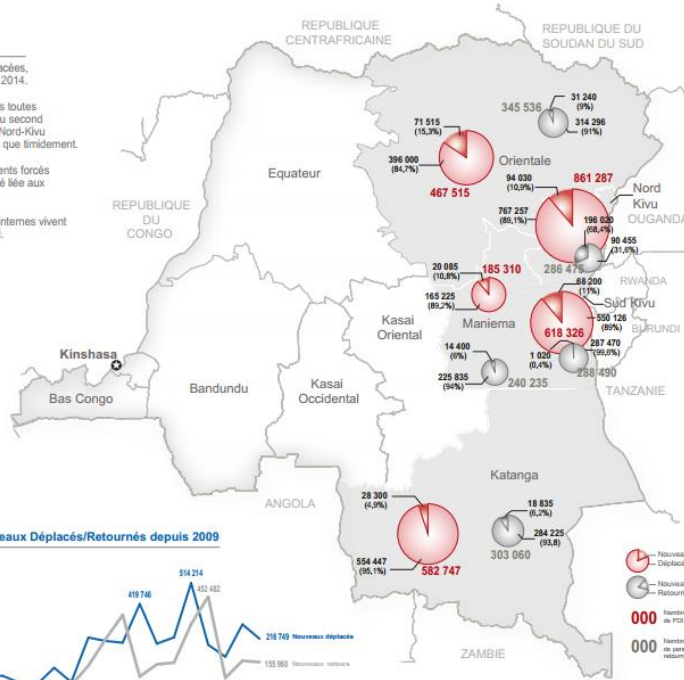
République Démocratique du Congo: Personnes déplacées internes et retournées (Septembre 2014)



Au 30 septembre 2014, environ 2,7 millions de personnes étaient déplacées internes dans cinq provinces de l'est de la RDC, soit une augmentation de près de 4% par rapport à la situation au 30 juin 2014.

Chiffres clés

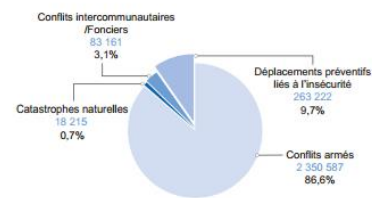
- 2 715 185 personnes déplacées, 103 627 de plus qu'en juin 2014.
- Tendance à la hausse dans toutes les provinces par rapport au second trimestre à l'exception du Nord-Kivu où la baisse continue, bien que timidement.
- Plus de 95% de déplacements forcés sont causés par l'insécurité liée aux conflits armés.
- Près de 80% de déplacés internes vivent dans des familles d'accueil.



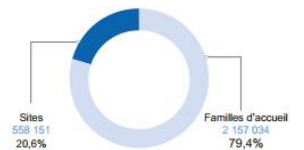
Province	Situation au 30 juin 2014		Situation au 30 Sept. 2014		TENDANCES
	PDI	Retournés*	PDI	Retournés*	
Nord-Kivu	908 597	240 819	861 287	286 475	↓ ↑
Sud-Kivu	554 981	472 734	618 326	288 490	↓ ↓
Orientale	439 215	337 713	467 515	345 536	↑ ↑
Katanga	543 540	282 100	582 747	303 060	↑ ↑
Maniema	165 225	225 835	185 310	240 235	↓ ↓
Total	2 611 558	1 559 201	2 715 185	1 463 796	↑ ↓

* Retournés au cours des 18 derniers mois

Causes des déplacements



Nature d'hébergement des personnes déplacées



Evolution des Nouveaux Déplacés/Retournés depuis 2009



Date de production: 14 Novembre 2014. Sources: CMP, OCHA et partenaires. Feedback: ocha@rdc.org www.rdc-humanitaire.net www.ocha.org/brc www.nslfweb.zn Twitter: @UNOCHA_DRC Les Nations Unies ne sauraient être tenues responsables de la qualité des données, des noms et des désignations utilisés sur cette carte.

Source: OCHA, Humanitarian Snapshot, September 2014¹¹

There are many different kinds of IDPs in Congo, representing diverse circumstances and relative vulnerability. In some cases, IDPs flee for only short periods of time, either hiding in the bush or taking refuge in neighboring communities, until violence or the threat of violence has passed. People reportedly try to stay close to home so that they can monitor their lands and track the local security situation. That being said, many people are forced to move further away for much longer periods of time when violence persists or follows them from village to village. According to field research carried out by Médecins sans Frontières (MSF) in 2009, IDPs travel between half a day to one and a half days to reach a place of safety.¹²

Although most IDPs in DRC disperse in nearby communities, there have been larger, more sustained waves of violence that have resulted in the formation of settlements and camps. Figures are rough, but humanitarians generally estimate that between 70 and 80 percent of IDPs

¹¹ OCHA, "République Démocratique du Congo: Personnes déplacées internes et retournées," September 2014, http://rdc-humanitaire.net/attachments/article/5245/RDC%20Factsheet%20Mouvement%20de%20population_french_3eme%20%20trimestre%202014.pdf.

¹² Médecins sans Frontières. *Everyday Emergency: Silent Suffering in Democratic Republic of Congo*, 2014, p. 45, https://www.msf.org.br/sites/default/files/everyday_emergency_report_eng.pdf.

live with host families and the remaining 20 to 30 percent live in camps.¹³ As of mid-2014, there were some 59 IDP camps existing in eastern Congo, all in the North Kivu province. The oldest of the existing camps were established in 2006 and 2007; more recent camps formed in 2012. North Kivu is the only province with established IDP camps. Elsewhere, camps have been strongly discouraged by provincial governors and other authorities. Still, IDP settlements do crop up periodically across the countryside even though they may not remain in existence for significant periods of time.

Of the 59 camps in North Kivu, about half are coordinated by UNHCR with the administrative and managerial support of the government's Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés (CNR). The other half are coordinated by IOM, also administered by CNR, but managed by a team of NGOs.¹⁴ Camp conditions are monitored by a UNHCR and IOM-led Working Group for Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM). There used to be a distinction between the two sets of camps, the older camps being called "official camps" and the newer camps termed "spontaneous sites." However, once IOM took over the administration of these camps at the end of 2012, the "artificial" distinction between the two was dropped. Today, all camps in North Kivu are simply referred to as IDP sites.

Overall, life in the IDP sites is quite fluid with regular movement to and from the camps. People may leave daily for work, to return to their homes, to cultivate land, and to visit friends and family members residing in other camps. After 20 years of conflict, people are conditioned to be on the move, using mobility to increase economic opportunities for survival. Since the defeat of M23 at the end of 2013, it is true that a good number of IDPs have left the camps of North Kivu to return home spontaneously. Still others, mostly those from parts of Masisi and Rutshuru, remain in the sites, prevented from returning home by the ongoing insecurity.

Unlike IDPs living in camps, the much larger number of IDPs in Congo is dispersed with host families and has never been closely tracked by the international community. Their numbers are generally monitored by the government's Commission Mouvements de Population (CMP) and published by OCHA on a monthly basis. However, the methodology used by the CMP monitors is not well understood, and it is unclear how closely CMP figures reflect the reality on the ground. What is generally known about these populations is that they are housed with neighbors, families, and friends, usually of their same ethnic group. Nearly all host families are very poor themselves and also conflict-affected, resulting in a situation of precarious vulnerability for everyone.

Further to existing caseloads, new displacements are continually occurring across the eastern provinces, often in peripheral and hard-to-reach areas that are outside the ambit of international response efforts. Access is hampered by insecurity, but also by very difficult road conditions. In

¹³ Multiple sources: Sean Healy and Sandrine Tiller. *Where is Everyone? Responding to Emergencies in the Most Difficult Places*, Médecins sans Frontières, July 2014, p. 33, <http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf-whereiseveryone-def-lr-july.pdf>; Working Group of Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM). *North Kivu CCCM Strategy 2013-2016*, November 2013, p. 1 http://www.drcongo.iom.int/PDF/GOMA/North_Kivu_CCCM_Strategy2013-2016_version_revisee_03_Fevrier_2014_IOM-UNHCR.pdf and key informant interviews, Goma, August 2014.

¹⁴ More specifically, it can be noted that UNHCR manages 31 sites and IOM manages 21. UNHCR, November 2014.

Katanga, for instance, many IDPs have reportedly received no assistance whatsoever. In these instances of remote displacement, children and other vulnerable persons can face severe malnutrition, lack shelter and healthcare, and survivors of rape and other forms of sexual and gender based violence (SGBV) receive little to no medical, psychosocial, or legal support. According to a May 2014 Refugees International report on Katanga, as many as half of the IDPs in the province (currently estimated at over 582,000) have received no aid at all.¹⁵

In terms of protection, violations of human rights by all armed groups have been grave and widespread during the whole of the conflict. Civilians have been victims of murder and massacre, rape and other forms of sexual violence, theft, pillaging of homes, extortion, illegal detention, and forced (child) recruitment. Of particular note is the epidemic of sexual violence that has become an integral aspect of the conflict. Incidents of violence have remained constant, if not increasing, over the last ten years with very little progress in preventing attacks.¹⁶ Although the overwhelming majority of cases involve women, sexual violence against men and boys is increasingly common in the country.

So serious and pervasive have been the crimes that eastern Congo is often described as the rape capital of the world. In 2013, over 25,000 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) were recorded in the country.¹⁷ Of these, 20 percent of the incidents were allegedly perpetrated by non-government armed groups, 20 percent by Congolese armed forces (FARDC), 50 percent by assailants in plain clothes, and an additional ten percent were assessed as gender-based and not necessarily related to the conflict *per se*.¹⁸ Tracking of victims and the provision of referral services have improved as a result of concerted efforts of UNFPA, UNHCR, MONUSCO and other organizations under the auspices of the *Comprehensive Strategy on Combatting Sexual Violence in DRC*. However, given the culture of impunity in Congo, victims of sexual violence still rarely report the crimes to law enforcement, and it is estimated that less than five percent of recorded cases are actually brought to the attention of judicial authorities.¹⁹

¹⁵ Refugees International. "Life in the DRC's Triangle of Death," *Refugees International Blog*, 28 May 2014, <http://www.refintl.org/blog/photo-report/life-drcs-triangle-death>.

¹⁶ See UNFPA-supported DRC government report on the subject: Ministry of Gender, *Ampleur des violences sexuelles en RDC et actions de lutte contre le phénomène de 2011 à 2012*, Kinshasa, June 2013, <http://www.unfpa.org/webdav/site/global/shared/documents/news/2013/Rapport%20DM%20SGBV%202011-2012.pdf>.

¹⁷ UNFPA + UNHCR figures, key informant interview, August 2014.

¹⁸ Key informant interview, Kinshasa, August 2014.

¹⁹ Key informant interview, Kinshasa, August 2014.

NATIONAL EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

One of the primary constraints to improving the protection and assistance conditions of IDPs in DRC is the overall lack of leadership on the issue by the national government. The government has long been criticized for lacking the technical capacity, the financial resources, and the political will to address the needs of the chronically displaced in the country. Since independence, a succession of leaders has lacked the tools and legitimacy to execute a national agenda that could move the country towards peace and prosperity. This lack of vision has been particularly devastating for the IDPs and other people affected by the conflict in the East.²⁰ The relative absence of national leadership in IDP protection and response efforts notwithstanding, the government has made some attempts to develop its capabilities over the last decade, usually with intensive support from the international community. Of particular note have been initiatives aimed at stabilizing the situation in the East, at combatting sexual and gender-based violence through its support for a national strategy, at developing institutional and legal frameworks for IDP protection, and at helping UNHCR and IOM with the on-the-ground management of established IDP camps.

The most recent political efforts by DRC to build peace in the country include the signing of *The Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for DRC and the Region* in February 2013, together with 10 other countries from the Great Lakes region and Southern Africa. The peace deal obliges the DRC government to implement security sector reform and capacity building initiatives. It also includes clauses about facilitating the return and reintegration of conflict-affected IDPs and refugees. While there is little evidence that it has led to the return and reintegration of IDPs and refugees, the framework is significant because it paved the way for the military deployment of a Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) under the auspices of the existing UN peacekeeping mission. The intervention brigade, authorized by UN Security Council Resolution 2098, is charged with carrying out targeted operations to “neutralize armed groups with the intent of preventing violence against civilians and protecting civilians under imminent threat” in collaboration with the FARDC.²¹

Further to DRC’s peace-enforcement objectives, the government has worked since 2009 to implement a *Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan (STAREC)* in conflict-affected areas. The goal of the plan is to restore state authority in the East through the rehabilitation of administrative infrastructure, inter-communal reconciliation, and the building of good governance. The UN actively supports the national plan through an aligned and complementary *International Strategy for Support to Security and Stability (ISSSS)*. Up until now, however,

²⁰ For more on governance in DRC, see Kitenge N’Gambwa, ed., *Leadership, Peace, Stability, and Prosperity in the DRC*, Special Report, United States Institute of Peace, October 2011, http://www.usip.org/sites/default/files/SR_289.pdf.

²¹ For more information on UNSC Resolution 2098, authorizing the FIB, see UNSC. *Intervention Brigade’ Authorized As Security Council Grants Mandate Renewal for United Nations Mission in Democratic Republic Of Congo*, March 28, 2013, <http://www.un.org/News/Press/docs/2013/sc10964.doc.htm>.

STAREC and ISSS have failed to influence peace due in part to a perceived lack of political will by national authorities and weak ownership of the stabilization process at local levels.²²

The DRC government has participated in efforts to combat sexual violence in the country through its official endorsement of the *Comprehensive Strategy on Combating Sexual Violence* since 2009. The Comprehensive Strategy was developed by the UN peacekeeping mission in Congo (then MONUC) with the support of the UN Action Against Sexual Violence in Conflict Network. The goal of the Strategy is to strengthen prevention, protection and response to sexual violence in close cooperation with MONUSCO, UN agencies, and other partners. The Ministry of Gender is the main national stakeholder involved in its overall implementation.

In addition to the more general stability and civilian protection initiatives of the government, the Congolese state has established national structures to respond specifically to the situation of internal displacement in the country. As a point of introduction, it can be noted that there are two government ministries in Congo that hold the primary responsibility for IDP protection and assistance. The Ministry of Interior is charged, through Ordinance no. 12/2008, with the surveillance of all population movements within the country. The Ministry of Social Affairs, Humanitarian Action and National Solidarity, by the same law, is accountable for coordinating humanitarian aid and for collaborating with national and international actors for assistance to IDPs and other disaster-affected populations. Other ministries, such as the Ministry of Public Health, the Ministry of Education, and the Ministry of Gender, participate in humanitarian interventions benefiting IDPs within their particular sectors of responsibility.

Further to these two ministries, the government established in 2002 an inter-ministerial committee, the Comité National pour les Réfugiés (CNR), for refugee and IDP protection and assistance. CNR is comprised of representatives from nine different ministries. It sits within the Ministry of Interior and has antennae offices in six different provinces.²³ The CNR works very closely with UNHCR and CCCM to administer, and in some cases, manage the IDP camps of North Kivu. While the CNR is viewed to perform its specific tasks in the North Kivu camps with relative competence, it is widely recognized that it lacks the resources and capacity to take on a larger leadership role vis-à-vis IDPs.²⁴ It should be noted that for all intents and purposes CNR operates as an implementing partner of UNHCR rather than as an independent, self-financed government entity. Its activities are fully supported by UNHCR with only nominal, if any, monetary contributions made by the government to address the IDP issue.

²² As evaluated by an external team commissioned by the UN Peacebuilding Fund, one of the main donors to the STAREC program. Patrick Vinck. *Evaluation Externe de la Mise en Oeuvre des Projets*, UN Peacebuilding Fund, August 2013, http://www.unpbf.org/wp-content/uploads/PBF_DRC_-_Evaluation-300813.pdf.

²³ CNR provincial offices are located in Bas-Congo, Katanga, North Kivu, South Kivu, Orientale and Equateur. For more information on the CNR mission, see the Ministry of Interior webpage at: <http://www.misdac-rdc.net/index.php/commissions-permanentes147/commission-nationale-pour-les-refugies255/111-presentation-de-la-commission-nationale-pour-les-refugies321>.

²⁴ When UNHCR took the decision to put CNR in charge of the management of UNHCR-coordinated camps at the end of 2013, the humanitarian community in Goma was somewhat surprised as they did not view CNR to possess the adequate capacity to do the job. That said, CNR has apparently performed relatively well over the last ten months and humanitarian actors on the ground are increasingly accepting of its role in the camps. Key informant interviews, Kinshasa and Goma, August 2014.

Likely the most significant action by the DRC government in its protection and assistance to IDPs over the last ten years is its recent ratification (July 2014) of *The African Union Convention for the Protection and Assistance of IDPs* (the Kampala Convention). The Kampala Convention is a regional instrument that binds governments to provide legal protection for the rights and well-being of IDPs. DRC's ratification of the Convention is seen as a positive sign by many human rights observers because it signifies a clear commitment on the part of the government to protect its uprooted citizens. Under the Convention, state parties accept to prevent, prohibit and eliminate root causes of internal displacement, to protect and assist people that are displaced, and to promote durable solutions for IDPs. Further to its ratification of the Convention, the DRC government, with the sustained support of UNHCR, is now working to naturalize its obligations through the development of complementary national legislation. The process to domesticate the Kampala Convention is expected for completion as early as mid-2015.²⁵

Given the serious weaknesses of the DRC government and, in particular, taking into account its inability to exert any meaningful authority over eastern Congo, many wonder whether the ratification of the Kampala Convention can have a practical impact on the lives of IDPs in the country. It is rightly argued that the Congolese government already signed *The Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region* in 2006 (which took effect in 2008) that includes a Protocol on the Protection and Assistance to Internally Displaced Persons. Since that time, there has been little to no change in the protection and assistance conditions of IDPs in the country.²⁶ While the government does seem committed to the principles of the Kampala Convention and to domesticating the treaty without delay, it is unclear whether national level actions will result in a direct improvement in conditions for IDPs on the ground.

²⁵ Key informant interview, Kinshasa, August 2014.

²⁶ Melanie Wissin, "As DRC ratifies the Kampala Convention, IDMC asks: What difference will it make?" *IDMC Blog Post*, July 24, 2014, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/blog/2014/as-drc-ratifies-the-kampala-convention-idmc-asks-what-difference-will-it-make>.

INTERNATIONAL EFFORTS TO RESPOND TO INTERNAL DISPLACEMENT

The international community has sought to end the conflict in DRC and to assist conflict-affected Congolese people, including IDPs, through myriad political, military and humanitarian means over the years. In addition to support for a range of regional peace initiatives, the international community has maintained an integrated UN mission in the DRC for nearly 15 years and a strong humanitarian presence in the country for even longer. During the period of its engagement, civilian protection has been at the center of international efforts as have activities to protect and assist the millions of people displaced across the eastern provinces. Given the difficulties of access and limited budgets, the focus of most humanitarian efforts has been on IDPs in camps. With relentless fighting and chronically weak government institutions, however, addressing the needs of even these IDPs has been a challenge. The role of the state in providing legal protection for the rights and well-being of IDPs is elemental. In its absence, any external interventions will by their very nature be inadequate.

Integrated UN mission

The UN Security Council established the UN Organization Mission in DRC (MONUC) in 1999 with the initial mandate to observe the Lusaka Ceasefire Agreement between DRC and five regional states. The Lusaka Agreement was designed to end the Second Congo War and was accompanied by the formation of a transitional DRC government. In 2010, MONUC was renamed the UN Organization Stabilization Mission in DRC (MONUSCO) and given a two-pronged mandate: [a] to protect civilians and [b] to consolidate peace.²⁷ MONUSCO is the largest UN peacekeeping mission in the world. Its current strength numbers some 22,000 uniformed personnel.²⁸

Under the auspices of the integrated mission in DRC, the UN has employed a “triple hatted” position of Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary General (DSRSG), Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) and Resident Coordinator (RC). In the context of this model, the HC/RC serves also as DSRSG, but OCHA retains an independent presence outside the main UN mission. Putting all UN operations in a country under a single management structure is always contentious.²⁹ UN integration for the purposes of political and programmatic coherence can erode the key humanitarian principles of neutrality, impartiality, and independence.

There is no question that the integrated mission in DRC has diminished perceptions of impartiality and reduced humanitarian space for the delivery of aid. The Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) in Kinshasa is generally well respected and thought to function satisfactorily.

²⁷ MONUC’s mandate was initially expanded in 2004 to include Chapter VII of the UN Charter, enabling the mission to use force to protect civilians in the country. The transformation of MONUC into MONUSCO in 2010 was a compromise between the government’s request that MONUC withdraw at the time and the UN’s wish to pursue a peace consolidation mission in the country.

²⁸ As found on MONUSCO website in September 2014. For more information, see <http://www.un.org/en/peacekeeping/missions/monusco/facts.shtml>.

²⁹ Humanitarian Policy Group and the Stimson Center. “The Search for Coherence: UN Integrated Missions and Humanitarian Space,” *Roundtable Summary*, 11 March 2011, p. 7, <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/4658.pdf>.

However, it is also widely recognized that due to the HC's multiple roles, busy schedule, and geographic distance from the crisis-affected area, he is unable to function as a consistent leader and advocate for the complex humanitarian issues associated with the situation of internal displacement in the country. Certainly, he is fully focused on stabilization strategies in his role as DSRSG, but is perhaps less fixated on the multi-faceted challenges of humanitarian aid delivery. By and large, humanitarians assessed the Humanitarian Coordinator role as neither an obstacle nor an enabler to their day-to-day work on behalf of IDPs.

Traditional weaknesses of the current UN model aside, the integrated mission in DRC has offered some positive trade-offs to the humanitarian undertaking, mostly in terms of providing high-level political support for civilian protection, including efforts to combat incidents of sexual violence. The MONUC-developed *Comprehensive Strategy on Combatting Sexual Violence*, described earlier in this paper, has been the only national mechanism to combat sexual violence in the country since 2009 and has five major components, each led by a MONUSCO section or UN agency.³⁰ In fact, now that the overall international lead of the Comprehensive Strategy will move from MONUSCO to UN Women, international stakeholders are concerned that the solid foundations built under MONUSCO leadership to fight sexual violence may be lost, underscoring the respect that actors have had for MONUSCO's role.³¹

Other factors that have led to a relatively wide acceptance of the integrated mission in DRC by the humanitarian community are noted as follows: [1] the presence of MONUSCO has had a tangible impact on civilian protection in certain areas of the East; [2] MONUSCO is thought to have created a more secure environment for humanitarians in the Kivu provinces and in Orientale; [3] humanitarians benefit directly from MONUSCO's logistical support, such as the use of air assets; and [4] there has been positive collaboration between MONUSCO's Civil Affairs Section and the humanitarian community to ensure that humanitarian concerns are taken into account during military planning.³²

Although there has certainly been a longstanding, albeit cautious, collaboration between the UN peacekeeping mission and the humanitarian community in DRC, the introduction of the Force Intervention Brigade (FIB) in 2013 has undoubtedly led to a change in attitudes among humanitarians. Given the unprecedented "war fighting" mandate of the FIB, there is no longer any ambiguity regarding the partiality of the UN mission. As a result, there are now heightened concerns about the principled delivery of humanitarian aid in the country. FIB's collaboration with FARDC makes humanitarians all the more uneasy given FARDC's poor human rights record and documented sexual assault violations. In view of the fact that MONUSCO assets look nearly identical to those of the humanitarian community, aid organizations justifiably worry

³⁰ The five components of the Strategy are: [i] Protection and Prevention (UNHCR); [ii] Security Sector Reform (MONUSCO); [iii] Combating Impunity (OHCHR/MONUSCO); [iv] Multi-sectoral Assistance to Survivors (UNICEF); and [v] Data Mapping (UNFPA).

³¹ Because of many actors concerns about the change in international leadership of the Comprehensive Strategy, there are even discussions as to whether the Protection Cluster Sexual Violence Sub-Working Groups should be reinstated, UNHCR, November 2014.

³² Humanitarian Policy Group and the Stimson Center. "The Search for Coherence: UN Integrated Missions and Humanitarian Space," *Roundtable Summary*, March 11, 2011, p. 7, <http://www.odi.org/sites/odi.org.uk/files/odi-assets/events-documents/4658.pdf>.

about how they are perceived by the multiple armed groups operating in Congo and by the civilian populations they seek to serve.

In addition to the war-fighting activities of MONUSCO's FIB, MONUSCO has conducted a range of stabilization activities over the years that seek to build peace, protect civilians, and encourage the return of IDPs. Of particular note is MONUSCO's *International Security and Stabilization Support Strategy (ISSSS)* launched in 2009. As noted above, the ISSSS is the main vehicle for international support to the *government's Stabilization and Reconstruction Plan for War-Affected Areas*. The five core objectives of the ISSSS are: [1] security; [2] political dialogue; [3] state authority; [4] return, reintegration and recovery; and [5] response to sexual violence.

Further to the ISSSS, MONUSCO has recently initiated a new counterinsurgency approach called Islands of Stability. The intended purpose of the Islands of Stability is to consolidate state authority in both areas "cleared" by FARDC and MONUSCO and in areas where armed groups can be encouraged to disarm. Humanitarians have been highly skeptical of the approach. They point out that, once cleared, these areas are not held by MONUSCO troops, but by FARDC that has a poor track record in promoting stability. Therefore, few believe that these "islands" can offer the sustainable security required for civilians to remain or return to these areas. Critics are concerned that as soon as power changes hands from FARDC to rebel factions that civilian populations will be on the front lines of violence. Furthermore, they argue that the Islands of Stability approach is ultimately a military and political tool. Any humanitarian association with them will only further blur the line between the political aims of MONUSCO and the humanitarian objectives of independent and impartial humanitarian organizations.

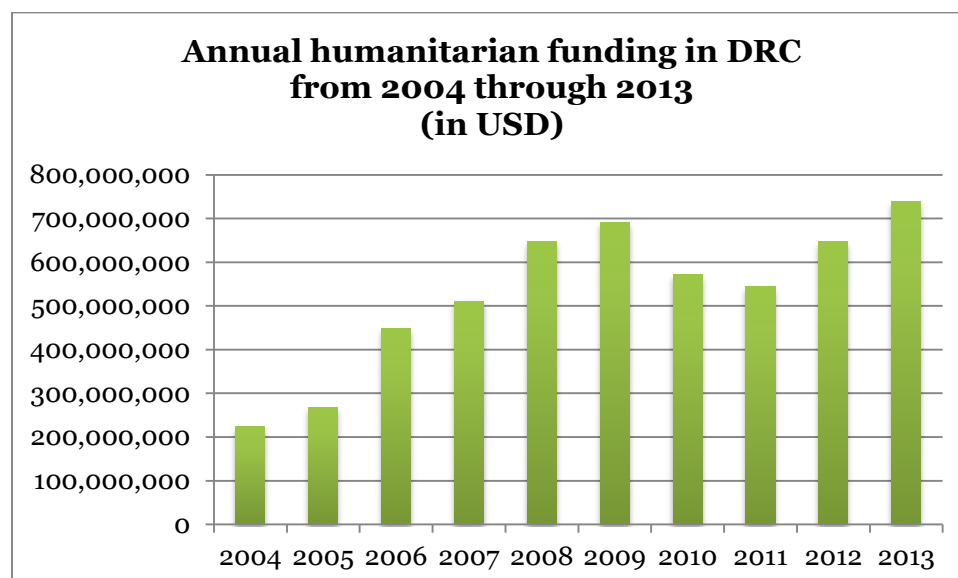
Sustained humanitarian engagement

The primary vehicle by which the international community has sought to assist and protect IDP populations is through sustained humanitarian engagement. This assistance has admittedly never addressed the full scope of humanitarian needs in the country. Moreover, it has been criticized for not being sufficiently agile to provide truly rapid emergency assistance nor adequately diversified to build the resilience of IDPs living in a situation of protracted displacement. Still, international humanitarian aid has been continuous in the context of a very difficult operating environment and has helped to save lives and alleviate suffering, if only for a portion of the millions of conflict-affected Congolese people. What has been completely impossible to achieve during the course of the last decade is a real transition toward durable solutions for IDPs, either through return, local integration or resettlement in other parts of the country. The few discussions that have taken place about durable solutions center almost entirely on return with a strong national resistance to and an overall lack of vision for framing local integration alternatives.

Funding

Since 2004, annual funding for humanitarian activities has ranged from an estimated USD 225 million to USD 740 million. A significant increase in funding was seen in 2006 (from USD 268 million to USD 448 million), and contributions have generally remained steady since then. Over the last ten years, Humanitarian Action Plans (HAPs) have been funded at between 51 and 82 percent of stated needs. Major gaps in financing have been met through contributions of the

Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) and the Common Humanitarian Fund (CHF), or Pooled Fund, as it is generally called in DRC.³³



Source: UN Financial Tracking Service (FTS), as found on the website in September 2014.³⁴

Introduced in 2006, both the CERF and the CHF have been instrumental in providing funding to UN agencies and NGOs (in the case of the CHF) seeking to respond to critical humanitarian needs in the country. Between 2006 and 2014, the CERF made total contributions of USD 238 million to the crisis in Congo, the largest percentage of the Fund utilized for any single crisis in the world apart from Sudan.³⁵ Over 70 percent of CERF monies have been provided through the “under-funded emergencies” window.

Even more than the CERF, the CHF, or Pooled Fund, has been particularly useful to humanitarians in DRC.³⁶ Managed by the Humanitarian Coordinator (HC) with support from OCHA at the country level, the Pooled Fund is a decentralized mechanism designed to finance priority life-saving projects as identified in the HAP. UN agencies, international NGOs and national NGOs can all request CHF funds through a prioritization process organized under the auspices of the Cluster Approach. Monies are allocated according to a Standard (2 year) or Reserve (for rapid and flexible allocations) mechanism. CHF is the largest source of funding for humanitarian projects in the country. To give a sense of the kinds of monies coming from the Pooled Fund for humanitarian action, it can be noted that annual allocations for the years 2010, 2011, and 2012 came in at just below USD 100 million annually.³⁷

³³ There was previously an Emergency Response Fund (ERF) in DRC but it closed down at the end of 2013. Emergency needs formerly addressed by the ERF have since been rolled into the CHF.

³⁴ See FTS website: <http://fts.unocha.org/>.

³⁵ Contributions to DRC during this period reflect 6.88 percent of total CERF funding; monies to Sudan represented 6.89 percent of total CERF funding. See CERF website at: <http://www.unocha.org/cerf/cerf-worldwide/allocations-country/2014>.

³⁶ CHFs are currently present in five countries with on-going, large humanitarian operations. These countries are DRC, Somalia, South Sudan, Sudan and Central African Republic.

³⁷ Annual reports of the Pooled Fund can be found at the following OCHA website: <http://www.unocha.org/drc/financing/common-humanitarian-fund>.

While Pooled Fund contributions have been vital to filling gaps in the HAPs, organizations involved in the CHF allocation process have voiced frustration about its lack of speed, transparency, and general inclusiveness. Critics point out that Pooled Fund allocations can easily take over six months to receive, admittedly not a time frame conducive to delivery of urgent humanitarian aid. UN agencies and NGOs alike complain that by the time CHF money is made available, the situation on the ground has evolved considerably, invalidating the needs analysis conducted when requesting the funding in the first place. Aid organizations are also dissatisfied with the lack of transparency surrounding the decision-making process for CHF allocations. Recommendations made by the Inter-Agency Provincial Committees (CPIAs), such as ones made to prioritize protection, are often disregarded by Kinshasa with little explanation as to why. A final criticism of the Fund relates to the narrow list of national NGOs currently eligible for allocations. It apparently excludes a large pool of actors who could act in difficult-to-reach zones not accessed by international organizations but who are not considered because they are not viewed as viable partners.³⁸

In the context of relatively steady humanitarian funding over the last decade, a sharp decrease in donor contributions in 2014 has been a cause of serious concern in DRC. As of September 2014, the HAP was only funded at 35 percent,³⁹ and there was little indication that this shortfall would be filled by year's end. Donors have grown tired of the protracted situation of instability in the country and are increasingly distracted by larger, more visible crises such as those in Syria, South Sudan, and even neighboring Central African Republic (CAR). Not only does the HAP lack financing, but contributions to the CHF, its traditional stopgap, have also dipped considerably in recent years. In 2013, funding was only USD 75 million, and in 2014, contributions slid still further, standing at only USD 47 million as of July 2014.⁴⁰

Key humanitarian objectives

Over the last decade, the international humanitarian response has focused almost exclusively on life-saving and basic emergency assistance. Although the humanitarian community has continually sought to expand its activities to more transitional programming when and where possible, the situation has generally not allowed for progress beyond the strictest of humanitarian objectives and, even then, emergency needs have always been so vast that it has been impossible for the international community to address them completely. So year after year, international efforts have concentrated on short-term aid delivery to reduce morbidity and mortality, to promote access to food, water and basic services, and to reinforce the protection of conflict-affected civilians, with a primary focus on IDPs. In the latest HAP 2014 (called the Strategic Response Plan or SRP), the humanitarian objectives of the international community were described in the narrowest of terms:

Il en résulte notamment que l'action humanitaire dans le pays s'inscrira strictement dans

³⁸ Persons interviewed for this report noted that national NGOs are often more corrupt than government counterparts. Many of the details on the CHF included in this report were found in an unpublished Commentary on the Pooled Fund produced by the Committee Provincial Inter-Agences, North Kivu, September 2014. It is also important to note that OCHA is currently conducting a full evaluation of the Pooled Fund to improve on its efficacy. The evaluation is being funded by DFID, the largest donor to the CHF.

³⁹ As noted on FTS home page as viewed in September 2014, <http://fts.unocha.org/pageloader.aspx?page=home>.

⁴⁰ For further details on the Pooled Fund in DRC, see <http://www.unocha.org/drc/financing/common-humanitarian-fund>.

la logique de “**protéger les personnes, sauver des vies, et réduire la souffrance des populations affectées par les crises**”.⁴¹

In 2014, as in the several previous years, the overwhelming majority of funding has been requested for food aid (approximately USD 250 million), followed by water and sanitation, nutrition, and basic non-food items like emergency shelter. Funding requests for protection over the last decade, comprising many activities for IDPs, have fluctuated between USD 11 million in 2005 to as much as USD 91 million in 2009. Actual spending on protection over the course of the last ten years has been significantly less with the protection needs met at an average of only 30 percent of the sums requested.⁴²

Humanitarian activities have been coordinated under the auspices of the Cluster Approach introduced in DRC in 2005. The Cluster Approach is thought to operate with relative efficacy in the country compared to other countries where it has been applied.⁴³ Overall, Cluster coordination is thought to work better at the provincial rather than the national level. At the national level, government officials do not participate; at the provincial level, government officials are active in some of the Clusters. Cluster coordination is noted to offer greater visibility on sector-specific issues, a common platform for advocacy vis-à-vis government, non-government, and MONUSCO representatives, and a forum for information exchange and standard setting. Common advocacy efforts in protection, in particular, are said to be useful in empowering humanitarian actors that might not otherwise speak out for fear of being ejected from the country.⁴⁴

Table 4: Democratic Republic of the Congo Clusters

Operational Clusters⁴⁵	National-level Cluster Lead/Co-Lead Agency	Activation
Food Security	WFP/FAO	2006
Education	UNICEF/Save the Children	2006
Health	WHO/MERLIN	2006
Protection	UNHCR	2006
Shelter	UNICEF	2006
WASH	UNICEF & ASF/PSI	2006

Clusters are said to be less useful for actual emergency operations as they generally involve too many actors, comprise decision-making processes that are slow and cumbersome, and tend to discuss the same issues over and over. It was noted that NGO representatives generally come,

⁴¹ United Nations. *2014 Strategic Response Plan 2014, Democratic Republic of Congo*, p. 5. The objectives for the Protection Cluster went beyond these narrow objectives and included also prevention and resilience, p. 44.

⁴² For more general information on funding over the last decade, see various Humanitarian Action Plans at the OCHA website for the Consolidated Appeals Process: <http://www.unocha.org/cap/appeals/by-country/results/taxonomy%3A9>.

⁴³ This opinion was shared by staff of UN agencies and INGOs, key informant interviews, Goma and Kinshasa, August 2014.

⁴⁴ Key informant interviews, Kinshasa and Goma, August 2014.

⁴⁵ http://www.urd.org/IMG/pdf/GPPi-URD_RDC_EN.pdf.

take notes, and then leave the meetings with little sense that operational action has moved forward.⁴⁶ Individuals involved in Cluster coordination remark that there is a direct correlation between the effectiveness of Clusters and the leadership capacities of lead organizations and their staff. Promoting effective leadership for Cluster coordination is challenging because funding is usually inadequate to dedicate a full-time staff member to the job.

Activities specifically targeting IDPs

In terms of the coordination of IDP assistance in DRC, UNHCR has taken on a definitive leadership role in conjunction with the overall coordination role of OCHA. UNHCR has fully dedicated Cluster Protection staff in Kinshasa and Goma (which is not always the case for lead Cluster agencies), and it funds the Working Group on Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM).⁴⁷ It also finances and provides technical support to the government committee mandated to address IDP and refugee issues, the Comité National pour les Réfugiés (CNR). And finally, its leadership of the Protection Clusters in the East is well-respected. Although UNHCR is often criticized for focusing squarely on its core refugee mandate in other contexts, and there are even some who make the criticism in DRC, it would be hard to argue that UNHCR has not stepped up to the plate – together now with IOM – to address the IDP issue in this particularly difficult situation.

For IDPs in camps

Even though humanitarians are aware that assisting IDPs in camps should be an intervention of last resort in protracted crises, international assistance in DRC remains overwhelmingly concentrated on IDPs living in camps, in part, some say, because these people are the most visible and easiest to access. The assistance is coordinated by the Working Group on Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) in concert with sectoral clusters. Given the centrality of CCCM's work in the IDP camps, many humanitarians have pushed for a more formal incorporation of the CCCM Working Group within the Cluster Approach to allow it access to Pooled Fund allocations. The HCT has never accepted this proposal for reasons that are not altogether clear, however, and the CCCM remains a sectoral working group. There is currently no Early Recovery Cluster active in DRC.

The main purpose of the Protection Cluster is to advocate for minimum standards of protection in all humanitarian interventions. In the IDP camps, the Cluster works with national authorities and MONUSCO to improve protection conditions, to promote multi-sectoral responses to sexual and gender-based violence, to facilitate access to personal documentation for IDPs, to protect children and people with special needs and to conduct protection monitoring among other initiatives. While the implementation of programming has been continuously hampered by instability over the years, multiple interventions to reduce and respond to sexual exploitation and other acts of violence, to protect children from recruitment to armed forces, and to respond to children becoming separated from their families have been implemented.⁴⁸

⁴⁶ In fact, one key informant pointed out that it was even a struggle to get “new emergency needs” to be discussed as a first point of business on some Cluster agendas. Key informant interview, Goma, August 2014.

⁴⁷ IOM also now funds CCCM activities.

⁴⁸ Passey, Megan. “Challenges in DRC,” *Camp Coordination and Camp Management Blog Post*, May 15, 2013, <http://www.globalccmcluster.org/news/challenges-drc>.

The goal of the CCCM Working Group is to ensure that displaced people in “camp-like” settings have access to minimum standards of humanitarian assistance. In theory, CCCM does not replace sectoral services providers and/or coordination structures (health, shelter, protection, education, water/sanitation, food-security), but works with them to ensure effective delivery of humanitarian aid. CCCM is meant to secure camp coordination and management, advocate for durable solutions, or at least facilitate discussions about potential durable solutions, and ensure the organized closure, consolidation and phase-out of camps. While CCCM theoretically focuses its activities on “camp-like” settings, in practice it is also meant to monitor the return of IDPs, to support the creation of “viable communities” after displacement, and to collect population data for IDPs located within host communities.⁴⁹ The CCCM Working Group in DRC is co-facilitated by UNHCR and IOM and is funded by both UNHCR and IOM.⁵⁰

By 2012, IDP camps in North Kivu were labeled as either “official camps” or “spontaneous sites.” “Official camps” were coordinated by UNHCR and received regular food and non-food assistance. “Spontaneous sites” were viewed to be of a less permanent and viable nature, even though many of them had existed well beyond the three-month threshold commonly associated with impermanent settlements. As a result, IDPs in “spontaneous sites” received little consideration or assistance from the international community. This gap was finally filled at the end of 2012 when IOM (traditionally the global lead for *disaster*-induced displacement) received specific funding to address assistance disparities between the two kinds of camps. Thereafter, the artificial distinction between them was dropped, and WFP began food distributions in both UNHCR and IOM-managed camps.

The situation in IDP camps changed again when WFP announced in early 2014 that it would be scaling back its coverage of food insecure populations to only the “most vulnerable” due to major institutional funding constraints.⁵¹ In light of the shortfalls, food security assessments were initiated in both UNHCR and IOM camps to facilitate a needs rather than status-based approach. Although not all camps have yet been assessed, among those that have been evaluated, it is estimated that only 27 percent (UNHCR sites) and 36.8 percent (IOM sites) of IDPs previously served continue to receive food assistance.⁵² Further to the significant change in WFP’s food assistance policy, IOM, as co-lead of CCCM, has initiated a series of IDP verification exercises (or “fixings”), accompanied by pilot biometric registrations to get a better estimate of the current number of IDPs in the camps. These activities are aimed at eliminating the duplication of data that already exists for IDPs in North Kivu. Thus far, regular registration complemented by verification and biometric registration operations have led to a reduction, on average, of 86 percent in the number of IDPs approximated to be living in camps.⁵³

⁴⁹ Working Group of Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM). *North Kivu CCCM Strategy 2013-2016*, November 2013, p. 2 http://www.drcongo.iom.int/PDF/GOMA/North_Kivu_CCCM_Strategy2013-2016_version_revised_03_Fevrier_2014_IOM-UNHCR.pdf.

⁵⁰ The IOM co-facilitator of the CCCM has been seconded to DRC by NorCap, the Norwegian Refugee Council’s standby roster. Key informant interview, August 2014.

⁵¹ UN. “DR Congo: funding gaps force UN agency to scale back food rations,” *UN News Centre*, February 28, 2014, <http://www.un.org/apps/news/story.asp?NewsID=47249#.VA9o5zmW7r0>.

⁵² Key informant interview, Goma, August 2014.

⁵³ IOM. *IOM’s Emergency Operations and Coordination in North Kivu*, August 29, 2014, <http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-DRC-Emergency-Operations-and-Coordination-in-North-Kivu-29Aug2014.pdf>.

The radical decrease in the number of IDPs now receiving food assistance and estimated to be living in camps poses somewhat of a dilemma. Many observers question whether the new numbers reflect a real change in the IDP caseload at all given the fact that so many IDPs do not stay put night after night and are constantly on the move. Still others assert that these figures are valid and offer a much more realistic reflection of the actual number of IDPs currently in camps. Although duplication of registration is always an issue when delivering aid, particularly in places like DRC where IDPs are conditioned to “game the system” in order to access aid wherever and however they can, these new IOM verification figures would seem to underscore some sort of disconnect, either due to too light an approach to camp monitoring or, alternatively, to too poor an understanding of the complex patterns of displacement in the country.

The underlying push for a camp exit strategy is not without immediate consequences for the protection of IDPs. Anecdotal stories collected from IDPs during focus group discussions in August 2014 suggest that many of women and their families are developing negative coping strategies to adjust to the changes. According to them, they are at increased risk of attack when they leave the camps to collect wood or to find daily work to buy food. Some women reported incidents of rape; others indicated that they are now more prone to prostitute themselves for food and money. All agreed that incidents of sexual violence were on the rise. They also explained that children are increasingly stealing from others in the camps and are unlikely to go to school this academic year due to an inability to pay school fees.⁵⁴

For the newly displaced

Further to international assistance efforts for IDPs in camps, the humanitarian community has utilized an innovative partnership tool to coordinate its rapid response to new displacements for many years in DRC. This tool, now called the Rapid Response to Movements of Population (RRMP) was initially established as the Rapid Response Mechanism by UNICEF, OCHA, and DFID in 2004 to respond to acute emergency needs in the country. It was then merged with a UNICEF project designed to address the needs of recently returned IDPs (PEAR) in 2009 and renamed. The RRMP partnership currently includes UNICEF, OCHA, Norwegian Refugee Council, Solidarité, IRC and a select number of other international NGOs.⁵⁵ The RRMP budget in 2012 was USD 33.6 million to assist a total of 1.2 million conflict-affected persons. The RRMP is the largest single humanitarian response program in DRC after food aid.⁵⁶ It operates outside the Cluster Approach coordination mechanism as a parallel coordinating tool, in part because it was initially begun around the same time as the Cluster Approach and in part because it needs to remain operational with a select number of active partners.⁵⁷

The goal of the RRMP is to monitor emergency needs and alert the humanitarian community to new displacements caused by conflict, natural catastrophes, and epidemics. The RRMP operates according to a continuous capacity of humanitarian surveillance, maintenance of pre-established

⁵⁴ IDP focus groups discussions were conducted in three camps in and around Goma, August 2014.

⁵⁵ Other actors such as UNHCR support the arrangement by supplying information from its protection monitoring system, UNHCR, November 2014.

⁵⁶ The biggest contributor to the RRMP is the Pooled Fund followed by ECHO. For more information about the RRMP, see DARA. *External Evaluation of the Rapid Response to Population Movements (RRMP) Program in the Democratic Republic of Congo*, commissioned by UNICEF, May 2013, p. 5.

⁵⁷ It may be interesting to note that while ECHO has always been a major funder of the RRMP, it has never participated in Cluster funding though the Pooled Fund.

partnerships, pre-positioning of relief supplies, and easy access to additional funds when needed. A provincial steering committee analyzes incoming alerts and validates each assessment and intervention on a weekly basis. Single RRMP interventions are supposed to be implemented within a period of three months. Non-food item (NFI) fairs and the introduction of cash-transfer systems represent innovative approaches for the RRMP over the last several years. Although primarily focused on NFIs, the RRMP now plans to incorporate food aid more consistently in its intervention with the support of NRC and WFP, as budgets allow.

The RRMP is widely lauded as the only truly operational emergency assistance mechanism to respond to newly displaced populations in DRC, far surpassing the Clusters in its quality of performance. In fact, a number of humanitarians noted that the strength of the Cluster Approach may have been adversely affected by the separate and more operational RRMP over the course of the last decade. In short, the argument goes that the Clusters have not needed to enhance their emergency capacities because the RRMP has had the situation of urgent assistance to new displacements in hand.

In the context of an overall record of quality performance, the efficacy of the RRMP has been subject to criticism in recent years. Of late, humanitarians are frustrated with the slower and slower speed by which RRMP teams conduct emergency multi-sectoral needs assessments. Sometimes, assessments come several weeks after alerts have been made when the time frame for RRMP urgent assistance is only three months. Additionally, it is said that one-time short-term RRMP aid often does not adequately meet the needs of vulnerable populations. Furthermore, systematic follow-up of RRMP interventions rarely occurs even though the need for longer-term activities is clearly identified by its own multi-sectoral assessments. Additionally, observers point out that the RRMP only responds to certain alerts and that the decision-making process to determine which ones are addressed is not clear, making it difficult for other organizations outside of the partnership to step in when necessary. In short, the RRMP can create a “bottleneck” while all humanitarian stakeholders wait to see if it will act in different situations. Apparently, a good number of alerts, especially those in remote areas difficult to access due to road and security conditions, are never addressed, and IDPs receive no assistance whatsoever.

After nearly a decade of implementation, the RRMP has demonstrated itself to be a critical response tool in the country. That said, it surely could do more to strengthen links with the broader humanitarian system to ensure that all vulnerable populations have access to quality emergency assistance. It was always thought that the sector-specific Clusters would follow up on initial RRMP interventions to identify what kinds of longer-term assistance was required, but this has never occurred in a systematic way. Stakeholders are aware of the gaps between RRMP interventions and the activities of the Clusters and are currently engaged in efforts to better integrate the two mechanisms.

Beyond the RRMP, there are growing concerns that the humanitarian community more broadly is not reaching newly displaced IDPs in peripheral, hard-to-reach areas in DRC. MSF recently released a report *Where is Everyone? Responding to Emergencies in the Most Difficult Places* wherein it asserts that the humanitarian community in DRC is not truly “covering” humanitarian zones and sectors where it says that it is and, moreover, that there is a lack of will on the part of the humanitarian community to address the needs of vulnerable people not “conveniently”

located near urban centers.⁵⁸ Overall, the report points out that while humanitarian actors generally perform well in response to larger waves of violence and displacement (like during the 2012-2013 crisis), they are not sufficiently agile to address the multiple, smaller shocks that regularly occur in Congo. Generally speaking, the humanitarian community is said to have become too risk-averse to perform its duties in the most difficult conditions, preferring to concentrate its efforts on the needs of populations near urban centers. UN and NGO staff in eastern Congo interviewed for this study largely agreed with the MSF assessment, going still further to say that many displacements are probably not even included in the RRMP alert system and occur completely outside the radar of the international community.

Resilience-building and possible durable solutions

During the course of its longstanding engagement in DRC, the international community has done little to build the autonomy of IDPs living in a constant state of insecurity. At the same time, it has been unable to transition towards durable solutions for IDPs given the protracted conflict and the consequent absence of development actors. As a result, IDPs remain as vulnerable and aid-dependent today as they were a decade ago.

In the context of this “treading water” approach, humanitarians are increasingly interested in trying something – almost anything - new. Humanitarians are frustrated with “business as usual,” particularly when money for traditional humanitarian inputs is dwindling and vulnerability in the country is still increasing. There are currently a number of pilot initiatives underway that aim to better understand the dynamics of displacement and the coping strategies of IDPs. In parallel, there is additional work being done that endeavors to support voluntary return through community-based interventions. These projects generally include land dispute mediation as a central component given how critical land use is to return in DRC.

It is somewhat astonishing to think that these kinds of activities are only just now being launched after so many years of displacement. In part, this may be due to the small window of peace proffered by the defeat of the M23. It may also stem from international fatigue over the longstanding situation of vulnerability. Whatever the case, it is nonetheless important that these activities have begun. Together, they reflect a more diversified portfolio of international interventions to address the complex issue of displacement in DRC. They also demonstrate an acknowledgement by international actors that traditional humanitarian action without an “exit strategy” cannot succeed in a situation of chronic crisis.

One activity being conducted by IOM and UNHCR (as CCCM lead agencies in North Kivu) to better understand IDP populations is a pilot mission called the joint Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM)/IDP Profiling exercise. DTM/IDP Profiling was launched in DRC in July 2014 with the purpose of gathering information about who is living with host families, what their multi-sectoral needs are, and what their intentions for return or local integration. It is envisioned

⁵⁸ Sean Healy and Sandrine Tiller. *Where is Everyone? Responding to Emergencies in the Most Difficult Places*, Medecins sans Frontières, July 2014, p. 32, http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf-whereiseveryone_-def-lr_-_july.pdf.

that the analyzed data from the project will be shared periodically with a range of stakeholders in order to develop appropriate interventions oriented towards durable solutions for IDPs.⁵⁹

This profiling exercise is occurring in parallel with a number of other initiatives. The development of these data collection and resilience-building activities is motivated by the wish to expand interventions for IDPs and the families that host them since the delivery of short-term humanitarian inputs alone leaves little sustainable support behind. A lack of support to host families can also lead to inter-communal tensions that do not reinforce the indigenous culture of solidarity that is widespread in the country. Two initiatives worthy of note include the *Do More Good Network* spearheaded by World Vision, Mercy Corps and Search for Common Ground and the *Increasing Resilience* project of IDMC, NRC, the International Alert and Climate Interactive. Further to these innovative studies is a push within the humanitarian community to include more resilience building activities in the 2015 Humanitarian Action Plan.

One of the first outputs of the *Do More Good Network* is the publication of a qualitative study aimed at better understanding the dynamics of displacement and the resilience strategies employed by IDPs and the families that host them.⁶⁰ It is hoped that findings from the study will reinforce collaboration between humanitarian organizations and multilateral development actors in order that they can bridge the gap between traditional humanitarian inputs and more transitional activities. One of the stated objectives of the project is to support the solidarity of host communities rather than fueling assistance dependence.⁶¹

The IDMC, NRC, and International Alert and Climate Interactive project is a three-year initiative that initially involves the development of a systems modeling methodology that will help actors to better understand the relationship between multiple displacements and an individual's ability to cope with such events. Through an analysis of data collected under the auspices of the methodology, it is hoped that alternative approaches to assistance that strengthen rather than degrade longer-term resilience can be designed and implemented at scale.⁶²

With regard to durable solutions for IDPs, there has been scant progress in DRC. A Guideline for the Return of IDPs (Lignes Directrices) in Kivu was developed by UNHCR and IOM in early 2014 and validated by the government in May. It outlines the principles of protection required for voluntary return and the multiple options represented by the international concept of durable solutions. Since the defeat of the M23, there is growing pressure by the government to close the IDP camps in North Kivu, and more talk amongst humanitarians about what kinds of durable solutions are appropriate in the context of ongoing instability.

⁵⁹ IOM. *IOM's Emergency Operations and Coordination in North Kivu*, August 29, 2014, <http://www.iom.int/files/live/sites/iom/files/Country/docs/IOM-DRC-Emergency-Operations-and-Coordination-in-North-Kivu-29Aug2014.pdf>.

⁶⁰ Rudolf, Markus. *Assessing the Humanitarian Response to Chronic Crisis in North Kivu*, MercyCorps, World Vision, Search for Common Ground, Goma, October 2014.

⁶¹ Key informant interview, by telephone, September 2014.

⁶² Wissing, Melanie and Anais Pagot. "Why is Aid Not Working? A Fresh Approach to Displacement in the DRC," *IDMC Blog Post*, 19 August 2014, <http://www.internal-displacement.org/blog/2014/why-is-aid-not-working-a-fresh-approach-to-displacement-in-the-drc>.

Currently, the various national and international stakeholders in DRC do not speak with one voice regarding durable solutions for IDPs, and there is concern that some IDPs may be forced back to areas not yet conducive to sustainable return. The government has its own agenda regarding return; MONUSCO has its own operations under the ISSSS; and humanitarian organizations both within and outside the Cluster System have still other ideas about how return should be planned and accompanied. In an effort to align actors around a common vision, OCHA, UNDP, and UNHCR hosted a workshop in July 2014 with the participation of government officials to raise awareness about appropriate durable solutions for IDPs, underlining that, according to international standards, durable solutions refer to (i) return, (ii) local integration and (iii) resettlement. During the workshop, government officials reiterated their will to prioritize the return of IDPs. The current government view is problematic because many IDPs in and around Goma indicate that they would like to integrate locally rather than return to insecure areas.⁶³ Obviously, much more work is required to sensitize government officials to the fact that durable solutions comprise multiple options beyond return alone and that all options must be carefully planned and accompanied in order that the rights of IDPs are respected.

One area that will be a major sticking point in any return process is disputes over land. IDPs consider land disputes to be the second biggest obstacle to return, after insecurity.⁶⁴ UN Habitat has partnered with various government ministries, humanitarian, and development actors over the years to assist in the mediation of land disputes although this work has never really been brought to scale due to the non-permitting security environment. Now, with increasing attention to transitional activities, multi-sectoral community-based projects involving land dispute support could prove very useful in promoting accompanied return where possible. An example of this kind of work is currently taking place in a secure part of Masisi wherein UNDP, FAO, WFP, and UN HABITAT are working together on a two-year pilot project to reinforce resilience and durable return through coordinated multi-sector support to returnees.⁶⁵

A second area that requires better analysis under the auspices of durable solutions is the possibility for city planning in Goma since so many IDPs in and around the city indicate that they would like to integrate locally. This is an option that is not strongly supported by the government. Still, the massive growth of Goma is a reality that needs to be addressed. The largest city in the East has apparently doubled in size over the last decade (from 500,000 to one million) and is now comprised of a patchwork of slums and shantytowns. If IDPs and other conflict-affected persons choose to integrate permanently, a careful urban development plan will need to be established that includes adequate infrastructure and social services. Apparently, UNDP is currently recruiting five new staff members to work as “early recovery” advisors in DRC. These experts would be prudent to include urban development planning in their overall strategy for early recovery in the country.⁶⁶ Urban planning in Goma would complement the major investments already made by the World Bank to improve road conditions and trade across South Kivu, Katanga and Orientale.⁶⁷

⁶³ Key informant interviews, Goma, August 2014.

⁶⁴ According to focus group discussion in IDP camps, August 2014.

⁶⁵ This pilot project will benefit 700 households and is being funded by the Dutch government. Key informant interview, Goma, August 2014.

⁶⁶ Key informant interview, Kinshasa, August 2014.

⁶⁷ World Bank. “World Bank announces US\$1 billion pled to Africa’s Great Lakes Region, Targeting Energy, Roads, Agriculture, Cross-Border Trade, Health and Jobs,” *World Bank News*, 22 May 2013,

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Quoi dire? Quoi faire? The ongoing conflict in DRC is one of the world's most longstanding and complex. What is more, it does not look as if it will end anytime soon. In the context of the incessant fighting in the country, the internal displacement crisis is massive and multifaceted. The millions of IDPs in Congo have varying needs and face different challenges depending on their individual circumstances. Over the years, many of the people who have been able to return home have only been displaced once again when violence returns to their communities. This situation of continual and repeated displacement has made it difficult to plan appropriate assistance beyond the most basic activities to save lives and alleviate suffering.

The relationship between IDPs and other conflict-affected people is complicated in DRC because so many IDPs living with host families are simply not tracked and their needs not well understood. The families that host them are incredibly vulnerable themselves, arguably as vulnerable as the individuals uprooted from their homes. At the same time, some IDPs living in camps for long periods of time have begun to integrate themselves locally, either by securing daily work in the city or by moving about between the camps and other displacement locales. In these situations, it is often hard to know who is displaced and whether such displacement makes them more vulnerable than all other exposed populations in the East.

In the context of the protracted crisis, the international community finds itself in a “no-man’s land,” neither operating in a traditional emergency context nor moving towards a more transitional setting wherein development actors could take over. In many ways, IDPs remain as vulnerable and aid-dependent today as they were a decade ago. Donors would seem increasingly weary of the longstanding international approach of simply “treading water,” but at the same time, too risk-averse to try something new. Surely, the humanitarian community was emboldened by the defeat of the M23, hoping it would build momentum for a lasting peace. However, nearly two years since M23 retreated from Goma, it is clear that the conflict is far from over with no indication that anyone is closer to winning the fight for power and minerals in the East.

The task at hand now is to explore what to do when nothing changes. Certainly, humanitarian actions need to be re-energized and improved to better address new shocks and displacements. At the same time, the international community should invest considerably more attention in transitional activities that can both develop the autonomy of IDPs and support durable solutions when and where appropriate. Many observers may point out that a diversified approach is not possible due to donor fatigue and dwindling funding in DRC or, even, to a relapse in intensive fighting. However, the international community must remain committed to a two-pronged approach that will improve the protection and assistance of IDPs over the longer-term regardless of the inevitable shocks that will continue to occur. It is no longer a question of either/or in DRC. Instead, there is an imperative for the international community to function in an emergency mode and a transitional mode simultaneously.

<http://www.worldbank.org/en/news/press-release/2013/05/22/world-bank-announces-us-1-billion-pledge-to-africa-great-lakes-region-targeting-energy-roads-agriculture-cross-border-trade-health-jobs>.

Further to reinforcing humanitarian outcomes for IDPs and, at the same time, bridging the gap between humanitarian action and more transitional activities is, of course, the urgent need for national authorities and the international community to address the root causes of and drivers of conflict. Ultimately, the protection and assistance of IDPs is the responsibility of the DRC government. Therefore, the international community must continue to support the government in its meaningful participation in reconciliation and peace processes that could avoid a continuation of the massive human suffering in the country.

Five recommendations moving forward include:

Recommendation 1: Re-energize and improve core emergency response functions to address new displacements.

As noted throughout this case study, the speed and efficiency with which core humanitarian actions are carried out in the country could be improved. There could be greater international staff presence in the field, better communication regarding alerts to new displacements, and a more agile and coordinated response. Field leadership needs to be nimble, highly reactive, and willing to deploy to hard-to-reach places.⁶⁸ At the same time, multi-sectoral needs assessments of new displacements need to include tools for follow up that ensure continued support beyond one-time assistance measures when necessary. An enhanced emergency response could be supported through a faster and more responsive CHF process as well as a more transparent and interlinked RRMP/Cluster relationship.

Recommendation 2: Reinforce humanitarian space through more high-level support to the Humanitarian Coordinator role.

Given that the integrated UN model is likely to remain in place in DRC, the UN may wish to consider supporting the Humanitarian Coordinator more actively with a high-level deputy that can assist him in satisfying his multiple duties as a “triple hatted” official. One suggestion is to engage a Deputy Humanitarian Coordinator or a senior OCHA official that would be stationed in Goma and delegated with certain high-level authorities in order to facilitate humanitarian advocacy, negotiate for the preservation of humanitarian space with MONUSCO and other armed groups, and have a ground-level view of the needs of IDPs and other conflict-affected populations. The distance between Kinshasa and the East has always been an obstacle to a fully connected international approach. Now that MONUSCO has moved most of its operations from Kinshasa to Goma, the humanitarian community could match that effort with the positioning of a senior level advocate in Goma as well.

Recommendation 3: Diversify the response to IDPs to include resilience-building and support for indigenous coping strategies.

It is widely acknowledged that the current approach to humanitarian aid is not resulting in measurable progress and may even be diminishing the resilience of IDPs over time. The

⁶⁸ As already recommended in the MSF report. See Sean Healy and Sandrine Tiller. *Where is Everyone? Responding to Emergencies in the Most Difficult Places*, Médecins sans Frontières, July 2014, p. 9, http://www.msf.org/sites/msf.org/files/msf-whereiseveryone_-def-lr_-_july.pdf.

humanitarian community has been conducting its approach in the same way for nearly two decades and, yet, vulnerability remains on the rise. For this reason, more work needs to be done to profile IDPs in all situations – both in camps and with host communities – to determine the dynamics at play in their displacement and to identify needs beyond traditional humanitarian interventions. Some organizations mentioned in this report are starting such important work and should be fully supported in their initiatives. Through a better understanding of how IDPs are managing on their own, sometimes through hybrid livelihood and residency approaches that have them regularly commuting between rural and urban settings,⁶⁹ the international community could be better placed to support indigenous coping strategies and to build the sustainable resilience of IDPs over the longer-term. Such interventions would also positively support host communities and reinforce the culture of solidarity that has been at the heart of the response to IDPs to date.

Recommendation 4: Launch an intensive advocacy campaign aimed at creating a common understanding and approach to durable solutions for IDPs.

While many actors in DRC currently seek an “exit strategy,” particularly as relating to the IDPs in the camps of North Kivu, the larger humanitarian community does not yet share a common vision about what durable solutions are appropriate for these vulnerable population and under what circumstances durable solutions could be reached. Humanitarian actors must work closely with national government officials, MONUSCO, and multilateral development organizations in both Kinshasa and the East to ensure an explicit and joint understanding of international standards for IDP return, local integration and/or resettlement. Given the scale and scope of potential activities, humanitarians cannot act alone but must work hand-in-hand with military and development actors. Without a common understanding of durable solutions across political, military and humanitarian fields, there is the risk that IDPs currently in established camps may be forced to return to areas that are not yet secure. This is particularly worrying given the upcoming national elections in 2016 that are already influencing government views of the camps.

Recommendation 5: Apply more robust pressure on the government and national actors to satisfy their responsibilities for the protection and assistance of IDPs in all phases of displacement.

Although DRC government institutions are widely thought to be weak and unresponsive, the ultimate responsibility for the protection and assistance of IDPs rests with them. To this day, the government still does not have an IDP strategy, something that the HC is strongly advocating for. Not only can the government be pushed to do more in terms of emergency response to acute needs of IDPs, it also needs to take a greater leadership role with regard to their resilience and transition. The government must begin work now with multilateral development actors to step up efforts to build the resilience of IDPs in order that humanitarian actors can focus on the core mandate of saving lives and alleviating suffering. At the same time, some capacity-building activities need to take place with national NGOs. For decades, these actors have been sidelined because they are viewed to be weak and corrupt. Still, the only way forward is to slowly build their technical expertise for response, including in the area of financial management.

⁶⁹ See Markus Rudolf. *Assessing the Humanitarian Response to Chronic Crisis in North Kivu*, MercyCorps, World Vision, Search for Common Ground, Goma, October 2014.

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