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Programme

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Chadrack is a father of six who had to flee his home in Kitchanga due to escalating conflict. Before the conflict, Chadrack and his wife made a living from trading and had no problem providing for their family. He has moved to the Bulengo camp, where he is housed in a communal shelter for newly displaced people, hoping to receive as much assistance as possible. Credit: WFP/Michael Castofas

HUMANITARIAN EMERGENCY IN ITURI, NORTH KIVU AND SOUTH KIVU (DRC): A WORSENING CRISIS IN 2024

Context

Since the end of 2023, intensified conflict has dominated the lives of people in eastern Congo. The violence continues to force families from their homes and as the conflicts continue, it is unclear when they will be able to return. The loss of income, harvest and livelihoods will weigh heavy on their food security throughout 2024.

The conflict between the March 23 Movement (M23) and the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) and its allies in North Kivu has escalated dramatically. Approximately 1.7 million people are displaced by the M23 crisis alone in North Kivu (as of 13 February 2024), 200,000 more than at the end of January 2024.¹ Many have sought safety and shelter in Goma, the provincial capital.

In September 2023, North Kivu was already estimated to host 2.3 million people affected by the M23 and the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) conflict in northern North Kivu.² Unless the fighting stops, the reality will become much more grave and food assistance

needs will grow.

South Kivu is experiencing increasing insecurity as the M23 conflict spills over into the province. Additionally, the withdrawal of the UN peacekeeping mission (MONUSCO) in early 2024 may have further impact on insecurity. Fizi territory also saw increased inter-community tensions in 2023. Overall, 1.6 million people were already estimated to be displaced in South Kivu in September 2023.³

Ituri faces long-standing inter-community conflicts, notably between CODECO and Zaire non-state armed groups. Attacks on villages and internally displaced peoples' camps are forcing families to flee in search of safety again and again. The ADF non-state armed group's violent attacks in southern Ituri and northern North Kivu are destroying the safety and security of local populations. 1.6 million people are already displaced in Ituri as of September 2023.³

1. [IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix: M23 Crisis Analysis \(14 February\)](#)

2.3.4. [IOM Displacement Tracking Matrix: Mobility Tracking Atlas \(November 2023\)](#)



WFP provided an urgent response to those affected by a fire at the Mushonezo Camp, in Kalehe, South Kivu. High-energy biscuits were distributed to 2,000 people, 48 hours after the tragedy, to help meet their immediate food needs. Credit: WFP/Michael Castofas

HUMANITARIAN SITUATION 2024

Food insecurity

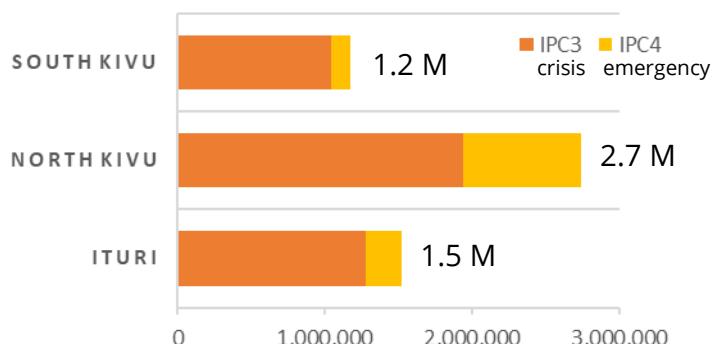
Some 5.4 million people living in eastern DRC were projected to be in crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity (IPC3+) in 2024, based on analyses done prior to the escalation of conflict since October 2023.¹

The situation is expected to be worse than initially predicted. Hunger soars in conflict zones where non-state armed group violence and activities prevent local communities from accessing their fields or forces them to flee, leaving their crops to wilt, rot and be looted. Even if a family is able to return after conflict subsides, their crops, livelihoods and their homes are often destroyed.

Survival coping mechanisms are increasingly observed, among people who are displaced, returnees and host communities. Households are reducing the number and size of their daily meals, selling their possessions, borrowing from family and friends, or sending their children to eat at neighbours' homes to keep themselves somewhat fed during this crisis.²

Following the rapid deterioration of the security situation in North Kivu since October, FEWSNET expects the situation to remain dire in the short term, with more families slipping into IPC4 (emergency) levels of food insecurity in

IPC3+ Projections January-June 2024



Rutshuru territory, where the conflict has been unrelenting for the longest and food assistance has been inadequate.³ The 2023 IPC analysis predicted 2.7 million people in North Kivu (31 percent of the population) need food support (IPC3+) prior to the escalations since October.⁴

Ituri was projected to host 1.5 million people in IPC3+; 37 percent of the population. Especially in Mambasa and Djugu territories food insecurity is becoming a more grave concern with increased displacement from violent inter-communal conflict.⁵

In South Kivu 1.2 million people were projected to be in IPC3+ since before the conflict escalation. With Kahele, Uvira and Fizi receiving more displaced people from North Kivu and the Hauts Plateaux, food needs can be expected to grow even higher.⁶

1. 4.5.6 [Integrated Phase Classification](#) (IPC3+ projections January to June 2024)

2. [REACH Report on North Kivu](#) (October 2023)

3. [FEWSNET](#) (November 2023)



Ushindi, four, is severely malnourished. He was forced to flee with his mother and his six siblings when fighting erupted in their village. Now they live with a host family near Rusayo camp. Previously they relied on farming and selling sweet potatoes and cassava for income, but they have left their land behind in search for safety. Credit: WFP/Michael Castafas

Malnutrition

Conflict and displacement are the main drivers of rising malnutrition rates in eastern DRC, due to the lack of access to food, especially dietary diversity, during times of crisis.

Malnutrition is multifactorial. The main causes are food insecurity, illnesses (malaria, respiratory infections and diarrhoeal diseases), epidemics (measles and cholera), poor hygiene and sanitation, inaccessibility to drinking water and inadequate healthcare.

Malnutrition prevention activities are crucial alongside sensitisation, counselling, and support on feeding practices. Vulnerable children and women in emergency settings may relapse multiple times even after recovering from malnutrition due to the persistent unavailability of food or the use of coping strategies.

Acute malnutrition represents a high risk of dying for these children are in case of additional infectious diseases

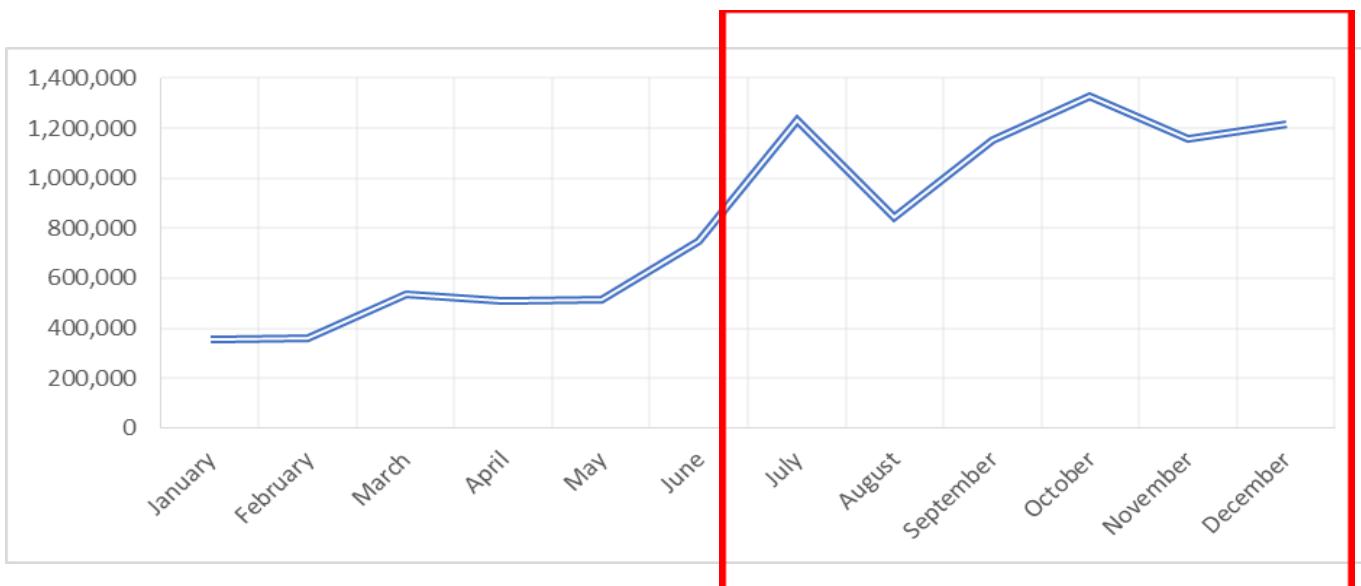
or chronic disease. Alarming rates of acute malnutrition prevalence of around ten percent and higher are recorded in three camps around Goma (North Kivu), in Mahagi (Ituri), and in Kalehe and Mwenga in South Kivu, as per SMART surveys from July 2023.

Most territories assessed also demonstrate around 50 percent rates of chronic malnutrition. These populations, with immune system deficiencies, are susceptible to rapid deteriorations in their nutrition status, especially when associated to acute malnutrition or in the case of cholera and measles epidemics are sweeping across eastern DRC, damaging their health further.

As a long-term consequence malnutrition stunt physical growth, cognitive development and weaken a child's metabolic health for the rest of their life. Humanitarian nutrition assistance focuses on bringing children and pregnant and breastfeeding mothers out of severe levels of malnutrition, to prevent some of the more dire consequences.

WFP OPERATIONAL RESULTS 2023

People reached with WFP emergency activities (in-kind food, cash and nutrition assistance) in 2023 each month in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu



WFP's corporate scale-up

3.6 million

people reached with WFP's **emergency** and **resilience** activities in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu from January to December 2023.

2.6 million

people reached with emergency food and cash assistance.

Emergency activities

555,000

people reached with emergency nutrition assistance.

Resilience activities

164,000 people reached with chronic malnutrition assistance.

158,000 people reached with resilience activities.

96,000 children reached with school feeding activities.

2024 PLAN AND RESOURCING PRIORITIES

5.4 million

people in severe food insecurity.¹

1.5 million

people targeted by WFP's emergency activities each month in the scale-up provinces.

In 2023, despite WFP's increased reach, food assistance could not keep up with the growing needs. From October 2023, the humanitarian situation deteriorated dramatically due to massive displacement.

From January to June 2024, while 5.4 million people are projected to be in emergency and crisis levels of food insecurity in Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu, in the first half of 2024, acute food insecurity is expected to increase.²

Against the growing needs, WFP's resources will not reach beyond assisting 1.5 million people per month. WFP will be forced into further extreme prioritisation and halt distributions to conflict-affected communities and displaced populations experiencing acute food insecurity.

The prioritisation is based on humanitarian needs assessments, Emergency Food Security Assessments, and on WFP's own monitoring which tracks the impact of WFP's food assistance on levels of food insecurity.

At present, WFP faces the dilemma of whom to feed with available resources. New displacements towards Minova (South Kivu) and camps around Goma (North Kivu) are predicted to increase as the M23 crisis continues.

Additionally, Rutshuru and Masisi territories (North Kivu) have not yet been reached due to resource shortages and accessibility challenges amidst the ongoing conflict and poor road conditions during the rainy season where needs are significant.

Lubero territory (northern North Kivu) is also an area with assessed low food consumption scores for which assistance should be provided.

South Kivu territories have also been under-assisted as has Mambasa in Ituri.

Meanwhile existing programmes are at risk of suffering from funding shortages as the focus shifts towards those newly displaced.



Kakule, aged 62, a father of 12, is displaced from his home due to ongoing conflict and is sheltering in Mangina, Beni territory. Credit: WFP/Anguanda

CHALLENGES ANTICIPATED IN 2024

Increasing needs—The humanitarian community is braced for a further escalation of conflict and growing needs amongst larger displaced communities. WFP will need to advocate for more funding and conduct strict prioritisation exercises to ensure the limited humanitarian resources are reaching those most in need and are having the greatest impact on improving their food security situation.

New arrivals—WFP is absorbing new arrivals into existing distribution cycles at sites for displaced people. WFP remains agile and flexible to respond to new and growing needs, reprioritising resources where possible, provided resources are available.

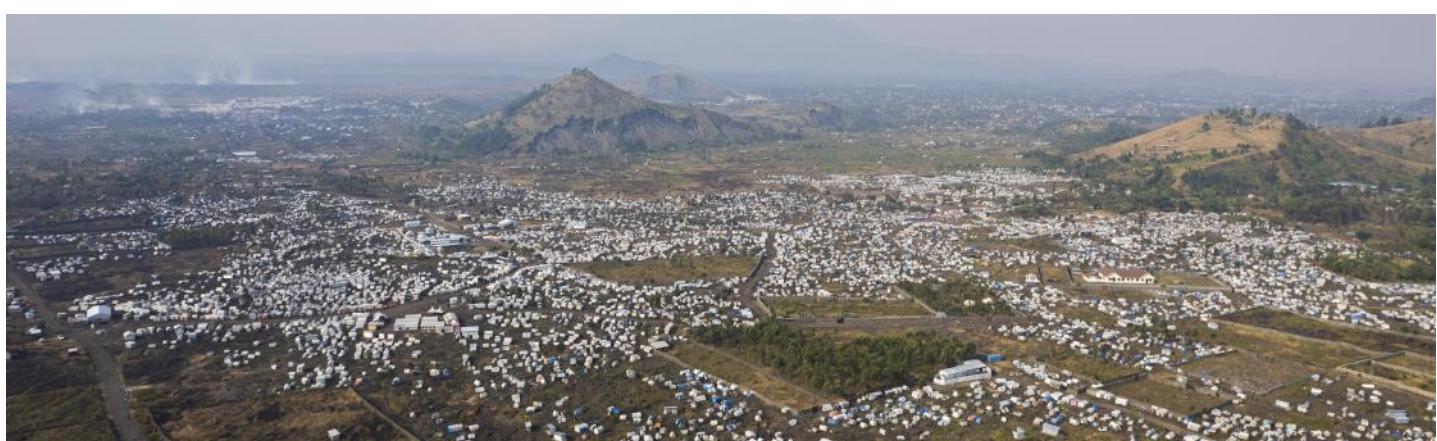
New sites—As the frontlines of the conflict move, the local population is forced to flee to new areas where impromptu sites are created, and the humanitarian needs are immediate. WFP works with the humanitarian community and the Food Security Cluster to assess needs and possible responses at new sites as the conflict spreads.

Resource shortages—WFP fears it may face a lower funding year than last despite growing needs as donor interest in the DRC wanes and the protracted nature of the long-standing conflict in DRC takes its toll. WFP's 2024 plan may

need to be revised further in eastern DRC if resources are not sufficient. Some commodities are facing pipeline breaks from March, while cash will run out from April. WFP is advocating for funds to fill these gaps.

Rainy season and precarious roads—Heavy rainfall destroys the very weak road infrastructure which can prevent trucks carrying food from reaching vulnerable communities. This particularly affects operations in Masisi (North Kivu) and across South Kivu. WFP explores new routes when needed and may have to postpone distributions by a few days if that allows for conditions to improve and for food to reach sites. WFP also has some flexibility in its assistance modality. Where stable food markets and other factors allow, WFP can conduct cash distributions if enough cash resources are available. This can replace the need for heavy food trucks traversing unstable or impassable roads.

Security incidents—Non-state armed group attacks and interference on humanitarian assistance remain prevalent in 2024. WFP is in constant contact with actors to ensure WFP's activities are understood and accepted and to allow the safe passage of its vehicles, commodities and staff across eastern DRC.



Bulengo camp, situated on the outskirts of Goma, the provincial capital of North Kivu, is one of many sites growing with new arrivals every day. People live in precarious conditions after fleeing their homes due to conflict. WFP is assisting over 98,000 people living on this site alone. Credit: WFP/Michael Castofas

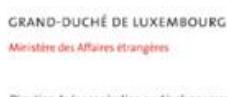
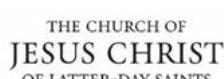
FUNDING SITUATION

WFP is appealing for USD 589.2 million for the next 6 months. With an urgent resource break starting in March, funding is needed immediately to plug this gap and continue its operations.

WFP FUNDING STATUS FOR ALL ACTIVITIES IN DRC (MARCH–AUGUST 2024)

EMERGENCY ACTIVITIES	FUNDING NEEDS (USD)	FUNDING AVAILABLE (USD) (INCLUDING CARRY-OVER)	FUNDING GAP (USD)	PERCENTAGE FUNDED
IN-KIND AND CASH ASSISTANCE	448.6 million	17.8 million	430.8 million	4 %
MALNUTRITION TREATMENT AND PREVENTION ACTIVITIES	68.2 million	17 million	51.2 million	25 %

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Reach Report (October 2023):



FEWSNET Key Messages (Nov 2023):



IPC Acute Malnutrition (Jan 2024):

