

## GREAT LAKES

## HUMANITARIAN KEY MESSAGES



### HIGHLIGHTS

- Displacement, food insecurity and malnutrition are increasing in the Great Lakes region\*, largely driven by conflict and internal violence in the DRC.
- Ebola has broken out in Equateur Province of DRC. 25 people have died so far.
- More than 15,000 new refugees arrived in Uganda from South Sudan and DRC in April 2018 and the influx is expected to continue.
- Humanitarian organizations are calling for less than 50 cents per person, per day, to provide life-saving assistance and protection to people in and from the DRC.

### KEY MESSAGES

- 1. Conflict and internal violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) intensified and spread in 2017, severely impacting many people's lives and increasing internal displacement and refugee outflows, especially into Uganda.** Conflict in the neighbouring states of the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan, and political tension in Burundi, are also expected to continue to worsen the humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region. Unless political solutions are found to resolve these crises, humanitarian needs will continue to rise.
- 2. Nearly 2.8 million people were newly displaced inside, into or from the Great Lakes region in 2017, about half of them children.** Some 7.4 million people are now internally displaced or living as refugees/asylum seekers in or from the region—primarily as a result of conflicts in CAR, DRC and South Sudan, and the situation in Burundi. Displacement is expected to rise in the months ahead. Host countries and communities in the region who provided shelter to those fleeing violence desperately require additional support.
- 3. Sexual violence and other violations against civilians are a major concern.** In 2017 alone, recorded incidents of sexual violence saw a 53 per cent increase in the DRC, and many refugees including children arriving in neighbouring countries have reported enduring sexual violence and assaults. The vast majority of survivors are women and girls, while a smaller number of men and boys have also reported such violations. In the Kasai region, children comprise 60 per cent of the militia forces and half a million children were unable to complete the school year in 2017.
- 4. There is a deepening food insecurity and nutrition crisis in the region, largely driven by conflict.** Some 10 million people were severely food insecure at the end of April 2018 across the DRC (7.7 million people), Burundi (1.8 million), Uganda (441,000) and Tanzania (120,000). In the DRC, levels of hunger and malnutrition are at historically high levels: more than 4.6 million children are acutely malnourished, 2.2 million of whom are suffering from severe acute malnutrition. In Burundi, an estimated 70,000 children under age 5 require treatment for severe acute malnutrition.

- 5. The region is battling simultaneous outbreaks of communicable diseases, and an Ebola outbreak in Equateur Province of the DRC has greatly escalated needs.** From 4 April to 27 May 2018, 54 cases of Ebola, including 25 deaths (case fatality rate 46 per cent), have been reported from Bikoro, Iboko and Wangata (Mbandaka City) areas. This is the ninth outbreak of Ebola in the last four decades in the DRC. The DRC faced its worst cholera epidemic in 15 years in 2017, and cholera has spread to Uganda, associated with refugee movements from DRC. Meanwhile, Tanzania continues to battle a cholera outbreak which began in 2015. The already high malaria burden in the Great Lakes is expected to increase during the coming rainy seasons. In Burundi, 1.2 million malaria cases were reported between January and March 2018, despite a joint Government-humanitarian community response in 2017 which allowed the Government to declare the end of the malaria epidemic in November.
- 6. Education now is vital to the future of the next generation.** In Uganda alone, more than 350,000 refugee children are out of school and these children are likely to be displaced for the foreseeable future.
- 7. Under-funding is the single largest impediment to saving lives in the DRC and in neighbouring countries receiving refugees.** Put together, the DRC Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) and the DRC Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) require \$2.2 billion dollars in 2018. That is a lot of money but amounts to less than 50 cents a day for each person whose life needs to be saved and protected. In 2018, the DRC Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has so far received just \$266.3 million, out of \$1.68 billion required, while the DRC RRP is just 4 per cent funded.
- 8. Under-funding is also a major challenge for other humanitarian responses in the Great Lakes region.** The 2018 Burundi HRP calls for \$141.8 million, while the Burundi RRP calls for \$391 million. To date, the Burundi HRP has received just 3 per cent of funding required, while the Burundi RRP is just 9 per cent funded. The South Sudan RRP requires \$1.5 billion in 2018 and is just 8 per cent funded. In 2017, funding shortfalls resulted in cuts to life-saving services, including decreases in the food ration provided to refugees in multiple countries.
- 9. Humanitarian workers are risking their lives to save lives in the DRC. In February 2018, two aid workers were killed near Mushikiri, North Kivu, while on duty for the NGO Hydraulique Sans Frontières (HYFRO).** Growing insecurity, including in North Kivu, represent a major obstacle to the delivery of humanitarian assistance to thousands of people in need.

*\* For the purposes of these Key Messages, the Great Lakes region includes: Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.*