

HUMANITARIAN OUTLOOK FOR THE

# GREAT LAKES

# REGION

JANUARY - JUNE 2018



INTERNALLY  
DISPLACED PEOPLE

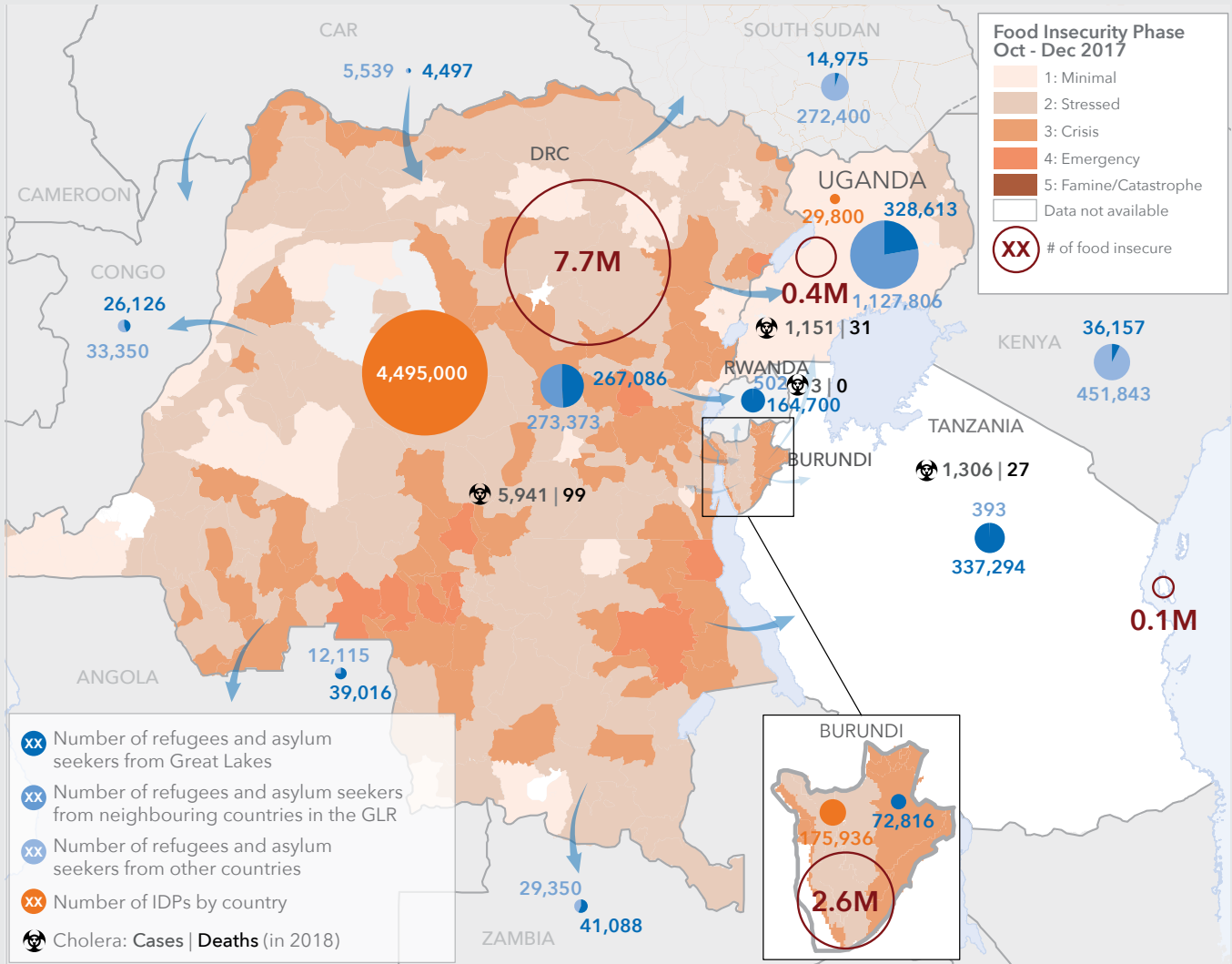
4.7M

REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS IN  
AND FROM THE REGION

2.7M

SEVERELY FOOD INSECURE  
PEOPLE

10.9M



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on the maps of this Outlook do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

**Cover photo:**

A young boy displaced in Kalamie in Tanganyika Province, DRC. ©UNICEF/Gabriel Vockel

Outlook publication date: 15 March 2018

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>PART I. INTRODUCTION &amp; KEY TAKEAWAYS</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>PART II. DRIVERS OF HUMANITARIAN NEED</b>	<b>6</b>
Political developments and conflict	6
Economic shocks	7
Climatic shocks and plant pests	8
<b>PART III. HUMANITARIAN IMPACT</b>	<b>10</b>
Protection and population displacement	10
Food insecurity and malnutrition	12
Disease outbreaks	13
<b>PART IV. CONSTRAINTS TO THE RESPONSE</b>	<b>15</b>
Humanitarian access	15
Humanitarian funding	15
<b>END NOTES</b>	<b>17</b>



## PART I.

# INTRODUCTION & KEY TAKEAWAYS

This Outlook provides an overview of the anticipated humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region from January to June 2018. It focuses on Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and neighbouring countries—including Angola, Kenya and Zambia—that have received refugees and asylum-seekers due to the DRC crisis. The report covers: drivers of humanitarian crises in the region, particularly the intensification of violence in the DRC; manifestations of humanitarian needs, including record levels of displacement and food insecurity; and constraints to meeting humanitarian needs, including obstacles to humanitarian access and inadequate funding.

The report's key takeaways are as follows:

- Conflict and internal violence in the DRC have intensified and spread in multiple locations, driving a severe deterioration in the humanitarian situation in the DRC and causing massive displacement**, both within the DRC and to neighbouring countries in the Great Lakes region. These trends are expected to continue in the months ahead. Conflict in the neighbouring states of the Central African Republic (CAR) and South Sudan is also expected to continue to impact the humanitarian situation in the Great Lakes region.
- The Great Lakes region is experiencing economic slowdown, rising poverty and increasing costs of basic goods as a result of conflict and political instability.** Unless political solutions are found to reverse the current trends, levels of vulnerability and humanitarian needs are expected to rise in the first half of 2018.
- Several locations in the region—western Uganda, north-eastern Rwanda and southern Tanzania—are expected to face higher chances of above normal to normal rainfall from March to May 2018**, increasing the risk of flooding and landslides.
- Displacement of populations is increasing at an alarming rate.** Nearly 2.8 million people were newly displaced inside, into or from the Great Lakes region in 2017, including about 2.1 million newly internally displaced in the DRC following an escalation in conflict and internal violence in multiple locations. There are now about 7.4 million people internally displaced or living as refugees/ asylum seekers in or from the region<sup>1</sup>—primarily as a result of the conflicts in CAR, the DRC and South Sudan, and the situation in Burundi—and displacement is expected to rise in the months ahead.
- There is a deepening food insecurity and nutrition crisis in the region, largely driven by conflict**, leaving some 10.9 million people severely food insecure at the end of December 2017 across the DRC (7.7 million people), Burundi (2.6 million), Uganda (441,000) and Tanzania (120,000). Over 2.2 million children are estimated to be severely malnourished in the DRC and an estimated 70,000 children under age 5 require treatment for severe acute malnutrition (SAM) in Burundi. Food insecurity could deteriorate in the coming months if fall armyworm is not contained.
- The region is battling simultaneous outbreaks of communicable diseases.** The DRC is facing its worst cholera epidemic in 15 years, and cholera cases have also been reported in Burundi, Tanzania and Uganda. A high malaria burden—especially in Burundi—is expected to worsen during the upcoming rainy seasons in the region.
- Humanitarian access continues to be impeded by direct attacks and widespread insecurity in the DRC**, with this trend expected to continue in the months ahead if violence intensifies and spreads.

- **Despite rising needs, humanitarian responses in the Great Lakes region are underfunded.** The 2018 humanitarian requirements for the DRC have doubled from 2017 to \$1.7 billion, while the 2018 Burundi Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) calls for \$141.8 million. The South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) and Burundi RRRP—which were 33 per cent and 20 per cent funded in 2017 respectively—require \$1.5 billion and \$391 million in 2018.



*Congolese refugees who have crossed Lake Albert on a boat approach Sebagoro landing site in Uganda, where UNHCR has an emergency centre. © UNHCR/Michele Sibiloni*

## PART II.

# DRIVERS OF HUMANITARIAN NEED

Conflict and political uncertainty are likely to remain the dominant drivers of rising humanitarian needs, serious protection concerns and poverty in the Great Lakes region in the first half of 2018. At the same time, there is an increased risk of flooding in several locations across the region due to the prediction of normal to above-normal rainfall in the months ahead, which could lead to a further spread of diarrhoeal diseases.

## POLITICAL DEVELOPMENTS AND CONFLICT

**The intensification of conflict, internal violence and political uncertainty in the DRC, situation in Burundi and persistent conflict in the neighbouring countries of CAR and South Sudan are likely to remain the main drivers of humanitarian needs in the Great Lakes region in the first half of 2018.**

All countries in the Great Lakes neighbour one or more countries in conflict and the presence of non-state armed actors in key locations, coupled with the porosity of borders, has led to increasingly complex conflict dynamics in the region.

In the **DRC**, violence spread and intensified in 2017 and early 2018, severely impacting civilians and causing refugee outflows to neighbouring countries, including Angola, Burundi, Uganda, Tanzania and Zambia. At least 10 (out of 26) provinces across the country are now directly experiencing armed conflict<sup>2</sup> and further escalation is possible in the months ahead. Already in 2018, there have been reports of heavy fighting between the Congolese army (FARDC) and armed opposition groups in and around Beni town in North Kivu, eastern DRC, and of armed confrontations between FARDC and the rebel movement Maï Maï Yakutumba in the South Kivu province, with civilians bearing the brunt of the attacks. Meanwhile, the domestic political impasse in the DRC continues, with the potential to spark further violence in the months ahead. President Joseph Kabila's tenure in power was extended on 5 November 2017 until at least the end of 2018, in violation of the December 2016 Saint Sylvester agreement, which required elections to be held by the end of 2017. The *Rassemblement* opposition platform has rejected the

new electoral calendar. Public demonstrations and civil protests against the Presidential extension and demanding enhanced democratic processes have been responded to with force by the authorities, with at least six people killed, 68 injured and more than 120 others arrested during the violent dispersion of demonstrators in Kinshasa on 23 January 2018.<sup>3</sup> Recent media reports indicate that Kabila has agreed to step down following elections in December 2018 and to name a successor in July 2018.<sup>4</sup> However, how political events will unfold in the coming months and their potential impact on the humanitarian situation remains unclear.

The regional political complexity and the cross-border nature of the conflicts in the region became increasingly evident in **Uganda** beginning in late 2017. On 7 December 2017, an attack on United Nations peacekeepers in the DRC was attributed to the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), a militia opposed to the Ugandan government. Alleged air and long artillery range attacks from the Ugandan People's Defence Forces, in coordination with the Congolese army on 22 December, reportedly undermined the strength of the group. However, the counter-offensive might lead to increasing violence along the border which could impact on the humanitarian situation of affected communities living in these areas.

On 12 December 2017, President Nkurunziza of **Burundi** launched a new campaign for constitutional changes that could keep him in power until 2034. On the recommendation of a national advisory board, the government is organizing a referendum for May 2018 that could allow the incumbent president to seek up to two more seven-year terms after his current mandate ends in 2020.<sup>5</sup> The Arusha peace talks facilitated by Uganda remain stalled after the Burundi opposition teams boycotted the fourth

round in December 2017.<sup>6</sup> The International Criminal Court (ICC) investigation into human rights abuses is ongoing despite Burundi's pull-out from the Rome Statute, as of 26 October 2017. On 9 November 2017, the ICC Prosecutor was authorized to open a formal investigation regarding crimes within the jurisdiction of the Court allegedly committed in Burundi or by nationals of Burundi outside Burundi from 26 April 2015 until 26 October 2017, while Burundi was a state party to the Rome Statute.<sup>7</sup>

Beyond the immediate Great Lakes countries, conflict in neighbouring **CAR** and **South Sudan** is expected to continue to impact the humanitarian situation in the region, with the onset of the dry season in the first half of 2018. In **CAR**, there was a serious deterioration of the security situation in 2017, leading nearly 512,000 people to seek asylum in neighbouring countries, including Cameroon, Chad and the DRC. The situation remains fragile in early 2018. In **South Sudan**, multiple locations across the country have seen clashes in early 2018, despite the signing of the Cessation of Hostilities agreement between the warring parties on 21 December 2017. The second phase of the

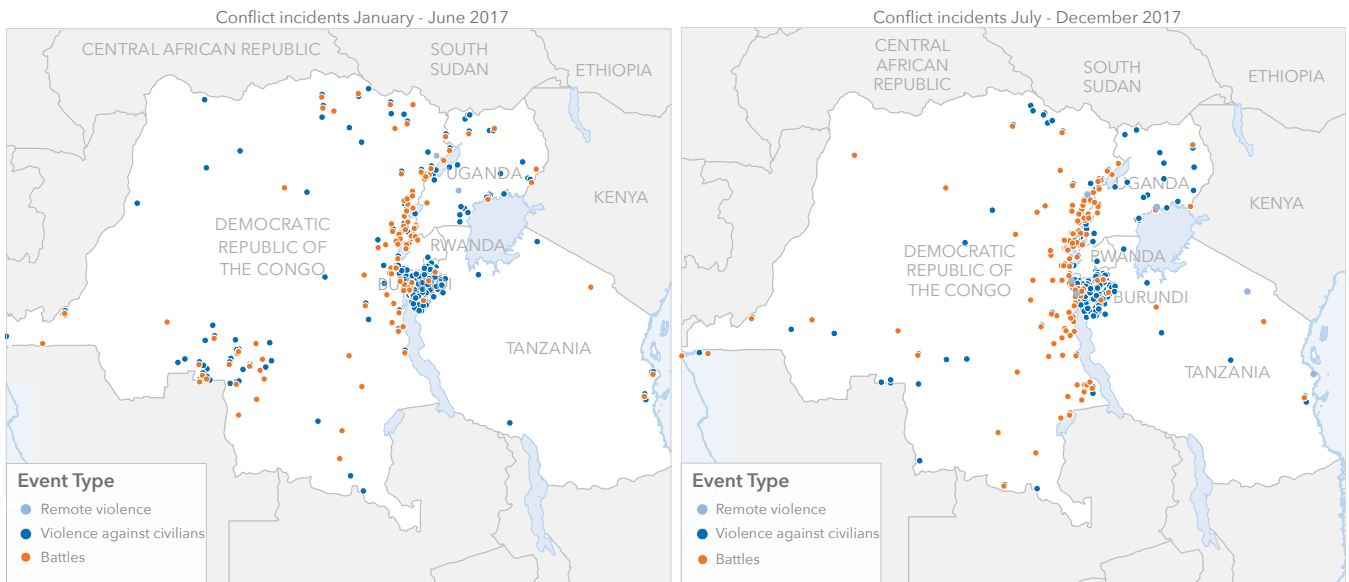
Intergovernmental Authority on Development (IGAD) High Level Revitalization Forum, which took place on 5-16 February 2018, was adjourned without any political agreement. Despite the parties recommitting to a cessation of hostilities, conflict has continued in February, and it is likely to escalate consistently with seasonal trends. UNHCR anticipates that the number of people fleeing violence in South Sudan will top 3 million by the end of 2018, including more than 300,000 more people expected to flee to Uganda and 30,000 more people expected to seek protection in the DRC during the year.<sup>8</sup>

## ECONOMIC SHOCKS

**Conflict in the Great Lakes region is likely to continue to cause economic slowdown, rising poverty and rising costs of basic goods in the months ahead, perpetuating high levels of vulnerability and deepening humanitarian needs.**

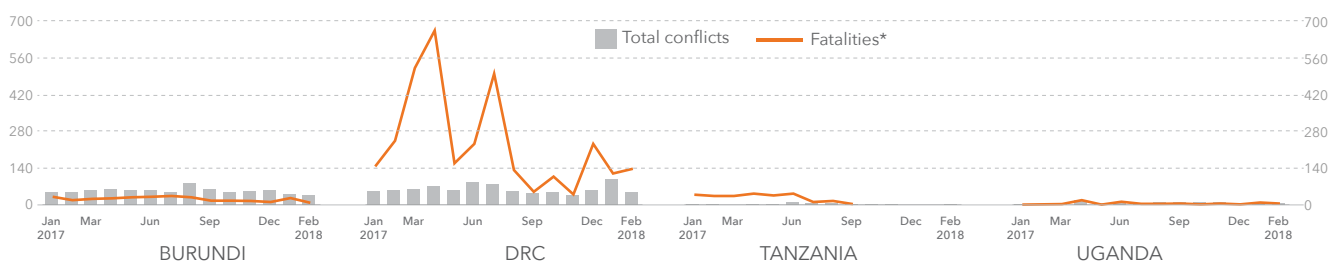
In the **DRC**, conflict and internal violence in the Kasai and Tanganyika regions has disrupted food trade and

### GREAT LAKES REGION CONFLICT INCIDENTS MAP (JAN-DEC 2017)



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Events Database (ACLED)

### GLR CONFLICT TRENDS BY COUNTRY JAN 2017 TO FEB 2018



Source: Armed Conflict Location and Events Database (ACLED), Jan 2017 - Feb 2018 | \*Fatalities in Tanzania include victims of alleged witchcraft-related lynching.



markets, and put additional upward pressure on food prices in recent months.<sup>9</sup> Conflict and internal violence has also impacted the country's gross domestic product, with growth declining to 2.6 per cent in 2017. The DRC's annual inflation rate has continued to increase—rising from 18 per cent in 2016 to 42 per cent in 2017—reflecting declining export revenues, owing to low international prices of minerals, combined with high Government spending. At the same time, the Congolese franc (CDF) depreciated by 70 per cent from CDF 925 per dollar in June 2016 to CDF 1,575 per dollar at the end of October 2017.<sup>10</sup> With conflict and political uncertainty expected to persist and potentially escalate in the first half of 2018, economic indicators are likely to remain negative.

In **Burundi**, the International Monetary Fund forecasts economic growth of 0.1 per cent in 2018, up from zero growth in 2017.<sup>11</sup> However, several Western donors continue to suspend budgetary aid and the Government is now relying on domestic tax collection and modest revenues from coffee and tea exports. Burundi has faced recurrent fuel shortages with serious consequences for daily life, with fuel prices increasing by 7.14 per cent after a week of shortage in service stations in January 2018. This is mainly due to the shortage of foreign currency to purchase fuel on the international market. The costs of transportation, basic services and commodities, including food prices, have also started to increase, impacting on the poorest families.<sup>12</sup>

While **Uganda** has had one of the most successful economies on the continent, growing at about 7 per cent in the 1990s and 2000s, its growth rate halved to 3.5 per cent in 2016/2017, including as a result of the conflict in neighbouring South Sudan.<sup>13</sup> At the same time, poverty has increased in the last four years, with

Northern Uganda the only region that has recorded a decrease, according to the Uganda Bureau of Statistics.<sup>14</sup>

In a more positive development, in **Tanzania**, inflation rates eased and the central bank was able to cut interest rates to support domestic demand in August 2017.<sup>15</sup> Prices of maize decreased by 40 to 50 per cent between May and October 2017 from record highs, as newly harvested crops increased supplies. Reduced exports following a maize export ban introduced in June 2017 also contributed to price declines.<sup>16</sup>

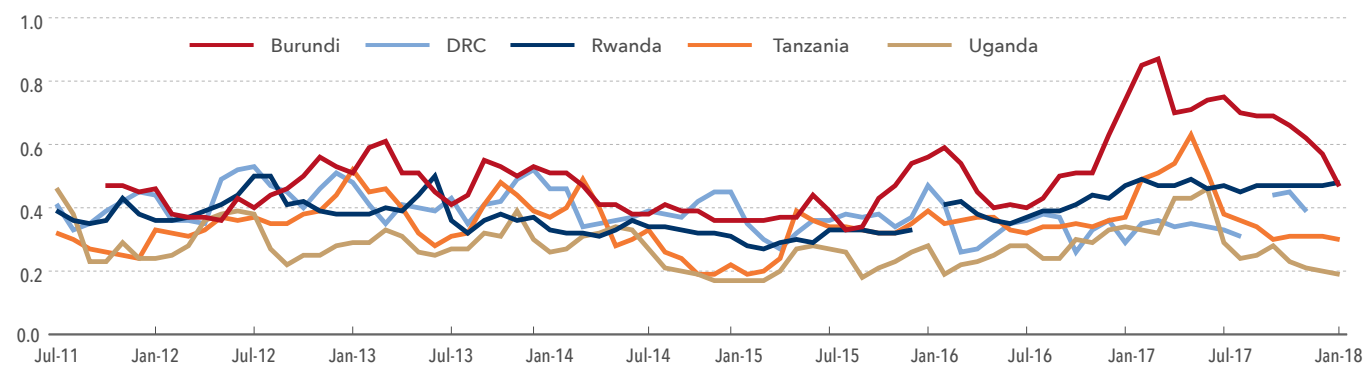
## CLIMATIC SHOCKS AND PLANT PESTS

**Several locations in the region—western Uganda, north-eastern Rwanda and southern Tanzania—are expected to face higher chances of above normal rainfall from March to May 2018, increasing the risk of flooding.**

In the **DRC**, vegetation conditions in 2017 were favourable in most cropping areas following adequate rainfall in most regions.<sup>17</sup> In **Burundi**, rain has been above average in January 2018, ending the December 2017 dry spell. This is likely to lead to an average harvest for 2018. Meanwhile, persistent heavy rainfall over southern **Tanzania** since early January 2018 has elevated the risk of localized flooding.<sup>18</sup>

**Fall armyworm (FAW), a plant pest that can result in loss of agricultural harvest, has been confirmed in all countries in the region and is expected to continue to impact crops in 2018.**

### MAIZE WHOLESALE PRICES IN URBAN CENTRES (US\$/KG)



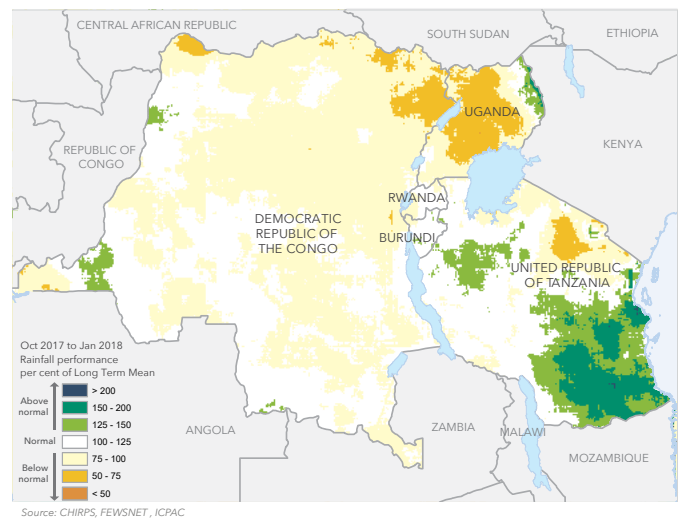
Source: FAO GIEWS (as of 28 Feb 2018)



In **Burundi**, FAW is attacking maize crops, particularly affecting lowland areas. According to the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), 14 provinces have reported widespread infestation and control measures vary countrywide. In the Imbo Plains of Cibitoke and Bubanza provinces, anecdotal estimates suggest that approximately 30-40 per cent of maize fields have been attacked.<sup>19</sup>

In **Uganda**, according to the Ministry of Agriculture, FAW wiped out 450,000 tonnes of maize worth \$192.8 million last year, equivalent to 12 per cent of the produce of the crop season (March-July 2017). In 2018, some maize crop losses are expected due to FAW, though recent field reports indicate impacts are less significant than originally expected, due to increased pest management and prevention in some areas.

#### RAINFALL PERFORMANCE (OCT 17 - JAN 18)



A young displaced girl holds her baby sister on her back in Tanganyika Province, DRC. ©UNICEF/Gabriel Vockel

## PART III.

## HUMANITARIAN IMPACT

The Great Lakes region is home to one of the world's largest displacement crises, with about 7.4 million people displaced within and from the region as at January 2018. Internal and cross-border displacement are expected to continue in the months ahead, particularly as a result of the conflicts in the DRC and South Sudan. At the same time, conflict is causing rising food insecurity, particularly in the DRC, which may further deteriorate if the FAW outbreak is not contained. The region is also battling simultaneous communicable diseases outbreaks and cholera is prevalent in almost all countries.

## PROTECTION, DISPLACEMENT AND POPULATION MOVEMENT

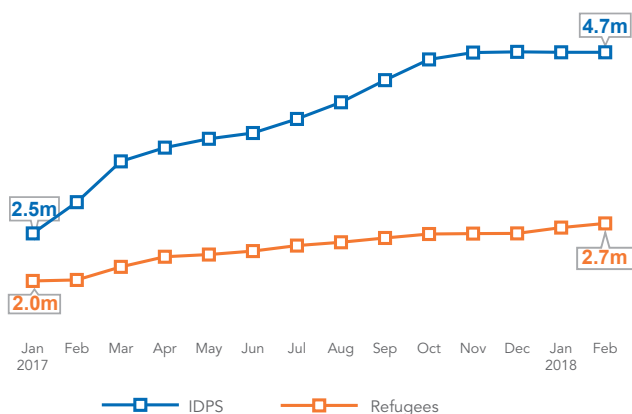
Renewed conflict and internal violence in the DRC in 2017 caused a significant spike in displacement in the Great Lakes, accompanied by reports of horrific violations against civilians, with about 7.4 million people now displaced within and from the Great Lakes region. This trend is expected to continue in the months ahead, if violence continues to spread and intensify in the DRC. In the Great Lakes region, only Rwanda and Uganda are States Parties to the African Union Convention for Protection and Assistance of IDPs (the "Kampala Convention"). Burundi, the DRC and Tanzania have signed it but not yet ratified. Kenya has neither signed nor ratified.

The DRC is among the world's biggest displacement crises,<sup>20</sup> with conflict forcing people to flee at record rates. In 2017, every hour of every day, 50 families were forced to flee their homes in the DRC. As 2018 began, some 5 million Congolese were displaced, including some 4.49 million internally displaced

persons (IDPs)<sup>21</sup> and more than 746,000 who had fled as refugees/asylum seekers to other African countries, including Angola, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Burundi, Zambia, Kenya, South Sudan, Republic of Congo, CAR, Sudan and Ethiopia. Of the 4.49 million IDPs in the DRC, some 2.1 million were newly displaced in 2017, including as a result of insecurity and armed conflict in the Kasai region and inter-communal clashes in the Tanganyika province. Over half of the rest of the country's IDPs are in North Kivu (957,000) and South Kivu (487,000). Sexual and gender-based violence are pervasive, with many women arriving into Uganda, for example, reporting having directly experienced or witnessed at least one form of gender-based violence prior to fleeing the DRC, according to CARE.<sup>22</sup> Children in eastern DRC are being sexually abused and recruited to fight, according to UNICEF, with recent data showing that more than 3,000 children have been recruited by militias and armed groups over the past year.<sup>23</sup> At the same time, the DRC hosts about 540,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Angola, Burundi, CAR, South Sudan and Rwanda.

Refugee outflows to **countries neighbouring the DRC** increased in 2017 and are expected to continue in the months ahead. Nearly 50,000 Congolese, 70 per cent of whom are women and children, crossed into **Uganda** from mid-December 2017 to end of February 2018 in the wake of new violence in the Ituri and North Kivu regions of eastern DRC.<sup>24</sup> Family separation remains a concern, with a high number of unaccompanied and separated children having been registered among the new arrivals of Congolese into Uganda. About 290 unaccompanied and 190 separated children have been identified among the refugees that have arrived through Kisoro or the south-west corridor. As fighting between FARDC and armed opposition groups in North Kivu in eastern DRC continued at the beginning of 2018, humanitarian agencies predict that the influx from eastern DRC to Uganda will continue and in the worst-case scenario

## DISPLACEMENT TREND



Source: IOM/DTM, OCHA, UNHCR

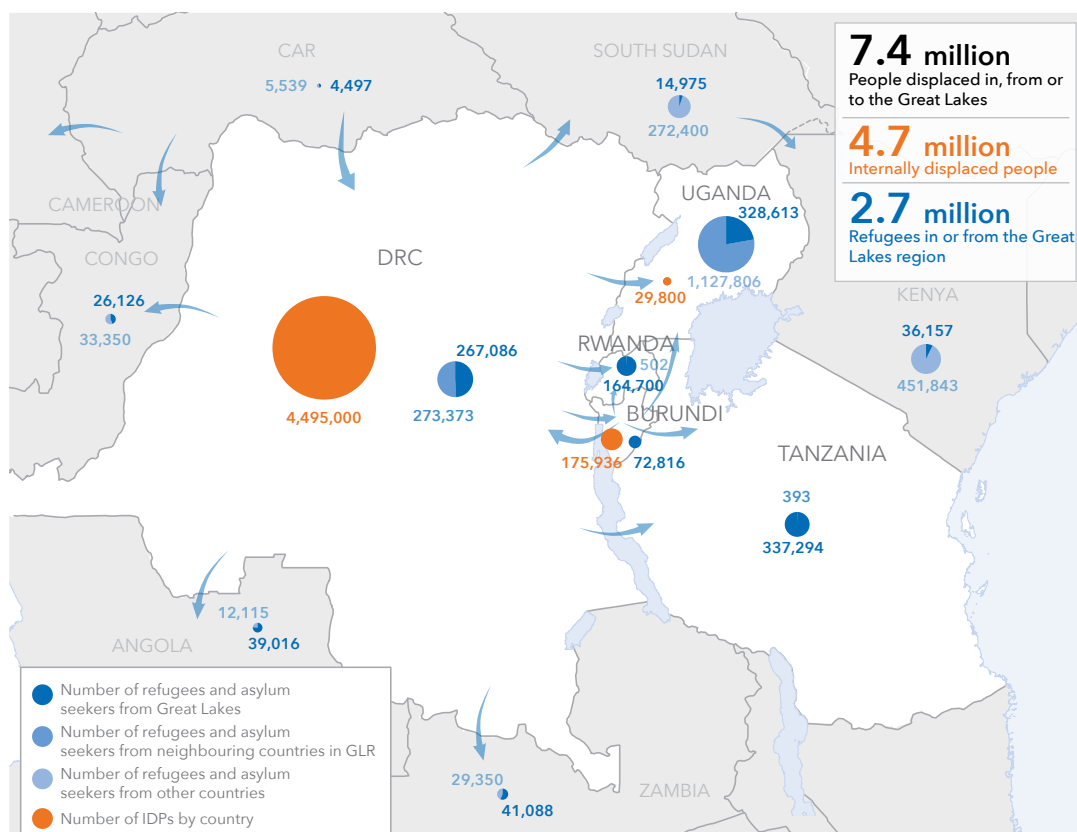
there would be 200,000 new arrivals from the DRC in 2018. In addition, more than 8,000 Congolese refugees arrived in **Burundi** from 24 January to 3 February 2018, following armed confrontations between FARDC and the rebel movement Mai Mai Yakutumba in the DRC's South Kivu province.

These refugee outflows come on top of influxes to **Angola** and **Zambia** in 2017. In **Angola**, UNHCR has pre-registered around 39,000 Congolese refugees, of whom 75 per cent are women, children and older people. On 13 January 2018, the provincial authorities of Lunda Norte, Angola, and Kasai and Kasai Central, DRC, signed a bilateral agreement on the repatriation of 31,000 Congolese refugees living in Lunda Norte Province. However, as the situation remains volatile in the Kasai region, humanitarian agencies in Angola have maintained a response planning figure of 50,000 refugees by end of December 2018. In **Zambia**, from August to December 2017, nearly 13,000 Congolese asylum seekers—over 80 per cent children and women—arrived at the Chiengi border in Luapula Province. On 20 January 2018, the Government of the Republic of Zambia, with the support of UNHCR and partners, started the relocation of Congolese refugees from the congested Kenani transit centre to a newly opened permanent site, Mantapala refugee settlement. It is projected that 25,000 people will register at the transit centre by 31 March 2018.

In **Burundi**, the number of IDPs decreased from 179,901 IDPs in December 2017 to 175,936 IDPs in January 2018, according to IOM. Natural disasters remain the main reported cause of displacement, at 70 per cent.<sup>25</sup> Nearly 430,000 Burundians live as refugees in the region, the majority in Tanzania. The outflow of asylum seekers has slowed since July 2017. A UNHCR-led repatriation plan is proceeding with 13,104 people (including 7,338 children) returning to Burundi from 7 September to 17 December 2017, and the 2018 Burundi RRRP anticipates up to 60,000 Burundian refugees may choose to return voluntarily in 2018. However, with political uncertainty persisting, further internal displacement as well as refugee outflows remain possible.

As of January 2018, nearly 340,000 refugees were living in **Tanzania**, approximately 253,000 of whom were from Burundi. On 25 January 2018, the Government of Tanzania informed UNHCR that it had withdrawn from implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), stopping the ongoing exercise to provide Tanzanian citizenship to some Burundian refugees, and said it will “discourage new asylum seekers”. According to international refugee law, people affected by conflict and persecution in their country of origin have a right to seek asylum in another country. Closure of borders may send asylum-seekers back to

## DISPLACEMENT IN THE GREAT LAKES REGION



a place where their life, security or health could be at risk and therefore may amount to *refoulement*, which is prohibited under international law.<sup>26</sup>

**Rwanda** is hosting about 165,000 refugees from multiple crises, 52 per cent of whom are women. As at 31 December 2017, 54 per cent (89,800 people) of the refugees in Rwanda were from Burundi and another 46 per cent (75,000 people) were from the DRC. Over 8,800 Congolese asylum seekers were awaiting verification. The majority of the refugees from Burundi originate from Kirundo (44 per cent) and Bujumbura Marie (35 per cent), while over 95 per cent of the Congolese refugees originate from North and South Kivu. Separately, the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugees (MIDIMR) has urged Rwandan refugees still living in exile to either repatriate to Rwanda or obtain the necessary documents to live legally in host countries before the Comprehensive Solutions Strategy (Cessation Clause) enters into final effect on 31 December 2017.<sup>27</sup>

**Uganda** is hosting more than 1.4 million refugees—the largest number on the continent—with over 1 million fleeing conflict in South Sudan, 288,000 from the DRC, over 40,000 from Burundi, over 37,000 from Somalia and another 37,000 refugees from across the Horn of Africa. UNHCR estimates that by the end of 2018, the refugee population in Uganda may increase to over 1.8 million, including 300,000 from South Sudan.<sup>28</sup> These figures are currently being reviewed following revelations of potential fraud and corruption, and a verification exercise was launched on 1 March 2018.<sup>29</sup>

## FOOD INSECURITY AND MALNUTRITION

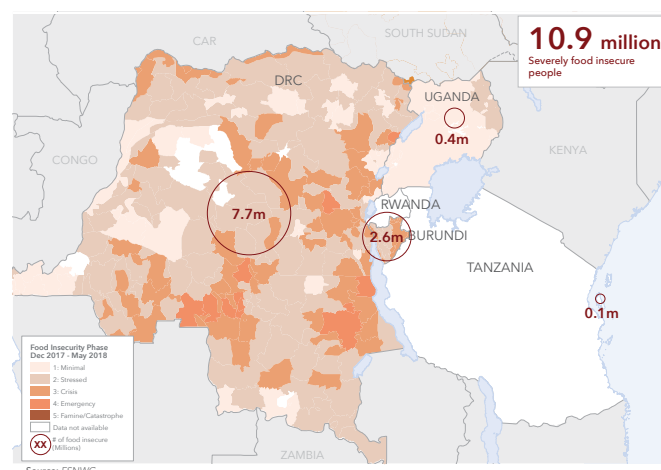
**Some 10.9 million people are severely food insecure across the Great Lakes region, reflecting the deepening crisis resulting from conflict, insecurity, displacement, the rapidly spreading FAW infestation and poor seasonal performance.**<sup>30</sup>

In the **DRC**, food insecurity has escalated dramatically, primarily as a result of conflict and internal violence, with the number of severely food insecure people rising from 5.9 million in November 2016 to 7.7 million by December 2017. Some 6.2 million people are in Crisis (IPC Phase 3) and 1.5 million people in Emergency (IPC Phase 4). The return of close to 700,000 IDPs to Central Kasai in the last three months of 2017 has exacerbated the already precarious situation. With poor harvests and atypically low production levels in the Kasai region for the last two growing seasons, households could remain in the Crisis (IPC Phase 3) stage of food insecurity.

In **Burundi**, 2.6 million people, representing 27 per cent of the population, were severely food insecure through the end of 2017, according to the Integrated Phase Classification (IPC) update released in August 2017. Food insecurity was driven by declining food stocks during the September to December lean season, elevated staple food prices and limited income-earning opportunities. High food insecurity has been reported in Congo Ridge Millet (50 per cent of the population), Bugesera (54 per cent) and Eastern Lowlands (48 per cent),<sup>31</sup> while a significant deterioration in food security has been observed in the Northern Lowlands/Bugeresera and Eastern Lowlands as a result of cross-border seasonal labour movements and trade limitations, the recurrence of climatic shocks/drought in Bukeresera, and a high number of returnees and IDPs in Makamba. Meanwhile, an improvement in food security has been recorded in the southern, central and western parts of the country due to improved rain, interventions in the central region and the rehabilitation of marshlands. An improvement in food security in the coming months is expected following season A harvests over December 2017 and January 2018.

In **Uganda**, about 440,800 people—1 per cent of the population—are facing Crisis (IPC Phase 3) food insecurity due to the lingering effects of two consecutive seasons of reduced agricultural outputs in 2016, prolonged dry-spells during growing season, low agricultural production, reduced purchasing power due to rising food prices, reduced water access, crop and livestock diseases, and influx of refugees that constrain access to food and services. This population is concentrated in Karamoja (10 per cent), Teso (3 per cent), Acholi (8 per cent) and West Nile (5 per cent) regions.<sup>32</sup> It is expected that most poor households will remain Stressed (IPC Phase 2) through to May 2018. The lean season is expected to begin in March 2018, with households in Rhupa, Nadunget and Tapac sub-counties in Moroto district in

### FOOD INSECURITY IN THE GREAT LAKES

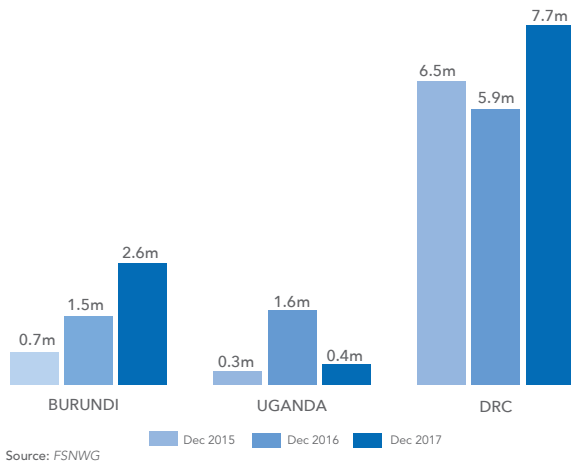




the Karamoja region of north-eastern Uganda likely to be in Crisis (IPC Phase 3).

In **Tanzania**, weather extremes, including drought and floods, in Zanzibar for two consecutive cropping seasons in 2016 and 2017 have left some 120,000 people severely food insecure.<sup>33</sup>

### FOOD INSECURITY TREND



### High levels of malnutrition accompany the food insecurity crisis in the Great Lakes.

In the **DRC** alone, an estimated 2.2 million children are suffering from severe acute malnutrition (SAM), some 12 per cent of the global caseload.<sup>34</sup> In **Burundi**, 43,444 children under age 5 with SAM (22,524 girls and 20,920 boys) were admitted and treated in health facilities in 2017 and a recent assessment found that half of the provinces had a GAM prevalence between 5 and 7.4 per cent and were classified as Alert through May 2018. In **Uganda**, 31,000 children are targeted for malnutrition, including 1,500 for SAM.

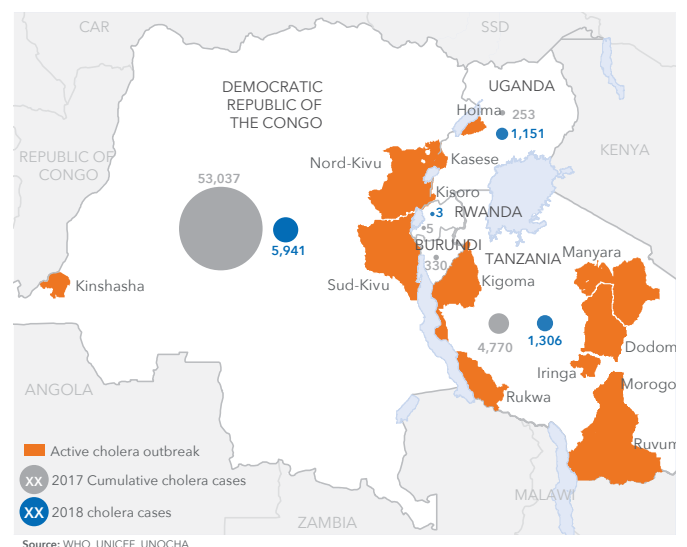
## DISEASE OUTBREAKS

The Great Lakes region is battling simultaneous outbreaks of communicable diseases including cholera, measles and a high rate of malaria infection. Health trends indicate a likely deterioration in the first half of 2018 due to the high disease burden, lack of access to health facilities and supplies, and insecurity.

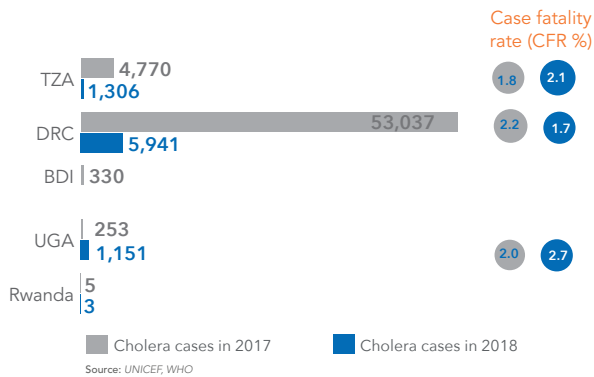
**Cholera outbreaks have been declared in Burundi, the DRC, Tanzania and Uganda.** The **DRC** is facing its worse cholera epidemic in the past 15 years with over 53,000 cases and more than 1,100 deaths reported in 2017; almost double the number of cases reported in 2016. In January and February 2018, nearly 6,000 cases were reported.<sup>35</sup> Challenges to prevention and response include breakdown of water supply systems,

cross-border movements between Burundi and the DRC, low sanitation coverage and insufficient access to safe water. While the number of cases continues to decline, cholera outbreaks and other water-borne diseases are expected to continue in 2018. In **Burundi**, 330 cholera cases were reported in six health districts in 2017, with zero deaths.<sup>36</sup> These multiple small outbreaks had been contained by the beginning of 2018, but are the consequence of an increasing shortage of safe water since the beginning of the political crisis in 2015 and the budget reduction in this sector. In **Uganda**, a cholera outbreak was reported in Bwera in Kasese district, which borders the DRC, in 2017. Since 25 September 2017, 225 suspected cases have been reported and four people died (case fatality rate (CFR) 1.8 per cent). A new outbreak of cholera started on 12 February 2018 in Kyangwali refugee settlement, located in Hoima district in the western part of the country. As of 27 February 2018, about 1,150 suspected cholera cases, including 31 deaths (CFR 2.7 per cent) were reported. The affected population are mostly newly arrived refugees and a few members of the host community. Fluid population movement across the DRC-Uganda border presents a heightened risk of cholera spread among populations. Meanwhile, in **Tanzania**, there was a resurgence of cholera in Dar es Salaam in November 2017 after 20 weeks of zero reporting, while the Ruvuma region has been affected for the first time since the beginning of the outbreak. Since January 2017, nearly 6,000 cholera cases and 111 deaths (CFR 2 per cent) have been reported, including 1,300 cases and 27 deaths in January and February 2018 alone.<sup>37</sup> Cholera remains a cross-border threat, with two suspected cases reported in Uige district of Angola (bold) on 21 December 2018, both of whom had a history of travel to Kimpangu in the DRC.

### CHOLERA OUTBREAKS



## CHOLERA CASES AND DEATHS (2017-2018)



### Measles cases reported have declined in early 2018, but outbreaks remain active in the DRC and Uganda.

Over 43,000 cases of measles were reported in the **DRC** in 2017. In 2018 to date, 2,830 cases including 16 deaths had been reported as at 23 February.<sup>38</sup> However, the trend of the outbreak was decreasing as of the third week of January, with most of the suspected cases reported from South Kivu province. In **Uganda**, a measles outbreak affected two urban districts in 2017: Kampala (310 cases) and Wakiso (313 cases).

### Malaria remains endemic in Burundi and the DRC.

In 2017, about 7 million cases and over 3,000 deaths were reported in **Burundi**. The malaria outbreak was partly contained in 2017 following the distribution of mosquito nets to more than 2.2 million households. To date in 2018, about 833,500 cases have been reported. In the **DRC**, 2.9 million malaria cases and

3,200 deaths have been reported in January and February 2018.

The Great Lakes region also faces outbreaks of rare and deadly communicable diseases, including **Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever, Rift Valley Fever and vaccine-derived polio**. On 1 February 2018, the **Uganda** Virus Research Institute confirmed a positive case of Crimean-Congo Haemorrhagic Fever (CCHF) and an outbreak of Rift Valley Fever (RVF) in cattle corridor districts. The diseases have claimed at least five lives. Uganda first reported an outbreak of the two diseases in August 2017. While animals can be vaccinated against RVF to prevent spreading the infection, there is no vaccine against CCHF. The **DRC**, **Uganda** and **South Sudan** are considered most at risk for haemorrhagic fever epidemics. In the **DRC**, the Ministry of Health declared a public health emergency regarding 21 cases of vaccine-derived polio virus type 2 on 13 February 2018. Three provinces had been affected as of beginning of March: Haut-Lo-mami (8 cases), Maniema (2 cases) and Tanganyika (11 cases).

**Kenya, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia** have generalized HIV epidemics, while **Burundi and the DRC** have pockets of higher prevalence, including around key border areas. Conflict as well as economic and climate shocks are associated with increased risky behaviour that fuels HIV transmission. Adolescent girls and young women are at particular risk. There is also risk of increased treatment attrition among people living with HIV who are on antiretroviral therapy.



Women and children carry water from a source built by UNICEF in Tshinyama, a village near Miabi, in Kasai Oriental, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ©UNICEF/ Gwenn Dubourthoumieu

## PART IV.

# CONSTRAINTS TO RESPONSE

## HUMANITARIAN ACCESS

While humanitarian access in refugee-hosting countries in the Great Lakes remains predominantly safe and secure, access in the DRC has been significantly impacted by the escalation in the conflict and violence.

During 2017, NGOs operating in the DRC were victims of 157 access related incidents, mostly robberies (62.4 per cent), that led to four casualties of humanitarian workers.<sup>39</sup> From June to November 2017, OCHA registered at least 271 security-related incidents in 170 locations, especially related to clashes between non-state armed actors and the national army. Some 54 per cent of the reported incidents occurred in the Kivu provinces. Violence indirectly impacted the access of the population to humanitarian assistance, as well the ability of humanitarian actors to reach the beneficiaries.<sup>40</sup> As a result, over 1 million people targeted by assistance had limited access to aid, and the number of people in need of assistance in non-accessible areas is expected to be higher.

As insecurity continues to spread in the country, humanitarian access is expected to remain limited in the first half of 2018. Limited logistical infrastructure and administrative impediments add additional challenges to the delivery of humanitarian assistance.

## HUMANITARIAN FUNDING

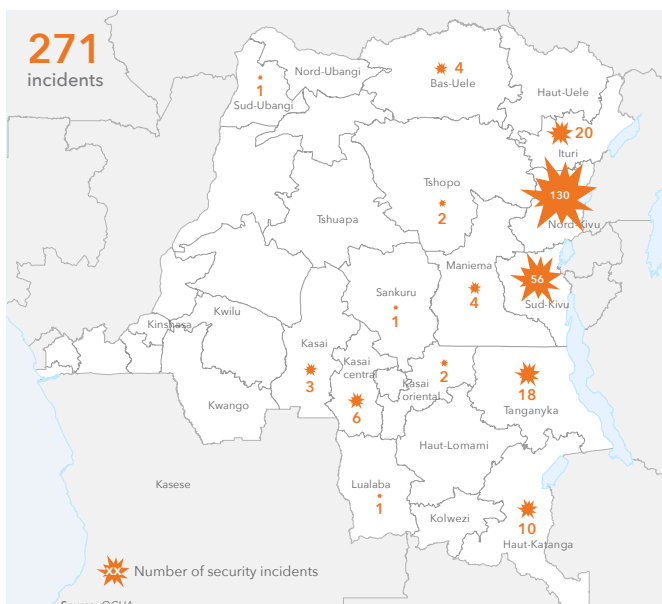
Humanitarian responses in the Great Lakes region were underfunded in 2017, and there is a risk of the same phenomenon in 2018.

Despite the dramatic increase in humanitarian needs, the DRC 2017 Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) for US\$ 813 million was just 57 per cent funded, while the Burundi HRP, which asked for \$73.7 million, was 63 per cent funded. The South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) was only 33 per cent funded while the Burundi RRRP only attracted 20 per cent funding against the \$429 million target.

Funding shortfalls in 2017 resulted in reductions in the size of food ration provided, particularly to refugees across the region.

In the DRC, despite significant efforts to scale up the humanitarian response, limited funding forced humanitarian partners to halve food rations in the Kasais in November 2017.<sup>41</sup> In Tanzania, in September and October, refugees were provided with a food ration of 62 per cent of required daily caloric needs. On 11 January 2018, WFP and UNHCR appealed to donors for funds to avert an impending 25 per cent reduction on food or cash assistance for more than 100,000 refugees in Rwanda. Some \$11 million is needed to restore full support for the first half of 2018. Funding shortages forced WFP to reduce rations to 90 per cent in November and December 2017, and a further reduction to 75 per cent in January 2018. In February 2018, the food ration cuts triggered demonstrations of Congolese refugees from Kiziba refugee camp in western Rwanda. The police reportedly used tear-gas and fired shots to disperse the protesters which led to the tragic death of 11 refugees (eight in Karongi town and three in Kiziba camp) and the injury of many others.<sup>42</sup>

### ACCESS/SECURITY INCIDENTS IN DRC (JUN-NOV 2017)



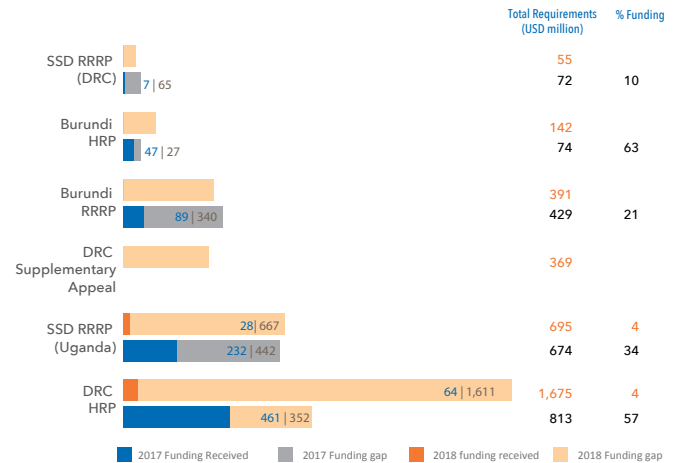


In 2018, humanitarian funding requirements are growing as a result of rapidly rising needs, with the DRC appeal more than doubling from \$813 million in 2017 to \$1.7 billion in 2018. Yet, humanitarian operations remain grossly underfunded and the needs far outstrip the humanitarian response.

Although there is donor interest in the DRC crisis, fatigue and political uncertainty have impacted investment in the response, with some donors withdrawing or limiting bilateral aid programmes. Out of the \$1.7 billion required for the DRC HRP, just \$71.7 million has been received to date. A RRRP for the DRC is under development to respond to the increasing number of Congolese refugees. The Burundi 2018 HRP requires \$141.8 million to respond to humanitarian needs in the country, while the 2018 Burundi RRRP requests \$391 million to assist refugees in the region and the Burundi United Nations Country Team plan for assistance to returnees and IDPs requires \$16 million for humanitarian response and \$15.4 million for reintegration. The South Sudan RRRP requests \$695 million to assist 1.38 million South Sudanese refugees in Uganda and \$55 million to

assist 120,000 South Sudanese refugees in the DRC by the end of 2018.

RESPONSE PLANS FUNDING STATUS



Source: Financial Tracking Service - OCHA (<https://fts.unocha.org/>), (as of 22 Feb 2018)



Burundi refugee children study in groups under trees at Furaha Primary School in Nduta refugee camp in western Tanzania, as the school has no classrooms, no text books or notebooks. © UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin



## END NOTES

1. Great Lakes region: Burundi, DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. Neighbouring countries: Angola, Congo, CAR, Kenya, South Sudan and Zambia.
2. International Crisis Group (2017) *Time for Concerted Action in DR Congo*. Available online at: <https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/democratic-republic-congo/257-time-concerted-action-dr-congo>
3. OHCHR (2018) *Press briefing note on DRC and Ethiopia*, 23 January 2018. Available online at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/press-briefing-note-drc-and-ethiopia-23-january-2018>
4. Voice of America (2018) *DRC: Kabila will name successor candidate by July*, 1 February 2018. Available online at: <https://www.voanews.com/a/drc-spokesperson-says-kabila-will-name-a-successor-candidate-by-july/4234439.html>
5. UN, Secretary-General report: <https://reliefweb.int/report/burundi/report-secretary-general-situation-burundi-s201889>
6. Reuters (2017) *Burundi opposition platform boycotts new round of peace talks in Tanzania*. Available online at: <https://af.reuters.com/article/topNews/idAFKBN1DS0Y5-OZATP>
7. ICC (2017) *Press Release: ICC judges authorise opening of investigation regarding Burundi situation*, 9 November 2017. Available online at: <https://www.icc-cpi.int/pages/item.aspx?name=pr1342>
8. UNHCR (2018) *South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2E6Ooal>
9. FAO (2017) *Crop Prospect and Food Situation, Quarterly Global Report, December 2017*. Available online at <http://bit.ly/2iC4MUc>
10. [https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-changes-the-Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congos-outlook-to-PR\\_375934](https://www.moodys.com/research/Moodys-changes-the-Democratic-Republic-of-the-Congos-outlook-to-PR_375934)
11. International Monetary Fund (2017) *Regional Economic Outlook, Sub-Saharan Africa*. Available at: <http://www.imf.org/en/Publications/REO/SSA/Issues/2017/10/19/sreo1017>
12. Famine Early Warning System Network (2018), Burundi Message Update: <http://bit.ly/2FJKntl>
13. World Bank (2018) *Uganda: Economic Overview*. Available online at: <http://www.worldbank.org/en/country/uganda/overview>
14. Uganda Bureau of Statistics report on Uganda National Household Survey 2016/17 (slides 117 and 118): [http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/pdf%20documents/2017\\_UNHS\\_26092017-Final\\_Presentation.pdf](http://www.ubos.org/onlinefiles/uploads/ubos/pdf%20documents/2017_UNHS_26092017-Final_Presentation.pdf)
15. World Bank (2018) *Global Economic Prospects, Broad-Based Upturn, but for How Long?*, page 24. Available at: <https://openknowledge.worldbank.org/handle/10986/28932>
16. FAO (2017), *Crop Prospect and Food Situation, Quarterly Global Report, December 2017*. Available online at <http://bit.ly/2iC4MUc>
17. FAO (2018) GIEWS Country Brief: The Congo, dated 22 January 2018. Available online at: [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COG\\_12.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/COG_12.pdf)
18. FEWSNET (2018) *Global Weather Hazards Summary: January 26 - February 1*: Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2DkvoRs>
19. FEWSNET (2017) *Burundi: Remote Monitoring Report (December 2017)*. Available online at: <http://www.fews.net/east-africa/burundi/remote-monitoring-report/december-2017>
20. UNHCR (2018) *DRC Congo violence sees surge in refugees fleeing eastwards*. Available at: <http://www.unhcr.org/5a7037ab4.html>
21. OCHA (2018) Displacement snapshot: <https://reliefweb.int/report/democratic-republic-congo/r-publique-d-mocratique-du-congo-personnes-d-plac-es-internes-et-13>
22. CARE (2018) *Refugee influx into Uganda worrying, warns CARE International* (14 February 2018). Available online at: <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/refugee-influx-uganda-worrying-warns-care-international>
23. UNICEF (2018) *Democratic Republic of the Congo: violence in Tanganyika and South Kivu fuels one of the world's worst displacement crises for children* (25 January 2018). Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2EaaG8Q>
24. UNHCR (2018) *Inter-agency emergency update on the DRC situation #18*
25. IOM Burundi, Displacement Tracking Matrix, January 2018: <http://www.globaldtm.info/burundi-displacement-dashboard-january-2018/>
26. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations (DG ECHO) Daily Flash, *Tanzania - Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework withdrawal* 24 January 2018: <https://reliefweb.int/report/united-republic-tanzania/tanzania-comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-withdrawal-eas-dg>
27. UNHCR (2018) Rwanda Operational Update, 1 January 2018: <http://www.unhcr.org/rw/wp-content/uploads/sites/4/2018/01/UNHCR-Rwanda-Monthly-Factsheet-December-2017.pdf>
28. UNHCR (2018) *South Sudan Regional Refugee Response Plan*.
29. UNHCR (2018), Press Release on Uganda: <http://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2018/2/5a8c1ae34/unhurt-statement-regarding-unverified-reports-being-circulated-by-the-media.html>
30. FSNWG (2017) *Update on Food / Nutrition Security Situation in the Great Horn of Africa (GHA), December 2017 and Prospects to January 2018*
31. FSMS, Nov-Dec 2017
32. IPC, Uganda: Acute Food Insecurity Situation for November 2017 - February 2018: <https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/uganda-acute-food-insecurity-situation-november-2017-february-2018>
33. IPC, Zanzibar Tanzania: Acute Food Insecurity Situation: July - September 2017. Available at: <http://bit.ly/2p4jCX1>
34. UNICEF (2018) *Humanitarian Action for Children: Democratic Republic of the Congo*. Available online at: <https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/2018-HAC-Democratic-Republic-of-Congo.pdf>
35. WHO, Weekly Bulletin on Outbreaks and other Emergencies (2 March 2018). Available at: <http://apps.who.int/iris/bitstream/10665/260412/3/OEW9-24022032018.pdf>
36. UNICEF Bulletin (15 December 2017). Available at: <http://bit.ly/2H77MCO>
37. WHO, Ibid.
38. WHO, Ibid.
39. INSO country profile, available at: [http://www.ngosafety.org/country/democratic\\_republic\\_of\\_the\\_congo](http://www.ngosafety.org/country/democratic_republic_of_the_congo)
40. OCHA (2017), *DRC Security-Related Humanitarian Access Overview (June-September 2017)*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2xQGMXm>. And OCHA8, *DRC Security-Related Humanitarian Access Overview (September-December 2017)*. Available online at: <http://bit.ly/2p2rIPQ>
41. WFP (2018), Press release on DRC: <https://www.wfp.org/news/news-release/wfp-broadens-operation-stem-severe-hunger-democratic-republic-congos-kasai-region>
42. UNCHR (2018), Press release on Rwanda: <http://www.unhcr.org/rw/13150-unhcr-shocked-refugee-deaths-rwanda.html>



 <http://www.unocha.org/southern-eastern-africa>

 <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/en/operations/southern-eastern-africa>

 @UNOCHA\_ROSEA