

NRC's operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Humanitarian overview

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DR Congo) faces a dire humanitarian situation marked by large-scale displacement and a pervasive gender-based violence (GBV) crisis. The country is grappling with long-standing conflicts, political instability and economic challenges.

With 6.9 million people forced to flee their homes, DR Congo hosts the second largest number of internally displaced people (IDP) in the world. This exacerbates the strain on already fragile infrastructures, hindering access to essential services such as healthcare, education and clean water. It also intensifies the risk of malnutrition and disease outbreaks.

There is an alarming prevalence of gender-based violence. Women and girls in particular are vulnerable to sexual violence, exploitation and abuse. The breakdown of social structures, coupled with the presence of armed groups, creates an environment where GBV thrives. The consequences extend beyond immediate physical harm, contributing to a cycle of trauma and long-term psychological distress.

Humanitarian organisations, working in challenging conditions, strive to provide assistance and address the underlying causes of displacement. Efforts are

focused on delivering emergency relief, shelter and medical care while implementing programmes to empower women and girls, combat GBV, and promote community resilience.

NRC's operation

In 2023, NRC assisted 264,636 individuals in DR Congo. Our main objective is to provide assistance and protection, through integrated programming, to populations during all phases of displacement. NRC provides a multisector response to internally displaced people, returnees and host communities. NRC's community-based approach is designed to reduce community tensions, work with communities to find alternatives to violent conflict resolution and enhance resilience.

NRC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Established	2001
International staff	17
National staff	273



NRC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Country office

Goma

Areas of operation

Ituri, North Kivu, Tanganyika



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Education

We provide quality education in safe and protected environments. Our education activities include:

- accelerated learning opportunities to allow out-of-school children to catch up with their peers and reintegrate into the formal school system
- protecting children and youth both physically and psychologically to create a sense of normality and routine
- training teachers, education authorities and other education stakeholders on psychosocial support, peace education, class management, prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse, and good governance in school management
- providing youth with an education to enhance their livelihood skills and guide them towards a profession
- advocacy for the Safe Schools Declaration

Information, counselling and legal assistance (ICLA)

We support people affected by displacement and enable them to exercise their housing, land and property rights, as well as gain access to civil documentation. Our teams:

- provide information, counselling, training and legal assistance services on how to access and claim land and property rights
- facilitate access to land and land tenure for internally displaced people throughout all phases of displacement and promote and advocate for women's and internally displaced people's housing, land and property rights
- increase capacity of other humanitarian actors to engage in housing, land and property issues
- promote and contribute to the land rights reform
- protect internally displaced people from forced evictions through monitoring and reporting, prevention initiatives, and improved government leadership on eviction prevention
- facilitate access to birth and marriage certificates, and other legal identity documentation
- enhance the capacity of local actors in alternative conflict-dispute resolution through material and technical support to local institutions and authorities (state and customary)

Shelter and settlements

Our shelter teams:

- contribute to the construction and rehabilitation of destroyed houses by providing in-kind materials, cash assistance and technical expertise to families who are displaced, those who return home, and vulnerable host communities
- support those in protracted displacement with access to land and housing
- contribute to settlement planning in line with public health measures by negotiating additional land with our ICLA team and constructing new shelters in line with SPHERE and/or shelter cluster standards
- collaborate with our ICLA team to ensure that every household's property rights are respected and upheld
- build and rehabilitate classrooms for displaced children
- build and rehabilitate community infrastructure, including warehousing and storage

Water, sanitation and hygiene promotion (WASH)

Our WASH teams:

- provide safe drinking water to people affected by displacement through 1) water trucking in urban emergency situations; 2) water spring catchment in rural areas with regard to the hydrological context; 3) water supply network to enable large groups of people to have access to water; and 4) rehabilitation of damaged and weak boreholes
- provide water harvesting and build water points in schools
- distribute water storage facilities and provide regular water quality testing
- provide appropriate sanitation and handwashing facilities through 1) the construction/rehabilitation of family/communal latrines and showers for internally displaced people, returnees

- and host communities; 2) the construction/rehabilitation of institutional latrines in schools
- provide appropriate hygiene items and cleaning materials for households and schools
- distribute appropriate menstrual hygiene management items for women and girls both in communities and schools
- spread knowledge about safe hygiene practices to people affected by displacement, both in communities and schools
- provide cash assistance and technical expertise to families and school committees for WASH construction
- provide faecal sludge management through the emptying of sewage sludge in the formal displacement sites

Protection from violence

The Humanitarian Mediation and Protection from Violence teams have addressed inter- and intra-community conflicts in Tanganyika and Ituri provinces. The programme contributes to improve the protection of civilians through prevention and mitigation of episodes of violence, facilitation of safe voluntary returns, improvement in accessing basic services, as well as ensuring respect of basic human rights in conflict-affected areas. The activities include:

- undertaking conflict-sensitive, gender and protection analyses
- increasing capacities of women, men and youth in conflict management and conflict resolution through participatory community-based workshops
- supporting inclusive, participatory and empowering dialogue processes and humanitarian mediation processes
- increasing capacities of national and international actors in conflict-sensitive analysis and humanitarian mediation as tools for enhanced protection of civilians in conflict areas
- improve civilian safety, security, and

understanding between the parties to the mediation in the targeted areas, and contribute to preventing and mitigating conflict between communities

- support communities in implementing community projects as a result of successful humanitarian mediation processes. These projects empower the communities and contribute to social cohesion, change and durable solutions

Emergency response

NRC is a key frontline responder in eastern DR Congo. We respond to displacement with multi-purpose cash assistance (MPCA) primarily through the SAFER consortium. We cater to other needs in the first phase of an emergency by providing emergency shelter,

water and sanitation, and essential household and hygiene items. We also support the identification of land for establishment of shelters, and support the immediate return of children to safe classrooms

Supporting returns and durable solutions

The context in DR Congo is complex, volatile and multi-faceted. Some (though few) areas of the country have potential for more durable outcomes. NRC continues to support the integration and return of internally displaced people and intends to support with individual and community-based packages to make a long-lasting impact in a stable environment. Such situations are suitable for all our core competencies: Shelter, WASH, ICLA, Education, and Protection from Violence.

NRC in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is grateful for the generous support from our donors:

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- The Swedish Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA)
- Norwegian Ministry of Foreign Affairs (NMFA)
- Embassy of Sweden in DR Congo
- United States Bureau for Humanitarian Affairs (BHA)
- USAID's Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA)
- UK's Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Office via the SAFER consortium
- Centre de crise et de soutien (CDCS) - French MFA
- Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (SDC)