



PRESS RELEASE

"OCHA reinforces its presence in Katanga Province, on the verge of a silent humanitarian crisis"

Kinshasa, 4 May - The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in Democratic Republic of Congo has opened a Field Coordination Unit, also known as an antenna, in the locality of Mitwaba, in the center of Katanga, a province in the throws of a silent humanitarian crisis.



In Katanga, women and children are the first victims of the silent humanitarian crisis - Photo: OCHA-DRC

hostages of armed men or groups. This is compounded by dysfunctional state services, further delaying a return to stability in the province. The recent upsurge of insecurity has led, over the last few months, to an increase in population displacement, serious human rights violations, and other abuses on the civilian population. Rapes, human exploitations, kidnappings are common practices in Katanga.

The situation is precarious in the province. The needs in food and protection, in particular of women against sexual violence, constitute major challenges of the humanitarian community. Recently, humanitarian interventions were undertaken and provided some relief to the suffering population. However the humanitarian community calls for other partners, with sufficient capacity, to deploy in Katanga to save lives. Only three non-governmental organizations are currently operational on the ground.

Katanga, the province where the mining industry has considerably flourished, offers an outstanding contrast between corporate revenues and impact on local communities. OCHA notes that the impact on the population is virtually non-existent, and calls on companies to exercise more corporate social responsibility so to contribute to the well-being of the communities who need to live in dignity.

OCHA calls on the government of DRC to fulfill its responsibility towards the security and protection of civilians, including IDPs. OCHA also appeals to donors to vigorously support the humanitarian action in DRC outlined in the 2006 Action Plan which aims to provide assistance to more than 30 million vulnerable people throughout the country

In addition, OCHA inaugurated on 17 April the first "House of Humanitarians" in the town of Dubie, in Katanga. The "House" offers a safe and reliable shelter to humanitarian actors operating in the area during short stays. OCHA also plans to open another coordination antenna in Moba.

Coordination Antennas are funded by the Department for International Development (DFID) of the United Kingdom and by the Swedish International Development Agency (SIDA). OCHA has 11 offices and four coordination antennas throughout the country.

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For more information on the humanitarian crisis in RDC, www.rdc-humanitaire.net