

- **Deployment of Ugandan militaries in Dungu and Isiro since 14/15 December**
- **Joint military operations, aerial strikes on LRA positions**
- **13 humanitarian organizations present in Dungu**
- **Food distribution in Dungu continuing since 18 December**

Security/Military Context

On 14 December, DRC, Uganda and Sudan launched joint military operations against positions of the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) in the district of Haut-Uélé. The deployment of Ugandan UPDF troops via air started on 14 December to Dungu and on 15 December to Isiro. The strength of these deployments is foreseen to total 1,500 troops.

- The operations against LRA started with **aerial bombardments of LRA positions by the Ugandan army** in Bawezi (camp Kiswahili) in Garamba Park, and continued in Bitima, Bayote, Duru, Pilipili and Suke, about 80 to 100 km north of Dungu town.
- The air lift of the logistics cluster for the transportation of food and NFI from Entebbe to Dungu has been suspended since 15 December due to the aerial strikes.
- The security situation in Dungu town and the southern part of Dungu, where most of the IDPs are congregated, remains calm for the moment.

Advocacy

The civil society of Dungu expressed dissenting views on the military offensive: while the military offensive if successful could bring about a definitive solution to the LRA question, it at the same time puts the civil society at risk, notably through the aerial bombardments.

- Humanitarian organizations are deeply concerned **about civilians that have been abducted by the LRA and risk to be caught in the crossfire during the attacks.**
- **LRA combatants could retaliate against the civilian population** that is still present in areas of LRA camps in the north of Dungu.
- The civil society requested OCHA to advocate for the adoption of measures to minimize collateral damage.

Protection

- **FARDC picked up at least six children that had been abducted by the LRA** and deployed in Kiliwa (65 km north of Dungu). The children, four boys and two girls, had been abducted during the September attacks in Dungu territory. According to the spokesperson of the UPDF, the children fled during the aerial bombardment of the Kiswahili camp in Garamba Park, on Sunday, 14 December. One of the girls, 11 years old, had been forced to marry an LRA fighter. And the other girl, 17 years old, is currently pregnant. UNHCR has taken over these cases and intends to refer them to COOPI for medical and psycho-social care.

IDPs

- The series of armed attacks of LRA elements on villages in Dungu territory (Haut-Uele district) has provoked numerous population displacements since 17 September. The majority of IDPs are in Dungu and Niangara territories.
- The estimated number of IDPs in Dungu and its environment is assessed at 20,000 to 30,000 persons. According to an assessment of Caritas-Dungu of end November, the number of IDPs in the 30 km perimeter around Dungu could exceed 10,000 families. In addition to that Caritas reported 383 displaced families in Isiro and 571 displaced families in Niangara. For the moment, no reliable estimations for the number of displaced persons in Bangadi and Ngilima are available.

Access

- The airlift between Entebbe and Dungu has been temporarily suspended due to increased air traffic caused by the deployment of the Ugandan troops. Furthermore the aircraft chartered by the Logistic Cluster to transport humanitarian assistance has been confiscated by the Ugandan army to transport military equipment.
- The date for the resumption of the airlift has not been confirmed yet. Out of the 16 flight rotations initially scheduled for the first phase of the airlift, 5 are still outstanding. OCHA requested a meeting for 20 December with MONUC AirOps/Movcon in Bunia to determine the date for the resumption of the humanitarian airlift.
- There is no access problem for the time being to the Logistics Cluster Warehouse situated at the MONUC base in the airport.

Humanitarian response

- Thirteen humanitarian organizations are present in Dungu. ADSSE, Caritas-Dungu and WFP are covering the food sector, Caritas-Dungu, UNHCR, UNICEF/Solidarités-RRM, MSF-Switzerland carry out NFI distributions, MEDAIR and MSF-Switzerland are active in the Health Sector, COOPI provides Nutrition, CESVI and LWF undertake WASH interventions, Save the Children and UNHCR provide protection and OCHA coordinates the response.
- Before the suspension of the airlift, which is financed by the Rapid Response Mechanism, 11 humanitarian flights were organized from Entebbe to Dungu. A total of 42 tons of food, 1,000 NFI kits and 5,000L of fuel were airlifted.
- On December 18, WFP, through his local partner ADSSE, began the distribution of 20 tons of food for 1,877 displaced families (8,500 persons), in the town of Dungu. Each household received a one week ration consisting of 10.5 kg of maize meal, 2.5 kg of peas, 700 grams of oil and 150 grams of salt. The second phase of the distributions, which should be carried out by Caritas-Dungu on December 20, will take place on the southern axis of Dungu and will target displaced families who have lost their harvests as well as families hosting at least 15 people.
- During the meeting of the Core Group of Haut-Uele (the crisis structure established within the framework of the Contingency Plan for the Haut-Uele) on 15 December, it was decided that the distribution of food will be made before the NFI distribution in order to prevent that the latter are sold or exchanged for food.

For further information please refer to : <http://www.rdc-humanitaire.net>

Contacts:

- Jean-Charles Dupin, Head of Office, OCHA Bunia, dupin@un.org, Tél.: +243 998 604 325
- Ivo Brandau, Chargé d'information OCHA-RDC, brandau@un.org, Tél. : + 243 815 142 956
- Noel Tsekouras, Desk Officer OCHA New York, tsekouras@un.org, Tél.: + 1 917 367 93 67