

SITUATION UPDATE



Jules Bahizire, International Medical Corps Community Mobilization Officer, hands medicine to Uzima, an IDP who fled the clashes between M23 rebels and the FARDC.

On January 19, the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) requested support in responding to the increasing needs of internally displaced persons (IDPs) who were fleeing violent clashes between M23 rebels and the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (FARDC). At the time, nearly 70,000 IDPs had sought shelter across five IDP camps in the Kirotshe Health Zone, located in North Kivu province. In February, the fighting intensified and M23 rebels began a siege-like offensive around Goma, the capital of North Kivu.

This offensive included M23 roadblocks, which prevent all traffic along the Goma-Sake-Minova axis, depriving Goma and Sake of most food from nearby Bweremana, Minova and other agriculture feeder roads. The ongoing M23 offensive also causes massive displacement among populations in the surrounding villages and the neighboring province of South Kivu. Most IDPs relocate to Sake and Goma in North Kivu and Minova in South Kivu. With the growing numbers of IDPs, camps and host families are running low on food and medicine. Prices of essential goods and food have risen dramatically as access and supply have decreased.

Combatants have been using heavy weapons in urban areas, leading to high numbers of civilian casualties. Most patients seeking healthcare services at IDP sites are civilians who are suffering from gunshots and other wounds related to the violence. With no end to the fighting in sight, the need for humanitarian support remains urgent.

International Medical Corps Response

In response to the emergency, International Medical Corps swiftly deployed mobile medical units (MMUs) to Kirotshe in North Kivu and to Minova in South Kivu, providing free access to primary and secondary healthcare services for IDPs and members of host communities. International Medical Corps has so far treated more than 4,000 patients and deployed six MMUs.

Our teams have treated a high number of wounds from the fighting, as well as other common diseases (including malaria, acute respiratory infections, diarrhea and sexually transmitted diseases). At one site, staff reported that nearly half of the cases they referred to nearby hospitals for secondary care were fractures or gunshots related to the conflict. Staff also have reported treating a high number of sexually transmitted infections (STIs), indicating widespread sexual violence in and around the IDP camps, where there is a disproportionate number of women. We will continue to deploy MMUs through June and plan to further expand North Kivu operations in July.

FAST FACTS

- Violent clashes have displaced more than 400,000 people in North Kivu since January 2024.
- Among the displaced, more than 95,000—more than half of them children—have sought shelter and safety in Minova.

OUR FOOTPRINT

- International Medical Corps has worked in the DRC since 1999, providing primary and secondary healthcare, capacity-building, gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and treatment, nutrition support, social and behavioral change, food security programs, mental health and psychosocial support (MHPSS), and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services.

OUR RESPONSE

- International Medical Corps staff, working from six mobile medical units (MMUs), have treated nearly 4,000 people. We will continue to deploy MMUs at the sites where the need is greatest.
- We plan to expand our operations in North Kivu in July.



Georgette, who fled with her child to escape the fighting in the Masisi territory, receives medication at the International Medical Corps mobile clinic at the Matendo site.