



WFP

Democratic Republic of Congo COVID-19 Emergency Situation Report

30 April 2020

In numbers

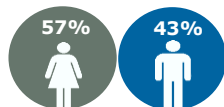
15.6 million food insecure people and **3.4 million** children acutely malnourished

6.9 million reached in 2019

7.6 million people targeted in 2020

1.3 million people reached in the first quarter of 2020

People assisted Emergency Response
March: 948,000



People assisted Ebola Response
Since August 2018: 920,000

Situation Update

- The first case of COVID-19 was detected in DRC on 10 March. As of end-April, 490 confirmed cases of COVID-19 have been reported, and 30 deaths. Six provinces are affected: Kinshasa; North Kivu; South Kivu; Haut Katanga, Ituri; and Kwilu, with the majority of cases reported in Kinshasa. The death rate is estimated at 7 percent, with an estimated 67 percent of contacts followed.
- On 18 March, President Felix Tshisekedi introduced measures to reduce the spread of the virus, including the closure of all schools and universities nation-wide, the banning of all gatherings of more than 20 people, and the closure of public spaces, including churches, bars, and restaurants. On 24 March, the President declared a nationwide state of emergency, imposing further restrictive measures, including no public passenger transit between Kinshasa and other provinces in the country.
- On 2 April, the Governor of Kinshasa, announced the confinement of the Gombe commune in Kinshasa for a period of 14 days from 6 April. This has been followed by a period of gradual

Highlights

- The first case of COVID-19 was detected in DRC on 10 March. As of end-April, 490 confirmed cases of COVID-19 and 30 deaths have been reported in six provinces.
- The advent of COVID-19 has resulted in border closures and trade and lockdown restrictions. These are likely to lead to increased unemployment and loss of incomes and livelihoods for the Congolese people, increasing the risk of greater food insecurity.

deconfinement. Gombe is considered "the epicenter of the epidemic" in DRC.

- DRC is the world's second largest food crisis, and COVID-19 is further compounding the country's protracted humanitarian crisis. The advent of COVID-19 has resulted in border closures and trade and lockdown restrictions, likely to lead to increased unemployment and loss of incomes and livelihoods for the Congolese people. Coupled with the ongoing Ebola epidemic, the COVID-19 pandemic puts additional strain on DRC's stretched healthcare system. Financial support is required to enable WFP to sustain its food and nutrition assistance to food insecure people in DRC.

WFP Response



Food and Nutrition Assistance

Food assistance:

- WFP is conducting its emergency food distributions in collaboration with local authorities and cooperating partners, in accordance with standard operating procedures developed to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, through measures including physical distancing, hand washing and temperature checks. In April, WFP is providing food assistance covering two months, where possible, to limit beneficiary exposure at distribution sites. Operations are ongoing, however, the distribution rate is slower due to the

Photo: WFP/Tiopini Konate

Beneficiaries observing social distancing at a distribution site in Kasai province.

implementation of COVID-19 preventive measures.

- As a result of the outbreak, the Food Security Cluster has developed a response plan targeting an additional 2.6 million food insecure people with food assistance. WFP is targeting 945,000 of these people with nine months of food assistance. WFP will therefore increase its annual caseload by an additional 945,000 people, in addition to the 7.6 million people already targeted until the end of 2020. Beneficiaries will receive either in-kind or cash assistance, depending on factors including market conditions and the availability of food commodities. Where possible, WFP will also use its data collection and analysis capacity to support possible government interventions that might include food subsidies.
- WFP is supporting the government in developing an interim emergency programme to address the impact of the COVID-19 crisis on the country. WFP has proposed strategies to the government focusing on supporting DRC's macroeconomic stability, mitigation of the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic and support to affected populations. These strategies include: provision of emergency food assistance to the most vulnerable groups; investing in local economies by supporting agricultural smallholders; establishment of strategic food reserves in the country; promotion of school feeding activities; and establishment of a food security and nutrition early warning system.

Nutrition assistance:

- WFP contributed to the development of the National Guidance Manual on Nutrition and the COVID-19 pandemic in DRC under the leadership of PRONANUT and the Nutrition Cluster. Preventive measures have been put in place, including: limited use of the middle upper arm circumference (MUAC) as a tool to assess malnutrition; and the dissemination of key messages related to nutrition and COVID-19. This includes promoting the continuation of breastfeeding to boost the immune system of babies, practising good hygiene and promoting the use of protective gear, such as gloves and masks.
- **School feeding:** WFP's distribution of hot meals to pupils in schools in North Kivu, Tanganyika and Kasai Central was halted after government's decision to close schools to prevent the spread of COVID-19. To ensure continued assistance to school children, WFP is exploring how to provide school children with take home rations in upcoming months.

- **Resilience:** WFP is developing a contingency and mitigation plan with measures designed to reduce the spread of the virus to enable WFP and its partners to continue delivering assistance to its beneficiaries.



Supply Chain

- WFP will provide critical logistics support to humanitarian partners in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. This includes service provision, such as warehousing, customs clearance, transportation of cargo by air, land and sea, particularly in provinces where WFP has existing capacity. Open borders for goods are a precondition to these services. WFP is also increasing its prepositioning capacity to anticipate fluctuating commodity markets, border closures and unforeseen blocks along the supply chain in-country and abroad. In-country warehousing, transporter networks and the WFP fleet are being augmented and reinforced.

Clusters and Common Services



Food Security Cluster

- As a result of the outbreak, the Food Security Cluster has developed a response plan which targets an additional 2.6 million food insecure people with food assistance. WFP is targeting 945,000 of these people with nine months of food assistance.
- With WFP as co-leader of the Food Security Cluster, the Cluster has highlighted response activities including: (i) raising awareness among the beneficiary population on preventive measures; (ii) distribution of food, cash, agricultural inputs and other livelihood items; (iii) reinforcement of conservation and processing of agricultural products; and (iv) coordination with the Government to support the functioning of food production, supply chains and markets. The Cluster has also developed standard operating procedures on food distributions and livelihood related activities.



UN Humanitarian Air Service (UNHAS)

- The COVID-19 outbreak has led to widespread movement restrictions around the country. Considering the significant disruption of commercial passenger air transport and the suspension of MONUSCO flights, UNHAS remains the only air transport service currently available to the humanitarian community in DRC. UNHAS continues to operate cargo and passenger flights, subject to the restrictions imposed by provincial authorities, including the suspension of all passenger flights out of Kinshasa. UNHAS is seeking a special exemption from the government for this and restrictions in other

provinces. Strict COVID-19 preventive measures are in place to protect travellers, including requiring all passengers to wear masks and gloves, the distancing of passengers on flights and the frequent disinfection of aircrafts.

- UNHAS is supporting the government's COVID-19 response strategy through transporting COVID-19 samples between collection points and testing labs. A humanitarian corridor will be established through the international hub in Accra, Ghana, in order to facilitate movement of essential humanitarian staff and cargo.

Resourcing Update

- WFP requires USD 569 million in order to provide lifesaving food and nutrition assistance for 7.6 million people in 2020. Based on preliminary estimations, WFP requires an additional USD 87.9 million for its COVID-19 response strategy in DRC.
- **Food Assistance:** USD 74.1 million is needed to provide an additional 945,000 people with nine months of food assistance.
- **Assessments:** USD 300,000 is required to increase WFP's remote data collection capacity. Such data will be critical to supporting evidence-based programme and policy decisions to be made by government and humanitarian partners.
- **Activity costs:** An estimated USD 6.7 million is needed to implement COVID-19 mitigation measures, including social distancing, handwashing and temperature checks, during programme implementation.
- **Supply Chain:** USD 3.7 million is needed to increase WFP's capacity in existing and possibly new locations and to provide support to humanitarian partners in DRC.
- **UNHAS:** An additional USD 3 million is required to cover operational costs and possibly establish international flights to link the DRC with regional strategic hubs.

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- For further information, visit the WFP [DRC page](#)