Eastern DRC Situation Report: Displacement and Urgent Needs

Overview Context

The eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), primarily North and South Kivu, are engulfed in a multifaceted crisis marked by escalating violence, widespread displacement, and a severe humanitarian emergency. The M23 rebel group, allegedly supported by Rwanda [3, 9, 10, 11, 13, 16, 18, 19, 26] has intensified its offensive, notably capturing Bukavu [11, 18, 22] and advancing towards Uvira, [12, 17] triggering mass population movements and exacerbating existing vulnerabilities. Compounding the crisis are human rights abuses, including reports of child executions and sexual violence, [26] and attacks on essential infrastructure such as hospitals and aid facilities. [26] Other armed groups, including the ADF [1, 25] and CODECO [8, 17], contribute to the instability, further disrupting access to essential services like education. [17, 32]

This report presents a current analysis of the situation, combining data from a Premise survey of 400 individuals in North and South Kivu conducted between February 7th and 18th, 2025 [32], with corroborating evidence from AI-powered media monitoring of news reports. [1-31] Key findings from the Premise survey reveal: over half of respondents reporting displacement within the past week; [32] a critical lack of access to basic necessities, with 69% citing "protection" and "food" as pressing needs; [32] widespread food insecurity affecting 78% of households; [32] and significant disruptions to healthcare and education. [32] These survey results, alongside news reports confirming widespread violence and humanitarian distress, highlight the urgent need for intervention.
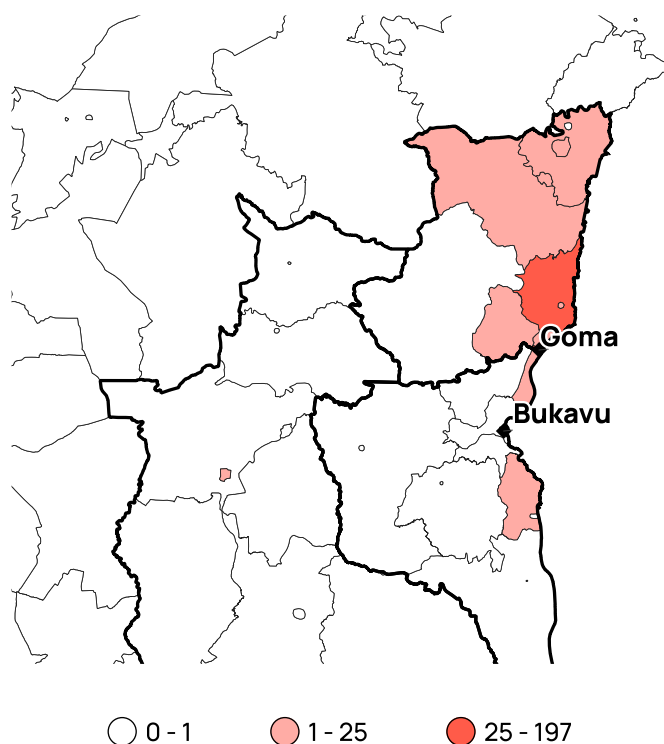
Methodology

Premise, a mobile data collection platform, facilitated the gathering of survey responses from **400 individuals** in or recently displaced from North and South Kivu provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo between February 7th and 18th, 2025. Premise's on-demand insight platform, designed for market research, government, and international development, conducts app-based opt-in panel surveys of respondents aged 18 and older. The survey, which achieved **equal gender representation**, collected data on age, household composition (including children, elderly, and persons with disabilities), and displacement status. Notably, a significant **71% of respondents reported having children under 18 in their households, with 84% of those households including children under five.**[32] Collecting through Premise's mobile application enables rapid and cost-effective data collection in remote and conflict-affected areas, while also ensuring data security.

AEGIS, Premise's custom AI tool, then employed AI-powered media monitoring [1-31] to enhance the survey data's contextual understanding. This process provided corroboration of survey findings, updates on the dynamic security and humanitarian landscape, and insights into the political and diplomatic aspects of the crisis. By analyzing news articles and reports from international organizations a comprehensive overview of the situation was achieved. While AI-generated reports are a relatively new approach, they offer significant benefits in humanitarian monitoring. **AI's ability to process large datasets quickly and objectively, identifying patterns and minimizing bias, enhances analysis.**

This report, based on a combination of survey data [32] and media monitoring [1-31], provides a balanced and evidence-based analysis. The inclusion of citations for all data points allows for verification and assessment of credibility. Additionally, the **AI's multilingual processing capabilities** facilitate a more thorough analysis of local news and social media discussions. AEGIS is powered by a custom-trained version of Google Gemini 2.0 Flash, tailored specifically for analysis of Premise Data and other publicly available data using our proprietary model focused completely on the humanitarian assistance subject. We set our temperature to 0.1 so it focuses precisely on the data we have sourced.

Survey Responses by Territory
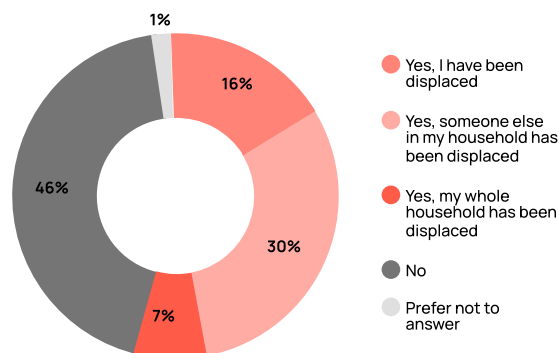

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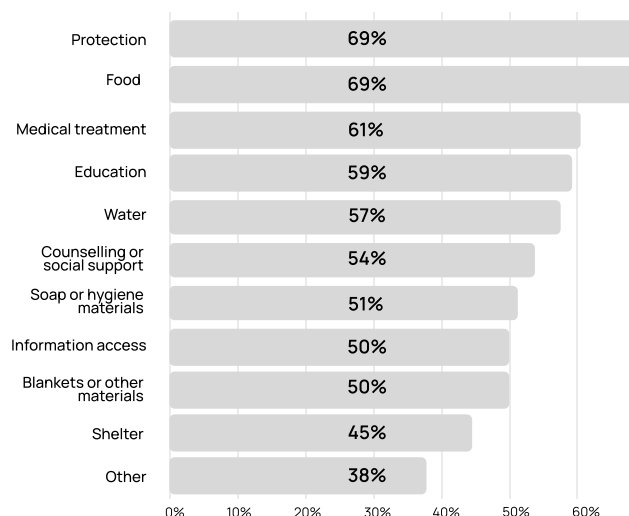
Displacement & Urgent Needs

Premise survey data [32] and news reports [3, 6, 11, 17, 22, 30, 31] confirm a high prevalence of displacement in North and South Kivu. **Over half of Premise respondents report themselves having been displaced or someone in their household displaced in the past week.**[32] These findings align with reports of hundreds of thousands fleeing recent violence and **over 700,000 persons displaced in Goma alone.**[31] Premise survey data indicates armed conflict and violence as the primary drivers of displacement, with many displaced persons seeking shelter with friends, family, host families, or in displaced persons camps.[32] The influx of refugees into Burundi [6, 30] underscores the scale of the crisis.

The most common pressing needs at this time were **"protection"** (selected by 69% of respondents), **"food"** (69%), and **"medical treatment"** (61%), indicating the pervasive sense of insecurity and unsupported needs among the North and South Kivu population. [32] Other pressing needs include water, counselling or social support, information access, education, soap or hygiene materials, blankets or other materials, and shelter.[32] Only a small proportion of respondents (17%) reported receiving assistance in the past week, [32] suggesting significant unmet needs.

Recent Displacement (During Current Conflict)

- Yes, I have been displaced
- Yes, someone else in my household has been displaced
- Yes, my whole household has been displaced
- No
- Prefer not to answer

1%, 16%, 30%, 7%, 46%

What are your most pressing needs at this time?

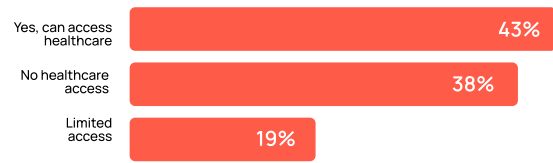| Need	%
Protection	69%
Food	69%
Medical treatment	61%
Education	59%
Water	57%
Counselling or social support	54%
Soap or hygiene materials	51%
Information access	50%
Blankets or other materials	50%
Shelter	45%
Other	38%

Healthcare

Premise survey data [32] reveals significant challenges in accessing healthcare in North and South Kivu. **Over half of respondents have no access or limited access to health care and medical treatment.**[32] The survey also indicates that access to healthcare has worsened for many households in the past two months.[32] News reports [22, 26] further highlight the dire state of the healthcare system, with hospitals overwhelmed and medical supplies running low. Attacks on hospitals and aid facilities [26] have further exacerbated the situation. Still, 80% of respondents report the primary health care facility nearest them is functional, and **83% of respondents report the closest hospital to them as functional.**[32]
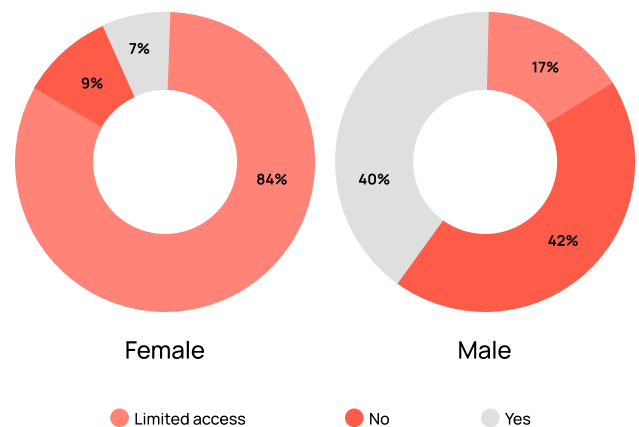
Does your household have access to basic healthcare or medical treatment?

- Yes, can access healthcare: 43%
- No healthcare access: 38%
- Limited access: 19%

Food

The Premise survey data [32] indicates widespread food insecurity in North and South Kivu. Seventy-eight percent of respondents have limited food or no food in their households.[32] **Among respondents with children, "food" was the most common pressing need reported; 80% said they have no food or only limited food at home currently.**[32] The survey also reveals that access to food has deteriorated for many households in the past two months.[32] News reports [22, 30] corroborate these findings, with reports of food shortages and widespread hunger. The looting of WFP warehouses [26, 30] has further exacerbated the situation. The survey data also provides information on the availability of key food items, with many respondents reporting below-normal availability.[32]

Access to Adequate Food

Female: 84% / 9% / 7%
Male: 42% / 17% / 40%
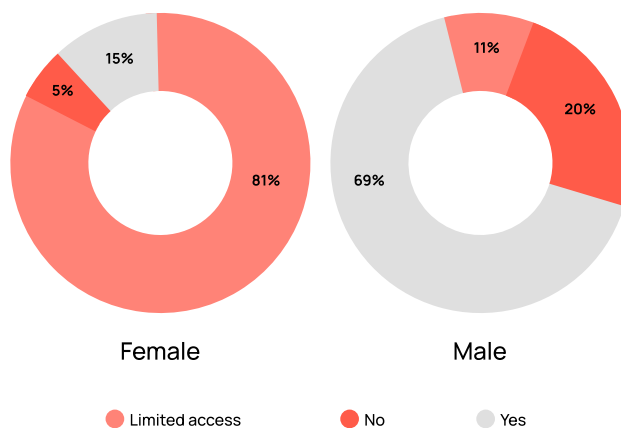
- Limited access
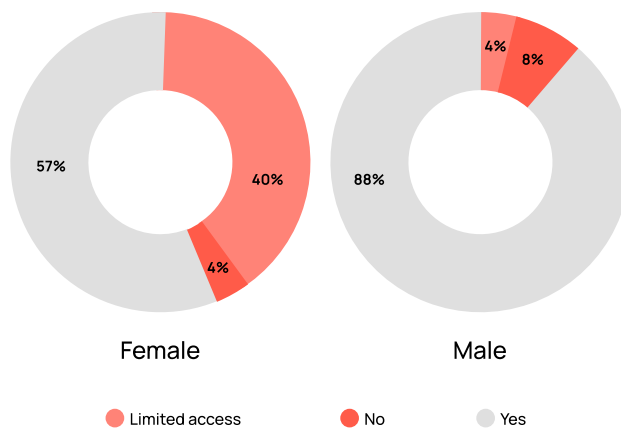- No
- Yes

Water/Sanitation

Premise survey data [32] reveals significant water and sanitation challenges. Over half of respondents reported limited or no access to clean drinking water, with **female respondents experiencing greater limitations than males**.

Access to water treatment supplies is also limited.[32] Many households reported worsened access to water in the past two months and faced significant time burdens in obtaining it.[32] Similarly, access to sanitation is a major concern, with **many reporting limited or no access to latrines or toilets**, and some experiencing decreasing access in the past two months. [32] Female respondents were also more likely to report limited or no access to sanitation facilities than male respondents. [32] These conditions pose significant health risks, particularly for vulnerable populations.
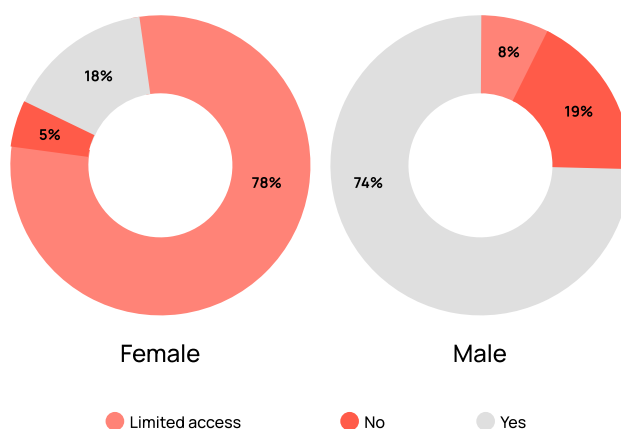
Fuel

Premise survey data [32] reveals significant challenges in accessing fuel in North and South Kivu. Many respondents reported **limited or no access to fuel**, including wood, charcoal, and gas.[32] The survey also indicates that access to fuel has worsened for many households in the past two months.[32] The lack of access to fuel has significant implications for cooking, heating, and other essential household activities.

Access to Clean and Safe Drinking Water

Female: Limited access 81%, No 5%, Yes 15%
Male: Limited access 11%, No 20%, Yes 69%

Legend: ● Limited access ● No ● Yes

Access to Adequate Sanitation

Female: Limited access 40%, No 4%, Yes 57%
Male: Limited access 4%, No 8%, Yes 88%

Legend: ● Limited access ● No ● Yes

Access to Fuel

Female: Limited access 78%, No 5%, Yes 18%
Male: Limited access 8%, No 19%, Yes 74%
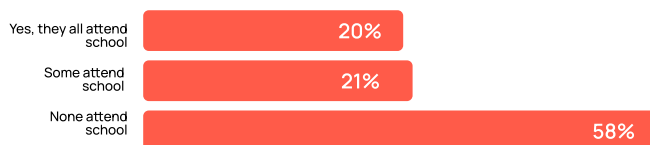
Legend: ● Limited access ● No ● Yes

Education

The Premise survey data [32] reveals significant disruptions to education in North and South Kivu. **Seventy-nine percent of respondents reported that some or all of the children in their households do not currently attend school.** [32] The survey also indicates that school attendance has changed for many children in the past two months. [32] The most commonly cited reasons for not attending school include school closures and safety concerns. [32] News reports [17] corroborate these findings, with reports of school closures due to the ongoing conflict. The disruption of education has long-term consequences for children's development and future prospects.

Do the children in your household attend school currently?

Yes, they all attend school	20%
Some attend school	21%
None attend school	58%

"We live in fear and the security situation does not allow us to work, we ask you to help us plead for our safety here in DR Congo, precisely in North Kivu, lack of food we are really suffering a lot"

- Premise Respondent, Male, Age 25-30 Goma, North Kivu

Security

The security situation in North and South Kivu remains extremely volatile. The Premise survey data [32] reveals a **pervasive sense of insecurity**, with many respondents rating the security situation in their community as unsafe or very unsafe. [32] News reports [1-31] paint a similar picture, with ongoing clashes between armed groups, attacks on civilians, and widespread human rights abuses. The M23's advance [11, 12, 17, 18, 20, 22] and the activities of other armed groups like the ADF [1, 25] and CODECO [8, 17] are major drivers of insecurity. The presence of Ugandan troops in the DRC [8, 23, 25] adds another layer of complexity to the security situation.

Next Steps & Further Research

To enhance the next round of data collection and provide deeper insights into the evolving crisis in the DRC, Premise's AEGIS tool proposes the following survey questions. These questions are designed to capture critical vulnerabilities and lived experiences, focusing on key risk factors within the conflict zones. Specifically, they aim to gather data on negative coping mechanisms, displacement intentions, aid distribution effectiveness, forced recruitment, community fears, economic livelihoods, and gender-based violence, thus providing a more nuanced understanding of the immediate and long-term challenges faced by the affected population:

1. **"Have you or any member of your household been forced to engage in any illegal activities to survive in the past month?"**
   Type: Categorical (Yes/No/Prefer not to answer).
   Enhancement: Provides insights into negative coping mechanisms and potential criminal activity driven by desperation.
   Risk factors: Internal security challenges, economic decline.

2. **"If you have been displaced, do you intend to return to your place of origin? If so, when?"**
   Type: Multiple choice (Yes, within the next month/Yes, within the next 3 months/Yes, within the next 6 months/Yes, but don't know when/No).
   Enhancement: Provides insights into displacement intentions and potential for return or permanent resettlement.
   Risk factors: Displacement, economic decline.

3. **"Do you feel that humanitarian aid is reaching those who need it most in your community?"**
   Type: Categorical (Yes/No/Don't know).
   Enhancement: Assesses the effectiveness and equity of aid distribution.
   Risk factors: Humanitarian crisis, lack of essential resources.

4. **"Have you or any member of your household been approached or pressured to join an armed group in the past month?"**
   Type: Categorical (Yes/No/Prefer not to answer).
   Enhancement: Provides insights into recruitment tactics and risks of forced recruitment.
   Risk factors: Safety of children, presence of armed groups.

5. **"What is your biggest fear or concern for the future?"**
   Type: Open-ended text.
   Enhancement: Provides qualitative data on community perceptions of risk and future prospects.
   Risk factors: All risk factors

6. **"What is your primary source of income right now?"**
   Type: Multiple choice (Farming/Trading/Labor/Other).
   Enhancement: Understanding current livelihoods helps assess economic vulnerability and impact of conflict on income sources.
   Risk factors: Economic decline, lack of essential resources.

7. **"Have you or any member of your household experienced or witnessed any form of gender-based violence in the past month?"**
   Type: Categorical (Yes/No/Prefer not to answer).
   Enhancement: Provides specific data on GBV prevalence, a critical risk factor often underreported.
   Risk factors: Safety of women and girls.

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32. **Premise AEGIS Survey Data**

We're working to improve our analysis and reporting to better meet your needs. We want to know:

- Does this information align with your organization's requirements?
- What key humanitarian data sources should we include?

Send your comments and suggestions to **idev@premise.com**