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## Press release

### **SOLIDARITES: the victims of violence in East RD Congo must be given security so that they can receive aid**

The humanitarian situation in North Kivu in East DR Congo is extremely alarming. Between 200,000 and 250,000 people have fled fighting between the national army (FARDC) and general Laurent Nkunda's rebel forces (the CNDP or National Congress for the People's Defense).

The displaced populations are moving in two directions: towards the south (Sake, Bukavu) from Kibumba and Goma, and towards the north, with a temporary settlement area at Kayna (Lubero territory). Numerous small groups are also scattered in bush areas, where they are hiding. Many of these people had already been displaced, and were living in refugee camps. They are exhausted from incessantly fleeing the violence, and have no food reserves. In addition, many people have fled the Rutshuru area where cholera was rife (on average 60 cases per week over the last few weeks), thereby spreading the cholera vibrio and increasing the risk of a serious epidemic.

Armed conflict has seriously disrupted and disorganized humanitarian assistance operations due to blocked roads, looting and insecurity. Despite the relatively calm situation in Goma today, we cannot predict how this shifting, unstable situation will evolve.

SOLIDARITES, one of the main humanitarian organizations working in DR Congo, with a team of around 70 expatriate volunteers, 790 Congolese workers and 13 permanent operational bases, is currently in the preparatory phase of an operation to assist the most vulnerable groups. Our Rapid Response Mechanism (RRM) teams, working in partnership with UNICEF and OCHA (United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), are present in Beni and Goma. They have pre-positioned stocks at their disposal, in particular in Beni. Tomorrow, providing the security situation allows, they will launch multidisciplinary needs assessments from Beni, and will then engage action in the Lubero and Kayna areas. These teams will rapidly receive reinforcements from Goma, where our team is also preparing other multidisciplinary needs assessments in southern areas.

Our action will first of all focus on:

- Emergency access to drinking water and sanitation: transportation of water via lorry, setting up chlorination points, fitting out water springs, rehabilitating small water networks, installing latrines and showers.
- Distribution of essential products (cooking kits, plastic sheeting, mosquito nets, fabric for clothing, jerry cans, hygiene products) and protein biscuits (BP5).

SOLIDARITES makes an urgent plea for these populations to be provided with security, which is essential before humanitarian organizations can start to cover their vital needs. As long as looting continues, large-scale distributions of food aid and essential commodities may place the displaced populations in danger. Moreover, SOLIDARITES asks international institutions to support and provide additional means for humanitarian organizations working on the ground using existing aid mechanisms.

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**To find out more about SOLIDARITES: [www.solidarites.org](http://www.solidarites.org)**

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