



**U.S. AGENCY FOR INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT
BUREAU FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE (BHR)
OFFICE OF U.S. FOREIGN DISASTER ASSISTANCE (OFDA)**

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO – Volcano

Fact Sheet #1, Fiscal Year (FY) 2002

January 18, 2002

Numbers Affected

Total Affected: Up to 600,000 (U.N.)
Deaths: 45 (U.N.)
Displaced People: Estimates range from 40,000 (field reports) to 450,000 (U.N.) Combine

Current Situation

- Initial assessments indicated that up to 400,000 residents around Goma, Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), were displaced by the eruption. Approximately one-third of the group moved west in DRC toward Sake. Approximately two-thirds moved east to Gisenyi in Rwanda. Other reports estimate that the number of displaced people is as low as 16,000 in Rwanda and 10,000 west of Goma. The situation remains fluid, however, with people continuing to depart Goma and some people returning to the city.
- The Government of Rwanda has opened two IDP camps approximately 25 kilometers from Gisenyi with a potential capacity for 85,000 people. The facilities already have some buildings and operable water systems. Rwandan authorities have at least temporarily closed the border to people trying to re-enter Goma, and are directing people to the two displacement camps. A lava flow has cut the road between Goma and Gisenyi, preventing the residents that do re-enter DRC from returning to Goma.
- The condition of IDPs west of Goma is unknown. Relief workers in the area assume that these people are more vulnerable than the refugees near Gisenyi, because the area west of Goma has few services and is insecure. An NGO assessment of Sake, east of Goma, is scheduled to take place on January 21.
- Lava continues to flow, although the rate of flow has slowed and much of the ash has cleared out of the air. Earth tremors continue to take place as often as once an hour, and some are strong enough to crack building walls in Gisenyi. Several tremors have been felt as far away as Bukavu and Kigali.
- Damage assessments report that lava flows have destroyed 14 villages and approximately 20 percent of the western half of the city, which is the commercial district and is the least inhabited area of Goma. The lava flow is approximately 500 meters wide and avoided most of the residential areas of the city. USAID/OFDA staff estimate that up to 5,000 homes have been destroyed.
- There is no electricity or gas in the city, making water systems inoperable. Lava has entered Lake Kivu.
- Approximately 700 meters of the 2700-meter Goma airstrip have been destroyed. Continuing lava flows threaten fuel storage tanks at the airport. The Gisenyi airstrip has resumed operations.

U.S. Government Response

- On January 18, U.S. Ambassador to Rwanda Margaret K. McMillion and U.S. Ambassador to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) Aubrey Hooks declared disasters for the eruption of Mt. Nyiragongo near Goma in the DRC.
- USAID/OFDA had one staff member at Goma at the time of the eruption. Two other USAID/OFDA staff members have been dispatched to Rwanda from offices in the region. A third specialist in water and sanitation management will depart to Kigali. The team is assessing assistance needs and coordinating the relief response.
- USAID/OFDA is providing \$25,000 to the U.S. Embassy in Kinshasa for relief assistance in the DRC. USAID/OFDA has also given Catholic Relief Services permission to reallocate funds from an existing grant in the DRC for Goma volcano relief efforts.
- USAID/OFDA is shipping 20,000 blankets, 20,000 5-gallon water containers, and 20 10,000-liter water bladders from its stockpile in Maryland to Kigali, Rwanda. The shipment will be consigned to the U.S. Embassy in Kigali for onward consignment to relief agencies operating in Goma and Gisenyi, Rwanda. Additional commodities will be made available as needs require.
- USAID/OFDA will consider local purchase of relief materials and monetary support for relief activities in DRC and Rwanda as the situation evolves.

Relief Efforts

- There are several assessment teams in place or en route to Goma. These include a U.N. team from Kinshasa; a U.N. team from Geneva; a team from the DRC Ministry of Health; a team from NGOs that have relocated to Ruhengeri, Rwanda; and several teams from relief donors and non-governmental organizations (NGOs). In addition, personnel from the Mission de la Organisation des Nations Unies au Congo (MONUC) that relocated to Kigali, Rwanda, are conducting coordination and assessment.
- Relief coordination is taking place in Gisenyi, Ruhengeri, and Kigali, Rwanda.
- MONUC helicopters have been conducting aerial reconnaissance of the volcano.
- The World Food Program has begun shipping 9 metric tons (MT) of high-energy biscuits to Gisenyi, and is preparing to mobilize additional commodities in the region.
- A United Nations Development Program convoy containing various relief commodities, including 10,000 bottles of water, is en route to Gisenyi.
- MONUC announced plans to airlift 5,000 plastic sheets to Kigali immediately.

Donor Response

- Catholic Relief Services (CRS) allocated \$50,000 for unspecified relief assistance on January 17.
- The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) allocated approximately \$60,000 (CHF 100,000) for unspecified relief assistance on January 17.
- Concern Worldwide allocated approximately \$90,000 (100,000 Euros) for unspecified relief assistance on January 18.
- The Government of Belgium has provided approximately \$1.8 million (2 million Euros) for assistance, and is arranging an airlift of relief commodities.
- The Government of Holland has made available \$40,000 for assistance efforts.
- The Government of Germany allocated approximately \$270,000 (300,000 Euros) for unspecified relief assistance on January 18.
- ECHO sent a four-person assessment team from regional offices, including a water/sanitation specialist, on January 18.

Background

- Mt. Nyiragongo erupted at approximately 9:30 AM local time (2:30 AM EST) on January 17. The volcano produced three paths of lava, one of which headed toward the city of Goma, 18 kilometers to the south. A fourth fissure opened at 4:00 PM on January 17. The area had been experiencing tremors intermittently since March 2001. The most recent eruption of Mt. Nyiragongo was in 1977, when the lava flow covered 20 square kilometers, killed 2,000 people, and destroyed 400 houses and a 10-kilometre section of road.

U.S. Government Assistance

DRC

- USAID/OFDA has provided \$25,000 for relief activities in DRC. The funds will be disbursed to NGOs providing assistance around Goma.

Rwanda

- USAID/OFDA is delivering relief commodities valued at approximately \$214,000. Transportation costs for the airlift are estimated to be \$250,000.

USAID/OFDA	\$489,000
Total USG Assistance	\$489,000

USAID/OFDA fact sheets can be obtained from the USAID web site at http://www.usaid.gov/hum_response/ofda/situation.html