

PRESS RELEASE

Volcanic eruption in Congo: Welthungerhilfe provides 150,000 euros for immediate assistance

Hundreds of thousands fleeing Goma are left without food, water, and shelter

Bonn/Berlin, 03/06/2021 Mass flight, cholera, hunger: Nearly two weeks after Mount Nyiragongo erupted, the humanitarian situation is worsening dramatically for the people who fled the city of Goma. According to UN figures, more than 200,000 IDPs are currently in surrounding areas after the partial evacuation of the city. There is a particular lack of drinking water, food and shelter. Welthungerhilfe is providing 150,000 euros to supply urgently needed immediate assistance. Residents fled from the lava flows and constant earthquakes that shook the region for days.

“Many people set off on foot in great haste, only taking the most basic essentials with them. They are sleeping in schools, in churches, or in the open air, and they have no clean water, not enough to eat, and no access to latrines. The host communities themselves are poor, and cannot support those in need for long using their own resources. People are also concerned about the risk of diseases like cholera. It is a race against time. If assistance does not arrive quickly, there is a risk of a humanitarian disaster, even if the volcano does not erupt again”, explains Liisa Perkkiö, Programme Coordinator for Welthungerhilfe in DR Congo. “The situation for people who remained in Goma itself is worsening as well. Hundreds of houses were destroyed by the lava and the earthquakes, and many neighbourhoods have no water or electricity. These people are also desperate, and urgently need help”, adds Liisa Perkkiö.

Welthungerhilfe and its partners are preparing to distribute food, drinking water, water purification tablets, protective tarpaulins and blankets, hygiene kits, and other daily essentials for affected people in Goma, and for refugees in the regions around Sake and Minova. In Goma, 135 children evacuated from an orphanage are also receiving food, medicine, and other supplies.

The humanitarian disaster following the volcanic eruption in Goma is affecting people who already had no more reserves. In the east of DR Congo, battles and attacks by armed groups persist. Many people have been weakened by diseases like cholera and the coronavirus. However, one of the greatest problems in the country is hunger: 27 million people—a third of the population—are suffering from hunger.

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Welthungerhilfe has been active in DR Congo since 1997, and it currently supports people in the provinces of Nord-Kivu, Ituri and Maniema through ten projects. 28 staff work at the office in Goma. Our work focuses on areas including sustainable agricultural and economic development, food security, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH).

Our staff in Congo are available for interviews (in English).

For further information see www.welthungerhilfe.de/presse

Welthungerhilfe is one of the largest private aid organisations in Germany, without political or religious affiliation. It is fighting for "Zero Hunger by 2030". Since it was founded in 1962, more than 9,830 overseas projects in 70 countries have been supported with 3.95 billion euros. Welthungerhilfe works on the principle of help for self-help: from fast disaster relief to reconstruction and long-term development cooperation projects with national and international partner organisations.

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