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### DISCLAIMER

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. All COI Query Responses are compiled in line with the Common EU Guidelines (2008) and the EUAA Methodology (2023). This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to international protection. Please refer to all documents cited.

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### COI QUERY RESPONSE

#### DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO - INFORMATION ON THE HUMANITARIAN SITUATION

The *UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs* in January 2025 mentioned that: “In Goma, essential services are severely disrupted. Water and electricity have been cut off since midday on 26 January. Internet access has also been interrupted since mid-day on 27 January, complicating humanitarian coordination efforts. Only mobile phone networks are functioning. On 26 January, at least 12 people lost their lives, and around 10 others were injured following shell explosions at Rusayo 1 and 2 sites in the Nyiragongo territory. Several water, hygiene, and sanitation facilities, as well as shelters, were also destroyed.”<sup>1</sup> The same document states that: “Due to the fighting, humanitarian activities are severely impacted. Only health-related interventions and water, hygiene, and sanitation activities continue.”<sup>2</sup>

The *World Food Programme (WFP)* in January 2025 notes that: “The security and humanitarian situation in Goma is currently deteriorating. We are still here, but in hiding. We don’t know who will come to help us, we who are activists.”<sup>3</sup>

In January 2025 *CARE International* reported that: “An uneasy calm has settled over Goma after several days of deadly violence between combatants. Heavy shelling and intense fighting forced tens of thousands of people—many of whom were already displaced due to earlier conflict—to flee once again.. The intense clashes in Goma and its surrounding areas over the past week have further deepened the already dire humanitarian crisis in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC).”<sup>4</sup>

The *European Commission* in January 2025 states that: “Between conflict, poverty, malnutrition and frequent disease outbreaks, humanitarian needs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo are among

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<sup>1</sup> UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (29 January 2025) Democratic Republic of Congo - Flash Update #3 : Escalation of violence significantly affects the humanitarian situation in North Kivu and South Kivu, 28 January 2025

<sup>2</sup> ibid

<sup>3</sup> World Food Programme (28 January 2025) Crisis in eastern DRC escalates - leads to greater humanitarian and protection needs

<sup>4</sup> CARE International (28 January 2025) DRC: Escalating conflict in Goma deepens humanitarian crisis for millions

the highest in the world.”<sup>5</sup> The document also mentioned that: “Humanitarian access to the most vulnerable people has been limited and remains a challenge where fighting is taking place.”<sup>6</sup>

The *Voice of America News* in January 2025 points out that: “There was gunfire Tuesday in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo city of Goma, as the United Nations warned of a worrying humanitarian situation amid clashes between Congolese soldiers and Rwandan-backed rebels who attacked the area and claimed to be in control. U.N. humanitarian office spokesperson Jens Laerke told a briefing Tuesday that hospitals in Goma were overwhelmed. The World Food Program said it temporarily paused food assistance activities in the Goma area.”<sup>7</sup>

The *UK Foreign Office* in January 2025 reported that: “In December this Council renewed MONUSCO's mandate. And in the four weeks since, M23's unacceptable offensive, and that of the Rwanda Defence Forces, through North and South Kivu, has resulted in the capture of several towns and villages. As we've heard, hundreds of thousands of civilians have been displaced, and violence has intensified as a result. We are also deeply alarmed by M23's declaration that they intend to take Goma, a city where the humanitarian situation is already catastrophic. The rising number of displaced people resulting from M23's territorial expansion has placed further pressure on crowded IDP camps and exacerbates the challenges faced by humanitarian actors.”<sup>8</sup>

The *Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)* in January 2025 mentioned that: “Unsurprisingly, the humanitarian consequences for people are very serious. Hundreds of thousands of people have once again fled the fighting. According to the United Nations, 400,000 people have already fled since January. Tens of thousands headed for displacement sites around Goma, where more than 650,000 people were already living, exhausted by almost three years of fighting. The clashes in recent weeks have led to a new influx of people into these completely unhygienic sites where – as we have been saying for far too long – families are surviving without proper shelter and lacking everything: food, water, healthcare, etc.”<sup>9</sup>

The *United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)* in January 2025 notes that: “Meanwhile, fighting intensified in the North Kivu town of Saké, approximately 25 kilometres from Goma, culminating in non-state armed groups seizing control. Heavy bombardments caused families from at least nine displacement sites on the periphery of Goma to flee into the city to seek safety and shelter. Many spent last night sleeping on the streets and in green spaces across the city. Persistent clashes between belligerents in these areas continue to deteriorate the protection environment for civilians in South and North Kivu Provinces which are already home to 4.6 million internally displaced people. Human rights violations, including looting, injuries, murders, kidnappings and arbitrary arrests of displaced people mistaken for rebels have escalated. Hospitals are nearing capacity with injured civilians. Vulnerable women, children, and the elderly are living in overcrowded and precarious conditions with limited access to food, water, and essential services. Humanitarian access to address these urgent needs is significantly restricted. All roads to Minova, including for

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<sup>5</sup> European Commission (28 January 2025) EU provides €60 million humanitarian aid to the Democratic Republic of the Congo

<sup>6</sup> *ibid*

<sup>7</sup> *Voice of America News* (28 January 2025) UN warns of worrying humanitarian situation in DRC's Goma amid assault by Rwanda-backed rebels

<sup>8</sup> UK Foreign Office (26 January 2025) The UK is deeply concerned by the scale and pace of recent M23 and Rwandan Defence Forces advances in eastern DRC: UK statement at the UN Security Council

<sup>9</sup> *Medecins Sans Frontieres (MSF)* (25 January 2025) Three questions on the intensification of the armed conflict in North and South Kivu

humanitarian aid, are closed. Indiscriminate shelling has forced the temporary suspension of life-saving activities in several areas in North Kivu.”<sup>10</sup>

In January 2025 *Save the Children* in January 2025 points out that: “David Okoni\* works at a Save the Children partner organisation which operates in the town of Minova, 45km from Goma city. On Tuesday heaving fighting took place in the town. David said: “Around 5:00 AM, gunfire started echoing through Minova, sending people fleeing in all directions. Most were already displaced people having previously fled conflicts and were sheltering in Minova. Many attempted to reach Goma across the lake, but as boats stopped operating, people were left stranded without adequate shelter, and forced to sleep in schools, under the open sky, and even in a warehouse. “The situation is dire. Parents have no food or clean water for their children, and those wounded by bullets remain without medical care as healthcare workers have also fled to save their lives.”<sup>11</sup>

This document also states that: “Conflict in DRC has created one of the world's largest humanitarian crises, with nearly 7 million people, including at least 3.5 million children, displaced and more than 26 million people – or one in every four people – in need of humanitarian assistance.”<sup>12</sup>

A report issued by *Human Rights Watch* in January 2025 states that: “In December 2023, President Félix Tshisekedi was elected for a second term amid a deteriorating human rights and humanitarian situation. Authorities cracked down on opposition members, civil society activists, critics, and journalists throughout 2024. Hostilities in North Kivu led to significant displacement of populations, disrupted humanitarian aid delivery, and created food shortages in Goma, the provincial capital.”<sup>13</sup>

The *United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO)* in January 2025 mentioned that: “Ms. Bintou Keita, Special Representative of the United Nations Secretary General in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Head of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the DRC (MONUSCO), strongly condemns the recent offensive launched by the March 23 Movement (M23) on January 2, 2025. This tragic attack resulted in the deaths of at least seven civilians and displaced tens of thousands of people, further exacerbating the severe humanitarian crisis in eastern DRC.”<sup>14</sup>

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<sup>10</sup> United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) (24 January 2025) UNHCR gravely concerned by worsening violence and humanitarian crisis in eastern DR Congo

<sup>11</sup> Save the Children (22 January 2025) Nearly 120,000 children displaced in escalation of violence in eastern DRC

<sup>12</sup> *ibid*

<sup>13</sup> Human Rights Watch (16 January 2025) World Report 2025: Democratic Republic of Congo

<sup>14</sup> United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo (MONUSCO) (7 January 2025) MONUSCO Condemns Ceasefire Violation and M23's Continued Territorial Expansion in North Kivu

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### **Contact Information**

Refugee Documentation Centre  
Legal Aid Board  
48/49 North Brunswick Street  
Dublin 7  
Ireland

Email: [research@legalaidboard.ie](mailto:research@legalaidboard.ie)