



# EMERGENCY FUNDING APPEAL DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO USD 9 MILLION

December 2022



**Women's Peace &  
Humanitarian Fund**

A United Nations & Civil Society Partnership

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## Background

The resumption of violent hostilities in October 2022 between the March 23 Movement (M23) armed group and the Democratic Republic of the Congo's army (FARDC) in Eastern Congo has caused significant human suffering, including deaths and injuries among civilians as well as significant numbers of newly displaced persons, leaving the country on the brink of a humanitarian disaster. Women constitute the majority of conflict victims in the D.R.C. The United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) estimates that as of 28 November 2022, more than 390,000 people, including 228,000 women, have been newly displaced since fighting resumed on 20 October 2022.<sup>1</sup> Approximately, 679,000 people are in need of assistance, the majority of whom are in Nyiragongo, Rutshuru and Lubero territories, and some in Goma (all North Kivu).<sup>2</sup>

Humanitarian actors in North Kivu have identified a gap of 49.8 million USD to meet the needs of the targeted population of an estimated 315,000 people for a period of three months – between November 2022 and January 2023.<sup>3</sup> Humanitarian assistance remains insufficient to meet the needs of these displaced persons as continuous fighting keeps pushing civilians out of their homes in numerous localities. Inhabitants and displaced populations in Rutshuru – considered the breadbasket of Goma – are becoming increasingly isolated as M23-controlled territory expands towards Goma.<sup>4</sup>

The D.R.C remains one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the world. Already around 5.6 million Congolese were internally displaced before the recent escalation in violence, accounting for the largest internally displaced persons (IDP) crisis in Africa and among the largest in the world, with a disproportionate impact on women and girls.<sup>5</sup> The country also has the largest number of food insecure people in the world. As the conflict and resulting displacement continue to exacerbate food insecurity across the country, approximately 26.4 million people expected to face acute food insecurity through December 2022.<sup>6</sup> On 23

November, an agreement was reached at the end of a summit in Luanda, for an immediate ceasefire from Friday 25 November.<sup>7</sup> However, no cease-fire has yet been observed as clashes continue while the East African Community (EAC) aims at brokering a peace deal at the Nairobi peace dialogue.

Women and children are disproportionately affected by the deep rooted multidimensional crisis in the D.R.C as they become exposed to increased risk of exploitation and abuse in their displacement.<sup>8</sup> A state of siege is being implemented in the three provinces most affected by the conflict (North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri) since mid- 2021 giving full powers to army and police, which lead to reduced attention to women's and girls' participation and protection.<sup>9</sup> Women are increasingly dispossessed of their property, deprived of their means of subsistence, plunged into economic and psychological vulnerability, and exposed to all sorts of exploitation.

Further, women's access to justice, sexual and reproductive health and rights, protection and security services have also become increasingly critical in the affected conflict zones. The recurrence of conflicts and armed attacks as seen in the DRC in which systematic rape is used as a tactic of war, and the atrocities of the crimes perpetrated, have deep and lasting consequences on communities, particularly on women and girls exposed to sexual violence. With the alarming escalation in violence against women and girls, there is a pressing need to ensure that such crimes continue to be reported, that perpetrators are held accountable, and that women and girls are provided with adequate protection and their voices heard. The lives and livelihoods of millions of women and girls are further threatened due to a combination of factors, including persistent conflict, insecurity and massive displacement, widespread poverty, increased food and fuel prices – directly related to the Russian war of aggression against Ukraine – further exacerbated by the ongoing impact of epidemics, including Ebola, cholera and monkeypox outbreaks and the COVID-19 pandemic.

Given that the combined effects of crises in the DRC are disproportionately affecting women's and girls' safety and security, access to health and reproductive services, and economic activity, it is critical that local women's rights organizations continue to be supported and form part in decision-making related to the humanitarian response and crisis management. Making up over half of the Congolese population, it is essential that women and women's rights organizations form part of the dialogues and management of humanitarian aid to ensure gender-inclusive and sustainable responses to the current needs.

### **WPHF's Funding appeal: USD 9 million**

Women's CSOs have long been at the forefront of peace and humanitarian response in the D.R.C, working across the human rights-development-peace nexus. It is essential that they are supported as key actors on the ground with strategic partnerships, legitimacy and ownership and reach to most marginalized communities. In the current context, they must be funded and given a leadership role in participating in the humanitarian response and recovery.

In this context, the Women's Peace and Humanitarian Fund is launching an urgent funding appeal for up to USD 9 million in 2023 to support local women's organizations in D.R.C. The following WPHF impact areas have been identified as priority needs:

- ▶ WPHF Impact Area 3: Strengthening women's participation and leadership in planning and responding to humanitarian crises, including food insecurity
- ▶ WPHF Impact Area 5: Protecting women and girls affected by SGBV

WPHF's D.R.C emergency response consists in channeling rapidly funding to pre-identified local women CSOs on the ground, followed by an open Call for Proposals under its Regular Funding Cycle to mobilize women's organizations that can respond to the crisis and the needs of women and girls:

- ▶ **Emergency Call for Proposals (Phase 1):** WPHF will allocate approximately 3,000,000 USD to the DRC through a targeted (closed) Call for Proposals focused on WPHF Outcome 3 and 5 to channel urgently needed funding to pre-identified local women CSOs to respond to the urgent needs. The identification of CSOs will be undertaken together with the UN Women Country office and the UN Resident Coordinator/Humanitarian Coordinator will be responsible for review and approval of projects, as per the WPHF's Emergency track.
- ▶ **Regular Call for Proposals (Phase 2):** With additional USD 6 million funding (and with a minimum of 1,000,000 USD), an open Call for Proposals under the

WPHF's Regular Funding Cycle standard rules and procedures will be launched. This will allow organizations that were not pre-identified to apply. The selection process will be held within the WPHF National Steering Committee, co-chaired by the RC/HC and the Government.

National and local women-led, women's rights, feminist, or civil society organizations with a proven track record working with women and girls, will be eligible to apply. Grassroots and local community-based organizations will particularly be encouraged to apply. Consortia of organizations will be allowed and encouraged.

The Call for Proposals will make available financing for civil society organizations that build the resilience of Congolese women and girls through programmatic funding from 30,000 USD to 200,000 USD, and institutional funding to help sustain and strengthen women's organizations throughout the crisis with grants from 2,500 USD to 30,000 USD.

### **Management Arrangements**

As per WPHF procedures, the Call for Proposals will be prepared and launched by the WPHF Secretariat, detailing the nature and scope of the funding as well as types of interventions that are encouraged, in close coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator and UN Women Country office. The UN Women D.R.C office will act as the WPHF management entity in the grant-making process. The WPHF Secretariat will conduct the technical review of all proposals received and the UN Resident Coordinator (for Phase 1) and the WPHF National Steering Committees will be responsible for the final selection of proposals (Phase 2).

The WPHF Secretariat, together with the Management Entity (UN Women D.R.C office) will ensure quality monitoring and reporting on projects as well as linkages with partners from the UN, civil society, networks of women, and member states. The grantees selected through the Call for Proposals will also be included in WPHF's Community of Practice to learn from and exchange best practices with other WPHF partners.

### **Background on WPHF's work in the D.R.C<sup>9</sup>**

The WPHF, as a UN & civil society pooled funding mechanism dedicated to channelling flexible and quality funding to women's organizations in contexts of crisis, has been supporting 32 projects implemented by 69 women-led and women's rights organizations in the D.R.C since 2019 with a total investment of over 4.5 million USD. Since 2019, WPHF has benefited 101,288 direct beneficiaries (76% women and girls). These projects have contributed to increasing women's meaningful participation in local decision-making processes and humanitarian assistance



mechanisms, women's access to economic recovery opportunities and preventing and responding to SGBV and addressing the gendered impacts of COVID-19 in crises settings.

In 2021, 449 survivors successfully accessed psychosocial care as a result of the establishment of six listening rooms which provide counsellors, social workers and legal advisors to survivors. Additionally, the economic leadership of 120 marginalized women in Mushingwa was strengthened, including women living with disabilities, women living with HIV/AIDS, survivors of rape and women headed households. Consultation frameworks with 50 delegation members (including 27 women) from the provincial government, public administration, civil society, police and army were strengthened to address issues of gender, peace and protection. Since their creation, these consultation frameworks have already managed and referred 70 cases of GBV on minors and 35 cases of domestic violence.

Projects have also contributed to the socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable and marginalized women and girls. Through 12 newly established agricultural groups and a soap cooperative involving 40 young women, new income has been generated, contributing to 85% of the women reporting increased confidence and support to their households. 200 cooperatives have also been established with members of women's CSOs to strengthen their entrepreneurship and improve actions on the ground.

Through income-generating activities, a total of 189 vulnerable and marginalized women and girls were equally empowered with professional and trading skills in sewing, hairdressing and breadmaking. Further, a total 150 women and 100 young mothers have also benefited from capacity building on entrepreneurship and management of microenterprises, and over 2,500 women grouped in 100 Village Savings and Credit Associations (VSLAs) now have increased knowledge of and access to credit and saving opportunities.

Through the COVID-19 Emergency Response Window, between 2020 and 2022, partners have amplified key information and messaging related to COVID-19 prevention and gendered impacts, with over 36 talk shows aired and 90 public discussion programs, increasing the role and influence of CSOs in advocating and ensuring accountability for WPS commitments in the context of COVID-19. Further, 2,000 women have enhanced knowledge on GVB and domestic violence and increased knowledge of their rights, through sensitization sessions. 60 women also benefited from consultations and legal assistance, whereby 12 cases have legal proceedings ongoing. Finally, adolescents have adopted improved healthy practices in the prevention of COVID-19, including an increased understanding of menstrual cycles, early pregnancies and family planning, as well as knowledge of COVID-19 spread and prevention methods.

## References

<sup>1</sup> OCHA, 2022. [DR Congo \(North Kivu\): Emergency Response Plan - Nyiragongo-Rutshuru-Lubero-Masisi-Goma Crisis.](#)

<sup>2</sup> Ibid.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect, 2022. [Atrocity Alert No. 326: Democratic Republic of the Congo, Myanmar \(Burma\) and Mali.](#)

<sup>5</sup> UNHCR, 2022. [Consequences of underfunding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo.](#)

<sup>6</sup> European Commission, Emergency Response Coordination Centre, 2022. [ECHO Flash: Democratic Republic of Congo: Food Insecurity.](#)

<sup>7</sup> Africanews, 2022. [African Leaders Agree on Ceasefire in Restive East DR Congo from Friday.](#)

<sup>8</sup> International Rescue Committee, 2022. [Humanitarian Needs Soar in DRC as Rebel Groups Continue to Displace Thousands.](#)

<sup>9</sup> As reported by WPHF CSO partners working in the affected provinces.

<sup>9</sup> As of December 31, 2021.

## About WPHF

The Women's Peace & Humanitarian Fund (WPHF) mobilizes critical support for local and grassroots civil society organizations working on women, peace and security and humanitarian action. WPHF is a flexible and rapid financing mechanism supporting quality interventions designed to enhance the capacity of women to prevent conflict, respond to crises and emergencies, and seize key peacebuilding opportunities. Since its launch in 2016, WPHF has funded over 900 civil society organizations through 24 funding allocations in 32 countries working to support women to be a force for crisis response and lasting peace.

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