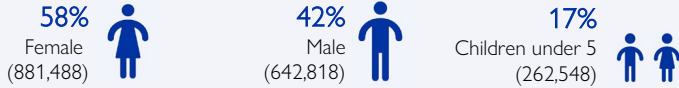
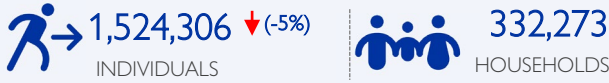
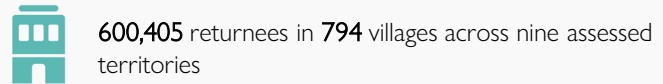
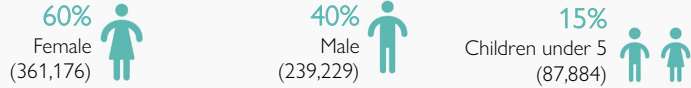


DTM has identified **1,524,306** IDP individuals as of 28 February 2024 and an estimated returnee population of **600,405** individuals.

Key displacement data



Key data on returns



CONTEXT

The conflict in the eastern region of the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), particularly in the province of North Kivu, has become increasingly complex over the years. Various armed groups, including the M23 group and the Congolese armed forces (FARDC) and their allies, have been involved in the conflict, leading to widespread instability and unprecedented humanitarian crises. The fighting has led to a large-scale displacement and an increasing population in need of humanitarian assistance, access to which remains extremely difficult.

Regional initiatives to improve peace and security in the region have intensified in recent weeks. In addition to the deployment of the Southern African Development Community (SADC) forces last December, initiatives such as the Heads of State summit in Addis Ababa on 17 February 2024 and the Heads of State meeting in Angola on 27 February 2024 took place with the aim of relaunching the peace process, secure a ceasefire between the FARDC and the M23 group and initiate direct dialogue between the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda.

From early February, fighting has intensified around Sake town, some twenty kilometres from Goma, the capital of North Kivu. The M23 group's offensive at the beginning of February exposed civilians to the repercussions of violent fighting, characterised by mortar and artillery fire in Sake and the surrounding hills. In addition to the serious casualties, the situation has led to an influx of displaced people into Goma and surrounding areas not yet under the control of the M23 group, an influx that is putting increasing pressure on the meagre resources and infrastructure available to meet the needs of the affected communities.

The escalation of tensions in recent weeks has triggered a continued movement of populations from host communities and displaced persons previously living in sites or with host families on the Sake-Bweremana axis towards the province of South Kivu in Kalehe territory, to the direction of Goma and the surrounding areas. However, since the last assessment (23 February), a slight upward trend in returns has been observed after the relative calm period between 21 and 28 February 2024.

Since the beginning of the crisis, IOM, through its Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM), has continued conducting a series of rapid assessments, including emergency monitoring (EET/ERM), crisis analysis and registration with the aim of responding to immediate information needs in order to understand displacement dynamics.

This report presents the results of assessments carried out in the various displacement and return areas between 21 and 28 February 2024.

DISPLACEMENT

The displacement data collected in this fifteenth crisis analysis shows a slight decrease in the number of people currently displaced by the M23 crisis compared with the previous publication (please see [here](#)).

The number of internally displaced persons decreased from 1,600,047 to 1,524,306 (as of 28 February 2024) a decrease of five per cent (please see the current dataset [here](#)), caused by several factors. Firstly, DTM rapidly implemented verification/registration activities in CCCM-managed sites around Goma, enabling a more accurate assessment of site populations. Secondly, field teams reported a slight increase in the return of persons previously displaced, as well as the movement of displaced people to the locations of their primary displacement. Although the majority of IDPs were identified in host communities, displacement sites continue to host a significant proportion (41%) of IDPs.

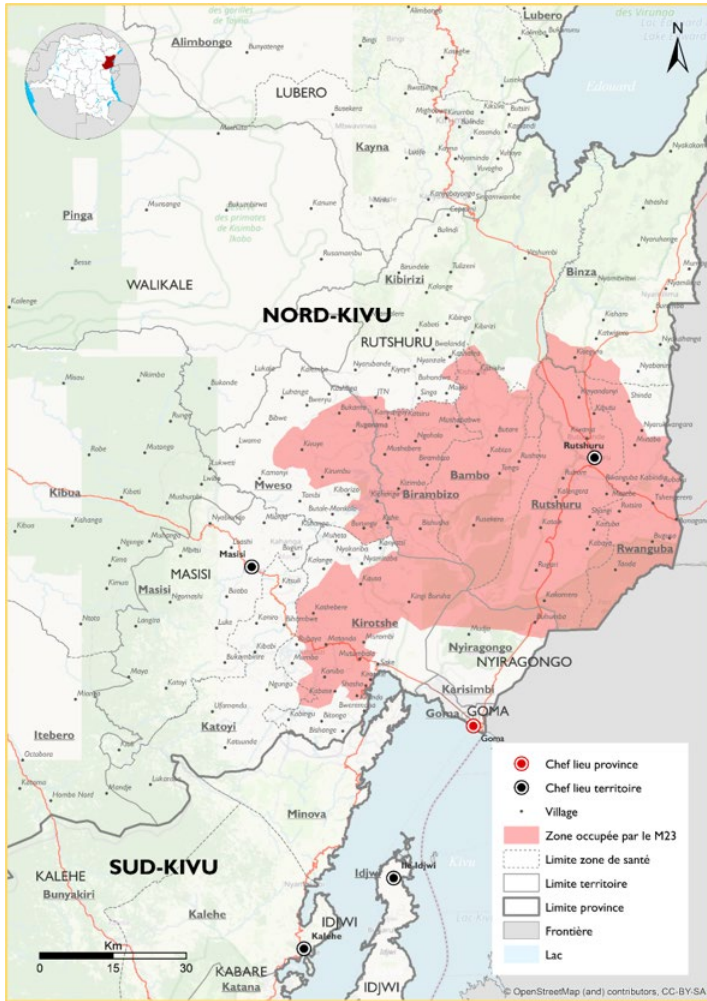
While some of these sites offer temporary shelter and basic assistance, most, including new sites, are not always able to respond adequately to the needs of the affected population. These sites are often overcrowded and struggle to provide basic services such as a sense of security, drinking water, food and sanitation, exacerbating the difficulties faced by displaced people. As a result, the vulnerability of displaced people has increased, particularly for those already facing difficult living conditions.

Types of Location	Households	Individuals	Male	Female
Host Community	173,517	898,188	381,344	516,844
Sites outside the CCCM	44,945	218,716	89,287	129,429
Sites under the CCCM	113,811	407,402	172,187	235,215
Total	332,273	1,524,306	642,818	881,488

From 23 to 27 February 2024, clashes were reported in Masisi territory, in the Kamuronza groupement on the Sake hills in Rutoboko and in the Mupfuni-Shanga groupement on the Bweremana-Shasha axis in Ngumba, Kiluku, Nambi and the surrounding area. These clashes led to further displacement of people who had remained in Sake and Mubambiro towards Nzulo in Masisi territory and towards the city of Goma.

ACCESSIBILITY AND MAPPING OF AREAS UNDER M23 CONTROL

Since the M23 armed group took over the town of Shasha on 3 February 2024, traffic on the road connecting the town of Goma to Bukavu has been paralysed. This is the fourth supply road in Goma to be cut by the M23 group, after the Goma-Rutshuru axis, the Sake-Kitshanga-Mweso axis and the Sake-Masisi centre axis. The blockage of these main roads could have major consequences for access to basic necessities for vulnerable populations in need and could also have an impact on food prices in the city of Goma and the surrounding area.

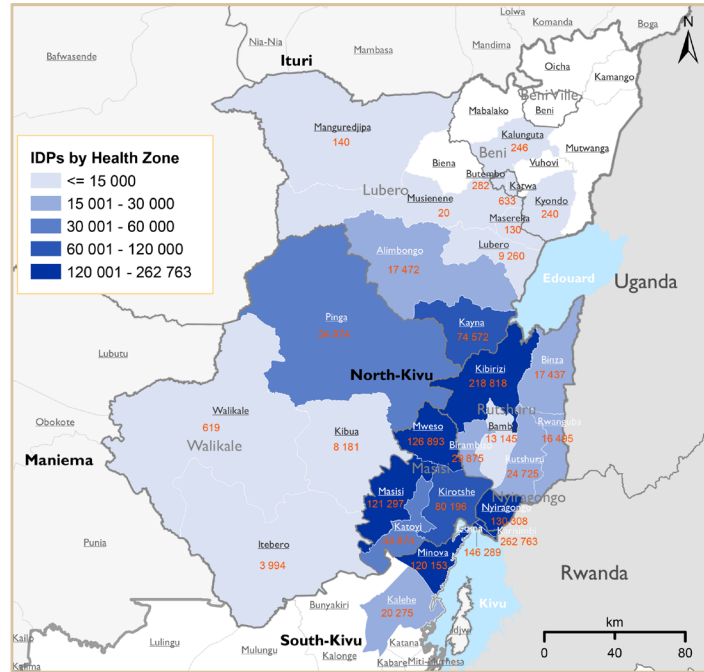


RETURN OF AFFECTED POPULATION

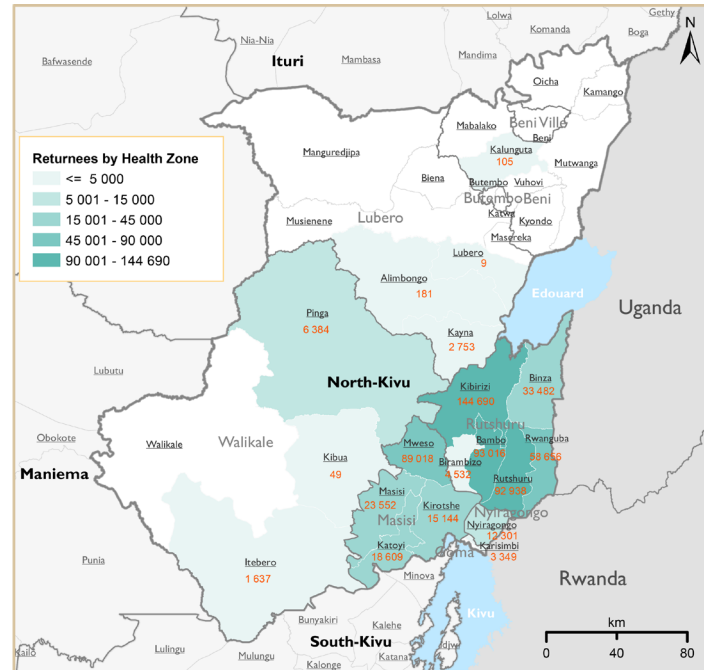
The results of the M23 crisis-related displacement assessments carried out between the period from 21 and 28 February 2024 identified a total of 600,405 returnees from 122,330 households. The trend of returns has increased by two per cent compared with the number recorded during the previous assessment and has been reported particularly in the territory of Rutshuru.

The return trend is still fairly modest. The return of displaced persons from the sites and collective centres of Bweremana to Masisi territory has been reported. This population returned to Minova and surrounding areas in Kalehe territory (South Kivu). Poor living conditions, a lack of assistance in the areas of displacement and the relative calm observed in the villages of origin were reported as the main reasons for return among returnee populations.

MAP - DISPLACEMENT



MAP - RETURNS



PERCEPTION OF PRIORITY NEEDS

The sudden influx of new arrivals is exacerbating the already limited or non-existent availability of essential resources in the affected areas. This shortage is leading to fierce competition for resources between displaced populations and local communities. The situation is particularly serious for vulnerable members of the displaced population, including children, the elderly, pregnant women and persons with disabilities.