

## **Who sending medicines for 60 000 Affected by drc crisis**

### **Geography & Geology**

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31 October, 2008 | GOMA/GENEVA -- The World Health Organization and Italy will be sending 10 tonnes of medical supplies to help the tens of thousands of people affected by the ongoing insecurity in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. Intensive efforts are needed to prevent the spread of communicable diseases among the fleeing population and to treat the physical trauma caused by the violence.

The World Health Organization is coordinating the health response to the emergency, and today convened an urgent meeting of partners including UN agencies, international and national nongovernmental organization and government health providers. The meeting was held to identify the urgent health needs confronting those in the affected areas.

The Government of Italy and WHO are sending a shipment of essential medicines that can assist 60 000 people for one month, along with drugs and supplies to treat diarrhoeal diseases, malaria and trauma injuries. WHO has already provided emergency medical supplies from its stocks to NGOs operating in Goma, the main city in eastern DRC.

WHO has also helped re-establish activities of the blood bank at Goma's main hospital, where staffing shortages and insecurity had hampered its operations. Staffing and financial support have been provided by WHO to ensure the bank's operations.

Major health concerns in the region include:

- The widespread threat of violence that translates into deadly wounds, sexual violence, and mental and psychosocial traumas;
- Limited or no access to food that can result in acute malnutrition;
- Limited access to water and appropriate sanitation, which can cause outbreaks of diarrhoeal diseases;

- A lack of shelter and consequent acute respiratory infections;
- Low vaccine-coverage, combined with mass displacement, will contribute to the spread of measles, a highly fatal illness in such emergency situations;
- Loss of access to reproductive health services contributes to high numbers of maternal and neonatal deaths;
- Limited essential drugs contributes and restricted access the health facilities contributes to increased illness and death;
- The breakdown of the disease surveillance system in the face of the growing risk of outbreaks.