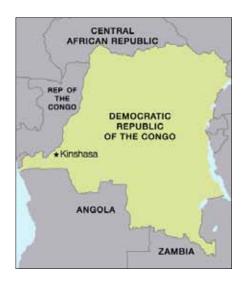
OXFAMIN DR CONGO

Violence, poverty and preventable diseases have killed an estimated 5.4 million people in the Democratic Republic of Congo

IN NUMBERS*

1,900,000 total people helped



THE SITUATION

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) is abundantly rich in resources, but decades of bad governance, foreign interference and brutal armed conflict have taken an horrific toll. Since 1998 an estimated 5.4 million people have died because of the violence, endemic poverty and most of all preventable diseases. More than 2 million people have fled their homes.

The current conflict dates back to the early 1990s and the Rwandan genocide, when both perpetrators and victims fled

into eastern Congo. Fuelled by illegal mineral exploitation, weak state authority, and porous borders through which weapons easily flow, the conflict has also been exacerbated by military attempts to forcibly disarm rebel groups, making life even worse for civilians. All parties – the rebels, the Government army, the police – have been responsible for abuses of civilians. The conflict continues to devastate communities across eastern DRC.



HOW OXFAM IS HELPING

Our emergency response concentrates on providing clean water and sanitation, and we work with community groups to promote good hygiene practices to help prevent diseases such as malaria and cholera. Unlike in many large emergencies, the people forced from their homes by violence tend to be hosted by other local communities, rather than in big camps. Oxfam works with these communities to help more than 800,000 people affected by the conflict.

Providing services alone is not enough, however, and Oxfam trains and supports local community committees to protect civilians' rights. These committees engage with the police, army and the legal system to try and put an end to illegal detentions, extortion and other rights abuses. This work goes hand in hand with Oxfam's global lobbying and advocacy efforts to raise attention to the conflict and civilians' suffering.

In the north east of the country, the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) has terrorised civilians for years, attacking villages, abducting women and children, and destroying livelihoods. We provide clean water to communities, hospitals and schools in the region, and provide support to people living with HIV and AIDS.

Eastern DRC is extremely lush and fertile, but the conflict and obstructions such as checkpoints – where farmers are forced to pay bribes to get to markets – mean it doesn't produce as much food as it should. We provide a number of farmers' associations across the region with the seeds, tools and technical advice they need.

While conflict still rages in the east, communities in western DRC are gradually rebuilding their lives. Oxfam runs longer-term development projects to help recently-returned refugees and displaced people settle back into their communities,

by helping them earn an income.

We support farmers and small businesses, and provide equipment, such as nets for fishermen and animal vaccines for herders.

One in three Congolese children don't get the chance to go to school – trapping future generations in the cycle of poverty. We work with local parent/teacher associations around Kinshasa and Mbandaka to construct and renovate classrooms, train teachers, and provide equipment. We provide schools with clean running water and new latrines, to try and ensure that children stay healthy to learn.

Ultimately Oxfam believes that better governance in the Congo could greatly alleviate poverty. We work closely with teachers' unions and farmers' associations to help them hold their Government accountable.

