

# DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC)



The DRC is grappling with long-term instability, massive-scale and protracted humanitarian needs, and ongoing governance challenges. Current responses to ongoing health outbreaks are complicated by mistrust of and insecurity for humanitarian actors.

## Country Context

Years of acute and chronic crises mark the DRC, including outbreaks of violence and insecurity from armed groups that led to high numbers of internally displaced people. DRC hosts over 500,000 refugees from neighboring countries, primarily Rwanda, the Central African Republic, and South Sudan. According to the Human Development Index, the DRC is among the poorest countries in the world—176 out of 189 countries. Insecurity, governance challenges, and mistrust of the health system have made the DRC particularly vulnerable to health outbreaks, including the current Ebola and measles outbreaks. Since January 2019, the measles outbreak has claimed more than twice as many lives as Ebola, with 250,000 reported cases of measles across all 26 provinces, resulting in over 5,000 deaths.

## Key Figures



**15.9 million**

in need of humanitarian assistance



**Over 3,300**

Ebola cases confirmed as of December 2019



**Over 5,000**

dead from measles



**73%**

of the population lives in extreme poverty (approximately 61 million)



**\$1.82 billion**

in funding requested for humanitarian response

## How is the U.S. Involved?

The U.S. is the largest bilateral donor to the DRC, giving an estimated \$500 million per year to support governance, health, and sanitation programs.

## On-the-Ground Perspective

- Since January 2019, there have been 321 security incidents against NGOs, more than any other country, limiting access and causing significant logistical and administrative hurdles.
- Violence and community acceptance have been significant problems in the Ebola response. According to World Vision, a lack of trust leads patients to avoid care, leave health facilities, and refuse safe and dignified burials to reduce Ebola transmission.
- The DRC is currently suffering the largest and most severe measles outbreak in the world fueled by low rates of immunization and high levels of malnutrition, which push up the number of deaths.

## Responses and Actions

- With U.S. support, the DRC has been polio-free for four years. U.S. investments helped fortify DRC's fragile health system, providing primary health care services at 1,793 health facilities in 78 health zones, serving over 12 million people in seven provinces.
- USAID and the United Kingdom Department for International Development (DFID) have jointly funded a five-year education program to improve reading outcomes of 1.5 million grade 1-4 students.

References available at [interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport](https://www.interaction.org/2020globalsituationreport).

