

Around 260,000 children in DR Congo's Kasai region suffering severe acute malnutrition

More than a quarter of a million children in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) – and thousands of others who have fled with their families to nearby provinces – are suffering severe and acute malnutrition, and need lifesaving treatment, said the UN Children's Fund (UNICEF) on Wednesday.

Between 2016 and 2018, large numbers of people were displaced from their homes due to militia-led violence and insecurity in the Kasais, fueling rights abuses and high levels of malnutrition among children.

While pockets of insecurity still remain, thousands who had fled, have now returned to their communities: "We have been working tirelessly with partners and local communities in the Kasai region to support the slow recovery process following years of conflict and violence that have devastated children and families," said Gianfranco Rotigliano, [UNICEF](#) Representative in the DRC.

At the same time, at least 300,000 Congolese are returning from Angola, causing additional stress on health centers, schools and other basic services in Kasai and compromising access to essential and lifesaving services for many children.

"We are concerned that recent gains for children might be lost in this fragile situation, now that we have many people returning to the region from Angola", the UNICEF Representative pointed out.

Over the last two years, UNICEF and its partners have treated 200,000 severely malnourished children in the Kasai region and rehabilitated 500 burned-down or looted classrooms so children could return to school.

It has also assisted more than 100,000 children with psychosocial support and education material and supported more than 5,000 unaccompanied children and those associated with militias, helping to reintegrate them back into their families and communities.

Moreover, since 2017, UNICEF and its partners in Kasai have vaccinated nearly four million children against measles and yellow fever; organized access to health care for more than 163,000 people; provided 900,000 people with water, sanitation and hygiene kits in cholera-prone zones; secured access to community spaces for learning for 78,000 children; provided essential household items to nearly 150,000 people; and reached more than six million people with key life-saving messages.