



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO COUNTRY REPORT

THE STATE OF THE HUMANITARIAN
SYSTEM 2026



5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Our findings show two pictures for the state of the humanitarian system in DRC.

One points to progress made in the system, ranging from delivering aid based on internationally recognised criteria in more accessible zones, to the visible effects of food distribution, to actors adapting their operations to better assist people affected by crisis, and to the setting up of a joint humanitarian action plan.

On the other hand, we found several factors that hinder the performance of the humanitarian system. It is strongly dominated by the international community, which holds the funding, controls resources and sets the agenda. This power exercised by the international community over local actors, including government officials, lies at the origin of several cases of malpractice (see [section 4.1](#)). These actors operate with excessive freedom, reinforced by poor engagement on the part of the state, which allows some staff to impose practices that do not comply with humanitarian ethics. This includes corruption, diverting humanitarian aid, and sexual exploitation and abuse – practices mainly facilitated by weak accountability mechanisms and the impunity often enjoyed by perpetrators.

This DRC country research illustrates how power imbalances and state disengagement in a prolonged conflict setting that is characterised by weak state authority, high external dependence and accountability failures can distort and weaken the governance of the humanitarian system. In such contexts, corruption,

embezzlement and various forms of misconduct can become widespread and common in humanitarian action, as reported by several interviewees and experienced firsthand by the research team throughout their careers. These practices undermine the effectiveness of humanitarian response, and they also damage the credibility and overall reputation of the humanitarian sector.

The effectiveness of humanitarian action in DRC therefore requires greater involvement of the government



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and other local actors to enable participatory and coordinated humanitarian governance, as well as strengthened localisation and accountability to affected populations. This would also diversify resources, meaning that humanitarian action would rely on both external and local resources, thus reducing strong external dependency. Localisation efforts would better equip and involve local actors, thereby improving the effectiveness of aid on the ground. Strengthening accountability to achieve greater transparency, trust and effectiveness would reduce the prevalence of bad practices, including corruption, fraud, the diversion of funds and other behaviours such as sexual exploitation and abuse.

