



DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO COUNTRY REPORT

THE STATE OF THE HUMANITARIAN
SYSTEM 2026

ANNEX 2: INTERVIEW GUIDE

PART 1: OPENING QUESTIONS (5 MINUTES)

Shape and size of the humanitarian system in your area (events, threats, access to aid)

Q1. Can you briefly describe your role as a government agency/office in the humanitarian response in your area since 2023 and 2024? What types of crisis have you responded to within this period?

- **Probe 1:** Since 2023, whom do affected populations in your area typically turn to for support?
- **Probe 2:** To what extent do they turn to the government for support? Through what mechanisms? Please provide examples
- **Probe 3:** What have been the key humanitarian challenges over the past two years?

Q2. Please describe the overall structure of the humanitarian system in your area of intervention. Among the various actors (e.g., international organizations, UN agencies, national NGOs, local community groups, government entities, private sector, diaspora), which have been most impactful since 2023 and 2024, and why? What other types of actors (e.g., national disaster management, local NGOs, community-based organizations, churches/religious groups, traditional leaders, diaspora, private sector, self-help groups) have been significantly involved in providing or coordinating aid?

- **Probe 1:** Are there specific areas where any actors are notably absent or underperforming?
- **Probe 2 :** Is there any other coordination mechanisms with actors outside the system?
- **Probe 3:** How has the humanitarian landscape in your area (conflicts and health crises) changed since 2023 and 2024?

PART 2: AID EFFECTIVENESS AND THEMATIC QUESTIONS (95 MINUTES)

a) Provision of enough assistance (15 minutes)

Q3. In your opinion as government representative/UN agency/donor/civil society actor/national NGO representative/local chief/private sector actor, do you think humanitarian assessments adequately capture affected population priority needs? What types of needs do they typically capture, and why?

- **Probe 1:** Do you also conduct humanitarian needs assessment? If yes, how and with which funding?

- **Probe 2:** In your opinion, what needs are often left unaddressed? Please elaborate.

Q4a. Over the past two years, how have changes in the operational context here (e.g., shifts in conflict dynamics, emergence of new crises or needs) and/or changes in donor funding allocation influenced the ability of humanitarian assistance to adequately meet people's needs? Please provide concrete examples.

- **Probe 1:** How did the USAID Budget cut affected aid service delivery in DRC? Please provide concrete examples.

Q4b. About the implications of USAID cuts, how aid is being prioritised in DRC following the new ongoing humanitarian new response process? Please provide concrete examples.

- **Probe 1:** Which geographic areas, people, and sectors are prioritised and why, which are losing out?
- **Probe 2:** Who is involved in making decisions? What are the worries about the implications?

b) Effective aid and efficient action (15 minutes)

Q5. Tell us your experience on how aid received has been effective and efficient.

- **Probe 1:** Can you share an example of aid that you found particularly effective and efficient, and explain why?
- **Probe 2:** Does the government services have measures to be more time and cost efficient? and how important has this timeliness been for the effectiveness of your programs?
- **Probe 3:** What choices have you made to ensure that operations are more efficient in times of funding cuts?

Q6. In your view, how well does humanitarian assistance meet the actual needs of people, including vulnerable groups, in your area?

- **Probe 1:** Are there specific population groups (e.g., people in particular geographic areas, IDPs, refugees, host communities, specific ethnic groups, or other minority groups) who are not receiving the aid they need due to being overlooked or marginalized? Please give an example.
- **Probe 2:** Look for system/policy level barriers/Security constraint/social exclusion, what are the barriers that prevent aid from reaching the right people?

Aid diversion and corruption (15 minutes)

Q7. Based on your work and observations over the past two years, can you describe any instances or patterns you have encountered where aid was **diverted, misused, or redirected**? This could be by individuals, organizations, or authorities.

- **Probe 1:** What do you perceive as the main reasons or motivations behind these

incidents (e.g., personal gain, political influence, systemic weaknesses, lack of awareness)?

- **Probe 2:** What measures or safeguards are in place to prevent aid misuse? How effective are these in your context? What role does the government play in either enabling or preventing such issues?

Q8. There are often perceptions in complex environments that aid distribution might not always reach everyone equally. From your position, what are the **factors that can contribute to perceptions of favouritism or exclusion** in aid delivery? How does the government aim to address these perceptions?

- **Probe 1:** Where these negative perceptions exist, how have these impacted aid integrity and community trust? Do affected communities trust in local actors or international actors more?

Protection, dignity and accountability (15 minutes)

Q9. International bodies and local groups have documented alarming instances of violence against civilians, including gender-based violence, during the conflict in the DRC. What are your views on these reports?

- **Probe 1:** As a government official/UN agency/donor/civil society actor/national NGO representative/local chief/private sector actor, what do you think are key ways the government can ensure respect the dignity and promote the protection of people affected/ vulnerable populations? Can you share your experiences and examples in addressing protection issues?
- **Probe 2:** Which specific actors bear the primary responsibility for ensuring the protection of vulnerable groups?

Q10a. Building on the topic of protecting vulnerable populations, can you discuss the measures in place, and any challenges, related to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) by humanitarian actors themselves in the delivery of aid? This includes issues of accountability and support for survivors.

- **Probe 1:** Have the changes made following the reports on SEA in 2022 (refers to Ebola in Beni) led to more positive approaches?

10b. Building on the topic of protecting vulnerable populations, can you discuss the measures in place, and any challenges, related to preventing and responding to sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) by humanitarian actors themselves in the delivery of aid? This includes issues of accountability and support for survivors.

- **Probe 1:** Have the changes made following the reports on SEA in 2022 (refers to Ebola in Beni) led to more positive approaches?
- **Probe 2:** What explains reported increases in cases from MONUSCO?
- **Probe 3:** Which PSEA initiatives have actually been implemented since the scandal (refers to Ebola in Beni), and what barriers or enablers shape their

effectiveness?

- **Probe 4:** What practices do communities themselves view as protective or dignity enhancing?
- **Probe 5:** What are the improvements or gaps in reporting pathways, support, and behaviour of aid workers?
- **Probe 6:** How do agencies coordinate on PSEA, and to what extent are local and women-led organisations included?

Q10c. What promising protection practices (including child protection) exist among NGOs, camp committees, or community-led structures?

- **Probe 1:** Please provide concrete examples in your context.

Q11. How does the government ensure **transparency and accountability in aid distribution** for the communities you serve (Mechanisms in place for feedback or report concerns about aid misuse or unfairness; channels known and trusted by communities that they feel safe to use; complaints followed up on and tangible changes or outcomes, because of their feedback)?

- **Probe 1:** What does the Government still need to do to strengthen transparency and accountability towards affected populations?

c) Coordination, localisation and sustainability (15 minutes)

Q12. How would you describe the partnership between international humanitarian actors (like donors, UN agencies, or INGOs) and your government/local actors in the DRC? Has this relationship changed recently? Do you have suggestions for how international groups can better support local capacity and leadership?

- **Probe 1:** How is humanitarian aid coordinated in your area? Can you identify the key actors involved (e.g., UN, INGOs, local government, community leaders) and describe how they typically coordinate?
- **Probe 2:** What specific aspects of this coordination have worked well, and what have been the challenges, and why?
- **Probe 3:** How does the Government contribute to this coordination of humanitarian assistance?

Q13. From your perspective, what concrete changes or efforts have you observed in the way international humanitarian organizations operate in the DRC that aim to shift power, resources, or decision-making authority more towards local actors or communities? Does the Government work with local communities? Can you describe your interactions with these groups and their outcomes?

- **Probe 1:** Are there barriers for your government or international actors supporting these groups during conflict (e.g., conflict, administrative factors, and access restrictions)? Are there specific examples where these efforts have been successful, or where significant challenges remain?

- **Probe 2:** In your view, have international humanitarian actors upheld their commitments to localization by ensuring that significant funding reaches local organizations?
- **Probe 3:** Can you share any examples of successful or promising decolonization initiatives within this context, whether at the policy, funding, or programmatic level?

Q14. How well do humanitarian organizations coordinate with development and peace actors to ensure that people affected by crises are protected both in the short and long term? Does the government play a role in those relationships? What positive or negative impacts has humanitarian aid had on social, environmental, or economic aspects in the DRC?

- **Probe 1:** How involved are national and local authorities in planning long-term solutions for humanitarian needs, especially with development and peace actors?
- **Probe 2:** Are there examples where humanitarian efforts have positive or negative impacts on social, environmental, or economic aspects in the DRC? What challenges exist in improving the coordination Government and peace actors at both the programmatic and political levels?
- **Probe 3:** Do these partnerships with international actors on long-term priorities affect government sovereignty (e.g., through conditional funding or support to sub-national authorities)?

Q15. Tell us your experience on how humanitarian activities make efforts to address longer-term vulnerabilities, risks and root causes of crisis (existing and functioning risk reduction and resilience initiatives locally/by affected population) ?

- **Probe 1:** What are these initiatives and how do they operate? Please give examples of programmes that support risk reduction and resilience or people in protracted displacement or chronic conflict locally and that make progress with connecting with peace and development actors in this context.
- **Probe 2 :** If they exist and are different from the above initiatives, can you provide examples of programs that aim to build self-reliance or support people in protracted displacement/chronic conflict to transition away from humanitarian-only responses?

Q16a. Regarding the Humanitarian-Development-Peace (HDP) nexus, what ongoing or new efforts are in place to strengthen collaboration among humanitarian, development, and peace actors in your area? How are these efforts addressing the dynamics of new or ongoing conflicts?

- **Probe 1:** To what extent are chronic needs deprioritised in favour of acute emergencies, and how do agencies manage trade-offs between protracted and sudden-onset crises?
- **Probe 2:** How is cash programming affected by funding cuts?

- **Probe 3:** Are there additional examples of how the quality of aid is affected? (Eg shelter)
- **Probe 4:** Has there been any progress on the HDP nexus (Eg livelihoods)? How and why?
- **Probe 5:** Can you provide specific examples of where this collaboration has worked well, or faced challenges?

Q16b. Thinking about disaster and epidemic response, how has the system responded to Monkey Pox pandemic crisis in the DRC? What lessons learned from the previous pandemic (COVID-19) are currently being put into practice? Please provide concrete examples.

- **Probe 1:** How effective was the collaboration between community structures, state health institutions, and humanitarian responders?
- **Probe 2:** How were political or security constraints managed?
- **Probe 3:** How did displacement affect the effectiveness of the response? Tell us whether there were cases of data losses and difficulties in disease tracking.
- **Probe 4:** How have COVID-19 lessons (on prevention practices, community communication, and clinical navigation) shaped the MPox response?

d) Aid and humanitarian principles (10 minutes)

Q17. In your view, do humanitarian actors, operating in the DRC generally maintain strict neutrality humanity, independence, and impartiality in their operations? Have you seen instances where political or local favouritism may have influenced targeting choices?

- **Probe 1:** If so, have you seen this have an effect on conflict dynamics? For example, exacerbating local divisions?
- **Probe 2:** How have these situations affected your relationship and coordination with humanitarian actors?

Q18. Access to affected populations is crucial for humanitarian action. What role does your Government play in facilitating timely and reliable access for humanitarian actors to volatile or hard-to-reach areas in the DRC?

- **Probe 1:** What challenges does your government face in enabling humanitarian access, and what approaches have proven useful in overcoming these?
- **Probe 2:** How does your government advocate for and protect safe spaces that allow humanitarian actors to operate freely and without interference?
- **Probe 3:** In your view, how do international humanitarian law (IHL) and human rights law apply to ensuring humanitarian access and the protection of civilians in the DRC?

Part 3: Closing questions (5 minutes)

Q19. Tell us if you have any other experience, you would like to share related to



humanitarian action in the DRC. Please elaborate.

Q20. Do you have any questions for us?



