

Thousands of people recently displaced by conflict in the vicinity of Goma, North Kivu, are facing a critical lack of access to clean drinking water, raising serious health concerns, according to a report.

This crisis comes as Médecins Sans Frontières (MSF) warns of the potential for a rapid spread of waterborne diseases and calls for an urgent response from the humanitarian community.

The influx of approximately 2,000 displaced individuals has exacerbated an already dire humanitarian situation.

Displaced people are forced to travel long distances, sometimes for up to half a day, to collect insufficient quantities of water due to a lack of adequate containers. This scarcity, combined with inadequate sanitation facilities, has created a dangerous environment for disease outbreaks.

“The situation is truly dramatic,” says Rachidi Bandu, MSF’s water, hygiene, and sanitation technical referent in North Kivu. “People are defecating right next to their shelters, and flies are everywhere. We are urgently installing sanitation facilities, but many latrines were originally intended for schools and are not properly maintained.”

MSF reports that current water distribution provides an average of only 3 liters per person per day, falling well below the World Health Organization’s recommended minimum of 15 liters.

This limited access to clean water significantly increases the risk of cholera and other waterborne diseases spreading among the displaced population, whose health and well-being are already precarious.

MSF is currently operating at only 20% capacity to meet the needs of the displaced population and is calling for the immediate mobilization of all humanitarian actors to address this critical situation.

The organization emphasizes the urgency of providing a minimum of 15 liters of clean water per person daily to mitigate the risk of disease outbreaks and alleviate the suffering of these vulnerable communities.