

Statement by Mr. Christos Stylianides, European Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management

Geneva, 13 April 2018

Let me first say that it is an honour for the European Union, and for me personally, to co-host this conference.

I was in the Democratic Republic of Congo just a few weeks ago. On that occasion, I visited North and South Kivu. Two of the most affected provinces for years by all kind of disasters.

I saw with my own eyes the massive humanitarian needs on the ground. The high number of displaced people. The many malnourished children. The number of victims of violence. Unthinkable violence. Unfortunately these are not fake news. I wish they were. But they are not. This is the hard reality of the ground.

My message in the DRC and here today is clear. The European Union stands by the people of DRC. We will continue our support. For as long as it takes. With protection to the most vulnerable. With health assistance. With tangible support to the victims of social violence.

All these would not have been possible without the assistance of our humanitarian partners. Allow me to say this: the humanitarian workers in DRC are real heroes. They try to help the most vulnerable. And they ignore the numerous attacks and kidnappings of their colleagues. And of course killings.

But it is of course the civilian population that is the main victim of violence and conflict in DRC. And that brings me to your question.

Insecurity and violence force people to flee their homes. It will be a matter of time before they need humanitarian aid to survive: food, shelter, water, health. Education for their children. We have seen it in the provinces of Kasai and in Tanganyika in 2017. Now we see it in Ituri. In North and South Kivu. The stories of violence that I heard from the victims themselves 3 weeks ago cannot be forgotten. The human horror and despair cannot be forgotten.

Obviously, there are other elements which create humanitarian needs. Such as climate change, epidemics and the list is long. But what I saw in DRC is a protection crisis. Fuelled by insecurity and violence.

This is why the European Union supports and will continue to support people in need of protection and assistance in the country.

Dear friends,

As the crisis in DRC is getting worse, our humanitarian commitment must get stronger. We cannot continue with business as usual.

Today, I am honored to reiterate the European Union's support and solidarity with the people of the DRC. In 2018, seventy-seven (77) million euros (or 95 million US dollars) will be provided by the European Union's budget to support the needs of the most vulnerable in the

DRC: With food, water, shelter, protection, and health assistance against disease outbreaks. But also with support for reconciliation, food security and resilience building.

I have recently announced another 6 million euros to support the needs of Congolese refugees in the neighbouring countries.

Dear friends,

Time is running against us. It is now imperative to give the vulnerable people of DRC the help they need. All of us, the DRC authorities, the donor countries, the United Nations, the humanitarian partners have a duty to help. And give people hope.