

BLESSED AID – JULY AND AUGUST 2025 BRIEF SITUATION REPORT IN NORTH KIVU PROVINCE



Photo taken at Shasha village, Muphuni Shanga groupment, Masisi territory. July 2025

1. Introduction

This is a brief report summarizing the activities that our organization, Blessed Aid, carried out in July and August 2025. These activities were carried out in the Kamuronza and Muphuni Shanga groupments in Masisi territory as well as in Beni town, in the North Kivu province. They were carried out in accordance with Blessed Aid's strategic areas of intervention.

2. Blessed Aid Profile

Blessed Aid is a Congolese non-governmental organization holding a Special Consultative Status with the UN Economic and Social Council (ECOSOC). Founded in 2002, Blessed Aid works in the fields of humanitarian action, community development, and peacebuilding. Operating primarily in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, particularly in North Kivu province, Blessed Aid has established itself as a leading local player in supporting vulnerable populations, particularly women, girls, and children affected by armed conflict, natural disasters, and forced displacement. www.blessedaid.org

The organization is distinguished by its integrated approach, combining emergency humanitarian response, sustainable economic empowerment, human rights promotion, and social transformation.

Blessed Aid is a Non-Governmental Organization headquartered in Goma, DRC

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Blessed Aid envisions a world left free of discrimination, violence, poverty and is based on an inclusive vision in which local communities are agents of change and not merely beneficiaries.

Blessed Aid's specific features and value added

- ✓ **Strong local roots:** Present in North Kivu for over two decades, Blessed Aid benefits from a deep understanding of the local context, community dynamics, and the specific needs of vulnerable groups.
- ✓ **Local and participatory approach:** The organization works directly with communities, relying on local facilitators and beneficiary committees, ensuring ownership, accountability, and sustainability of its actions.
- ✓ **Priority targeting women, girls and children:** Its work is based on the premise that strengthening women, girls and children's economic and social empowerment is an essential lever for breaking cycles of poverty and violence, particularly in post-conflict contexts.
- ✓ **Specialist in post-crisis economic resilience:** Blessed Aid has acquired solid experience in supporting the reconstruction of livelihoods, the development of economic solidarity groups (VSLA, IGA), and the establishment of community mutual aid mechanisms.
- ✓ **Proven expertise in SGBV and gender:** Since 2020, through its **Gender Protect program**, the organization has strengthened the socioeconomic capacities of more than 600 women and girls, while integrating psychosocial and legal support for survivors of conflict-related sexual violence.
- ✓ **Humanitarian-Peace-Development Nexus Approach:** Blessed Aid adopts a holistic and innovative strategy that links immediate humanitarian response, rehabilitation, and community capacity-building for peace and resilience.
- ✓ **Proven implementation capabilities:** Blessed Aid has successfully carried out several projects funded by international partners, demonstrating its ability to manage funds, adhere to transparency standards, and deliver concrete results with a strong impact on the ground.

Strategic Areas of Intervention

Blessed Aid's actions are structured around four operational pillars:

- ✓ Overall Protection & Empowerment of vulnerable people (women, young girls & boys, children, internally displaced persons);
- ✓ Equitable access to quality education for all, particularly in rural and post-conflict areas;
- ✓ Humanitarian-Peace-Development Nexus approach, based on community engagement and inclusive governance;
- ✓ Promotion of community health and mental health, with a focus on basic care, reproductive health, and violence prevention.

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3. Activities carried out in July and August 2025

3.1. Situation of women, girls and children victims of rape

Following the ongoing security situation in North Kivu province caused by the fights between the DRC government forces and M23 rebels and by the latter's occupation of the city of Goma in January 2025, activities for humanitarian organizations have been reduced on the ground. Many humanitarian actors are only providing a minimum service in order to alleviate the difficulties faced by civilian populations. In our report on the situation of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and children affected by conflict in east of Democratic Republic of Congo as published in May 2025, we notably mentioned the difficulties faced by internally displaced persons (IDPs) in their return environments; the situation of vulnerable children and of those associated with armed forces and groups; and finally the situation of women and girls. These difficulties range from food insecurity due to the problem of agricultural recovery, the forced recruitment of children into armed forces and groups operating in North Kivu province, to rape and other sexual violence targeting women and young girls.

Speaking specifically of rape, last June we reported a case of looting and rape of more than 47 women and girls in the villages of Ngumba, Shonga, Bwagazi, Kirotshe, Mwambaliro, Canve, Lushangi, and Mayutsha-kisisi/Sake in the Karuba, Muphunyi/Shanga, and Kamuronza groupments. Our focal points listened to these women and then referred them to the Shasha Health Centre for medical care.

During July and August 2025, the situation remained very hard, particularly with regard to unaccompanied children (UCC), separated children (SC), and to victims of sexual violence (VSV) in the areas of Sake-Kitshanga, Sake-Masisi, and Sake-Shasha-Bweremana, in Masisi territory. During the months of July and August, for example, 41 women and girls were raped in Bweremana, 44 in Shasha and 170 in Sake and its surrounding areas. These figures are so alarming that Blessed Aid is calling for intervention from stakeholders working on the issue of GBV to provide holistic care to these survivors. It should also be noted that several children are victims of atrocities in Masisi territory by armed groups. Other children experience the problem of severe acute malnutrition. Some are identified and referred to care structures and others, such as those released from armed forces and groups, are in transitional foster families (FAT) and social foster families (FAS). Blessed Aid carries out mediation so that these children are accepted on the one hand by their respective families and on the other by members of their communities. In its field work, Blessed Aid mainly adopts the IDMRS approach (Identification, Documentation, Tracing, Mediation, Reunification and Post-reunification Monitoring).

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Statistics data of identified and referred vulnerable children, girls and children as per axis:

N°	Axis	UCC			VSV			Malnutrition		
		F	G	T	F	G	T	F	G	T
01	Shasha	64	37	101	41	0	41	81	61	142
02	Bweremana	29	33	62	44	0	44	213	109	322
03	Sake	48	23	71	170	0	170	37	46	83

Comment: It is observed regarding this board that the rate of people who are victims of sexual violence (VSV) for these two months (July & August) is very high on these three axes, notably 41 for Shasha, 44 for Bweremana and 170 for Sake. According to information collected in the areas, women and young girls are often victims of rape when going to look for food in the fields and when going to look for firewood at Virunga National Park, but others are also raped on their way back home.

3.2. Situation of children in conflict with the law at EGEE Beni



Photo showing the Building of EGEE Beni. August 2025

According to data generated by AI Overview, Care centres or care and education facilities for children in conflict with the law (sometimes referred to as EGEE) are structures designed to accommodate children and adolescents who have been in conflict with the law. Their objective is twofold: to ensure their care and to support them in a process of social, academic, and family reintegration. These establishments aim to provide a suitable environment and follow-up programs to prevent recidivism and promote the successful integration of young people into society.

Blessed Aid staff based in Beni town, in the North Kivu province, had conducted in August 2025, a field mission at EGEE Beni (translated into French as Etablissement de Garde et d'Education pour Enfants) in

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order to understand the situation of children in conflict with the law who have been detained in this establishment. In collaboration with the children's court since 2016, EGEE Beni is one of the three Care centres which exist in Democratic Republic of Congo (EGEE Goma, EGEE Kisangani and EGEE Beni) and is the only one currently working in North Kivu province.

According to Mr Sefu Kambale, the Director of EGEE Beni and who guided Blessed Aid team during this visit, EGEE Beni is built following the international standard separating boys and girls' rooms.



Rooms for boys in conflict with law. Photo taken in August 2025

Actually 45 children in conflict with the law are detained at EGEE Beni (all are boys) among them 25 are under judiciary decision and 20 others under judicial placement order.



Room for girls in conflict with the law (there aren't girls at the moment). Photo taken in August 2025

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Coming from different areas such as Beni town, Beni territory, Butembo and Lubero and sometimes from Rutshuru, these children are accused of having committed rape (70%); robbery, killings and for having been part of forces and armed groups.



Photo showing the room where hearings take place. By Blessed Aid staff in Beni, Aug 2025

4. Difficulties EGEE Beni has been facing

The visit of Blessed Aid at EGEE Beni aimed at understanding the current situation of this care centre and more particularly to make sure children in conflict with the law are well treated, if their rights are effectively respected and then allow us to do advocacy and fundraising. Unfortunately we noticed that the 45 children in conflict with the law who are currently at EGEE Beni have been suffering and their rights are not respected at all. They have no assistance neither from the government of Kinshasa nor from humanitarian organizations. The children have been facing challenges as follows:

- ✓ **Food security:** According to the Director, Mr Sefu Kambale, the EGEE Beni hasn't any means to take care of the 45 children who are awaiting for the decision about their cases. The EGEE Beni is unable and receives no grants from Kinshasa. Only some churches try to bring food to these children (it doesn't happen very often), the Seventh-day Adventist Church, for example, manages to provide a small quantity of food on Saturdays. Children eat this food only during one day or rarely during two days. These children are at this way abandoned by the government of Kinshasa as well as by their parents. Many of these children's members live very far from Beni town. So, it is not easy for them to regularly provide food for their children. Even food coming from Kangwayi prison isn't sufficient and rarely reaches the children at EGEE Beni.
- ✓ **Health care issue:** Another challenge at EGEE Beni is healthcare. We found that this establishment never receives healthcare support from the government of Kinshasa. Only the



International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) that sometimes provides medical assistance to the children at EGEE Beni. Health support is also highly required at this establishment.

- ✓ **Lack of beds and mattresses:** EGEE Beni also misses beds and mattresses for the children who usually pass their days at this establishment. Children difficultly sleep due to lack of beds, mattresses and other materials. There are only 25 mattresses that were recently donated by Monusco/Correction Unit.
- ✓ **Toilet difficulty:** All the boys' toilets are blocked and the EGEE Beni Office does not have means to unblock them.
- ✓ **Electricity supply problem:** The establishment also faces challenges due to electricity. Indeed, the building is electrified but sometimes the office misses means to provide electricity in children's rooms.
- ✓ **Lack of office equipment (computer and other office supply):** For better retention of data relating to identification and attendance of children within the EGEE Beni, this establishment should have computer equipment such as computers, hard discs, internet and premises monitored by 24 hour video surveillance cameras.
- ✓ **Lack of building capacities for EGEE Beni staff members:** It is also good for the staff of EGEE Beni to receive training and capacity buildings in various areas of expertise such as child protection, etc.
- ✓ **Psychological support.** This is another requirement at EGEE Beni. This support is missing despite the periodic intervention of DIVAS North Kivu (Division Provinciale des Affaires Sociales).
- ✓ **Judicial and legal support.** Despite the free judicial and legal support of some lawyers during the hearings, a permanent judicial and legal support would extremely be needed for these children. As most of them come from poor families, this legal support should be free of charge.
- ✓ **Transport issue.** If children are discharged, they have to go back to their families. Then as their villages of origin are located very far from Beni town, many children miss how to join their families. This is why it is also important that EGEE Beni has means to provide transport fees to any child whose case is closed.

Normally the overarching goals of Care centres or care and education facilities for children in conflict with the law are:

- **Protection and Support:** These facilities guarantee the protection of children in conflict with the law and provide them with a support framework adapted to their age and situation.
- **Reintegration:** The objective is to promote the social, family, academic, and professional reintegration of young people so that they can regain their place in society.
- **Alternatives to Detention:** They aim to avoid or limit the use of detention in adult prisons, which is often inappropriate and in violation of international standards, as they must be separated from adults.



We unfortunately note that the rights that should be provided to children in conflict with the law at EGEE Beni are not respected. Instead of being a centre where children in conflict with the law both boys and girls receive rehabilitation, it has become a place increasing stress and trauma to children and where they become more dangerous in the society. Because the fact of missing food during the entire days, develops another aggressive behaviour to these children.

5. Conclusion & Recommendations:

In the above lines, we have just given a brief situation of women, girls and children in the Masisi territory especially at Sake, Shasha and Bweremana. We have also given an overview of children in conflict with the law at EGEE Beni. We do not have the impression to have given all the situation undergone by women, girls and children at the both areas, but we have only summarized some data according to our field work. This is why we call upon other organizations to make more research in order to complete what we have done. At another hand, we would like to inform all who will read this report that Blessed Aid's wish is to actively support the beneficiaries of its actions in the field especially women, girls and children. This is why we would like to request for partnerships from different actors (organizations, foundations, individuals, governments, group of people, etc) according to our strategic areas of intervention (please don't hesitate to contact us via the contact details below). For example, the 45 children in conflict with the law at EGEE Beni are in extreme need to be supported as well as all the victims of sexual and gender based violence.

Thanks to its local roots, specific expertise, and commitment to the women, youth (both girls and boys) and children's rights and marginalized communities, Blessed Aid is a strategic and credible partner for sustainable community recovery initiatives, particularly in areas as complex as North Kivu.

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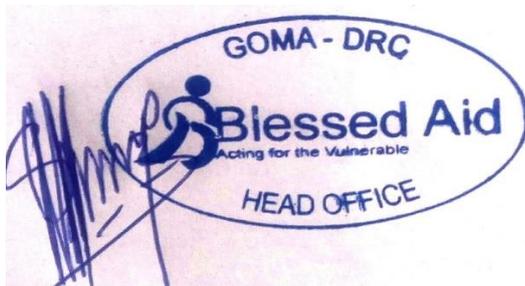
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