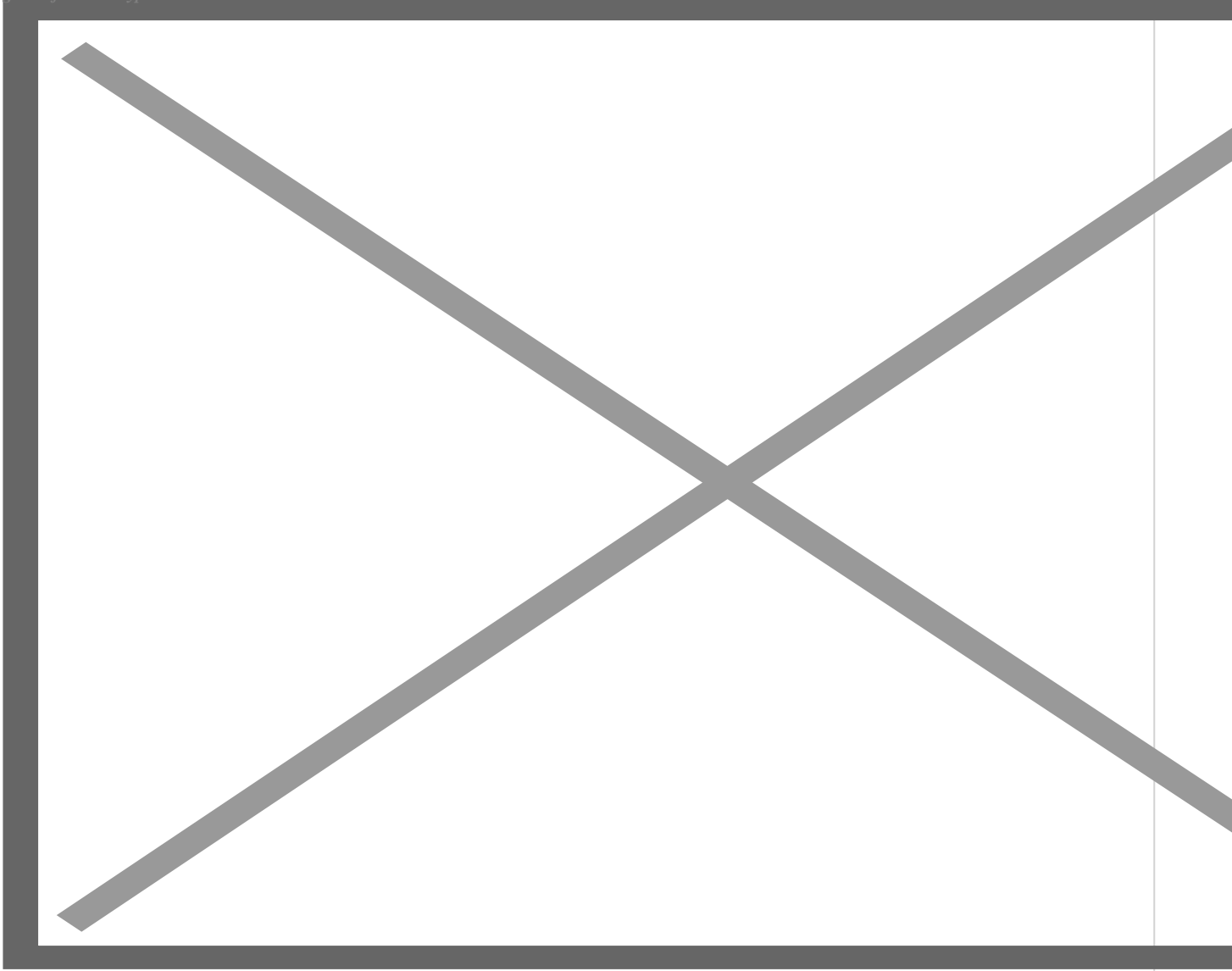


UN says 20,000 homeless, 40 missing in DR Congo volcano aftermath

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People examine a crack on the road caused by earthquakes following the eruption of Mount Nyiragongo volcano near Goma, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo [Djaffar al-Katanty/Reuters]

Kinshasa, May 26 (RHC)-- More than 20,000 people are homeless and 40 are still missing in the aftermath of a volcanic eruption in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo that killed dozens and continues to cause strong earthquakes in the nearby city of Goma, the United Nations has said.

Saturday's eruption sent rivers of lava streaming down the hillside from Mount Nyiragongo, destroying hundreds of homes and forcing thousands to flee, but stopped 300 metres (984 feet) short of Goma airport, the main hub for aid operations in the east of DRC.

The ash cloud caused by the eruption has closed down airports in Goma and Bukavu, and is likely to cause respiratory diseases, the UN Office for Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) said in a statement on Wednesday.

People who fled their homes have lost valuable possessions including motorcycles that were either consumed by the lava flow or looted, OCHA said. The death toll from the eruption rose to 32 on Tuesday.

More than 200 small and medium earthquakes have since caused cracks in buildings and streets in Goma. The cracks, almost 60 cm (2 feet) wide in some places, have caused panic among residents unsure if the danger has passed.

Local volcanologists have recorded hundreds of aftershocks since Nyiragongo roared back into life, including 119 on Monday alone, but say there is hope that the much-feared volcano will calm down. Government officials who visited Goma on Monday announced several relief measures including paying for victims' funerals, supplying roofing material, food and medicines, as well as psychological counselling and emergency repairs of damaged infrastructure.

But residents remain jittery. Hundreds are sheltering in a Rwandan refugee camp, and many are continuing to flee there, according to the Rwandan emergency situations ministry.

Boats are ferrying hundreds of people from Goma to Bukavu, about 70km (43.5 miles) down the shore of Lake Kivu.

<https://www.radiohc.cu/index.php/en/noticias/internacionales/258693-un-says-20000-homeless-40-missing-in-dr-congo-volcano-aftermath>



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