Democratic Republic of the Congo

June 2023

Highlights

- Handover to the local authorities in the Ubangis of 3 equipped health centres and an ambulance each to the villages of Nzakara and Wenze.
- Completion of 2,800 shelters on the Rusayo II site in North Kivu and the transfer of 1,966 households into these from the dangerous Lac Vert spontaneous site.
- Voluntary repatriation of 168 Rwandan refugees (from Goma and Bukavu) and 294 Burundian refugees from Kanvinvira in safety and dignity.

UNHCR hands over to the provincial authorities the modern health centre built and equipped in the development hub village of Nzakara, a village with a high concentration of refugees. The health centre is open to both refugees and the Congolese community. ©UNHCR/Ghislaine Nentobo

KEY FIGURES

523,528 refugees and asylum seekers in DRC

6.29 millions Internally displaced people in DRC

1 million Congolese refugees in Africa

11,712 Congolese refugees repatriated (2021-2023)

Context & Security

Within the framework of protecting refugees, the UNHCR commemorated World Refugee Day on 20 June with the refugees themselves, NGOs and the government. Activities focused on refugee entrepreneurship, with markets in Lubumbashi, Goma and Yakoma showcasing products made by refugees. Progress in the fight against gender-based violence in conflict and post-conflict contexts was also highlighted. The security situation in the regions hosting refugees in North and South Ubangi, Haut-Uele and Ituri remained calm in June.

To facilitate repatriation opportunities, UNHCR organised a tripartite meeting in Nairobi on 26 and 27 June on the voluntary repatriation of Congolese and Rwandan refugees. Following up on commitments made by the parties at a high-level meeting held in Geneva in May 2023, the meeting enabled the two governments of Rwanda and the DRC to reaffirm their commitment to create conditions conducive to the sustainable return and reintegration of refugees and to identify key challenges such as security conditions, documentation and access to land and property for displaced populations.

In Eastern DRC, the conflicts continued with the consequence that on 16 June a System-Wide Scale Up to Level 3 was announced for the humanitarian crisis in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. Initially active for three months, this extension is designed to help overcome bureaucratic and administrative obstacles to a more robust response in terms of protection (including gender-based violence), health, nutrition and food security.

In Ituri, the UNHCR condemned in strongest terms the heinous attacks against vulnerable civilians, especially the 12 June attack in which at least 12 people were burnt alive when their shelters were set on fire. Clashes between non-state armed groups also continued to be reported in many localities in the territories of Rutshuru and Masisi,

North Kivu. In the *Grand Nord* of the North Kivu province, violence and human rights violations committed by other non-state armed groups additionally continued, giving rise to protection monitoring reports of killings, abductions and extortion.

In Luanda, Angola, a quadripartite summit of regional bodies from Southern Africa, East Africa, West Africa and the Great Lakes ended on Tuesday 27 June. Initiated by the African Union, the summit aimed to improve coordination of regional peace efforts and initiatives for Eastern DRC.

Needs-based response for refugees, returnees and stateless people

PROTECTION

- To better combat statelessness, UNHCR Côte d'Ivoire welcomed the Congolese Minister of Justice and a UNHCR delegation from the DRC, led by the UNHCR Representative 12-15 June for a learning exchange on good practices.
- The Gbadolite Sub Office mapped gaps in the response to incidents of Gender Based Violence (GBV) in the provinces of North and South Ubangi. The results, which will be used as an advocacy tool, show that medical and psychological aspects are much better covered than the judicial aspect and socio-economic support.
- In Kasaï Oriental, the legal framework committee finalised, with the support of the UNHCR, a draft edict abolishing customs and practices that devalue girls and women in the province. The adoption of this edict will strengthen the protection of women and girls.
- In South Kivu, 348 people, including 92 women, took part in the 3 awareness-raising sessions on GBV.
- In North-Ubangi, 237 asylum seekers were registered in Inke, Bili and Modale. In South Kivu, UNHCR identified 3,061 Burundian asylum seekers at the Sange assembly point.
- UNHCR and its partners repatriated 168 Rwandan refugees, for a total of 861 returns this year; 294 Burundian refugees were also repatriated from South Kivu; and 226 Central African refugees from South Ubangi. The repatriation rate to the Central African Republic is now at 61.2%, i.e. 1,528 refugees repatriated out of the 2,500 planned.
- As part of the commemoration of World Refugee Day, UNHCR and its partners organised an entrepreneurship fair in Goma, in which 10 refugees and 5 IDPs took part and presented the articles they produce. In Lubumbashi and Yakoma events were organised with the same objective.
- UNHCR carried out an assessment of the Mulitcha spontaneous settlement, 53 km from Kalemie, Tangayika. Around 555 households have been living in difficult conditions for over a year, without decent shelter, access to healthcare, drinking water, etc.
- A total of 623 returnees, including 495 women, were sensitised to the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse and to reporting mechanisms in the territories in Tanganyika province.

EDUCATION

- A total of 138 refugee primary school finalists, including 70 girls, took part in the national primary school test in Haut Katanga and Lualaba provinces. In North Kivu, 593 refugee children eligible for monetary assistance for education received their assistance to cover school fees. As part of the commemoration of the 30th anniversary of the DAFI programme, 16 students (including 12 girls) from the University of Lubumbashi received school kits and other visibility materials.

HEALTH/NUTRITION

- A total of 7,409 refugee and local children aged between 0 and 59 months were vaccinated against Polio during the second mass vaccination campaign launched by the Ministry of Health. Two cases of Acute Flaccid Paralysis, 1 refugee and 1 native, were reported in the development pole village of Sidi.

- Partner ADSSE assessed medical facilities in Kalemie with the aim of facilitating access to primary healthcare for urban refugees, who are not yet covered by the health programme.
- In North/South Ubangi, 21,033 Central African refugees from 5,564 households received monetary assistance from WFP. These are Central African refugees living in development hubs and other sites outside the camps, notably in Nzakara, Nganzato, Sidi, Modale and Gomba /Northern Ubangi and those in Wenze in Southern Ubangi. Each person received the equivalent of around USD $12.
- In North/South Ubangi, as part of its policy of alternatives to camps, UNHCR is supporting basic social infrastructure in development hub villages for the benefit of refugees and the host community. It has officially handed over to the local authorities three health centres built from durable materials, each equipped and equipped with an ambulance, in the development hubs of Nzakara and Wenze.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

- In Bili, Sidi and Modale, North Ubangi, partner World Vision built 35 family latrines and 4 blocks of community latrines at the transit centre in the development hub village of Modale.

SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS

- A total of 1,002 beneficiaries (returnees, returnees and IDPs) of the villagisation project implemented by UNHCR in the village of Tshilumba in Kasai Central received cash assistance to build shelters.
- UNHCR provided 500 households (around 3,000 people) affected by flooding in Tshikapa, Kasai Province in April 2023 with essential household items.

Coordinated humanitarian response for Internally Displaced People (IDPs)

PROTECTION

- As part of community-based protection (CBP), community consultations were carried out in and around Goma. A total of 7,650 households spread over 20 sites and collective centres were consulted in urban and peri-urban areas.
- On 11 and 12 June, in Beni territory, North Kivu incursions and attacks on civilians by elements of non-state armed groups led to the forced displacement of 2,711 people from the rural commune of Karisimbi to the commune of Kasindi in the Mwutanga health zone. UNHCR continues to monitor the situation and assess the needs of the displaced.

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

- In North Kivu, UNHCR, with the help of partners AIDES and OIM, completed the construction of 2,800 shelters at the Rusayo II site.
- In North Kivu, 5,120 targeted households in Lushagala received kits of essential household items.
- UNHCR distributed construction tool kits to six local shelter committees to enable them to repair and rehabilitate their shelters in the territories of Kalemie and Nyunzu, Tanganyika province.
- A total of 729 IDPs living with special needs in the Kikumbe site, Tanganyika, received welfare kits distributed by AIDES.

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)

- A total of 1,966 families from 4,596 people were rehoused on the Rusayo II site from the Bulengo/Lac Vert site where volcanic gases pose danger to inhabitants.

- Hectares of land were mobilised on 5 official sites (Saké, Bushagara, Rusayo II, Nzulo and Lushagala) in order to increase the reception capacity for IDPs in Goma.

Donor Contributions

UNHCR's financial needs for refugee and IDP activities in the DRC in 2023 amount to USD 232.6 million, of which 27% has been covered as of June 2023.

UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of :

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