

# South Sudanese Refugee Situation

## Democratic Republic of the Congo

October 2017

In October, **1,593 South Sudanese refugees were biometrically registered** in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); an **increase** compared to the previous month (1,074).

A **primary school and health post** were inaugurated at the Biringi refugee site and handed over to the local authorities. These infrastructures will serve the refugees as well as the host community.

**Construction works began** at the recently allocated Kaka refugee site near the town of Dungu (Haut-Uélé province).

### KEY INDICATORS

**87,019**

South Sudanese refugees **registered or pre-registered** as of 31<sup>th</sup> October 2017

**53%**

Women and girls

**64%**

Children below the age of 18 years

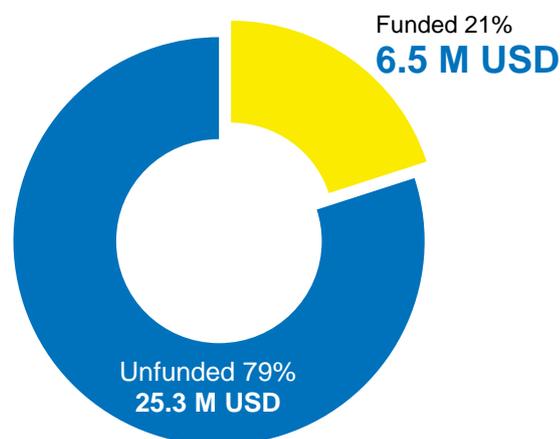
**32,063**

Refugees living in the refugee sites of Meri and Biringi as of 31<sup>th</sup> October 2017

### FUNDING (AS OF 24 OCTOBER 2017)

**USD 31.8 M**

requested for the DRC - South Sudanese refugee situation



# Update on Achievements

## Operational Context

### Latest development

- Civil war in South Sudan continued to trigger displacement to DRC's Haut-Uélé and Ituri provinces where UNHCR and its government partner registered asylum seekers at the Meri and Biringi refugee sites.
- In view of the volatile security situation in the border areas of the Aru territory (Ituri province), the Congolese National Police reinforced their presence on the axis Ariwara - Ingbokolo - Kengezi Base. UNHCR's partners maintained their presence in the border areas to inform asylum seekers of the possibility of relocation to the Biringi site and to organize the transfer. The security situation in the Aru territory had no significant impact on UNHCR and its partners' operations.
- UNHCR's access to a considerable number of refugees and asylum seekers in the border areas of the Dungu territory (Haut-Uélé province) remained very limited due to ongoing activities by armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army. UNHCR provided direct assistance to the refugees in and around the town of Dungu, while its partners assisted persons of concern in Duru, Bitima, Mogoroko and Doruma.

### Funding update

- UNHCR's response to the South Sudanese refugee situation in DRC remained severely underfunded at 21% of the total requirement of USD 31.8 m. Funding constraints strongly impacted the provision of all basic services, including shelter, education, water and sanitation, nutrition and healthcare services.



*Inauguration of three classrooms built by UNHCR at the local primary school in Biringi which refugee children as well as children from the host community attend © UNHCR 2017 / A.Cadonau*

**PROTECTION****Achievements and Impact**

- **Registration** – 1,593 newly arrived South Sudanese refugees were biometrically registered in October. As in previous months, the majority (88%) was registered at Meri site (Faradje territory, Haut-Uélé province) where the total population stood at 28,672. Overall, Biringi site (Aru territory, Ituri province) accommodated 3,391 refugees.
- **Border mission** – UNHCR conducted a protection and security assessment of Aru territory's border areas (Ituri province). Many refugees still live in border areas. UNHCR and its partners have held multiple awareness raising sessions to inform them about the possibility to relocate to Biringi site where asylum seekers receive assistance.
- **Capacity building** – In an effort to strengthen local capacities, UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) trained local authorities in Aba (Meri site) on international refugee protection principles aiming at fostering peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- **Civilian character of asylum** – Over the past three months, CNR and UNHCR identified an increasing number of ex-combatants among the asylum seekers during the screening exercises. CNR referred the individuals concerned to the Congolese authorities; however, in absence of appropriate infrastructures to host these ex-combatants their future remained unclear.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence** – Since the beginning of the year, 107 cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported in Meri and 67 in Biringi. While UNHCR provided the victims with medical and psychosocial assistance, access to justice proved to be challenging due to shortcomings or even absence of local judiciary structures.



*Inauguration of three classrooms built by UNHCR at the local primary school in Biringi which refugee children as well as children from the host community attend © UNHCR 2017 / A.Cadonau*

**EDUCATION****Achievements and Impact**

- **Classrooms** – A new school with three classrooms built by UNHCR was inaugurated at Biringi site. It will provide 180 refugees and children from the local community with the opportunity to attend primary school. The construction of three classrooms at the Rikominzou Primary School in Meri was also approaching completion. Meanwhile, the construction of other three classrooms in Meri and three in Biringi began, adding up before the end of the year to 12 additional classrooms built by UNHCR for the local community and the refugees.
- **Language classes** – A new hangar was built, using local materials, to replace the temporary classrooms for the French language courses in Biringi. 330 children were attending these courses in Biringi. UNHCR's partner ADSSE identified 120 children who had acquired the necessary language skills in these classes to integrate the regular primary school and enrolled these children. The second round of language courses for 55 refugee children started in three local schools in Dungu.
- **School supplies** – Some 600 children of primary school age in Biringi, Doruma and Duru received notebooks and writing utensils. UNHCR commissioned refugee tailors at the Biringi site to sew school uniforms for the refugee children, enabling those refugees to earn a small income.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- **Enrollment rate** – The enrollment rate in primary school remained low as only the refugee children whose school fees were covered by UNHCR factually attended school (40% of the children of primary school age in Meri and 43% in Biringi). Additional funds are needed to cover expenses and to build infrastructure to allow 5,100 children of primary school age at the two sites to receive primary education.
- **Secondary education** – Additional funding was also needed to support the 4,700 refugees of secondary school age in Meri and Biringi who remained deprived of education opportunities.

**HEALTH****Achievements and Impact**

- **Health facilities** – A new health post, constructed by UNHCR and its partners at Biringi site, was inaugurated and handed over to the local authorities. It has eight beds, a pharmacy and is equipped for nutritional screenings, prenatal consultations and other medical consultations and treatments.
- **Health care** – An evaluation of the causes of death conducted by UNHCR's health partner ADES revealed that refugees in Meri tend to seek medical assistance only once they are already in a critical condition. This led to 16 deaths over the past two months. In response, community health workers carried out a door-to-door campaign, reaching 1,500 refugees, about the importance of consulting the health center in case of prolonged or serious illness and the availability of free treatments. In addition, 20 refugees were recruited to reinforce the community health relays. Malaria was the most common disease and the associated mortality rate remained significant.
- **Vaccination** – Routine vaccinations, including against polio, diphtheria, pertussis, tuberculosis, measles and yellow fever, were administered in Meri where 40 children completed the vaccinations cycle. 100 pregnant women in Meri were vaccinated against tetanus during their prenatal consultations.
- **Reproductive health** – Pregnant women benefit from three prenatal consultations during their pregnancy. In October, 244 expecting mothers in Meri and 36 in Biringi underwent prenatal consultations. Since the beginning of the year, over 1,700 prenatal consultations were carried out in Meri and 300 in Biringi.

**Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps**

- **Blood bank** – There was a significant lack of blood for transfusions at the Meri site. UNHCR had previously provided the General Referral Hospital of the respective health zone with the technical equipment to operate a solar-powered refrigerator for the blood bank. The health zone endorsed and planned a large-scale blood donation campaign which, however, did not materialize due to lack of funds and support from health organizations.



## FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

### Achievements and Impact

- **Malnutrition** – In Meri, over 900 children were cured from malnutrition since the beginning of the year, thanks to UNHCR’s feeding program.
- **Cash distribution** – 23,400 refugees in Meri and 3,200 in Biringi received their monthly cash grants of USD 16 by the World Food Program (WFP). WFP started a pilot project at Biringi site to remotely evaluate the cash distributions by contacting the refugees by cell phone; an approach which WFP applies already in other operations.
- **Food distribution** – Instead of the cash grants distributed at the Meri and Biringi sites, flour, cooking oil, beans and salt were distributed to 6,800 refugees in Doruma and 1,200 in Dungu. A distribution for 2,230 refugees in Duru, Bitima and Mogoroko was foreseen for the end of October. In addition, Caritas Mahagi-Nioka distributed food staples to 1,800 of the most vulnerable refugees at the Biringi site.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Malnutrition** – A lack of supplements continued to impede the correct and most efficient treatment of severe malnutrition. 46 such cases were registered at the Meri site – the vast majority children – and eight at the Biringi site. UNHCR continued to advocate with other organizations and the administration (Health Zone) to obtain the appropriate supplements. Comprehensive nutritional evaluations will be conducted in Meri, Biringi and Dungu by UNHCR’s health partner ADES to better prevent and cure malnutrition.



## WATER AND SANITATION

### Achievements and Impact

- **Water** – UNHCR’s partner ADES repaired a water pump at Biringi’s primary school, allowing the supply of water to the school’s latrines. The new school buildings and health posts in Biringi and Meri were equipped with latrines, showers and hand-washing facilities.
- **Latrines** – 45 latrines in Biringi and 170 in Meri were under construction, under a cash-based approach. The refugees receive USD 45 to purchase material for the latrine’s superstructure. UNHCR’s partner ADES provides concrete slabs and an engineer assists the refugees in the construction. The engineer also instructs those refugees who are not beneficiaries of the cash program but construct latrines with their own means, expanding significantly the number of beneficiaries.
- **Hygiene awareness** – A team of refugees promoted hygiene and sanitation at the Meri and Biringi sites. In Meri, they informed 3,700 refugees about household hygiene,

including hand washing, safe transport of water from the source to the house and correct storage of drinking water to avoid contamination. In Biringi, campaigns on the importance of constructing family latrines reached 1,000 refugees. At Nambili site, 100 refugees cleaned up the site invaded by herbs to avoid the spread of diseases.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Water** – The availability of water remained below standards at all refugee sites with 16 liters per refugee/day instead of the standard of 20 liters. UNHCR allocated funds to construct 20 additional boreholes, which will significantly increase the water production, and is finally expecting to receive in the coming weeks the drilling machine ordered end 2016.
- **Latrines** – The lack of latrines posed a serious threat to the health and protection of the refugees and increased the risk of epidemics. Merely 11% of the need for latrines in Meri was covered and 16% in Biringi, leaving a gap of 8,000 latrines in Meri and 1,200 in Biringi.



### COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

#### Achievements and Impact

- **Income generation** – UNHCR expanded its support for income generating activities from agriculture to tailoring, milling and hairdressing. As a first step, 120 beneficiaries were identified among the most vulnerable at the Meri and Biringi sites to receive mills, sewing machines, fabric and equipment for hairdressing salons, and the beneficiaries began constructing shops to house their future businesses. The beneficiaries elected a committee to coordinate their activities. Among the beneficiaries are refugees with specific needs and survivors of sexual and gender-based violence. In addition, UNHCR conducted a socio-economic survey at the Meri site which will inform about its livelihoods strategy for 2018 to further strengthen the refugees' self-reliance.
- **Agriculture** – UNHCR advocated to the local authorities in Aba (Meri site) to abolish road tolls that were claimed on the stretch between the refugee site and the refugees' fields. Moreover, a team of agronomists from UNHCR's partner ADSSE assisted the refugees at Meri, Biringi and Nambili sites with expert knowledge to plan the sowing cycles, harvests and instructed them in the use of insecticide and alternative means.



### SHELTER AND NFIS

#### Achievements and Impact

- **Hygiene kits** – UNHCR's partner Caritas Mahagi-Nioka distributed hygiene kits to 800 girls and women of reproductive age at Biringi site.

### Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Shelter** – 5,570 families in Meri and 560 in Biringi urgently require an individual shelter. They live in overcrowded transit hangars or are hosted in the modest huts of other refugees or Congolese host families. Merely 39% of all families in Meri and 61% in Biringi have a family shelter.



### CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT

#### Achievements and Impact

- **New refugee site** – Construction works began at the recently allocated Kaka refugee site near the town of Dingu (Haut-Uélé province). UNHCR provided refugees with building material and expert knowledge of an engineer for construction of a first group of 170 family shelters (with latrines) which will house 500 refugees. UNHCR's partner AIRD will assist the most vulnerable with shelter construction. Wells will be constructed and a primary school and health post rehabilitated. Almost 300 refugees have settled on the grounds of the site since the beginning of October and are in desperate need of basic infrastructure and services.
- **Hangars** – The construction of seven hangars made of local material instead of plastic tarpaulins was underway in Meri and Biringi (six in Meri and one in Biringi). They will serve for the reception and registration of the newly arrived refugees, distribution of food, cash and non-food items, as well as for schooling and for the police.



*UNHCR handed over the newly constructed health post in Biringi to the local authorities. Refugee women expressing their joy when visiting the fully equipped facility © UNHCR 2017 / A.Cadonau*

## Working in partnership

- UNHCR coordinates its assistance with a variety of humanitarian actors, working together to ensure refugee benefit from dignified and efficient protection mechanisms.
- For this operation, UNHCR's partners are: ADES, ADSSE, AIRD, CNR and INTERSOS. Other partners include FAO, WFP (with its partner TSF), MALTESER and TROCAIRE/CARITAS.

## External / Donors Relations

### Donors for SSD refugee response in DRC in 2017

United States of America (6.2 M) | Belgium (0.3 M)

### Other donors for UNHCR operations in DRC in 2017

United States of America (32.7 M) | Japan (2.5 M) | Belgium (1.1 M) | European Union (1.1 M) | Sweden (1.1 M) | UNIQLO Co. Ltd (0.9 M) | DRC Humanitarian Fund (0.8 M) | Canada (0.7 M) | Private Donors Germany (0.5 M) | France (0.5 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints (0.2 M) | U.N. Foundation (0.2 M) | Private Donors Republic of Korea (0.8 M) | Private Donors Spain (0.07 M) | Vodafone Foundation (0.05 M)

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## LINKS

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