

ELECTIONS IN LÓVUA SETTLEMENT



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Refugees elect new representatives in Lóvuá, Lunda Norte.

Introduction

On 27 March 2018, hundreds of Congolese refugees living in Lóvuá settlement in the Angolan province of Lunda Norte voted to elect their representatives. This was part of a comprehensive process that included an awareness campaign and a three-day election.

Context

In 2017, political and military instability in the Kasai region of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) forced more than 35,000 people to seek refuge in Lunda Norte Province. Most of these refugees now live in a large settlement in Lóvuá municipality.



Figure 1: Congolese boy writes the village number on candidate board for elections © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Reason for the election

Refugee voices are important for the work of UNHCR, humanitarian actors and the host community. In this context, after a consultation with approximately 500 refugees in October 2017, each village elected a three-person committee that included a Representative, a Vice-Representative, and a Secretary. Each committee includes at least one woman. As a result, some 200 refugees were selected as candidates for the elections.

The preparation for the elections was part of a larger campaign called “More of Listening” that included the dissemination of detailed information in local languages, and peaceful coexistence between elected officials and the population. To achieve these goals, an inter-agency taskforce organised village meetings and information sessions on the election process as well as on the objectives of the leadership structure.



Election day



Figure 2: UNHCR and partners organising the elections © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

On 27 March 2018, the elections were managed by UNHCR, Médicos del Mundo (MdM), World Vision (WVI) and Jesuit Refugee Service (JRS) with the aid of refugee mobilisers. Government entities such as the Ministry of Social Welfare, Family and Female Empowerment (MASFAMU) also participated to monitor the election whilst the police ensured the security of the process and of the vote counting exercise. Congolese refugees were happy to have the chance to vote and there was dancing and singing.

Election results

On 12 April 2018, UNHCR and partners announced the election results. Out of an eligible 4,728 refugees, 3,524 voted which resulted in a voter turnout rate of 74%. Some villages recorded an impressive 100% voter turnout. 1,620 women voted, representing 35% of the voters.

General Assembly

On 18 April 2018, a general assembly was held with all new refugee representatives, UNHCR and partners as well as representatives from the police, MASFAMU, and agriculture, to explain the Terms of Reference (ToR) for the elected positions and introduce the elected leaders to all partners.





Figure 3: UNHCR Staff with refugee leaders © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Profiles of elected refugee leaders

Angele Tshibola



Figure 4: Angele Tshibola © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Residence	Zone C, Village 1
Post	Secretary

Secretary Tshibola is happy with the election process. Tshibola noted that she would like to organise cleaning sessions for her Village. Moreover, Tshibola wants to implement activities to help mitigate potential tribal tensions.

Mwanza Joseph Kandolo



Figure 5: Mwanza Kandolo © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Residence	Zone C, Village 5
Post	Representative

Representative Kandolo stressed that his objective is to serve people in Village 5. Kandolo plans to develop training on livelihoods and values that he hopes will serve them both in Lóvua and in the DRC should they decide to return voluntarily. Kandolo also spoke about the importance of working with



partners to solve potential problems that may affect the wellbeing of the Village.

Kapambu Barron and Rene Ndambi



Figure 6: Elected refugee leaders © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Names	Residence	Post
Kapambu Barron (right)	Zone C, Village 9	Representative
Rene Ndambi (Left)	Zone E, Village 3	Secretary

Representative Barron and Secretary Ndambi are both mobilisers (*informateurs*) whose job it is to assist UNHCR with messaging and communicating with the refugee community. Both elected refugee leaders were elated to have been elected and felt that the election result legitimised their current work. Representative Barron would like to improve employability for residents of his Village. Tshibola Ndambi focused on fighting against tribal tensions.



Mobaka Noéla



Figure 8: Mobaka Noéla © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Residence	Zone B, Village 3
Post	Secretary

Secretary Noéla would like to arrange a space where residents can meet and discuss matters with the elected committee and amongst themselves. The Secretary stressed the importance of assisting people with specific needs and giving a voice to widows, orphans, and the elderly. Lastly, Noéla wants to work with partners to improve communication and general information dissemination in the settlement.

Partners' expectations

Natalia Argyrou



Organisation	Medicos del Mundo
Post	Mental Health and Psychosocial Support Coordinator

In the future, Natalia hopes that there will be an even greater participation of women in such fora. Health is a key part of the operation in Lóvuá and Natalia hopes that there can be monthly meetings with the elected officials to discuss health as a way of increasing awareness in the Lóvuá settlement.



Garcia Banza



Garcia Banza hopes for significantly better communication between the communities and partners on health-related matters. Garcia believes that measures such as a complaints box and radios will increase accountability and information dissemination.

Organisation	World Vision
Post	Child Protection Officer

Contacts

Margarida Loureiro, External Relations Officer
loureiro@unhcr.org; Tel: +944 929 871 626.

Omotola Akindipe, Associate Reporting Officer
akindipe@unhcr.org; Tel: +944 926 829 455.

