

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

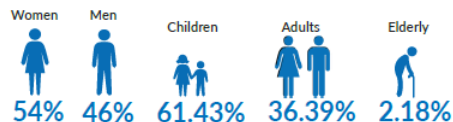
UNHCR's response for Central African refugees in DRC

December 2018



Basic figures

Central African Refugees in DRC



Location of Central African Refugees in DRC

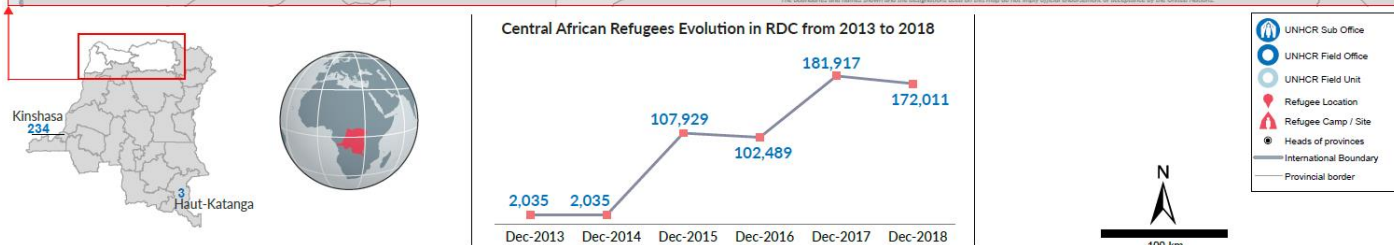
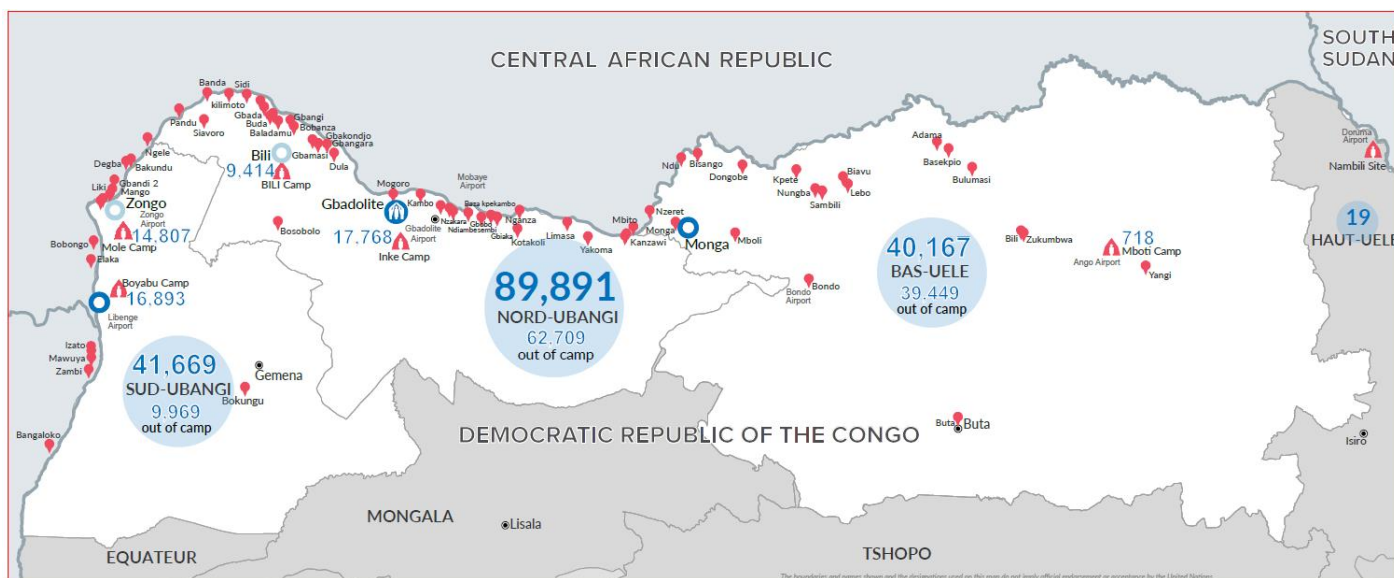


As of 31 December 2018

CAR refugees are primarily located in three provinces of DRC: **Nord-Ubangi**, **Sud-Ubangi** and **Bas-Uele**, both in camps and among local communities. The five established camps are **Inke** and **Bili** (Nord-Ubangi), **Mole** and **Boyabu** (Sud-Ubangi), and **Mboti** (Bas-Uele). Most of the refugees who are hosted within local communities live in rural locations along the DRC-CAR border.

The latest massive arrivals occurred in **May 2017**, with smaller numbers more recently: around 5,000 new arrivals in May 2018, and 600 in December 2018. There have been no cases of voluntary repatriation facilitated by UNHCR so far, but spontaneous returns have occurred. In 2019, voluntary repatriations (mainly to Bangui) are likely to be organised.

The crisis in CAR was **one of the most forgotten** in 2018, both in terms of media attention and financial support, despite the almost 590,000 refugees still outside the country, 30% of whom reside in DRC.



Operational context as of December 2018

Following the **resurgence of conflict** in the Central African Republic around May 2017, there were mass arrivals of CAR refugees into DRC. Most of these have been **hosted by impoverished Congolese communities** close to the Ubangi and Mbomou rivers, which form the border between DRC and CAR, while some of the vulnerable households have moved to existing refugee camps. Many villages have drastically increased in size with the new arrivals.

Prior to the 2017 influx, over 100,000 CAR refugees had **already been living in DRC**, some since 2013, with over 59,000 living in five camps. The assistance in camps is more comprehensive than that provided outside of camps. However, serious gaps remain due to a lack of funding, notably in **health, self-reliance** and **non-food items**. For out-of-camp refugees, UNHCR's approach has focussed on advocacy for protection, community-based protection, and support to basic local infrastructure (health centers, boreholes, schools), benefitting refugees and Congolese host communities alike.



CAR refugees living in difficult conditions in a makeshift settlement in the village of Ndu, Bas-Uele. This village alone is home to 15,000 refugees. © UNHCR 2018 / N. Gergely

UNHCR's presence

UNHCR's response to the CAR refugees situation is managed from its **Sub-Office in Gbadolite**, Nord-Ubangi Province. The Gbadolite Sub-Office oversees two Field Offices (**Libenge** in Sud-Ubangi and **Monga** in Bas-Uele), and two Field Units (**Zongo** in Sud-Ubangi and **Bili** in Nord-Ubangi). There is a total of about 75 staff. As a key UN partner, the World Food Programme is present on a permanent basis in several locations. Non-UN humanitarian actors (MSF, World Vision, CARITAS, ACTED,...) are also present.

UNHCR's partners

UNHCR works with seven Implementing Partners in the zone: in addition to **CNR** (the National Commission for Refugees), these are the **Association pour le Développement Economique et Social** (ADES) for health; **Action et Intervention pour le Développement Social** (AIDES) for the response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and for peaceful coexistence, the

Association pour le Développement Social et la Sauvegarde de l'Environnement (ADSSE) for education and community mobilization; **African Initiatives for Relief and Development** (AIRD) for infrastructure, shelter and logistics; the **Agence pour la Coopération Technique et le Développement** (ACTED) for WASH and SGBV in Bas-Uele; and **Terre Sans Frontières** (TSF) for education, shelter and protection in Bas-Uele. The selection process for the livelihoods sector for 2019 is underway.

UNHCR's activities

Protection

- **Biometric registration** and **verification** of refugees living in and out of camps;
- **Documentation** (issuance of refugee certificates and identity cards) to enhance refugees' protection;
- **Protection monitoring**; regular documentation of human rights violations and protection needs in refugee-hosting areas and along the DRC-CAR border;
- Establishment of **Local Protection Committees** composed of refugee and host community members in charge of reporting protection incidents in out-of-camp refugee-hosting localities;
- Protection, prevention and multisectoral responses to **Sexual and Gender-based Violence** (SGBV);
- Promotion of **peaceful coexistence** between refugees and host communities;
- Child protection, especially for **unaccompanied and separated minors**;
- **Raising awareness** of refugees' rights and obligations in their country of asylum;
- **Advocacy** for the respect of refugee rights; regular capacity-building of authorities and security services on this subject;
- Occasional material assistance to **people with special needs** (wheelchairs, etc);
- **Relocation** of the most vulnerable refugees to camps on a case-by-case basis.

MAJOR GAPS: Protection activities in **out-of-camp locations** are all extremely difficult to realise, because Central African refugees are spread across considerable distances, with quasi-inexistent transport infrastructure. **Monitoring protection needs and incidents** outside camps is therefore slow and costly, and so is **preventing and responding to SGBV**. Secondly, there are reports of **unaccompanied minors** living in remote out-of-camp areas, whom are difficult for UNHCR to reach.

Lastly, in Bas-Uele Province, which is especially inaccessible, UNHCR is facing difficulties **verifying the numbers of, and registering** out-of-camp Central African refugees.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- **Construction** of transitional, “semi-sustainable” shelters and community infrastructure in camps;
- Rehabilitation and construction of **social infrastructure** outside the camps: schools, health centers;
- Occasional **distribution of non-food items (NFI)** to refugees in and out of camps, often targeting the most vulnerable.

MAJOR GAPS: Refugees have expressed a need for **more NFIs in various** refugee hosting locations. In some out of camp refugee hosting localities, shelter conditions are still basic as the arrival of refugees has put **pressure on the availability of shelter** in villages.

Education

- **Support to schools in or near refugee camps** for the free schooling of refugee and Congolese students at primary level;
- **Construction or renovation of school facilities** in out-of-camp locations using a community participatory approach;
- Support for **school fees and supplies** for select primary and secondary school students outside of camps;
- Support for **teachers' salaries** in select primary schools outside of camps;
- **Internet cafes and electronic learning centers** in camps, allowing primary school students to follow some of their coursework in electronic formats (tablets); and for the whole community to develop computer literacy skills;
- **Sports activities** supported by the International Olympic Committee (football, volleyball, basketball, dance) for nearly 2,800 refugee youth between 10 and 24 in three camps, with a focus on girls' empowerment and protection.

MAJOR GAPS: Although there are primary schools in refugees camps, there is a lack of almost all additional equipment; **uniforms, school supplies**, and in some cases **proper buildings** (tarpaulin means classrooms are exposed to elements). There is also a lack of **qualified teachers** and of **classroom space**, leading to overcrowding. Outside camps these needs are even more acute. Secondly, a lack of access to **secondary education** is a major gap both in and outside camps, as well as the lack of **vocational training opportunities**. There is no funding for such programmes, putting youth (especially girls) at risk of negative coping mechanisms and increased psychological vulnerability.

Health

- **Free medical care** for refugees and host community members in camp health centers and health outposts;
- Support to health centers in select out-of-camp refugee-hosting locations through the **provision of medication, basic equipment, staff salaries, hospital referrals, and health center operational costs**;
- **Reducing barriers** of access to health outside camps: free medical care for pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 in select locations; 50 % reduction of fees for general population in select locations in the Yakoma medical district
- **Construction** of additional health centers both in camp and in out-of-camp areas.

MAJOR GAPS: Outside of camps, existing health structures experience **shortages of medicines** and **no electricity**, making it difficult to provide certain equipment. Besides, many out-of-camp structures are **not covered by UNHCR**, which currently assists eight of them but could assist more with more funding. Lastly, only out-of-camp pregnant and lactating women and children under 5 can currently receive free medical care thanks to UNHCR's help. This **targeting could be widened** with more funding.

Food Security and Livelihoods

- **Facilitation of monthly cash for food distributions** by WFP to refugees living in the 4 major camps, while seeking alternatives to food aid in view of reduced levels of aid;
- **Allocation of land**, around each camp and in some out-of-camp locations, to refugees by community leaders;
- Distribution of **seeds and agricultural tools** to mixed cooperatives of refugees and locals;
- **Training** on agricultural and animal-breeding techniques for both refugees and locals;
- Support for **income-generating activities** (IGAs) mainly in camps.

MAJOR GAPS: Activities in 2018 covered only a part of the population. Very basic investment could yield significant results, for instance through the provision of **agricultural tools** that are currently lacking, especially outside camps. In 2019, UNHCR will seek to reinforce this sector, alongside a new Implementing Partner.



Water and Sanitation

- Drilling of **boreholes** (14 in 2018) in out-of-camp locations, to the benefit of both refugees and Congolese people;
- Development of **water wells and streams** in out-of-camp locations;
- **Maintenance** of existing boreholes and water sources in camps;
- **Construction** of family and individual latrines in camps;
- **Promotion of hygiene and sanitation** among all CAR refugees.

MAJOR GAPS: The **lack of water points in out-of-camp locations** is a major gap; existing numbers are still far below the needs. With more funding, more **boreholes** could be built, as well as more **sources rehabilitated**, which UNHCR has found is a more durable source of water that needs less maintenance.

Coordination and presence of humanitarian actors

The CAR refugee response takes place in remote areas with a very limited presence of humanitarian actors. UNHCR's Gbadolite Sub-Office coordinates the refugee response in the area. In the main refugee hosting areas, only one other UN Agency (WFP) is present on a permanent basis. Non-UN humanitarian actors (MSF, World Vision, CARITAS, ACTED,...) are present, often intermittently. There are no Clusters activated in the area.

Latest news

November 2018 3,707 Central African refugees expressed an intention to return to their country, in November 2018 alone. UNHCR is collecting intentions and discussing the possibility of a tripartite meeting in 2019, paving the way towards voluntary repatriations.

October 2018 Since October 2018, large quantities of non-food items (NFIs) are being distributed to 19,500 out-of-camp refugees and host community members in Bas-Uele and Nord-Ubangi. Yet this is just a fraction of the almost 39,500 out-of-camp refugees present in Bas-Uele. NFI kits include blankets, plastic buckets, cooking utensils, mosquito nets and more. Between 20 and 30% are going to the Congolese host community to foster peaceful coexistence.

September 2018 From September to October 2018, UNHCR biometrically registered refugees living outside of camps in over 50 remote locations in Nord-Ubangi province of DRC. 10,901 refugees were registered by the end of the operation.

Budget

Needed for Central African refugees in DRC
(OP budget)

US\$ 33.1 M

Contacts

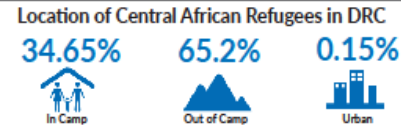
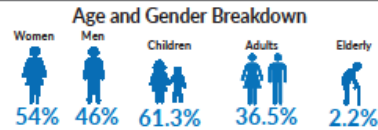
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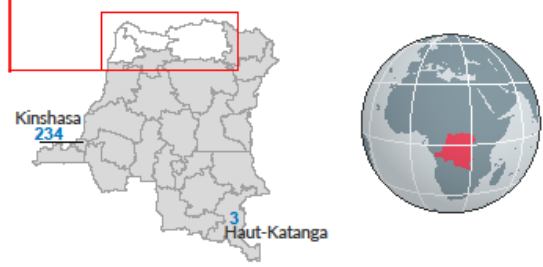
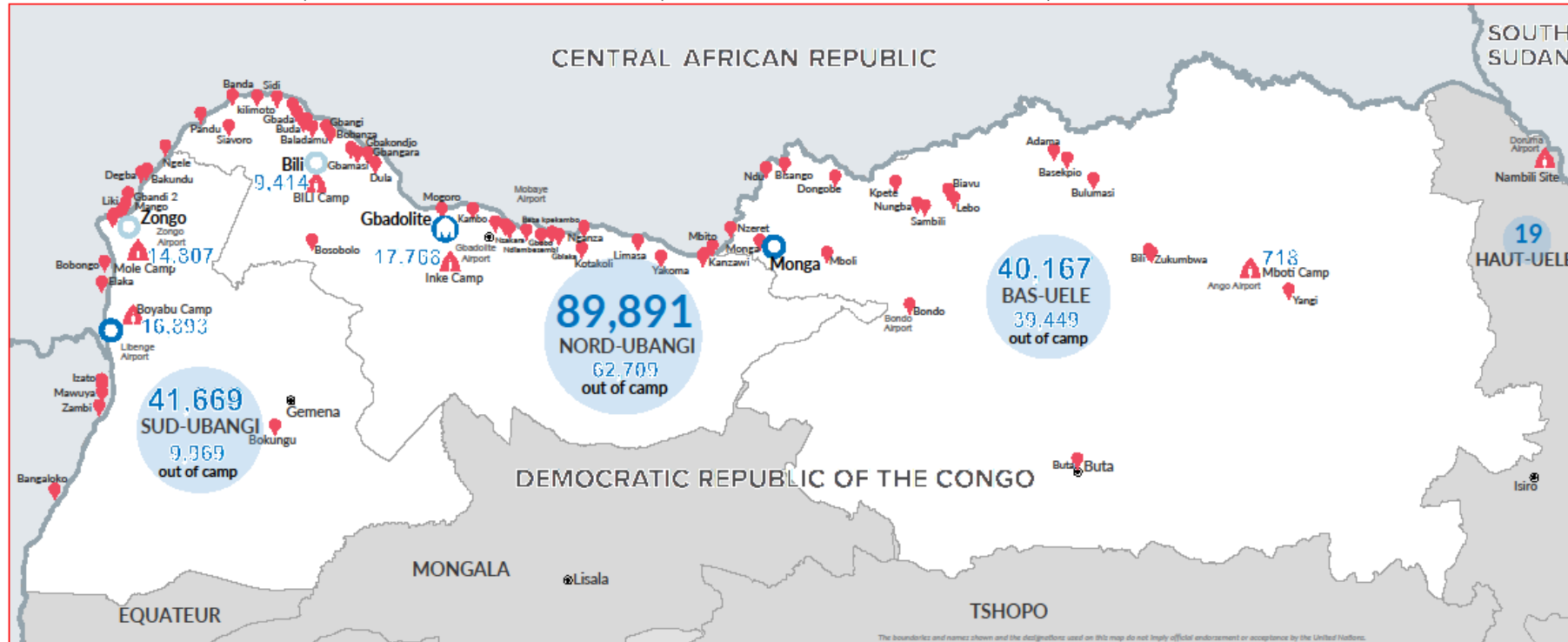
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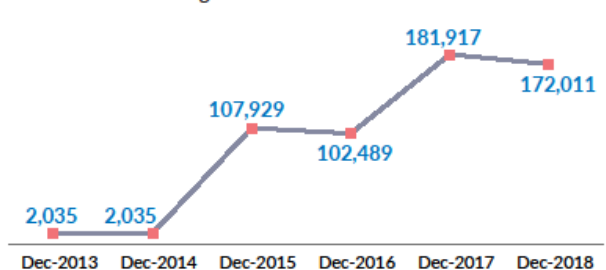
Central African Refugees in the DRC
172,011



Budget of Gbadolite Sub-Office
13,076,128 USD



Central African Refugees Evolution in RDC from 2013 to 2018



- UNHCR Sub Office
- UNHCR Field Office
- UNHCR Field Unit
- Refugee Location
- Refugee Camp / Site
- Heads of provinces
- International Boundary
- Provincial border

