

Regional Bureau for Southern Africa 1 May 2020

Key figures

8,873,588 persons of concern in the region, including 767,754 refugees, 311,755 asylum-seekers, 5,600,782 IDPs, and 2,134,349 IDP returnees (as of 31 March)

6,956 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Southern Africa region (Includes active cases, recovered, deaths)

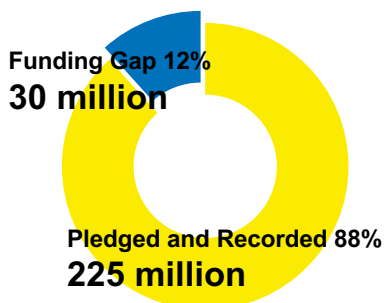
Cases by countries

COUNTRY	CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
Angola	18	7	2
Botswana	17	5	1
Comoros	0	0	0
DRC	404	65	31
Eswatini	87	12	1
Lesotho	0	0	0
Madagascar	36	92	0
Malawi	26	7	3
Mauritius	12	310	10
Mozambique	64	12	0
Namibia	8	8	0
ROC	192	19	9
Seychelles	5	6	0
South Africa	3,174	2073	103
Zambia	40	54	3
Zimbabwe	31	5	4
TOTAL	4,114	2,675	167

Source: WHO, Government, CDC and Johns Hopkins as of 29 April.

USD 255 million

Requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally over the next nine months



Regional developments

Across the 16 countries in the Southern Africa region, national efforts to contain the virus range from the suspension of all passenger commercial flights from affected countries, through the closure of borders to national lockdowns. UNHCR is working with governments, WHO and other UN agencies and NGOs to secure the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless people and other marginalized communities in preparedness and response measures.

UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Southern Africa (RBSA) and the United States Department of State's Bureau of Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) hosted on 29 April a virtual briefing on the COVID-19 response in the region. More than 70 government and private sector partners participated. The programme included a number of speakers providing different perspectives on the situation. The UNHCR and PRM directors talked about the importance of "stay and deliver" and responding to the pandemic while continuing to address the needs of refugees. PRM also underscored the importance of education in humanitarian situations in a post COVID-19 world. The representative from the private sector, Old Mutual, stressed the need for greater burden-sharing from all sectors and new actors. The UNHCR representatives from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and South Africa emphasized the importance of refugees being part of the national COVID-19 response plans to ensure their access to services and the importance of livelihoods and food security. UNHCR's Goodwill Ambassador Leanne Manas interviewed a former Rwandan refugee and beneficiary of UNHCR's higher education scholarship funded by Germany who is now a doctor in Durban, South Africa, to provide insight into how COVID-19 has been impacting refugees. A main takeaway is that COVID-19 is pan-global which affects us all, and that we all need to work together to find solutions during this crisis.

Preparedness and response

Information campaigns to raise awareness among refugees, IDPs and host communities about COVID-19 prevention and response measures are ongoing



UNHCR held an open-air meeting in Mozambique, with the camp administrator and community leaders in Maratane refugee settlement to stress the importance of implementing COVID-19 preventive measures. ©UNHCR/ Danielle Scarpassa do Prado.

throughout the region. On 22 to 24 April, in **Angola** UNHCR participated in the Lóvuva municipality's information campaign to sensitize the host community and donated hundreds of core relief items such as jerry cans, sleeping mats, tents, and buckets to support the authorities' efforts to promote hygiene and social distancing. Community mental health and psychosocial support staff have been asking refugees in the settlement about their knowledge, perceptions and behaviours in response to COVID-19 to identify risks and practices, and social and cultural norms, in order to design further interventions and campaigns. In the **DRC** over 75,000 people have been reached through sensitization sessions on COVID-19. UNHCR conducted sessions for 4,749 refugees and IDPs this week in Tanganyika, Nord Ubangi, Sud Ubangi and Bas Uele provinces. Sessions were either in small groups with individuals two metres apart, or carried out in a door-to-door fashion.

In areas hosting South Sudanese refugees in the **DRC**, UNHCR has provided 58 mobile phones with SIM cards, and 36 pairs of walkie-talkies to refugees to expand outreach efforts and community-based communication. UNHCR and partners in **Mozambique** provided community volunteers in 10 IDP neighbourhoods in Sofala Province with training on how to involve IDPs affected by last year's Cyclone Idai in COVID-19 prevention activities. The volunteers were also trained in protection, case management, child protection and sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In **Zimbabwe**, UNHCR, partners and the Department of Social Welfare are engaging in a joint information campaign on COVID-19 prevention in Tongogara refugee camp, encouraging people to stay home.

To support continued access to education during the national lockdown, UNHCR's education partner in **Malawi** has provided laptop computers and internet data bundles to 15 students and six teachers involved in the Digital Inclusion programme supporting tertiary education so they can continue their studies online during school closures. UNHCR and its education partner are supporting 738 refugee and host community learners to access the electronic lessons provided on the Ministry of Education website. Teachers in Lóvuva settlement in **Angola** surveyed a small group of students to assess first impressions on remote learning and found that the students appreciate that they are able to continue learning despite the need for social distancing. In the **Republic of the Congo (ROC)**, UNHCR and partners organized awareness-raising sessions for out-of-school girls and primary school students at risk of SGBV during the national lockdown as well as support for government home schooling efforts to prepare pupils for exams.

Challenges for operations

UNHCR's Helpline in **South Africa** has responded to 1,011 calls requesting urgent assistance since the beginning of the lockdown in late March. Some 95 per cent of callers were previously self-sufficient. With the closure of schools and increased economic pressure on families in the **DRC**, a growing number of displaced children in Ituri Province are begging on the streets, exposing them to possible sexual violence, kidnapping or economic exploitation. There is a risk that they will not return to school because their families now depend on the income from begging. Closure of child-friendly spaces in IDP sites in **Mozambique** during the national lockdown has led to an increase in protection risks for children. UNHCR is working with the government and partners to find alternatives and solutions.

Financial requirements

UNHCR launched a revised [Coronavirus Emergency Appeal](#) on 27 March seeking USD 255.2 million to boost preparedness, prevention and response activities. This amount is fully coordinated with and included in the [COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) launched on 25 March.

Special thanks to the major donors of softly and unearmarked contributions and pledges at the global level to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation giving UNHCR critical flexibility to rapidly respond to evolving needs.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEDGES TO THE COVID-19 APPEAL | USD

USA 64M (USD 400,000 earmarked for the DRC operation) | Germany 38M | EU 28.7M | UK 24.8M | Japan 23.9M | Denmark 14.6M | CERF 6.9M | Canada 6.4M | Ireland 3.3M | Sweden 3M | Sony Corporation 3M | Finland 2.4M | Education Cannot Wait 1.8M | Qatar Charity 1.5M | Australia 0.8M | Private Donors 0.5M | Portugal 0.1M | Liechtenstein 0.1M

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Germany 25.9M | Private donors Spain 20M | Switzerland 16.4M | Private donors in Republic of Korea 10.5M

Contacts

- Joan Allison, Chief, External Engagement Section, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, allison@unhcr.org
- Edward Leposky, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, leposky@unhcr.org