

Southern Africa Operational Update

March 2022

Highlights

Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) situation seeks US\$ 650M to assist 1.4 million people in 2022

UNHCR Level 2 Emergency declared for Mozambique marking a scale-up in response to the impacts of Tropical Cyclone Gombe

International Women's Day events held across the region highlighted women's leadership and contributions in refugee communities



Refugees from the DRC wait at the refugee reception office in Pretoria, South Africa, as they prepare to return home. © UNHCR/Laura Padoan

During the month of March:



12,019 people received soap and sanitary material in **Zimbabwe**



9,207 people accessed outpatient health care in **Zambia**



3,678 birth certificates issued in the **DRC** to help prevent statelessness



215 technical and vocational training students graduated in **Mozambique**



163 government and security sector officials trained in **Angola**



58 refugees departed on resettlement from **South Africa**

People of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa

7,772,202 people of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa, including:



781,876 refugees and
290,953 asylum-seekers



6,662,174 IDPs



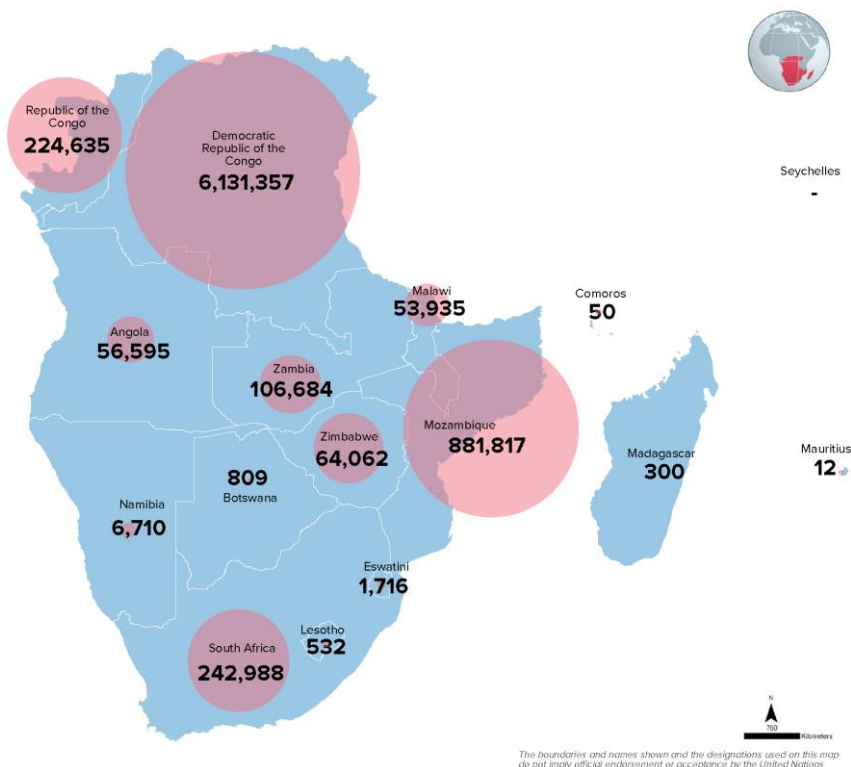
146 returnees*



37,053 other people of concern

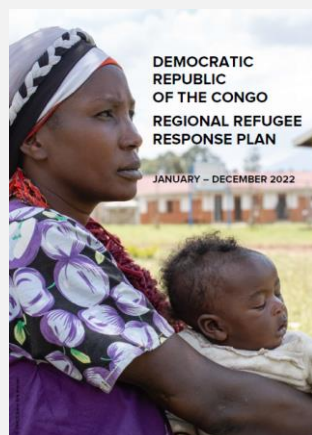
(as of 31 March 2022)

**Note: The reduction in overall population as compared to December 2021 is due to an adjustment of IDP and refugee returnee figures following the regional data review in January 2022.*



Launch of the DRC Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP)

The **2022 DRC RRRP** brings together 71 UN and NGO partners across seven countries of asylum. It aims to provide protection, basic assistance, and solutions for 1.4 million people including 801,000 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers and 583,000 people in host communities. Coordinated by UNHCR, the RRRP has an inter-agency budget of US\$ 650 million for operations in **Angola, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia**. The plan is based around four regional strategic priorities:



- 1. Protection:** Maintain access to asylum and international protection while promoting full enjoyment of rights for refugees and asylum-seekers in host countries. Ensure attention to age, gender and diversity, and accountability to affected people.
- 2. Multi-sector assistance:** Achieve and maintain minimum standards across all sectors for refugees and host communities. Provide emergency assistance for new arrivals, while ensuring access to basic services for long-term populations in need. Where possible, anchor responses in government systems and development plans.
- 3. Self-reliance and social cohesion:** Promote refugees' economic self-reliance to gradually reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance and promote socio-economic inclusion. Encourage social cohesion with host communities.
- 4. Durable solutions:** Promote policies and conditions that facilitate durable solutions through voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration.

To learn more, please visit the [DRC situation page](#) on Global Focus.

Operational highlights

Angola

- **Gender-based violence (GBV) prevention and response capacity in schools:** On 17 March, UNHCR conducted GBV awareness and training for staff working in the three schools in Lóvua settlement. The training, which was attended by 76 staff members, aimed to share information about preventing and responding to GBV; to identify a focal point for responding to GBV incidents; and to establish tools such as peer support, an ethics committee, and an efficient complaint mechanism. Following the training, staff are better equipped to address GBV issues at the school level and to link with relevant services providers when needed.
- **Training for authorities:** On 15 March, UNHCR trained 15 police officers, migration officers, criminal investigation officers and firemen from Lóvua settlement and the wider municipality on the rights and duties of refugees, code of conduct and abuse of power, and the prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA). The training was also attended by representatives from the refugee community. Furthermore, on 31 March, UNHCR and partners trained 148 officers from the Ministry of the Interior, namely immigration officers, border guards and police from the municipalities of Chitato, Cambulo, Lóvua and Lucapa. The training focused on international protection and regulatory frameworks, managing mixed migration, UNHCR Detention Guidelines, the national legal framework and the protection of refugee children in emergencies.
- **High-level diplomatic delegation:** From 4 to 7 March, the UNHCR Representative in Angola led a high-level delegation comprising of Ambassadors of Argentina, Belgium and Japan, and a Political Officer from the United States Embassy in Angola, to Lunda Norte. The purpose of the three-day visit was to familiarize participants with UNHCR's operations in the province. Courtesy meetings were held with the Provincial Vice-Governor and the Administrator of Lóvua refugee settlement. The delegation also met with the refugee's representation and undertook an interactive tour of the settlement and its infrastructure, including the Lóvua market, distribution site, demonstration farm, schools, and clinic.

Democratic Republic of the Congo

- **Documentation:** In North and South Kivu, UNHCR continued to renew refugee cards, with 573 refugees and asylum-seekers in Goma receiving identity documents, including refugee cards and certificates, through UNHCR and the government National Commission for Refugees (CNR). These documents allow refugees and asylum-seekers to enjoy their right to free movement and access basic social services. Furthermore, in Haut-Uele and Kasai, UNHCR, through CNR, continued its efforts to prevent statelessness among refugee and displaced children. A total of 178 birth certificates including 107 for girls and 71 for boys, were issued in Meri site, Haut Uélé, while 3,500 birth certificates were issued to returnees and displaced children in Shamusanda village, Kasai province.
- **School rehabilitation:** On 17 March, UNHCR officially handed over the Mulongoy primary school that was rehabilitated in Miketo, Tanganyika Province. The school, which was in ruins, will host more than 500 children from displaced and returning Twa and Bantu communities, providing better conditions to facilitate learning.

- **Access to health insurance and vaccination:** UNHCR supported 32 refugees living in Goma to enrol in the health insurance scheme, for a total of 643 urban refugees benefitting from access to free health care since the beginning of 2022. However, more than 2,000 urban refugees remain without health assistance due to funding gaps. Furthermore, UNHCR, in collaboration with the Provincial Health Division of South Kivu, WHO, UNICEF and NGO partners, launched a joint vaccination campaign against measles in Lusenda refugee camp and surrounding areas after nine cases of measles were detected in February. By the end of March, 4,083 children between 6 and 59 months were vaccinated.
- **Core relief items (CRIs):** UNHCR, with support from government and NGO partners, provided CRI packages to 1,752 displaced households in North Kivu, composed of blankets, mats, jerrycans and soap. In addition, 2,682 dignity kits were provided to women and girls in Beni and Oicha, North Kivu.
- *For more detailed reports on UNHCR's work in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, visit [Global Focus](#).*

Malawi


- **Refugee business community supports emergency response:** In support of those left homeless and displaced by Tropical Storm Ana and Tropical Cyclone Gombe, the refugee business community in Malawi donated 60 tonnes of maize and 50 bales of blankets to the relief efforts. The donation highlighted that with the right opportunities, skills and documentation refugees can contribute positively to the society, economy, and development of their host countries. The items, which were valued at over US\$ 17,000, were received by the Deputy Commissioner for Refugees on behalf of Government of Malawi, at an event also attended by UNHCR.



Refugee business community representatives with the Deputy Commissioner for Refugees at the relief assistance handover ceremony. © MoHS/Newton Mwenesongole

- **LGBTIQ+ safehouses:** UNHCR continued work supporting LGBTIQ+ refugees and asylum-seekers residing in safehouses. This included cases processing for durable solutions, and distribution of food and non-food items. Refugees and asylum-seekers living at the safehouses are also supported by NGOs and local organizations to receive psychosocial counselling and a monthly cash assistance allowance.
- **Donors visit to Dzaleka refugee camp:** UNHCR facilitated a visit to Dzaleka refugee camp for officials from donor governments on 24 and 29 March. The visits were an opportunity for the government representatives to observe programming in the camp and to appreciate the impacts of their financial support. At the same time, ongoing gaps requiring additional resources were highlighted. Notably, UNHCR and WFP are highlighting the need for additional funds to address resource gaps in food and cash assistance in 2022.

Mozambique

- **Declaration of Level 2 Emergency:** On 31 March, UNHCR declared an organizational Level 2 Emergency for Mozambique in response to the impacts for Tropical Cyclone Gombe, which made landfall on 11 March. The Cyclone has significantly impacted the provinces of Nampula and Zambezia, and the Level 2 declaration has triggered a scale-up in capacity and programming to address critical needs in affected areas. As of 30 March, more than 736,000 people were recorded to be affected, with 108 people injured, and 63 deaths. More than 78,600 houses, 69 health centres, 2,265 classrooms and 12 bridges have been damaged according to the National Institute for Disaster Management. In Nampula, UNHCR is working closely with the local authorities, clusters, partners, displaced and host communities, and community leaders to assist those affected. This includes 9,300 refugees living in Maratane refugee settlement and 18,000 individuals from host communities surrounding the settlement.
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- Burundian refugees living in Maratane refugee settlement in front of their house that was destroyed by Cyclone Gombe.*
 © UNHCR/Juliana Ghazi
- **Mission to Zambezia:** Beginning on 30 March, UNHCR conducted a three-day mission to Zambezia province to assess damage caused by Tropical Cyclone Gombe. The mission covered the districts of Mocuba, Nicoadala and Namacurra. In all locations, UNHCR met with IDPs from Cabo Delgado as well as families newly displaced by the cyclone. Main needs identified included food, shelter and CRIs, civil documentation, mental health and psychosocial support, GBV prevention and child protection. Many individuals were found to have also lost their civil documentation due to floods that damaged their houses and belongings.
 - **Access to civil documentation:** UNHCR in partnership with the Catholic University of Mozambique (UCM) assisted 1,452 people in Montepuez and Pemba districts in the month of March in accessing civil documentation. Since December 2020, 20,348 people from displaced and host communities in Cabo Delgado received legal assistance and support in accessing documentation.
 - **Technical and vocational education training (TVET):** UNHCR in partnership with the Institute for Vocational Training and Labour Studies Alberto Cassimo (IFPELAC) hosted a graduation ceremony for the first cohort of 215 TVET graduates in skilled trades. The high graduation rate of 95 per cent has demonstrated the positive impact of cash assistance in promoting attendance and educational outcomes for youth at heightened risk from both displaced and host communities. During the ceremony, TVET graduates received nationally accredited certificates along with productive assets to support their entrepreneurial and self-employment initiatives. Notably, the cohort included women graduating with qualifications in male-dominated areas such as electrical installation and plumbing.
 - *For more detailed reports on UNHCR's work in Mozambique, visit [Global Focus](#).*

Republic of the Congo

- Lisungi Social Safety Nets Project:** UNHCR released the monitoring and evaluation survey findings for the first-round payments of conditional cash transfers (CCT) to host communities and refugees under the World Bank-financed Lisungi Social Safety Nets Project. The survey collected data for 500 beneficiaries across the Likouala department and shows that CCT contributed to enhanced access to education, health, and food purchasing, and also contributed towards household savings and investment in income-generating activities. Meanwhile, in parallel to a new round of CCT payments, UNHCR conducted community outreach through local awareness-raising teams. The outreach campaign, which was part of the technical support agreement with the Ministry of Social Affairs and Humanitarian Aid, focused on financial literacy, GBV and social cohesion. It reached over 6,000 people, a third of whom were indigenous people, through 31 mass awareness sessions, 36 focus groups, 123 individual and 67 thematic sessions.



Aaka-language community outreach with indigenous families benefiting from the Lisungi project in Eboko village. © UNHCR/Marc Foukou

- International Water Day:** On 22 March, UNHCR mobilized refugees, host communities and the chiefs of Mounougoungui village, Likouala department, and Makotimpoko, Plateaux department, reaching more than 200 persons with awareness-raising discussions on water resource management. Ninety-four households of more than 600 refugees from the DRC and Congolese nationals received water purification products.

South Africa Multi-Country Office (SAMCO)

Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles and South Africa

- Refugees welcomed in Lesotho:** The Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho welcomed the first group of four refugees out of more than 20 stranded in the Union of the Comoros. The refugees were greeted on arrival in Lesotho by the Principal Secretary in the Ministry of Home Affairs and senior government officials. The refugees were part of a group that arrived in the Comoros in 2021 after fleeing conflict in the Great Lakes region. Comoros is not a party to the 1951 Refugee Convention and there is limited national asylum system or capacity. Therefore, to address their needs and ensure international protection, the refugees were relocated by the Government of the Kingdom of Lesotho with support from UNHCR.
- Prevention of statelessness in Eswatini:** Led by the UNHCR Representative, UNHCR undertook a mission to the Kingdom of Eswatini to support the prevention of statelessness. The purpose of the mission was to adopt a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of Eswatini to formalise the collaboration with UNHCR, and to define commitments towards the implementation of the National Action Plan to eradicate statelessness in the Kingdom. UNHCR also provided support to the Ministry of Home Affairs for the nation-wide civil registration and documentation exercise launched in February. UNHCR contributed ICT equipment and technical staff to support statelessness activities and management of the civil registration exercise.

Zambia

- **Voluntary repatriation:** Governments of Zambia and of the DRC, with support from UNHCR, continued consultations on the voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees, along with ongoing registration of refugee families who wish to repatriate. By the end of March, 5,470 refugees had confirmed their intentions to return the coming months. Based on the information, UNHCR has prepared a provisional manifest for the first convoy of 500 refugees which was shared with authorities in Zambia.
- **Strengthening food security:** UNHCR has partnered with the International Food Policy Research Institute / Harvest Plus to support food security and nutrition amongst refugee and host community households by strengthening production and consumption of nutrient dense orange sweet potato. Harvest Plus provided 8,700 orange sweet potato vines to farmers in the three refugee settlements, which were planted between November 2021 and January 2022. UNHCR monitoring conducted in March indicates good progress in the fields, with potential to also strengthen the livelihoods of farmers.
- **Access to healthcare and insurance:** Refugees continue to have access to healthcare on par with national, and in the month of March 9,207 individuals accessed care through the outpatient departments supported by UNHCR in urban areas and in the three refugee settlements, including 38 per cent children and 17 per cent individuals from the host community. Furthermore, UNHCR continued advocacy for inclusion of refugees in the National Health Insurance Scheme, to take up some medical costs for those registered.

Zimbabwe

- **Vegetable harvest and distribution of agricultural inputs:** Vegetables including lettuce, tsunga, okra and spinach were harvested by farmers in the refugee producer group (an organization of smallholder farmers). The producer group sells produce both in and outside the camp, and with support from UNHCR secured a reliable market for lettuce at two local supermarkets. Furthermore, sugar bean packages with 10kg bean seed, 15kg top dressing and 30 kg basal fertilizer were distributed to 410 households, accompanied by training on planting and fertilization. Planting will start in April.



Farmers receiving agricultural inputs for the bean cycle.
 © World Vision/Sheilla Mupenyu

- **Weather station:** UNHCR installed an electronic weather station in Tongogara refugee camp to improve early warning systems. The weather station will help gather weather-related information including barometric pressure, rainfall, humidity, and temperatures to help schedule irrigation in the camp.
- **Distribution of soap and sanitary material:** UNHCR, together with partners, distributed soap and sanitary pads to more than 12,000 persons of concern in Tongogara Refugee Camp.
- *For more detailed reports on UNHCR's work in Zimbabwe, visit [Global Focus](#).*

International Women's Day across Southern Africa

March 8th marked International Women's Day (IWD), an occasion to recognize the countless ways that women and girls lead and contribute to their communities. This year's theme "Gender equality today for a sustainable tomorrow," focused on how women's place in decision-making results in a more sustainable and equal future for all. Various events were held across the region to commemorate the day.

- **Angola:** Activities took place in capital Luanda including a cultural ceremony, business training for 52 refugee women, distribution of solar lanterns to 67 single women, and HIV testing attended by 36 refugee women. In Lunda Norte, 150 refugees participated in events in Lóvua refugee settlement, which included artistic performances and awareness-raising sessions on GBV and gender equality. The new Women Friendly Space was also inaugurated and will serve as a location for planning and carrying out women-focused activities such as training, roundtables, and legal clinics.
- **DRC:** On IWD, UNHCR announced the winners of the 2022 UNHCR NGO Innovation Award, celebrating women-led organizations in different regions across the world for their investment in the strength and capacities of displaced women and girls. In Southern Africa, the award went to Femme Main dans la Main pour le Développement Intégral (FMMDI) in the DRC. FMMDI is a women-led organisation that provides psychosocial, socio-economic care, legal and judicial support for internally displaced persons and returnees surviving or at-risk of GBV in DRC.
- **Malawi:** IWD commemorations in Dzaleka refugee camp included a demonstration by Women4Action, a women refugee-led organization, of how the organization is championing climate change adaptation methods by making briquettes as a source of energy. This serves as but one example of women contributing to a more sustainable future in their communities.
- **Mozambique:** UNHCR in collaboration with the government, academic and NGO partners held a public discussion panel on 8 March in Pemba focusing on the role of women in the humanitarian response in Cabo Delgado. The panel, composed of women humanitarian experts from both international and local organizations, addressed bias and barriers that women face in the humanitarian field and how to overcome them. The event was attended by 105 participants. Furthermore, in the districts of Montepuez, Chiure and Metuge, UNHCR and partner NGOs organized women and girls' marches in IDP sites to raise awareness on women's rights, while the community participated in a photo exhibition. A total of 424 people participated in the community activities.
- **Zimbabwe:** UNHCR and partners commemorated IWD in Tongogara refugee camp with participation by various community-led groups who provided entertainment. Of note was a drama presented by NGO partners on prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse in humanitarian work.



*Women4Action founder Cecile Pango conducting demonstrations in Dzaleka refugee camp, Malawi.
©UNHCR/ Rumbani Msiska*

COVID-19

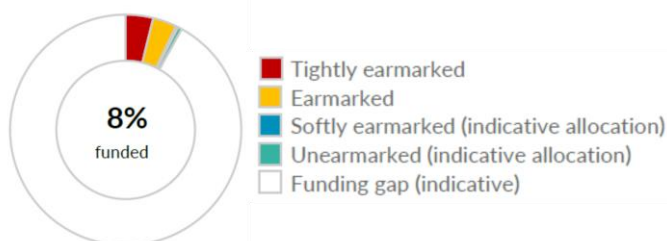
There were more than 5.5 million reported cases of COVID-19 in the 16 countries of the Southern Africa region as of 30 March. Some 1,489 cases of COVID-19 have been reported among people of concern to UNHCR since reporting began in 2020. Lack of testing facilities and reliance on voluntary reporting in urban areas means that case numbers may be higher. Overall, a downward trend in active cases was observed in the region as compared to the previous month.

Vaccination rollout continues across the region. By the end of March, nearly 32,000 people of concern to UNHCR confirmed receiving at least one dose, and more than 21,000 have reported being fully vaccinated. These numbers mainly reflect those living in camps and settlements as it is difficult to track vaccination in urban areas.

While vaccination rates are increasing, vaccine hesitancy continues to compromise uptake among refugees, asylum-seekers and IDPs. UNHCR and partners are continuing efforts to address hesitancy. In March, this included 30 awareness sessions reaching 1,470 refugees in Lóvua settlement, **Angola**; 93,000 pamphlets, 8,000 posters and 144 placards distributed and displayed in North Kivu, **DRC**; and 7,190 people reached by community health workers with awareness messages in **Zimbabwe**.

Financial Requirements

UNHCR's financial requirements for the Southern Africa region in 2022 total **USD 436.5 million**. As of 29 March, **8 per cent** of needs have been funded. UNHCR is grateful to donors who have supported operations in Southern Africa in 2022, including¹:



Japan 6.4M | UN Peacebuilding Fund 2.7M | Giuliana Lagetto 2M | Education Cannot Wait 1.8M | European Union 0.9M | UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe 0.8M | UN Programme On HIV/AIDS | Republic of the Congo | Qatar | Profuturo | Germany | Migration MPTF | UN Trust Fund for Human Security | Private donors

Flexible financial support greatly facilitates UNHCR being able to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and enable the fullest possible implementation of programmes. They enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved. UNHCR is grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions in 2022, including:

Other softly earmarked contributions (USD)²: Norway | Education Cannot Wait | Private donors

Unearmarked contributions (USD)³: Sweden 95.2M | Norway 72.5M | Netherlands 37.2M | Denmark 35.6M | Germany 27.6M | Switzerland 18.4M | Private donors Spain 12.3M | Belgium 11.9M | Ireland 11.8M

Notes: 1. Where a donor has contributed USD 500,000 or more, the total amount is shown. 2. Due to their earmarking, other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used in Southern Africa. 3. Donors contributing USD 10M or more are listed.

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