The most common routes used by refugees and asylum seekers in 2025 in the southern region of Africa

Context

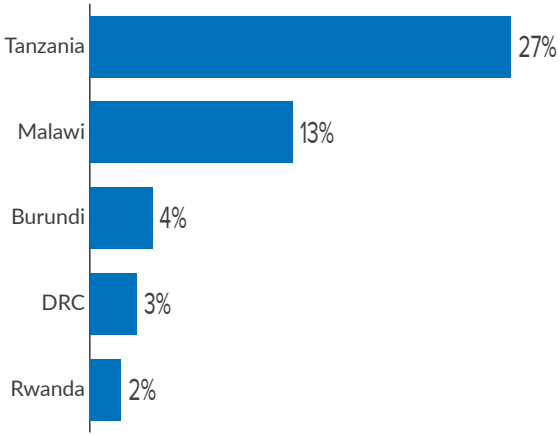
Mixed movements of refugees and asylum seekers across Southern Africa remain complex, shaped by diverse routes, profiles, and motivations spanning origin, transit, and destination countries.

The region is experiencing significant activity in mixed movements. There was a 152 percent increase compared to 2024. In June 2025, over 100,000 refugees and asylum seekers were recorded as part of these movements. Notably, two main migratory corridors - the Southern Route and the Western Indian Ocean Route - serve as key pathways for these mixed flows.

In response, UNHCR, SADC, Governments and partners have advanced the Route-Based Approach (RBA) through regional strategy and priorities endorsed in June 2025 by SADC Member States designed to foster whole-of-society solutions. A priority has been strengthening data management, in partnership with the Mixed Migration Centre (MMC). This complements UNHCR's monitoring framework, combining quantitative data with qualitative insights on drivers, risks, and protection concerns.

Additionally, progress includes the completion of qualitative research in Malawi, Zambia, and Zimbabwe (reports pending). Such evidence is critical to shaping responses that uphold international protection standards.

Top 5 transit countries in which movers faced protection incidents



Six main corridors for mixed movements (Jan - Jun 2025)

Route 1 (Primary)
Central African Republic to DRC
57K movers

Route 2 (Primary)
South Sudan to DRC
25K movers

Route 3 (Primary)
DRC to Republic of the Congo
8.1K movers

Route 4 (Primary)
DRC to Zambia
2.8K movers

Route 5 (Primary)
DRC to Malawi
1.8K movers

Route 6 (Secondary)
Indian Ocean routes, from Burundi and DRC passing by Tanzania to Madagascar and Mauritius. Pakistan to Madagascar.
175 movers

The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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