

## Uganda

22 December 2017

**229,957**

Congolese refugees  
as of 30 November 2017

**43,000**

Congolese new arrivals  
from January to November 2017

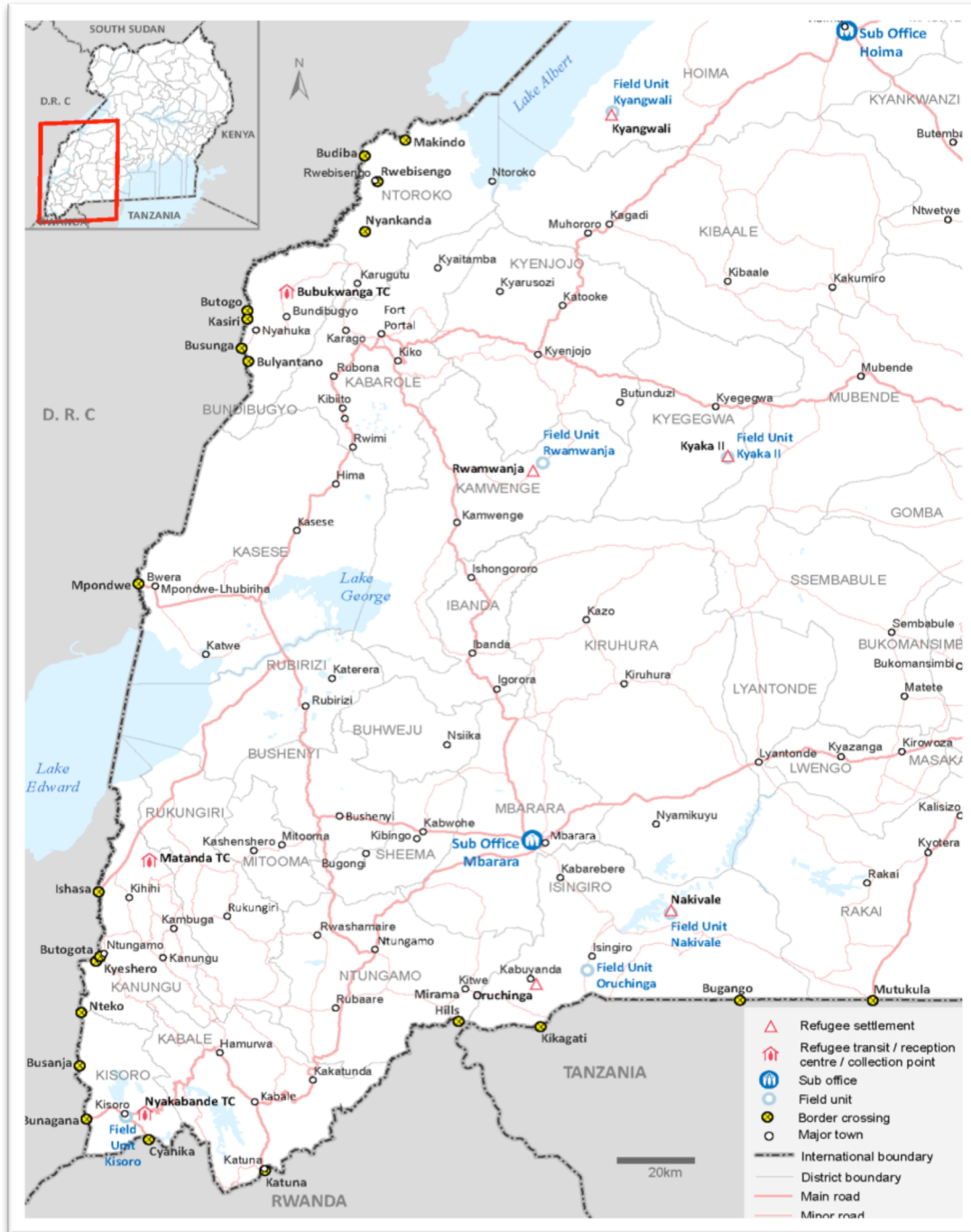
**4,430**

Congolese new arrivals since  
1 December 2017

## HIGHLIGHTS

- Since 18 December, over 2,650 new refugee arrivals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) have crossed to Uganda, four times the average daily arrival recorded between January and November 2017. The vast majority (2,300) entered Uganda crossing Lake Albert aboard rickety fishing boats, with others (350) coming in through more commonly used border points in Kisoro, Kanungu and Bundibugyo districts. The Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) reported that many more refugees have reached reception centres and settlements on their own.
- This week has been characterised by two major developments: firstly, the unexpected surge of arrivals to Kyangwali settlement through the Lake Albert route; secondly, the arrival of the first major convoy of Congolese refugees to Kyaka II settlement. Since Rwamwanja settlement, which used to receive Congolese refugees entering through south-western Uganda, has reached full capacity, all Congolese new arrivals in South-West will be settled in Kyaka II from now on.
- The refugees crossing Lake Albert arrived to Sebagoro, a village some 270 kilometers northwest of the Ugandan capital Kampala. This route is being used by a large number of refugees for the first time after a tragic shipwreck in 2014 that left over 200 dead. The new arrivals, mostly women and children, are reportedly fleeing intercommunal violence at Djugu territory in the DRC. Since Monday, there were reports of houses being scorched in the area, and people attacked with machetes and firearms. More than 20 villages were abandoned due to the fear of reprisals. Refugees reported that many more people are gathering on the Congolese side of Lake Albert waiting for their turn to cross, despite the journey's high cost.
- UNHCR and partners are stepping up their capacity to help local authorities respond to the situation. The refugees receive basic relief assistance in Sebagoro and are then transferred by African Initiative for Relief and Development to Kyangwali settlement, some 50 kilometers to the east. There, refugees are registered by OPM and medically screened by Action Africa Help. UNHCR carries out protection screening to identify and assist persons with specific needs, including unaccompanied minors and separated children, survivors of sexual and gender-based violence and pregnant women. WFP is providing hot meals and UNICEF is ready to provide 20,000 polio and measles vaccines. The Police Marine Forces are increasing their boat patrols in the lake to reduce the risks of fatal boating incidents.
- As of Thursday, 21 December, the Nyakabande Transit Centre in Kisoro district was highly congested with over 2,000 Congolese refugees. To ease pressure on the transit facility, a first convoy carrying 734 Congolese refugees departed on 21 December for Kyaka II settlement. The journey took over 12 hours requiring UNHCR and partners in Kyaka II to work until 3:00 am to assist the arrivals. Convoys from Kisoro to Kyaka II are now scheduled to take place once or twice a week at least, depending on the influx rate.
- In anticipation of further influxes from DRC and as a preparedness measure, partners continue to work to construct a transit centre in Matanda (Kanungu district), to upgrade Bubukwanga transit facility (Bundibugyo district), and to enhance reception in the Kyangwali area (Hoima district).

## Map of southwestern Uganda



### CONTACTS

#### Country level

**Jens Hesemann**, Senior Field Coordinator in Kampala  
 hesemann@unhcr.org, Cell +256 772 201 011

**Rocco Nuri**, Inter-Agency Coordination Officer in Kampala  
 nuri@unhcr.org, Cell +256 779 663 793

#### Field level

**Hassan Dabar**, Emergency Operations Coordinator in Mbarara  
 dabar@unhcr.org, Cell +256 771 895 655