

# Democratic Republic of the Congo

1 – 31 December 2019

As of 20 December, UNHCR repatriated 3,133 Central African refugees to areas of the Central African Republic that were assessed as safe, namely the capital Bangui and surrounding prefectures. The operation started on 21 November and will continue in 2020.

UNHCR intensified the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees, in response to the risks faced by dependents of a prominent group in Nyamunyuni military site, South Kivu Province. In December, 529 Rwandan refugees were repatriated.

On 15 December, an attack on the village of Kamango, North Kivu Province, led to massive new displacements towards Nabili. Initial estimates are of 24,000 newly displaced households, or up to 130,000 newly displaced individuals.

## Refugees

### Burundian refugees

Total in DRC	Women	Men
47,570	24,479	23,091

As of 31 December 2019

- In December, UNHCR and CNR biometrically registered 882 Burundian asylum-seekers (273 families) at three different Transit Centers (TCs), namely 65 in Mongemonge, 614 in Sange, and 203 in Kavimvira. They will remain in the TCs until they are recognized as refugees by CNR. Most of them arrived in DRC in late 2019, fleeing political tension and violence around the upcoming May 2020 elections in Burundi.
- In addition, 368 Burundian asylum-seekers were transferred from Sange TC to Kavimvira TC to decongest the former, which is facing overcrowding. 133 refugees were also transferred from Kavimvira TC to Mulongwe refugee settlement, where they will receive assistance. Refugees usually pass by TCs to be registered and granted refugee status, then are relocated to settlements for assistance.
- Refugee women and girls in Lusenda camp had not received menstrual hygiene kits since March 2019, due to a lack of funding and logistical issues, although distributions should take place every three months. In December, UNHCR was able to distribute 4,363 kits consisting of underwear, sanitary pads and soap, however these kits will only last one month. UNHCR needs additional funding to purchase enough quantities of menstrual hygiene kits, to be distributed every three months.
- In November, UNHCR and partner ADRA distributed 105,415 kgs of biomass briquettes to 29,463 Burundian refugees in Lusenda camp and 5,638 in Mulongwe settlement. Biomass briquettes are an eco-friendly alternative to firewood, which also enables refugee women not to have to look for firewood in the bush, which exposes them to risks of sexual violence. However, UNHCR is only able to provide briquettes for 1-2 weeks of cooking per month (depending on consumption), due to a lack of funding.
- A total of 800 fuel-efficient stoves were also installed, and beneficiaries were sensitized on how to save energy. Using less and alternative energy also helps improving peaceful coexistence between refugees and locals, as it addresses the issue of resource-sharing.



A fuel-efficient stove used by Burundian refugees in South Kivu Province. © ADRA

- UNHCR provided **special assistance to 45 persons with specific needs** (PSN), which consisted of bedding, additional milk for children, and clothing. However, due to funding shortfalls, UNHCR was unable to assist all the 2,198 PSN identified in Lusenda camp and Mulongwe settlement.
- The World Food Programme (WFP), along with CNR, AIDES and UNHCR, distributed **cash assistance to 37,400 Burundian refugees** in Lusenda camp and Mulongwe settlement, enabling refugees to meet their food needs.
- UNHCR continued **agricultural activities** for Burundian refugees and host populations, through its partner ADRA. Additional land was made available for plowing, 318 refugees and locals received agricultural training in Lusenda and Mulongwe, and 229 households received seeds. 17,500 seedlings of different species were also planted by refugees and locals together. Cultivating fields together improves both **self-reliance and peaceful coexistence** among refugees and locals.
- Heavy rainfall caused **road damages that impacted operational movements** on a key axis connecting UNHCR's Uvira and Baraka offices, which is pivotal for delivering assistance to Burundian refugees.



Burundian refugees and locals plowing land together near Mulongwe settlement, South Kivu Province. © ADRA

## Central African refugees

Total in DRC	Women	Men
<b>171,234</b>	<b>91,554</b>	<b>79,680</b>

As of 31 December 2019

- As of 20 December, UNHCR had **repatriated 3,133 Central African refugees** (711 households) to areas of the Central African Republic that were assessed as safe, namely the capital Bangui and surrounding prefectures. The voluntary repatriation convoys had started on 21 November and will continue in 2020. In the meantime, growing numbers of Central African refugees expressed their intention to return home.
- From 20 to 22 December, UNHCR and partner CNR **pre-registered 1,181 newly-arrived Central African refugees** (378 individuals) in the village of Gboko, Bosobolo Territory, Nord Ubangi Province. They fled armed groups' attacks in the CAR's Kemo Prefecture and started arriving in mid-November. Most of them are women and children, and wish to be relocated away from unsafe border areas, in locations where UNHCR plans to provide non-food items.
- In Sud Ubangi Province, **25 solar panels were installed** in the health centers of Mole and Boyabu refugee camps, while the health center of Inke camp, Nord Ubangi Province, received solar panels in November. These now provide electricity to power equipment such as incubators, fridges containing blood banks, electric microscopes, or infrared equipment. Night-time consultations, such as births that used to be done with flashlights, can also now take place in better conditions thanks to 24-hour lighting.
- In December, **UNHCR provided non-food items and cash to 4,523 refugee and local households**, victims of recent floods in Nord and Sud Ubangi Provinces. 3,411 of them received cash, while 1,112 received non-food items consisting of mosquito nets, tarpaulins, sleeping mats and blankets. Nord and Sud Ubangi were hit by severe flooding in October and November 2019, affecting an estimated 600,000 persons (including refugees)



Fully-functioning incubator at the maternity of Boyabu refugee camp. The incubator can now work thanks to the installation of solar panels in the camp's health center. © UNHCR/Ghislaine Nentobo

according to OCHA. Needs include shelter, health and WASH as many have lost their homes, and water points and latrines were damaged, increasing risks of water-borne disease and hampering access to hygiene.

- UNHCR and partner AIRD handed over a **civil registration office** to Congolese authorities in Pambwa, Mobayi Mbongo Territory, Nord Ubangi Province, to ensure proper birth registrations and the delivery of birth certificates, and reduce the risk of statelessness. The area hosts many Central African refugees, including some 18,000 in Inke camp, many of whom do not have access to birth registration, exposing babies to remain undocumented and to statelessness. This is the fourth office handed over by UNHCR in Nord and Sud Ubangi.

## Rwandan refugees

Total in DRC (figure based on a pre-registration done by the DRC Government)	Repatriated this month (figure pending verification)	Repatriated in 2019 (figure pending verification)
<b>214,989</b>	<b>529</b>	<b>29,330</b>
Women: <b>108,168</b>   Men: <b>106,821</b>		

As of 31 December 2019

- Following the start of a military operation by the DRC army against militias in eastern DRC, **UNHCR received an increased number of Rwandan candidates for Voluntary Repatriation**, due to fighting taking place in areas hosting Rwandan refugees. In addition, some 2,100 persons (among them an estimated 648 refugees, women and children included) were expelled to Rwanda on 15 and 21 December, under the assumption by the DRC army that they were combatants.
- **UNHCR intensified the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees**, in response to the risks of human rights violations faced by dependents of a prominent Rwandan armed group, in Nyamunyunyi military site, South Kivu Province. In December, 529 Rwandan refugees were repatriated, in comparison to ten in November and 20 in October. UNHCR and the Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés (CNR) are profiling civilians and collecting their intentions regarding repatriation. Refugees were also sensitized about the possibility for voluntary repatriation.
- Still at Nyamunyunyi military site, ICRC identified **165 non-accompanied Rwandan children** who were transferred to the BVES (Bureau pour le Volontariat au service de l'Enfance et de la Santé), a local charity. UNHCR and ICRC are looking for durable solutions, including family reunification or finding an alternative host family. UNHCR and ICRC reunited and repatriated 18 unaccompanied children in December.



A Rwandan refugee is being helped onto a voluntary repatriation convoy by a UNHCR staff. © UNHCR/Justin Kissa

## South Sudanese refugees

Total in DRC	Women	Men
<b>88,717</b>	<b>47,374</b>	<b>41,343</b>

As of 31 December 2019

- From 5 September to 15 December, UNHCR and partner CNR conducted a **verification of the number of South Sudanese refugees and asylum-seekers living in settlements and reception centers** in Haut Uele and Ituri provinces, with the aim of updating UNHCR's database. UNHCR found that 33,701 refugees and asylum-seekers (10,248 households) were living in settlements and reception centers in both provinces. The

verification also recorded 1,770 persons with specific needs, including 84 children at risk, 619 elderly persons at risk, and 138 persons with serious medical conditions.

- The result of this verification shows a **significant drop** compared to the almost 48,000 refugees (let alone asylum-seekers) who were registered in settlements and reception centers in August. This could be due to a combination of factors, notably that some refugees may have moved to anglophone Uganda from francophone DRC, or that some were absent during the verification. UNHCR is following up on the latter.
- In December, 500 South Sudanese refugees were **relocated to Bele settlement** in Haut-Uele Province, bringing the total to 1,195 since 4 September 2019 (including 678 not yet biometrically registered). The relocation exercise aims to decongest the overcrowded Meri settlement and to move refugees away from unsafe border areas.
- UNHCR recorded the **arrival of 329 South Sudanese asylum-seekers** in its reception centers in Ituri and Haut Uele Provinces in December. Some fled ongoing fighting in South Sudan, while others arrived from border areas in DRC that are frequently targeted by armed groups, and where humanitarian aid is diminishing.
- In the last week of December, UNHCR's partner AIRD **repaired a bridge over the Kibali River** in Ituri Province, on the road to Biringi settlement. This renovation facilitates the movement of people and goods, including refugees needing to be relocated to the settlement. It also facilitates the implementation UNHCR and its partners' response.
- In December, three incidents that took place in Biringi settlement **affected peaceful coexistence** between refugees and the local population. On 18 December, under the initiative of UNHCR, the Territorial Administrator of Aru Territory held an audience at Biringi settlement, during which refugees were able to express their concerns and where the Government figure called for peaceful coexistence.

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## Congolese returnees

- In the Kasai region, **the voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees from Angola was suspended in December** due to poor weather and road conditions. As of 31 December, 2,588 people had been repatriated through UNHCR's organised convoys.
- With support from UNHCR's partner War Child UK, 60 children, who were repatriated from Angola through UNHCR's organized convoys, were **enrolled in remedial classes** in December. This will allow them to reintegrate in their home country's educational system. The children each received a school kit (including notebooks, pens, bags and more), stationery was provided to teachers (maps, chalk, etc.), and 60 benches and desks, as well as 6 classroom doors, were provided by War Child UK.

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## Urban refugees

- From 14 to 19 December, UNHCR, the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) and the Provincial Minister of Humanitarian Affairs launched the **biometric registration and verification of refugees and asylum seekers in Kalemie**, Tanganyika Province. This operation targets 1,238 persons (1,165 refugees and 73 asylum-seekers), who were manually registered in the UNHCR database since 2016. Biometric registration allows the collection of reliable, disaggregated data for all UNHCR protection and assistance activities, informing the search of durable solutions for refugees and asylum seekers. The aim is also to provide the refugees with individual IDs, as many of the risks they encounter are due to their lack of documentation.

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## Statelessness

- From 18 to 27 December, 5,101 Congolese children in the Kasai region **received birth certificates**, with UNHCR's support (4,500 in Kasai Province and 601 in Kasai Central Province).

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# Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

## Ituri Province

- The protection of civilians remained of concern in Djugu, Irumu and Mahagi territories. On 20 December, unidentified armed men attacked three villages in the Walendu Tatsi Sector, Djugu Territory, killing a dozen of people and leading to an **important displacement towards Tchomia** on the shore of Lake Albert.
- In the second week of December, UNHCR and partners conducted a joint mission to **evaluate protection needs in displacement sites on the Katoto-Lita axis**, in Ituri Province's Djugu Territory. According to the report, 3,991 households were living in the Sesele (566), Luvangire (632), Bahwere (447), Mbala (900), Tsere (359), Landa (237) and Nyama-Ziza (850) sites. Communities reported shelter and site management as their biggest needs, followed by WASH, food, health, hygiene kits for women and girls, and non-food items such as kitchen sets.
- From 19 November to 12 December in Bunia (Ituri Province), 585 households (2,810 individuals) were **relocated from the General Hospital site to the new IDP site of Kigonze**. Some 2,250 households (9,000 individuals) remain to be relocated to the new site.

## North Kivu Province

- On 15 December, a presumed ADF **attack on the village of Kamango led to massive displacements towards Nobili** and the surrounding villages of Kalera and Kahondo. Initial estimates by local authorities are of 24,000 newly displaced households, or up to 130,000 newly displaced individuals. Some of them had only just come back from a previous displacement to Nobili, in 2019.
- In North Kivu Province, following the storming of the Beni townhall and of the MONUSCO base there at the end of November, and evacuations of humanitarian staff, **essential UNHCR staff are starting to be redeployed**.
- As of 8 December, UNHCR and partner AIRD's **shelter project for returned IDPs in North Kivu Province was completed**. 1,700 family shelters were completed in return areas in Masisi, Rutshuru and Lubero territories. In Beni Territory, the construction and equipment of four classrooms at the Mwangaza school was completed.
- In December, UNHCR's partner AIDES continued the **construction of 366 emergency shelters** in Mweso health zone, as well as in three IDP sites in Masisi Territory. In response to the recent displacements in the Territory, UNHCR also targeted 1,477 households that will benefit from a **non-food items distribution**.
- UNHCR and partner Caritas provided **multi-purpose cash assistance** to 197 people with specific needs, specifically women at risk of sexual exploitation in Kitchanga, Masisi Territory. The cash assistance will allow them to respond to their basic needs according to their own priorities.
- As part of Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) around Nyanzale, Rutshuru Territory, the **construction of a community market** in Kibirizi was completed, while the village's primary school is still under construction.
- UNHCR and partner Caritas provided **cash assistance to 80 IDP, returnee, local and Rwandan refugee households** in Kitchanga (50) and in Birambizo health zone, in Masisi and Rutshuru territories. The beneficiaries received training on income-generating activities, and each received varying amounts of cash depending on activity they chose.

## South Kivu Province

- **The security situation was relatively calm in December**, compared to October and November. Armed clashes however continued between the DRC army and armed groups in the highlands. According to OCHA's estimates, 91,252 IDPs fled from Minembwe (Fizi Territory) and Itombwe sector (Mwenga Territory) between September and November, towards the lower highlands and Tanganyika coastline in Fizi Territory.
- In December, the DRC army detained members of CNRD, a Rwandan armed group, as well as their dependents. The group had moved from North to South Kivu provinces in February 2019, and their presence led to clashes with the army, village lootings, and caused serious protection concerns for the local population. All men aged 18 and above, presumed to be combatants or affiliated to the armed group, and were **held at Nyamunyunyi military site**, along with 1,570 of their dependents, mostly women and children. The humanitarian situation inside Nyamunyunyi military site has been a serious protection concern for UNHCR. A majority of people in the site are civilian, and 29 people, including seventeen children, have died there.

- In response to the protection risks faced by dependents of presumed CNRD members, UNHCR participated in a “Go and See” mission in Ziraló, where remaining CNRD combatants and their dependents are installed.

### Kasai region

- On 7 December, UNHCR organized a [workshop on international protection](#) for 32 members of judicial authorities, to discuss IDPs’, children’s and women’s rights in the DRC context.
- During the campaign of 16 Days of Activism against sexual and gender-based violence, UNHCR organised [awareness-raising activities](#) to promote women’s rights, reaching 6,325 people in the Kasai region.

### Tanganyika / Haut-Katanga Provinces

- On 30 December, UNHCR and its partners AIRD and CNR, along with a member of the Provincial Humanitarian Affairs Division, [officially handed over a community market](#) to IDP returnees and to the host population in Nsango Malumbi, a village of return in Kalemie Territory, Tanganyika Province. The community market has a capacity of 20 stalls for 20 traders, with a block of 2 separate latrines for men and women, as well as a hand-washing unit. The community market aims to encourage self-reliance activities for returnees in their village of origin, while encouraging peaceful coexistence.
- UNHCR and partner AIRD started a Post-Distribution Monitoring (PDM), to [follow up on 180 out of 991 beneficiaries of a multipurpose cash distribution](#) that took place from 17 to 20 December 2019 in six villages of Kiambi Health Zone, Manono Territory, Tanganyika Province. The cash-for-shelter project provided shelter assistance to 330 returnees and multipurpose cash to 1,000 returnees. During the PDM, beneficiaries reported having mainly used the cash to buy food and hygiene products (including menstrual hygiene products), and to pay back debts used to buy cattle or clothes. The main remaining needs were in terms of health, food, as well as education.



Inauguration of the new community market handed over by UNHCR and partners in Nsango Malumbi, Tanganyika Province.  
© UNHCR

## Clusters and Working Groups

### Protection Cluster

- During its plenary meeting on 6 December, the Protection Cluster (led by UNHCR) exposed its priorities for 2020, which included continued advocacy for the [nationalisation of the Kampala Convention](#) in DRC, and for a [reinforced response to Housing, Land and Property](#) (HLP) issues in DRC.
- The Child Protection Working Group (a sub-group of the Protection Cluster) [established common vulnerability criteria](#) for the implementation of child protection projects in areas affected by Ebola. The CPWG also finalized a [glossary of vulnerabilities specific to children](#), for a better understanding of child protection terms.

### Shelter Cluster

- On 17 December in Tanganyika Province, the Shelter Working Group welcomed its [new regional coordinator](#), Wivine Mwamini.

## External / Donor Relations

### As of 7 January 2020

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency is grateful for the support of:

#### Donors for UNHCR operations in DRC in 2019

United States of America (36 M) | CERF (3.7 M) | European Union (3.2 M) | Japan (2.5 M) | Sweden (2.2 M) | Finland (1.7 M) | France (1.6 M) | Canada (0.76 M) | Australia for UNHCR (0.53 M) | Spain (0.42 M) | United Nations Foundation (0.43 M) | International Olympic Committee (0.27 M) | UPS Corporate (0.14 M) | UNIQLO (0.13) | UNAIDS (0.03 M) | Private donors (0.13 M)

**Major donors of regional or other funds with soft earmarking 2019**

**Germany** (32 M) | **United States of America** (27.8 M) | **Private donors Australia** (13.7 M) | **Private donors Germany** (6.9 M) | **Canada** (6.8 M) | **Sweden** (4 M) | **Finland** (3.3 M) | **Private donors Spain** (3 M) | **Private donor Republic of Korea** (2.8 M) | **Norway** (2.8 M)

**Major donors of un-earmarked funds in 2019**

**Sweden** (99.8 M) | **Private donors Spain** (73.8 M) | **United Kingdom** (44.6 M) | **Norway** (44.5 M) | **Netherlands** (43.1 M) | **Private donors Republic of Korea** (41.8 M) | **Germany** (28.9 M) | **Japan** (25.7 M) | **Denmark** (24.4 M) | **Private donors Japan** (23.4 M) | **Private donors Italy** (17.5 M) | **Switzerland** (15.1 M) | **Private donors USA** (15 M) | **France** (14 M) | **Private donors Sweden** (13.6 M) | **Ireland** (10.2 M) | **Italy** (10 M)

**Contacts**

**Fabien Faivre**, Associate External Relations Officer, – UNHCR Regional Representation Kinshasa, [faivre@unhcr.org](mailto:faivre@unhcr.org), Tel: +243 996 041 000, +243 825 443 419

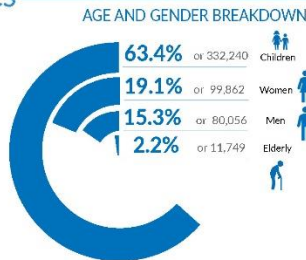
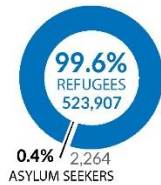
**Alexandra Stenbock-Fermor**, Associate External Relations and Reporting Officer, – UNHCR Regional Representation Kinshasa, [stenbock@unhcr.org](mailto:stenbock@unhcr.org), Tel: +243 996 041 000, +243 822 253 121

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# 526,171\*

TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

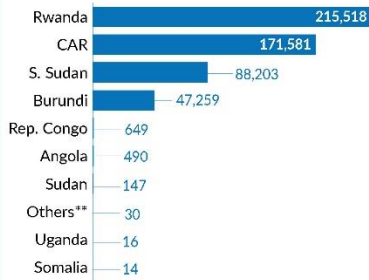
## KEY STATISTICS



### TYPES OF LOCATION



### REFUGEE POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN



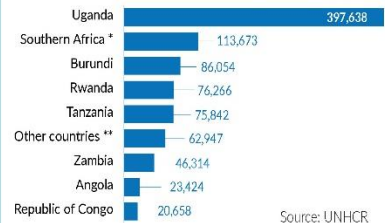
\* These figures are for the end of November 2019.

\*\* Others include Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Syria, Liberia, Chad and Sierra Leone.

### REFUGEES FROM DRC IN AFRICA

# 902,816

TOTAL DRC REFUGEE POPULATION



Source: UNHCR

\* Southern Africa includes Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar, South Africa and the Kingdom of Eswatini.

\*\* Other countries include South Sudan, Kenya, Central African Republic and Chad.

