

Southern Africa

4 June 2020

Highlights

64,742 individuals screened for COVID-19 in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**, in camps and settlements hosting refugees from the Central African Republic and from Burundi.

6,210 bars of soap distributed to refugees and asylum-seekers in **Mozambique** to encourage handwashing and reduce the spread of COVID-19.

1,531 asylum-seekers and host community members reached in the **Republic of the Congo** with COVID-19 prevention messages, using workshops, focus groups, and door-to-door campaigns.



A refugee in Lôvua settlement, Angola, has her token scanned at a distribution site, where COVID-19 prevention measures are observed. @UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

Population Figures

8,953,716 persons of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa, including



767,743 refugees and 311,924 asylum-seekers



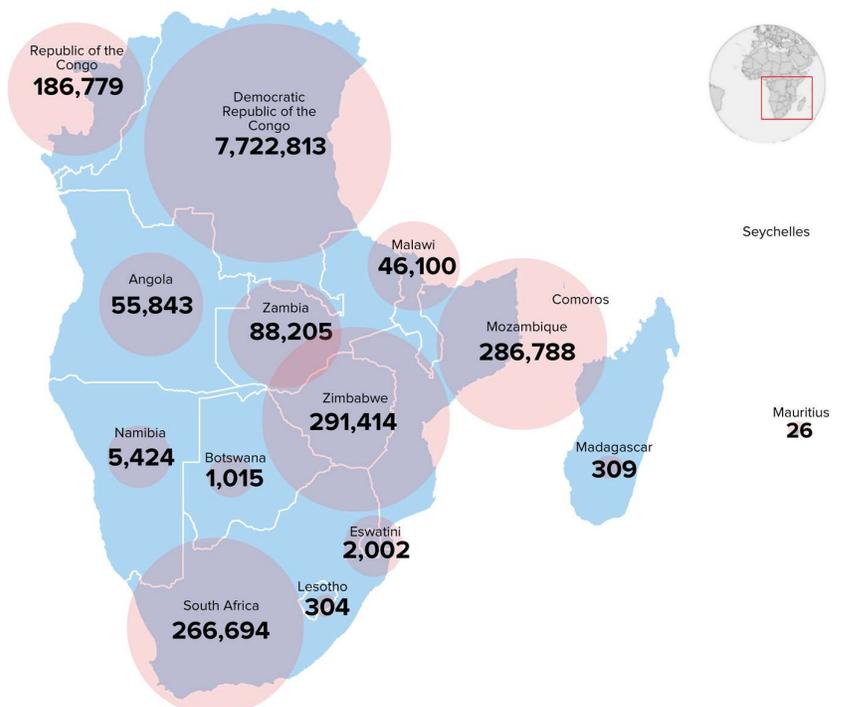
5,680,781 internally displaced persons (IDPs)



2,157,597 returnees

(as of 3 June 2020)

Persons of Concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa



Operational Context

As of 4 June 2020, there are a reported 43,353 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the 16 countries covered by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, an increase of 14,205 cases over a one-week period. South Africa continues to report the highest number of confirmed cases on the continent. Across the region, national efforts to contain COVID-19 have included restrictions on movement, limits on social gatherings, prohibition of public events, suspension of commercial flights, closure of borders, and nation-wide lockdowns. Many governments have spent the past weeks strengthening COVID-19 prevention and response measures, and COVID-19 restrictions are gradually beginning to ease in many – but not all – countries in the region.

UNHCR continues to work with governments, World Health Organization (WHO) and other UN agencies and NGOs to secure the inclusion of persons of concern – refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless people and other marginalized communities – in preparedness and response measures for COVID-19.

UNHCR and partners have also committed to a 'stay and deliver' approach, continuing to provide critical services and assistance while adopting social distancing and other COVID-19 mitigation measures. This includes implementation of strict health protocols at distribution points, the use of hotlines to report protection issues and assistance needs, and support to virtual and distance learning and capacity building. UNHCR has also been expanding its outreach efforts in the region with the support of partners and community volunteers to spread the message among persons of concern and their host communities about COVID-19 prevention and services.

UNHCR Response



Health and WASH

UNHCR and partners continued health and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities across the region, to prevent and respond to COVID-19. In **Mozambique**, UNHCR distributed soap for refugees and asylum-seekers in Maratane camp, Nampula Province, alongside the World Food Programme's general food distribution. The distributions are being conducted in line with the COVID-19 prevention measures such as social distancing, hand washing and the use of masks. As of 28 May, 6,210 bars of soap for a period of two months has been distributed.

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, 1.6 tons of soap was distributed to 6,622 South Sudanese refugees (1,652 households) in Bele settlement, while in the Kasai region, 173 handwashing kits with soap were distributed to authorities and 6 donated to health centres. UNHCR and its WASH partners disinfected 132 community latrines and health posts in Lusenda camp, Mulongwe settlement and transit centres in hosting Burundian refugees in South Kivu Province. UNHCR and partners also constructed 25 latrines and 15 showers in Tsukpa displacement site, Ituri Province, improving hygiene conditions and helping to prevent contagious diseases including COVID-19.

UNHCR has also been supporting COVID-19 screening activities across the DRC. In Nord and Sud Ubangi provinces, UNHCR medically screened 11,368 more persons in the four camps hosting refugees from Central African Republic (CAR), bringing the total number of persons screened in the four sites to 38,455 persons. In South Kivu Province, UNHCR's partners medically screened 5,365 Burundian refugees in Lusenda camp and Mulongwe settlement, bringing the total to 26,287 persons screened people so far, with no suspected or confirmed cases.

Training and capacity building have also featured in the health response in the region. In the **Republic of the Congo (ROC)** UNHCR and partners have conducted COVID-19 training for 21 health workers at hospitals, health centres and health posts in Gamboma, Plateaux Region, as well as capacity building on COVID-19 for 44 Rapid Intervention Team members, in collaboration with government. In the **DRC**, UNHCR and its health partner trained 70 hygiene promoters on community hygiene monitoring in Lusenda camp and Mulongwe

settlement, which host Burundian refugees in South Kivu Province. In Fizi Territory, South Kivu Province, four laboratory technicians received training on collection and delivery of COVID-19 samples, while 200 community volunteers were trained on community-based monitoring of COVID-19 in areas hosting South Sudanese refugees.



Protection, Communication and Community Engagement

UNHCR continued awareness-raising and risk communications across the region, focusing on reducing the spread and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 and related protection issues, such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). In the **DRC**, UNHCR along with partners and community volunteers continue to roll out the largest awareness-raising campaign in the region, reaching more than 55,300 individuals through focus group discussions, flyer distribution, door-to-door messaging and camp-based broadcasts across the country, plus an estimated 700,000 persons of concern and host community members widely-broadcast radio spots.

COVID-19 awareness-raising in the DRC also included messaging on prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV). For example, in Tanganyika Province UNHCR and partners conducted 21 interactive awareness sessions for 177 IDPs on aspects of sexual violence related to COVID-19, while UNHCR-sponsored radio broadcasts on SGBV prevention also continued in the province. In the past week there were 20 broadcasts on 5 community radio channels in Kalemie, Manono and Moba, and 4 animated shows. Furthermore, amongst refugees from Central African Republic (CAR), three awareness-raising sessions reached 256 persons on SGBV prevention, amidst increased risks of SGBV due to COVID-19 related movement restrictions.

In the **ROC**, 1,531 individuals including asylum-seekers and host community members, have been reached through a range of awareness-raising initiatives on COVID-19 prevention and mitigation by UNHCR and partners in Gamboma, Plateaux Region. This includes workshops, focus groups, educational talks and door-to-door campaigns. Meanwhile, in **Mozambique**, UNHCR and its legal assistance partner are conducting awareness-raising activities on COVID-19 preventive measures in refugee-hosting districts of Maputo and Nampula Provinces. The door-to-door information campaign targets shops owned by refugees and asylum seekers. To date, approximately 120 families have received information and awareness-raising materials in line with technical requirements of the Ministry of Health and WHO.



Assistance

UNHCR has been working with partners and government to assist the most vulnerable persons of concern during this period of COVID-19 lockdown and movement restrictions, including with food and cash assistance. In **Angola**, a distribution of food baskets targeted approximately 200 vulnerable refugee families. The distribution was organized in coordination with the refugee community and local leaders, and marked the first time refugees were formally included in government social assistance programming in the context of COVID-19. In **Malawi**, a supplementary food distribution was provided to 105 individuals with chronic illness at the recommendation of health centre in Dzaleka refugee camp, where referrals for supplementary food assistance were made based on medical assessments. Meanwhile, in **ROC**, 90 elderly refugees received food items, distributed jointly by UNHCR and the government. This is a continuing activity to ensure that elderly refugees – one of the most vulnerable group of people to COVID-19 – are protected against exposure.

Cash-based assistance also continued to be provided to vulnerable persons of concern throughout the region. In **Botswana**, cash-based assistance was distributed to persons of concern in urban areas, including an additional 88 people who are not part of the regular assistance programme, while in **Madagascar** approximately 400 persons of concern received cash assistance in April and June under the COVID-19 response. In **Zambia**, UNHCR assessed persons with specific needs in Solwezi for the purpose of COVID-19

emergency cash assistance. Approximately 1,700 individuals were identified from Meheba and 1,300 from Mayukwayukwa refugee settlements, to receive the cash assistance.



Education

As COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions are eased gradually across the region, schools in some countries are preparing to re-open in June. UNHCR and partners are moving quickly to support preparedness measures and reduce the risk of COVID-19 when students return to school. In **Zambia**, ahead of schools re-opening on 1 June, the Education Working Groups met in all three settlements to review progress towards implementing COVID-19 prevention measures. School managers and district education authorities confirmed preparedness, including disinfection of classrooms and other facilities as well as general community awareness-raising through refugee leaders. In line with COVID-19 prevention measures, masks for students and teachers, hand washing buckets with stands, soap, disinfectant, brooms, mops, bins and other items were distributed in Meheba and Mayukwayukwa refugee settlements.

In preparation for schools opening in **Zimbabwe**, UNHCR and its WASH partner distributed handwashing stations (85L each) in Tongogara refugee camp to primary and secondary schools, as well as an early childhood development centre. Sanitizers were also distributed to the learning institutions in preparation for school opening. 136 sanitizer bottles (1 litre each) will be placed in each classroom to cater for 68 classrooms. Eight additional handwashing stations were also distributed to host community clinics in Chipangayi, Kondo, Chibuwe, Gumira Clinics, and to Musapingura and Maronga primary schools.

Meanwhile, for those countries where schools remain closed, UNHCR and partners continue to take measures to help students keep up with their studies. In **Malawi**, radio programmes began delivering school lessons on Yetu Community Radio, supported by UNHCR. The programme benefits 233 Form 4 learners and runs for two hours a day, five days per week covering 10 subjects. Teachers have been trained in the preparation of radio programs and delivery of radio lessons, which are in line with government's COVID-19 Education Preparedness and Response Plan.

Challenges

The economic impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns and restrictions are felt by households across the region. Many refugees and IDPs work in the informal sector and are particularly vulnerable to loss of livelihoods and income as a result of restrictions on movement and economic activity. The number of persons of concern seeking emergency assistance from UNHCR and partners is increasing, notably among individuals who had previously been self-sufficient and not reliant on assistance, and are now struggling to put food on the table, pay rent, or cover the cost of utilities. UNHCR and partners are providing emergency cash assistance for the most vulnerable families, especially those who cannot access government assistance programmes. However, the demand for assistance far outweighs the available resources and more support is needed to ensure cash assistance continues to reach the most vulnerable to help them through and to recover from this challenging period.

Ongoing school closures, combined with the economic impacts of COVID-19 lockdowns and movement restrictions have led to increased protection risks for children, especially those who are not accessing distance learning, and those whose parents are unable to work. For instance, in the DRC, increased cases of economic exploitation of children in the construction industry have been reported amongst South Sudanese refugees. UNHCR and partners are monitoring the situation and seeking to increase awareness-raising about economic exploitation of children during COVID-19. UNHCR and partners have also set up hotlines where incidents can be reported.

Cross-border movements continue in the region, with new arrivals as well as pendular movements noted in refugee-hosting countries, and there is a need for isolation and quarantine facilities to prevent the spread of COVID-19. While UNHCR and partners are working to establish and equip isolation centres in camps and settlements, further resources are needed to meet standards and ensure preparedness. For example, in Angola, where new arrivals continue from the DRC, additional requirements need to be met at the isolation centre to meet medical protocols.

Financial Requirements

On 7 May 2020, the UN launched a revised inter-agency [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) seeking US\$6.69 billion, which includes US\$745 million for UNHCR's operations in affected countries through December 2020 and as reflected in UNHCR's [revised Coronavirus emergency appeal](#). US\$246 million has been pledged and recorded towards UNHCR's appeal.

In Southern Africa, US\$31.2 million is needed under the revised Coronavirus emergency appeal. As of 2 June 2020, the region has received earmarked funding totalling US\$429,017, accounting for approximately 1% of financial needs.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEDGES TO THE UNHCR COVID-19 APPEAL | US\$
 USA 64M (400,000 earmarked for DRC) | Germany 38M | EU 32.8M | UK 24.8M | Japan 23.9M | Denmark 14.6M | United Nations Foundation 10M | CERF 6.9M | Canada 6.4M | Private Donors 4.3M | Ireland 3.3M | Sweden 3M | Sony Corporation 2.9M | Finland 2.4M | Education Cannot Wait 1.8M | Qatar Charity 1.5M | Norway 1.4M | USA for UNHCR 1M

UNHCR is also grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked support. Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees, the internally displaced, stateless persons and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk.

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | US\$

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Private donors Spain 26.6M | Germany 25.9M | Switzerland 16.4M | Private donors in Republic of Korea 13.9M

CONTACTS

- Joan Allison, Chief, External Engagement Section, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, allison@unhcr.org
- Miranda Gaanderse, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, gaanders@unhcr.org

Global Financial Requirements: UNHCR Coronavirus Emergency Appeal

