EASTERN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO (DRC) SITUATION

June 2026

UNHCR distributes soap to forcibly displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, helping promote good hygiene practices and reduce the risk of diseases © UNHCR/2026

HIGHLIGHTS

- **The protection environment in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remained highly fragile, as recurrent armed clashes and rights violations by non-state armed groups continued to drive internal and cross-border displacement. Since January 2026, around 15,700 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers have fled to neighbouring countries, while the Ebola outbreak declared in May has further deepened humanitarian needs, with the Government currently ,reporting more than 1,900 confirmed cases and 700 deaths.**

- **Despite the fragile context, large-scale voluntary returns from Burundi continued, with more than 50,200 Congolese returning home through self-organized movements and 8,200 supported through Government-facilitated convoys with UNHCR support as of 30 June. However, voluntary repatriation from the DRC to Rwanda remained suspended due to the May border closure linked to Ebola containment measures, leaving around 500 Rwandan refugees stranded in transit centres in Goma and Bukavu.**

- **In Burundi, UNHCR and the Government completed Level 2 biometric registration at the Busuma site, registering more than 54,300 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers. Despite ongoing returns, overcrowding at the site strained reception. Critical gaps remained in the provision of shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene, health, education and livelihood services.**

DRC Updates

- **Ebola virus disease preparedness and response:** The seventeenth Ebola virus disease outbreak in eastern DRC continued to spread, with 1,926 confirmed cases including 702 deaths and 318 recoveries[1] currently reported across 42 health zones in the provinces of Ituri, the epicentre of the outbreak, North Kivu, South Kivu, Haut Uele and Tshopo since 15 May.

- While no Ebola cases have been reported among refugees in the DRC as of 30 June, 19 internally displaced persons (IDPs) from the Kpangba, Kigonze and Bembeyi sites in Ituri are among confirmed cases. More than 2 million forcibly displaced people live in Ebola-affected or high-risk areas of eastern DRC, including 320,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, heightening the urgency of inclusive preparedness, risk communication, surveillance and access to national response systems.

- UNHCR is supporting the Governments of the DRC and Uganda, alongside the World Health Organization (WHO), other United Nations agencies and local communities, to strengthen Ebola prevention and response and ensure that refugees, asylum-seekers, IDPs and host communities can access information, surveillance and essential services. Details can be found in UNHCR External Updates on the Ebola virus disease outbreak, available on the Operational Data Portal.

- **Facilitated Returns from Burundi:** Despite the challenging security and public health context in eastern DRC, voluntary returns of Congolese refugees who had been in asylum in neighbouring countries have continued and have mostly taken place in relatively safe and Ebola-free areas of South Kivu. In June, UNHCR and the Governments of Burundi and the DRC facilitated the safe and dignified voluntary return of more than 2,300 Congolese refugees from Burundi to South Kivu. This brought total facilitated returns since the reopening of the Kavimvira-Kamanyola border crossings in February 2026 to 8,200.

- **Self-organized returns from Burundi:** Self-organized returns of Congolese from Burundi comprised 596 people in June, bringing the total number of such returns since February, to around 50,200.

- **Voluntary repatriation from eastern DRC:** More than 500 Rwandan refugees remained stranded in UNHCR transit centres in Goma and Bukavu throughout June, as a result of the suspension of voluntary repatriation to Rwanda following g border restrictions linked to Ebola prevention measures. The prolonged stay of refugees in facilities intended for no more than 72 hours created challenging living conditions, protection concerns and significant operational costs. Despite all refugees having remained symptom-free beyond the 21-day Ebola incubation period, repatriation movements remained suspended. UNHCR continued to advocate for practical, risk-managed solutions that would allow voluntary repatriation to resume safely and with dignity.

- Following intention surveys conducted by UNHCR and partners 3,929 refugees expressed their wish to voluntarily return to their countries of origin, including 3,740 Rwandan refugees from 688 households and 189 Burundian refugees from 34 households, highlighting continued demand for assisted returns.

- In June, UNHCR participated in separate tripartite technical committee meetings with the Governments of the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda. Participants reviewed country situations, assessed progress since previous consultations and updated the 2026-2027 roadmaps, while reaffirming commitments to voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation in line with the evolving Ebola virus disease context and public health guidance. They also agreed to strengthen coordination, information-sharing and refugee confidence-building through updated country-of-origin information and targeted communication initiatives.

- **Shelter and essential items:** UNHCR and CIAUD distributed emergency shelter kits and essential items to 2,434 vulnerable internally displaced people and host community members in Uvira and Ruzizi health zones, helping to reduce overcrowding and improve shelter conditions.

[1] The figures on Ebola cases are as of 11 July, although this report covers June 2026.

Regional Updates

- Neighbouring countries also continued to bear the brunt of the crisis in eastern DRC, hosting around 1.3 million Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers as of 31 May 2026, including more than 250,900 people who fled between January 2025 and May 2026.

- Burundi and Uganda hosted the majority of new arrivals, despite ongoing self-organized and facilitated returns from Burundi. Host communities remained overstretched, with already critical gaps in shelter, health, water and sanitation services, worsened by the new Ebola outbreak. UNHCR's Ebola Preparedness and Response Plan seeks $14.08 million from July to November 2026 to support preparedness and response activities in the DRC and Uganda which are currently impacted by the outbreak and in Burundi, Rwanda and South Sudan which are among the high risk countries requiring preparedness actions.

Country	New arrivals in 2026	Total arrivals since January 2025
Burundi	Registration is ongoing	**142,157[2] (109,000 as of March 2026)**
Rwanda	**2,558**	**9,707[2]** (as of 30 June 2026)
Tanzania	448	**4,391** (as of 30 June 2026)
Uganda	**12,077**	**90,887** (including 85,161 registered as of 30 June 2026)
Zambia	**696**	**3,803** (as of 30 June 2026)
TOTAL	**15,779**	**250,945**

Burundi:

- **Facilitated voluntary repatriation:** The Governments of Burundi and the DRC, together with UNHCR, convened the second Tripartite Commission meeting from 2-4 June in Kinshasa, to discuss the ongoing facilitated voluntary returns of Congolese refugee. Parties reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that returns remain voluntary, safe and dignified, while agreeing to strengthen registration, intention surveys, cross-border coordination, sensitization, and resource mobilization to support return and reintegration. Weekly return convoys since April comprise around 1,000 people and children account for 60 per cent of the over 8,200 Congolese who have so far returned home.

- **Registration and reception conditions:** Level 2 biometric registration at the Busuma site since March 2026 ended in June, with around 54,300 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers registered, reflecting a decrease from the previous estimated 66,400 people at the site, due to ongoing self-organized and facilitated returns to the DRC. Registration in out of camp locations with

- As of 30 June, the Cishemere Transit Centre also hosted nearly 3,200 Congolese refugees and the Makombe Transit Centre hosted more than 600.

- Humanitarian needs remain significant across Busuma, Cishemere and Makombe. Refugees continue to face limited access to adequate shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, healthcare, education and livelihood opportunities. Overcrowding places additional pressure on already stretched services and infrastructure.

- **Legal Assistance:** To strengthen protection for Congolese refugees, in June, the Bujumbura Bar Association conducted four awareness-raising sessions on refugee rights and responsibilities, as well as children's rights, reaching 525 participants. The Burundi Bar Association also trained around 40 local authorities and stakeholders on international refugee protection, access to justice, solutions and the prevention of statelessness.

- **Gender-based violence prevention and response:** In coordination with UNHCR, the Association for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Burundi trained 150 refugees, mainly community leaders and persons with

[2] The figures on Burundi do not yet reflect ongoing returns. All figures on Burundi will be updated once biometric registration in out of camp/site locations end.

disabilities, on gender-based violence, violence against children, and reporting and referral mechanisms, strengthening community-based protection.

- **Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse:** Prevention of sexual exploitation and abuse was strengthened through training for 41 participants, risk analysis and improved coordination among partners. Ongoing work focuses on harmonizing complaints mechanisms and improving refugees' safe access to reporting channels.

- **Child protection:** Child protection remained a key priority. UNHCR and its partners completed 318 Best Interest Determination procedures and 488 Best Interest Assessments at the Busuma site, including 170 children approved for facilitated voluntary repatriation to the DRC. To date, 454 separated and 34 unaccompanied children have returned through facilitated movements.

- UNHCR also facilitated registration of 184 births in June, bringing the total number of forcibly displaced children issued birth certificates since the beginning of the year to 937. This marks important progress towards legal identity and prevention of statelessness, although an estimated 3,000 births have been recorded at Busuma since the influx began in December 2025.

- **Assistance to people with specific needs:** Targeted support continued for people with specific needs who represent around 25 per cent of the refugee population at Busuma. Care International provided cash assistance to 562 refugees, while other vulnerable individuals received essential items and tailored protection support.

- **Cash assistance and food support:** Multipurpose cash assistance was provided by the World Food programme, contributing to improved access to food despite operational constraints. Cash assistance for facilitated voluntary returns also supported close to 3,800 refugees from over 900 families, in June.

- **Health and nutrition:** UNHCR and health partners delivered more than 27,800 consultations in June, including nearly 15,200 for Congolese refugees. Routine nutrition screening and follow-up were conducted for more than 300 children aged 6 to 59 months and 100 pregnant and breastfeeding women with moderate acute malnutrition, as well as more than 200 people with severe acute malnutrition. However, the health response remained constrained by limited staffing, weak laboratory capacity, funding gaps and gaps in Ebola preparedness.

- **Water, sanitation and hygiene:** Water supply remained below minimum standards, despite a slight increase to 8.3 litres per person per day, with daily production of around 386,000 litres. WASH infrastructure works included water reservoirs, distribution networks, multiple water sources and sanitation facilities. However, sanitation access remained insufficient, with nearly 300 people per shower and 47 people per latrine.

- **Shelter and infrastructure:** Shelter gaps were critical, with only 45 per cent of the Congolese refugee population adequately accommodated and 54 per cent still lacking proper shelter. Following facilitated voluntary returns, 96 shelters were reallocated to 96 households, benefiting more than 500 individuals.

- **Environment:** Site conditions continued to deteriorate, with damaged roads, blocked drainage channels and soil erosion making some routes impassable, including for water tankers, and weakening emergency latrines from the base of the pits. This poses safety risks for refugees and further strains service delivery. Continued reliance on firewood, due to limited access to alternative cooking fuel, is also accelerating deforestation and may increase pressure on natural resources and tensions with host communities.

Tanzania:

- **New arrivals:** From 1-30 June, Tanzania received 62 new arrivals from the DRC, bringing total arrivals since January 2026 to 448 and to 4,391 since January 2025. During the reporting period, new arrivals said they were coming from Baraka, Fizi, and Uvira, and they entered Tanzania through Lake Tanganyika and land routes. The number of arrivals remained broadly consistent with the previous month (56 arrivals), underscoring the continued humanitarian impact of insecurity and displacement in parts of eastern DRC.
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- **Support to DRC new arrivals:** UNHCR provided life-saving assistance and protection to new arrivals, including food, shelter, healthcare, water, sanitation, and essential relief items. In June, UNHCR constructed 13 emergency family shelters in Nyarugusu Camp, accommodating 51 newly arrived refugees and asylum-seekers. To improve hygiene and sanitation conditions, a communal washing slab was also constructed at the reception centre in the camp, where new arrivals are temporarily accommodated before being allocated family shelters.

- **DRC self-organized voluntary returns:** In June, four families comprising 13 Congolese asylum-seekers in Nyarugusu Camp informed UNHCR of their intention to undertake self-organized voluntary returns to the DRC. UNHCR counselled the individuals on current conditions in the DRC and reiterated that it is not currently promoting nor facilitating returns to the country, while respecting the right of refugees and asylum-seekers to make informed decisions regarding return. Two families comprising four individuals subsequently returned to Kalemie and Uvira in Tanganyika and South Kivu provinces, areas outside the main conflict-affected regions of eastern DRC. UNHCR continues to closely monitor developments and provide protection counselling to individuals considering return.

Uganda:

- **New arrivals and registration:** In June 2026, Uganda registered 1,049 Congolese nationals, including 1,048 asylum-seekers and one refugee. Most registrations took place in Nakivale Refugee Settlement, which recorded 949 individuals, followed by Imvepi with 55, Kyangwali with 40, Rwamwanja and Rhino Camp with two each, and Kampala with one.

- The majority of those registered came from North Kivu, accounting for 949 individuals, followed by Ituri with 55 and South Kivu with 40. Smaller numbers originated from Haut-Lomami and Kongo Central, with two individuals each, and Kinshasa, with one.

- Since January 2026, Uganda has received 12,077 Congolese asylum-seekers, underscoring its continued role as a key country of asylum for people fleeing insecurity in eastern DRC. As of 30 June 2026, Uganda hosted 667,687 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers.

- **Ebola update:** The cumulative number of Ebola-affected people in Uganda remained at 20 confirmed cases and two deaths. Of the confirmed cases, 17 patients had recovered[3], while one remained in admission.

- Ebola preparedness and response continued across refugee-hosting districts and settlements. Settlement Ebola Task Force meetings coordinated preparedness, surveillance, infection prevention and control (IPC), and risk communication. Health facilities maintained Ebola prevention and control measures, including screening, surveillance and referral systems, while partners supported the provision of Ebola prevention materials at public institutions and continued community sensitization and awareness campaigns, particularly in schools and reception facilities.

- Uganda maintained the closure of official border entry points to asylum-seekers from the DRC and other nationalities as part of Ebola prevention and control measures throughout June.

- **Decongesting reception and transit centres:** No new asylum-seekers were received at Nyakabande and Matanda Transit Centres in June, due to the continued DRC-Uganda border closure. Transit and reception centres continued to accommodate people with specific protection needs and asylum-seekers who had arrived before the border restrictions were imposed.

- During the reporting period, 16 Congolese asylum-seekers at Kagoma Reception Centre completed the mandatory 21-day Ebola observation period and were scheduled for final health screening prior to relocation.

- By 30 June, 214 individuals remained in reception centres across the South-West and Mid-West regions, which host the majority of Congolese asylum-seekers and refugees in Uganda. Most of those accommodated were

[3] The Ebola figures for Uganda are as of 13 July 2026, although this report covers June 2026.

protection cases. Preparations continued for the registration and relocation of eligible asylum-seekers to their designated settlement plots, subject to health clearance and operational conditions.

Zambia/ZAMCO:

- **New arrivals in Zambia:** Zambia continued to receive and register small groups of new arrivals from the DRC, comprising 78 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers in June, bringing the total number of arrivals from the DRC since the beginning of the year to 3,803

- **New arrivals in Malawi:** Malawi continued to receive and register new arrivals, comprising 168 Congolese in June, totalling 1,109 since the beginning of the year.

- **Voluntary repatriation to the DRC:** The fourth voluntary repatriation convoy departed from Zambia's Mantapala Settlement for Pweto in the DRC on Wednesday 10 June 2026, carrying 303 people from 83 households. This brings the cumulative number of repatriated refugees to 865 since May 2026. Voluntary repatriation registration is ongoing in the settlement in preparation for the fifth convoy. Refugees continued to express willingness to return, with no significant change in current trends

- **Ebola response:** UN agencies across Malawi and Zambia strengthened Ebola preparedness and response through enhanced prevention and risk communication measures aligned with guidance from national ministries of health and WHO. These efforts have improved understanding of transmission pathways, early detection and reporting procedures, infection prevention and control measures, and the importance of accurate public messaging to counter misinformation and support coordinated response efforts.

- UNHCR continues to monitor new arrivals from Ebola-affected areas of the DRC and coordinate with health authorities to facilitate screening in accordance with national protocols. Community engagement and awareness efforts have also been strengthened through the dissemination of approved communication materials to refugee communities, including the development of a dedicated Ebola planned training for Lifeline Childline Zambia call centre staff to ensure the delivery of accurate and consistent health messaging.

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For updates on the Eastern DRC Situation, check the country pages of Burundi, the DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Zambia on the UNHCR Operational Data Portal