

South Sudanese Refugee Situation

Democratic Republic of the Congo

September 2017

In September, **more than 1,000 newly arrived South Sudanese refugees** were biometrically registered in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); all of them at Meri and Biringi refugee sites.

UNHCR **increased its support for school fees, uniforms and school supplies** and covers the expenses for over 6,000 primary school-aged refugee children and 800 children from the local communities.

Almost **10,000 families** received their monthly cash **grants** at Meri and Biringi sites, allowing them to purchase goods according to their own needs and priorities.

KEY INDICATORS

85,426

South Sudanese refugees **registered or pre-registered** as of 30th September 2017

53%

Women and girls

64%

Children below the age of 18 years

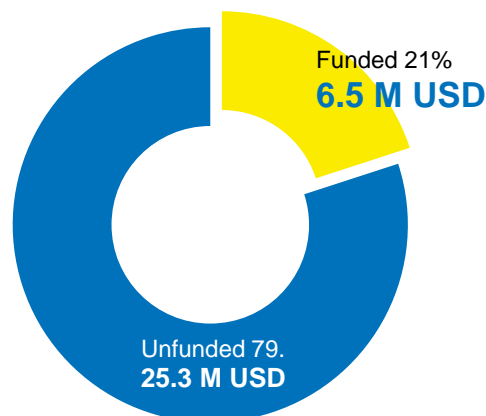
30,470

Refugees living in the refugee sites of Meri and Biringi as of 30th September 2017

FUNDING (AS OF 26 SEPTEMBER 2017)

USD 31.8 M

requested for the DRC - South Sudanese refugee situation



Update on Achievements

Operational Context

Latest development

- As civil war in South Sudan persisted, asylum seekers continued to arrive in the DRC. UNHCR and the Congolese National Commission for Refugees (CNR) registered the newly arrived at the Meri site (Faradje territory, Haut-Uélé province) and the Biringi site (Aru territory, Ituri province). Meanwhile, UNHCR's partners continued to sensitize the asylum seekers residing at the border of the Aru territory to relocate to the Biringi site, which is at a safer distance to the volatile border area, and organized the relocation.
- The security situation in Dungu territory (Haut-Uélé province) remained a serious concern due to the ongoing activities of armed groups that restrict UNHCR's access to a considerable number of refugees and asylum seekers who crossed the border finding refuge in the DRC. UNHCR provided assistance to these refugees, including in Duru, Bitima, Mogoroko and Doruma, via its implementing partners.

Funding update

- The UNHCR South Sudanese Refugee Situation in the DRC continued to be severely underfunded at 21% of the total requirement of USD 31.8 m. Funding constraints strongly impacted the provision of all basic services. A considerable number of refugees are hosted in overcrowded transit hangars for months due to the lack of shelter and building material, and suffer from shortage of water and sanitary facilities, as well as education and healthcare services.



Children playing in front of one of the 136 latrines at the Biringi site which serve more than 3,000 refugees. The availability of a sufficient number of latrines remained critical © UNHCR 2017 / A. Cadonau

**PROTECTION****Achievements and Impact**

- **Registration** – In September, 1,074 newly arrived South Sudanese refugees were biometrically registered in the DRC. The number of new arrivals was lower than in the previous months of August (2,030) and July (1,547); however, such fluctuations were regularly observed since the beginning of the year. The majority of the newly arrived refugees (87%) was registered at the Meri site (Haut-Uélé province) and a smaller percentage (13%) at the Biringi site (Ituri province). As of 30th September 2017, the number of refugees stood at 27,273 at the Meri site and at 3,197 at the Biringi site.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV)** – In response to the 15 SGBV cases reported in Meri in September, UNHCR's partner ADES and the SGBV focal points - consisting of women and men from the refugee and host community - sensitized over 9,000 people to the prevention of and response to SGBV. Since the beginning of the year, 94 cases have been reported in Meri. In Biringi, two new cases were reported during the course of September; overall, 64 SGBV cases were registered since January 2017 and 80 percent of the refugees living on the site have been involved in awareness raising campaigns.
- **Refugees with specific needs** – In an effort to support the refugees with specific needs, UNHCR's partner for community services, ADSSE, continued to identify particularly vulnerable refugees across the sites, the majority of whom are elderly, persons with disabilities, unaccompanied and separated children, pregnant women and single parents. About one fifth of the refugees in Meri and Biringi were considered as having specific needs. They received hot meals, food and non-food items and benefited from other community services according to their needs.

**EDUCATION****Achievements and Impact**

- **School fees** – UNHCR significantly increased its support for school fees, uniforms and school supplies. Today, UNHCR covers the expenses for 6,085 primary school-aged refugee children for the current academic year compared to 2,450 the previous year. UNHCR's support to education was recently extended to 800 children from the local communities.
- **Classrooms** – Three newly built and fully furnished primary school classrooms opened for the beginning of the school year in Biringi.

- **Language courses** – 350 refugee children started their three-month French induction language classes at the Biringi site, preparing them to integrate into the Congolese public school system. The next session of language courses in Meri were still on hold as the community hangars were under rehabilitation.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Enrollment rate** – The enrollment rate in primary school remained low as only the refugee children whose school fees were covered by UNHCR factually attended school. This corresponded to 49% of the children of primary school age in Meri and 64% in Biringi. An increase in funds could significantly raise school attendance.
- **Classrooms** – 15 additional primary schools are needed in Meri and two in Biringi to accommodate the continuously increasing number of school children. In response to the need, UNHCR will construct 12 classrooms at the two sites in 2017, six at each site.



HEALTH

Achievements and Impact

- **Health facilities** – The construction of an incinerator at the newly built health center in Biringi was finalized. The health center will be equipped during the course of October and shall be brought into service thereafter.
- **Malaria** – As a response to malaria being the most common disease at all sites, community relays continued to inform the refugee population about the risk of malaria transmission, means of prevention, including the correct use of mosquito nets, and treatment. These campaigns reached 1,800 refugees in Biringi and over 1,000 in Meri. Additional mosquito nets are urgently needed for 12,500 refugees in Meri and 1,600 in Biringi.
- **HIV prevention** – Over 5,500 condoms were distributed at the Meri site and 1,200 at the Biringi site as part of regular campaigns on the prevention of HIV transmission. HIV remains a critical issue as the respective public health zones are poorly resourced with comprehensive HIV/AIDS competencies. Although antiretroviral medication is available, HIV tests and prevention of transmission of the virus from mother to child are not available at present.
- **Medical consultations** – The new health center Nyalanya in Meri was opened and will allow for the treatment of a larger number of out-patients. Over the month, 2,200 patients were treated at the health facilities in Meri and 650 refugees were sensitized

during door-to-door campaigns to the availability of the health structures and the modalities of using them. In Biringi, 900 patients received medical treatment.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

Achievements and Impact

- **Malnutrition** – Upon arrival at the Meri and Biringi sites, refugee children and pregnant and lactating women were systematically screened for their nutritional status. If identified as malnourished, they were admitted to UNHCR and the World Food Programme's (WFP) feeding programme. In Meri, 540 refugees with acute malnutrition were identified (300 children below the age of five and 240 pregnant or lactating women) and 240 in Biringi (90 children below the age of five and 150 lactating and pregnant women). Moreover, community workers in Biringi sensitized over 1,100 refugees to ways of preventing malnutrition.
- **Food distribution** – Instead of the cash grants distributed at the Meri and Biringi sites, flour, cooking oil, beans and salt was distributed to 5,240 refugees in Dungu Centre, Duru, Doruma, Bitima and Mogoroko (Dungu territory).



WATER AND SANITATION

Achievements and Impact

- **Water** – UNHCR allocated additional funds for the construction of 20 boreholes. This will significantly increase the water production in Meri, which stood at 11 liters per refugee/day, provided by 23 sources. At least 36 additional water points were required. The average water production in Biringi stood at 17 liters per person/day; the construction of an additional three water points will help to meet UNHCR's standard of 20 liters.
- **Hygiene** – To prevent waterborne diseases including Cholera, community relays sensitized 7,300 refugees in Meri and 780 in Biringi to the correct treatment of drinking water, individual and collective hygiene, food hygiene and the use of latrines.
- **Latrines** – In Meri, 87 latrines and showers were constructed using a cash-based intervention approach. Furthermore, 160 additional beneficiary families were identified in Meri and 45 in Biringi who started the construction of new latrines.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Latrines** – Latrine coverage stood at 11.5% in Meri with 1,025 latrines available for almost 9,000 households. On average, 27 refugees in Meri shared one toilet. An additional 8,000 latrines were urgently needed. In Biringi, where 136 latrines were functional, at least 1,000 additional latrines were needed.



COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

Achievements and Impact

- **Income generating activities** – with UNHCR support, the International Labor Organization (ILO) conducted values chains assessments for income generating activities in Meri, Biringi and Dungu. Livestock breeding, small trade, motorcycle taxi, sewing, fish farming, masonry, hairdressing and beekeeping were identified for possible self-reliance activities promotion, in addition to agriculture, which UNHCR and the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) already promote among the refugees.



SHELTER AND NFIS

Achievements and Impact

- **Cash distribution** – The monthly cash grant of 16 USD per person distributed by the World Food Programme (WFP) allowed the vast majority of families (8,250 in Meri and 1,210 in Biringi) to purchase goods according to their personal needs and priorities.
- **Shelter** – By the end of September, 520 of the 700 shelters that UNHCR will construct in 2017 for the most vulnerable refugees in Meri and Biringi were finished and inhabited.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Shelter** – 5,200 families in Meri and 360 in Biringi still urgently required family shelters. They lived in overcrowded transit hangars for months where they were exposed to the weather and an increased risk of infectious diseases. Construction material was scarce, particularly in the vicinity of the Meri site.

**ACCESS TO ENERGY****Achievements and Impact**

- **Fuel** – A first group of the 2,000 targeted refugees in Biringi were trained on the construction of fuel-efficient stoves by UNHCR's partner Caritas Mahagi-Nioka. They were also provided with the necessary material to build the stoves. The availability of fuel-efficient stoves remove strain from the surrounding forests and increase the availability of branches for the construction of shelters, latrines and showers.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **Deforestation** – The need remained to reforest the Meri site and its surroundings due to the large number of refugees – in addition to the local community – who collect firewood and construction material. Wood was scarce around the site and refugees had to go as far as 25 km to collect branches and sticks. UNHCR continued to seek cooperation with partners to reforest the site.

Working in partnership

- UNHCR coordinates its assistance with a variety of humanitarian actors, working together to ensure refugee benefit from dignified and efficient protection mechanisms.
- For this operation, UNHCR's partners are: ADES, ADSSE, AIRD, CNR and INTERSOS. Other partners include FAO, WFP (with its partner TSF), MALTESER and TROCAIRE/CARITAS.

External / Donors Relations

Donors for SSD refugee response in DRC in 2017

United States of America (6.2 M) | Belgium (0.3 M)

Other donors for UNHCR operations in DRC in 2017

United States of America (32.2 M) | Japan (2.5 M) | Belgium (1.1 M) | European Union (1.1 M) | Sweden (1.1 M) | UNIQLO Co, Ltd (0.9 M) | DRC Humanitarian Fund (0.8 M) | Canada (0.7 M) | Private Donors Germany (0.5 M) | France (0.5 M) | Church of Jesus Christ of Latter day Saints (0.2 M) | U.N. Foundation (0.2 M) | Private Donors Republic of Korea (0.7 M) | Private Donors Spain (0.07 M) | Vodafone Foundation (0.05 M)

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LINKS

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