

# Democratic Republic of the Congo:

## 2018 End Year Report

### SOUTH SUDAN REGIONAL RRP

January - December 2018



## 95,704

SOUTH SUDANESE  
REFUGEES HOSTED IN  
DRC (31 DECEMBER 2018)

## US\$ 54.8 M

REQUIRED IN DRC IN 2018

## 18%

FUNDING RECEIVED IN  
2018

## 4

RRP PARTNERS IN DRC  
IN 2018

#### SITUATION OVERVIEW

As of end of December 2018, there are over 95,700 South Sudanese refugees in the north east of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), of which 53 per cent are women and girls, and 63 per cent are children below the age of 18. Most arrived during 2016 and 2017; there was no significant population increase in 2018 with some 5,895 new arrivals and no substantial departures. Despite a ceasefire and a Revitalized Peace Agreement signed in September 2018 in their home country, South Sudanese refugees in the DRC remain wary of voluntary repatriation.

South Sudanese refugees arriving to the DRC are from a country which remains the most affected in Africa by forced displacement. Their vulnerability is compounded by the fact that refugee hosting areas are among the most economically underserved and marginalized in the DRC. Refugees live alongside host communities with limited resources who nonetheless share what they have with refugees and with Congolese returnees from South Sudan and other vulnerable populations. The protracted experience of hosting regions contributes to chronic food insecurity and limited livelihood opportunities – as well as internal displacement in some cases. The lack of support for public infrastructure such as schools, health centres and police and justice systems, is also a significant challenge for residents and refugees alike.

RRP partners and the Government had – and continue to have – very limited access to refugees in the north of the DRC due to the volatile security situation and presence of armed groups, including the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). With only 41 per cent of South Sudanese refugees living in settlements, most South Sudanese refugees live scattered along border with no or limited access to humanitarian assistance. A verification mission led by UNHCR confirmed 11,528 South Sudanese refugees have been identified in the border region north of DRC. The majority expressed a wish to relocate away from the border, particularly for security reasons.

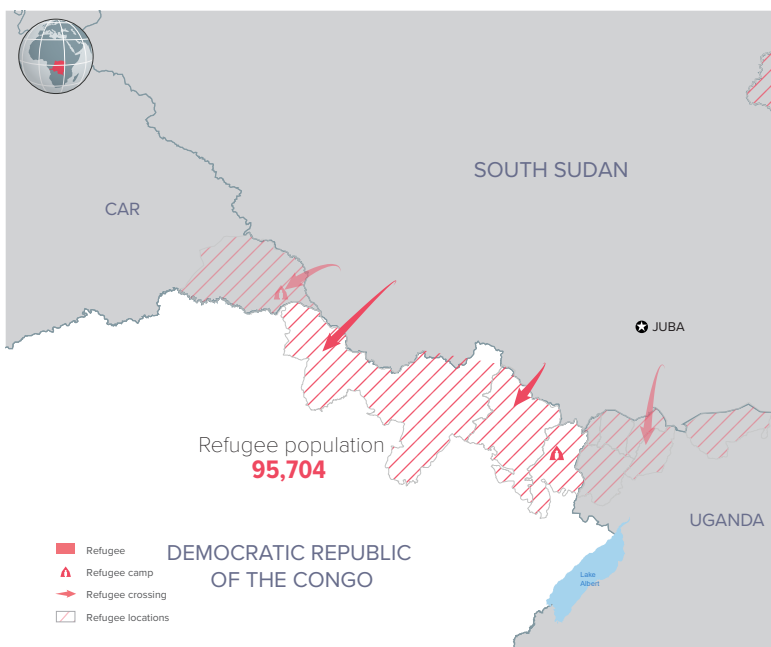
However, congestion of the existing refugees hosting sites and access to shelter remain the most critical challenges. The maximum capacity of Meri site is 20,000, while over 34,000 South Sudanese individuals have settled and live there. Kaka refugee site (DRC, Haut-Uele Province) was opened in late 2017, but in 2018, after discussions with the authorities and various stakeholders an alternative location at a greater distance from Garamba National Park and its adjacent Protected Areas was identified. On 18 July 2018, the Governor of Haut-Uele Province issued a decree which designated Bele (Faradje Territory, in Haut-Uele Province) as a new site. The relocation exercise to the new site is expected to start during the first half of 2019. Refugees settled in Bele will be integrated within the same self-reliance-oriented programming as the other South Sudanese refugees in the areas.

However, it is to be noted that the continuous influx continues to pose major concerns in terms of access to adequate basic services, especially regarding health and nutrition, education and justice, and proper sanitation and hygiene facilities.

The border areas of Ituri and Haut-Uele Province and South Sudan remain uncontrolled due to the insufficient presence of the Congolese police and armed forces, creating opportunities for armed groups to enter, putting both refugee and the host community populations at great security risk. Humanitarian access rests on the ability and capacities of the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission (MONUSCO) in the DRC to prioritize protection of civilians in border areas hosting refugees. In 2018, UNHCR organized trainings to sensitize police and local authorities on its mandate, international protection, and specific security measures for refugees, but more work is needed.

Promoting self-reliance has become a strong component of the RRP response and will be reinforced in 2019. Through a community based approach, RRP partners support the integration of refugees into the host communities in all sectors, while promoting peaceful coexistence. For example, public schools have been constructed and renovated in Haut-Uele and Ituri provinces where refugees and Congolese children study together. RRP partners played a pivotal advocacy role with local authorities. For example, following advocacy, the village chief of Biringi agreed to allocate an area of 140 hectares neighboring Biringi site where refugees can build shelters.

In 2018, the funding received in DRC for the South Sudan RRRP reached only 18 per cent. The lack of funds continued to impact the provision of the necessary assistance to both new arrivals and existing caseload. Protection challenges for the South Sudanese people are immense, especially in terms of registration, child protection, and SGBV while living conditions remain below humanitarian standards with basic needs and standards being unmet. The assistance strategy for the South Sudanese refugees is to make sure the refugees and asylum seekers have access to international protection and life-saving assistance, while advancing on an alternatives to camp and CRRF-consistent model as resources and partnerships allow.



## Protection

**100%** of reported SGBV cases received psychosocial care

**39%** of children with specific needs received individual case management

only **44%** of South Sudanese Refugees are biometrically registered

Since the beginning of the crisis in South Sudan, UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) registered biometrically or pre-registered 95,704 South Sudanese refugees (as of 31 December 2018) in the DRC. Throughout the year, understaffing and limited capacity of the RRP partners responsible for pre-registration hindered the registration process of the continuous flux of South Sudanese refugees. Only 44 per cent of South Sudanese refugees are biometrically registered, with the remaining 56 per cent to be registered by mid-2019. Lack of full registration and the ID card that comes with it can expose individuals to protection risks such as harassment and abuse, limiting their freedom of movement and access to labour markets and other key elements of self-reliance.

Some 64 per cent of the refugee population are children below the age of 18. Through the individual biometric registration, 512 children were identified as having specific needs; 230 are unaccompanied or separated children (UASC). Providing support to all UASC is a major challenge due to the funding shortfall. Work with ICRC is ongoing to support the family reunification process; 12 BID panels were conducted in Aru, Aba and Dungu in 2018. In Aba, the setting up of the BID Panel was a challenge as most of the Congolese administrative authority are located far from the site, in Faradje, which is 70 km from Aba.

Refugees contacted during a registration verification mission to the South Sudanese border north of Dungu, expressed the willingness to relocate from border areas to the new site. After the confirmation of funding at the end of 2018, plans for relocation are underway with the construction of a new site in Bélé, Haut-Uélé province.

SGBV remains severely underreported, mainly due to fear of stigmatization, and socio-cultural attitudes and

preconceptions. In 2018, there were 192 reported incidents related to SGBV among the South Sudanese refugee population. All survivors received psychosocial care, and 123 were helped with economic reintegration, however the weak judiciary and legal aid system in the region meant that only 13 were taken up by the courts.

## Education



**52%**

of primary aged children were enrolled in primary school

**13**



classrooms constructed or rehabilitated in 2018

Access to education is not only the right of every refugee child, it is also the best way to protect children from harm. In 2018, mass information efforts were needed to ensure parents understood the importance of sending their children to school. The enrolment rate in primary school, however, remained low in 2018, in part due to the lack of funds. The available funding allowed for the support of 5,811 children out of 40,000 primary school aged refugee children (living in settlements). No funds were available to support secondary level schooling and relative few families decided to invest in further schooling themselves.

In 2018, 52 per cent of South Sudanese refugee children were enrolled in primary schools, leaving 48 per cent refugee children without access to primary school. RRP partners worked with parents on the importance of sending their children to school; on identification of all school-aged refugee children and registration of refugee children to schools according to their grades; providing of school materials; procuring and distribution of school uniforms; attendance; school reinsertion for child victims of SGBV, and payment of school fees for the most vulnerable refugee and host community children.

RRP partners also supported education in the region by constructing six classrooms at the Djanbokele school in Aba. At Momusi School in Kaka site near the town of Dungu, Haut-Uele province, UNHCR and its partners built two classrooms and two latrines in addition to the rehabilitation of five classrooms and one management room. The schools helped to reinforce peaceful coexistence with the host community, as refugee and local children study together. However, many children are still unenrolled in both primary and secondary level schooling. Economic and protection risks, school dropouts, difficult adaptation to a francophone educational system remained serious challenges.

## Food



**38,970**

South Sudanese Refugees received food assistance in 2018

only **16%** of Refugee households received seeds and tools to grow their own food crops

In 2018, food assistance continued to be provided to refugees in all settlements and out-of-site locations, transit and reception centers through provision of in-kind food or cash. Targeted refugee households were provided with either dry food rations or a cash transfer equivalent monthly food assistance. Due to a security incident, cash distribution was temporarily ceased in Meri site in November and December. Ongoing discussions are underway to reconstitute cash for food assistance in Meri, in 2019. However, a strategy meant to accelerate attainment of self-reliance by conditioning cash distribution to farming has been proposed and it still to be adopted. Budget constraints were a constant challenge to provide cash vouchers for food. This poses a critical obstacle to achieve self-reliance and in view of the extremely livelihood opportunities, forcing them to be highly dependent on humanitarian assistance.

Only 16.7 per cent of the refugee population has been assisted with seeds and tools to grow crops so far. Food consumed by refugees are short in animal protein sources. Fisheries are currently being introduced in order to boost animal protein production in the sites. Only 40 households out of the 2,820 household which can engage in livestock and fisheries production have been served.

## Health & Nutrition



only **One** box of medicine was provided to the transit center in Aru across the whole year

Currently, 100 per cent of South Sudanese refugees in Ituri and Haut-Uele provinces have access to primary healthcare facilities. Out of a total of 1415 refugee women giving birth in 2018, 1306 women received assistance from qualified health staff.

In 2018 a health center was renovated at Kaka 2 site, which also serves six neighboring villages and thus benefits refugees and host populations alike. In addition, three psychosocial counselors have been deployed to the community center at Meri site (Haut-Uele province), to Nyalanya health center and to the local referral hospital, to provide mental health and psychosocial support to survivors of SGBV.

In order to improve access to healthcare for refugees and host populations, RRP partners provided essential drugs and medical products to four health center in Ituri and Haut-Uele provinces. RRP partners targeted health centers for the distribution of key medicines to treat the most frequent diseases. A quarterly drug supply is made in Aba, Dungu, Biringi and Doruma.

Given the funding constraints, only one box of drugs was provided to the transit center for the South Sudanese refugees in Aru. Health and nutrition committees were established at the new Kaka site (Haut-Uele Province), composed of refugee women and men who support identification and referral of sick refugees and in carrying out sensitization campaigns on disease prevention and nutritional screening.

RRP partners and a team from the national program against HIV assessed the emergency response, originally initiated in Doruma in 2016, to ensure continuity of antiretroviral therapy (ART) to 1,252 persons living with HIV/AIDS.

## Livelihoods & Environment



**2,040**  
Refugee  
households  
received **farming**  
tools and seeds

**200**  
briquettes Kits  
were distributed in 2018


Refugees opened  
**two** new bakeries to  
support themselves

Promotion of self-reliance activities is of utmost importance for refugee households, particularly after a security incident during a cash for food distribution in Meri site in November 2018. In 2018, a cooperative of eight refugees and two locals opened a bakery in Meri. A bakery was also opened in Biringi by an association of ten refugees and supported by RRP partners who provided construction material, kitchen equipment, and training. RRP partners promoted other income generating activities for South Sudanese refugees, such as agriculture, milling, hairdressing and tailoring with provision of material, as well as technical and management training.


In 2018, 2,040 households in Doruma, Dungu, Meri and Biringi refugee sites received farming tools and seedlings. A 3-month trainers' training on manufacturing of improved fireplaces and briquettes was launched at Meri and Biringi refugee sites. By the end of September 2018, 200 kits were distributed to the 59 trainers, including 37 women, all of them persons with specific needs and/or SGBV survivors.

As at 31 December 2018, only 26 per cent (2,230 out of 8,544) of refugees identified at the time of baseline collection in November 2017) as having been engaged in farming in their country of origin had been supported in agriculture. Harvests benefited approximately 71 per cent (1,220 out of 1,720) of the refugees who received seeds and farm tools during the last quarter of 2018 in order to engage on the second annual farming season.

## Shelter & NFIs

 **28,121**  
refugee  
received NFI kits  
in 2018

**4,382**  
women and girls  
received hygiene kits,  
including sanitary pads,  
soap and buckets


 **49%**  
of Refugees  
households  
**do not have**  
**appropriate**


In 2018, 75 shelters (25 in Biringi and 50 in Meri) were built through a cash-based intervention approach to assist persons with specific needs. However, providing shelter remains a major gap: 49 per cent of South Sudanese refugee households in all sites do not have appropriate shelter. This forces refugee families to live in communal hangars for months, exposed to abuse and theft, or under cramped conditions in precarious shelters. However, as a result of RRP partners' advocacy efforts, the village chief of Biringi allocated an area of 140 hectares neighboring Biringi site to build shelters. For the first time authorities in Biringi allowed the refugees to collect building material from the surrounding forests without restriction. In the new allocated area of Biringi site, RRP partners delimited, cleared and distributed plots to refugees.

In Aba, 500 refugee housing units (RHUs) were deployed in Aba and used for multiple purposes, such as reception points/ centers for new arrivals and to address logistical needs for partners logistical needs (room for extra health facilities, etc.).

A total of 28,121 refugees (7,837 refugee households) received NFI kits (mainly in Meri site), including sleeping mats, kitchen set, blankets, mosquito nets, jerry cans, and soap. Hygiene kits (including sanitary pads, soap and bucket) were distributed to 4 382 women and girls (983 in Biringi, 2929 in Meri, and 470 in Kaka). Nevertheless, RRP partners cannot provide enough relief items due to funding shortages. Refugees in need of relief items may be at risk for malaria or other illnesses. Some venture back into South Sudan to recover their belongings, facing serious protection risks.

## WASH

 **2,878**  
refugees  
households  
have access to  
household latrines

 **2,650**  
Refugee  
households have access  
to communal latrines

**The remaining**  
**57% of refugee households**  
**have no access to latrines**

The continuous influx of South Sudanese refugees in the province of Haut-Uele and Ituri has put stress on available water sources. This situation causes refugee population, including children, women and the elderly, to suffer from lack of drinking water, and/or significant portion of their time, fetching water.

Since the beginning of the year, despite the fact that RRP partners acquired a water drilling machine, the situation remains of concern. Two boreholes were already drilled at the Aru transit center and in Aru town. A third borehole was constructed in Biringi site in early March. At Kaka site, two water sources were rehabilitated. At Meri site three new wells were finished, nevertheless water supply is still below half of the minimum standard (on average 18,6 liters/refugee/day) and more boreholes are needed in order to meet the SPHERE's standards regarding access to water. For refugees living outside the sites, the situation is worse as there is no assistance to improve potable water for drinking. Some locations are hard to reach and the provision of appropriate drilling equipment to those remote areas is very difficult.

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## CRRF

While the DRC is not formally a Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework roll out country, its legal framework and practice are supportive of its application. Refugee response strategies, policies and plans in response to the needs of refugees and host communities are in line with the spirit of CRRF. RRP partners participated in the finalization of the National Development Plan for refugees, taking steps to incorporate refugee needs. RRP partners are fully engaged in the UNDAF process. Considering cultural and linguistic affinities of the refugees and host communities, the DRC response is using a community based approach to pursue and build development alliances that will facilitate their peaceful and mutually beneficial coexistence. Joint programming opportunities with international development actors are aligning with collaboration under the Sustainable Development Goals, the implementation of the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus, and the Transformative Agenda of the Government of DRC. The goal is for a mixture of rule of law and governance, local economic development and service support programming to facilitate the transition to a sustainable area based model that supports local communities as well as refugees. CNR is working in particular on access to land by farming collectives, and new partnerships with UNDP and others will focus on community oriented policing, access to justice and local governance. Larger-scale economic cooperatives programming has been designed with local authorities and experts and is in development for implementation in 2019 under the title “Terre Rouge”.

### RRP PARTNERS

- Food and Agriculture Organisation
- United Nations Children’s Fund
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- World Food Programme

In line with the CRRF and UNHCR’s policy on Alternatives to Camps, the DRC operation seeks to assimilate all services into the national health, education, water, sanitation, and infrastructure sectors by collaborating with actors already providing services in these sectors. RRP partners are assisting the government with stipends for teachers not yet on government payroll, to allow children to attend school while discussions are ongoing. The private sector to support education in the refugee hosting area through the support of Vodacom, which is supporting refugees’ education. The platform will support the education strategy to integrate refugees in the national education system, and RRP partners were engaged in the discussion during the Education conference in Nairobi which led to the adoption of the Nairobi declaration on education in which member states committed to support education and included refugees and IDPs.

### FOR MORE INFORMATION

**South Sudan Data Portal** - <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/southsudan>

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