

5 October 2019

**QUICK FACTS**

Response start  
date: 1971

Total  
registered  
refugees:  
25,378



**CONTEXT**

The Meheba Refugee Settlement was established in 1971 during the refugee influx from Angola and is located in Kalumbila District in North-Western Province. The settlement covers an area of 720 sq./km demarcated into eight blocks from A-H and further divided into land for the settlement of refugees and “former refugees”. It is located 10 kms from the Kalumbila District Administration Centre, and 75 kms south-west of Solwezi, the provincial capital of the North-Western Province (NWP). The settlement hosts a protracted Congolese (the Democratic Republic of Congo) and Somali population, new arrivals from Burundi and the DRC as well as “former” refugees from Angola and Rwanda.

The Government of Zambia (GRZ) is responsible for the protection of refugees and has adopted the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) approach, which has been extended to NW, with a priority focus on achievements in the education and livelihood sectors. The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) under the Ministry of Home Affairs, is responsible for the administration of the settlement in accordance with the Refugee Act of 2017 and collaborates closely with UNHCR, line ministries, partners and community structures within the context of a CRRF approach of refugee management.

While one-third of the settlement has been retained for the management of asylum seekers and refugees, two thirds have been designated for the settlement of former refugees from Angola and Rwanda, for whom the cessation clauses were invoked but who opted to remain in Zambia. They remain under the management of the Department of Resettlement (in the Office of Vice President). Health, education, protection, community and security services are provided by government staff who reside in the settlement. Livelihood services are provided by CARITAS Czech Republic, an implementing partner (IP), while warehousing and fuel management lies with Action Africa Help Zambia (AAHZ).

Humanitarian assistance by UNHCR is prioritized for new arrivals and persons with specific needs, including both the refugee and “former refugee” categories. Cash for food was introduced in 2016, which is under UNHCR direct implementation and

transitioned to digital cash in 2018, as part of accountability measures to ensure direct and efficient transfer of funds.

## PROTECTION

- **Border monitoring:** UNHCR FO Solwezi conducts periodic border monitoring at Kipushi (35km from Lubumbashi), Kasumbalesa (68km from Lubumbashi), Kakoma (closer point to Kolwesi), Kitwe, Ndola, Kaputa, Ikelenge.. Continuous advocacy has resulted in enhanced collaboration with local authorities and has ensured respect for non-refoulement and flexible admission procedures in line with the CRRF pledges.
- **Refugee status determination:** Refugee status is determined by the Government in accordance with the 1951 Refugee Convention and the 1969 OAU Convention. Individualized RSD interviews are conducted by a Government legal officer deployed to the settlement with appeals against negative decisions determined by a separate body. The major challenge remains the return of rejected asylum seekers.
- **Registration and documentation:** Continuous and timely registration of persons of concern based on proGres V4 is routinely done by COR and has afforded protection against *refoulement* and improved access to basic human rights. Timely issuance of identity documents, such as, refugee identity cards, aliens' cards, birth certificates by COR and NRPC, respectively, improved in 2019 through continuous advocacy. Aliens' cards are required for access to bank accounts, farming inputs through the Ministry of Agriculture, and to acquire a driver's license. A concrete achievement by the Government to prevent statelessness was achieved through the decentralization of issuance of birth certificates and the establishment of a provincial office in Solwezi, which will now be issuing birth certificates, including to refugee children.
- **Detention monitoring:** Zambia is one of the roll-out countries of the Global Detention Strategy and a 5-year national action plan was developed in consultation with the Government and other stakeholders. Improvements in the management of detention has been noted in 2019 with very few cases in detention because of lack of work permits or mobility passes. Main challenges in 2019 include inadequate funding to support continuous capacity building.
- **Sexual and gender-based violence:** UNHCR continue its multi-sectoral activities in regard to identification, referral and response to SGBV, in close coordination with MCDSS, MoH, the Zambian Police, the Judiciary and GRZ authorities, as well as the refugee community leaders and women's action teams. Increased sensitization sessions during 2019 have prevented SGBV occurrence and facilitated survivors' access to the legal and health referral system including psychosocial support available in Meheba. UNHCR extended its programme, especially to heads and teachers in the settlement to extend awareness raising on sexual exploitation and abuse of children to school communities. A comprehensive awareness-raising campaign on sexual exploitation and abuse was organized in 2019. The roll out of the South African community mobilization model, ZTVA Zero Tolerance Alliance Villages, is under way.
- **Child protection:** Child protection was strengthened with the roll out of Isibindi Without Borders child protection model in 2016, with the support of UNHCR under MCDSS. 30 Child and Youth Care community workers engage with children-at-risk supporting 753 children and youth to date. Alternative care arrangements are supported, including group-living, foster-care and a children's Safe Haven. In 2019, a pilot project supporting 10 unaccompanied children who have dropped out of school was started.

- **Resettlement:** With the 2019 resettlement target set at 1,100 individuals and 1,200 for 2018, UNHCR Zambia's target remains the highest in the Southern African region. It is expected that the resettlement target will continue to remain high, with resettlement case identification and processing focusing mainly on Meheba and Mayukwayukwa Refugee Settlements and the urban areas like Lusaka. Reseyttlment is currently taking place to the US, Finland and for dossier cases, to Sweden.

## SETTLEMENT AND SHELTER

Each household is allocated a 25x30 m plot of land and farming land of 2.5 hectares by the Government as a measure to contribute to their self-reliance. Much of the infrastructure in the settlement is dilapidated and needs to be renovated.

*Main challenges:* As a result of consistent continuous inflow into Meheba from the DRC and Burundi, a high demand on shelter and food was noted in 2019 which resulted in congested living at transit center for new arrivals. Measures employed to address the challenges included establishment of a new transit centre (TC28), immediate relocation of UAMs from TC 36 to a children's' Safe Haven in Block C, creation of a shelter support group to assist with quick shelter construction in the community in addition to the use of refugee housing units recently deployed to Meheba.

## LIVELIHOODS

Livelihoods activities are supported in the settlement to contribute to the local food economy and ultimately attain self-reliance for refugees. However, restrictive employment and mobility laws hinder the early attainment of self-reliance of settlement-based refugees.

*Main challenges:* Inadequate funding for livelihood projects and programmes especially for agricultural, livestock and fisheries activities pose as a major constraint.

## LOCAL INTEGRATION

In December 2011, the Government of Zambia made a pledge at the ministerial meeting commemorating the 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1951 Convention to facilitate the securing of a durable solution through local integration for some 10,000 Angolan refugees who have been living in Zambia for over four decades, some of whom have been born and brought up in Zambia as second or third generation refugees. In January 2014, the Government of Zambia and UNHCR launched the Strategic Framework for the local integration of former refugees in Zambia, an integration programme that sought to integrate up to 10 000 former refugees from Angola and 4,000 from Rwandan into Zambian society between 2014-2016. The majority of the beneficiaries of the program were residing in the two refugee settlements, Mayukwayukwa and Meheba.

The Strategic Framework had three main pillars: access to legal documentation (a resident permit providing them with a legal status, freedom of movement and access to rights), access to land for living and farming for both former refugees and members of the host community and social integration through access to government services and programs. The socio-economic pillar of the local integration programme was officially handed over by the Government of Zambia and UNHCR, to the Department of Resettlement, under the Office of the Vice President, and the UNDP). The documentation for persons of concern in the local integration such as Residence permits, alien cards has continued under the auspices of COR and UNHCR, while socio economic-related activities are being managed by the Office of the Vice President through the Department of Resettlement. Land allocation for agriculture purposes is an ongoing activity.

UNHCR and the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees were allocated the legal pillar. By 31 January 2019, 1,170 residence permits have been issued and delivered to former Angolan refugees in Zambia, and an additional 11,959 would be eligible for local integration. Humanitarian assistance was phased out, but very little development funding could be obtained to enable sustainable socio-economic, and environmental development,

even though the government of Zambia strives to include the settlements in their district plans. Utilizing a comprehensive refugee response approach, UNHCR and the Government of Zambia strive to ensure full inclusion of the former refugees into national services and strengthen the available services through multi-stakeholder support.

*Main challenges:* The main outstanding gaps include rehabilitation of delapidated infrastructure that was constructed 40-50 years' ago, access to social protection for an ageing population, more than 1,000, extremely vulnerable due to physical and mental disabilities, and opportunities for economic empowerment and building of resilience of the youth. Only a small number of those who are eligible have been issued with Residence Permits and Temporary Permits respectively. Bureaucratic processes and limited funding delayed timely processing of documents.

<b>AGENCY</b>	<b>PARTNERS</b>
<b>UN</b>	<b>UNHCR</b>
<b>GOVERNMENT</b>	<i>Office of the Commissioner for Refugees/Ministry of Home Affairs, Zambia Police, DJOC, District Councils, Zambia National Service, Ministry of Community Development and Social Services, Ministry of Health, Ministry of General Education, Ministry of Defense/Zambia National Service, Ministry of Commerce and Cooperatives, Ministry of Fisheries and Livestock and Department of Forestry, Ministry of Agriculture.</i>
<b>NGOs</b>	<i>Africa Action Help, Caritas Czech Republic</i>