

Democratic Republic of the Congo

March 2021

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR DRC is producing a condensed monthly Operational Update. Specific information about UNHCR's response to COVID-19 in DRC can be found [here](#).

Highlights

- **255 Rwandan refugees (104 households)** were repatriated in safety and dignity to Rwanda this month
- **26,409 Congolese** were forced to flee the attacks of non-state armed groups in the territory of Irumu (Ituri Province) in March, bringing the total number of people displaced in the area in 2021 to 44,625.
- **300 returnees with specific needs, mostly women and children, received core relief items** in Kalemie, Tanganyika Province to improve their living conditions.
- **UNHCR distributed 20 bicycles to 10 "Village Committees for Peace"** in Tanganyika Province to facilitate reporting of protection incidents.
- **UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugee (CNR) relocated 157 people from the Meri to the Bele site** in Haut Uélé province, bringing the total number of people relocated to 2,842.



A woman and a child with specific needs receive core relief items in Kalemie, Tanganyika Province, © UNHCR/A. Irakarama

Refugees



PROTECTION

- **In March 255 Rwandan refugees (104 households)** were repatriated in safety and dignity to their country of origin.
- From 23 to 25 March, in Lubumbashi, Haut Katanga, **UNHCR and the CNR organized a three-day workshop on the principles and foundations of international protection of refugees** and persons forced to flee, discussing the mandate of UNHCR, state responsibility in protecting refugee rights and the right of asylum in the DRC. The workshop gathered around 60 participants and targeted primarily provincial and administrative authorities, members of the national police (PNC) and the Congolese armed forces (FARDC), as well as private sector, civil society and refugees' representatives.
- **As part of UNHCR efforts to promote peaceful coexistence and prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), 20 bicycles were distributed** together with partner AIDES to 10 "Village Committees for Peace" in Manono Territory, Tanganyika Province. Thanks to this endowment, the committees are better equipped to move around the communities and report protection incidents, human rights violations, and work on conflict resolutions in their respective localities.
- During March, **UNHCR and the CNR registered 9 households consisting of 24 asylum seekers from South Sudan in Ima locality, Faradje territory** (Haut Uélé Province). These households were relocated to Bele site after receiving medical, social and security screening.

**HEALTH**

- **UNHCR continues to promote refugees' access to life-saving and essential healthcare.** For Burundians refugees, **4,162 consultations** were carried out by UNHCR and its medical partners in South Kivu Province, revealing respiratory infections and malaria as the main diseases affecting the refugee population. 359 patients were admitted to the patient services. 1,043 children were examined to screen potential nutritional risks. In the urban areas of Bukavu and Goma, all refugees were granted access to health services through public health providers.
- UNHCR through partner ADES **continue to work to prevent HIV among Burundian refugees and the host population.** A total of 50 pregnant refugees women were tested for HIV and 606 condoms were distributed. Antiretroviral treatment, tuberculosis and vaccines provided by the Ministry of Health were made available to the refugee population.
- Over **14,000 refugee children** under five years have been **vaccinated against polio in the North and South Ubangi Provinces** as part of the first phase of a vaccination campaign organised by the Ministry of Health. This campaign is the result of an advocacy effort carried out by UNHCR towards WHO, UNICEF and the Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI).

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)**

- **121 hand wash facilities were maintained in place in the Lusenda, Mulongwe sites and in the Kavinvira, Mongemonge and Sange transit centres** in South Kivu Province during the month under review. Other 32 hand wash maintained functional in the Goma transit centre and assembly point in North Kivu Province.

**SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)**

- At Mulongwe site (South Kivu Province), UNHCR through his partner AIRD has assisted the relocated Burundian refugee households with the distribution of 148 construction kits to help them building their shelters.
- During the month under consideration, UNHCR and partner ADSSE proceeded to the **distribution of CRIs kits to 75 households for a total of 157 people recently relocated in Bele.** This CRIs kits were composed of mats, blankets, jerry cans, buckets, kitchen set and soap.

**CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)**

- **142 urban refugees received mobile money payments** in Goma through UNHCR partner Trust Merchant Bank (TMB) within the framework of the ad-hoc financial assistance programme targeting urban refugees.
- **An emergency cash distribution** has been carried out by UNHCR in Yakoma (North Ubangi Province) through partner Trust Merchant Bank (TMB) between 24-27 March. **6,947 individuals** (2,133 vulnerable households) of which **232 local community members** (40 households) have benefited from this assistance to respond to their most urgent needs.
- **UNHCR distributed SIM cards and opened mobile money accounts for approximately 400 refugees** in Haut Katanga and Lualaba Provinces, in order to facilitate access to multi-purpose assistance which will be used by refugees to cover school fees, health and other significant needs and reduce direct contact amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

EDUCATION

- **UNHCR and ADSSE conducted a distribution of school kits and payment of school fees for 700 school children including 101 children of host community and 599 South Sudanese refugee children** in three primary school in Biringi (Ituri Province). The kits consisted of shoes, school bags, knickers (for boys), skirts (for girls), folders, notebooks, pencils, pens and math boxes. The fees paid per child amounted to USD 5 and included food and one-off interventions.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)



PROTECTION

- **424 protection incidents were documented by UNHCR through its partner INTERSOS**, a slight decrease from 452 reported in February. The majority of these incidents were recorded in Beni territory, Ituri Province (51%). Violations of the right to property were the most common incidents, with 146 cases of extortion of property. **Other 591 protection incidents were registered during the same period in Ituri Province for a total of 1,385 victims, including 221 cases of sexual and gender-based violence.** Kidnapping, murders, and rape were the most common incidents.
- **26,409 Congolese (5,130 households) were forced to flee** armed attacks in the territory of Irumu, Ituri Province. These internally displaced people were welcomed in Beni city and its surroundings by host families, and in schools and local churches. The latest displacement occurred brings **the total number of displaced persons in 2021 in Beni territory to 44,890 individuals.**
- **A four-day training on the protection of internally displaced persons and UNHCR's role in protecting people of concern was organized in Nyunzu territory, Tanganyika Province.** The training targeted approximately 50 participants including political and administrative authorities, humanitarian actors as well as civil society representatives and focused on humanitarian principles and the Do Not Harm principle. Participants also exchanged on the functioning of humanitarian coordination mechanisms through the protection cluster and on protection related cross-cutting issues in the humanitarian response.
- On the occasion of International Women Day, **UNHCR and its partner INTERSOS have recorded a radio show with community religious leaders and psychosocial support specialists in different locations such as Bunia, Komanda health zone, Niania health and Mahagi health zone.** These radio programs were broadcasted throughout the month of March to promote women's rights. During the sessions, participants discussed the status of women in Ituri Province and how religious leaders can play a positive role in fostering the social role of women and supporting girls' education.



FOOD SECURITY AND NUTRITION

- In Bili, Bosobolo Territory (Bas Huele Province) UNHCR in collaboration with ALBIHAR/AACID Foundation has carried out a **food seeds distribution (to grow mais, peanuts and niébé) targeting 650 households, of which 60% refugee and 40% local communities' households**, with particular focus to people with specific needs and most vulnerable households. The recipients of this livelihoods project have also been trained in farming techniques. Together with the seeds, food items such as rice, vegetable oil and salt have been distributed to ensure the food security of beneficiaries in the initial phase of the project.



SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)

- **UNHCR, through its partner AIDES, has launched a project for the construction of six community shelters to host a total of 120 households in the city of Beni, Ituri Province.** Once completed, these shelters will help to free up classrooms and churches currently occupied by displaced households in the town of Beni. This project was made possible thanks to the support of town services who negotiated with different churches to provide land plots to host the displaced people.
- **UNHCR and partner AIDES distributed CRIs to 300 women, children and men returnees who are living with specific needs** in 4 villages near Kalemie, Tanganyika Province. The kits were composed of mats, blankets, loincloths, buckets, and soaps. Assistance to people living with special needs, especially women, enhances their dignity and helps to improve their living conditions.

\$ CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)

- **100 individuals have benefited from a cash distribution totalling USD 10,375** within the context of a socio-economic reintegration programme in Tshikapa, Kasai Province.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

- **60 young people from both IDP and host communities (including 51 girls and 9 boys)** at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation have received vocational trainings on cutting, sewing and professional hairdressing and received social rehabilitation kits through UNHCR partner CARITAS in Beni territory, Ituri Province.
- UNHCR and its implementing partner SOCOAC launched **the project of peaceful coexistence 2021 through community fields** on the Beni, Mabalako and Musienene areas. Three workshops were organized for local authorities, community leaders, and the committee of displaced persons, targeting a total of 700 households distributed as follows: 300 in Musienene, 200 in Beni and 200 in Mabalako.

Clusters and Working Groups

- Between January and March 2021, Shelter Cluster partners reached 29,000 households (about 167,000 people) with shelter assistance. This represents the 8% of the target population for the Shelter Cluster from the Humanitarian Response Plan for 2021 whilst the remaining 92% of targeted population will be reached throughout 2021. Funding for the Shelter Cluster remains one of the most underfunded sectors in DRC, with 119 million USD required to respond to the shelter needs and provide adequate and safe shelters for those displaced by conflicts and crises in DRC.
- In March, Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) trainings for humanitarian actors and authorities were conducted in Bunia, Kalemie, Kananga, Tshikapa and Goma. Participants were trained on the basic notions of CCCM, on sustainable solutions and on the role and responsibilities of each one in site management.

External / Donor Relations

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of:

Donors for UNHCR operations in DRC

UN Peacebuilding Fund (1.4M) | UN Covid-19 MPTF (0.2M)

Donors of regional or sub-regional funds

Germany (10.9M)

Major donors of unearmarked funds

Norway (80M) | Sweden (66.9M) | Netherlands (36.1M) | Denmark (34.6M) | Germany (22.1M) | Switzerland (16.4M) | Private Donors Spain (13.3 M) | Ireland (12.5M) | Belgium (11.9M)

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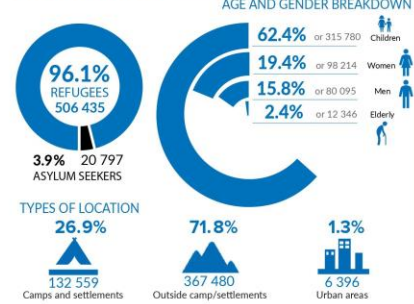
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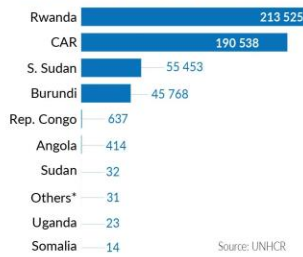
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TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

KEY STATISTICS



REFUGEE POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

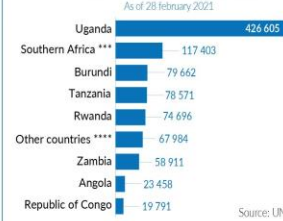


*Others include Ivory Coast, Eritrea, Syria, Liberia, Chad, etc.

REFUGEES FROM DRC IN AFRICA

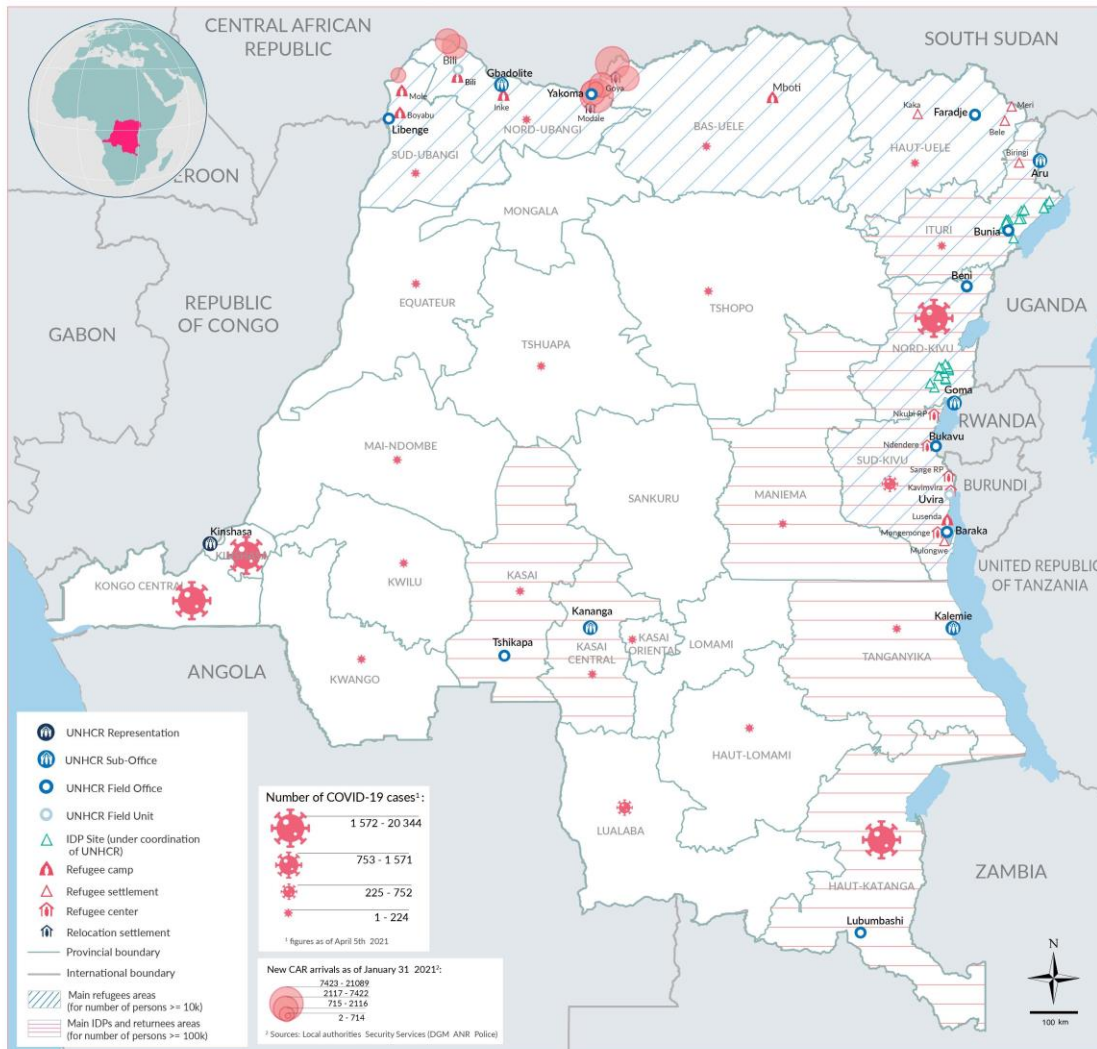
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TOTAL DRC REFUGEE POPULATION



***Southern Africa includes Namibia, Botswana, Lesotho, Malawi, Zimbabwe, Mozambique, Madagascar, South Africa and the Kingdom of Eswatini.

****Other countries include South Sudan, Kenya, Central African Republic and Chad.



The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

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Sources: UNHCR, WHO, CMR-Covid-19 in DRC and OCHA. For more information on refugee statistics in the DRC, please contact: cod@kinshasa.unhcr.org

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