UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

REGIONAL FACT SHEET

Southern Africa

December 2024

9.7 million people* are covered by UNHCR's operations across 16 Southern African countries, including over **1 million refugees and asylum-seekers**, mainly from Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Burundi, and South Sudan.

UNHCR contributes to protection and solutions for **8.6 million internally displaced persons (IDPs)** in the region who have been forced to flee due to conflict and some **1.2 million displaced by disasters** – including 660,000 in Malawi and 139,000 in Mozambique.

UNHCR continues to **closely monitor the evolving situation in the DRC**, working to **advocate for rights** and **provide life-saving assistance** to families affected by the alarming rates of violence in the eastern provinces of the country.

KEY FIGURES (as of 31 December)

812,958
Refugees

201,462
Asylum-seekers

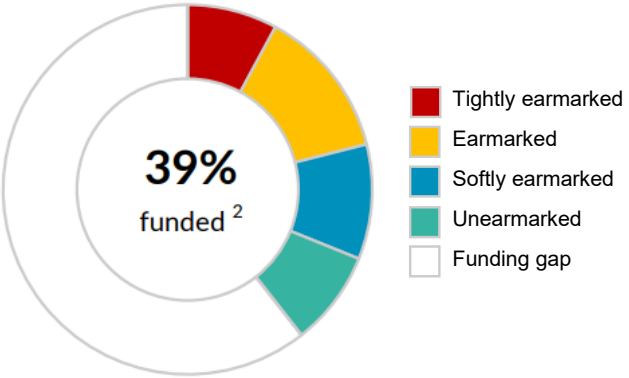
6,951,876
Internally displaced persons *

*This figure includes only conflict-related IDPs. In addition, as of 31 December 2024, there were 1,227,879 **people displaced internally by natural disasters** in Malawi (659,278), the DRC (387,733), Mozambique (139,333) and Zimbabwe (41,535).

FUNDING (as of 31 December) *

US$ 492.2 million

UNHCR's financial requirements in southern Africa for 2024

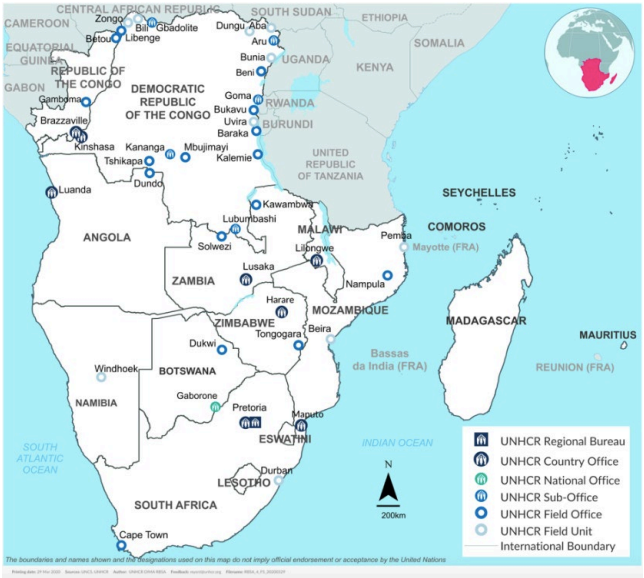


* Includes indicative allocation of softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions for the region.

PRESENCE AND STAFF (as of 31 December) *

Regional Bureau for Southern Africa	75
Angola	36
Democratic Republic of the Congo	417
Malawi	62
Mozambique	129
Republic of the Congo	56
South Africa Multi-Country Office (Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, South Africa)	69
Zambia	73
Zimbabwe	36
TOTAL STAFF	**953**

*Figures reflect regular UNHCR staff and affiliate workforce.



Regional Overview

Refugees in Lunda Norte, Angola, participate in agriculture activities. © UNHCR/Marina Aragão

Context: As of December 2024, Southern Africa had **9.7 million forcibly displaced people and returnees**. The region comprises one of the largest IDP situations in sub-Saharan Africa, while refugee camps and settlements in multiple countries, along with some urban areas, host long-term refugee population. **Complex crises** cause millions to flee their homes and prevent their safe return every year. The situation is further complicated by the **growing impact of natural disasters such as drought, heavy rains and cyclones**, which have **displaced 1.2 million people** in Southern Africa. In addition, thousands undertake the **dangerous journey along the Southern Route** alongside migrants, often reporting harsh experiences including violence, detention and exploitation.

Emergency Situations: The **DRC** is home to one of the world's most severe and underfunded humanitarian crises. Violence in the eastern provinces of Ituri, North Kivu, and South Kivu and natural disasters across the territory have internally displaced some 6.3 million people and caused some 1 million people to seek asylum beyond the country's borders.

Solutions: **Efforts toward sustainable responses and more integration of refugees are being made. Voluntary repatriation** is the focus of solutions efforts in the region, as opportunities for **resettlement** remain limited. Options to expand complementary pathways continue to be explored. **Steps taken towards ending statelessness** in southern Africa include working with government to advocate for reforming nationality laws, policies, and procedures and supporting access to documentation.

Strategic Directions

The High Commissioner's Strategic Directions, renewed for 2022-2026, continue to guide UNHCR's efforts in Southern Africa to enact sustainable achievements for forcibly displaced and stateless people and the States and communities that host them. Priorities within the scope of the Strategic Directions include:

Protect	**Strengthen** the protection environment; **improve** the quality of registration and information management; **reinforce** asylum systems and legal protection frameworks.
Respond	**Strengthen** emergency preparedness; **innovate** to improve operational responses.
Include	**Enhance** partnerships; **invigorate** the humanitarian-development nexus; **encourage** sustainable responses.
Empower	**Empower** displaced communities; **improve** communication; **support** decision-making.
Solve	**Promote** and **facilitate** comprehensive solutions; **alleviate** poverty; **foster** self-reliance.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the support of donors who contributed to its operations in the Southern Africa region with flexible and earmarked funds in 2024:

African Development Fund | Algeria | Angola | Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa | Armenia | Australia | Australia for UNHCR | Austria | Belgium | Bulgaria | Canada | Central Emergency Response Fund | China | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Denmark | Estonia | España con ACNUR | European Union | Finland | France | Germany | Leaving No One Behind | Luxembourg | Iceland | Ireland | Italy | Japan | Japan for UNHCR | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS | Kuwait | Leaving No One Behind | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | Netherlands | New Zealand | Norway | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Spain | Sweden | Sweden for UNHCR | Switzerland | Switzerland for UNHCR | Thailand | Türkiye | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland | UN Children's Fund | UN Development Programme | UN Joint SDG Fund | UN Trust Fund for Human Security | UN Joint SDG Fund | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe | UK for UNHCR | United States of America | Uruguay | USA for UNHCR | Private donors in Italy, Japan, Netherlands, Republic of Korea, United Kingdom of Great Britain & Northern Ireland

Contact: UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, External Engagement: rbsaext@unhcr.org

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