Southern Africa Operational Update

October-December 2024

Highlights

Communities in the region impacted by **Cyclone Chido and post-election violence** in Mozambique received essential items and services.

Registration exercises were conducted in Angola and Namibia, improving refugees' self-reliance and protection.

Displaced people in Angola, DRC, Malawi, Mozambique and Zimbabwe **received support to access education and vocational training**

UNHCR staff distribute dignity kits to women impacted by Cyclone Chido in Cabo Delgado Province, Mozambique.
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During October-December, across Southern Africa:

12,639 people were registered and **30,158** people received documentation.

4,098 people were supported to voluntarily return to their home countries.

3,568 people received livelihoods training and support.

1,642 refugees were submitted for resettlement and **1,201** people departed on resettlement and complementary pathways.

84,032 people received cash assistance to support their basic needs.

7,542 people benefited from trainings on prevention of and response to sexual violence and child protection.

21,098 people were reached with core relief items (CRIs) and shelter initiatives.

215,438 people benefitted from health and WASH initiatives.

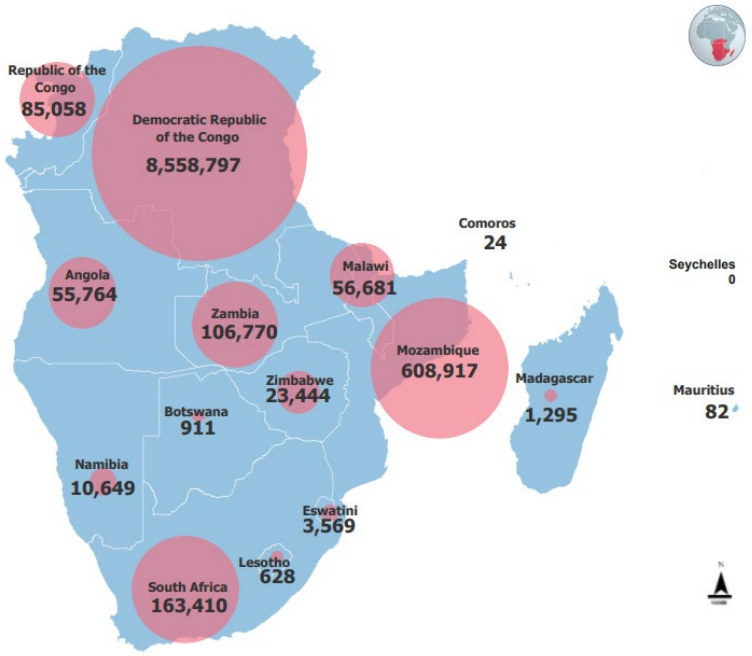
Population Figures in Southern Africa

812,958 refugees
201,462 asylum-seekers

6,951,876 IDPs

563 refugee returnees
1,670,539 IDP returnees

38,601 from other groups



(as of 31 December 2024)

The figures and the map only include conflict-related IDPs and IDP returnees. In addition to this number, as of 31 December 2024, there were some 1,227,879* ***people displaced internally by natural disasters and extreme weather events* *in the region. The displacement occurred in the following countries: DRC (387,733), Malawi (659,278), Mozambique (139,333), and Zimbabwe (41,535).*

Regional Context: Key Developments

- **Cyclone Chido impacts the region:** Tropical Cyclone Chido struck northern Mozambique on 15 December, bringing torrential rains and powerful winds severely impacting Cabo Delgado, Nampula and Niassa provinces. In Mozambique, the cyclone impacted more than 453,000 people, destroyed over 70,000 houses, and severely damaged infrastructure in areas already hosting approximately 300,000 forcibly displaced people. The cyclone also caused significant devastation in Comoros and destroyed homes and infrastructure in Malawi.
- **Insecurity continues in DRC:** Armed conflict remained widespread in eastern DRC, particularly in North and South Kivu provinces. Civilians continued to face violence, forced displacement and growing risks of human rights violations and abuses, with a spike in mass displacements during December. Given the levels of armed conflict, the UN peacekeeping mandate was renewed for 2025, while the Southern African Development Community (SADC) Mission in the DRC was also extended by one year.
- **Post-election unrest in Mozambique:** Following the presidential election on 9 December, the unstable security situation in Mozambique marked by demonstrations, strikes, road blockages, looting and destruction of property forced several thousand people to flee to neighbouring countries. As of the end of December, more than 1,100 asylum-seekers, including over 600 children, were registered in Malawi's Nsanje District, while some 950 people were being sheltered at Malindza Refugee Reception Centre in Eswatini.
- **Meeting on the route-based approach:** In December, government officials from across Southern Africa gathered at a meeting co-convened by the Southern African Development Community (SADC) and UNHCR to discuss how to undertake collective action to address the complex challenges faced by refugees and migrants in mixed movements through a route-based approach. Discussions centered around the need to enhance coordination among Member States to enhance protection, harmonize migration and asylum policies and establish systems for regular data sharing.

Operational Highlights

Angola

- **Lusophone Centre of Excellence opens in Luanda:** In November, UNHCR and the Catholic University of Angola (UCAN), in collaboration with the International Association of Refugee and Migration Judges (IARMJ), opened the Lusophone Centre of Excellence for training in international refugee and statelessness law in Luanda, with the objective of enhancing technical knowledge on asylum and statelessness law in the six Portuguese-speaking countries on the African continent.

The Lusophone Centre of Excellence opens in Luanda, Angola. © UNHCR/Camila Geraldo

- **Joint registration missions:** UNHCR and the Service for Migration and Foreigners (SME) conducted the first joint registration missions in Angola's southern provinces, resulting in a total of 7,200 refugees being registered and reinforcing the Government's pledge made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2023 to issue documentation to refugees and asylum-seekers, ensuring greater access to services and rights.
- **Women's entrepreneurship training:** In Louva Settlement, 62 women, including 36 survivors of sexual violence, gained entrepreneurship skills through participating in trainings delivered through a UNHCR-UNFPA partnership on reusable sanitary pad production, as well as menstrual health promotion and bodily autonomy. Additionally, UNHCR partners raised awareness on preventing early pregnancy, child marriage, and HIV/AIDS reaching 217 people.

Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

- **Cash assistance in North and South Kivu:** In North Kivu, UNHCR, its partner and local authorities distributed cash assistance to 150 IDP and returnee families to enable them to purchase local building materials to construct shelters, as well as cover labour costs. In South Kivu, UNHCR and the Panzi Foundation distributed cash to 75 vulnerable women and girls at risk of sexual violence.
- **Education support in North Ubangi:** UNHCR handed over two schools to the local community in North Ubangi, while 478 students and community members received training on the use of digital tools and platforms. In addition, 239 educational material kits, 6,000 uniforms, 2,940 teaching materials and school supplies and 450 hygiene kits were distributed.
- **Voluntary repatriation to Burundi:** 324 refugees were voluntarily repatriated from South Kivu to Burundi. In total, across the DRC, more than 11,000 refugees were repatriated to their countries of origin in 2024, including over 8,400 to the Central African Republic, 1,900 to Burundi and 1,300 to Rwanda.

Malawi

- **Essential support for new arrivals:** UNHCR distributed 600 blankets, 100 jerry cans, 200 kitchen sets, 100 solar lamps, 100 basins, 600 sleeping mats, 200 tarpaulins and 4,000 soap bars to help address the basic needs of new arrivals from Mozambique. UNHCR also transported 500 family-sized tents to the Nsanje District Commissioner to be pitched at the newly identified Nyamithuthu Settlement providing critical shelter for the new arrivals.
- **Cash assistance for education:** To support refugee inclusion, 571 students received cash assistance to enable them to register with the Malawi National Examinations Board by 31 December and participate in national exams in 2025.

Mozambique

- **Cyclone Chido response:** UNHCR distributed kits containing tarpaulins, blankets, and hygiene items across multiple cyclone-affected districts to address the urgent shelter and hygiene needs of displaced and host communities whose homes and belongings were destroyed by Cyclone Chido. More than 800 kits were distributed, benefiting approximately 4,100 individuals in Cabo Delgado. Additionally, 300 vulnerable women and girls received dignity kits, ensuring their specific needs were met.
- **Vocational trainees graduate:** 336 people in Cabo Delgado and Nampula provinces, including refugees, IDPs and people from the host community, graduated after participating in vocational training courses on construction, plumbing, catering, carpentry, welding and electrical wiring. The graduation was facilitated by UNHCR in collaboration with the Alberto Cassimo Institute of Vocational Training and Labor Studies (IFPELAC), with funding received from the German Agency for International Cooperation (GIZ).
- **Preparation for natural disasters:** 18 members of the local disaster risk reduction committee in Corrane IDP settlement, Nampula Province, participated in a three-day training organized by UNHCR and the National Institute for Disaster Management (INGD) to strengthen capacity to effectively prepare for and respond to natural disasters, including integration of protection measures in the context of natural hazards.

Republic of the Congo

- **Mobile court hearings:** As part of efforts to prevent statelessness, UNHCR and the National Committee for the Eradication of Statelessness (CNEA) conducted mobile court hearings in seven departments of the country, reaching reached approximately 17,000 people. Possessing legal documents remains essential to ensure access to basic social services such as healthcare and education, and legal and social protection.
- **Nutrition survey launched:** UNHCR launched the Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) which will be jointly implemented by UNHCR with WFP, UNICEF, the Ministry of Health and UNHCR's partner Médecins d'Afrique and will assess the overall health and nutritional status of refugees in the five main refugee-hosting areas of the country.

South Africa Multi-Country Office (SAMCO)

Botswana, Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia, Seychelles, and South Africa

- **Assistance for new arrivals:** Over 1,000 people in Eswatini, including new arrivals from Mozambique, were provided with access to water and sanitation, while 274 women and girls received sanitary materials.
- **Refugee registration:** In October, Namibia's Ministry of Home Affairs began registering refugees in Osire Settlement for the purpose of issuing identification cards which will enhance legal protection, improve access to services and boost self-reliance opportunities. The biometric data of 238 refugees was captured using UNHCR's IMAGO machine.
- **Voluntary repatriation:** 195 refugees and asylum-seekers were assisted to voluntarily return to their countries of origin, increasing the total number of individuals repatriated during 2024 to 337. The majority returned to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi.

Refugees voluntarily returning to DRC depart O.R. Tambo International Airport in Johannesburg, South Africa. © UNHCR

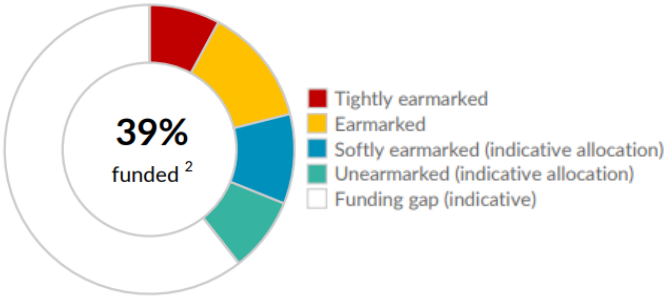
Zambia

- **Healthcare services:** More than 1,100 people accessed primary healthcare services from rural healthcare centres in Mantapala and Meheba refugee settlements. In addition, over 450 people accessed free HIV testing and counselling services during the commemoration of World AIDS Day in Mantapala refugee settlement.
- **Sustainable responses:** UNHCR engaged with bilateral and multilateral development partners, embassies, NGOs and the private sector organizations on the development of a joint roadmap for sustainable responses to forced displacement. In addition, the development of an Agricultural Roadmap for Zambia was launched to scale up environmentally smart and market-oriented agricultural solutions for forcibly displaced people and stateless and host communities.

Zimbabwe

- **Classroom construction:** The construction of a three-classroom block at the Early Childhood Development (ECD) centre in Tongogara Refugee Settlement was completed as part of the centre's transformation into an infant school. The classrooms will be equipped with chairs and desks for learners.
- **Consular clinics:** During October, UNHCR supported the Embassy of Malawi in Zimbabwe to undertake consular clinics in Gweru and Bulawayo, reaching 250 Malawian nationals, to help facilitate access to information on nationality, dual citizenship and acquisition of documentation.

Financial Information



UNHCR's financial requirements for the Southern Africa region in 2024 total **US$ 492.2 million**. As of the end of December, **39 per cent** of needs had been funded. UNHCR is grateful to donors who supported operations in Southern Africa in 2024, including[1]:

United States of America 104.2M | Germany 16M | Central Emergency Response Fund 12.6M | European Union 5.4M | Sweden 3.8M | Japan 2.3M | Denmark 2M | Private donors in the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 1.9M | France 1.6M | Japan for UNHCR 1.3M | Italy 1.1M | Switzerland for UNHCR 1M | España con ACNUR | Canada | Spain | Austria | Private donors in Japan | Joint United Nations Programme on HIV/AIDS | Leaving No One Behind | Switzerland | United Nations Children's Fund | Luxembourg | USA for UNHCR | Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa | African Development Fund | UK for UNHCR | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) | China | Sweden for UNHCR | United Nations Development Programme | Portugal | Angola | Belgium | United Nations Joint SDG Fund | United Nations Trust Fund for Human Security | Republic of Korea | Estonia | Other private donors

Flexible financial support greatly facilitates UNHCR's ability to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and enable the fullest possible implementation of programmes. They enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved. UNHCR is grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions in 2024, including:

Other softly earmarked contributions (US$)[2]: Australia for UNHCR 11.6M | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe 7.3M | UK for UNHCR 7M | Norway 2.8M | Private donors in Italy 2.4M | Private donors in the Republic of Korea 2.1M

Unearmarked contributions (US$)[3]: Sweden 112.2M | España con ACNUR 77.5M | Norway 58.9M | Japan for UNHCR 49.9M | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 41.4M | Denmark 38.7M | Netherlands (Kingdom of the) 36.3M | France 34.1M | Private donors in the Republic of Korea 33.9M | Germany 25.1M | Private donors in Italy 24.7M | Switzerland 19.2M | Republic of Korea 18.1M | USA for UNHCR 16.8M | Sweden for UNHCR 16.7M | Japan 16M | Private donors in the Netherlands 15M | Belgium 14.2M | Ireland 13.6M | Australia 10.7M | Algeria | Angola | Armenia | Austria | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Iceland | Kuwait | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Mexico | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Qatar | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovakia | Spain | Thailand | Türkiye | Uruguay | Private donors

Notes: 1. Where a donor has contributed US$ 1,000,000 or more, the total amount is shown. 2. Due to their earmarking, other softly earmarked contributions listed are those which can potentially be used in Southern Africa. Where a donor has contributed US$ 2M or more, the total amount is shown. 3. Donors contributing US$ 10M or more are listed.

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