

Regional Bureau for Southern Africa 24 April 2020

Key figures

8,873,588 persons of concern in the region, including 767,754 refugees, 311,755 asylum-seekers, 5,600,782 IDPs, and 2,134,349 IDP returnees (as of 31 March)

4,929 confirmed COVID-19 cases in Southern Africa region (Includes active cases, recovered, deaths)

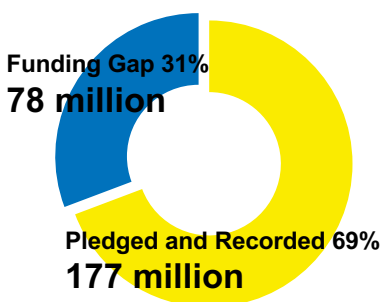
Cases by countries

COUNTRY	CASES	RECOVERED	DEATHS
Angola	17	6	2
Botswana	21	0	1
Comoros	0	0	0
DRC	305	47	25
Eswatini	22	8	1
Lesotho	0	0	0
Madagascar	63	58	0
Malawi	27	3	3
Mauritius	59	261	9
Mozambique	33	8	0
Namibia	9	7	0
ROC	164	16	6
Seychelles	5	6	0
South Africa	2,515	1,055	65
Zambia	36	35	3
Zimbabwe	22	2	4
TOTAL	3,298	1,512	119

Source: WHO, Government, CDC and Johns Hopkins as of 22 April.

USD 255 million

Requested for UNHCR's COVID-19 response globally over the next nine months



Regional developments

Across the 16 countries in the Southern Africa region, national efforts to contain the virus range from the suspension of all passenger commercial flights from affected countries, through the closure of borders to national lockdowns. Some countries have instituted a partial lockdown: goods and cargo, returning citizens and legal residents are still allowed to move across borders. These measures are coupled with restrictions on the number of people allowed to gather in one place, and the prohibition of events and activities related to religion and sports. UNHCR is working with governments, WHO and other UN agencies and NGOs to secure the inclusion of refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless people and other marginalized communities in preparedness and response measures.

Preparedness and response

UNHCR and partners in the region have been conducting awareness sessions and supporting government COVID-19 prevention efforts. In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, UNHCR has reached 75,351 people with public health information on COVID-19, broadcast through 43 radio spots in 33 locations, and in the various languages spoken by refugees. UNHCR visited two orphanages in Brazzaville in the **Republic of the Congo (ROC)** to promote awareness amongst refugee and host community children on COVID-19 prevention. Community volunteers have been conducting home visits to vulnerable refugees to convey essential information, including the importance of following government measures. Between Dzaleka refugee camp in **Malawi** and Mantapala settlement in **Zambia**, over 2,000 posters and brochures with details of COVID-19 prevention and referral mechanisms ensure widespread awareness.

In the **DRC**, UNHCR has installed 488 handwashing stations in refugee-hosting areas, distributed 41,959 soaps to refugees and host community members, and disinfected 1,068 infrastructures for refugees. Tongogara refugee camp in **Zimbabwe** has been receiving uninterrupted electricity for water pumps ensuring a consistent supply of water to all sections. Handwashing, footbaths and temperature checks are mandatory for people entering the camp clinic.



Refugees waiting to be served during the distribution of dignity kits in Tongogara refugee camp in Zimbabwe. UNHCR/ Jacob Apollo

In an effort to promote hygiene and income generation, refugees are producing facemasks in a number of countries in the region. In Bukavu in the **DRC**, enterprising refugees are making and selling hygienic masks for less than USD1 each, and UNHCR is supporting refugees and asylum-seekers in Maratane settlement in **Mozambique** to produce an estimated 2,000 masks daily. In **Zambia**, UNHCR is working with members of the refugee and host communities to produce facemasks through the initiative 'Lusaka Helps'. The tailors have so far produced around 1,500 masks for health workers in Lusaka. UNHCR has also provided eight sewing machines to tailors in Mantapala settlement to produce facemasks. Refugees in the Bele and Meri refugee settlements in the **DRC** have begun making their own handwashing devices called "tippy taps" using recycled materials. UNHCR ran a two-day training on how to use basins, jerry cans, plastic bottles and other materials to make the taps.

UNHCR conducted a refresher course for the Ministry of Homeland Security Registration Unit in **Malawi** on remote registration and documentation to support them carry out remote registration from their homes. For IDPs in the **DRC**, UNHCR and partners provided training on COVID-19 prevention and response to 18 doctors and 6 social assistants. In turn, the trainees are training 395 nurses and 155 community volunteers, who will raise awareness among the local and displaced populations. Since the start of the COVID-19 response, UNHCR has provided farming training and has distributed seeds to 160 refugees in Nord Ubangi and Sud Ubangi provinces in the **DRC** to promote livelihoods, self-reliance and food security.

UNHCR has established a direct referral system and assisted around 300 refugees and asylum-seekers in Western Cape in **South Africa** to access the provincial Food Relief Programme, and is training community leaders in communication, conflict resolution and preventing SGBV to combat the social impact of the COVID-19 crisis. UNHCR is also advocating for refugees and asylum-seekers to have access to apply for special COVID-19 grants the government has announced as part of stimulus package to keep the economy going and assist people who have lost their livelihoods or whose self-reliance has been affected.

Challenges for operations

Flooding between 16 and 18 April in South Kivu Province in the **DRC** resulted in the death of 25 people, more than 40 injured, and significant damage to houses, WASH and health infrastructure. UNHCR is working with local authorities and partners to immediately assist the nearly 80,000 people displaced by the flooding, including IDPs and refugees. The destruction may worsen health and WASH conditions and undermine COVID-19 prevention activities and heighten the risk of cholera, which is endemic to the area.

Livelihoods of refugees, IDPs and other vulnerable populations have been disrupted due to movement restrictions and social distancing requirements. Some refugees have resorted to negative coping mechanisms, including collecting firewood outside Tongogara refugee camp in **Zimbabwe**, placing pressure on the environment and exposing woman and girls to sexual abuse, potential conflict with host communities and attack by wild animals.

Financial requirements

UNHCR launched a revised [Coronavirus Emergency Appeal](#) on 27 March seeking USD 255.2 million to boost preparedness, prevention and response activities. This amount is fully coordinated with and included in the [COVID-19 Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) launched on 25 March.

Special thanks to the major donors of softly and unearmarked contributions and pledges at the global level to the Coronavirus Emergency Situation giving UNHCR critical flexibility to rapidly respond to evolving needs.

CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEDGES TO THE COVID-19 APPEAL | USD

USA 64m (USD 400,000 earmarked for the DRC operation) | UK 25m | Japan 23.9m | EU 17.9m | Denmark 14.6m | CERF 6.9m | Canada 6.4m | Ireland 3.3m | Sweden 3m | Sony Corporation 3m | Education Cannot Wait 1.8m | Qatar Charity 1.5m | Australia 0.8m | Private Donors 0.4m | Portugal 0.1m | Liechtenstein 0.1m

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Sweden 76.4m | Norway 41.4m | Netherlands 36.1m | Denmark 34.6m | United Kingdom 31.7m | Germany 25.9m | Private donors Spain 20m | Switzerland 16.4m | Private donors in Republic of Korea 10.5m

Contacts

- Joan Allison, Chief, External Engagement Section, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, allison@unhcr.org
- Edward Leposky, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, leposky@unhcr.org