Democratic Republic of the Congo

February 2023

Highlights

- **422 shelters constructed** for refugees in Ubangi provinces
- **3,545 protection cases monitored** in North and South Kivu
- Refugee **Cooperative won a $45,000 Innovation Award** cash prize in the Ubangis
- **500 durable shelters reinforced** by the displaced population in Kasai.

UNHCR through NGO World Vision repaired 15 boreholes in Inke camp @UNHCR/Ghislaine Nentobo

KEY FIGURES

523 121
Refugees and asylum seekers

6 million
Internally Displaced People

366
refugees in DRC returned to their country of origin

492
Congolese refugees returned to DRC

Context & Security

The security context in the eastern part of DRC continued to deteriorate in February, as violent clashes between non-state armed groups and government forces drove hundreds of thousands to flee their homes in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In February alone, nearly 300,000 people fled across Rutshuru and Masisi territories in North Kivu Province. Civilians continue to pay the heavy and bloody price of the conflict, including women and children who barely escaped the violence and are now sleeping out in the open air in spontaneous or coordinated sites, exhausted and traumatised. The resurgence of violence in this region as well as the provinces of South Kivu and Ituri resulted in more than 6 million people becoming internally displaced, a net increase of more than 200,000 people since January 2023.

Considering the escalating crises, UNHCR in the DRC in collaboration with 10 humanitarian partners activated its contingency plan to scale-up humanitarian response in the eastern part of the country. UNHCR and partners are positioned to provide multi sectoral assistance, with a particular emphasis on Protection, Shelter and Camp Coordination and Camp Management.

Outside of the crisis in Eastern DRC, UNHCR with partners continued to facilitate protection and seek solutions for 520,682 refugees in the country. It also supported the National Committee for Refugees (CNR) with the reception of 2,439 asylum seekers. As 76% of these populations remained in rural areas, UNHCR's strategic approach (in alignment with its multi-year, multi-partner plan) continued to focus on self-reliance, economic inclusion, and education.

UNHCR also continued to support voluntary repatriation in the reporting period, activities for which included

facilitating the return to Haut Katanga province of 492 Congolese refugees from Zambia and South Africa. UNHCR also began efforts to revitalize the Tripartite Agreement on Voluntary Repatriation between the DRC-UNHCR-Rwanda after a request of the President of the DRC.

Refugee Response

PROTECTION

- In North Ubangi, UNHCR in collaboration with the CNR (*Commission Nationale pour les réfugiés*) registered 546 new asylum seekers who had recently arrived from the Central African Republic. A large majority of them came to join their family members living in the Inke camp.
- CIAUD *(Comité International pour l'Aide d'Urgence et le Développement)*, a UNHCR partner in North and South Ubangi, organised 21 community awareness raising and sensitization for 757 people, including 556 refugees and 218 members of the host community. The objective was to educate on different GBV (gender base violence) related topics including the consequences of female genital mutilation. During this meeting, 35 new cases of GBV were reported among which, 8 cases were referred to medical care facilities, 14 survivors received psychological support, and 8 cases were reported to the police.
- UNHCR, in collaboration with the CNR (*Commission Nationale pour les réfugiés*) visited the government authorities, host populations and refugees in the provinces of Kasai-Central and Lomamie. The aim of this mission was to promote peaceful coexistence and raise awareness on refugee protection, the rights and duties of refugees and their host population. It was organised following a violent confrontation between refugees and the host population in Kasai province in January 2023.
- UNHCR and its partners CNR and AIRD (African Initiative for Relief and Development) facilitated the voluntary repatriation of the second group of Rwandan refugees for the year 2023. A total of 62 Rwandan refugees were transported to their country of origin in safety and dignity from North and South Kivu on 23 February. Since the beginning of the year, a total of 366 refugees have been freely repatriated from North and South Kivu provinces.
- UNHCR in partnership with CNR and NGO partners welcomed 492 refugees from Zambia and South Africa who voluntarily repatriated back to Haut Katanga. Here they received a return package in the form of monetary assistance that will enable them to cover their basic needs and facilitate their reintegration.

EDUCATION

- In North and South Ubangi, UNHCR registered a remarkable 60% increase in school enrollment in the four Development Hubs (Nzakara, Modale, Wenze and Sidi) supported by Education Cannot Wait (ECW). A total of 10,830 students (4,803 girls) were enrolled in host community schools, while 5,441 students (2,510 girls) were enrolled in schools of four refugee camps (Mole, Boyabu, Inke and Bili). UNHCR partner ADSSE also distributed school supplies to students in 19 ECW-supported schools, however, these schools, still face the challenge of insufficient school infrastructure such as desks, school supplies and kits for learners.

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

In North Ubangi, UNHCR through its partner World Vision, repaired 15 boreholes in Inke camp, bringing the total number of functioning boreholes to 25 out of 29. The quantity of water provided per person per day has now increased from 10 to 21 litres per refugee, slightly exceeding the recommended standard.

SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)

UNHCR and CIAUD *(Comité International pour l'Aide d'Urgence et le Développement)*, constructed 422 shelters, including 112 transitional shelters in collaboration with local groups of artisans and carpenters from the refugee community in North and South Ubangi Territories.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT AND SELF RELIANCE

- In South Ubangi, the Maboko Agropastoral Cooperative of Central African refugees living in Mole camp won the UNHCR Innovation Award. Globally, a total of 17 refugee organizations won this $45,000 prize. The Maboko Cooperative is composed of 307 members including 74 refugees and 233 members of the host community and has a proven track record in fish production to supply the cities of Zongo (DRC) and Bangui (CAR) with carp and tilapia.

Ending Statelessness

- In North/South Ubangi, 126 new-born children were identified and assisted for birth declaration and birth registration, while an additional 136 children were supported with the issuing of birth certificates.

Coordinated Humanitarian Response for IDPs

PROTECTION

- UNHCR and partners registered 1979 human rights violations during the month of February 2023 in the territories of Ituri, and Haut Uélé provinces. These incidents affected returnees (52%), IDPs (27%), residents (14%) and refugees (7%) accounting for the displacement of 818 households. In North and South Kivu, UNHCR partner INTERSOS documented 1566 protection incidents (540 North Kivu and South Kivu 1026). Internally displaced persons (IDPs) and returnees are the most affected by these incidents.

- UNHCR partner FMMDI (*Femme Main dans la Main pour le Développement Integral*), in collaboration with the customary chiefs in Kasai-Central, sensitized 1,680 students (905 girls and 775 boys) from local schools on GBV (gender base violence), SEA (sexual exploitation and abuse) and child marriage. This sensitization was part of the initiative to strengthen women's protection environment and reenforces the commitment made by customary chiefs who signed an act of engagement to fight degrading practices affecting women.

- The UNHCR Sub Office for Kananga participated in a joint mission led by OCHA to the border with Angola following the expulsion of Congolese economic migrants that have been living without documentation on Angolan territory. The aim of this mission was to assess the needs of the expelled populations and find ways to address their most urgent needs. Meanwhile, 226 Congolese, including 217 men, six women and a child (boy), were deported at the Kamako border. Many of the expelled migrants reported harassment and other human rights violations during the expulsion process.

SHELTER AND NON-FOOD ITEMS

- Through the UNHCR led Shelter Cluster, the humanitarian community in North Kivu was granted a 53-hectare of land area in Rusayo for the development of settlements for displaced persons. This new site will enable the decongestion of the population from the Bulengo (Lac-Vert) and Rusayo1 site.

- **Rehabilitation of shelters**: In Kasai, UNHCR through its partner AIDES (*Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social*) started reinforcing durable shelters under the villagization project. The process involves plastering the shelters with cement. Some 20 builders were identified from among the beneficiary population and trained to use this technique to rehabilitate 500 of the 600 UNHCR constructed shelters.

Trained beneficiaries reinforcing durable shelters under the villagization project of UNHCR through its partner AIDES In Kasai Central ©UNHCR/Clarisse Fatouma

CAMP COORDINATION AND CAMP MANAGEMENT (CCCM)

- The CCCM Cluster successfully managed the transfer of displaced population from the collective centers of Kanyaruchinya to the official site of Buchagara, North Kivu. 635 households were transferred in February, making a total of 2926 households living in the planned Buchagara site.
- As part of the search for sustainable solutions to the problems of IDPs, the CCCM Cluster, Protection Cluster, and the Sustainable Solutions Working Group conducted advocacy with the provincial authorities on behalf of 600 households relocated to the village of Kachelewa, Kalemie Territory, Tanganyika Province, who are subject to eviction.

Donor Contributions

UNHCR's financial requirements for the **refugee and IDP activities in DRC** in 2023 totals **$232.6 million of which 8 percent has been covered as of January 2023**.

UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is grateful for the support of:
Algeria | Australia | Belgium | Bulgaria| Canada | Denmark | Estonia | Japan | Finland | Germany | Iceland | Ireland | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | New Zealand | Norway | Netherlands | Philippines | Republic of Korea | Saudi Arabia | Serbia | Singapore | Slovenia | Sweden | Switzerland | Thailand | Türkiye | Uruguay | | United States of America | Vodafone Foundation

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