Democratic Republic of the Congo

October 2020

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

- A verification exercise targeting almost 19,000 refugees from the Central African Republic was completed in Nord Ubangi Province.
- UNHCR launched the construction of 1,000 additional emergency shelters at Kigonze displacement site in Bunia, Ituri Province.
- Cash for shelter assistance was provided to 1,300 displaced, returnees and host community households in the Kasai region.
- Nearly 1,000 internally displaced households received core relief items in Ituri Province.
- 601 Burundian refugees were voluntarily repatriated to Burundi.

Burundian refugees are registered and given identification documents at Kavimvira transit centre in South Kivu Province before returning to their country of origin. © UNHCR/Sanne Biesmans

Refugees

PROTECTION

- **UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) assisted 601 Burundian refugees to voluntarily return to their home country**, bringing to 884 the total number of people voluntarily repatriated since the operation began in September 2020. UNHCR conducts pre-departure formalities such as registration, health screenings and interviews to ascertain the voluntariness of returnees' decision to return. Upon arrival in Burundi, returnees are provided with an initial assistance package that includes food and non-food items as well as cash grants to help them restart their lives.
- **UNHCR and CNR resumed voluntary repatriations of Rwandan refugees**, with a first wave of 160 individuals from North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces. UNHCR obtained special authorization for these returns, as Rwanda's land borders remain closed.
- **In Haut Uele Province, 368 South Sudanese refugees were relocated from the overcrowded Meri and Kaka settlements to Bele settlement**. UNHCR and partners provided shelters, farming tools and core relief items comprising blankets, kitchen sets, jerrycans and plastic buckets. A total of 2,284 out of 5,000 South Sudanese refugees targeted for the relocations have already benefited from the operation since 2019.
- **UNHCR completed a verification exercise targeting almost 19,000 refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) at Inke camp, Nord Ubangi Province**. The verification provides viable statistics to inform protection and assistance activities, as well as facilitate surveys on voluntary returns. The exercise has just begun in Bili camp, Nord Ubangi Province and will continue in November in Bondo, Bas Uele Province.

- To strengthen the protection for separated and unaccompanied refugee children from CAR, **UNHCR set up a Best Interest Determination (BID) panel in Bondo, Bas Uele Province**. A special training on BID was given to partners and local authorities. The panel will take decisions on the well-being and protection of 25 children at risk, currently living with host families. A total of 70 cases in Nord Ubangi, South Ubangi and Bas Uele Provinces, home to refugees from CAR, are awaiting decisions from BID panels.
- At the Biringi and Meri settlements, Ituri and Haut Uele Provinces respectively, **700 South Sudanese and 170 host community households harvested over 163 tons of food from farms** supported by UNHCR and partners. The produce comprised beans, groundnuts, maize, rice and cassava, cultivated during the first farming season. Rich harvests ensure food self-sufficiency, strengthen self-reliance while joint farming also promotes peaceful coexistence between refugees and their hosts.
- In Fizi Territory, South Kivu Province, UNHCR and partner AIDES distributed **clothing items donated by Japanese partner-UNIQLO to 45,000 Burundian refugees and host community members**.

HEALTH

- **UNHCR continues to promote refugees' access to life-saving and essential healthcare**. This include HIV prevention, protection and treatment, reproductive health services, food security and nutrition and hygiene services.

EDUCATION

- In October, **916 South Sudanese children including 895 pupils and 21 students at Biringi settlement, Ituri Province resumed school, with support from UNHCR**. Most of the schools however remain ill-equipped and are in dire need of additional hygiene facilities to prevent COVID-19.

SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)

- UNHCR and partner AIRD provided **shelter support to 178 South Sudanese refugee households** who have newly been relocated to Bele settlement, Haut Uele Province. Relocation of refugees to Bele is helping to decongest the overcrowded Meri settlement and to move refugees away from unsafe border areas.

CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)

- In Bas Uele Province, UNHCR's partner Terre Sans Frontiere (TSF) provided **cash assistance to 45 refugee families and Congolese families hosting separated and unaccompanied refugee children from the Central African Republic**. The host families comprised 13 households in Baye and 13 in Bondo Centre, now supported to provide basic necessities and protection for such children at risk.
- In Haut Katanga Povince, UNHCR's partner ADSSE **provided cash assistance to 42 refugees women and girls to support their menstrual hygiene kits.**

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

- In an effort to improve sanitation and access to drinkable water in Bele settlement, Haut Uele Province, UNHCR and partner ADES are **constructing six additional water points, thereby mitigating the risks of health problems such as acute diarrhoea**. Six water point management committees have been established and are receiving support to repair and maintain the supply system.

Statelessness

PROTECTION

- In Ituri Province, the Aru peace court pronounced **supplementary judgements for 92 South Sudanese refugee children born in the Biringi settlement**. A similar request was also filed in for 60 host community children, with support from UNHCR. These judgements will facilitate the establishment of birth certificates thus preventing statelessness. One hundred births were also registered at the settlement in the month of October.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

PROTECTION

- **UNHCR facilitated the settlement of a land dispute between the Kuba and Lulua ethnic groups in the Kasai region**, over control of the resource-rich locality of Bakwa Nkenge, through a peace agreement reached in Kananga, Kasai-Central Province. Over 32,000 people have been displaced and 350 shelters destroyed in Kasai Central and Kasai as a result of clashes resulting from the dispute.
- **As part of our efforts to strengthen social cohesion and forge closer ties between host and displaced communities in Moba Territory, Tanganyika Province, UNHCR and partner AIDES rehabilitated a football pitch** and donated sports equipment to over185 displaced youth and host community members.
- **UNHCR's partner INTERSOS documented 123 incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) including 91 cases of rape reportedly perpetrated by armed groups in IDP hosting sites in Masisi Territory, North Kivu Province**. 59 survivors received Post Exposure Preventive (PEP) kits and appropriate medical care, 49 others received psycho-social support, while cash assistance was given to seven victims of related human rights violations to support medical care, legal assistance and relocation costs.
- **UNHCR and partner AIDES documented 39 SGBV incidents including 18 cases of rape, with 14 of those concerning minors, in returnee areas in Tanganyika Province**. Survivors of SGBV received legal assistance while six of them were given PEP kits within 72 hours. AIDES continues to raise awareness on SGBV prevention as young people in returnee and host communities are increasingly at risk of abuse, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic.
- **In Kasai Oriental Province, UNHCR-supported mobile court hearings led to 23 GBV convictions, including 17 for rape of IDPs**. UNHCR provided legal aid and logistics support to the two-week hearings in Boya, 55 km from the provincial capital Mbuji-Mayi, thus improving outreach to rural areas for local courts who often lack the means to try such cases.
- To encourage self-reliance as an SGBV mitigation strategy, UNHCR and partner AIDES **provided training on baking and soapmaking to 80 Congolese returnees and host community women and girls at risk in Manono Territory, Tanganyika Province.**
- To strengthen SGBV prevention and response, UNHCR and a local NGO AIDPROFEN held **11 focus groups for IDP and host community men in Masisi Territory, North Kivu Province**. About 144 of them will receive training on positive masculinity and techniques to break social practices that favour such abuses. Rising SGBV incidents are a serious concern in eastern DRC.

HEALTH

- UNHCR and partner ADES provided medical equipment and medical supplies to the Aru health zone, Ituri Province.

SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)

- In Ituri Province, UNHCR's partner, the Danish Refugee Council (DRC), launched **the construction of 1,000 additional emergency shelters at the Kigonze site in Bunia**. The new infrastructure will accommodate the remaining IDPs after the imminent closure of the HGR site, as well as decongest overcrowded communal hangers hosting new IDPs at the ISP site.
- **UNHCR and partner CARITAS distributed core relief items (CRI) to 994 households in four displacement sites in Irumu and Djugu Territories, Ituri Province**. The CRIs comprised tarpaulins, mats, jerrycans and hygiene kits for women and girls with urgent needs, including those at Venyo IDP site, Djugu Territory, where 100 shelters were recently destroyed by fire.
- **In Tanganyika Province, UNHCR and partner AIRD launched the construction of the Kumbula primary school in Moba Territory.** The infrastructure will host eight classrooms, a school administration block, toilets and a borehole, to provide a good learning environment and promote the reintegration of returnees.
- **To prevent diseases and improve living conditions, UNHCR and partner AIDES continued the construction of emergency shelters for IDP households in North Kivu and South Kivu Provinces**. Between September and October, 3,116 emergency shelters were completed. 98 households built their own houses using local materials like mud bricks and thatch. A total of 15,725 individuals have received shelter assistance in these two Provinces since the beginning of the year. A majority of the estimated 3.5 million IDPs in the Kivus still live with host families in abject poverty.

CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)

- **UNHCR and partner the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) provided cash assistance for the completion of 1,300 durable shelters for IDP, returnees and host community households** in Dimbalenge, Kasai Central and Kamonia, Kasai Provinces. The beneficiaries previously had received an initial instalment and in-kind assistance in the form of door frames and windows.
- **In Tanganyika Province, UNHCR and partner AIDES provided cash assistance to 100 displaced women at risk of gender-based violence** to support and develop their livelihoods activities.

Clusters and Working Groups

- **As co-leads for the CCCM Working Group, UNHCR and IOM facilitated trainings for 27 provincial authorities on the search for durable solutions** to internal displacements and on Congolese government involvement in site coordination and management, in Bunia, Ituri Province.
- **The Camp Management and Camp Coordination working group finalized plans to build 300 transitional shelters for IDPs in host community locations in North Kivu Province**, as an alternative to people unable to return home due to continuous insecurity. Beneficiaries will also receive a certificate of voluntary return and will no longer be registered as IDPs. This strategy was adopted following joint surveys to determine durable solutions for 91,939 IDPs living in 13 sites in North Kivu Province in the month of July. UNHCR needs more funds to assist and protect the remaining thousands living in precarious conditions and insecurity, while waiting to return home or to be fully integrated into the host community.

External / Donor Relations

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

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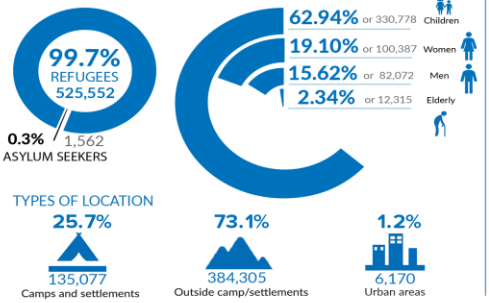
The UN Refugee Agency

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO
DRC AT A GLANCE
as of 31 October 2020

527,114
TOTAL NUMBER OF REFUGEES AND ASYLUM SEEKERS

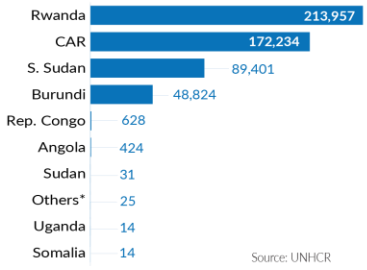
KEY STATISTICS



AGE AND GENDER BREAKDOWN

TYPES OF LOCATION

REFUGEE POPULATION BY COUNTRY OF ORIGIN

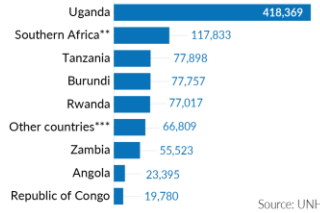


Source: UNHCR

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

REFUGEES FROM DRC IN AFRICA

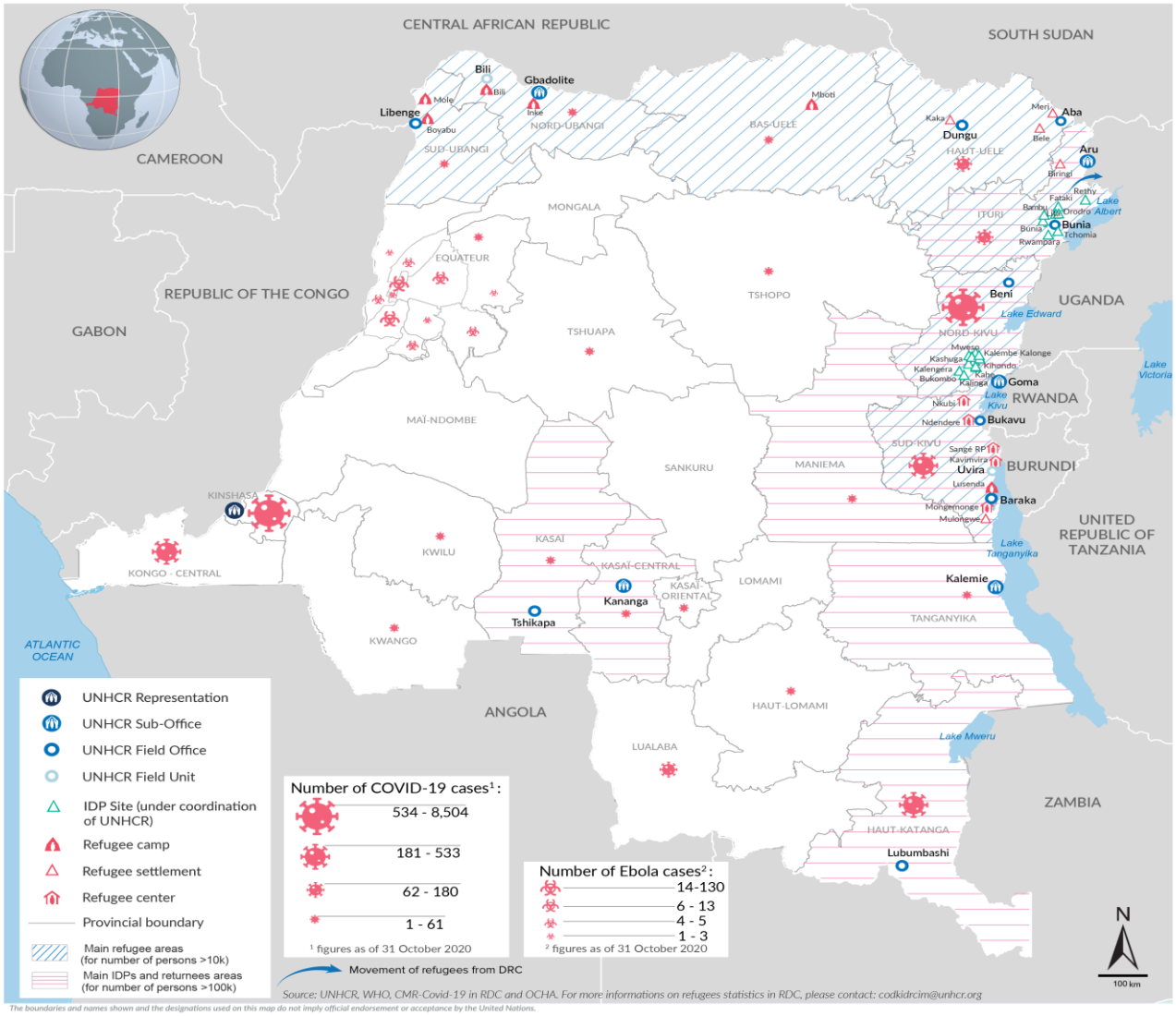
934,381
TOTAL DRC REFUGEE POPULATION



Source: UNHCR

**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.



Source: UNHCR, WHO, CMR-Covid-19 in RDC and OCHA. For more informations on refugees statistics in RDC, please contact: codkidrcim@unhcr.org

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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