## THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

**January-December 2021** 

#### CREDITS

UNHCR wishes to acknowledge the contributions of partners and staff in the Southern Africa and Great Lakes regions in Africa and at Headquarters who have participated in the preparation of the narrative, financial and graphic components of this document.

#### CONCEPT DESIGN

UNHCR, Office of the Bureau for Southern Africa in Pretoria, South Africa. The maps in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of UNHCR concerning the legal status of any country or territory or area, of its authorities, or the delimitation of borders or boundaries. All statistics are provisional and subject to change. Except where otherwise indicated, all population figures provided in this report are as of 31 December 2020.

#### WEB PORTAL

For more information on the DRC situation go to: https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/drc

#### PHOTOGRAPHS

#### FRONT PAGE :

A group of newly-arrived Congolese asylum-seekers sit exhausted in Zombo, near Uganda's border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo. ©UNHCR/ Rocco Nuri

#### **REGIONAL OVIEW:**

Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo arrive at Rumonge port on the Burundi side of Lake Tanganyika, having fled militia violence. ©UNHCR/ Bernard Ntwari

#### ANGOLA CHAPTER:

Refugee children from the Kasai region of the DRC, celebrating their relocation from Cacanda reception centre to the new settlement in Lovua, Lunda Norte. © UNHCR/Margarida Loureiro

A Congolese refugee shops for shoes at Lovua market in Angola. © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

#### **BURUNDI CHAPTER:**

Congolese schoolchildren in Musasa camp, Ngozi, Burundi, take a break from class as UN High Commissioner for refugees Filippo Grandi pays a visit. © UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin

Congolese refugees gather at Musasa camp in Ngozi, Burundi, for the arrival of UN High Commissioner for refugees, Filippo Grandi. © UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin

#### **REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO CHAPTER:**

Daily hot meals are provided to the most vulnerable refugees from the DRC in Bouemba settlement, Republic of the Congo ©UNHCR / Guy Fernand Mouneyi

A refugee boy from the DRC with a handmade truck in Bouemba settlement, Republic of the Congo. Children are given space and opportunity to play and express their talent and creativity © UNHCR / Guy Fernand Mouneyi

#### RWANDA CHAPTER:

A refugee girl from the DRC attends class in Kigeme Camp, Rwanda  $\odot$  UNHCR/EAC/Paddy Dowling

A refugee from the Democratic Republic of the Congo is pleased with her harvest in the Misizi Marshland project, which supports food security project for both refugees and Rwanda farmers. ©UNHCR/ Eugene Sibomana

#### UGANDA CHAPTER:

Some of the refugee women mentored by Nansen Refugee Award Regional Winner for Africa, Sabuni Francoise Chikunda, have founded the Heriyetu Foundation at Nakivale settlement in Uganda – a group that has launched a wine-making business, pharmacy and savings and loans programme. © UNHCR/Esther Ruth Mbabazi

A Congolese torture survivor finds healing in empowering others. Once a broken woman, she has emerged as a successful entrepreneur and an inspiration for fellow refugees. She checks on her newly set-up fish breeding pond in Kyangwali Refugee settlement, in mid-western Uganda. ©UNHCR/ Duniya Aslam Khan

#### UNITED REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA CHAPTER:

An elderly Congolese refugee lives alone in a Refugee Housing Unit (RHU) given to refugees with special needs, at Nyarugusu camp in Tanzania. © UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin

A market in Tanzania where Congolese and Burundian refugees interact with their Tanzanian hosts.© UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin

#### ZAMBIA CHAPTER:

Congolese refugees draw water at a water distribution point in Kenani transit centre. © UNHCR/Kelvin Shimo

A Zambian trader from the nearby village of Kampampi regularly comes to Mantapala refugee settlement to sell fish. She is saving up the money she makes for her education. © UNHCR/Enoch Kavindele Jr

#### ANNEXURE:

A young refugee from the Democratic Republic of Congo performs in a play at Mantapala refugee settlement in Zambia. ©UNHCR/ Will Swanson

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## Foreword

humanitarian crises in Africa. By the end of 2020, some 940,421 Congolese refugees and asylumseekers were hosted across the African continent. Ongoing conflicts in eastern DRC, as well as intercommunal violence, continue to cause forced displacement within the DRC and into neighbouring countries, along with tragic loss of human life and destruction of communities. Moving into 2021, we can expect that new Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers will require protection and basic assistance, while those in protracted situations – many for over a decade – will still require ongoing support.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) is one of the most complex and long-standing

2020 has presented the unique challenge and threat of the COVID-19 pandemic. Countries of asylum implemented COVID-19 prevention measures that, while necessary to curb the spread of the virus, resulted in heightened protection risks and assistance needs, including for people with specific needs and people with disabilities. Partners have had to adapt and reformulate their programmes to ensure continuity of services, while scaling up activities that respond to COVID-19.

Given the evolving and growing needs, along with increasing strain on resources in countries of asylum, the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) for the DRC Situation remains the essential tool to rally financial support, coordinate humanitarian assistance and provide a strategic direction towards medium and long-term solutions for Congolese refugees in Angola, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia. UNHCR values the partnership of those engaged in the 2021 DRC RRRP, and together we have developed interventions through close consultations with the affected populations and host governments to improve protection space for Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers, and ensure there is preparedness in the event of new influxes. Response to COVID-19 has also been mainstreamed into sectoral responses.

A key factor to mitigate dependence on humanitarian assistance is to strengthen self-reliance through education, skills training and supporting livelihood opportunities. Mainstreaming access for Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers to government services will also ensure much-needed resources are not devoted to creating parallel systems. Rather, services and programmes are strengthened for the benefit of everyone, adding to improved development and a shared social wellbeing. UNHCR and RRRP partners urge States to provide favourable conditions towards local integration. At the same time, UNHCR is also ready to support repatriation where returns are voluntary and informed, and can be conducted in a safe and dignified manner. Resettlement must also remain an option for the most vulnerable, and we continue to seek support of the international community to provide solutions for these special cases.

Throughout the RRRP process, we placed great importance on data and analysis to clearly articulate evidence-based needs and on aligning our responses with the Agenda 2030 and the Sustainable Development Goals. This RRRP also follows pledges made during the first ever Global Refugee Forum (GRF) held in December 2019, providing an opportunity to bring on board nontraditional partners as well as regional actors to strengthen the commitment to the DRC situation and to spark new pledges.

In closing, I would like to thank all the donors who have supported our inter-agency response for Congolese refugees by

contributing to past RRRPs. Through this 2021 RRRP, let us renew our commitment to continue to work together in the pursuit of comprehensive solutions for Congolese refugees.

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Valentin Tapsoba Director, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

**2021 PLANNED RESPONSE** 

### **1,108,420** REFUGEES TARGETED

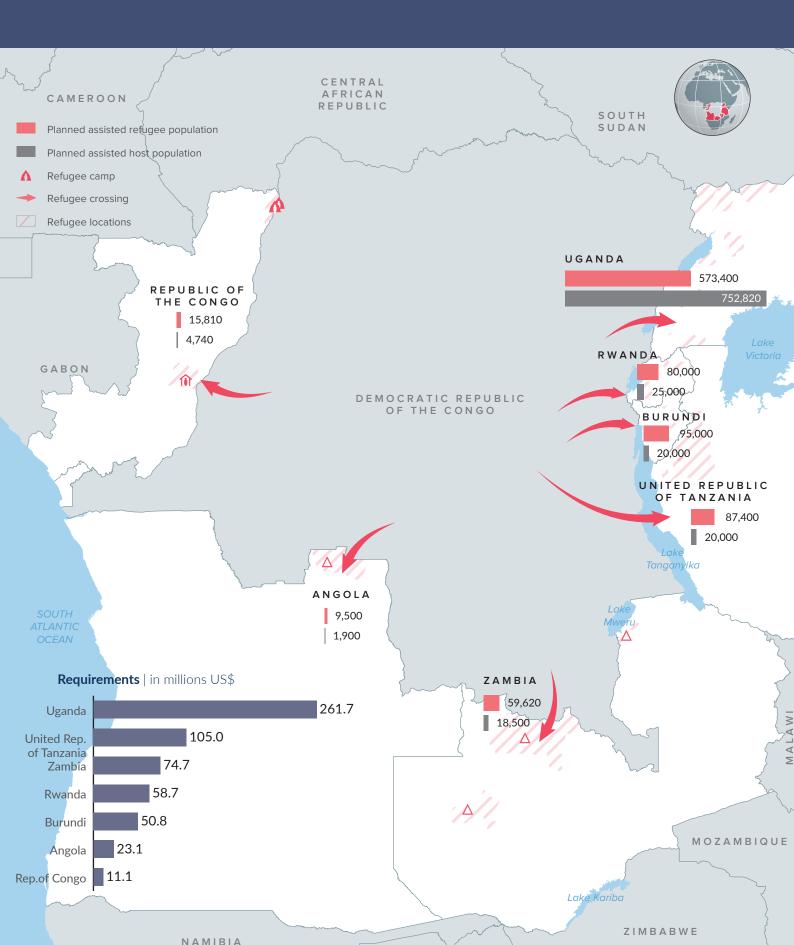
## 842,960 HOST POPULATION

TARGETED

## US\$ 585M

REQUIREMENTS

66 PARTNERS INVOLVED



# **Regional Overview**

# Situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

Although a peaceful transition of power followed the December 2018 presidential elections in the DRC, at the end of 2020, the overall security situation remained complex, with continued inter-ethnic conflicts and armed attacks, particularly in the eastern provinces of the country. Since 2019 and throughout 2020, increased violence has resulted in the continued internal forced displacement of more than 5.2 million people, according to the 2021 DRC Humanitarian Response Plan. This includes approximately 2.9 million people displaced in 2020 in the eastern provinces (mainly in Ituri, North and South Kivu and Tanganyika). This is the largest IDP situation in Africa and one of the most acute and longstanding humanitarian crises in the world. The country also hosts about half a million refugees, fleeing unrest and persecution in neighbouring countries.

The situation in the DRC was aggravated in 2020 by the COVID-19 pandemic, while the DRC also continues to

fight against successive outbreaks of the Ebola Virus Disease and a measles outbreak. Additionally, in October 2020, OCHA estimated that 15.6 million people are severely food insecure, of which some 4.7 million suffer from severe malnutrition.

Although the rate of outflows from the DRC was lower in 2020 than in previous years, tens of thousands of people still fled across borders and have joined refugees from previous waves of violence and insecurity. Refugees continued to flee mostly from eastern areas of North and South Kivu and Ituri Provinces to Uganda, as well as from Haut Katanga and Tanganyika Provinces to Zambia and other countries in Southern Africa. At the same time, some countries reported a net reduction in the Congolese refugee population attributed to spontaneous returns to the DRC, suggesting a general stability in some areas of origin.

## **Beneficiary Population**

COUNTRIES	TOTAL ASSISTED REFUGEE POPULATION BY THE END OF 2020	PLANNED ASSISTED REFUGEE POPULATION BY THE END OF 2021	PLANNED ASSISTED HOST POPULATION BY THE END OF 2021
Angola	23,436	9,500	1,900
Burundi	79,406	95,000	20,000
Republic of the Congo	20,830	15,810	4,743
Rwanda	74,491	80,003	25,000
Uganda	421,563	573,406	752,820
United Republic of Tanzania	78,075	87,402	20,000
Zambia	57,445	59,625	18,500
Southern Africa*	117,606	119,924	-
Other Countries**	67,569	67,752	-
TOTAL	940,421	1,108,422	842,963

	PLANNED ASSISTED REFUGEE POPULATION BY THE END OF 2021										
COUNTRIES	0-4 YEARS MALE	0-4 YEARS FEMALE	5-11 YEARS MALE	5-11 YEARS FEMALE	12-17 YEARS MALE	12-17 YEARS FEMALE	18-59 YEARS MALE	18-59 YEARS FEMALE	60+ YEARS MALE	60+ YEARS FEMALE	INDIVI- DUALS WITH DISABILITY
Angola	862	847	1,085	1,131	619	682	1,932	2,016	217	109	2
Burundi	7,493	7,304	11,146	10,940	8,429	8,239	18,690	20,633	957	1,170	2,045
Republic of the Congo	1,729	1,837	1,699	1,726	1,085	1,136	3,176	2,977	228	218	202
Rwanda	6,099	6,025	8,137	8,120	6,752	6,773	13,890	20,510	1,571	2,125	3,298
Uganda	53,673	53,857	67,482	67,230	41,308	40,113	111,038	123,667	6,605	8,433	12,004
United Republic of Tanzania	8,486	8,483	9,110	9,146	6,735	6,801	16,990	18,685	1,297	1,669	1,230
Zambia	4,341	4,366	6,279	6,309	4,747	4,587	15,074	12,576	704	645	27
Southern Africa*	5,445	5,419	9,826	9,642	7,022	6,593	46,308	27,584	1,215	870	374
Other Countries**	3,836	3,642	6,450	6,200	5,255	5,304	18,691	16,633	761	980	1,130
TOTAL	91,964	91,779	121,212	120,444	81,950	80,228	245,788	245,281	13,556	16,219	20,312

\*Southern Africa includes Botswana, the Kingdom of eSwatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe. \*\*Other countries include Central African Republic, Chad, Kenya and South Sudan. Updated population figures are available at: <u>https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/drc</u>

## **Regional Protection and Solutions Context**

The 2021 Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) Situation details the inter-agency response for Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries of asylum: Angola, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. Most countries in the region have demonstrated commitment to maintaining open borders for asylum-seekers, and Congolese have benefitted from safe access to asylum and international protection. However in 2020, due to the COVID-19 pandemic, governments implemented precautionary measures including border closures, which affected access to asylum. This trend may continue into 2021 and RRRP partners are committed to engaging with governments to ensure those seeking asylum still have safe access to territory. Furthermore, Congolese refugees, particularly those living in camps and settlements, often face restrictions on their freedom of movement; right to work; housing, land and property

rights; and access to education and justice. This situation was worsened in 2020 as a result of COVID-19 lockdowns and movement restrictions, which negatively impacted economic activity and resulted in loss of income and increased vulnerability for Congolese refugees and their families.

At the same time, refugee settlements and camps in many host countries have reached or exceeded capacity, and the available basic services are stretched to their limit. RRRP partners continue discussions to expand existing or establish new camps and settlements. While RRRP partners promote self-reliance with the aim of reducing dependence on humanitarian assistance, the reality is that this process is slow and often underfunded. Therefore, the majority of Congolese refugees are expected to continue to rely on assistance and services provided by RRRP partners and government. In 2021, it is expected that in addition to



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