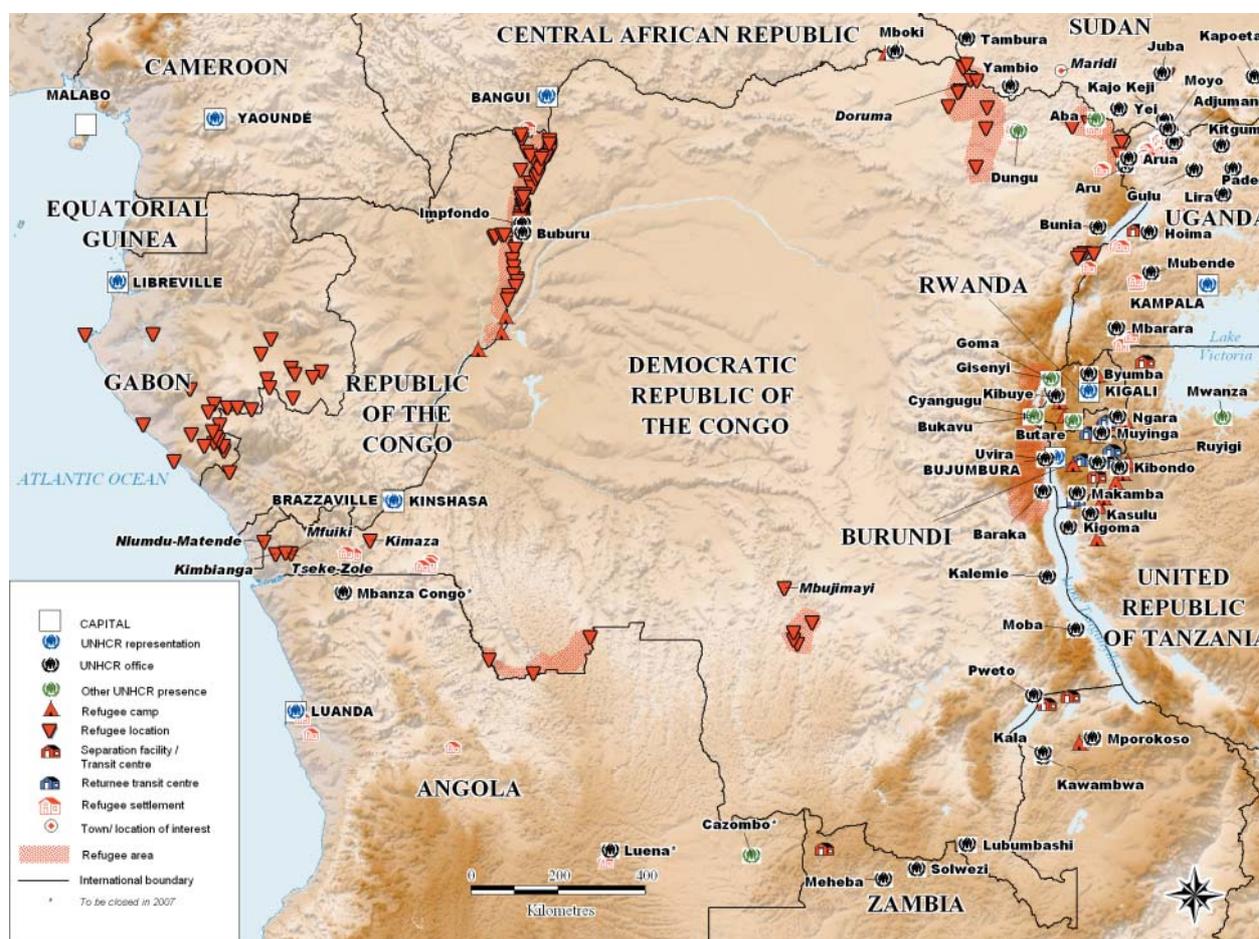


Democratic Republic of the Congo



Working environment

The context

It is estimated that the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) hosts more than 156,000 refugees. Most of them live in villages or refugee settlements and have land to cultivate and lead barely different lives from those of the surrounding population. The DRC's Transitional Government has recently indicated its willingness to allow the local integration of Angolan and Sudanese refugees who remain on its territory and who are unable or unwilling to repatriate.

At the same time, insecure conditions have displaced 1.6 million Congolese within their country, mostly in the eastern provinces. While most internally displaced persons (IDPs) live with host families, not in camps, others are still hiding in the forest. A significant number have suffered repeated displacement.

In 2006, the DRC marked several political milestones with the successful organization of a Constitutional

Referendum and, in February 2006, the adoption of an electoral law and a constitution. The first free general elections in 40 years were held in July 2006, and the second round of a presidential poll was planned for 29 October 2006. The United Nations peace-keeping mission *Mission des Nations Unies en République Démocratique du Congo* (MONUC) has been deployed in the country since 1999. The mission helped with the elections and continues to pursue disarmament, demobilization, repatriation, resettlement and reintegration.

Although a successful and peaceful transition to a democratically elected government is hoped for, the security situation in the DRC remains fragile. Pockets of insecurity persist. Several militia groups are still active in the Ituri region, while the *Front Démocratique pour la Libération du Rwanda* and the *Mayi-Mayi* militia remain present in the North and South Kivu provinces.

Despite this situation, most of the 350,000 Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries say they wish to return home, so repatriation to the DRC is expected to intensify in 2007.

The needs

UNHCR and its partners have organized participatory assessments focusing on the provinces of Equateur, Katanga and South Kivu. In the latter two, UNHCR also undertook a village assessment and mapping exercise. These activities revealed that only 5 per cent of the total population in these areas have received agricultural inputs, that only 10 per cent have safe drinking water and that 70 per cent do not have adequate health care.

Schools and health centres in the concerned provinces lack basic supplies and equipment, as well as paid and trained staff. Food insecurity now prevails even in areas such as north-eastern Katanga, which before the war was considered one of the breadbaskets of the country. Improved access to some areas hosting IDPs has unveiled pockets of extreme human suffering. Sexual exploitation and abuse, extortion and looting remain common features in all areas of displacement as a result of weak or non-existent systems for the enforcement of law and order.

Total requirements: USD 11,520,750

(Annual programme only. The financial requirements for the supplementary programmes are being finalized.)

Main objectives

UNHCR's 2007 programme in the DRC will consist of an annual programme addressing the needs of refugees and two supplementary programmes — one for the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and one for IDPs.

Annual programme

- Protect and assist refugees and strengthen the capacity of national institutions dealing with refugees.



Recently returned refugees rebuild their lives with UNHCR's help. *UNHCR / S. Schulman*

- Support the voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity of refugees living in the DRC.
- Work towards the local integration of refugees who opt to remain in the DRC.
- Pursue resettlement for refugees for whom local integration or repatriation are not possible.

Supplementary programme

- Support the return and sustainable reintegration of IDPs and Congolese refugees from neighbouring countries.
- Strengthen partnerships with humanitarian actors to respond better to protection and recovery needs.
- Ensure that the interests of all persons of concern to UNHCR are taken into account in local and national recovery and development plans.
- Help reduce violence and human rights violations, build national institutions and civil society's capacity to protect civilians.

Planning figures					
Type of population	Origin	Jan 2007		Dec 2007	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Angola	80,120	5,850	80,120	2,370
	Rwanda	32,300	10,330	17,300	15,000
	Sudan	5,720	2,460	1,220	40
	Various	38,550	1,840	29,550	1,840
Asylum-seekers	Various	100	20	100	-
Returnees ¹ (refugees)		73,000	73,000	98,500	98,500
IDPs		1,600,000	1,100,000	1,200,000	1,100,000
Total		1,829,790	1,193,500	1,426,790	1,217,750

¹ The January 2007 figure reflects the planning number of refugees that will have returned home by the end of 2006. The December 2007 figure reflects the number of returnees that will return during 2007.

Key targets for 2007

Annual programme

- All urban refugees and asylum-seekers are registered and receive ID cards.
- All refugees get primary education and health care.
- 15,000 refugees repatriate in safety and dignity and within a reasonable time-frame.
- All refugees opting for local integration are granted a favourable legal status, identity documents and support to become self-reliant.
- 250 refugees are resettled in third countries.

Supplementary programme

- At least 98,500 DRC refugees return from neighbouring countries.
- All returning refugees receive transport to their place of return as well as a non-food return package;
- All returnees are made aware of HIV/AIDS-related issues.
- At least 60 per cent of returnees without a shelter receive a construction kit.
- At least 80 per cent of returnees receive livelihood support through the concerted efforts of UNHCR and other agencies.
- National and provincial protection working groups meet at least twice a month to define required interventions.
- Protection needs are identified and prioritized, and response plans are developed for all provinces in DRC.
- Protection monitoring of IDPs and returnees is carried out in all areas where UNHCR is involved.
- - The number of incidents of violence against civilians, particularly of sexual and gender-based violence decreases.
- The number of perpetrators of human rights violations who are arrested and sentenced increases.

Strategy and activities

UNHCR will provide financial and technical support to the *Commission nationale pour les réfugiés*, (CNR, or National Commission for Refugees) to build the Government's capacity to conduct a fair refugee status determination (RSD) process for asylum-seekers.

Furthermore, the Office will ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers receive identity documents recognized by all authorities, allowing them to work and avail themselves of education and health services.

UNHCR will continue its repatriation operations for Rwandan, Burundian, Sudanese and other refugees. Through written and oral communications, as well as "go-and-see" visits, refugees will be made aware of the situation in their countries of origin and thus be able to make informed decisions on return. Those who decide to repatriate will be supported with documents and transport as required. As for the remaining Angolan and Sudanese refugees who are unable or unwilling to repatriate, UNHCR will support the Government in regularizing their stay in the country and provide limited community-based support for their socio-economic integration. Refugees with specific protection needs as well as those unable to repatriate or integrate locally will be referred for resettlement.

UNHCR will continue to help Congolese refugees return to Equateur, South Kivu and some parts of Katanga. It will assess the situation in other return areas to identify those where repatriation can be facilitated. The modalities of return will be agreed on in tripartite agreements and will be regularly reviewed. Cross-border meetings will help coordinate operations with countries of asylum. UNHCR will prepare information packages and radio programmes to disseminate information to Congolese refugees in the countries of asylum.

Returnees will receive a return package of a three-month food ration provided by WFP, seeds and agricultural tools from FAO, other non-food items and transport to their place of origin. To make returns sustainable, UNHCR will support health and education services in areas of return. Moreover, it will engage in short-term community-based interventions such as the distribution of shelter kits and tools, micro-credit schemes for women's associations and programmes to raise awareness of sexual and gender-based violence, HIV/AIDS and land mines.

Constraints

The main constraint is the lack of, or limited access to persons of concern for security or logistical reasons. This situation also makes operations complicated and expensive. Due to the sheer magnitude of the humanitarian needs and limited resources, interventions are difficult. Furthermore, the absence of minimum socio-economic infrastructures is a major deterrent to the return of refugees from neighbouring countries.

Internally displaced people in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

In December 2005, the DRC was designated by the Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) as one of the countries in which the cluster approach would be piloted. UNHCR was designated to lead the protection cluster with MONUC, and to chair the early recovery cluster with UNDP. The Office is also an active participant in the shelter and non-food items cluster.

UNHCR has spearheaded the establishment of protection and early recovery groups at the national and provincial levels. There have been other noteworthy achievements. The protection cluster has developed into an advocacy force focusing on serious human rights violations. Strong coordination between the humanitarian community and the military has helped address human rights violations by soldiers, enhance security in volatile zones and protect civilians during military operations in the east. A system of legal advice and referral services was established in Ituri District to provide a peaceful means to resolve land disputes, which in the past had led to deaths. Human rights courses have been conducted for soldiers.

The early recovery cluster is becoming a source of information on conditions in areas of return. Assessments in two provinces to which returns are taking place led in September 2006 to projects to repair roads and rehabilitate health facilities. In 2007, these activities will continue to expand as needed. In line with the main goals defined for the 2007 Humanitarian Action Plan for the DRC, UNHCR will focus its interventions to:

1. Create a protective environment, where the civilian population in general, and IDPs in particular, are not arbitrarily deprived of their human rights and are free from violence, abuse and exploitation.
2. Support the Government and partners in devising and implementing an operational strategy for the return in safety and dignity of both IDPs and refugees.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence

Number of offices	14
Total staff	230
International	46
National	177
UNVs	7

Coordination

The National Commission for Refugees (CNR) is UNHCR's key counterpart in the DRC. UNHCR participates in the UN Country Team and collaborates closely with the Humanitarian Coordinator and Deputy Special Representative of the Secretary-General of MONUC. Coordination and advocacy with development actors on returnee reintegration is channelled through the DRC Action Plan. The Office also co-chairs the IDP Protection Cluster with MONUC and the Early Recovery Cluster with UNDP. In these capacities UNHCR will continue to work towards effective inter-agency coordination and collaboration.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government: *Gouvernorat du Nord-Kivu*, Ministry of the Interior, Ministry of Human Rights, National Commission for Refugees.

NGOs: *Action Humanitaire Afrique*, *Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social*, Agency for Technical Cooperation and Development, *Association pour le développement social et la sauvegarde de l'environnement*, *Atlas Logistique*, Caritas Katanga, Catholic Relief Services, *Comité de développement intégré*, Danish Church Aid, *Regroupement des institutions du système de financement décentralisé du Congo*, Search for Common Ground.

Others: *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*.

Operational partners

Government: Defence Ministry, Police Department, Ministry of Women and Social Affairs.

Others: FAO, ICRC, ILO, UNDP, UNICEF, UNESCO, UNHCR, UNOCHA, WFP.

Budget (USD)		
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget	
	2006	2007
Protection, monitoring and coordination	6,850,443	3,808,352
Community services	400,244	157,890
Crop production	36,106	27,250
Domestic needs	319,348	239,468
Education	285,630	125,903
Food	40,000	2,120
Forestry	73,526	50,048
Health	414,000	237,670
Income generation	110,000	170,493
Legal assistance	551,718	176,563
Operational support (to agencies)	1,129,744	242,173
Sanitation	61,520	1,950
Shelter and infrastructure	157,660	55,084
Transport and logistics	1,917,753	430,088
Water	26,000	4,300
Total operations	12,373,692	5,729,352
Programme support	5,962,877	5,791,398
Total	18,336,569	11,520,750

