

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Main objectives

- Reinforce national institutions dealing with refugees as well as civil society, local communities and their institutions.
- Organize and facilitate the repatriation of Angolan, Burundian, Rwandan and Sudanese refugees to their home countries.
- Provide international protection and assistance towards self-reliance for residual groups of Angolan, Burundian, Congolese, Rwandan, Sudanese, Ugandan and urban refugees.
- Cooperate with UNDP, MONUC and the World Bank to support initiatives for Demobilization, Disarmament, Reintegration (DDR) and the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) to complement repatriation and reintegration efforts for refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- Assist the Government of DRC and implementing partners in facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees and ensure that their return is of a voluntary nature.
- Reinforce community services and promote economic activities in areas of return to ensure that return is durable.
- Support the rehabilitation of the environment in refugee camps and other areas formerly occupied by refugees.



Planning figures

Population	Jan 2005	Dec 2005
Angola (refugees)	101,814	69,814
Returnees	27,500	60,500
Sudan (refugees)	25,060	9,660
Other refugees	23,388	8,265
Uganda (refugees)	18,904	13,904
Asylum-seekers	300	300
Total	196,966	162,443

Total requirements: USD 18,850,519

Working environment

Recent developments

A series of agreements culminated in 2003 in an all-inclusive transitional government set up to rule the country for a two-year period leading to general

elections in mid-2005. Hopes were raised for a durable solution to the country's protracted crisis.

The UN Security Council Resolution 1493 of 28 July 2003 expanded the mandate of MONUC, requiring it to do all in its power, including the use of force, to pacify the DRC and ensure the protection of the civilian population and humanitarian workers throughout the country. However, with recent insecurity, particularly in the eastern part of the country, the UN Security Council is considering an increase in MONUC troop levels. Meanwhile, increased insecurity impeded the delivery of sorely needed humanitarian assistance and access to the civilian populations.

Key issues, such as the Nationality Law and the electoral census, have not been resolved. Further instability could result from aggravating factors such as the illegal exploitation of natural resources, the integration of armed groups into the national army and the sensitive question of the nationality of some of the political leaders. The massacre of more than 150 Banyamulenge Congolese refugees in Gatumba, at a transit camp in Burundi, on 13 August 2004, has once again opened up the risk of armed retaliatory attacks.

The DRC's internal and external problems are fuelled by power struggles revolving around ethnicity and the desire to control the immense untapped natural resources of the country. These problems were generally considered as endemic to the post-Mobutu era. Unfortunately, today many Congolese are tending to attribute their country's woes to certain refugee communities. In such an environment, it is sometimes difficult to provide protection and assistance for Burundian and Rwandan refugees and returnees to DRC.

The Sun City Accord of April 2002 referred to more than 500,000 DRC refugees living in exile, the majority of them having originated from previously rebel-controlled areas. The main countries of asylum for DRC refugees are the United Republic of Tanzania, the Republic of the Congo (RoC), Zambia, Burundi, Rwanda, the Central African Republic (CAR) and Uganda. Other DRC refugees have found asylum in South Africa, Mozambique and Malawi, or even further afield in Europe and the United States.

Constraints

Most potential return areas in the DRC were formerly major zones of conflict that claimed the lives of some three million people and caused massive population movements. To date, more than three million Congolese are still estimated to be internally displaced. Despite the official reunification of the country, some return areas remain under the control of opposition groups and militias - a situation that is likely to remain unchanged as long as the Demobilization, Disarmament and Reintegration (DDR) programme is not implemented as agreed.

Delays in the implementation of the transitional arrangements and elections foreseen for mid-2005 are likely to create conflicts in the country. The implementation of the DDR programme, the establishment of a national army and the resolution of the question of nationality - crucial to the consolidation and legitimization of the central Government - are lagging behind schedule. Security is likely to remain fragile in the eastern part of the country with continued divisions among the authorities, and armed militia groups.

Continued insecurity and instability are likely to undermine the confidence of refugees as they weigh up the prospect of repatriation. A lack of resources may challenge the sustainability of the repatriation programme. Furthermore, the absence of material assistance to host communities could result in heightened tensions between returnees and receiving communities with the result that returns ultimately prove unsustainable. The absence of development agencies and NGOs undertaking complementary activities could also undermine reintegration, adversely affecting the pace of returns or even leading to a renewed outflow of refugees, back to the countries of asylum. Voluntary repatriation of urban refugees has been hampered by the transitional Government's refusal to accept returnees without individually verified addresses.



UNHCR's Mugunga refugee camp is now inhabited by people who have been relocated there by the Government after their village was destroyed by the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano. *UNHCR / B. Heger*

Strategy

Protection and solutions

The main strategy for refugee protection is to improve the national system of asylum by increasing knowledge of refugee rights within the Government and civil society. UNHCR will pursue a variety of capacity-building measures and the mainstreaming of protection issues in all aspects of its work. The Office will enhance the partnership between relevant UN agencies and NGOs, as well as selected authorities such as the Ministry of Human Rights and the Ministry of the Interior. The scope and the timing of possible durable solutions will be broadened and mandate limitations clarified. UNHCR, countries of asylum and countries of origin will conclude tripartite agreements to ensure that repatriations are conducted in safety and with dignity.

UNHCR will initiate new partnerships with the Government, civil society and NGOs on refugee protection. It will strengthen existing cooperation with UNICEF and an international NGO for the

protection of refugee and returnee children. An increased number of qualified protection staff in field locations and key positions should result in an improved protection perspective on previously neglected issues and sectors. Refugee and returnee communities will be involved in the design of appropriate security plans and protection activities.

The Office will analyse registration data in order to anticipate refugee needs for resettlement. At the same time, it will initiate mechanisms to minimize the potential for malfeasance, corruption and fraud.

UNHCR will organize voluntary repatriation for some 32,000 Angolan refugees from Bas Congo and Bandundu Provinces, 15,000 Sudanese, about 10,000 Burundian and 6,000 Rwandan refugees dispersed in the Kivus, Maniema, Kasai, Kinshasa and Lubumbashi.

Assistance

Two main sectors of UNHCR's interventions in DRC concern health and education. The beneficiary

populations include urban and rural refugees from Angola, Burundi, Rwanda and Sudan. The number of partner organizations assisting rural refugees is expected to diminish considerably as the voluntary repatriation operations progress. The Office may opt for sector-specific local partners to accelerate the process of local integration with minimal UNHCR support.

To address the AIDS epidemic in the Great Lakes Region, UNHCR is cooperating with the World Bank and other institutions (Great Lakes Initiative for HIV/AIDS, GLIA). Efforts will be made to ensure systematic testing of blood transfusions for HIV/AIDS, in particular for malaria-affected children.

UNHCR will assume a leading role in the repatriation process with its return and reintegration programme for Congolese returnees in DRC. The Office will join forces with WFP and FAO for food security and with UNICEF for emergency education. It will also press development agencies such as UNDP and the World Bank to include the needs of returnee populations in post-conflict reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction activities. UNHCR will set up and maintain appropriate registration mechanisms including transit centres, way stations and sufficient logistics capacity. It will continue road repairs to ensure access to return areas. Minimum health and other services will be available in reception centres and reintegration areas. Environmental activities such as camp clean up and reforestation efforts will continue in refugee sites and settlements. Coordination mechanisms will be put in place for human rights monitoring purposes, especially in areas where UNHCR lacks a presence.

In the main return areas of Gemena, Libenge and Imesse Dongo in Equateur and Uvira in South Kivu, UNHCR will establish a presence to collect detailed information and monitor return movements. The information will be shared with countries of asylum, governmental and humanitarian actors, and the refugees themselves, to enable them to make informed decisions. In these areas, UNHCR will benefit from existing partnerships, establish new ones and undertake repatriation and reintegration activities for the returnees from CAR and the Republic of the Congo.

The degree to which UNHCR can phase out projects for rural refugee groups towards the end of 2005 will largely depend on the evolution of voluntary returns. In addition, the local integration of rural refugees is likely to face many challenges emanating from power struggles within DRC. An untimely withdrawal of UNHCR from the area could compromise the legal and physical well-being of refugees and other persons of concern to the Office.

Desired impact

UNHCR is planning for the voluntary repatriation of some 32,000 Angolan, 15,000 Sudanese, 10,000 Burundian and 6,000 Rwandan refugees to their home countries. The Office is striving to improve the physical protection of refugees, in particular that of refugee women and girls in refugee settlements. Through the continued promotion of gender awareness, women will participate in economic and social activities and refugee committees. Their involvement in decision-making will be actively encouraged. Authorities will be increasingly engaged in the protection of refugee rights. Appropriate durable solutions will be identified for individual refugees, including voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

177 staff members – 31 international and 134 national, one JPO and 11 UNVs – will implement UNHCR's programmes in 2005. UNHCR will maintain its main office in Kinshasa, two sub-offices in Aru, Bukavu, and four field offices in Goma, Kimpese, Kisenge and Lubumbashi. The field office in Kisenge will deal with a residual group of Angolan refugees and undertake phase-out activities until its closure in July 2005. If there is sufficient progress in the peace process, sufficient improvement in security conditions and sufficient repatriation movement, UNHCR will open offices in Imesse and Dongo in Equateur Province of DRC.

Coordination

UNHCR will continue its collaboration with other agencies such as WFP, UNICEF, WHO, FAO, UNAIDS and the World Bank on the repatriation and rehabilitation programmes. The Office will cooperate closely with MONUC, UNOPS and OCHA, in particular within the inter-agency Consolidated Appeals Process and the piloting of the IASC Needs Assessment Framework Matrix (NAFM). It will contribute to the UNDAF and the CAP as well as to provide inputs to the Resident Coordinator's reports.

In the spirit of Partnership in Action (PARinAC), UNHCR will give preference to competent local NGOs for project implementation. UNHCR will pursue regular meetings with operational and implementing partners and will seek to jointly develop expertise and capacity. The Office will work to foster partnerships with national and local human rights NGOs. Dialogue and interaction with other UNHCR offices in the region will be strengthened.

UNHCR will provide the necessary information and feedback to the Good Donorship initiative that selected DRC to pilot its implementation plan.

Offices
Kinshasa
Aru
Bukavu
Goma
Kahemba
Kimpese
Kimvula
Kisenge
Lubumbashi
Ngindinga
Partners
Government agencies
<i>Commission nationale pour les réfugiés</i>
NGOs
<i>Actions et interventions pour le développement et l'encadrement social</i>
<i>Association pour le développement social et la sauvegarde de l'environnement</i>
ATLAS
CARITAS
ERUKIN
OXFAM
RIFIDEC
Others
<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>

Budget (USD)			
Activities and services	Annual Programme	Supplementary Programme	Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	6,663,821	596,412	7,260,233
Community services	364,000	120,000	484,000
Crop production	70,000	0	70,000
Domestic needs	328,948	80,000	408,948
Education	268,000	0	268,000
Food	40,000	0	40,000
Forestry	105,000	0	105,000
Health	554,000	40,000	594,000
Income generation	150,000	0	150,000
Legal assistance	909,052	90,000	999,052
Operational support (to agencies)	728,250	180,000	908,250
Sanitation	8,000	30,000	38,000
Shelter/other infrastructure	172,000	55,000	227,000
Transport/logistics	1,898,000	605,000	2,503,000
Water (non-agricultural)	28,000	0	28,000
Total operations	12,287,071	1,796,412	14,083,483
Programme support	4,767,036	0	4,767,036
Total	17,054,107	1,796,412	18,850,519

Note: The supplementary programme budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost (USD 125,749) that is recovered from each contribution to meet indirect costs in UNHCR (field and headquarters).