

GREAT LAKES

Burundi, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, United Republic of Tanzania

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo** (DRC), steps were taken towards the implementation of the Lusaka Cease-fire Agreement. The Inter-Congolese Dialogue, which was held in Sun City, South Africa, between February and April 2002, resulted in the signing of an agreement uniting 70 per cent of the country. Importantly, the Goma-based *Rassemblement Congolais pour la Democratie (RCD) – Goma* remains outside of the agreement. It has allied itself with other non-signatories in an effort to try and negotiate a new agreement.

Despite significant steps in the implementation of the cease-fire agreement, conflicts continue to flare up regularly in various parts of DRC, in particular in the northeast and in the Kivu provinces. The working environment in most parts of the DRC continues to be volatile and insecure.

In January, the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano in Goma, in the North Kivu Province, caused a two-month discontinuation of activities of UN and international agencies operating in Goma. UNHCR donated non-food items to the victims.

In Angola – the death of the UNITA rebel leader, Jonas Savimbi, earlier this year led to a change in the dynamics of the political situation, bringing a new promise of peace to the Angolan people. The Government of Angola signed a cease-fire agreement on 4 April 2002 with representatives of UNITA. This positive development triggered spontaneous return movements, especially from the Bas-Congo Province and the Kisenge region. By the end of June, some 6,000

Angolan refugees had spontaneously left DRC for Angola.

In the neighbouring **Republic of the Congo**, the first half of the year saw a series of elections, including a presidential ballot and legislative elections seen by some observers as steps towards democracy. Unfortunately, the political gains were somewhat reduced as a result of the renewed conflict between Government forces and “Ninja” rebels that flared up in the Pool Region in April. This conflict uprooted many people, several thousand of whom were displaced internally and a few thousand sought refuge in the DRC.

In **Rwanda**, the repatriation of Rwandan refugees from the **United Republic of Tanzania** (Tanzania) and the Kivu Provinces in DRC continued, albeit in reduced numbers. There were fears of a possible major influx of DRC refugees from Goma as a result of the volcanic eruption on 17 January 2002. Those persons who crossed the border were temporarily housed in a UNHCR transit centre in Gisenyi, but the majority of victims returned as soon as the lava flow subsided.

In **Burundi**, the signing of the Arusha Agreement and the installation of Transitional Institutions marked a significant move in the peace process. The UN Security Council mission touring the region in May 2002, acknowledged that improvements have taken place in the country and emphasised the need for the international community to support efforts to help the Arusha Peace Process. In view of the positive environment that prevailed during the early part of 2002, UNHCR and the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi began the facilitation of voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in Tanzania to the northern provinces of Burundi, where

security had been stable for several months. By June, over 14,000 persons had returned with an almost equal amount returning spontaneously to the southern provinces. Reintegration activities continued in areas where access was not a problem. However, despite some positive developments, the military and security situation in Burundi has remained a matter of deep concern with ongoing incursions by military groups into the southern provinces. As a result of this, UNHCR has decided to refrain from facilitating voluntary repatriation to the south until such time as this can be done in safety and dignity. In a related development, Congolese refugees were relocated from the volatile south to a camp in Muyinga, northern Burundi.

Tanzania continued to host Africa's largest refugee population of almost one million, about half of whom receive humanitarian assistance from UNHCR. Ongoing civil and political unrest in DRC and Burundi hindered the promotion of voluntary repatriation to these countries, and continued to cause refugee flows into Tanzania, albeit at lower rates than in previous years.

Public and political tolerance for the presence of Rwandan and Burundian refugees in Tanzania continued to decline, amid calls for a speedy repatriation of these refugees. UNHCR

Financial Data (USD)

Country / Activity	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds			
	Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available	Obligation Level
Burundi	6,516,928	6,503,536	9,972,246	3,170,730
Democratic Rep. of the Congo	23,374,952	30,593,531	15,041,005	14,516,730
Republic of the Congo	6,926,406	8,207,209	3,982,540	3,982,540
United Rep. of Tanzania	24,718,192	29,113,914	14,283,001	14,098,820
Regional Activities ¹	8,056,300	8,026,021	4,110,200	3,924,660
Sub-total Great Lakes Operations	69,592,778	82,444,211	47,388,992	39,693,480
Rwanda	8,307,269	7,760,821	4,040,036	4,034,900
TOTAL	77,900,047	90,205,032	51,429,028	43,728,380

¹ Includes assistance to various refugees in the Great Lakes region, such as resettlement, care and maintenance as well as support costs for UNVs and consultants, light aircraft charters' costs and scholarships for refugee students.

has been intervening at the highest level with the Government of Tanzania and the countries of origin of the refugees to ensure that any repatriation undertaken is voluntary and carried out in safety and dignity.

PROGRESS TOWARDS OBJECTIVES, AND CONSTRAINTS ENCOUNTERED

Despite chronic funding problems, UNHCR continued to exercise its protection role in the Great Lakes Region, while at the same time seeking lasting solutions wherever possible. Tripartite agreements are being negotiated between UNHCR and various countries in the region, and repatriation plans are being developed with the aim of promoting/facilitating repatriation to Angola, DRC, RoC, Burundi and Rwanda, as soon as conditions in these countries permit.

ACTIVITIES UNTIL 30 JUNE 2002 (Please refer to individual country chapters)

OUTLOOK FOR JULY-DECEMBER 2002

With positive developments in Angola, the DRC and, to some extent, in Burundi, UNHCR programmes will be adjusted to these new situations, focusing on repatriation and self-sufficiency.