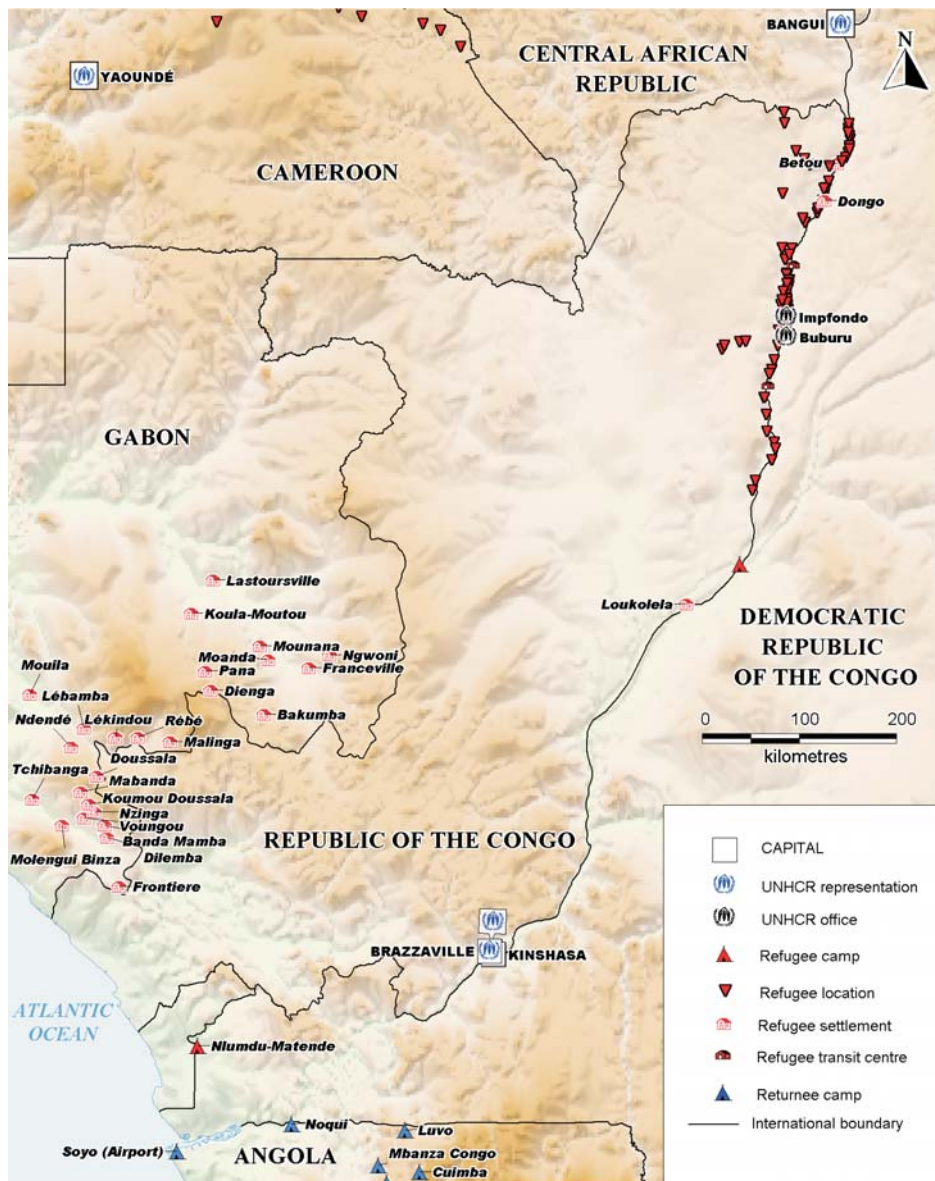


# Republic of the Congo

Total requirements:  
USD 5,977,632



After elections in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) at the end of 2006, the Office assisted in the repatriation of 19,402 refugees to that country's Equateur Province, and closed its field offices in Betou and Loukolela in April 2007. The Office in Impfondo is continuing the repatriation process and monitoring the conditions of return. At the beginning of 2008, the RoC still hosted 43,329 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from the DRC. The country plans to repatriate some 12,000 by the end of the year.

## The needs

In March 2008, following needs assessments in refugee settlements around Betou, Loukolela, Impfondo and Brazzaville, UNHCR and its partners identified wide gaps in the refugees' access to primary education, health facilities, water, sanitation services and protection. The assessments revealed that sexual and gender-based

violence, as well as police harassment, were major problems for both rural and urban refugees. Other problems in need of urgent attention are early and forced marriages, prostitution, discrimination and domestic violence.

Most asylum-seekers in the country originate from the DRC. The Government has accepted responsibility for refugee status determination (RSD), but UNHCR continues to provide technical assistance and support to ensure the quality of decision-making. Given the high number of asylum-seekers in the north-east of the country, the *Comité National d'assistance aux réfugiés* (CNAR) office in Impfondo needs support.

A project aimed at accelerating decisions on asylum applications is planned for 2009. This will include

## Working environment

### The context

The economic situation in the Republic of the Congo (RoC) did not improve in 2008. Some 70 per cent of the population still lives below the poverty line. Despite some progress, access to health, employment and education remains severely limited.

General elections in June 2007 saw the ruling *Parti Congolais du Travail* (PCT) win 90 per cent of the 137 seats in the National Assembly. The former rebel leader, Frederic Bitsangou, was appointed General Delegate in charge of the promotion of peace.

revision of the legislation governing status determination, the streamlining of existing processes, clearing the backlog of pending cases, building the CNAR's capacity and ensuring that the Refugee Board and Appellate Body hold regular meetings.

After the repatriation of 12,000 refugees from northern DRC in 2008, it is estimated that some 12,000 refugees will remain in the RoC. This group will require help to integrate into local communities.

## Main objectives

- Facilitate the organized voluntary repatriation of refugees.
- Provide alternative durable solutions, particularly local integration, for those refugees who are unable or unwilling to repatriate.
- Strengthen the capacity of the CNAR to conduct RSD and ensure that people of concern benefit from legal assistance.
- Provide international protection and assistance to refugees.

## Strategy and activities

Most of the DRC refugees wishing to return home should be repatriated by the end of 2008. However, in 2009 UNHCR will continue to facilitate the repatriation of the few who remain in the RoC. With the completion of the voluntary repatriation operation, the Office will support the sustainable integration of refugees living in rural areas in the north of the RoC.

The Office will continue to protect and assist all refugees in the country, focusing primarily on education and

## Key targets

- All refugees and asylum-seekers receive international protection and material assistance.
- Some 500 DRC refugees are repatriated in 2009 to their places of origin, where they benefit from reintegration activities.
- All survivors of sexual and gender-based violence receive appropriate psychological, social and medical care.
- All refugees in Loukolela have access to 20 litres of drinking water per person per day and all refugees in Betou and Impfondo are aware of methods to purify water.
- All children of school age are enrolled in primary schools.
- All refugees have access to primary health care.
- Some 50 per cent of the Angolan refugees who remain in the country are locally integrated.

basic health services. Particular attention will be given to HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention. As sexual and gender-based violence remains a major concern, UNHCR's protection strategy seeks to improve the reporting system and the establishment of effective response mechanisms. Through a capacity-building strategy shared with local authorities, UNHCR will assist victims to take legal action against perpetrators.

UNHCR will continue to provide technical and financial assistance to the CNAR for its RSD activities and the distribution of identification cards.

In the context of durable solutions for refugees from Rwanda and Angola, UNHCR will continue to promote returns while advocating for UN Development Assistance Framework initiatives to facilitate the local integration for those who opt to stay.

## Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	Angola	2,660	980	2,600	980
	DRC	16,610	16,500	13,110	10,000
	Rwanda	8,000	50	8,000	50
	Chad	100	-	100	-
	Various	300	80	300	80
Asylum-seekers	DRC	3,000	-	500	-
	Côte d'Ivoire	300	-	200	-
	Various	300	-	200	-
Returnees (refugees)		70	70	70	70
<b>Total</b>		<b>31,340</b>	<b>17,680</b>	<b>25,080</b>	<b>11,180</b>



Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo boarding a repatriation boat in Impfondo.

UNHCR/J. Hessemann

## Constraints

The lack of basic infrastructure makes access to refugees settled along the Oubangui River a logistical challenge. Refugees in the north-east of the RoC are settled in 93 sites dispersed over 400 square kilometres and only accessible by boat. Finding reliable transportation is a challenge, as river traffic is highly dependent on the level of water in the Oubangui River.

Despite efforts to promote voluntary repatriation, few Rwandan refugees have decided to return. Many fear reprisals within their home communities. While some Angolan refugees have been allowed to integrate locally, national authorities in the RoC appear reluctant to consider this solution for the remaining Rwandan refugees.

Without further economic incentives in areas of return in the provinces of Kouilou, Niari, Lekoumou and Pool, voluntary returns of RoC refugees from Gabon will be limited. Economic stagnation and high unemployment rates hamper the reintegration of refugees.

## Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence	
Number of offices	2
Total staff	36
International	6
National	23
UNVs	7

## Coordination

UNHCR will coordinate its activities with three ministries, those of Foreign Affairs and Francophony, Humanitarian Action, Solidarity and Cooperation; Security and Police; and Health, Social Affairs and Family. The Office works with three national implementing partners (including one governmental body). It will pursue coordination with the UN Resident Coordinator and other agencies to ensure that development programmes benefit refugees and returnees. Agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF, FAO and WFP have indicated they are ready to include refugees in their programmes.

## Financial information

The year 2006 saw increasing numbers of refugees entering the country, which was reflected in the increase of the annual budget. With active repatriation to DRC and Angola in recent years, the level of the budget and the number of beneficiaries in the RoC have declined. From 2005-2007, a supplementary budget supported these repatriation activities. In 2008 and 2009, the annual programme is focused primarily on local integration activities.

## Partners

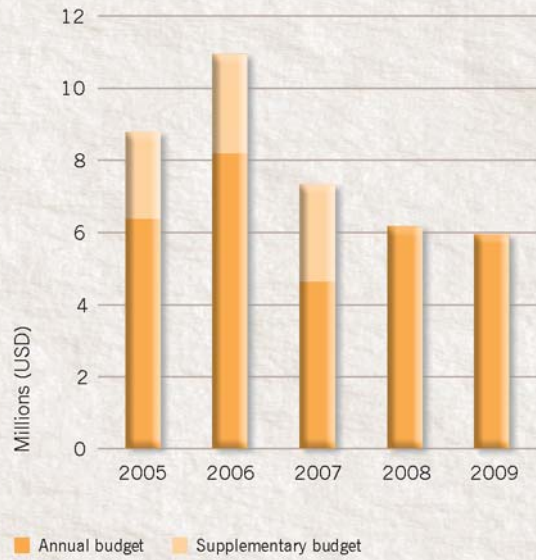
### Implementing partners

**Government agencies :** *Comité national d'assistance aux réfugiés*, Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Francophony, Humanitarian Action, Solidarity and Cooperation, Ministry of Security and Police, Ministry of Health, Social Affairs and Family

**NGOs :** *Agence d'assistance aux rapatriés et réfugiés au Congo*, *Commission d'entraide pour les migrants et les réfugiés*, *Médecins d'Afrique*

**Others:** FAO, ICRC, UNAIDS, UNDP, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

### UNHCR's budget 2005 - 2009



## Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual budget	
	2008	2009
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,733,885	1,572,677
Community services	187,945	129,201
Crop production	57,019	48,062
Domestic needs	89,358	41,644
Education	234,778	282,075
Fisheries	54,460	43,256
Health	272,300	439,170
Income generation	69,834	108,723
Legal assistance	199,530	150,720
Livestock	60,110	52,868
Operational support (to agencies)	448,938	853,397
Sanitation	13,928	19,225
Shelter and infrastructure	7,142	4,806
Transport and logistics	765,964	376,391
Water	13,816	48,062
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>4,209,006</b>	<b>4,170,277</b>
Programme support	1,761,807	1,807,355
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,970,813</b>	<b>5,977,632</b>