

# Central Africa and the Great Lakes



**Burundi**

**Cameroon**

**Central African Republic**

**Chad (see under Chad/Sudan situation)**

**Congo (Republic of the)**

**Democratic Republic of the Congo**

**Gabon**

**Rwanda**

**United Republic of Tanzania**



## | Working environment |

The general situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains relatively calm, except in the east of the country. Joint military actions by armies from the DRC, Rwanda and Uganda against rebel groups have raised hopes of stability and security in North Kivu and Province Orientale; nonetheless the security situation in the eastern part of the DRC remains worrying due to the presence of various armed groups.

In the Central African Republic (CAR), the political situation has been dominated by efforts to create an environment conducive to national reconciliation through the signing of a peace agreement in June 2008 and the organization of an Inclusive Political Dialogue in December the same year. The protection situation in the north-east and south remains precarious, with the incursion of Tora Bora fighters from Sudan and the Lord's Resistance Army from Uganda.

The return of Congolese from Zambia and the United Republic of Tanzania is progressing steadily and will continue throughout 2010. However, the return of Congolese refugees from Rwanda and Burundi, foreseen as happening in 2010 after the signing of tripartite agreements, remains problematic as it concerns ethnic minorities. Any unorganized or forced return within the framework of the repatriation of Congolese refugees from Rwanda is likely to jeopardize peace and stability in the eastern DRC.

The scale of displacement of civilian populations in eastern DRC has been a major concern for the humanitarian community. By the end of December 2008, there were some 1,617,600 internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the eastern DRC, with 840,000 in North Kivu, 335,000 in South Kivu, 282,600 in Province Orientale and 160,000 in Haut Uele District.

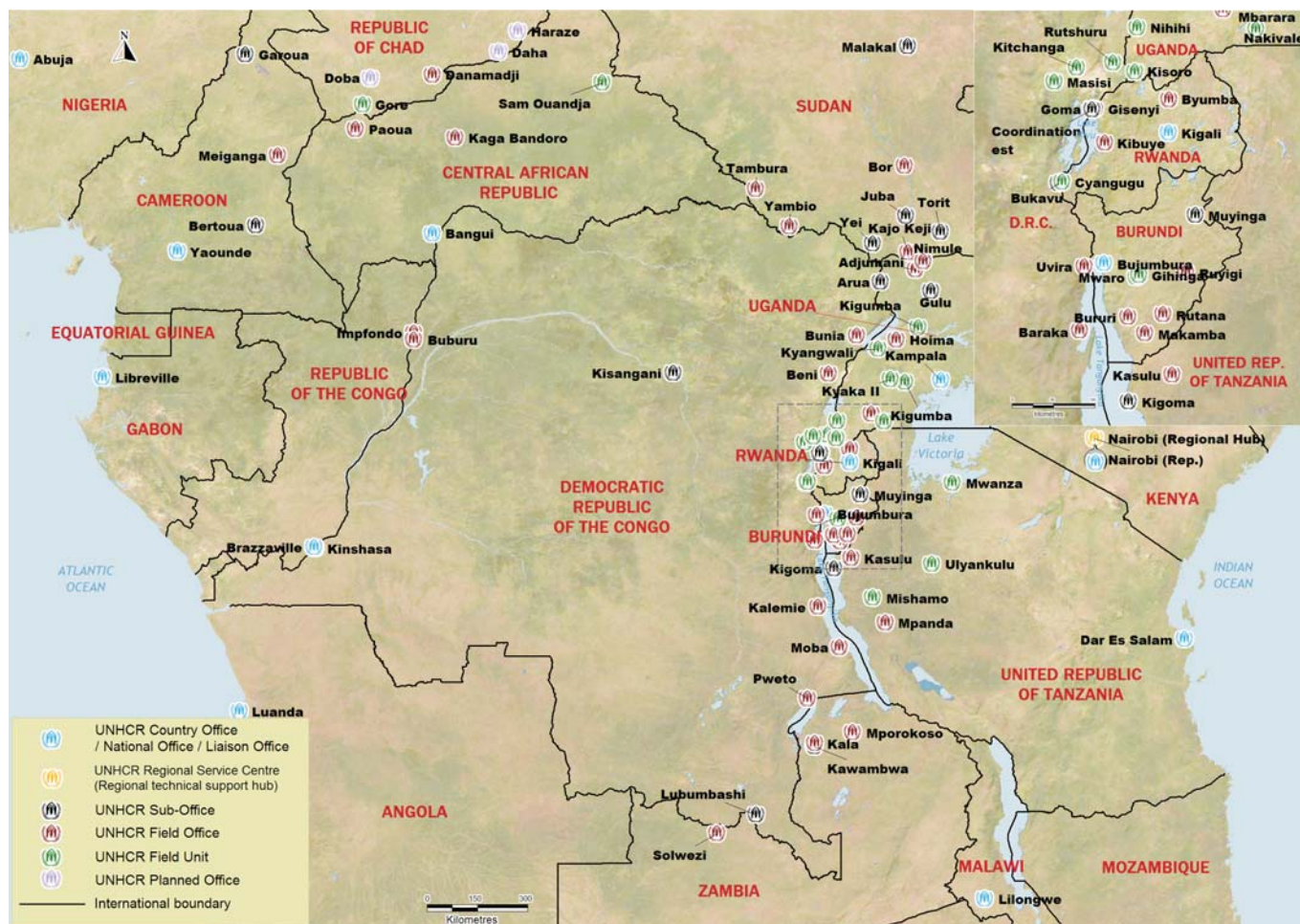
In early 2009, a joint military operation was launched by the Governments of the DRC and Rwanda to root out and demobilize members of the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR) in eastern DRC and repatriate them to Rwanda. As a result, around 2,000 FDLR soldiers have been demobilized, repatriated and reintegrated into Rwandan society. In addition, more than 10,000 refugees were returned to Rwanda.

If the relative calm and security in most parts of North Kivu, in particular in areas around Goma and Rutshuru, prevails, it could lead to massive returns of IDPs, and Congolese refugees from neighbouring countries.

Where peace reigns in the region, returns are inevitable. An important indicator of this is the massive voluntary return of Burundian refugees. Today, more than six per cent of Burundi's inhabitants are former refugees who have returned over the last six years, mainly under the auspices of UNHCR. The organized repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania will be completed in 2009. UNHCR will continue to repatriate Burundians from the DRC and also those whose naturalization applications are rejected by Tanzanian authorities who then opt for repatriation.

**Returnees from Kigeme camp in Rwanda arriving home in Burundi.**

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Nevertheless, the socio-economic situation remains difficult in Burundi. At least 16 per cent of the country's 8.9 million people are considered vulnerable and in need of sustained humanitarian aid, while a further 68 per cent live close to the poverty line, according to UNFPA and WFP sources.

As of January 2010, only some 58,100 refugees will remain in Tanzania, a country that has sheltered some half a million refugees over the last 50 years. While there is an acknowledgement that the refugees—particularly those who arrived in 1972—have been contributing to the economy, there is a perception that other Burundians in north-western Tanzania remain in camps to avail themselves of assistance, not because they need international protection. The Tanzanian authorities therefore continue to support voluntary repatriation and other solutions, hoping to put an end to the refugee situation by the end of the decade.

## Strategy

UNHCR will promote durable solutions, including the voluntary repatriation of refugees, to Angola, Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda. For those who opt to remain in their country of asylum, the Office will work with concerned governments to find comprehensive solutions aimed at local integration. Wherever repatriation or local integration is not feasible, resettlement will be pursued for individuals and groups with specific protection needs.

UNHCR will continue to provide technical assistance to governments to strengthen national asylum frameworks, especially in Burundi, Cameroon, the Republic of the Congo, the DRC and Gabon. In CAR and the DRC, where UNHCR leads the protection clusters, the Office will continue to provide

protection and coordinate activities to stem sexual and gender-based violence.

Furthermore, UNHCR will provide temporary shelter to vulnerable IDPs. It will give priority to its lead role in camp coordination and management and in support of the return and reintegration of IDPs. To that end, reintegration action plans will focus on community-based activities to foster sustainable return and reconciliation.

## Constraints

The volatile security environment in several countries of the region poses a challenge to humanitarian work. In addition to insecurity, poor road infrastructure hampers UNHCR's access to persons of concern, especially for those who returned from Gabon to Congo over the last few years.

## Operations

Operations in **Burundi, Cameroon, Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and the United Republic of Tanzania** are covered by individual country chapters.

**The Republic of the Congo** hosts 20,000 refugees and 3,800 asylum-seekers, mainly from the DRC. Some 80 per cent of them live in the northern part of the country.

UNHCR will advocate for the local integration of those refugees who opt to remain in the country. The emphasis will be on supporting the Government's efforts to find an alternative resident status for displaced Rwandans. The Office will also advocate for all UN development assistance framework initiatives to facilitate local integration.

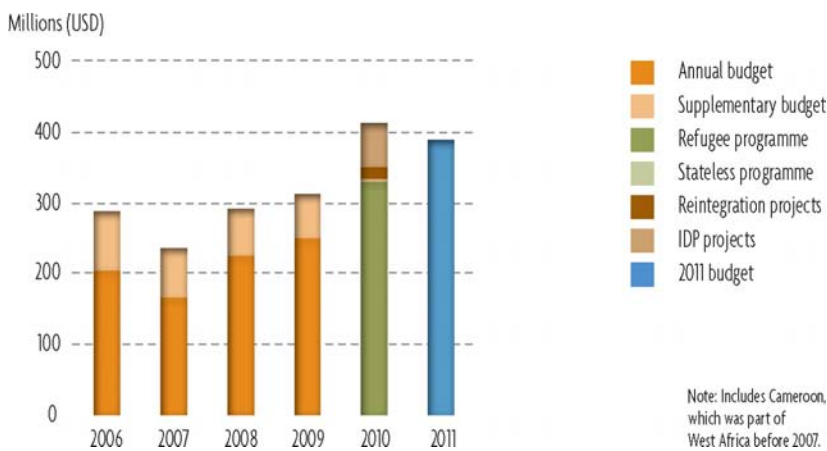
Refugees in the Congo will be given help to avail themselves of primary education and basic health care. Priority will be given to HIV and AIDS prevention. Through a capacity-building strategy with local authorities, UNHCR will help victims of sexual violence take legal action against their assailants.

Gabon is host to some 13,000 refugees and asylum-seekers to whom the Government began issuing identity cards in 2007, as a means of aiding their local integration. The process has been delayed due to difficulties in collecting data from refugees in remote areas. UNHCR will continue to help the Government issue the cards and assist those refugees who wish to repatriate. Where voluntary repatriation is not an option, resettlement opportunities will be sought.

Financial information

From 2005 to 2009, efforts to secure durable solutions increased the budgets for operations in Central Africa and the Great Lakes slightly, although many of the costs were offset by a reduction in care and maintenance budgets. The global needs assessment carried out for the 2010 budget revealed gaps in the protection and assistance for people of concern. The increase in the budget, as compared to previous years, reflects efforts to remedy these gaps. The biggest increase has taken place under the refugee programme, while the budget for internally displaced people has remained similar to the one in 2009.

UNHCR’s budget in Central Africa and the Great lakes 2006 – 2011



UNHCR budget for Central Africa and the Great Lakes (USD)

COUNTRY	2009 REVISED BUDGET <sup>1</sup>	2010					2011
		REFUGEE PROGRAMME PILLAR 1	STATELESS PROGRAMME PILLAR 2	REINTEGRATION PROJECTS PILLAR 3	IDP PROJECTS PILLAR 4	TOTAL	
Burundi	39,425,537	33,397,699	309,687	2,879,506	440,254	37,027,145	27,100,000
Cameroon	12,158,513	20,636,773	0	0	0	20,636,773	21,125,600
Central African Republic	6,730,942	5,930,808	0	0	5,541,561	11,472,369	11,635,000
Chad	101,661,085	139,547,745	0	0	22,081,862	161,629,607	154,181,000
Congo, Republic of the	6,054,743	9,137,767	0	0	0	9,137,767	8,302,200
DRC	75,351,003	65,584,652	2,151,087	0	33,887,567	101,623,306	104,314,700
Gabon	2,244,021	2,943,788	0	0	0	2,943,788	2,600,000
Rwanda	13,265,626	19,937,999	0	2,401,659	0	22,339,658	20,611,000
United Republic of Tanzania	49,831,495	32,180,735	0	13,168,673	0	45,349,408	38,343,600
Regional activities	7,460,000	0	0	0	0	0	0
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>314,182,965</b>	<b>329,297,966</b>	<b>2,460,774</b>	<b>18,449,837</b>	<b>61,951,244</b>	<b>412,159,821</b>	<b>388,213,100</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes supplementary programme requirements of USD 62,502,940.