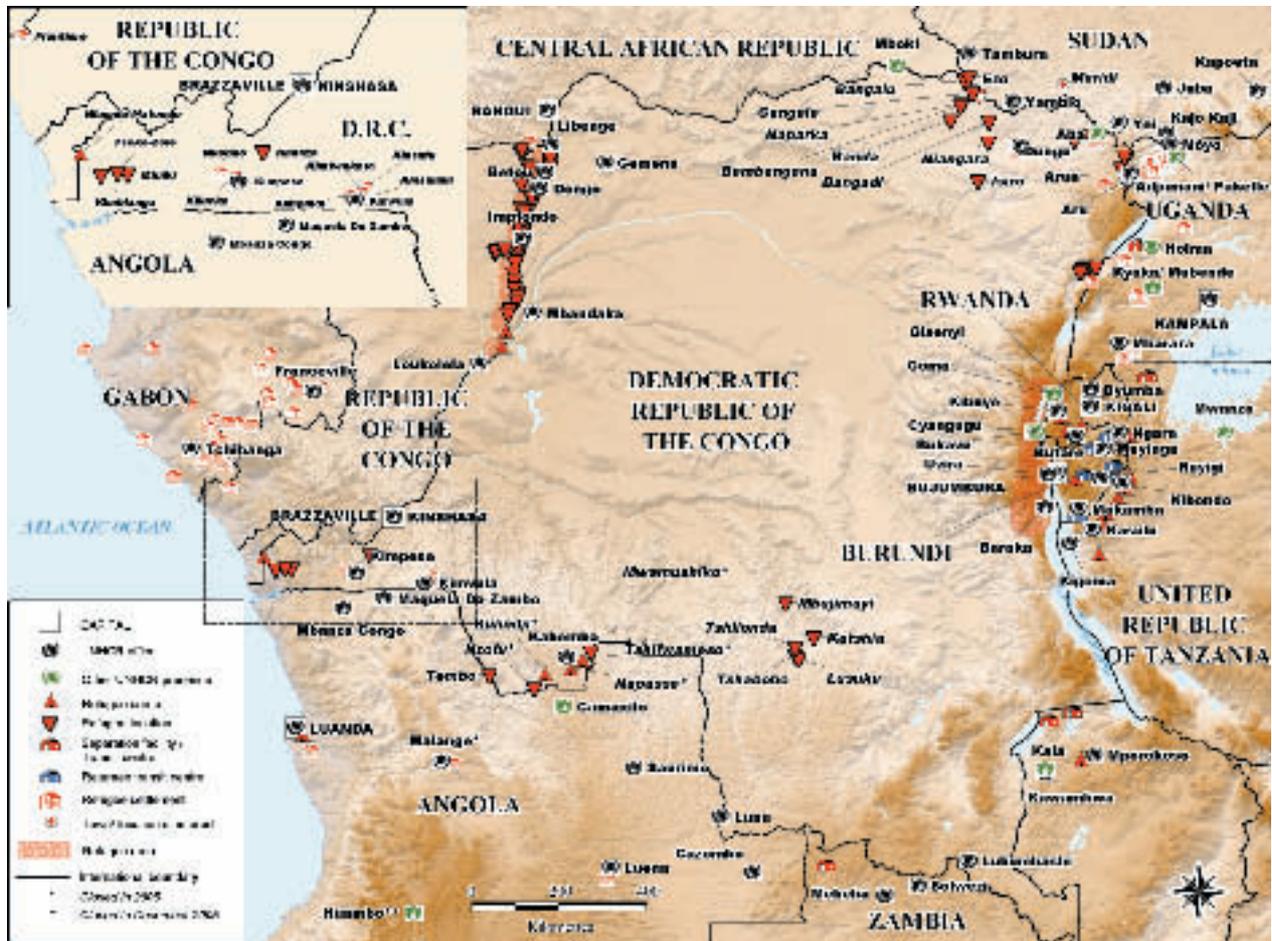


Democratic Republic of the Congo



Main objectives

In 2005, UNHCR aimed to strengthen the protection framework through national capacity building, registration, and the prevention of and response to sexual and gender-based violence; facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Angolan, Burundian, Rwandan, Ugandan and Sudanese refugees; provide basic assistance to and locally integrate refugee groups that opt to remain in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC); prepare and organize the return and reintegration of DRC Congolese refugees into their areas of origin; and support initiatives for demobilization, disarmament, repatriation, reintegration and resettlement (DDRR) and the Multi-Country Demobilization and Reintegration Programme (MDRP) in cooperation with the UN peacekeeping mission, UNDP and the World Bank.

Impact

- UNHCR provided international protection to some 204,300 refugees in the DRC of whom some 15,200 received humanitarian assistance.
- Some of the 22,400 refugees hosted by the DRC were repatriated to their home countries (Angola, Rwanda and Burundi).
- Some 38,900 DRC Congolese refugees returned to the DRC, including 14,500 under UNHCR auspices. UNHCR monitored the situation of at least 32,000 of these returnees.
- With the help of the local authorities, UNHCR conducted verification exercises in several refugee locations, which allowed UNHCR to revise its estimates of the beneficiary population.
- UNHCR continued to assist the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) in maintaining its advocacy role, urging local authorities to respect refugee rights.

Working environment

The context

More than two years into the political transition, the peace process still remains at risk in the DRC. This lengthy transition has put the country under permanent pressure, and some former rebel factions who joined the Government maintained parallel command structures in the local administration, the army and intelligence services. The main opposition parties voiced their concern regarding the Transitional Government's alleged lack of commitment to holding elections. The peace process is hindered by armed groups that have refused to disarm despite a Government ultimatum supported by the international community. Most of these armed groups are still active, mainly in the Kivus and the Eastern Province.

Nevertheless, at the end of 2005, the DRC took a decisive step towards political stability when 84 per cent of the 25.6 million registered voters overwhelmingly accepted a new constitution in a referendum held on 18 December. The positive vote meant that the DRC could start preparing for the first elections in 45 years, scheduled for summer 2006.

Constraints

The lack of road and communications infrastructure rendered the delivery of assistance to target groups very difficult. In Bandundu and Bas Congo, for example, the deteriorating access routes, and a limited UNHCR fleet, adversely affected the implementation of the assistance programme. In Equateur Province, refugees are scattered along 700 kilometres of river banks along the shores of the Oubangui River. Navigation of the Oubangui River is almost impossible during the dry season from March to August.

Recurrent security threats in some regions have put another strain on this situation. In mid-September 2005 the infiltration of the area between Lasu and Aba towns by Lord's Resistance Army (LRA) militia groups delayed the voluntary repatriation of Sudanese refugees. Organized voluntary repatriation of DRC Congolese refugees in Uganda was also delayed by uncertain security conditions in North Kivu province, from where most of these refugees originate. The absence of humanitarian and development actors in most areas remained a major challenge to the return and reintegration programme.

Overall, the socioeconomic situation in the DRC was at best precarious. This had a negative impact on the phasing out of some assistance programmes and the local integration of refugees. The lack of relevant judicial institutions in and around the refugee and returnee settlements has created a sense of impunity among both refugees and the local population, especially with regard to incidents of sexual and gender-based violence, many of which were not reported to local authorities.

Funding

UNHCR's operations in DRC focused on two projects: assistance and protection to refugees in the DRC as part of the Annual Programme; and return and reintegration assistance to DRC Congolese refugees, launched as a Supplementary Programme.

For the Annual Programme, only 90 per cent of the approved annual budget was funded. At the same time, the financial requirements for the programme for Angolan refugees had to be increased as the number of refugees remaining in DRC was higher than anticipated.

The Supplementary Appeal was revised in September in order to start voluntary repatriation from Tanzania and prepare for repatriation from other countries of asylum.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total in country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	Angola	107,000	5,900	53	51
	Rwanda	42,400	300	47	39
	Burundi	19,000	700	45	44
	Uganda	19,000	-	55	55
	Sudan	11,700	7,500	49	43
	RoC	5,200	800	35	45
Returnees	From Tanzania	19,200	6,700	-	-
	From Rwanda	10,200	-	-	-
	From RoC	7,300	7,100	-	-
	From Burundi	1,400	-	-	-
	From Central African Republic	800	700	-	-



Gigel Mele, left, is filled with joy at finally being reunited with her aunt in their home village of Zambi, in July 2005. Mele and her immediate family had left the village five years before, when the fighting started. *UNHCR / J. Ose*

However, the programme experienced delays in funding, and a final funding level of only 71 per cent was attained. As a result, some reintegration activities (mainly rehabilitation of health posts and schools) had to be postponed to 2006 (likewise some preparatory activities in the Eastern Province).

Achievement and impact

Protection and solutions

Assistance and Protection to Refugees

UNHCR provided international protection to some 204,300 refugees in the DRC, of whom some 15,200 received humanitarian assistance. Some 22,400 refugees, mainly Angolans and Rwandans, were repatriated to their respective countries in organized truck convoys as well as by airlifts.

Following a tripartite meeting on the return of Angolan refugees held in Geneva in December 2004, UNHCR extended its repatriation programme to Angolan refugees not residing in camps. As a result, more than 2,100 Angolan refugees who had settled spontaneously in Bas Congo were repatriated in August 2005 and a further 53,600 Angolan refugees were registered outside camps in this area. Assistance for those who opted to remain in Kisenge continued until August 2005, when UNHCR closed its offices in the area. From Lubumbashi town, over 100 urban refugees (Rwandans, Burundians and Angolans) were repatriated. In March 2005, assistance

to long-staying urban refugees was ended because of financial constraints. Some 260 Burundian refugees were airlifted to their country from Mbuji-Mayi in the Western Province.

In the Eastern Province, the CNR continued its advocacy role, sensitizing local authorities to uphold refugee rights. A registration team conducted a verification and registration exercise for Sudanese refugees and registered a total of 11,700 refugees.

DRC Return and Reintegration Operation

The tripartite agreement between UNHCR, DRC and Tanzania signed in September 2005 provided the legal framework for the return of over 21,000 DRC Congolese refugees to South Kivu in 2005; some 6,700 repatriated with UNHCR's assistance, while the rest returned spontaneously. In addition, UNHCR facilitated the return of some 7,800 DRC Congolese refugees from the Republic of the Congo and the Central African Republic, to Equateur Province. In total, some 38,900 DRC nationals returned to their country during 2005, some 14,500 of them under UNHCR auspices. UNHCR monitored the protection of at least 32,000 DRC Congolese refugees who repatriated to South Kivu and Equateur provinces during 2005.

Activities and assistance

Community services: Community workshops were held in all refugee sites in order to foster the peaceful coexistence of refugees and the host community.

Awareness-raising and sensitization on sexual and gender-based violence continued, including monthly meetings. Female representation on camp committees exceeded 50 per cent.

Crop production: Refugees, returnees and host populations were encouraged to grow various crops in an effort to increase self-sufficiency and skills. In cooperation with FAO, seeds were distributed in some sites.

Domestic needs and household support: In 2005 UNHCR continued to distribute non-food items to at least 90 per cent of refugees and those returnees whose return had been facilitated by UNHCR. Firewood was distributed to those with special needs in Bandundu and North and South Kivu.

Education: Assistance provided in this sector varied regionally but included incentives to teachers, paying refugees' and returnees' school fees and providing school supplies to students. Attendance of girls at primary school level ranged from 46 to 50 per cent in most areas. In Equateur Province, a total of five schools were rehabilitated and one school was constructed, facilitating the enrolment of 75 per cent of returnee children.

Food: WFP food rations, complemented by supplementary UNHCR rations, were distributed all year only in Kimvula. In the other sites refugees received two months' food rations to help facilitate their local integration. Refugees in Ngidinga were assisted until the site was closed in August 2005. Food assistance ended in May 2005 for the refugees from the Angolan enclave of Cabinda who settled in the Bas-Fleuve district.

Forestry: Refugees reforested some 74 hectares of land, and 15 seminars were held on environmental protection. To reduce dependency on wood, some 1,000 fuel-efficient stoves were produced and distributed among families, and environmental education was taught in 12 schools. In Kimpese (Bas Congo), more than 33,000 seedlings were planted over more than 150 hectares.

In Bandundu, sensitization on environmental management and nursery training resulted in the distribution of more than 1,500 seedlings.

Health and nutrition: UNHCR rehabilitated five health centres and provided medicines and medical equipment. Rehabilitation and provision of medical supplies targeted areas with a high concentration of refugees or returnees. Supplementary feeding programmes were introduced in Equateur Province with the assistance of other UN organizations, notably UNICEF and WFP. UNHCR and implementing partners delivered the minimum HIV/AIDS services required by refugees in emergency and remote settings, and UNHCR hosted a

regional HIV/AIDS workshop which included participants from Burundi, Chad, DRC, Ghana, RoC, Rwanda and Switzerland.

Income generation: Urban refugees benefited from UNHCR microcredits but the reimbursement rate was very low. In Bandundu, 172 households were involved in small businesses such as chicken breeding. In Uvira and Fizi professional kits were distributed to returnees and IDPs. Roughly 17,500 people (13,000 returnees and 4,500 IDPs) received training and kits under this programme. In Equateur Province, projects included baking, soap-making, tailoring, carpentry and food processing, generating income for some 157 families.

Legal assistance: In the Eastern Province a comprehensive registration/verification exercise was conducted in all refugee sites. Refugees received new ration cards which also served as identity cards, and birth certificates were provided to newborns. Seventeen cases of sexual and gender-based violence were reported with follow-up fully supported by UNHCR. UNHCR was able to intervene in nearly all property disputes, and all but three of these were resolved in favour of the returnees concerned.

Operational support (to agencies): The Office continued to provide support to 24 implementing partners in the DRC. UNHCR contributed to operational costs of UNAIDS relating to office supplies and furniture.

Sanitation: UNHCR provided latrines where shortages were reported (Aba, Bukavu, Goma and Bandundu). A sensitization campaign was carried out through established hygiene committees in refugee camps and settlements.

Shelter and infrastructure: UNHCR continued to rehabilitate and construct transit centres, way stations, access roads, bridges and social infrastructure. Returnees were provided with minimum shelter kits for the construction of homes. In Equateur, returnees were at first assisted with ready-made shelters but difficulties in implementation led to the abandonment of this strategy by the end of 2005.

Transport and logistics: UNHCR was able to rehabilitate the most critical access routes, including some airstrips, which allowed registration, repatriation and the delivery of assistance to be undertaken in refugee-hosting and return areas.

Water: In the Eastern Province, each refugee had access to 20 to 40 litres of water per day during the rainy season and 10 to 30 litres per day in the dry season. In Bas Congo, the supply was maintained at 20 litres per person per day. In Bandundu, UNHCR created ten additional

water sources, which increased supplies to more than 25 litres per person per day. As a result of the low level of funds, UNHCR could only rehabilitate simple traditional water wells and was unable to invest further in the water sector in return areas in South Kivu and Equateur Provinces.

Organization and implementation

Management

UNHCR maintained a main office in Kinshasa and 18 sub-offices and employed 38 international staff, 162 national staff and 18 UNVs. During the first half of 2005 the offices in Ngidinga (Bas Congo) and Kisenge (Katanga Province) were closed.

Working with others

UNHCR cooperated with local authorities through the CNR and with other agencies. WFP provided food rations for the returnee population and undertook several capacity-building activities. FAO provided seeds, tools and expertise to promote crop production and reduce dependency, covering between 5 to 15 per cent of people of concern to UNHCR. The Office also collaborated with UNICEF and UNAIDS in various activities.

Overall assessment

UNHCR and its partners did their utmost to improve the living conditions of refugees and returnees in all sites. UNHCR provided international protection to refugees and returnees and ensured that their rights were upheld. For Sudanese refugees, preparations for voluntary repatriation were by the end of the year nearly complete in Aba, while some progress had been made in Doruma. However, delays in the South Sudan peace process and the volatile security situation in the region precluded the launch of the organized voluntary repatriation programme.

Roughly 48,000 DRC refugees returned home despite the extremely weak absorption capacity and the very limited presence of other humanitarian actors in the areas of return, the still fragile security situation and the low level of funds available to UNHCR for returnee reintegration. Return movements will continue in 2006, but adequate funds will be needed to implement a successful repatriation and reintegration programme.

Offices

Kinshasa
Aba
Aru
Baraka
Bukavu
Dongo
Dungu
Gemena
Goma
Kahemba
Kimpese
Kimvula
Libenge
Lubumbashi
Mbandaka
Ngidinga
Uvira

Partners

Government agencies

Cellule provinciale de rapatriement du Sud Kivu
Commission nationale pour les réfugiés
Gouvernorat de la Province du Nord Kivu

NGOs

Agence pour la coopération technique et le développement
Association pour le développement social et la sauvegarde de l'environnement
African Humanitarian Action
Actions et interventions pour le développement et l'encadrement social
Atlas Logistique
Caritas Congo
Caritas Development
Centre de développement intégré de Bwamanda
Catholic Relief Services
Encadrement des réfugiés urbains de Kinshasa
OXFAM Québec

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit
IOM
Mines Advisory Group
OHCHR
Paroisse Notre Dame de Lourdes (Kimvula)
Regroupement des institutions du système des finances décentralisé au Congo
Search for Common Ground

Budget, income and expenditure (USD) Annual and supplementary programme budgets

	Final budget	Income from contributions ¹	Other funds available ²	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Annual programme	17,706,998	7,200,818	10,388,964	17,589,782	17,589,782
Supplementary programme ³	19,749,937	7,262,114	7,324,702	14,586,816	14,586,816
Total	37,456,935	14,462,932	17,713,666	32,176,598	32,176,598

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

³ The supplementary programme figures apply to the Supplementary Appeal for Repatriation and Reintegration of Congolese (DRC) Refugees.

Note: The supplementary programme budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

Financial Report (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current year's projects			Prior years' projects
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	Total	Annual and supplementary programme budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	6,702,233	5,067,902	11,770,135	0
Community services	474,911	143,626	618,537	241,197
Crop production	36,398	0	36,398	44,288
Domestic needs and household support	296,242	410,567	706,809	27,521
Education	202,095	138,879	340,974	184,376
Food	18,318	1,781	20,099	5,234
Forestry	87,630	63,417	151,047	50,943
Health and nutrition	472,690	392,399	865,089	362,428
Income generation	81,443	9,037	90,480	29,348
Legal assistance	507,379	192,001	699,380	49,291
Operational support (to agencies)	1,104,935	1,158,507	2,263,442	653,685
Sanitation	10,404	0	10,404	12,635
Shelter and infrastructure	126,458	318,501	444,959	136,538
Transport and logistics	2,079,894	3,629,839	5,709,733	792,514
Water	13,856	38,141	51,997	16,692
Instalments with implementing partners	766,473	3,020,797	3,787,270	(2,606,690)
Sub-total operational activities	12,981,359	14,585,394	27,566,753	0
Programme support	4,608,423	1,422	4,609,845	0
Total expenditure	17,589,782	14,586,816	32,176,598	0
Cancellation on prior year's expenditure				(152,022)
Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	4,937,489	5,178,572	10,116,061	
Reporting received	(4,171,016)	(2,157,775)	(6,328,791)	
Balance	766,473	3,020,797	3,787,270	
Prior years' report				
Instalments with implementing partners				
Outstanding 1 January				3,005,120
Reporting received				(2,606,690)
Refunded to UNHCR				(294,365)
Adjustments				(2,929)
Balance				101,136