



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

9th Meeting of the Tripartite Commission on the Voluntary Repatriation of Congoese Refugees Living in the Republic of Zambia Held in Kolwezi, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo March 10-12, 2026

At the invitation of the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the 9th meeting of the DRC – ZAMBIA - UNHCR Tripartite Commission was held in Kolwezi, Lualaba Province, from 10 to 12 March 2026, to assess the situation of Congoese refugees living in the Republic of Zambia.

This meeting follows the resolutions of the 14th Session of the Joint Permanent Commission on Defence and Security, between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and the Republic of Zambia, held in Lubumbashi, from 12 to 16 January 2026.

The delegations were respectively led by:

Mr. SHABANI LUKOO BIHANGO Jacquemain, Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior, Security, Decentralization and Customary Affairs, for the Democratic Republic of the Congo;

Hon. Jacob Jack MWIMBU, MP, SC, Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security, for the Republic of Zambia;

Dr. Pierre ATCHOM, Acting Representative of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, for UNHCR.

In his speech, the head of the delegation of the Democratic Republic of the Congo praised the excellent relations between the two Governments, characterized by the strong bonds of fraternity between the two peoples.

He also thanked the Zambian Government and its people for their hospitality to the Congoese refugees who have found asylum on Zambian territory.

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REPUBLIC OF ZAMBIA

Thanks were also extended to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees for protection, assistance and the search for durable solutions.

He also reaffirmed the Government's firm commitment to providing long-term care to those nationals who have expressed a willingness to return to the country.

With regard to the presence of Zambian refugees from the Lumpa sect, he called for the establishment of a working group for their identification and registration in order to find appropriate solutions.

The head of the delegation of the Republic of Zambia expressed his gratitude to the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo for the invitation extended to his Government and for the warm welcome and facilities reserved for his delegation.

The head of the delegation of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees reaffirmed UNHCR's commitment to support the two Governments in the implementation of durable solutions, including the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Congolese returnees in the DRC.

Taking note of the report of the Technical Working Group and reiterating the commitments made in the Tripartite Agreement of 28 November 2006 and its practical modalities of 27 April 2007 relating to the voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees living in the Republic of Zambia, the Tripartite Commission decided the following:

1. *Resume* the voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees living in Zambia;
2. *Strengthen* the collection of return intentions from Congolese refugees living in Zambia;
3. *Organize* a mission of the authorities of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to sites and other settlements to raise awareness on the repatriation of Congolese refugees living in Zambia;
4. *Support* efforts to mobilize funds for the voluntary repatriation of Congolese refugees living in Zambia and their reintegration in the DRC;



5. *Organize* regular meetings, either face-to-face or online, of the Technical Working Group meetings to ensure continuous consultation, effective coordination and timely follow-up of the implementation of agreed decisions to make repatriation operations more efficient;
6. *To set up* a specific working group on the situation of Zambian refugees from the Lumpa sect.

The Tripartite Commission expressed its satisfaction with the smooth running of the work and agreed to hold the next meeting in Zambia on a date to be set and communicated through diplomatic channels.

Done in Kolwezi, March 12, 2026

For the Government of the Democratic Republic of
the Congo

Mr. Shabani Lukoo Bihango Jacquemain
Deputy Prime Minister, Minister of the Interior,
Security, Decentralization and Customary Affairs

For the Government of the Republic of
Zambia

Hon. Jacob Jack MWIIMBU
Minister of Home Affairs and Internal Security

For the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)

Dr Pierre ATCHOM

UNHCR Representative a.i. in the Democratic Republic of the Congo