

# Republic of the Congo

## Working environment

### The context

After more than a decade of civil war, the political situation in the Republic of the Congo (RoC) is gradually improving. A peace agreement was signed in 2007 between the Government and the *Conseil National de Résistance* led by Frederic Bitsangou. The return of the former Prime Minister, Bernard Kolelas, has also brought hope for more stability in the country. Still, the socio-economic situation in the RoC remains precarious. Civil servants face repeated delays in the payment of their salaries, while educational and health care facilities are inadequate and unemployment is high. Although the general security situation has improved, violent incidents continue to plague Brazzaville, the Pool region, and the area along the border with the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).

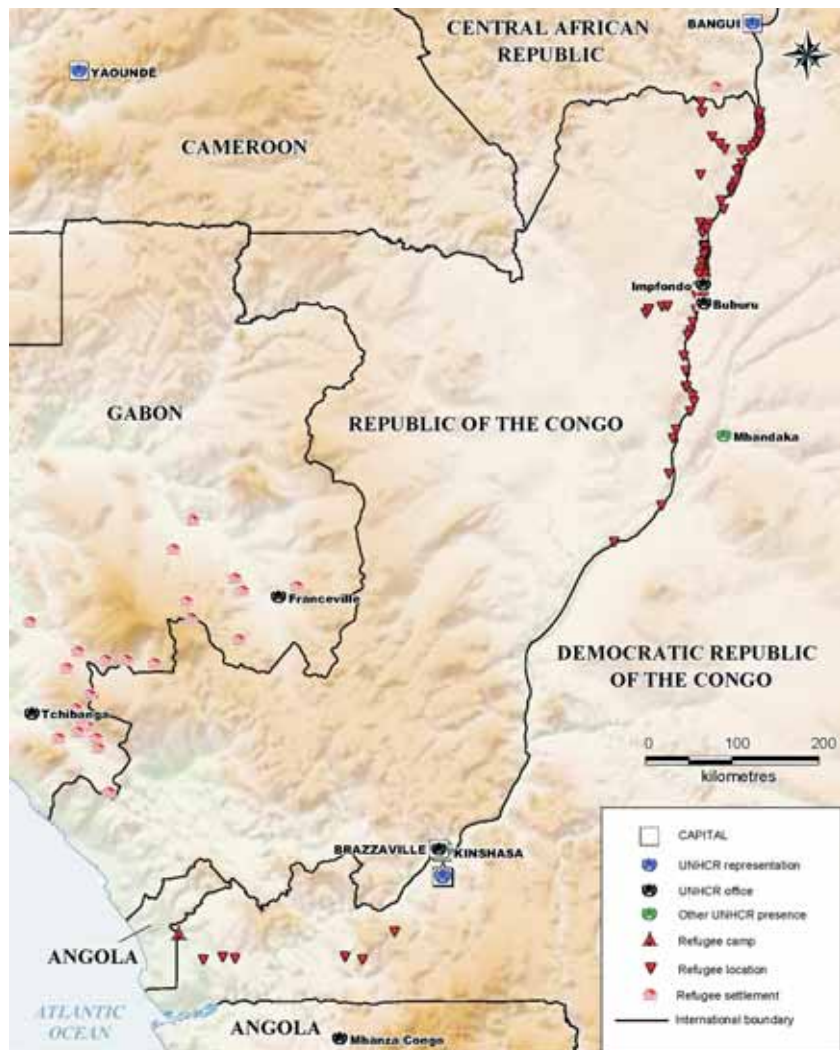
At the beginning of 2007, some 66,000 refugees from the DRC were registered in the country. With greater stability in the DRC's Equateur province, UNHCR has repatriated 16,000 of them. About 6,500 Rwandan refugees are also registered with UNHCR in the country. Tensions, particularly in the capital, Brazzaville, have increased because of the protracted stay of many Rwandan refugees.

### The needs

Most refugees in the RoC are able to make a living as fishermen or farmers and are largely self-sufficient. However, cases of malnutrition, especially among infants, need to be addressed. Many rural areas have no health facilities or schools.

With women and girls facing a high risk of sexual and gender-based violence, there is a need for more sensitization programmes and counselling and support services for victims. The high prevalence of HIV and AIDS has not been sufficiently addressed.

The RoC hosts about 4,300 asylum-seekers from the DRC. Their status will be determined by the Government, which took responsibility for refugee status



determination (RSD) in 2004. However, the *Comité National d'assistance aux réfugiés* (CNAR) will need UNHCR's technical assistance for several more years. Moreover, about half of the 2,800 Angolan refugees living in the coastal Pointe-Noire region are waiting for local integration.

**Total requirements**  
2008: USD 5,970,813  
2009: USD 4,307,344

## Main objectives

- Facilitate the organized voluntary repatriation of refugees from the DRC and Rwanda.
- Pursue durable solutions for those refugees who will not or cannot repatriate, particularly through local integration.
- Strengthen the RSD capacity of the CNAR and ensure that people of concern benefit from legal assistance.

## Key Targets for 2008 and 2009

- A total of 26,000 refugees and asylum-seekers receive international protection and material assistance.
- 15,000 refugees from the DRC are repatriated by the end of 2009; they are transported to their places of origin, where they benefit from reintegration assistance.
- All victims of sexual and gender-based violence receive psycho-social counselling and medical care.
- All eligible refugee children are enrolled in primary school and girls' secondary-school enrolment is raised to 40 per cent by the end of 2009.
- All refugees have access to primary health care.
- 50 per cent of the Angolan refugees remaining in the RoC are locally integrated by the end of 2008.

The Office will help provide primary education and basic health care to refugees in the RoC. Particular attention will be given to HIV and AIDS awareness and prevention. Sexual and gender-based violence will be reduced by organizing educational campaigns and supporting women's empowerment. Through a capacity-building strategy shared with local authorities and civil groups, UNHCR will assist victims of sexual violence to take legal action against perpetrators. Awareness campaigns and human rights training sessions will focus on the military, police and the judiciary.

UNHCR will help refugees who do not wish to repatriate to integrate locally. It will support community-based projects that help refugees sustain themselves. The Office will negotiate with the Government on the legal status of refugees and will help all groups of concern obtain the necessary legal documents. Furthermore, UNHCR will advocate for all UN Development Assistance Framework initiatives to facilitate the local integration of the remaining Rwandan, Angolan and DRC refugees, as well as the reintegration of returnees to the RoC from neighbouring countries.

## Strategy and activities

### Refugees

UNHCR will promote the voluntary repatriation of refugees from the DRC. The returnees will be provided with an assistance package and transported to their places of origin, mostly in the DRC's Equateur province.

The Government may consider the integration of Rwandan refugees in the north-east on a case-by-case basis. UNHCR will organize information campaigns and support the Government's efforts to regularize the status of the Rwandans. Furthermore, UNHCR will monitor the protection of Angolan refugees and advocate for local integration for up to half of the group by the end of 2009.

### Asylum-seekers

UNHCR will provide technical assistance to the CNAR, particularly on the RSD process and on the drafting of the refugee law. In the course of 2008, a CNAR office will be opened in Impfondo to deal with the large number of asylum-seekers in the north-east. UNHCR will select a national NGO to provide legal services for asylum-seekers and refugees.

### Constraints

Access to refugee settlements in the north-eastern part of the country remains extremely difficult. Refugees are settled in 93 sites dispersed over hundreds of kilometres and accessible only by boat. Public transportation is

## Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2008		Dec 2008 - Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	DRC	31,050	25,000	24,150	19,000	17,150	12,000
	Rwanda	6,500	50	6,400	50	6,400	50
	Angola	2,000	1,000	2,000	1,000	1,000	1,000
	Various	200	80	200	80	200	80
Asylum-seekers	DRC	2,700	-	2,700	-	2,700	-
	Côte d'Ivoire	200	-	200	-	200	-
	Chad	100	-	100	-	100	-
	Various	500	-	500	-	500	-
Returnees	RoC	70	70	70	70	70	70
<b>Total</b>		<b>43,320</b>	<b>26,200</b>	<b>36,320</b>	<b>20,200</b>	<b>28,320</b>	<b>13,200</b>



UNHCR/L. Ose

A refugee boy from the Democratic Republic of the Congo returning from a day of fishing at a refugee settlement in the village of Malebo.

## Organization and implementation

### UNHCR presence

	2008	2009
Number of offices	2	2
Total staff	34	29
International	6	5
National	26	22
UNVs	2	2

### Coordination

UNHCR will coordinate its activities with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Francophony, the Ministry of Security and Police, and the Ministry of Social Affairs, Solidarity, Humanitarian Action and Family. The Office works with three national implementing partners, including one affiliated with the Government. It will cooperate with the UN Resident Coordinator and other agencies to see that refugees and returnees are covered by development programmes.

### Partners

#### Implementing partners

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

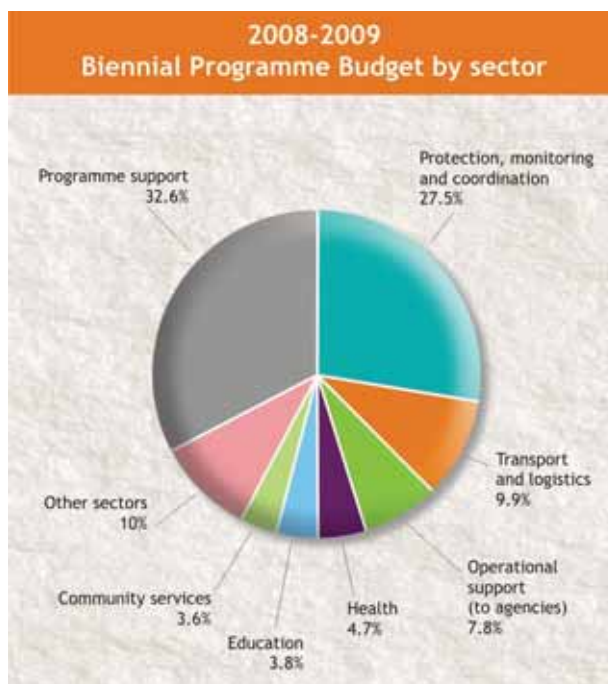
**NGOs:** *Agence d'assistance aux rapatriés et réfugiés au Congo*, *Commission d'entraide pour les migrants et les réfugiés*, *Médecins d'Afrique*.

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

unreliable and river traffic is dependent on the water levels in the Oubangui River.

RoC refugees in neighbouring countries are reluctant to repatriate without improvements of security in their areas of return. The prospects for reintegration are especially difficult in the Kouilou, Niari and Lekoumou departments, as well as in the Pool region, all of which are affected by stagnant economic conditions.

Despite constant efforts to promote their voluntary repatriation, few Rwandan refugees have decided to return. Individual Rwandans who wish to repatriate often fear the reactions of other refugees who oppose to return to Rwanda.



Budget (USD)					
Activities and services	2007			2008	2009
	Annual Programme Budget	Supp. Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget	Annual Programme Budget
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,572,950	350,871	1,923,821	1,733,885	1,095,300
Community services	236,627	66,793	303,420	187,945	182,054
Crop production	32,874	0	32,874	57,019	57,019
Domestic needs	56,888	64,925	121,813	89,358	39,862
Education	330,661	0	330,661	234,778	159,594
Fisheries	0	0	0	54,460	54,460
Forestry	0	105,168	105,168	0	0
Health	355,496	48,782	404,278	272,300	211,302
Income generation	122,609	0	122,609	69,834	70,999
Legal assistance	129,273	21,303	150,576	199,530	169,478
Livestock	0	0	0	60,110	60,368
Operational support (to agencies)	209,498	254,080	463,578	448,938	355,157
Sanitation	5,744	12,348	18,092	13,928	8,714
Shelter and other infrastructure	0	44,839	44,839	7,142	0
Transport and logistics	385,975	824,948	1,210,923	765,964	249,067
Water	7,586	56,814	64,400	13,816	2,861
<b>Total operations</b>	<b>3,446,181</b>	<b>1,850,871</b>	<b>5,297,052</b>	<b>4,209,006</b>	<b>2,716,236</b>
Programme support	1,501,545	231,479	1,733,024	1,761,807	1,591,109
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,947,726</b>	<b>2,082,350</b>	<b>7,030,076</b>	<b>5,970,813</b>	<b>4,307,344</b>

Note: The Supplementary Programme Budget excludes a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.