

# Consequences of underfunding in the Democratic Republic of the Congo



*The humanitarian response in the Democratic Republic of the Congo is severely underfunded. UNHCR is unable to adequately respond to the rising needs of refugees and internally displaced people. © UNHCR/Sanne Biesmans*

## Overview of the situation

The Democratic Republic of the Congo remains one of the most complex humanitarian crises in the world. As of 31 July, the country hosted 520,00 refugees and asylum-seekers, the majority of whom (74 per cent) live outside of refugee camps or settlements. Around 5.6 million people are internally displaced, accounting for the largest internally displaced persons (IDP) crisis in Africa and among the largest in the world.

In addition, more than one million refugees and asylum-seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo are sheltered across the African continent<sup>1</sup>. Wracked by decades of conflict, the Democratic Republic of the Congo is also among the world's five poorest countries. Around 76 per cent of the population live in poverty and 27 million people are food insecure.

<sup>1</sup> Regionally, UNHCR leads the [Regional Refugee Response Plan](#), which brings together partners across seven countries (Angola, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, and Zambia) to provide coordinated protection and assistance, while working towards solutions and sustainability.

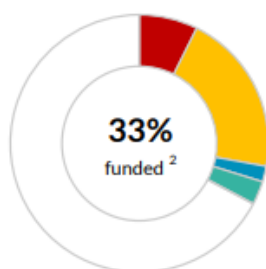
Since a fresh surge in violence began in April 2022, tens of thousands of Congolese have been displaced as a result of armed groups active in the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu. In North Kivu alone, fighting between the Congolese Army and non-state armed groups forced more than 200,000 people to flee their homes.

For such a dire and long-running crisis, the humanitarian response is severely underfunded. As of 30 August, only 33 per cent of UNHCR's requested budget of \$225 million for the Democratic Republic of the Congo in 2022 had been funded, despite the massive needs.



**\$225.4 million**

UNHCR's financial requirements 2022 <sup>1</sup>



FUNDING UPDATE | 2022

**DEMOCRATIC REP OF THE CONGO**

as of 30 August 2022

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

## REFUGEE RESPONSE

As part of a coordinated approach to providing protection and assistance to those forced to flee in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, UNHCR leads the Refugee Coordination Model, predominately serving refugees and asylum-seekers from the Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan. The operational areas at critical risk due to underfunding in the refugee response are education, self-reliance and voluntary repatriation.

### Impact on Education

#### FINANCIAL NEEDS:

- **\$3.9 million** needed to enable refugee students continue their studies for the 2022-2023 school year

To promote access to education for refugees and their inclusion in the national system, UNHCR provides assistance through the provision of school kits, payment of elementary school teachers' salaries and uniforms. In the provinces of Ituri and Haut-Uele, 22,882 (83.5 per cent) refugee children are at risk of dropping out of school for the 2022-2023 school year. In addition, the lack of funding prevents UNHCR from supporting state services for the proper inclusion of refugee children in the national school system. Improvement of the capacity of public schools, particularly through construction and rehabilitation of school infrastructure, increasing the number of classrooms and school supplies, and providing in-service training

for teachers, is unattainable under the current funding levels. Additional financial support is an important contribution to improving the quality of education, protecting investments and gains, and ensuring the motivation of teachers throughout the school year.

## Impact on Self-Reliance and Economic Inclusion

### FINANCIAL NEEDS:

- **\$8.6 million** needed to support the livelihoods of Burundian, Central African and South Sudanese refugees

Although the operation's strategy has a significant focus on promoting the self-reliance of people of concern, UNHCR lacks funds to implement the self-reliance and peaceful coexistence action plan for the three-quarters of the refugee population who live in host communities. In South Kivu, 500 hectares of arable land has been made available by the local community to improve integration between Burundian refugees and host communities but funding is needed for tools and inputs to work this land.

In the context of Central African refugees, livelihoods assistance provided by UNHCR and its partners currently covers less than 1 per cent of the total Central African refugee population and less than 5 per cent of the refugees in the camps. In Ituri and Haut Uele provinces, only 6 per cent of the South Sudanese refugee population has attained at least sufficient economic capacity to cover their basic needs. The lack of seeds and agricultural, fishing and livestock inputs in particular hinder the capacity of the targeted populations and to start income-generating activities.

## Impact on Voluntary Repatriation

### FINANCIAL NEEDS:

- **\$12.8 million** needed to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of 35,700 Central African refugees and 15,700 Burundian refugees in 2022
- **\$16.6 million** needed for return and reintegration of 12,110 Congolese refugees from Angola, South Africa, and Zambia in 2022

UNHCR, with the support of its government partner the National Commission for Refugees (CNR), continues to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Burundian and Central African refugees even when logistics and accessibility conditions are difficult, by organizing convoys by road, boat, or air. UNHCR estimates that 35,700 Central African refugees and 15,700 Burundian refugees would like to be voluntarily repatriated to their countries of origin in 2022. However, financial resources are insufficient to cover transport and essential household items, as well as the human resources and equipment needed to support the repatriation operations.

At the same time, prospects for voluntary repatriation have improved for Congolese refugees from the Kasai region living in Angola, for those from Haut-Katanga and Tanganyika Provinces living in Zambia, and also from South Africa. UNHCR is facilitating safe and dignified returns for those who wish to repatriate to these areas and is planning to support return and reintegration activities for an estimated 12,110 Congolese refugees from Angola,

Zambia and South Africa in 2022. UNHCR needs more resources to help refugees who have expressed a desire to return home to do so in safety and dignity.



*Firmin and his family prepare to board a repatriation flight bound for the Central African Republic.*  
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## RESPONSE FOR IDPs

As part of a coordinated approach to the needs of 5.6 million IDPs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the UNHCR plays a leadership role in the Protection, Camp Coordination and Camp Management, and Emergency Shelter Clusters. The operational areas at critical risk due to underfunding are Protection (including women's empowerment) and Shelter (sustainable housing and settlements).

## Impact on Protection and Women's Engagement



### FINANCIAL NEEDS:

- **\$18 million** needed to fund protection activities including the engagement of women in gender-based violence prevention, mitigation and response

The funding gap in protection and women's engagement for the prevention and mitigation of gender-based violence increases the risks of human rights violations for vulnerable populations. In the absence of protection monitoring and funding for relevant protection intervention packages, survivors of violations will not be identified, referred, or cared for in a timely manner, including unaccompanied children, children associated with armed forces and

groups, and survivors of gender-based violence. In addition, 47,000 people will not be able to access the legal assistance needed to overcome obstacles to accessing land rights.

UNHCR monitors gender-based violence incidents and acts to support local organizations, prioritizing cash assistance, as well as comprehensive responses in coordination with humanitarian partners as part of Gender-Based Violence Sub-Clusters as well as Government service providers. In the first quarter of 2022 with the limited funding available, only 50 per cent of survivors received psychosocial care; 27 per cent received medical assistance in cases of rape within 72 hours; 7 per cent received security and safety assistance; 4.5 per cent received legal assistance; and 0.3 per cent received much needed economic assistance.

## Impact on Sustainable Housing and Settlements



### FINANCIAL NEEDS:

- **\$8.2 million** needed to fund the shelter response

The shelter sector in Democratic Republic of the Congo remains one of the least funded sectors, despite the ever-increasing needs due to recurrent population movements, an increasing number of which have been triggered by violent attacks. At the present rate, four out of five IDPs will not receive adequate shelter support and will continue to live in inadequate and unsafe conditions. As a result, displaced people will be forced to sleep in churches, schools and stadiums, out in the open, or may resort to returning to their homes despite the high risk of being targeted by armed groups.

The funding gap creates particular risks for women and girls. Shelter programmes are based on the most fundamental principles of protection and freedom from physical harm and violence. Settlements on the whole, as well as individual shelters must be safe for women and girls, people living with disabilities, and for children and elderly. Adequate shelters are a key factor in mitigating the risk of exposure to gender-based violence. Shelter and settlement investments are also crucial in preventing disease. In Ituri, for example, the low level of funding for the shelter sector has led the spread of contagious diseases in collective reception centres such as schools or overcrowded places of worship.

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