

# Republic of the Congo

## Multi-year Strategy 2025 – 2027



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## 1.1 Executive Summary

UNHCR has designed its long-term strategy considering the socio-economic, political, and security landscape in the Republic of the Congo, which, despite the current level of stability, is fraught with challenges and risks. GDP is expected to experience modest growth of 2.1% in 2024 (World Bank, October 2024), and there is a continued need for economic recovery and structural reforms to ensure inclusive growth. Factors such as economic disparities, low-quality social services, territorial and social inequalities, and uncertainties surrounding the upcoming 2026 elections contribute to the country's fragility. Moreover, chronic instability in neighbouring countries and the rise in climate change-related natural disasters add to the complexity.

Nevertheless, the Republic of the Congo has a long history of hosting forcibly displaced people from neighbouring countries since the 1990s, implementing a refugee-friendly policy evident in the 2021 asylum law, which guarantees refugee protection and outlines commitments to combat statelessness. As of 30 September 2024, the Republic of the Congo hosts 71,122 refugees and asylum-seekers, primarily from the Central African Republic (CAR, 49%), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC, 45%), and Rwanda (5%). Amongst them, 80% reside in rural areas, while 20% are in urban settings. Recent influxes occurred in 2021 when 8,018 refugees from CAR arrived in Likouala and in 2022, with over 5,000 refugees from the DRC settling in Pool.

However, people who have been forced to flee face challenges such as delays in the refugee status determination process, limited recognition of refugee documents by state services and economic entities, and inadequate awareness of the 2021 asylum law. Refugee-hosting areas lack essential social services and economic opportunities, affecting both refugees and local populations, especially given vulnerabilities to climate-related hazards and limited adaptation mechanisms. Specialized protection services are also scarce.

To address these challenges, UNHCR's 2025-2027 strategy aims to support the country's inclusion and integration policy through strengthened partnerships with various stakeholders, aligned with the Republic of the Congo's National Development Plan 2022-2026, the UN Framework Plan 2020-2024, and the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). The strategy focuses on three key objectives: strengthening the protection environment, promoting socio-economic integration and empowerment, and maintaining response capacities for emergency situations and resilience to climate shocks.

## 1.2 Situation Analysis

The political situation in the Republic of the Congo remains stable, but several economic challenges need to be addressed to sustainably improve the daily lives of the population. According to the IMF and the World Bank, GDP growth is estimated to average 3.4% in 2025-2026. However, 46.8% of the population lives below the poverty line and prospects for accessing employment opportunities remain limited with a young population (median age 19) and a youth unemployment rate estimated at 42% (World Bank).

Moreover, approximately 33% of the population lives in food insecurity (WFP, August 2024). According to the OECD fragility index, the Republic of the Congo can be considered a country with an 'extremely fragile' status in economic, political, human, environmental, and societal dimensions with weak capacities and adaptation mechanisms. Inequitable distribution and poor quality of essential social services (such as water, education, and health) and infrastructure exacerbate social inequalities.

Sixty-seven percent of the population has access to electricity in urban areas compared to 12.4% in rural areas, while 74% have access to clean water in urban areas compared to 46% in rural areas (World Bank). According to the World Bank, the Republic of the Congo's human capital index is 0.42, below the average for lower-middle-income countries (0.48). The country is grappling with macroeconomic and budgetary challenges due to its heavy reliance on oil production, which accounts for 80% of export revenues and two-thirds of budgetary resources. The decline in production and the collapse of prices are impacting an already poorly diversified economy. To accelerate and operationalize the implementation of the National Development Plan (NDP) launched in early 2022, local development plans are underway.

The political landscape is marked by increasing calls for change from the opposition as the 2026 presidential election approaches.

On the security front, the internal situation is stable but marked by chronic instability in neighbouring countries (Central African Republic, Democratic Republic of the Congo, notably the situation in Kwamouth), as well as recent transitions in Gabon impacting the Republic of the Congo. The country is increasingly and regularly affected by the effects of climate change, characterized by widespread flooding. As of 30 September 2024, the country hosts 71,122 refugees and asylum-seekers. The average growth of the forcibly displaced population varies from 10-15% depending on the countries of origin, and trends will need to be monitored between 2025 and 2027 to guide policies. The Republic of the Congo has a legal framework guaranteeing the protection and socio-economic inclusion of refugees, as illustrated by the provisions of asylum law 41-2021.

The Government has also made specific commitments to combat statelessness, creating a national committee for the eradication of statelessness in 2022 and acceding to the 1954 and 1961 Conventions on Statelessness at the end of 2023.

In March 2024, the Government renewed its 2017 development policy letter for support to refugees and host communities. This renewal includes a five-year schedule articulated around three priorities and allows for broadening perspectives on inclusion. Firstly, strengthening the legal framework and institutional provisions for refugee protection; secondly, ensuring equitable and inclusive access to basic public services; thirdly, strengthening the resilience and empowerment of refugees and host communities. The commitments of 2017 are renewed and expanded to capitalize on progress made (inclusion in the Lisungi social protection project from 2021 to 2024) and to integrate commitments made at the Global Refugee Forum in 2019 and 2023.

The opportunities for socio-economic inclusion and local integration of refugees are affected by the country's persistent economic weaknesses, lack of diversification of its economy, exacerbated by the adverse effects of climate change. Essential services like healthcare, water, and sanitation are operating at full capacity and are also expensive. Food insecurity is a major concern, with refugees facing difficulties in obtaining essential products due to rising prices.

During 2025-2027, UNHCR will strengthen collaboration with the Congolese Government, international organizations and development actors to create an enabling environment for refugee integration, promote stability, and advance sustainable development for the benefit of people who have been forced to flee and host communities. Emphasis will be placed on capacity building in asylum and statelessness management. UNHCR will expand and strengthen existing and additional partnerships with IFIs, UN agencies, NGOs, and local actors to enhance the protection and inclusion of forcibly displaced and stateless people. This collaboration will jointly develop policies and programmes for durable solutions. The operation's area-based approach will deepen to encourage refugee integration into local communities, including continuous advocacy work to eliminate barriers to access to basic services (education, employment, healthcare) and strengthen their availability in refugee-hosting areas. Civil and community participation will be strengthened to ensure ownership, accountability, and social cohesion. UNHCR will support access to naturalization of refugees when feasible.

Regarding other durable solution perspectives, between 2025– 2027, UNHCR will continue to collaborate with the governments of countries of origin and host country to ensure the voluntary nature of return through consultations and tripartite evaluations to assess return conditions. UNHCR will continue to provide capacity building to government personnel involved in refugee management, including training on refugee rights, protection, and integration.

### 1.3 Vision and Strategic Orientation

By 2027, national responsibilities for asylum and statelessness will be budgeted within the Republic of the Congo's national programme and supported, if necessary, by international stakeholders for the effective provision of protection and inclusion in national systems across the country. UNHCR will ensure preparedness for emergency situations, including climate action, by adopting a sustainable programming approach.

UNHCR's strategic vision for 2025-2027 focuses on the inclusion of forcibly displaced people in all national development programmes. To achieve this inclusion strategy, UNHCR will continue to collaborate with various state institutions, technical and financial partners, United Nations agencies, international and national NGOs, and the private sector to maintain, develop, and strengthen these partnerships to support the vision.

This vision is aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals, the National Development Plan of the Republic of the Congo, and the revised United Nations Development Assistance Framework, while ensuring that no one is left behind.

The strategic priorities supporting this vision are:

- Strengthening the protection environment with a focus on capacity development on asylum procedures and national ownership of statelessness-related activities.
- Continuing and expanding socio-economic integration and promoting empowerment through improving the quality of evidence to support advocacy and joint programming, diversifying partnerships, and enhancing integration opportunities at the local level.
- Maintaining response capacities in emergency situations, strengthening joint planning during emergencies, and developing actions for climate change to support resilience and adaptation of affected populations.

### 1.4 Fair Access and Representation

To achieve gender equality, promote child protection, and ensure the inclusion and empowerment of forcibly displaced people, UNHCR will ensure that refugees and people at risk of statelessness are at the centre of national programmes. This involves promoting their full participation in decisions that affect them and ensuring they enjoy effectively their rights on an equal basis with nationals.

To achieve this objective by 2027, the strategy will focus on strengthening the normative framework and revitalizing the institutional protection framework to make it inclusive. This will include, among other things:

- Ensuring the inclusion and full participation of refugees and asylum-seekers in all activities, with enhanced involvement of women, girls, the elderly, youth, and children.
- Increasing community engagement and empowerment to foster inclusion and integration and ensure accountability.
- Working with local and governmental authorities to strengthen the inclusion of all school-age children in the national education system.
- Assisting the Government to implement its child protection strategy and ensuring the appropriation of roles and responsibilities of state actors in monitoring cases of forcibly displaced children at risk.
- Continuing to collaborate with local, judicial, and social affairs authorities to monitor and provide adequate responses to the issue of gender-based violence (GBV).
- As per UNHCR's policy on child protection and GBV, UNHCR will expand its use of proGresV4 and build the capacity of staff and partners, as well as further advocate and provide technical guidance and support to the National Committee for Refugee Assistance (CNAR) to adopt proGresV4 so that quality data on GBV and child protection is available and can be used for programming while data is progressively rolled out within nascent national systems.
- Continuing awareness-raising among parents to systematically and timely register the births of their children with civil registration authorities, as well as advocating with the National Commission for the Eradication of Statelessness to equip civil registration services with personnel and birth registers.
- Strengthening collaboration with other UN agencies, embassies, the private sector, and civil society to ensure the inclusion of forcibly displaced people in their various programmes.
- Continuing advocacy with ministries and UN agencies to uphold the commitment to "leave no one behind".
- Working to strengthen key partnerships with technical departments of line ministries, strengthening community capacity for self-management and community development for effective empowerment of people who have been forced to flee.

## 2. Impact Statements

### *Impact statement*

***By the end of 2027, all refugees and people at risk of statelessness enjoy their fundamental rights and live above the poverty line, while benefiting from equitable access to basic social services on the same basis as nationals.***



*Impact area: Attaining favourable protection environments*

*Outcome statements*

*By the end of 2027, all refugees have equal access to territory, registration and documentation in accordance with international and regional conventions.*

*Outcome area: Access to territory, registration and documentation*

*By the end of 2027, asylum seekers have effective and free access to national refugee status determination procedures.*

*Outcome area: Refugee status determination*

*The national protection framework is strengthened to allow access to protection services for refugees, asylum seekers and persons at risk of statelessness.*

*Outcome area: Protection policy and law*

*Survivors of sexual and gender-based violence have access to the support they need to build resilience and integrate locally.*

*Outcome area: Gender-based violence*

*All children at risk receive the support necessary for their best interests and are referred to the appropriate services.*

*Outcome area: Child protection*

*All refugees and asylum seekers are safe and have effective access to remedies and appeal procedures.*

*Outcome area: Safety and access to justice*

*By the end of 2027, refugees and asylum seekers are included in the communal urban development plan for access to decent sustainable housing, energy and NFI on the same basis as local population.*

*Outcome area: Sustainable housing and settlements*

*By the end of 2027, all refugees and asylum seekers are included in the national health system and receive equitable, affordable and quality health care, both preventive and curative, on the same basis as the host population.*

*Outcome area: Healthy lives*

*By the end of 2027, all refugees and the host population have access to a sufficient quantity of clean water and live in good hygiene and sanitation conditions, thanks to their inclusion in national development plans and the interventions of relevant actors*

*Outcome area: Clean water, sanitation and hygiene*

*By the end of 2027, the operations management cycle is fully supported by effective and timely coordination and supply chain mechanisms*

*Outcome area: Operational support and supply chain*

*Adequate resources are mobilised according to identified needs, priorities are defined and coordination and reporting mechanisms are effective and efficient.*

*Outcome area: External engagement and resource mobilization*

*The operations management cycle is fully supported by effective and timely coordination and supply chain mechanisms*

*Outcome area: Operational support and supply chain*

**Impact statement**

***By the end of 2027, 50% of refugees, including women, young people and vulnerable groups, lead productive and decent lives and benefit from national social safety net projects on the same basis as the local population.***

*Impact area: Empowering communities and achieving gender equality*

*Outcome statements*

*By the end of 2027, host communities, including women, have a greater capacity and interest in supporting the local integration of "people with and for whom UNHCR works".*

*Outcome area: Community engagement and women's empowerment*

*By the end of 2027, 50% of young people and adults are able to engage in an economic activity that generates sufficient income to meet basic family needs.*

*Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods*

*By the end of 2027, diversified economic opportunities are strengthened to promote integration and self-sufficiency.*

*Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods*

*By the end of 2027, all refugee children and adolescents of primary, secondary and tertiary school age are included in the national education system for quality education on the same basis as nationals*

*Outcome area: Education*

*By the end of 2027, the refugee population has access to the public employment system and to support and placement mechanisms.*

*Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods*

*By the end of 2027, all vulnerable refugees have access to national social protection mechanisms.*

*Outcome area: Self-reliance, economic inclusion and livelihoods*

**Impact statement**

***By the end of 2027, at least 70% of refugees have access to durable solutions (repatriation, resettlement, local integration) or complementary pathways.***



*Impact area: Securing solutions*

*Outcome statements*

*By the end of 2027, refugees have the information and resources they need to return voluntarily to their country of origin.*

*Outcome area: Voluntary repatriation and sustainable reintegration*

*By the end of 2027, the resettlement process (from identification of cases to departure) is organised for the benefit of identified refugees and complementary pathways are offered.*

*Outcome area: Resettlement and complementary pathways*

*By the end of 2027, legal and socio-economic opportunities for local integration are available for refugees in the Congo.*

*Outcome area: Local integration and other local solutions*

### 3. Republic of the Congo 2025 Indicators and Targets

Country	Results Level	Result Area	Indicator	Population Type	Baseline	Target 2025
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97%	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA1: Protect	1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	60%	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA2: Respond	2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	60%	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	41%	Not applicable
Congo, Republic	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in	Refugees and Asylum-	87%	Not applicable

of			primary education	seekers		
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13%	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA3: Empower	3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	51%	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	11	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Impact	IA4: Solve	4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	Not applicable
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	97%	98%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	73%	80%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA1: Access/Doc	1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	93%	95%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	90	90
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	95%	97%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA2: Status	2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	13%	15%

Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol	None	Broadly aligned: ≥90 points	Broadly aligned: ≥90 points
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA3: Policy/Law	3.2 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1961 Convention on the Reduction of Statelessness	None	Not yet aligned: ≤69 points	Broadly aligned: ≥90 points
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	63%	100%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40%	94%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA4: GBV	4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	53%	76%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15%	65%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100%	100%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA5: Children	5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	17%	60%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Limited: ≤39 points	Moderate: 40-69 points
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	91%	95%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA7: Community	7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10%	50%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.1 Proportion of people that receive cash transfers and/or non-food items	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	39%	85%

Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA8: Well-being	8.2 Proportion of people with primary reliance on clean (cooking) fuels and technology	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	15%	70%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	20%	100%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA9: Housing	9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	46%	92%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA10: Health	10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	42%	48%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA10: Health	10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	99%	100%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA11: Education	11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0%	10%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA11: Education	11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	67%	75%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA12: WASH	12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	51%	81%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA12: WASH	12.2 Proportion of people with access to a safe household toilet	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	41%	72%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	71%	80%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	88%	95%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA13: Livelihood	13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	16%	14%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA15: Resettle	15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	8	To be confirmed

Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA16: Integrate	16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	20%	30%
Congo, Republic of	Outcome	OA16: Integrate	16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	63%	75%