

EASTERN DRC SITUATION

27 June 2025



The Musenyi refugee site in the south of Burundi, where refugees fleeing violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are being relocated, for their safety, away from the border areas. ©UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

HIGHLIGHTS

- Congolese and Rwandan officials signed a [peace agreement](#) on 27 June in Washington. The agreement has raised hopes of ending the fighting, which escalated in January this year.
- **Violence and insecurity in several territories of North and South Kivu have, this week, continued to drive displacement and cause loss of life.**
- **The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC) visited DRC this week, where he met with the Government of DRC and Humanitarian Actors, as well as non-state authorities in control of vast swathes of Eastern DRC**
- UNHCR and partners continue to provide protection services across North and South Kivu, including case management and referrals for vulnerable individuals. Survivors of sexual violence are also receiving psychosocial support and timely access to medical care.
- UNHCR is expanding its cash assistance programme in eastern DRC. **In the first five months of 2025, 3,252 IDP households in Beni and Lubero territories have received cash support to help meet their urgent needs.**
- Voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in South Kivu has resumed, with 44 individuals departing the Kavimvira transit centre for Bujumbura in safety and dignity.
- **Over 118,500 people have fled eastern DRC to neighboring countries since the start of the year.** Although the number of new arrivals has dropped significantly compared to earlier peaks, recent UNHCR border monitoring reveals that those still crossing face dangerous and often life-threatening journeys to reach safety.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- Congolese and Rwandan officials signed a [peace agreement](#) on 27 June in Washington, in the presence of United States Secretary of State Marco Rubio. The agreement has raised hopes of ending the fighting, which has persisted for several years but escalated dramatically in January, killing thousands and displacing hundreds of thousands.
- **The UN Emergency Relief Coordinator (ERC), Tom Fletcher, undertook a four-day mission to the DRC from 23 to 26 June.** The ERC arrived in Kinshasa, where he met with government officials, including the Minister of Foreign Affairs, donors and the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT)- where UNHCR was present- before heading east, where he visited multiple areas of North and South Kivu, including Minova, Sake, Shasha, Nyiragongo and Goma. During his visit to Goma, the ERC met with the leadership of non-state authorities in control of vast swathes of Eastern DRC. **The ERC called for the removal of operational impediments that are hampering principled humanitarian action in eastern provinces.**
- **On June 20, 2025, Uganda's Chief of Defense Forces, General Muhoozi Kainerugaba, reportedly met with Democratic Republic of Congo President Félix Tshisekedi** in Kinshasa, where they discussed strengthening bilateral security ties and assessed the progress of joint operations against the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) in eastern DRC. A revised Memorandum of Understanding was signed, formalizing Uganda's continued military presence in the DRC and introducing new frameworks for intelligence-sharing, logistics support, and strategic coordination.
- In Masisi, Rutshuru, Walikale, Nyiragongo, and Goma, armed group assaults reportedly continue resulting in killings, rapes, pillaging, and other human rights abuses. In northwest Rutshuru, reprisals between rival factions persist, with civilians caught in the crossfire. Dozens of homes in Bukombo ward have reportedly been burned, potentially delaying safe returns. Fighting along the Kalembe–Pinga axis has choked off supply chains, driving up prices of basic goods. Criminal gangs pose a significant threat around Goma and Nyiragongo, while Beni has seen relative calm following joint operations by Congolese and Ugandan forces, although risks of gender-based violence remain high, especially in rural areas near Virunga National Park. Sporadic clashes continue across Kalehe and Kabare territories, harming displaced people and children as armed groups drive ongoing insecurity. In Walungu Territory, 17 civilians were allegedly summarily executed on suspicion of collaborating with a rival armed group.
- **UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners, continues to deliver a comprehensive package of protection interventions in North and South Kivu, including:**
 - **Access to documentation:** UNHCR is actively supporting the distribution of identity cards to urban refugees at the Mimoza transit centre in Bukavu, helping them secure essential legal documentation. So far, 386 out of 798 cards have been successfully distributed. Some young men have expressed hesitation about traveling to the centre due to security concerns, and UNHCR is working to identify safer, more accessible ways for them to receive their cards.
 - **Prevention of statelessness:** UNHCR is supporting access to civil registration for newborn children in Lusenda and Mulongwe refugee settlements in Baraka, Fizi Territory, ensuring they receive legal identity from birth. During the reporting period, 18 new births were successfully registered with the civil registry office.
 - **Child Protection:** UNHCR, in collaboration with local community structures, has supported recent awareness-raising sessions on early marriage and sexual violence at Lusenda refugee camp. Similar sessions were also organized by UNHCR's partner, Appui aux Initiatives de Développement et à l'Encadrement Social (AIDES), at the Kavimvira transit centre.
 - **Community-Based Protection:** On 17 June, UNHCR's partner INTERSOS held a community awareness session on peaceful coexistence and the prevention of sexual

exploitation and abuse (PSEA) in Kanyanja and Buhumba wards, Nyiragongo Territory, reaching 306 recent returnees. UNHCR and INTERSOS are also working together to implement 18 Quick-Impact Projects (QIPs) in Lubero Territory, funded through the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF), which include activities to promote awareness and support conflict resolution.

- **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** UNHCR's partner AIDPROFEN provided psychosocial support to nine survivors in North Kivu, including six rape cases, and held coaching sessions reaching 40 recently returned women in Kalehe and Masisi territories. In South Kivu, Panzi Foundation identified 19 new GBV cases in Minova health zone, including 17 rapes—12 of which involved survivors presenting more than 72 hours after the incident—and ran awareness sessions in Baraka refugee settlements, reaching 115 residents with information on GBV, rape, and related issues. All rape survivors were referred for medical care.
- **Legal assistance:** UNHCR continues to monitor the situation of detained refugees and provides them with legal support, including in cases of arbitrary detention linked to leaving refugee settlements without proper authorization.
- **On 23 June, UNHCR began the enrolment of 1,000 IDP households- including many living in collective centres in Beni Territory in its cash assistance programme.** Over the first five months of 2025, a total of 3,252 IDP households have received cash assistance across Beni and Lubero territories.
- The voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in South Kivu has resumed, in coordination with the National Commission for Refugees. **On 26 June, the first convoy of 44 Burundian refugees, comprising nine families, departed the Kavimvira transit centre for Bujumbura.** Additional convoys are planned in the coming weeks. UNHCR remains committed to safeguarding the rights of refugees and displaced persons and will continue to advocate for solutions that respect their dignity, safety, and informed choices.
- **UNHCR's partner Action Aid continues to support education interventions in South Kivu,** including by supporting the enrolment of 122 new teachers during June, serving refugee children from the Lusenda and Mulongwe refugee sites. UNHCR is also following up with Action Aid to address the high levels of school dropouts reported among primary school children from these sites, with Action Aid recording a dropout rate of 25.4 per cent (1,874 children) among the 7,391 children who enrolled in primary education in quarter two.

REGIONAL UPDATES

- **As of 26 June, over 118,500 people have fled the DRC to neighboring countries since the beginning of the year,** the majority of whom have arrived in Burundi and Uganda. The rate of new arrivals has remained relatively static over recent weeks. While the number of new arrivals is significantly below the peak levels recorded between February and April, the rate of arrival remains significantly higher than the same period in 2024.
- The latest figures on new arrivals to neighboring countries are reflected in the Eastern DRC Displacement **Dashboard, Burundi CORE and Uganda CORE, which are updated regularly and available on the [Operational Data Portal](#).**

Country	Total New Arrivals* since 1 Jan (as of 26 June unless specified)	Arrivals in the Past 7 Days
Burundi	41,742 (as of 24 June)	195
Uganda	67,711	336
Zambia	1,650 (as of 25 June)	9
Rwanda	4,366*** (as of 25 June)	0
Tanzania	3,076	0

TOTAL	118,545	540
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**For countries where data is available, the new arrivals figure includes returnees as well as refugees from third countries, alongside the Congolese new arrivals. The inclusion of these group reflects that returnee populations and third country nationals may also have specific international protection and humanitarian needs.*

***Of the 70,400 people who have arrived in Burundi since January 2025, 41,403 are estimated to remain in Burundi. This includes over 5,000 Burundian refugees who have returned from the DRC.*

****This figure comprises 3,765 Rwandan refugee returnees who have been supported to return from DRC to Rwanda, including 381 who were supported to voluntarily return on 10 June.*

Burundi

- Since 1 January, **it is estimated that well over 70,000 people have arrived from the DRC to Burundi, of whom at least 41,742 are estimated to remain in Burundi, including 36,396 refugees.** In the period 1-25 June, 1,355 new arrivals have been recorded by UNHCR. Recent new arrivals have been transferred to the Cishemere Transit Centre in Cibitoke Province, awaiting their transfer to the Musenyi Extension Site, which is currently under construction. Most new arrivals comprise women and children who have fled from localized violence in the Kamanyola and Luvungi areas of South Kivu Province.
- Recent UNHCR border monitoring at Kaburantwa, Rukana 2, and Mparambo crossing points indicates that new arrivals to Burundi continue to face dangerous journeys with significant protection risks. Restricted access and extortion were observed, particularly affecting young men, with some reportedly detained while transiting irregularly between Bukavu and Uvira, leading to family separations and unaccompanied children. Many asylum seekers attempt to cross the Rusizi River using improvised flotation devices like inflated plastic bags, despite not knowing how to swim. Refugees entering through Kaburantwa reportedly pay non-state armed groups to travel on bush paths, risking forced recruitment, while others have reportedly relied on smugglers. **Continued advocacy for access to territory and non-refoulement remains essential, alongside efforts to establish protection by presence, support family reunification, and ensure interim care for vulnerable children.**
- UNHCR and partners continue to prioritize the humanitarian response to refugees, including over 16,500 new arrivals, at the Musenyi site as well as host communities living near the site. **As of 13 June, some 3,879 households, comprising 13,553 refugees, have undergone registration at Musenyi. Key responses include the following:**
 - **Protection:** Tailored and case-specific protection assistance continues to be provided to vulnerable refugees. In the past week, 31 refugees charged with various criminal offences were provided with legal advice and representation through UNHCR's legal partners, the Bujumbura Bar Association. Likewise, 30 persons with specific needs were provided with psychosocial support and referrals. UNHCR also completed a training on GBV case management and survivor care
 - **Child Protection:** Efforts are ongoing to scale up activities and services for children. Over 330 children were engaged in activities and games over the reporting period, promoting wellbeing and resilience while also offering children an opportunity to play and learn. Separately, a further 13 at-risk children were identified during the registration process and referred as appropriate, including to receive assistance, placements in foster families, school enrolment, and family tracing.
 - **Education:** UNICEF has also distributed learning materials and recreational items to 326 preschool-aged children in Musenyi. Access to education and interruptions to schooling are a pressing concern among new arrivals, with the ongoing registration exercise recording 7,575 cases of out-of-school children. Efforts to enroll these children ahead of the start of the next school year and bolster schooling capacity are critical and time-sensitive priorities.
 - **Basic Needs:** UNHCR's partner, the Danish Refugee Council, is also providing emergency cash assistance to refugee households upon transfer to Musenyi. So far, 113 households, comprising 831 individuals, have been supported through this intervention.

- As of 24 June, 23,785 Congolese refugees have returned to the DRC. UNHCR continues to support the ability of those families who wish to do so to return to the DRC spontaneously. Furthermore, at the Gihanga Transit Site, UNHCR supported the transportation of 20 spontaneous returnees.

Uganda

- Since January 2025, **Uganda has received over 67,300 new arrivals from the DRC, representing more than half of all new arrivals seeking safety in the country.** During the week ending 26 June, 336 people, an average of 48 per day, crossed into Uganda from the DRC. Reports indicate that restrictions and border controls imposed by non-state authorities in control of the area continue to limit regular cross-border movement, forcing many asylum seekers to use unofficial routes. Seasonal factors and increased stability in some areas of eastern DRC may also be contributing to the recent slowdown in arrivals.
- Of the over 67,300 Congolese arrivals this year, about 33% are children under 12. Most, 64%, entered Uganda through crossing points in Kisoro District (Bunagana, Nteko, and Busanza) in the far southwest. Consistent with past patterns, most new arrivals come from North Kivu, including Goma, Masisi, and Rutshuru territories, citing forced recruitment, rape, kidnapping, and widespread small arms as key drivers of displacement.
- As of the week ending 22 June, **3,301 new arrivals from the DRC were being hosted across eight transit and reception centres, operating at 45% of their combined capacity. Only Kabanza Reception Centre was over capacity, reaching 129% occupancy.** Humanitarian conditions have generally improved, with Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates falling below the 15% emergency threshold at Nyakabande, Kabanza, and Matanda centres. However, malnutrition remains a concern in Nakivale Settlement's new arrival villages, where Juru village recorded a GAM rate of almost 16%. UNHCR is working closely with UNICEF to begin treating Moderate Acute Malnutrition in Nakivale, complementing existing interventions for Severe Acute Malnutrition.
- **With reduced pressure on transit and reception centres, UNHCR and partners are now prioritizing improvements in living conditions in new arrival villages, especially in Nakivale Settlement.** Access to water remains a serious challenge, with Juru and Rubondo villages receiving just 4 and 7 liters per person per day, respectively, well below the emergency minimum of 15 liters. This shortfall is mainly due to inadequate water infrastructure and unreliable power, making the urgent upgrade of Nakivale's ageing water systems a top priority.
- **The number of unaccompanied and separated children in Nakivale Settlement continues to rise, with 1,775 cases recorded since the start of the year.** This increase is driven by family separations during displacement journeys and by caregivers leaving children behind to seek livelihoods elsewhere. UNHCR and child protection partners are working to identify alternative care arrangements to safeguard these children's well-being.

Tanzania

- **Since the beginning of 2025, a total of 3,076 Congolese asylum seekers have arrived in Tanzania.** While this is fewer than in neighboring countries, there continues to be a steady number of new arrivals. Most arrive via land routes along the Burundi-Tanzania border, with a smaller number arriving by crossing Lake Tanganyika. Asylum seekers report significant challenges reaching Tanzanian territory via the lake.

Zambia

- UNHCR continues to assist new arrivals from the Democratic Republic of the Congo at four main border transit centres in Zambia—Kaputa, Chiengi, Nsumbu, and Mpulungu. Most are

relocated to Mantapala settlement, although some proceed directly to Meheba, Mayukwayukwa, or Lusaka. **As of 25 June, Zambia had registered 1,650 new arrivals since the start of 2025,** through various entry points.

Rwanda

- Since January, **3,765 Rwandans have been facilitated to return from eastern DRC with the support of UNHCR.** Returnees are received at the border by Rwandan authorities, who carry out identity verification and health screenings. UNHCR and partners provide food, temporary shelter, core relief items, medical care, and protection services at transit centres, with additional support for transportation to areas of origin and cash assistance to aid reintegration.

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