

EASTERN DRC SITUATION

11 July 2025



The Musenyi refugee site in the south of Burundi, where refugees fleeing violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) are being sheltered. ©UNHCR/Charity Nzomo

HIGHLIGHTS

- **While hopes remain high that the recent peace agreement between the Governments of DRC and Rwanda will help usher in peace**, clashes between armed groups continue across parts of North and South Kivu, leading to civilian casualties and new displacement.
- **A Tripartite Commission meeting between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and UNHCR** on the voluntary repatriation of refugees will take place in Addis Ababa from 22 to 24 July.
- **UNHCR and partners continue to deliver a range of protection services across North and South Kivu**, including birth registration to prevent statelessness, child protection monitoring and awareness activities, and support for survivors of sexual violence.
- Voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in South Kivu has continued, **with 63 individuals departing the Kavimvira transit centre for Bujumbura in safety and dignity.**
- **The DRC Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) Hyper-Prioritization Factsheet has been released.** As part of this exercise, UNHCR and partners across seven neighboring countries have identified the most urgent funding needs to ensure a focused and impactful response to the ongoing displacement crisis.
- **Over 119,000 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)

- **The heavy presence of armed actors continues to create a highly insecure environment in North and South Kivu, exposing civilians to violence, forced displacement, and rights violations.** In North Kivu, ongoing cordon-and-search operations have led to widespread arbitrary arrests and forced recruitment, particularly targeting young men. Hundreds have reportedly been detained in the past week alone, with many allegedly abducted and transferred for training before being deployed to areas such as Lubero, Walikale, and Masisi, where non-state armed groups are reinforcing their presence. Civilians have also been forcibly used to carry military equipment, placing them at heightened risk of reprisals from rival groups.
- **There are ongoing concerns about the availability of Post-Exposure Prophylaxis (PEP) kits for survivors of sexual violence in North Kivu.** According to an analysis by the [Working Group on Sexual and Reproductive Health](#), under the DRC health cluster, 61 secondary health facilities in the province currently lack PEP kits. No PEP kits were available in 8 out of the 34 health zones assessed.
- **A Tripartite Commission meeting between the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, and UNHCR will take place in Addis Ababa from 22 to 24 July.** The meeting aims to provide strategic direction on the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan and Congolese refugees within the framework of the tripartite agreement. It will begin with a two-day technical session of the Tripartite Commission's Technical Working Group, followed by a high-level ministerial session on 24 July.
- Since the resumption of voluntary repatriation convoys between the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi in late June, **a second convoy departed Kavimvira Transit Centre in Uvira on 10 July, facilitating the return of 63 refugees to Bujumbura.** This brings the total number of Burundian refugees who have returned voluntarily to 107. Almost 2,000 Burundian refugees in eastern DRC have expressed their desire to be voluntarily repatriated.
- In June, UNHCR began enrolling beneficiaries for the distribution of cash assistance to internally displaced households in Beni Territory. **Although initial planning targeted around 1,000 households, nearly 2,000 have received support as of 3 July, with disbursements still ongoing.**
- **UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners, continues to deliver a comprehensive package of protection interventions in North and South Kivu, including:**
- **Prevention of statelessness:** UNHCR continues to facilitate access to civil registration, and by extension legal identity, for newly born children at the Lusenda and Mulongwe refugee settlements in Baraka, Fizi Territory. Over the reporting period, a total of 27 new births were registered through the civil registry office.
 - **Legal assistance:** UNHCR continues to provide legal and judicial assistance and monitor the situation of refugees in detention/ arbitrarily arrested. Over the reporting period, UNHCR successfully liaised with the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) in Uvira to release nine refugees who were arbitrarily arrested and detained in the Uvira city prison. These refugees were subsequently acquitted.
 - **Child Protection:** Through its implementing partner in South Kivu, Appui aux Initiatives de Développement et à la Santé (AIDES), UNHCR continues to closely monitor child protection risks and implement interventions to minimize risks and aid children at risk. This includes monitoring of child protection risks and providing follow-up support to children deemed at risk. AIDES also conducts awareness-raising sessions and recently reached 100 adolescents from Lusenda camp during an event marking the Day of the African Child.
 - **Community-Based Protection:** UNHCR continues to work closely with its partner INTERSOS to advance CERF-funded Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) in Lubero Territory, focused on community engagement, conflict resolution, and awareness-raising. Sixteen

projects have already taken place, with the final two activities, a roundtable, and an awareness session, expected to follow this week after earlier delays linked to temporary bank closures in Goma. INTERSOS is also preparing four additional QIPs for implementation in the southern part of the province.

- **Violence against Women and Girls:** As part of efforts to prevent violence against women and girls, UNHCR's partner AIDPROFEN carried out community mobilization activities in Kalehe, Nyiragongo, and Masisi territories in North Kivu, reaching 109 recent returnees through sessions led by local women's groups and male ambassadors promoting positive masculinity. In South Kivu, six awareness-raising sessions were held, including three at the Mulongwe site in Fizi Territory. UNHCR's partner, the Panzi Foundation, documented 33 cases of sexual violence during the reporting period, with survivors receiving psychosocial support and, in some cases, medical care.
- As part of efforts to promote inclusive and sustained access to education for displaced populations, **UNHCR's education partner ActionAid supported 478 primary school finalists, 249 girls and 229 boys, with academic and psychosocial assistance during the national primary school leaving exam (ENAFEP) held on 1–2 July 2025.** The exams took place at Lusenda and Mulongwe centres, helping ensure continued access to formal certification for refugee learners. In Bukavu, 56 refugee children also sat for the ENAFEP, marking an important step toward educational continuity and integration into the national system.

REGIONAL UPDATES

- **As of 4 July, over 119,000 people have fled the DRC to neighbouring countries since the beginning of the year,** most 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 arrival rate remains significantly higher than the 2024 levels.
- 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](#).**
- **The DRC Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) Hyper-Prioritization Factsheet was released.** Through this hyper-prioritization exercise, UNHCR and partners from seven neighbouring countries have prioritized US\$359 M (46 per cent) of the US\$773 M regional RRP requirements, focusing mainly on life-saving interventions alongside specific support to inclusive national systems that help to maintain the provision of critical services to refugees and accelerate self-reliance.

Country	Total New Arrivals* since 1 Jan	Arrivals in the Past 7 Days
Burundi	41,742 (as of 29 June)	118
Uganda	68,183 (as of 6 July)	344
Zambia	1,781 (as of 4 July)	102
Rwanda	4,367*** (as of 26 June)	0
Tanzania	3,124 (as of 29 June)	31
TOTAL	119,197	595

*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 (as of 29 June), including 36,396 refugees.** In the period 23-29 June, a further 118 new arrivals have been received at the Cishemere Transit Centre in Cibitoke Province. There are 266 households (819 individuals) being hosted at the transit centre, bringing the centre close to its designated maximum capacity. Protection monitoring conducted by UNHCR indicates that most of these new arrivals are from the Kamanyola and Luvungi areas of South Kivu, with many reporting incidents of sexual violence, physical assault, extortion, and detention during flight.

Uganda

- **Since the beginning of 2025, Uganda has received almost 68,300 new arrivals from the DRC,** accounting for well over half the total number of individuals who have newly arrived in Uganda in search of safety. During the week to 6 July, 344 people have newly arrived from the DRC, averaging 49 daily new arrivals. The number of weekly arrivals has remained broadly consistent since the beginning of June, significantly below both the peak levels reported in mid-April, when the number of new arrivals was approaching 8,000 per week. Despite the recent slowdown in arrivals, cross-border movements from the DRC to Uganda between 1 January and 6 July are over 350 percent higher than during the same period in 2024.
- **Among those who have crossed into Uganda this year, around one-third are children under 12, and 40 percent are under 18.** The majority have entered through Bunagana, Nteko, and Busanza crossing points in Kisoro District, in Uganda's southwest. Most come from North Kivu, particularly Goma, Masisi, and Rutshuru, and continue to cite protection risks such as forced recruitment, sexual violence, kidnapping, and the widespread presence of small arms as the main drivers of displacement.
- **As of 6 July, transit and reception centres in Uganda were hosting over 3,500 new arrivals from the DRC, with facilities operating at roughly half their total capacity.** Only the Kabanza Reception Centre was overstretched, accommodating well above its intended limit at 129 percent occupancy. While overall malnutrition rates among new arrivals have improved, thanks to the resumption of blanket supplementary feeding and treatment services, serious concerns remain. At Kabanza, the Global Acute Malnutrition rate among pregnant and lactating women remains above 20 percent, exceeding the 15 percent emergency threshold.
- With pressure easing at transit and reception centres, **UNHCR and partners are shifting focus to addressing critical gaps in the main receiving sites, particularly across refugee villages in Nakivale settlement.** Key priorities include accelerating land demarcation, improving water access, expanding sanitation coverage, and upgrading ageing site infrastructure. Additional staff are also needed to meet growing demands in health and education, while resources are required to strengthen nutrition services in high-risk areas without compromising support elsewhere in the settlement.

Tanzania

- **As of 30 June, 3,124 new arrivals from the DRC to Burundi have been recorded so far this year.** Although the pace of arrivals remains relatively low, the total is already significantly higher than during the same period in 2024. Despite a 50 percent reduction in food rations for the general refugee population since 19 June due to funding constraints, UNHCR and partners

continue to provide new arrivals at the Kigoma reception centre with hot meals covering 82 percent of their daily kilocalorie needs.

- Due to funding constraints, **UNHCR has suspended the construction of emergency shelters and latrines for new arrivals in Nyarugusu Camp, as key building materials are no longer available.** As a result, more than 360 individuals remain at the reception centre, awaiting relocation to appropriate shelters. Resource shortages have also affected the ability to provide essential household items.

Zambia

- **Since the beginning of 2025, Zambia has registered 1,781 new arrivals from the DRC.** The Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) has introduced a new reception and registration system requiring asylum-seekers, including those fleeing conflict in the DRC, to undergo screening at designated border entry points before being formally registered in rural settlements. As a result, thousands of undocumented asylum-seekers currently in Lusaka must travel long distances back to border areas to regularize their status. Challenges remain, including the lack of reliable, funded transportation between district capitals, where screening is conducted, transit centres, and refugee settlements. There is also a need to strengthen information provision at border entry points and in urban areas, to ensure asylum-seekers are fully informed about their rights and the procedures required to access protection.
- As part of DRC contingency planning, **UNHCR finalized and deployed a tailored Inter-Agency Rapid Needs Assessment (ISRNA) tool.** Based on regional best practices, the tool includes modules for Key Informant Interviews, Focus Group Discussions, and Household Surveys. The tool enables rapid assessments of urgent needs during emergencies, supporting a coordinated, inclusive, and evidence-based response for both refugee and host communities.

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