

EASTERN DRC SITUATION**08 September 2025**

UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi (centre) meets recently returned refugees in Kimoka, North Kivu province, Democratic Republic of Congo. © UNOCHA/Francis Mweze

HIGHLIGHTS

- UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi [visited DRC and Rwanda](#) from 25 to 29 August, calling for stronger international support for peace and humanitarian efforts to enable the safe return of refugees and internally displaced people.
- On 22 August, the [UN Security Council](#) held an emergency session on escalating violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, noting that diplomatic efforts have yet to translate into improved security conditions on the ground
- The heavy presence of armed actors continues to create a precarious protection environment in eastern DRC, with civilians directly affected by hostilities and exposed to displacement, human rights violations, and exploitation.
- UNHCR and partners continue to strengthen protection efforts in North and South Kivu through training, community awareness, support to survivors of gender-based violence, and assistance to displaced people in collective centres.
- In August, 533 Rwandan refugees were voluntarily repatriated from Goma Transit Centre to Rwanda, while 261 Burundian refugees returned from South Kivu to Burundi.
- The Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to face one of its worst [cholera outbreaks](#) in recent history, with 44,800 cases reported in the first seven months of 2025.
- Almost 122,500 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, the arrival rates remain substantially higher than the same period in 2024.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- **UN High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi [visited DRC and Rwanda](#) from 25 to 29 August, calling for stronger international support for peace and humanitarian efforts to enable the safe return of refugees and internally displaced people.** He met President Félix Tshisekedi in Kinshasa to discuss UNHCR's role in supporting voluntary return. In Sake, near Goma, he spoke with displaced families about their hopes for stability and the challenges of rebuilding. In Rwanda, he commended the government's inclusive approach toward refugees.
- **On 25 August, 533 Rwandan refugees from 168 families were voluntarily repatriated from the Goma Transit Centre to Rwanda.** The return, which follows commitments made at the DRC–Rwanda–UNHCR [Tripartite meeting](#) in Addis Ababa, marks an important confidence-building step in the wider peace process. Currently, 147 newly arrived individuals remain at the transit centre awaiting the next convoy.
- **On 28 August, the National Commission for Refugees (CNR), UNHCR, and NGO partners in Baraka and Uvira facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 261 Burundian refugees (55 families) to Burundi.** This brings the total number of Burundian refugees who have returned in 2025 to 1,701 people (391 households), representing 43 per cent of the annual target of 4,000. In South Kivu, an additional 4,334 individuals have expressed their willingness to be repatriated.
- **On 22 August, an emergency session of the [UN Security Council](#) was convened to address escalating violence in eastern DRC.** During her briefing to ambassadors, the Assistant Secretary-General for Africa in the Departments of Political and Peacebuilding Affairs and Peace Operations noted that progress achieved on the diplomatic front has yet to be fully reflected in the security situation on the ground, while also drawing attention to the ongoing challenges in North Kivu since April.
- **The heavy presence of armed actors continues to create a precarious protection environment in eastern DRC, with civilians directly affected by hostilities and exposed to displacement, human rights violations, and exploitation.** During the third week of August, 50 civilians were reportedly killed along the Mangurujipa axis, while in South Kivu, 12 civilians were reported killed following renewed clashes. Ambushes and incursions remain widespread, resulting in looting, destruction of property, physical assaults, and sexual violence, all of which fuel a climate of fear. In Nyiragongo and Goma territories, intermittent cordon-and-search operations have reportedly led to arbitrary arrests and abductions, particularly of young men. On 29 August, 17 people, including five children, were reportedly abducted and transferred to a detention site in Sake.
- **UNHCR, in collaboration with its partners, continues to deliver a comprehensive package of protection interventions in North and South Kivu, including:**
 - **Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA):** On 27–28 August, UNHCR trained 32 staff from five implementing partners in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo as part of efforts to strengthen the PSEA. Participants came from Actions et Interventions pour le Développement et l'Encadrement Social (AIDES), Action pour le Progrès des Femmes (AIDPROFEN), African Initiatives for Relief and Development (AIRD), the National Commission for Refugees, and INTERSOS.
 - **Community-Based Protection:** In collaboration with the local authorities in Bashu chiefdom in Beni Territory, UNHCR's partner, the National Commission for Refugees, conducted awareness-raising on the reintegration and protection of returnees. These sessions looked to bolster acceptance and understanding of refugee returnees in villages bordering Uganda
 - **Gender-Based Violence (GBV):** As part of ongoing GBV prevention efforts, community structures supported by UNHCR and partners delivered 34 awareness sessions in late August across Masisi, Nyiragongo, and Kalehe, reaching over 740 people, including internally displaced returnees and host community members. Topics included GBV,

referral pathways, and hygiene, with activities ranging from focus group discussions to door-to-door visits. Eight GBV cases, including four rapes, were documented, and survivors were referred for psychosocial and medical support. In South Kivu, UNHCR's partner Panzi Foundation provided follow-up assistance to 16 survivors, while additional awareness sessions in Lusenda camp and Kavimvira transit centre reached 641 people, including 239 refugees.

- **Through local partners, UNHCR continues to support displaced persons in collective centres in North Kivu.** In the last week of August, partner AIDES facilitated the reception and registration of 16 new households (68 people) across three centres, ensuring access to assistance and services. AIDES also conducted awareness sessions for breastfeeding women on registering newborns within 90 days to secure healthcare and legal recognition. In Lubero Territory, AIDES installed five community sheds, ten shower blocks, and ten latrine blocks, improving shelter and living conditions for displaced households from conflict-affected areas.
- **The Democratic Republic of the Congo continues to face one of its worst cholera outbreaks in recent history, with 44,800 cases reported in the first seven months of 2025.** South Kivu has recorded the highest caseload, and North Kivu has the third highest. The fatality rate stands at 2.8 per cent, well above the World Health Organization's 1 per cent threshold, with more than 1,250 deaths estimated this year. The response continues to be hampered by the outbreak's rapid spread, flooding that has contaminated water sources and damaged sanitation systems (including in displacement sites), and severe funding gaps, with only 13 per cent of the [WASH sector's](#) requirements under the Humanitarian Response Plan met..

REGIONAL UPDATES

- **As of the beginning of September, some 122,500 people have fled DRC to neighbouring 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 arrival rate remains significantly higher than 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](#).

Country	Total New Arrivals ¹ since 1 Jan
Burundi	40,727 ² (as of 26 August)
Uganda	71,416 (as of 24 August)
Zambia	2,139 (as of 31 August)
Rwanda	4,933 ³ (as of 31 August)
Tanzania	3,124 (as of 13 August)
TOTAL	122,339

¹ 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.

² Of the 70,400 people who have arrived in Burundi since January 2025, 40,727 are estimated to remain in Burundi. This includes over 5,000 Burundian refugees who have returned from the DRC

³ This figure comprises 4,219 Rwandan refugee returnees who have been supported to return from DRC to Rwanda, including 533 who were supported to voluntarily return on 25 August.

Burundi

- **Since 1 January, well over 70,000 people are estimated to have arrived from the DRC to Burundi, of whom at least 40,727 remain in the country.** According to the most recent reports, 120 new arrivals were recorded in the last seven days. UNHCR and its partners continue to provide humanitarian assistance and protection to these new arrivals.

Uganda

- **Since January 2025, Uganda has received nearly 71,500 new arrivals from the DRC, making up more than half of all those who have sought safety in the country this year.** Between 1 and 24 August alone, 1,796 people, about 75 per day, crossed into Uganda, a slight increase compared to June and July. While arrivals remain well below the March–April peak of almost 8,000 per week, the majority continue to come from North Kivu, with women and children representing about 70 per cent of the new arrivals.
- The health and nutrition situation for both new arrivals and long-term refugees remains fragile. **Global Acute Malnutrition (GAM) rates continue to exceed emergency levels in some areas, with 17.6 per cent recorded among pregnant and lactating women at Nyakabande Transit Centre and 14.4 per cent among children at Matanda.** By contrast, Kabanza Reception Centre in Nakivale has shown improvement, with the GAM rate in children falling below 10 per cent for the first time in months. Public health risks persist, however, including an anthrax outbreak with nine cases, one fatal, reported as of 17 August. Anthrax infections generally occur when people come into contact with contaminated animal products.
- **The funding crisis continues to severely affect basic services for DRC refugees, particularly health services.** In Rwamwanja Refugee Settlement, Kamwenge District, healthcare provision has been significantly reduced after the contracts of 35 health workers supported by an international NGO were discontinued due to funding shortfalls. This has shifted the burden onto local government staff, who previously made up only 14 per cent of health workers in the settlement, and has particularly constrained specialized secondary healthcare, leading to more high-risk referrals and increased chances of surgical complications. As an emergency measure, essential staff lists have been submitted to the District Health Officer and Chief Administrative Officer to seek a supplementary budget from the Ministry of Health so key staff can be absorbed onto the government payroll.

Tanzania

- **Between 1 and 18 August 2025, 109 Congolese new arrivals were relocated from the reception centre in Nyarugusu Refugee Camp to emergency family shelters in the camp,** providing them with privacy and dignity, and helping stabilize and reduce stress for families. This brings the total number of new arrivals from the DRC who have been moved into emergency family shelters in Nyarugusu Camp to 2,913, out of 3,124 people who have fled to Tanzania since 1 January, following the escalation of violence.
- **Efforts are ongoing to upgrade infrastructure and improve living conditions for new arrivals and protracted populations from the DRC residing in the Nyarugusu Camp.** Between 1 January and 18 August, 399 emergency family latrines have been installed in zones where new arrivals are located, while in August alone, the water distribution network in the camp was upgraded through the installation of four water tanks with the capacity to support the distribution of 40,000 liters of water. In addition, close to 1,050 emergency shelters have been constructed in the camp since the beginning of the year.
- **Due to ongoing funding constraints, the capacity and coverage of WASH services in Nyarugusu camp remain inadequate.** Most new arrivals are still using emergency or shared family latrines instead of individual facilities, increasing risks to health, privacy, and dignity. In addition, many households lack basic water collection and storage containers, limiting their ability to access and safely store drinking water.

Zambia

- **Since January 2025, Zambia has received over 2,100 new arrivals from the DRC**, mainly through five entry points in Luapula, Muchinga, and Northern provinces. New arrivals have reported conflict and insecurity as the main drivers of displacement. Assistance for these new arrivals has been limited due to resource constraints, resulting in stringent prioritization that leaves many without basic supplies and exposes asylum-seekers to protection risks.

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Effective 01 October 2025, Angola, Malawi, Mozambique, the South Africa Multi-Country Office, Zambia and Zimbabwe will be covered by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for the East and the Horn of Africa and the Great Lakes (email: kenrbext@unhcr.org), while the DRC and the Republic of the Congo will be covered by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for West and Central Africa (email: senrbmedia@unhcr.org).