



SITUATION SUMMARY

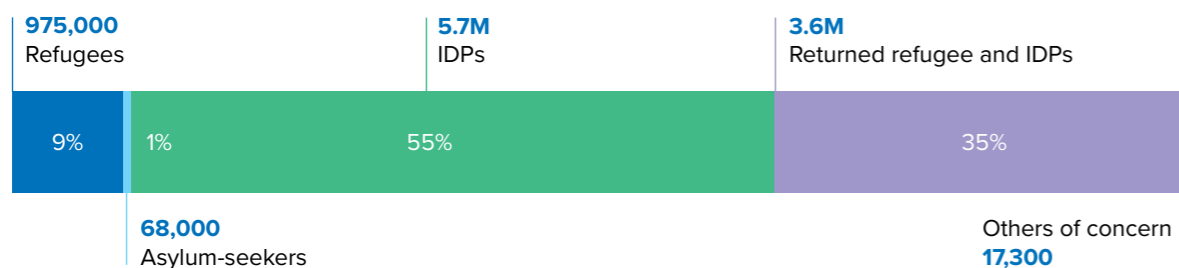
New arrivals seek safety in Ndava, Burundi, after fleeing renewed fighting in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). In 2025, over 167,000 people crossed the border in two waves (February and December), many arriving exhausted and without belongings, as displacement and violence persist in eastern DRC. © UNHCR/Arnold Temple

The Democratic Republic of the Congo Situation

Country operations involved in the response: Angola, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, the United Republic of Tanzania and Zambia.

2025 year-end population figures

10.3 million Congolese refugees in neighbouring countries and IDPs



Context

By the end of 2025, 6.7 million Congolese were forcibly displaced within the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and across Africa – a 8% decline from 7.3 million in 2024. Despite this reduction, violence in the eastern provinces continued to drive new displacement, and the crisis remained one of the world’s longest-running and most complex.

Renewed violence in South Kivu in December displaced more than 500,000 people within

DRC, while around 84,000 fled to neighbouring countries, mostly to Burundi. Insecurity also affected Tanganyika, reigniting communal tensions in Kalemie, while clashes persisted in North Kivu and Ituri. Disease outbreaks – including cholera and mpox – as well as landslides and floods, further eroded livelihoods and heightened vulnerabilities.

Internally displaced people (IDPs) accounted for 55% of all displaced Congolese, totalling 5.7 million, down from 6.9 million in 2024 due to returns. However, volatility persisted, with 2 million new

displacements recorded in 2025, placing sustained pressure on host communities, basic services and response capacities.

Cross-border displacement continued, with Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers reaching 1 million in 2025. Uganda hosted the largest population (649,000), followed by Burundi (111,000), the United Republic of Tanzania (87,000) and Rwanda (84,000), with smaller numbers in the other neighbouring countries – underscoring the need for stronger regional responsibility sharing.

Despite ongoing insecurity, nearly 800 Congolese refugees returned voluntarily in 2025, up from 578 in 2024 but far below the 11,000 recorded in 2022, reflecting fragile return conditions. Tripartite commissions between UNHCR and the Governments of the DRC, Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania adopted work plans to facilitate returns when conditions allow.

At the same time, UNHCR and partners facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 23,000 refugees from the DRC, up from 12,900 in 2024. Most returned to the Central African Republic and Rwanda, each accounting respectively for 32% and 31% of refugee returns, while 31% returned to Burundi, although security and logistical constraints continued to limit operations.

The protection environment remained highly precarious. Reported violations included sexual violence, child recruitment, and housing, land and property rights abuses. Protection monitoring recorded 45,500 incidents, predominantly in the eastern provinces. Women and girls accounted for 95% of survivors, and IDPs represented most of the victims.

UNHCR in action

UNHCR’s response in 2025 was significantly constrained by severe funding cuts, resulting in scaled-down operations across all sectors. Priorities focused on protection and solutions, combining life-saving assistance with efforts to strengthen national systems, promote self-reliance, and support sustainable responses through area-based approaches, community protection, and enhanced partnerships with development actors.

UNHCR supported regional peace efforts, including the [Doha Declaration of Principles](#) between the Government of the DRC and the March 23 Movement, as well as the [Washington Accords](#) between the DRC and Rwanda. UNHCR provided technical advice on civilian protection and facilitated community engagement to help translate peace commitments into tangible protection outcomes and reduce risks of renewed displacement.

Within the DRC, protection interventions enabled the safe relocation of 2,500 IDPs, reducing exposure to immediate risks. Community-based protection activities reached 82,000 people, while more than 2,200 individuals participated in peace dialogues aimed at mitigating tensions and strengthening local conflict-resolution mechanisms.

UNHCR assisted 3,100 survivors of violence against women and girls through psychosocial, medical, and legal support. Awareness-raising activities reached 62,600 people in North Kivu, while 1,500 individuals in South Kivu received specialized services and 1,000 received financial aid to support recovery and resilience. Child protection interventions reached 1,700 children and caregivers, including 1,600 separated children and 164 unaccompanied children.

Efforts to address statelessness intensified, despite the DRC not yet acceding to the 1954 and 1961 Statelessness Conventions. Through sustained advocacy and technical support, progress was made towards accession and legal reform, alongside training for seven civil registry offices and support for the issuance of 1,700 birth certificates in South Kivu.

Major achievements in the Democratic Republic of the Congo

- 49,300** people received financial aid
- 41,900** people received shelter and housing assistance
- 44,000** people received protection services
- 133,300** people benefited from specialized gender-based violence programmes

Emergency financial aid supported 49,300 people – primarily IDPs and returnees – enabling families to meet basic needs and reduce harmful coping mechanisms. UNHCR improved housing conditions for 41,900 people through transitional shelters, rehabilitation kits, and cash-for-rent, including integrated shelter support for 11,000 IDPs in Tanganyika.

Inclusion in national services expanded, with over 100,000 people accessing public health services and 2,800 individuals integrated into national statistical systems. Economic inclusion initiatives supported income-generating activities and vocational training for 8,700 people, while UNHCR-supported agricultural projects produced 359 tonnes of food in Ituri and Haut Uele. Training for 1,510 households in the Kivus strengthened local value chains and reduced reliance on humanitarian aid.

Progress towards durable solutions continued despite insecurity. UNHCR supported the reintegration of 14,000 returnees, particularly in Kananga, through housing, livelihoods, and improved access to services. Advocacy with local authorities secured land access for 981 IDP households, reducing risks of secondary displacement.

In asylum countries, policies remained generally favourable, though responses were constrained by funding gaps. By year-end, the inter-agency refugee response plan was funded at 27%, and UNHCR requirements at 35%. UNHCR launched two emergency appeals to respond to rising refugee flows amid a volatile regional context.

Burundi maintained access to asylum and granted prima facie recognition to 109,000 Congolese refugees. UNHCR supported the relocation of 65,000 refugees to the Busuma site, registered 92,000 asylum-seekers, and issued documentation to over 62,000 people, although only 5% lived in adequately serviced settlements.

Rwanda maintained over 99% access to asylum, with refugees fully integrated into national systems such as health care and primary education. Uganda kept its progressive asylum framework, though funding cuts reduced assistance and led to declining school enrolment. In the United Republic of Tanzania, Congolese refugees accessed asylum procedures and documentation, supporting the enrolment of 31,000 refugee children in schools in Nyarugusu camp. However, funding shortfalls limited shelter assistance, with only 1,276 emergency shelters constructed for newly arrived asylum-seekers.

Coordination and partnerships

UNHCR coordinated the response through the [Regional Refugee Response Plan](#), engaging 107 partners across Angola, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and Uganda. The plan targeted nearly 1.2 million Congolese refugees and 949,500 host community members, with total financial requirements of \$773 million. Aligned with the Global Compact on Refugees, it focused on protection, access to essential services, inclusion in national systems and enhanced self-reliance.

In this context, and within the framework of the regional refugee response plan, Burundi issued refugee identity cards to 37,000 Congolese refugees and facilitated the integration of 4,700 children into national education systems. Uganda provided safe water to 127,000 people, delivered primary health care services to 669,500 individuals, and supported 44,800 people through self-reliance activities.

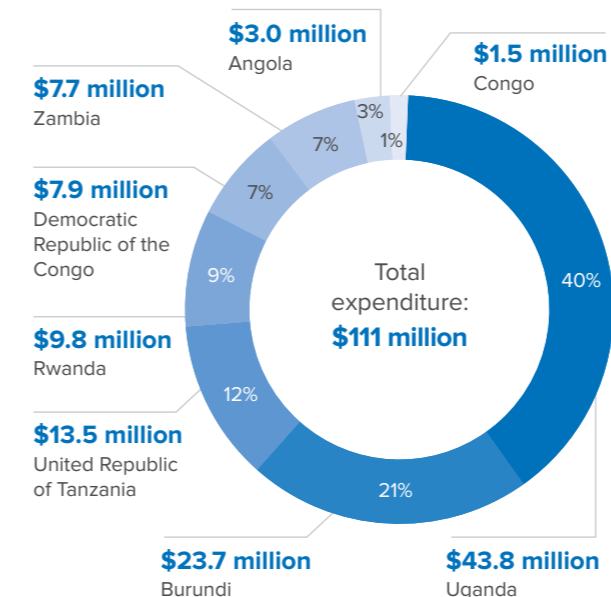
UNHCR strengthened partnerships with development actors in the DRC, including the World Bank, the European Union, FAO, and WFP, to enhance livelihoods, food security, and service delivery. Joint initiatives with development partners enabled the construction of three schools, benefitting 1,000 forcibly displaced and host-community children.

Use of flexible funding

Flexible funding enabled UNHCR to strengthen prevention and response to violence against women and girls, reaching 83,300 IDPs in eastern DRC through specialized services. Despite the cancellation of large-scale livelihood programmes due to funding cuts, 600 returnees in Kananga benefited from vocational training and reintegration assistance, including construction skills training for 220 individuals – primarily youth and women – supporting employment, resilience and local service provision.

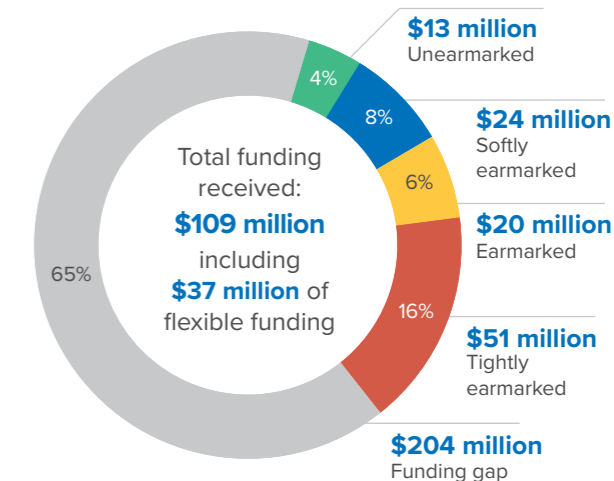
Financial overview

Expenditure by operation

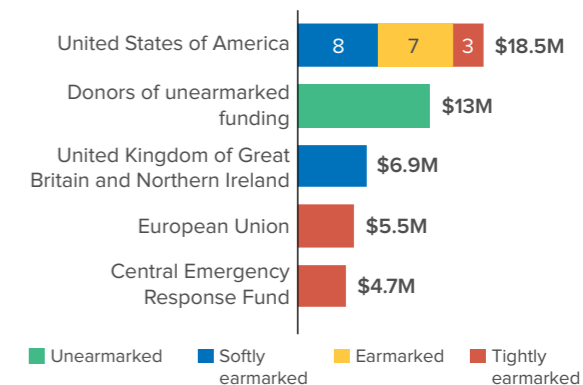


Funding received (USD)

In 2025, UNHCR required a total of **\$313 million** to address the situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and neighbouring countries but received only **35%** of that amount.



Top 5 donors



Voluntary contributions from all other donors, carry-over and other adjustments were \$60 million.

Building resilience through self-reliance



UNHCR helped 12,400 people in the DRC rebuild their livelihoods and regain dignity as they returned to communities affected by repeated violence. Provision of seeds and tools boosted agricultural production for 680 individuals in Ituri and Haut-Uele and 1,500 households in South Kivu. In North Kivu, 60 returnee women learned trades such as dressmaking and basket weaving, enabling them to earn income and support their families.