



# Central Africa and the Great Lakes

## Working environment

The political and economic situation remains stable in Cameroon, Gabon, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania. Some positive developments occurred in other countries in the region. The leader of the *Front National de Liberation* (FNL) returned to Burundi and the last two rebel movements in the Central African Republic (CAR) agreed to peace. While hostilities have been reduced significantly in CAR, the country remains volatile. In the Democratic Republic of the Congo fighting, which declined in the aftermath of the Goma Conference, resumed in both the North Kivu Province and the Ituri district of the Province Orientale in late August.

As a result, there has been little change in the number of IDPs in both countries. At the end of June 2008 there were 1,250,000 IDPs in the DRC, most in North Kivu province, and some 197,000 IDPs in CAR.

Another positive development was the coming into force of the Stability Pact of the Great Lakes conference and its related protocols, covering the property rights of returnees, the provision of protection and assistance to internally displaced persons (IDPs), and the prevention and suppression of sexual violence against women and children.

Burundi

Cameroon

Central African Republic

Chad (see under Chad/Sudan situation)

Congo (Republic of the)

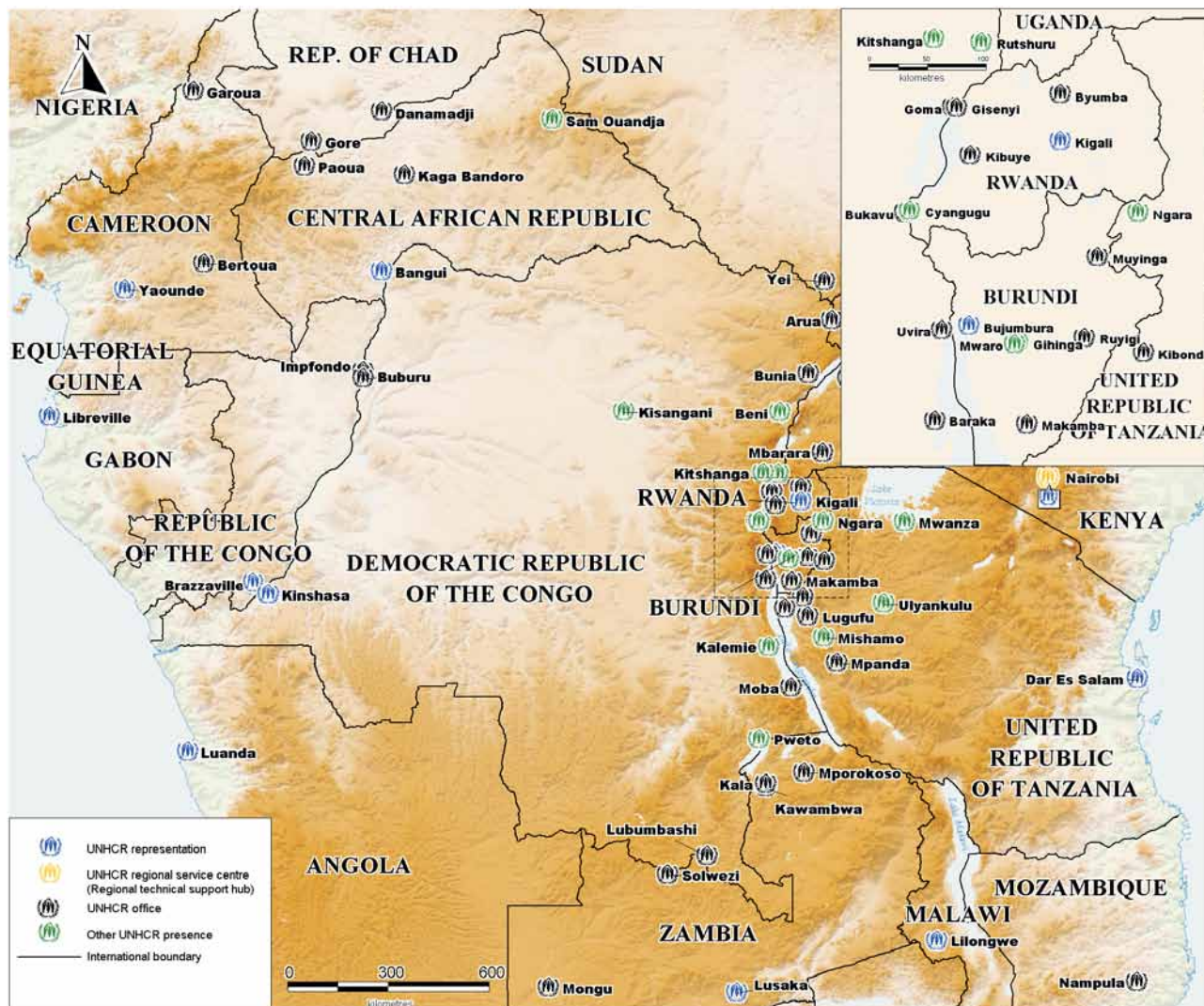
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Gabon

Rwanda

United Republic of Tanzania





There has been significant progress in achieving solutions for long-staying refugees. By mid-September, more than 75,000 Burundian refugees had repatriated, most of them from Tanzania, and 15,000 more were expected to return by the end of the year. Some 24,000 Congolese had also returned home, mainly from the Republic of the Congo, Zambia and Tanzania, while 6,500 Rwandan refugees had returned to their country from the DRC.

In addition, in late 2007 the Government of Tanzania agreed to expedite the processing of naturalization applications for 171,000 Burundian refugees who had expressed their desire to remain in the country. Naturalization applications for some 112,000 refugees are currently being processed. In Gabon, identity cards are being issued to refugees to facilitate their socio-economic integration, and a revalidation exercise is underway for refugees who have lost their legal status.

In a tripartite meeting, UNHCR, Angola and the DRC agreed to restart the repatriation of 60,000 Angolan refugees in the DRC who have been unable to return within the timeframe set by the Angolan government. No significant progress has been made in the search for durable solutions for refugees from CAR and Chad in Cameroon, and Sudanese refugees in CAR.

Refugees in the region need UNHCR's support to achieve durable solutions. Reintegration in the countries of origin and local integration are major challenges due to the poor socio-economic environment, particularly in areas that have been affected by conflict. Pending solutions, refugees in camps are dependent on the protection and assistance of the Office.

UNHCR's involvement with IDPs in the DRC and CAR, where the cluster approach is being used, is a major component of its operations in these countries. In the DRC, UNHCR co-leads the protection cluster, with the UN Mission (MONUC), and the early recovery cluster with UNDP. The Office also leads the camp coordination and camp management (CCCM) mechanism established in North Kivu to coordinate the humanitarian response to IDPs in sites. In CAR, the Office leads the protection cluster.

## Strategy

UNHCR's programmes in the region will focus on finding durable solutions for Angolan, Burundian, Congolese (DRC) and Rwandan refugees. Voluntary repatriation and local integration are the preferred solutions.





Children happily rush to school in Bemal, the Central African Republic.

UNHCR / J. Caux

Resettlement will also be pursued for individuals and groups of refugees with specific protection needs, or for whom repatriation and local integration are not feasible. In 2009, some 270,000 refugees are expected to benefit from one of the three durable solutions.

UNHCR will create a profile of the remaining refugee populations in camps in Tanzania to identify protection needs and the best durable solutions. The naturalization of Burundian refugees who fled to Tanzania in 1972 and of Somali Bantu refugees in the country is expected to be completed in 2009.

In the DRC, the Office will ensure that refugees who remain in the country receive identification documents as a first step towards local integration. It will also negotiate a favourable status for them. Meanwhile, should the situation in CAR improve, UNHCR will facilitate the return to the country of refugees from Cameroon and Chad.

UNHCR will ensure that the repatriation and local integration of refugees is sustainable by providing household and community-based reintegration support. It will encourage other UN agencies and donors to engage in developmental activities in return and integration areas. The legal and institutional frameworks on asylum in central African countries will be strengthened and their civil society networks given support in order to increase refugee protection.

Both in the DRC and CAR, UNHCR will continue to provide protection and assistance to IDPs through the

cluster approach. The Office will lead the protection clusters established in these two countries. In the DRC, UNHCR will be active in camp coordination and management in North Kivu and in the return and reintegration of IDPs.

UNHCR will ensure that comprehensive HIV and AIDS services are available within national AIDS control programmes to people of concern and surrounding communities. In order to provide a minimum standard of assistance in this regard, UNHCR will make sure that selected health clinics receive essential HIV and reproductive health packages. These packages should help to increase voluntary counselling and testing and the provision of anti-retroviral drugs. They should also aid in the prevention of mother to child transmission of the virus.

The Office will continue to support activities to combat HIV and AIDS, including voluntary testing and counselling, prevention of mother to child transmissions and the provision of free anti-retrovirals. UNHCR will also continue its efforts to reduce illness and deaths from malaria through general distributions of long-lasting insecticide-treated mosquito nets and the use of rapid diagnostic tests. Comprehensive multi-sectoral strategies will combat sexual and gender-based violence, while legal support for victims should help end the impunity often enjoyed by perpetrators.

UNHCR will focus on preventing the exploitation and abuse of children. The Office will work to increase school enrolment, particularly among girls, and fight against the stigmatization of children who have been

victims of sexual violence or are living with disabilities. Unaccompanied and separated refugee children will be identified and efforts made to return them to their families. UNHCR will also ensure that all proposed care arrangements and durable solutions for children are in their best interest.

## Constraints

Despite efforts to increase humanitarian space, access to IDPs remains problematic in CAR and the DRC due to insecurity. In these countries, and in the Republic of the Congo, Gabon, Cameroon and Tanzania, the delivery of protection and assistance is also complicated by the dispersal of refugees and IDPs over wide areas far from urban centres. The delivery of assistance is constrained by poor transport links.

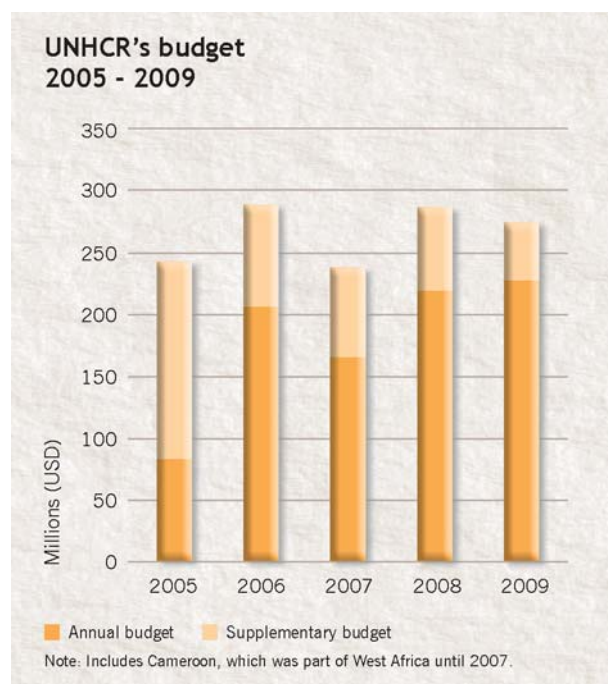
## Operations

Operations in **Burundi, Cameroon, the Central African Republic, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, the Republic of the Congo and the United Republic of Tanzania** are covered by individual country chapters.

In **Gabon**, the issuance of identity cards to refugees, which began in 2007, will continue through 2009. Distribution will reach remote areas and should ease local integration, allowing greater access to the job market and facilitating travel within the country. UNHCR will continue to pursue durable solutions for refugees while supporting in particular their self-sufficiency.

## Financial information

From 2005 to 2009, reductions in care and maintenance activities were offset by increasing efforts to find durable solutions. The increase in the annual programme budget in 2006 was linked to expansion of return and reintegration of Congolese (DRC) refugees and IDP protection and assistance activities in the DRC and CAR. The increase in the 2008 budget was linked to the launch of comprehensive solutions programmes for 1972 Burundian refugees in Tanzania's old settlements.



Countries	Budget (USD)					
	2008			2009		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget	Total
Burundi	21,833,225	5,742,263	27,575,488	24,127,058	2,733,304	26,860,362
Cameroon	3,150,673	500,000	3,650,673	11,244,567	0	11,244,567
Central African Republic	2,133,674	2,804,057	4,937,731	3,730,862	2,998,080	6,728,942
Chad	73,766,150	15,082,897	88,849,047	80,626,842	11,698,498	92,325,340
Congo, Republic of the	5,970,813	0	5,970,813	5,977,632	0	5,977,632
Democratic Republic of the Congo	40,922,027	28,507,764	69,429,791	53,587,722	21,447,738	75,035,460
Gabon	1,994,337	0	1,994,337	2,179,825	0	2,179,825
Rwanda	5,450,315	141,000	5,591,315	10,389,742	0	10,389,742
United Republic of Tanzania	24,671,621	14,537,812	39,209,433	26,563,840	9,176,211	35,740,051
Regional activities <sup>1</sup>	8,415,000	0	8,415,000	8,000,000	0	8,000,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>188,307,835</b>	<b>67,315,793</b>	<b>255,623,628</b>	<b>226,428,090</b>	<b>48,053,831</b>	<b>274,481,921</b>

<sup>1</sup> Includes activities for resettlement, repatriation and care and maintenance, as well as light aircraft charters.

Note: Supplementary programme budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.