

REPUBLIC OF CONGO

Operational highlights

- UNHCR verified the status of all refugees in the Republic of the Congo.
- The Office pursued durable solutions, mainly local integration, for those refugees unwilling or unable to repatriate.
- UNHCR continued to strengthen the national capacity of the Government to conduct refugee status determination (RSD).
- In November, the Office began to respond to the needs of more than 100,000 refugees who fled violence in the DRC.

Working environment

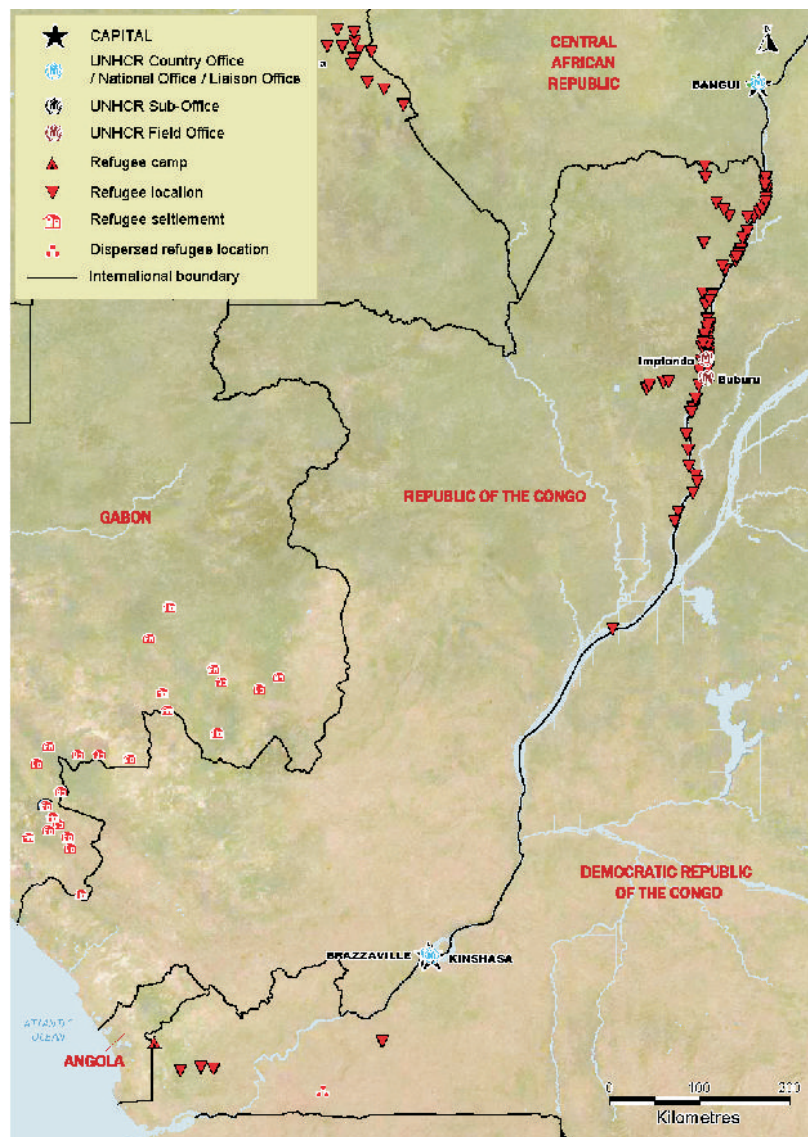
Efforts by the Government of the Republic of the Congo aimed at consolidating peace contributed to the process of national reconciliation and good governance. During 2009, presidential elections were conducted without major incidents. However, more than half of the population continued to live below the poverty threshold.

On the humanitarian front, the Congo hosted more than 28,000 refugees and asylum-seekers at the beginning of the year. The majority of them lived in rural areas and were hosted by the local population in the northern part of the country. Security and logistics remained major challenges for the delivery of protection and assistance. Access to refugee sites scattered along the Oubangui River over a distance of 500 kms, remained difficult given the lack of roads. Continuing ethnic clashes in the neighbouring Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) affected relief operations in refugee sites.

Achievements and impact

Main objectives

One of UNHCR's objectives in the Congo was to verify the status of urban refugees in Brazzaville and Pointe



Noire and of rural refugees in Betou, Imfondo and Loukolela. It also sought to reinforce local integration activities for rural refugees in the same areas. Furthermore, it aimed to strengthen the RSD capacity of the authorities to ensure that people of concern benefited from legal assistance.

Persons of concern					
Type of population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	DRC	103,200	103,200	-	-
	Rwanda	7,100	100	42	39
	Angola	800	10	48	47
	Various	260	10	41	17
Asylum-seekers	DRC	4,500	4,500	44	47
	CAR	120	120	42	19
	Various	290	290	31	20
Returnees (refugees)	Various	80	80	-	-
Total		116,350	108,310		



A refugee mother and her child wait for medical consultation from UNHCR's medical partner, Doctors of Africa.

UNHCR / F. NOY

○ *Protection and solutions*

In collaboration with the Government, UNHCR verified the status of all refugees living in the country and updated their registration data. The National Commission for Refugees (CNAR) issued more than 3,400 temporary certificates to asylum-seekers and nearly 2,900 identity cards to refugees. Some 43 families were granted refugee status.

More than 110 refugees repatriated to their country of origin, while 76 refugees were resettled and 48 Congolese returnees were provided with assistance.

UNHCR continued to implement projects to promote refugee self-sufficiency and advocated with the Government for local integration opportunities.

○ *Activities and assistance*

Community services: Some 48 per cent of refugee women in Brazzaville and 30 per cent in the north participated in community activities. Some 600 women of reproductive age in Brazzaville and 1,730 in the north received sanitary kits. There were 70 cases of sexual and gender-based violence which were reported and the survivors received medical support. Fifteen survivors of sexual violence received income generation support.

Crop production: Some 193 refugee groups received agricultural tools and seeds to increase self-sufficiency.

Domestic needs and household support: Non-food items (NFIs) were provided to 33 new urban refugees, who also received three-month rental housing allowances and cash

subsistence grants for six months. Some 260 older refugees were assisted with a payment of two months of rent; 70 of them also received NFIs.

Education: In Brazzaville, 250 urban refugee pupils at the primary, secondary and post-secondary levels received subsidies for inscription, uniforms, educational materials and to cover a monthly allowance. Some 28 refugees were provided with vocational training, and 17 attended literacy courses. In the north, UNHCR covered the enrolment fees for refugee children in host community schools. Five schools were rehabilitated and seven received equipment.

Fisheries: 140 fishing groups received fishing nets and boats.

Health and nutrition: In Brazzaville, urban refugees received primary health care at a Médecin d'Afrique health centre. Pregnant women and children under five were vaccinated. Complicated cases were referred to the health centre or hospitals. In the north-east, refugees who opted for local settlement received primary health care at eight health posts, or received referrals. HIV and AIDS sensitization and prevention campaigns, voluntary counselling and testing, and activities related to the prevention of mother to child transmission were conducted at Betou and Dongou.

Income generation: Some 60 refugees in Betou, Loukolela and Impfondo received financial assistance for self-reliance projects, such as soap and palm oil production. In Brazzaville, 35 refugees (13 women and 22 men) benefited from micro-finance for small businesses.

Legal assistance: UNHCR, in collaboration with the CNAR, verified the status of all refugees and registered asylum-seekers in the Congo. In order to reduce police harassment and to facilitate free movement for refugees, some 2,900 identity cards were distributed. Some 110 refugees repatriated to their country of origin and 76 refugees were resettled in third countries. About 48 Congolese refugees were assisted to return from abroad.

Livestock: 19 refugee groups in the north-east of the Congo, were provided with poultry and sheep by UNHCR.

Operational support (to agencies): UNHCR provided financial support to implementing partners to carry out programme activities. The Office also helped transport goods and staff to field locations.

Sanitation: UNHCR helped the refugee communities construct 198 latrines: 158 in Impfondo and 40 in Betou. Environmental sensitization campaigns were conducted in Impfondo, Loukolela and Betou.

Transport and logistics: UNHCR and its partners had access to 13 vehicles (seven in Brazzaville and six in the north-east). All implementing partners received fuel through UNHCR's stock.

Water: Some 291 wells were maintained (153 in Impfondo, 127 in Betou and 11 in Loukolela). In Loukolela, the water system allowed for the distribution of between 15 and 20 litres of water per person per day for refugees and host populations.

○ *Constraints*

Access to refugee sites in the north remained a challenge. The transportation of relief items was usually possible only by boat, making operation during the dry season difficult. The vehicle fleet, being old, experienced frequent maintenance problems and resulted in delayed activities. The Office had difficulty covering all of the needs of vulnerable urban refugees under the existing budget. During the last quarter of 2009, the operation was affected by the large influx of refugees from the DRC and had to shift the focus of its activities to respond rapidly.

| **Financial information** |

Upon completion of the large voluntary repatriation operations implemented over the last five years, UNHCR's programme in Congo has been reduced. In 2009, the priority was given to local integration activities.

The Office responded to the needs of the over 100,000 newly arrived refugees from the DRC through funds available at the time and UNHCR's operational reserve.

| **Organizational and implementation** |

UNHCR operations were managed by the country office in Brazzaville. Activities in the north were supervised by the field office in Impfondo. UNHCR managed its activities with six international and 25 national staff, as well as one consultant and seven UNVs.

| **Working with others** |

UNHCR Brazzaville worked with three national implementing partners. The Office cooperated with the CNAR on various protection issues and with the ICRC on the family reunification of unaccompanied children.

| **Overall assessment** |

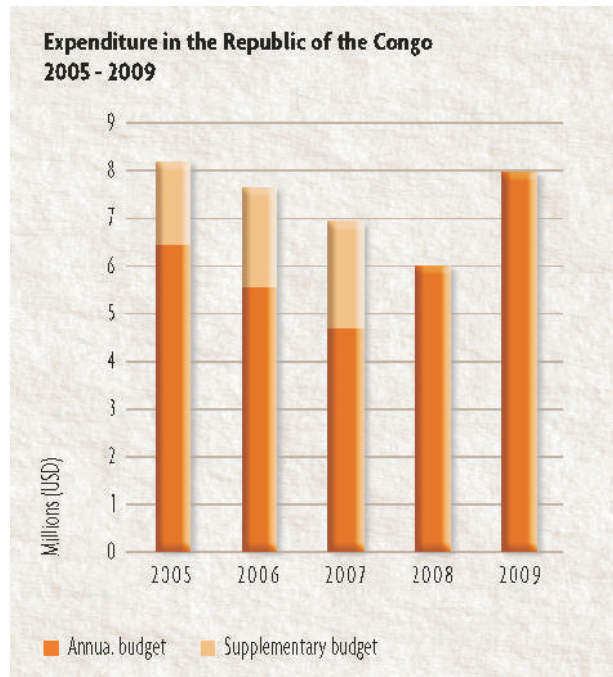
UNHCR met its objectives in a difficult operational environment. All refugees and asylum-seekers in Congo were registered, verified and provided with documentation. The Office continued to reinforce local integration activities for rural refugees who wished to remain in the RoC, and advocated with the Government on their behalf. It also worked to strengthen the national capacity for conducting RSD.

Partners

Government: *Comité National d'Assistance aux Réfugiés (CNAR)*

NGOs: *Médecins d'Afrique (MdA), Commission d'Entraide pour les Migrants et les Réfugiés (CEMIR), Agence d'Assistance aux Rapatriés et Réfugiés (AARREC)*

Others: UNFPA, ICRC



Budget, income and expenditure Republic of the Congo (USD)

	Final budget	Income from contributions	Other funds available	Total funds available	Total expenditure
Annual budget	8,456,302	3,245,323	4,948,920	8,194,243	7,945,303

Note: Income from contributions includes contributions earmarked at the country level and do not include seven per cent support costs for NAM contributions. Other funds available include transfers from unearmarked and broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

Financial report for UNHCR's operations in the Republic of the Congo (USD)

Expenditure breakdown	Current years' project			Previous years' project
	Annual budget	Supplementary budgets	Total	Annual and supplementary budgets
Protection, monitoring and coordination	1,381,079	0	1,381,079	0
Community services	25,440	0	25,440	127,531
Crop production	0	0	0	18,915
Domestic needs and household support	667,373	0	667,373	64,993
Education	29,203	0	29,203	205,838
Fisheries	0	0	0	5,353
Health and nutrition	274,386	0	274,386	253,630
Income generation	1,086	0	1,086	20,601
Legal assistance	220,774	0	220,774	23,956
Livestock animal husbandry	0	0	0	10,979
Operational support (to agencies)	312,898	0	312,898	195,053
Sanitation	0	0	0	9,216
Shelter and infrastructure	0	0	0	10,519
Transport and logistics	1,480,791	0	1,480,791	181,471
Water	0	0	0	10,005
Instalments to implementing partners	2,068,901	0	2,068,901	(1,138,058)
Subtotal operational activities	6,461,930	0	6,461,930	0
Programme support	1,483,374	0	1,483,374	0
Total expenditure	7,945,303	0	7,945,303	0
Cancellation on previous years' expenditure				(44,651)

Instalments with implementing partners				
Payments made	2,312,049	0	2,312,049	
Reporting received	(243,148)	0	(243,148)	
Balance	2,068,901	0	2,068,901	

Previous year's report	
Instalments with implementing partners:	
Outstanding 1st January	1,394,963
Reporting received	(1,138,058)
Refunded to UNHCR	(71,110)
Currency adjustment	0
Outstanding 31st December	185,794