

# Repatriation and Reintegration of Congolese (DRC) Refugees

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Revised Supplementary Appeal  
January 2005 – December 2006



*Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo: A girl is being helped to get off a boat at a transfer centre in Betou, Republic of Congo, July 2005 © Ose / UNHCR*

## Introduction

This appeal constitutes a revision of the “Return to DRC” appeal launched in early 2005 and lays out a more comprehensive vision for the return of nearly 200,000 refugees to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2005 and 2006. For 2005, facilitated return to Equateur will now include refugees from the Central African Republic (CAR) due to renewed interest in return from this group. The initial repatriation and reintegration programme will also be expanded to include (a) facilitated return to South Kivu of up to 15,000 returnees from the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania), (b) preparatory activities in the Katanga area to support returns from Zambia and Tanzania, and, (c) establishing a UNHCR presence in Ituri (Province Orientale). Total revised 2005 needs are **US\$ 23.1 million**, of which US\$ 15.6 million from the initial appeal.

For 2006, UNHCR plans to launch organised repatriation movements from all of the nine neighbouring countries of asylum – Angola, Burundi, CAR, Republic of Congo (RoC), Rwanda, Sudan, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia, as well as Southern Africa countries – provided that conditions of safe and dignified return are fulfilled in the respective return zones in addition to contributing to sustainable return through initial reintegration activities. UNHCR appeals for **US\$ 75.6 million** for this phase of the multi-year programme.



*Returnees transported by boat on the River Oubangi ©2005 UNHCR*

Even though this appeal covers the period up to the end of 2006, it is anticipated that activities will continue throughout 2007 in order to assist all those Congolese who wish to repatriate. A review of remaining needs beyond 2006 will take place in due time.

The extension and expansion of the programme have been triggered by recent promising developments in some areas of the DRC in terms of the security and political situation. The momentum created by the adoption of a constitution and the prospect of elections are already having a positive impact as evidenced by an increasing number of returns. Operational planning is based on the assumption that this situation will further improve and that out of **433,000** Congolese refugees, more than **63,000** will return to DRC in 2005 and some **123,000** in 2006, taking into account spontaneous and UNHCR organised movements. UNHCR will regularly review planning assumptions, both at country level and for each return zone, in order to adapt to the situation on the ground and better respond to the wishes of refugees to return. This will necessitate some flexibility in planning figures, activities and timetables.

More than 20,000 Congolese refugees have already opted to return home from eight host countries since October 2004. Generous support to UNHCR's first appeal has allowed the agency to ease some of the challenges faced by these returnees in terms of safe passage and reintegration: returnees are being transported by boat from RoC into DRC's Equateur province twice weekly and the transit centres in South Kivu offer spontaneous returnees from Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda a place to rest after the long journey across Lake Tanganyika. Upon receipt of an assistance package, they travel onwards to their home areas with trucks and busses provided by UNHCR. In Equateur Province, UNHCR and partners have rehabilitated schools and health centres, enabling returnees to gain access to critical health services and education.

Despite the many challenges faced by returnees, the rate of return to Eastern DRC, especially to South Kivu and Katanga, has significantly increased in recent months. Just in August 2005, before the Tripartite Commission DRC-UNHCR-Tanzania concluded that facilitated refugee return would officially commence from Tanzania as of 15 October 2005, the rate of spontaneous returns to South Kivu averaged 800 persons



*Gigel Mele (left) is overjoyed to be reunited with her family in her home village of Zambi, DRC ©2005 Ose / UNHCR*

**UNHCR and inter-agency needs assessments have identified the following priority needs for this operation:**

- Community-based initial reintegration measures in areas of return will be important, as destroyed and damaged school buildings and health centres – effects of the war which ravaged these areas – pose obstacles to a lasting return.
- The passage from Tanzania across Lake Tanganyika and the crossing of the Oubangui River from RoC into DRC's Equateur province need to take place under safe conditions, therefore boats must be provided to those refugees who wish to return.
- Refugees in asylum must have access to objective and neutral information on areas of origin through mass information campaigns to help them make an informed decision on their return.
- All project activities should be implemented with a conflict-sensitive approach to promote peaceful coexistence between returnees and receiving communities.

**Beneficiaries and planning figures**

Country of Asylum	Refugee Population	Main provinces of origin in the DRC	2005 Planning Facilitated/ spontaneous return	2006 Planning Facilitated/ spontaneous return
Angola	14,000	Katanga	300	1,600
Burundi	30,000	N/S Kivu	2,000	10,000
CAR	4,800	Equateur	1,700	2,000
RoC	58,000	Equateur	24,000	30,000
Rwanda	48,000	N/S Kivu	3,000	10,800
Sudan	1,500	Orientale		1,500
Tanzania	154,000	South Kivu, Katanga	20,000	35,000
Uganda	19,000	Orientale		6,500
Zambia	66,000	Katanga	10,000	20,000
Southern Africa Countries	37,700	Katanga, Kivus, Kinshasa	2,500	5,900
Total	433,000		63,500	123,300
<b>Total Expected Return 2005/2006</b>			<b>186,800</b>	

## Context and Background

The DRC extends over a territory of 2.3 million square kilometers (equal to two thirds of the European Union), and is populated by an estimated 58 million inhabitants. Some 1.5 million Congolese continue to be internally displaced within the DRC, while another 433,000 are in exile as refugees, mainly in neighbouring countries. They have fled their homes since the mid-1990s to escape fighting between different factions along the frontline extending from Pweto in south-eastern DRC's Katanga province up to Equateur province in the north-west of the country. At different stages the conflict has involved almost all neighbouring countries. More than three million people have died as a result of the conflict, which was accompanied by widespread human rights violations including systematic killings and rape.

Since 1999, the deployment of the UN peacekeeping force (United Nations Organization Mission in the Democratic Republic of Congo or "MONUC") has assisted with maintaining peace in the country. The UN Security Council Resolution 1565 in October 2004 agreed to increase the peace-keeping force of MONUC by 5,900 to a total of 16,900 troops. The majority of the additional troops have been deployed to the troubled Eastern DRC. Under a Chapter VII mandate, MONUC is authorized to use all means necessary to reinforce peace and indeed since end of March 2005, has used the full extent of its mandate to conduct pro-active cordon and search operations against armed groups in Ituri.

The security situation in the DRC has improved in many areas, despite certain pockets of insecurity. Nevertheless, a general statement on the overall security level cannot be made due to the vast size of the country. Even within provinces stretching over hundreds of kilometres, the situation can differ tremendously. North and South Kivu provinces, some areas of Equateur province and the Ituri region remain plagued by the existence of local and regional militias. However, the disarmament programme has made significant progress and MONUC peacekeeping forces and the national army continue to launch military operations against militias in Eastern DRC.

These operations, while possibly causing localised insecurity in the short-run, are expected to bring more stability in the medium and long-term.

On the political side, the Sun City Accords signed in 2002, in combination with a series of other inter-Congolese agreements, brought together almost all opponents of the Congolese war in one Transition Government headed by Joseph Kabila as President. The Transition Process has now advanced to the final stage with elections for a regular Government in sight. Voter registration for the forthcoming elections has started in several DRC provinces, including in South Kivu, a major refugee return area. It has been observed that the electoral process has led to an increase in refugee returns, as many refugees wish to participate in the forthcoming elections.



*Returnees aboard a transfer boat wave goodbye to their compatriots who will follow them home at a later stage ©2005 Ose / UNHCR*

## Intervention Strategy

The overall intervention strategy envisages that UNHCR organises cross-border return movements to those areas considered appropriate for return in dignity and safety. At present, this concerns parts of Equateur province and the Uvira and Fizi territories of South Kivu. Return movements will be carried out in a phased manner and will take into account safe passage and absorption capacity in areas of origin. As soon as conditions improve, other areas, such as in Katanga, will also be open to repatriation. Tripartite agreements on refugee return between the DRC, UNHCR and country of asylum have so far been concluded

with the Central African Republic, RoC and Tanzania.

UNHCR assists the DRC Government in re-establishing public services to promote the sustainable reintegration of returnees into home communities. UNHCR reintegration assistance measures will focus on initial needs, while development-oriented agencies such as UNDP, UNICEF and the FAO will implement complementary projects. UNHCR and UNDP jointly chair the inter-agency working group on reintegration, focusing on strategies to benefit all returnee groups – refugees, IDPs and ex-combatants. All activities covered by this appeal are part of the 2005 CAP and 2006 Action Plan for the DRC process.



*Returnees continue their journey from a drop-off point on the Oubangui River ©2005 UNHCR*

### Areas of intervention

UNHCR and its partners intervene in the following four areas:

- 1. Preparatory activities for repatriation:** In asylum countries hosting Congolese refugees originating from areas in the DRC to which facilitated repatriation has not yet started - including Angola, Burundi, Rwanda, South African countries, Sudan, Uganda and Zambia - UNHCR will set up the structures necessary to assist Congolese refugees with return, once the conditions in their home areas are suitable. Activities will include return intention surveys, verification of the refugee populations, mass information campaigns about conditions in the DRC and preparation of actual repatriation operations.
- 2. Repatriation movement:** Once refugees have opted for voluntary return, they receive a voluntary repatriation form (VRF) and are assisted with transport back to their home areas. Mass information campaigns ensure that refugees are fully informed on the conditions in the DRC and repatriation modalities. Transport assistance can include UNHCR arranged return convoys, by boat and by land, or the reimbursement of self-organised transport through a cash grant. During the repatriation movement returnees receive a return package. UNHCR in countries of asylum ensures proper registration procedures and establishes departure centres, while UNHCR in the DRC will coordinate the return process and put in place transit centres and way-stations. Protection and community services staff will be available to assist and monitor persons with special needs as identified during registration.
- 3. Initial returnee reintegration:** The aim is to meet the most immediate reintegration needs, and to fill the gaps in the transition from humanitarian to development interventions. Those who return spontaneously will be eligible for the same assistance as those benefiting from the facilitated repatriation programme. UNHCR advocates with the Government and partner agencies like FAO, UNDP, the World Bank and UNICEF to incorporate returnees' needs into their planning and operations.
- 4. Returnee monitoring:** Frequent monitoring missions are conducted by UNHCR and partners to return areas in the DRC in order to identify and address the problems returnees are facing upon return home. The findings of these missions will be incorporated in the overall repatriation strategy and the planning for protection and assistance interventions of UNHCR and operational partners.

## Internally displaced persons (IDPs)

Current estimates of the IDP population in the DRC amount to some 1.5 million individuals, the majority of which are accommodated by host families. The largest IDP camps are located in the Ituri region, the Kivus and the Kinshasa area. In the collaborative approach to IDP situations, UNHCR will support the UN country team so that these displaced populations can also return home in safety and dignity. IDPs will benefit from returnee monitoring and community-based reintegration assistance in the same areas to which refugees are returning.

## Legal Framework for Return

The National Commission for Refugees (CNR), an inter-ministerial body established by presidential decree, is mandated by the DRC Transition Government to establish the legal framework for refugee return. UNHCR

supports the conclusion of tripartite agreements between the DRC Government, neighbouring countries hosting DRC refugees and UNHCR. So far, three tripartite agreements have been concluded with the CAR, the RoC and Tanzania and additional agreements are planned with other host countries. The DRC Transition Government carries the main responsibility for the return and reintegration of its nationals and their physical security.



*Brick making at a community base in Equateur Province ©2005 UNHCR*

## Assistance Activities

The assistance programme will encompass legal, physical and material aspects for a dignified return. UNHCR's strategy envisages a holistic community-based support in its intervention whose *main aims* are to:

- Avoid further internal displacement;
- Anchor sustainable return in the receiving communities;
- Avoid the creation of inequalities and promote peaceful co-existence between returnees and the local communities and;
- Link its programme to longer term development assistance within the framework of the "4Rs" strategy (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction).

The *key objectives* of the programme are to:

- Ensure that refugees have the possibility to make a free and informed choice to return home. To this end, a mass information campaign will be put in place using various means of communication as well as "go-and-see" visits;
- Facilitate the return and reintegration of refugees to areas considered conducive to organised return and ensure the voluntary nature of return;
- Welcome and register returnees at transit centres and ensure access to civil documentation as well as transportation to drop-off points as close as possible to their final destination;
- Provide Congolese returnees including spontaneous returnees with basic humanitarian assistance to ensure their dignified and sustainable reintegration into local communities.

### Return Movement

UNHCR will provide registration documentation, voluntary repatriation forms (VRF), medical screening and vaccinations in countries of asylum before departure. Refugees who wish to return will be transported to the entry point into the DRC, or to ports for transport by boat in the case of the Republic of Congo (crossing of the Oubangui River) and Tanzania (transfer across Lake Tanganyika). All return movements will be accompanied by UNHCR staff. Boats will either be purchased or rented for the operation. Reception centres will be put in place to accommodate returnees upon arrival and to distribute the return assistance package. Onward transport will be provided from these centres to drop-off points in returnees' areas of origin. UNHCR will procure additional trucks and vehicles to implement this assistance.

### Return package

Each returnee family will receive a return package comprised of mats, blankets, kitchen sets, mosquito nets, hygienic cloth, soap, buckets and jerry cans. The package will be complemented by 3-month food rations provided by WFP, subject to availability. Seeds, agricultural and fishery tools will also be distributed as appropriate to facilitate re-integration and self-sufficiency of returnees.



*Items are being distributed to refugees during the repatriation at a transfer centre in Mozambo, DRC ©2005 Ose / UNHCR*

### Shelter

All returnee families will receive a basic construction kit at transit centres in the DRC, which will enable them to construct their own provisional homes or rehabilitate an existing structure. Most construction material will be available locally. Returnees with special needs who are unable to reconstruct their own homes

will receive a basic shelter constructed by UNHCR and partners. The shelter package will comprise the following items: hoes, string, nails, plastic sheets and other construction tools.



*Hospital in Fizi, South Kivu ©2005 Ippolito/UNHCR*

### Community-Based Initial Reintegration Assistance

UNHCR will implement multi-sectoral initial reintegration assistance using a community-based approach. Interventions to ensure access to potable water and the rehabilitation of **community infrastructures** will likewise benefit the returnees and the receiving communities. UNHCR's intervention strategy will aim at promoting peaceful co-existence by anchoring its programme within the receiving communities. In the **health sector**, UNHCR will support the running costs of rehabilitated clinics for an initial period, and provide free medicines and incentives to professional staff. In **education**, UNHCR and the DRC Government are collaborating to ensure that returnee students' school fees are waived for the first six months upon return. **Income generation activities**, mainly "Cash for work", and small community grants will empower returnees and receiving communities, especially those with special needs. Close cooperation is planned with the FAO seeds and tools programme.

The priorities of the initial reintegration assistance will be set in line with the needs in each return area, taking into account other agencies' activities and the planning of development actors.

## Protection

UNHCR's guiding principles are the voluntary nature of repatriation, the ability to return in safety and dignity, respect for returnees' human rights and ensuring the well-being of groups with special needs. Particular attention will be given to returning **refugee women and children**. UNHCR will monitor the situation of returnees in the areas of return and will intervene with the local authorities and the military in case problems arise, such as concerning access to civil registration documents, exercising property rights or obtaining/confirming citizenship. The agency will promote campaigns to raise awareness of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) issues as well as the rights of the child and will fund various projects where feasible. HIV-AIDS sensitisation and mine awareness campaigns will be carried out.

In order to prevent conflicts between returnees and receiving communities in Eastern DRC, specific projects are planned to promote peaceful coexistence and to prevent land and property disputes. These projects will include small grants for community rehabilitation activities, village theatre as well as the production and broadcasting of radio programmes.

### **UNHCR presence in return areas**

UNHCR has so far opened three field presences in Equateur Province, at Libenge, Gemena and Mbandaka, and will shortly open an additional office in Dongo. The assistance and reintegration activities in the Kivus will be implemented and monitored through the agency's presence in Goma, Bukavu, Uvira and Baraka. Due to increased spontaneous returns to Northern Katanga province, UNHCR is establishing a presence in Kalemie, Moba and Pweto. In view of increased spontaneous movements from Uganda, an office will also be opened in Bunia (Ituri province) by the end of 2005.

### **Coordination**

In collaboration with the Government of the DRC and the UN Country Team, UNHCR will

coordinate the voluntary repatriation of the DRC Congolese refugees, and promote the engagement of other assistance agencies in return areas. Field level coordination fora under the participation of Government authorities, UN agencies and NGOs will ensure sound coordination of activities and avoid duplication of assistance efforts.

UNHCR continues to work closely with the UN Humanitarian Coordinator, promoting synergy with UN agencies, other humanitarian and development actors to respond to returnees' needs with due consideration of the "4Rs" strategy (repatriation, reintegration, rehabilitation and reconstruction). Within the existing UN Country Team framework, UNHCR will coordinate its humanitarian interventions with its partners, particularly OCHA, UNICEF, WHO, WFP, FAO, UNAIDS, UNDP, World Bank and MONUC, to ensure complementarity. In addition to the MOU concluded with WFP, Memoranda of Understanding with FAO, MONUC, UNICEF and UNDP will be signed for a division of labour to optimise the outcome for returnees in the return and reintegration process



*Returnee siblings sit for an ID photo at a transfer centre in Betou, ROC©2005 Ose / UNHCR*

# Financial Requirements and Maps

**Supplementary Programme for the repatriation and reintegration of Congolese (DRC) refugees**  
**Regional multi-year operations plan Summary Budget**  
**Overall requirements 1 January 2005 – 31 December 2005**  
**(in US Dollars)**

SECTORS AND SERVICES	DRC	CAR	ROC	TAN	ZAM	UGA	RWA	BDI	ANG	SUD	S/ AFRICA*	HQ	TOTAL
Protection, Monitoring and coordination	6,707,389	96,704	471,952	363,494	-	-	-	-	30,000	-	-	-	7,669,539
Community services	400,145	-	26,925	45,000	-	-	-	-	5,000	-	-	-	477,070
Crop production	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Domestic Needs / Household	580,792	20,000	286,856	9,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	896,648
Education	516,350	-	24,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	540,350
Food	22,703	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	22,703
Forestry	87,470	-	89,749	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	177,219
Health/Nutrition	1,000,000	21,750	26,406	86,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,134,156
Income Generation	568,879	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	568,879
Legal assistance / Protection	206,652	30,000	111,991	105,000	-	-	-	-	10,000	-	-	-	463,643
Operational Support (to agencies)	1,700,000	-	510,541	180,000	-	-	-	-	10,000	-	-	-	2,400,541
Sanitation	50,000	-	10,000	40,500	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	100,500
Shelter / Other infrastructure	914,693	15,000	90,672	191,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	1,211,365
Transport / Logistics	3,250,000	255,890	546,178	935,000	-	-	-	-	75,000	-	-	-	5,062,068
Water (non-agricultural)	365,062	-	2,530	45,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	412,592
<b>Total per Sector</b>	<b>16,370,135</b>	<b>439,344</b>	<b>2,197,800</b>	<b>1,999,994</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>130,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>21,137,273</b>
Support Costs (7%)	1,145,909	30,754	153,846	140,000	-	-	-	-	9,100	-	-	-	1,479,609
Programme Support	-	-	189,739	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	327,773	517,512
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>17,516,045</b>	<b>470,098</b>	<b>2,541,385</b>	<b>2,139,993</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>139,100</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>327,773</b>	<b>23,134,394</b>

\*This column groups together the following Southern Africa countries: Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

**Supplementary Programme for the repatriation and reintegration of Congolese (DRC) refugees**  
**Regional multi-year operations plan Summary Budget**  
**Overall requirements 1 January 2006 – 31 December 2006**  
**(in US Dollars)**

SECTORS AND SERVICES	DRC	CAR	ROC	TAN	ZAM	UGA	RWA	BDI	ANG	SUD	S/AFRICA*	HQ	TOTAL
Protection, Monitoring & coordination	22,650,729	94,364	1,276,832	1,228,062	1,035,365	258,390	476,796	250,000	60,000	25,000	555,000		27,910,538
Community services	1,200,000	-	102,770	105,000	30,000	15,000	4,092	4,092	20,000	-	100,000		1,580,954
Crop production	600,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		600,000
Domestic Needs / Household	1,000,000	20,000	24,262	20,000	60,000	-	26,596	26,596	-	-	-		1,177,454
Education	2,200,000	-	30,000	-	20,000	40,000	-	-	-	-	-		2,290,000
Food	65,000	-	-	-	-	-	6,206	6,206	-	-	-		77,412
Forestry	200,000	-	150,000	-	60,000	-	120,000	60,000	-	-	-		590,000
Health / Nutrition	3,500,000	21,750	60,749	55,660	-	5,000	10,000	5,000	-	-	-		3,658,159
Income Generation	1,000,000	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-		1,000,000
Legal assistance / Protection	3,000,000	15,000	171,065	43,518	40,000	40,000	120,594	60,000	40,000	10,000	200,000		3,740,177
Operational Support (to agencies)	3,780,000	-	199,000	200,000	380,000	40,000	49,134	25,000	40,000	-	200,000		4,913,134
Sanitation	350,000	-	15,000	15,000	-	2,500	-	-	-	-	-		382,500
Shelter / Other infrastructure	7,000,000	5,000	25,050	100,000	-	5,000	100,000	50,000	-	-	100,000		7,385,050
Transport / Logistics	6,000,000	255,890	704,000	1,735,000	1,200,000	300,000	86,059	40,000	337,500	150,000	1,475,000		12,283,449
Water (non-agricultural)	2,000,000	-	1,404	15,000	-	-	9,752	9,752	-	-	-		2,035,908
<b>Total per Sector</b>	<b>54,545,729</b>	<b>412,004</b>	<b>2,760,132</b>	<b>3,517,240</b>	<b>2,825,365</b>	<b>705,890</b>	<b>1,009,229</b>	<b>536,646</b>	<b>497,500</b>	<b>185,000</b>	<b>2,630,000</b>	<b>-</b>	<b>69,624,735</b>
Support Costs (7%)	3,818,201	28,840	193,209	246,207	197,776	49,412	70,646	37,565	34,825	12,950	184,100		4,873,731
Programme Support												1,072,396	1,072,396
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>58,363,930</b>	<b>440,844</b>	<b>2,953,341</b>	<b>3,763,447</b>	<b>3,023,141</b>	<b>755,302</b>	<b>1,079,875</b>	<b>574,211</b>	<b>532,325</b>	<b>197,950</b>	<b>2,814,100</b>	<b>1,072,396</b>	<b>75,570,862</b>

\* This column groups together the following Southern Africa countries: Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe



**REPATRIATION OF DRC REFUGEES**

Equateur, DRC

As of 28.01.05

Geographic Information Systems

Kinshasa, DRC

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