

# THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

January 2020-December 2021



## CREDITS

UNHCR wishes to acknowledge the contributions of partners and staff in the Southern Africa and Great Lakes regions in Africa and at Headquarters who have participated in the preparation of the narrative, financial and graphic components of this document.

## CONCEPT DESIGN

UNHCR, Office of the Bureau for Southern Africa in Pretoria, South Africa. The maps in this publication do not imply the expression of any opinion on the part of UNHCR concerning the legal status of any country or territory or area, of its authorities, or the delimitation of borders or boundaries. All statistics are provisional and subject to change. Except where otherwise indicated, all population figures provided in this report are as of 31 December 2019.

## WEB PORTAL

For more information on the DRC situation go to: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/drc>

## PHOTOGRAPHS

### Front Cover:

Refugee women from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) walk to a market at the Mantapala settlement in Zambia. © UNHCR/Will Swanson

### Angola Chapter:

Refugee girls from the DRC enjoy a game of skipping in Lóvua Settlement. © UNHCR/Omotola Akindipe

### Burundi Chapter:

Congolese refugee children gather in Musasa refugee camp in northern Burundi. © UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin

### Republic of the Congo Chapter:

A refugee woman from the DRC carries wood, manioc and vegetables back to the Gouga Route refugee site where she lives. © UNHCR/Frederic Noy

### Rwanda Chapter:

A young Congolese refugee boy from the DRC attends a class at the Gasaka School in Nyamagabe. Over 2,000 primary school children enrolled in that district are refugees from the DRC. © UNHCR/Paddy Dowling

### Uganda Chapter:

A refugee from the DRC, talks with his sons in front of his shop in Rwamwanja refugee settlement. © UNHCR/Vincent Tremeau

### United Republic of Tanzania Chapter:

Congolese students attend a literature class at Fraternity Secondary School in Nyarugusu refugee camp. The school has a shortage of schoolbooks so the students must group together to share. © UNHCR/Georgina Goodwin

### Zambia Chapter:

"Thanks to this business, I can take care of my kids," says this refugee woman from the DRC at a market stall in Mantapala Settlement. © UNHCR/Will Swanson

### Annex:

Congolese refugees stand outside their shops at a market in Mantapala Settlement, Zambia. © UNHCR/Will Swanson

### Back Cover:

A Congolese refugee who weaves traditional mats from dried palm leaves to make a living in Rwamwanja settlement, Uganda. © UNHCR/Duniya Alam Khan

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## Foreword

The Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) remains one of the most complex and long-standing humanitarian crises in Africa. As of the end of 2019, countries in the Southern and Great Lakes regions in Africa generously host some 905,573 Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers. The on-going armed conflicts across much of eastern DRC, as well as intercommunal violence continue to cause internal and external displacement of populations, tragic loss of human life and destruction of communities. Although a peaceful transition of power followed the presidential elections in December 2018, concerns remain over the deterioration of the security and humanitarian situation, mainly in the eastern part of the country.



The situation has become even more complex in recent years with ongoing displacement in parts of the DRC, while the government pursues efforts to promote returns for refugees, asylum-seekers and those who have been internally displaced. Recently displaced Congolese continue to arrive into neighbouring countries, requiring assistance and protection who have been in a protracted situation of forced displacement – many for over a decade. Given the constantly growing needs and increasing strain on resources in the host countries, the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) continues to be an essential tool to rally support and provide immediate humanitarian assistance and a strategic direction towards medium and long-term solutions in the countries of asylum for Congolese refugees neighbouring the DRC: Angola, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia.

UNHCR values the partnership of the agencies engaged in the DRC RRRP 2020-2021, and together we have developed interventions through close consultations with the affected populations and host governments in order to improve protection space for Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers, while ensuring there is preparedness in the event of new influxes. A key factor to mitigate dependency on humanitarian assistance is to foster and strengthen self-reliance in a conducive environment. This can be accomplished through education, skills training and supporting livelihood opportunities for the refugee and host communities. Mainstreaming access for Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers to government services will ensure much needed structures and resources are not devoted to creating parallel systems. Rather, services and programmes are strengthened for the benefit of everyone, adding to improved development and a shared social wellbeing. In addition, as refugees and host communities share the same land and resources, it is important to promote conservation activities that mitigate the impact that hosting refugees has on the environment.

UNHCR and RRRP partners urge States to provide favourable conditions towards integration, and we support efforts that promote viable integration. More refugees are considering repatriation from all countries in the region, and UNHCR is also ready to support where returns are entirely voluntary and come about through informed decisions and can be conducted in a safe and dignified manner. To this end we are engaging in tripartite agreements which take refugee concerns into consideration and promote the sustainability of returns. Resettlement must also remain an option for the most vulnerable, and we continue to seek the support of the international community to provide much needed space for these special cases.

Throughout the RRRP process, we have placed great importance on data and analysis in order to clearly articulate evidence-based needs of the Congolese refugees and align our responses with the UN Sustainable Development Goals. This RRRP also follows pledges made during the first ever Global Refugee Forum (GRF) held in December 2019. The GRF pledges provide an opportunity to bring on board traditional and non-traditional partners as well as regional actors to strengthen the commitment to the DRC situation and to spark new pledges. Through this RRRP, let us renew our commitment to continue to work together in the pursuit of comprehensive solutions for Congolese refugees.

Valentin Tapsoba  
Director, UNHCR Regional Bureau for Southern Africa

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Valentin Tapsoba', written over a light blue horizontal line.

912,069

PLANNED ASSISTED REFUGEE  
POPULATION BY END OF 2020

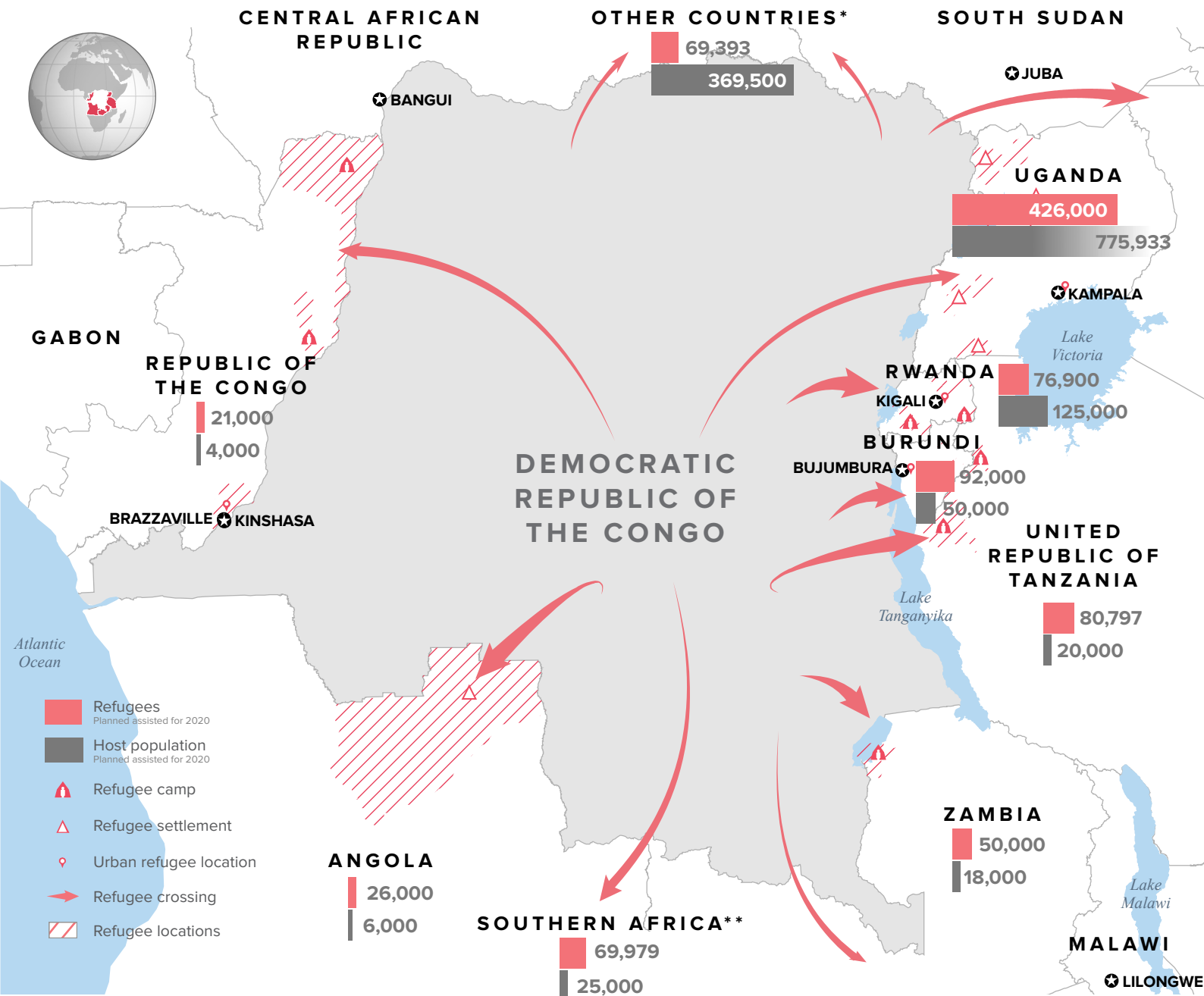
1.4M

HOST POPULATION  
TARGETED

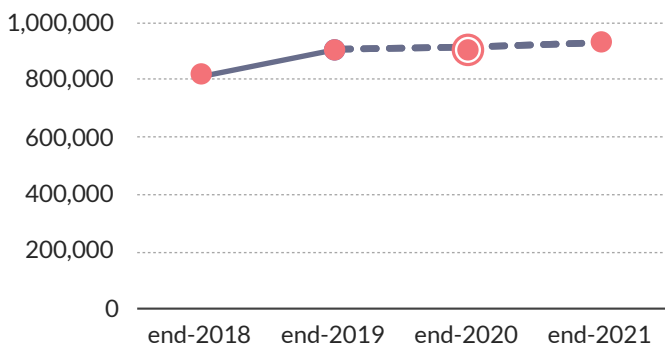
US\$ 621.2M

FUNDING REQUIREMENTS  
FOR 2020

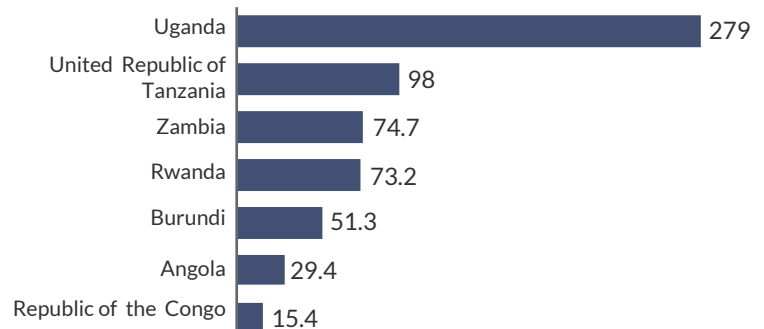
66

PARTNERS PARTICIPATING  
IN 2020

## Refugee Population Trends



## Requirements | in millions US\$



\* Southern Africa includes Botswana, Indian Ocean islands, the Kingdom of eSwatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe

\*\* Other countries include Central African Republic, Chad, Kenya and South Sudan.

# Regional Overview

## Introduction

The 2020-2021 Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) validates the earlier RRRP, launched in December 2018 and revised in June 2019, covering the inter-agency response in the countries of asylum for Congolese refugees neighbouring the DRC: Angola, Burundi, Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania, Uganda and Zambia. By the end of 2020, RRRP partners aim to provide life-saving humanitarian assistance and protection to **912,069** Congolese refugees. The planning figures are based on scenarios reflecting a deteriorating situation within the DRC characterized by ongoing conflict in the east and other parts of the country targeting civilians, where serious and frequent violations of human rights continue to be perpetrated by various actors notably in North, South Kivu and Iturbi.<sup>1</sup> Interventions will also be provided for **1,393,433** people in the host communities also affected by the refugee crisis. This will ensure access for all to better quality services, promote development and strengthen social cohesion among the refugee and host communities.

In the DRC, recent military operations have focused on North Kivu, while intercommunal conflicts persist in Ituri between Hema and Lendu communities. An estimated 360,000 people were displaced as a result of generalized violence that erupted in Ituri Province in June 2019.<sup>2</sup> Armed groups killed at least 100 civilians in Beni territory in North Kivu in November 2019 and humanitarian access to affected persons remains a serious challenge. As a result of violence, tens of thousands of new refugees have fled across borders since the beginning of 2019. Although countries in the Southern and Great Lakes regions in Africa generously host some **905,573** Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers, resources have been decreasing in recent years and do not adequately meet protection, shelter, food security, health and other basic needs or minimum standards. In many countries of asylum, refugee settlements and camps are already at full capacity. Support for livelihood interventions are limited, prolonging refugees' dependence on humanitarian assistance.

According to the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA), there are some 15.6 million people in need of assistance in the DRC, 8.1 million of which will be targeted by the Humanitarian Response Plan in 2020.<sup>3</sup> There are an estimated 5.01 million persons internally displaced in the DRC;<sup>4</sup> some repeatedly. More than two million internally displaced persons (IDPs) have been newly displaced in North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri provinces in the last 18 months. Internal displacement in the DRC is typically related to old and unresolved inter-community conflicts, primarily due to deep-rooted and long-standing tensions over identity issues, access to power, control of natural resources, including land conflict. The presence and activity of armed groups, national and foreign groups, especially in the east of the country, who are fighting against the government's armed forces in order to maintain their control over resources such as mining and wood also contribute to displacement. There are as many as 120 active militias as well as numerous informal armed groups in the Great Lakes region, able to cross porous borders between the DRC and neighbouring states. As one group is dislodged, others fill the vacuum and there is also a general distrust of security forces among the civilian population due to security incidents. The majority of IDPs in the DRC live with host families and there is increasingly limited humanitarian access due to security restrictions and dwindling resources. Previously several actors were present and providing a full response in South Kivu (Baraka and Uvira) as well as Beni, Bunia and Dungu; this has ceased although the needs persist.

A further challenge to the humanitarian situation in the DRC has been the outbreak of Ebola since August 2018, in response to which an international public health scale-up protocol was declared and extended until February 2020. According to WHO, Ebola has taken more than 2,000 lives so far. In addition, a measles epidemic has led to the loss of a further 2,700 lives. At the same time, the DRC continues to host over 500,000 refugees from Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan, who fled their countries in search of international protection.

<sup>1</sup> Position on Returns to North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri and Adjacent Areas in the Democratic Republic of the Congo Affected by Ongoing Conflict and Violence – Update II, <https://www.refworld.org/country,...COD,,5d6d794a4,0.html>

<sup>2</sup> <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/download/73537>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.humanitarianresponse.info/fr/operations/democratic-republic-congo/document/rd-congo-aper%C3%A7u-des-besoins-humanitaires-d%C3%A9cembre-2019>

<sup>4</sup> [https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/factsheet\\_movpop\\_2019.pdf](https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/factsheet_movpop_2019.pdf)

## Beneficiary Population

	Refugee population as of 31 December 2019	Planned assisted refugee population by the end of 2020	Planned assisted host population by the end of 2020	Planned assisted refugee population by the end of 2021	Planned assisted host population by the end of 2021
Angola	23,419	26,000	6,000	21,000	3,600
Burundi	84,469	92,000	50,000	75,000	50,000
Republic of the Congo	20,658	21,000	4,000	16,355	3,000
Rwanda	76,266	76,900	125,000	77,200	125,000
Uganda	397,638	426,000	775,933	415,000	560,928
United Republic of Tanzania	75,842	80,797	20,000	85,000	20,000
Zambia	50,661	50,000	18,000	68,000	18,800
<b>Southern Africa*</b>	113,673	69,979	25,000	100,939	25,000
<b>Other Countries**</b>	62,947	69,393	369,500	73,201	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>905,573</b>	<b>912,069</b>	<b>1,393,433</b>	<b>931,695</b>	<b>1,192,019</b>

\* Southern Africa includes Botswana, Indian Ocean islands, the Kingdom of eSwatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Malawi, Mozambique, Namibia, South Africa and Zimbabwe.

\*\* Other countries include Central African Republic, Chad, Kenya and South Sudan.

Updated population figures are available at: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/drc>

## Regional Protection and Population's Needs

The humanitarian situation in the region remains highly complex, illustrated by the different groups of refugees and IDPs in countries where Congolese refugees are hosted. Although most of the countries hosting Congolese refugees have maintained open borders for Congolese seeking refuge and international protection, many face restrictions on the freedom of movement, the right to work, housing, land and property rights, and access to education and justice. The current refugee settlements and camps in many host countries are full and the available basic services are stretched to the limits. Meanwhile, there is a need to accommodate the growing Congolese refugee population and organize the relocation to safe places away from border areas, and the establishment of new settlements. There have also been increasing incidents of discrimination and xenophobia in some countries. Given their situation of displacement, refugees are especially vulnerable, specifically women, children, and other persons with specific needs, or disabilities.

Increased humanitarian needs in the Southern and Great Lakes regions in Africa because of recent climate shocks may have an adverse impact on the ability and willingness of countries to welcome refugees. A destructive drought in 2019 affecting Angola and Zambia among other countries in the region has led to rising humanitarian needs. Some 2.3 million people in Zambia and over one million people in Angola are estimated to be severely food insecure.<sup>5</sup>

Therefore, it is important to strengthen collaboration between states, humanitarian and development actors to provide adequate protection and provide legal safeguards to create an environment conducive to local integration and social cohesion. Given that prospects of voluntary repatriation and resettlement are limited, it is necessary to strengthen self-reliance and integration initiatives for refugees and the communities that host them. In this regard, livelihood opportunities for refugees in rural hosting areas where there are few opportunities for income-generating activities

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