



UNHCR improves conditions for IDPs by distributing emergency core relief items in the Democratic Republic of the Congo | © UNHCR/Blaise Sanyila

## THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

The forced displacement crisis in the DRC is colossal, complex and escalating in scope and impact. The country has the largest internally displaced population in Africa, at 6.3 million in 2023. More than 520,000 refugees, mainly from Central African Republic, Rwanda and Burundi, have sought asylum in the DRC, while over 1 million Congolese are refugees elsewhere in Africa. After decades of war, the country faces a plethora of socioeconomic problems, and violent clashes continue to force people to flee, including 2.4 million in North Kivu province alone since March 2022. An estimated 72% of the Congolese population live on less than \$1.90 a day and an estimated 27.3 million are food insecure, with high rates of infant mortality, maternal mortality and malnutrition. There is a lack of basic education and health services, and weak security, justice, and social services.

The cyclic and protracted nature of the various crises in the DRC heavily impact UNHCR's operations, which need to reach some of the most

remote, poverty-stricken, and underserved areas of the DRC to ensure adequate protection and assistance. In many of these areas, UNHCR stands alone as a provider of last resort.

UNHCR aims to ensure IDPs have the basics to live in safety and dignity, and that humanitarian, development actors and peacemakers work together to ensure IDPs' rights are respected and protected, and that wherever possible a durable solution to their displacement is achievable. However, the DRC operation remains heavily underfinanced. More positively, the Government has, in the spirit of the Global Compact on Refugees, complemented UNHCR and stakeholder efforts by providing land and other resources to support the response to displacement. Host communities have also been hospitable, enabling UNHCR to implement its "alternative-to-camps" policy and to work with the Government on involving refugees and IDPs in community programming and public services.



### POPULATION OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED AND STATELESS PEOPLE AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

Overall: **7,290,878**

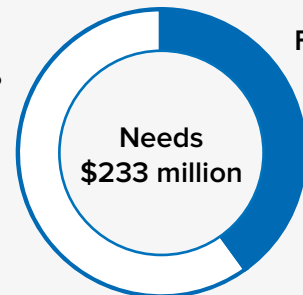
Largest population group: IDPs - **5,541,021 / 76%**




### FUNDING


Gap  
60%


Funded  
40%




## AREAS CUT OR SIGNIFICANTLY REDUCED

 **Education:** due to funding constraints, UNHCR's capacity to support refugee education at primary level remains well below the national average (42% against 68%). Secondary level education is also well below the national average at 15.8 percent compared to a national average of 43%.


 **Health:** health services have been reduced with 58% of the needs for Central African Republic refugees not being covered in 2023. Healthcare support for Rwandan and Burundian refugees has had to be limited to children, women of child-bearing age and the chronically ill, with men of all ages being altogether left out of the healthcare system.


 **Livelihoods:** Self-reliance and empowerment are at the core of the DRC's strategy for all 522,000 refugees and yet, by the end of 2022, only 4% (20,000) had received livelihoods support.


 **Solutions:** out of 68,000 refugees in the DRC who indicated an intention to return to their countries of origin, only 26,392 refugees (or 39%) were assisted to return to their countries of origin by the end of 2022. In 2023, only 3,286 returned in the first half of the year, due to UNHCR's financial constraints.

Of the 22,000 Congolese refugees residing in other countries, such as Zambia and Angola, 11,712 out of a planned 22,000 Congolese could be supported to return to the DRC by the end of 2022. In 2023 only 553 refugees have been supported to return to date.

## AREAS AT CRITICAL RISK AND IN NEED OF URGENT FUNDING

 **Protection - \$3.5 million:** Funding levels will necessitate a reduction in the number of protection monitors to document human rights violations, including killings, kidnappings, and sexual assaults. In the Grand Nord of North Kivu, where an average of 100 civilians were killed per month in 2022, there is already a 79% reduction in the number of monitors due to funding.

 **Shelter for IDPs - \$1.5 million:** adequate and secure shelter is an important protection tool but less than 10% of shelter needs for IDPs will be met by UNHCR in 2023.

 **WASH - \$1.2 million:** water, sanitation and hygiene is critical for the refugee response, but at the current funding rate UNHCR will only meet 27% of the latrine needs for Central African refugees. Refugees are also faced with the challenge of fending off epidemics such as cholera which stem from a lack of clean water and adequate sanitation and hygiene systems.

### GROWING CONCERNS/AREAS TO MONITOR

Concerning protection and shelter for IDPs, UNHCR and humanitarian partners are deeply alarmed by the increase in gender-based violence in overcrowded displacement sites in eastern DRC. Of great concern is the trend by IDPs of increased engagement in negative coping mechanisms

**Funds available to the operation must reach 2021 levels of \$114.84 million, if not more.**



UNHCR improves conditions for IDPs by distributing emergency core relief items in the Democratic Republic of the Congo | © UNHCR/Blaise Sanyila