

Annual Results Report

2023

Democratic Republic of the Congo

Acknowledgements

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Section 1: Context and Overview

1.1 Changes to the Operational Context

As of 31 December 2023, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) hosted 527,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, 75% of whom resided outside designated camps, 23% in camps and sites, and 2% in urban areas. The DRC also had 6.5 million internally displaced persons (IDPs), most of whom remained displaced due to ongoing insecurity in potential return areas. In 2023, the number of IDPs increased by 840,000 (750,000 people were displaced in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces) due to activities from multiple non-state armed groups and inter-community conflicts predominantly observed in the eastern provinces of the country. The widespread violence has also impacted refugees from Burundi, Rwanda, and South Sudan, who are mostly located in the eastern provinces. This insecurity has disrupted governance structures, impeded service provision, led to widespread human rights violations and increased population displacement in comparison to 2022.

In June 2023, four armed groups signed a peace memorandum under the auspices of the Disarmament, Demobilization, Community Rehabilitation, and Stabilization Programme. However, this agreement was not honored. The UN Stabilization Mission in the DRC (known as MONUSCO), which has offered some security assurances in the east, began its gradual scaling down of operations at the beginning of 2024, leaving a security vacuum in the area at least within the short to medium terms and potentially negatively impacting humanitarian access. Conversely, the west of the country (North Ubangi, South Ubangi, and Bas Uele provinces), remains calm, and repatriation of refugees from the Central African Republic continues owing to relative stability in certain areas of the country of origin.

1.2. Progress Against the Desired Impact

1. Impact Area: Attaining Favorable Protection Environments

Refugees and Asylum - Seekers, IDPs, Returnees, Stateless Persons, and Host Communities live in peace and security, and enjoy their rights without discrimination

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
1.1 Proportion of people seeking international protection who are able to access asylum procedures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
1.2 Proportion of people who are able to move freely within the country of habitual residence	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

There was a significant improvement in the protection environment in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 2023, in part because of UNHCR's work with the Government and support from partners and donors. This is exemplified by the open access to territory for refugees and asylum-seekers (with zero cases of refoulement registered in 2023), the granting of refugee status to 100% of applicants, and the maintenance of the humanitarian character of camps and sites hosting refugees and IDPs. Refugees and asylum-seekers have freedom of movement, and systems are being put in place by UNHCR and the Government, to ensure universal access to documentation. The Government, as well as local and provincial authorities, worked with UNHCR and the humanitarian community during the year to ensure the full inclusion of refugees into development systems. Communities across the country have been very welcoming of refugees and asylum-seekers -- about three out of every four refugees reside with local communities, and they coexist peacefully.

Because human rights violations persisted across the DRC, mostly affecting IDP populations, UNHCR and partners increased protection monitoring both in terms of the number of active protection monitors and the geographical coverage. This resulted in an increase in the number of reports of protection-related issues faced by refugees, asylum-seekers, and IDPs. About 80% of refugees and IDPs benefited from protection monitoring and related response actions and enjoyed their rights and freedoms without discrimination.

UNHCR continued to work with the Office of the DRC Resident Coordinator to reinforce the activities of the Camp Coordination and Camp Management Cluster, in response to various attacks by armed groups on IDP sites. These initiatives fortified the protective environment in the DRC, thus safeguarding the safety, rights, and dignity of displaced individuals amidst persistent challenges.

2. Impact Area: Realizing Rights in Safe Environments

Refugees and Asylum - Seekers, IDPs, Returnees, Stateless Persons and Host Communities have effective and equitable access to goods, services, and income, to enable them to lead a dignified life.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
2.2 Proportion of people residing in physically safe and secure settlements with access to basic facilities	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	21.54%	25.00%
2.3 Proportion of people with access to health services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%

The long-term goal of the humanitarian response by UNHCR and other actors in the DRC is to ensure dignified living for all forcibly displaced populations through enhanced self-reliance, inclusion into social protection and development systems, and equitable access to goods, services, and income. In line with this, UNHCR and partners, with the support of donors and development actors, have implemented an alternative-to-camps policy in Ituri, Haut Uele, South Kivu, North Ubangi, South Ubangi, and Bas Uele

provinces and villagization in Grand Kasai and Tanganyika provinces. This policy focuses on improving access to services for refugees (Education, Health, Livelihoods and WASH) and returnees (Shelter and Livelihoods). This is done through advocacy for access to arable land and land tenure documents and increasing access to essential services such as health, water, and education. These initiatives have reached nearly 10,000 refugees and IDPs since 2022; in 2023 alone, UNHCR worked with the Government and other partners to facilitate access to arable land for 750 returnee and IDP families in Kasai, Kasai-Oriental, and Kasai-Central provinces.

Also, since 2022, UNHCR and partners have worked towards ensuring community self-management by capacitating local leadership in project management. As part of the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach, there is an increased alignment of humanitarian and development actions with community priorities, thus, in 2023, UNHCR sought to ensure refugee and IDP needs were integrated into national services.

Multiple stakeholders (UNHCR, partners, UN agencies, donors, and the forcibly displaced) worked in tandem to ensure that communities reside in physically safe and secure environments with access to basic services. Central to this strategy are sustainable solutions, community empowerment, and the enduring integration of displaced populations into broader development frameworks.

3. Impact Area: Empowering Communities and Achieving Gender Equality

Refugees and Asylum - Seekers, IDPs, Returnees, Stateless Persons and Host Communities play an active role in their own protection.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
3.1 Proportion of people who have the right to decent work	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%
3.2a Proportion of children and young people enrolled in primary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	33.25%	62.85%
3.2b Proportion of children and young people enrolled in secondary education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	7.38%	35.83%
3.3 Proportion of people feeling safe walking alone in their neighbourhood after dark	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	50.05%	100.00%

UNHCR and partners involved in the humanitarian response in the DRC aim to empower communities through capacity reinforcement, promotion of gender equality, and addressing challenges associated with access to basic services and protection. As a result of trainings, advocacy, sensitization, affirmative action and other initiatives, women's representation in leadership fora increased from 19% in 2022 to 30% in 2023, in addition to gender-sensitive livelihoods programmes, means that more community-based decisions (such as decisions on vulnerability assessment and response actions) are being made with a focus on alleviating vulnerabilities and increasing resilience to socio-economic shocks.

Access to education, decent work, and feelings of safety in their neighborhoods have notably improved, reflecting positive strides towards enhancing the quality of life for refugee and asylum-seeker populations.

UNHCR initiated Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and reinforcement of community protection systems. This has fostered social protection for forcibly displaced people and host communities, facilitated the reduction of gender-based violence, and engaged the skills of women and girls in apprenticeships. It has also kept the information management systems for young people active.

Age-, gender-, and diversity-based assessments and analyses were essential to the identification of protection needs and causes of tensions and conflict. Based on these analyses, 25 QIPs were initiated in North Kivu and South Kivu provinces. This has led to the easing of social tensions and community cohesion. In Kasai, UNHCR equipped a health post to serve local communities and displaced persons and installed a borehole with capacity for 40,000 litres per day. Shelter construction was also initiated for 500 households in three villages in Kasai and Kasai Central provinces. Communities have been sensitized on

peaceful coexistence, hygiene, environmental education, reforestation, and fraud prevention.

4. Impact Area: Securing Solutions

Refugees and Asylum - Seekers, IDPs, Returnees, and Stateless Persons have progressive access to durable solutions

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Actual (2023)
4.1 Number of refugees who voluntarily return in safety and dignity to their country of origin	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14,237	10,576
4.2a Number of people who departed on resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	9	16
4.2b Number of people who departed through complementary pathways	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4	16
4.3b Number of refugees for whom residency status is granted or confirmed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0	0

UNHCR works with other stakeholders to ensure durable solutions (voluntary repatriation, resettlement, and local integration) for forcibly displaced people. In terms of voluntary repatriation, although the 2023 target was 25,000 people, due to financial constraints, this target was revised downwards to just 8,870 individuals (4,517 to Burundi, 2,327 to the Central African Republic, and 1,923 to Rwanda). Regarding South Sudanese refugees, intentions surveys conducted during the year revealed a lack of interest in voluntary repatriation due, in part, to the very precarious security and humanitarian situation in potential areas of return.

Although the situation in North Kivu and South Kivu was clouded by tensions, sensitization campaigns on voluntary repatriation continued, with over 40,000 refugees reached in 2023.

Some 1,806 refugees from the DRC living in Angola and Zambia returned to the DRC, and each received a basic assistance package that included food, dignity kits, a permanent shelter, and basic cash assistance for livelihoods (such as investment in small-scale businesses to generate additional household income).

Regarding IDPs, a variety of stakeholders (government institutions, UN agencies, NGOs, the Nexus Group, and affected populations themselves) worked together through the humanitarian-development-peace nexus approach to find durable solutions, mostly in the form of integration with local communities and relocation to other areas that are more secure.

Resettlement was also stepped up by ensuring that resettlement staff and experts had the required knowledge and tools to carry out their responsibilities and expedite the requisite processes. With the aim of systematizing resettlement procedures in the DRC in a coordinated and long-term manner, the resettlement team developed and shared a number of tools, such as tailored profiling templates, action plans, updates on SOPs on resettlement and resettlement panel workings. Moreover, it worked with the teams in the field to enable the identification and preparation of resettlement files, thereby enhancing the integration of resettlement as a durable solution into protection activities. Strengthening the capacities of teams on the ground on resettlement, 4 sessions of two days each were organized in Aru, Faradje, Gbadolit  and Libenge, with the support of the representation office. These sessions were attended by 97 professionals, including 34 UNHCR staff and 63 partner agents. Resettlement staff attended capacity building sessions on RRF writing organized by the Regional Bureau, as well as the Workshop in Pretoria covering a number of resettlement and complementary pathways aspects.

Ultimately, these initiatives signify a concerted push towards sustainable solutions for displaced persons in the DRC, addressing various challenges while prioritizing the safety, dignity, and well-being of affected populations.

1.3 Challenges to Achieving Impacts

Work inefficiencies: Although a lot has been done towards ensuring a collective understanding of the humanitarian response, as well as to develop a common set of priorities, coordination with other stakeholders remains challenging. This has led to some cases of duplication and to inefficiencies in the work.

Lack of buy-in from communities: Moreover, there is a general ambivalence on the part of forcibly displaced people towards community projects and they do not see them as being for the common good. This nonchalance has led to a lack of investment in such projects which sometime leads to them dying down. Water systems remain the hardest hit, whether it be the stealing of solar panels (such as in Mulongwe refugee camp) or minimum attention to the importance of reporting when systems breakdown (such as in Kasai province among returnees). Returnees still expect UNHCR to provide for all their needs without any form of investment on their part, and to replenish needs or rehabilitate infrastructure.

MONUSCO withdrawal: The withdrawal of the UN Stabilization Mission to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (known as MONUSCO) has triggered the cessation of activities by some key protection actors, such as the Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC), because of security risks. This has compromised key initiatives on access to housing, land, and property (HLP), which is also not helped by slow processes for obtaining authorization to access land for displaced persons.

Needs supersede stakeholder capacity: The high numbers of people forced to flee in short periods of time have made it difficult for humanitarian actors to cope with needs (for housing, food, protection, etc.) and to develop a response plan that is able to keep the pace with the number of forcibly displaced people.

1.4 Collaboration and Partnerships

Partnerships are foundational to UNHCR DRC's strategy. UNHCR and other UN agencies have enhanced inclusion of forcibly displaced individuals in programming on food distribution (WFP), financial inclusion (UNDP/UNCDF), resilience (FAO/WFP), health (UNICEF/WHO), gender-based violence (UN Women/UNFPA), and child protection (UNICEF). UNHCR also has joint projects with UNIDO.

These actions have revitalized the Humanitarian-Development-Peace nexus approach. UN agencies have also enhanced the collaboration with several government ministries and specialized state bodies enabled multi-scalar advocacy for forcibly displaced people's inclusion.

Collaboration with International Financial Institutions (IFIs) has been reinforced. This is exemplified by ongoing discussions with the World Bank to assess the relationship and identify avenues for further cooperation (strengthening human capital, engaging in joint advocacy and policy dialogue, and enhancing data collection and analysis efforts) and with the IMF to explore avenues for supporting the socio-economic inclusion of forcibly displaced persons.

The technical and financial capacities of key development partners were harnessed to bolster the implementation of UNHCR's strategy. For instance, EU/INTPA regional funding was deployed to South Kivu, North Ubangi, and South Ubangi provinces, while the African Development Bank is supporting the reinforcement of the private sector and financial inclusion. UNHCR is also working with JICA on improving the resilience of forcibly displaced persons in agricultural, pastoral, and fisheries production and with Equity Bank on financial inclusion, in a partnership established in 2023.

Ultimately, to engender a whole of society approach and foster ownership, UNHCR works with national NGOs and community-based organizations such as ADSSE, AIDES, AIDPROFEN, FMMDK, KADIMA, PANZI, SAFDF, and VIBOSA, and with international NGOs including ACTIONAID, ADES, AIRD, AVSI, CIAUD, INTERSOS, and WVI to enhance the collective response effort.

Section 2: Results

2.1. Outcomes and Achievements

1. Outcome Area: Access to Territory, Reg. and Documentation

By 2026, refugees, returnees, IDPs and people at risk of statelessness have valid identity documents

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
1.1 Proportion of refugees and asylum seekers registered on an individual basis	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	73.89%	78.00%	75.00%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	IDPs	Unknown	0.01%	40.20%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	40.00%	66.00%	90.00%
1.2 Proportion of children under 5 years of age whose births have been registered with a civil authority	Returnees	Unknown	1.00%	100.00%
1.3 Proportion of people with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	78.00%	75.30%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Registration and Documentation stand as one of seven key priorities in implementing the response action for forcibly displaced and stateless persons. This involves biometric registration, birth registrations, identity management, and the issuance of necessary documents. Presently, the refugee and asylum population in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) totals 527,000 individuals, reflecting a 0.6% increase from 2022.

Among this population, 395,000 individuals, constituting 75%, have been individually registered and possess identity documents serving as proof of identity, facilitating access to assistance. The remaining 25% (131,000 refugees) consist of Rwandan refugees pre-registered by the government of the DRC in 2014.

These individuals reside in remote and inaccessible locations. With the technical support of UNHCR, CNR has registered and documented 16,500 refugees and asylum seekers, including 3,000 newborns, 8,800 new arrivals, and 4,700 in situ. Of these, 13,500 were from Burundi (10,000), Central African Republic (1,860), South Sudan (900), Rwanda (600), and other nationalities (140). All 10,550 individuals seeking international protection in 2023 accessed asylum procedures, with 91% (9,950) recognized as refugees by the eligibility committee. Moreover, more than 23,590 legal and identity documents were issued or renewed, including 6,399 birth certificates, 2,900 refugee ID cards, and 14,290 asylum certificates.

Approximately 40% of children under 5 years old are registered in the DRC, with less than 13% possessing birth certificates in 2018 (Demographic Health Survey DHS 2013-2014). To address this gap, CNR issued birth certificates to 6,399 children, and similar efforts were made to provide civil registration documents to internally displaced children. UNHCR's collaboration with the National Independent Voters Committee facilitated the enrollment of internally displaced persons (IDPs) in sites managed by UNHCR and its partners, thus enabling IDPs and returnees to participate in the 2023 presidential and parliamentary elections.

A joint UNHCR-CNR National Strategy for Registration and Identity Management has been developed, focusing on the registration and documentation of refugees and asylum seekers, birth registration, capacity

development of government counterparts, and strategic partnerships for the inclusion of forcibly displaced persons into the national legal and digital identity system. This Outcome Area aligns with SDG 10, which emphasizes reducing inequalities. For forcibly displaced persons, access to territory serves as a crucial initial step toward achieving equity.

2. Outcome Area: Status Determination

By 2026, asylum-seekers can access effective and cost-free national refugee status determination procedures.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
2.1 Average processing time (in days) from registration to first instance asylum decision	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	180.00	180.00	90.00
2.2 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to legal representation	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%
2.3 Proportion of people undergoing asylum procedures who have access to an effective appeal mechanism after first instance rejection of their claim	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.00%	Unknown	100.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, UNHCR played a pivotal role in facilitating the recognition of refugee status for numerous asylum-seekers across various regions in the DRC. Notably, in South Kivu, 4,878 out of 9,120 registered individuals were granted refugee status, while advocacy efforts in North Kivu and Tanganyika provinces benefited Burundian asylum-seekers, with 4,242 cases awaiting decisions. UNHCR also assisted authorities in issuing documents, including birth certificates, asylum-seeker certificates, and identity cards, improving refugees' legal status. Collaborative efforts with CNR offices in North Ubangi ensured efficient access to national refugee status determination procedures, resulting in the recognition of refugee status for asylum-seekers for the Central African Republic. Furthermore, mobile court hearings in North Kivu facilitated the issuance of birth certificates to refugee children who missed the registration deadline. Overall, a total of 9,950 asylum-seekers applied for asylum through the CNR, all of whom were granted refugee status. These individuals have been relocated to refugee sites and have access to essential services provided to all refugees in the DRC. An additional 3,110 asylum-seekers, primarily from Burundi and South Sudan, will have their applications reviewed in 2024.

Activities under this Outcome Area enhanced access to effective and cost-free national refugee status determination procedures, thereby strengthening protection mechanisms and ensuring the rights and dignity of asylum-seekers and refugees in the DRC. Continued efforts to address pending RSD cases, streamline procedures, and provide comprehensive support will be the focus going forward.

Status determination promotes the social, economic, and political inclusion of refugees and gives them the opportunity to thrive regardless of background or circumstances, in line with sustainable development goal 10.

3. Outcome Area: Protection Policy and Law

By 2026, the Government will accede to, ratify and domesticate the 1954 Convention relating to the status of stateless persons, and the 1961 Convention on the reduction of statelessness and the AU Convention for the Protection and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa (Kampala Convention).

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
3.1 Extent national legal framework is in line with the 1951 Convention and/or its 1967 Protocol	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Broadly aligned: ≥ 90 points	Broadly aligned: ≥ 90 points	Broadly aligned: ≥ 90 points

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

UNHCR held capacity-building efforts targeting government officials and other stakeholders on Law 021/002, concerning refugee status. Training sessions were also held on UNHCR's mandate and international protection to ensure the protection of displaced persons. As most government officials are unaware of these conventions and texts, more capacity building efforts will be undertaken in 2024; these will also encompass community members, local authorities, and other humanitarian actors to educate them on matters of international protection. Additionally, journalists, investigators, members of the protection cluster, and various other clusters (Health, Nutrition, Camp Coordination and Camp Management, Shelter, Education, and Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene), took part in training sessions focused on international protection, UNHCR's mandate, cross-cutting protection, and durable solutions. All these initiatives reached over 600 people country-wide, ultimately enhancing protection outcomes for displaced populations in all operational areas.

4. Outcome Area: Gender-based Violence

By 2026 GBV response services are available for all GBV survivors in all PoC sites and follow clear standard operating procedures.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	IDPs	11.65%	15.00%	70.00%
4.1 Proportion of people who know where to access available GBV services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10.46%	15.00%	90.10%
4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women	IDPs	11.65%	15.00%	66.52%
4.2 Proportion of people who do not accept violence against women	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10.46%	15.00%	63.51%
4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	IDPs	49.93%	50.00%	50.01%
4.3 Proportion of survivors who are satisfied with GBV case management services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	88.30%	90.00%	90.08%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

As part of the implementation of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) strategy in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) operation during 2023, a total of 2009 prevention activities were conducted. These initiatives received support from one hundred and nineteen (119) community groups, women's associations, men's

groups advocating against GBV, and community radios. The outreach of these activities extended to 164,838 individuals, including 60,950 men and boys, and 103,888 women and girls. Various training sessions were organized, reaching 1075 men and 1141 women from 77 community structures, as well as UNHCR, its partners, and national authorities.

For GBV risk mitigation, three training sessions were held with UNHCR's tri-cluster partners to facilitate the integration of GBV risk mitigation into their planning and operations. These trainings engaged 85 participants, comprising 34 women and 51 men. Additionally, a risk reduction plan was implemented by the Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCM) cluster, leading to the installation of 30 photovoltaic streetlights at a displacement site to minimize GBV risks.

The breakdown of reported GBV incidents in 2023 was as follows: 30% rape, 23% physical assault, 20% psychological violence, 13% denial of resources and opportunities, 7% sexual assault, and 5% forced marriage. The alleged perpetrators were primarily civilians (82%), followed by unknown entities (13%), armed groups (8%), the Congolese Armed Forces (FARDC) (2%), and the Congolese National Police (PNC) (1%).

In terms of response to GBV cases, 78% received psychosocial care, 32% received medical care, and 18% of rape cases were addressed within 72 hours. Additionally, 7% of cases received security and safety support, 8% received legal assistance, 6% received material assistance, 18% were provided with income-generating activities (IGA), and 2% received support for school reintegration.

Throughout 2023, a total of 65 GBV coordination meetings were convened, including inter-agency meetings, discussions with national authorities, embassies, donors, internal meetings with GBV focal points, and coordination meetings with UNHCR and other partners. Considerable progress has been made in addressing GBV through various initiatives, challenges such as survivor satisfaction, cultural norms, and resource constraints persist. This underlines the importance of ongoing efforts to combat GBV comprehensively, including sustained awareness-raising, capacity-building, and collaboration among stakeholders. Additionally, the success of multifaceted approaches in Kalemie highlights the effectiveness of holistic strategies in addressing GBV among displaced populations. Moving forward, continued commitment and collaboration will be crucial in achieving lasting solutions to GBV in the DRC.

Combatting Gender-Based Violence (GBV) is in line with achieving SDG 10 because GBV is a pervasive form of discrimination and inequality that affects vulnerable people but predominantly women and girls. By addressing GBV, UNHCR's aim of gender equality can be significantly advanced.

5. Outcome Area: Child Protection

By 2026, the risks related to violence, exploitation and abuse of children are identified and adequately addressed.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
5.1 Proportion of children at heightened risk who are supported by a Best Interests Procedure	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14.36%	20.00%	0.53%
5.2 Proportion of children who participate in community-based child protection programmes	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4.56%	7.00%	4.50%
5.3 Proportion of unaccompanied and separated children who are in an alternative care arrangement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	17.19%	17.00%	0.61%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In Gbadolite, child protection initiatives included identifying 204 separated and unaccompanied children, registering 1,981 refugee children for birth records, and conducting best interests' procedures for 165 children for sustainable solutions. Additionally, school reintegration was provided to 223 at-risk children, and 12 awareness sessions reached 14,128 individuals. Other UNHCR activities involved resettling an unaccompanied child, supporting the local integration of 100 girls, and issuing 1,839 birth certificates,

primarily focusing on births recorded within the refugee camps. These efforts aimed to safeguard vulnerable children and promote their well-being and were conducted in partnership with various organizations.

In North and South Kivu, UNHCR prioritized safeguarding refugee children's rights in collaboration with the Government, NGOs, and other stakeholders. In South Kivu, capacity-building for community-based child protection structures, awareness sessions on children's rights and gender-based violence, and Child-Friendly Spaces benefited 1,251 registered children, reducing protection risks. In North Kivu, mobile court hearings led to the issuing of 573 birth certificates to refugee children not registered within the legal timeframe. These efforts aimed to mitigate risks like abuse, exploitation, school dropout, and early marriage among refugee children.

In Ituri and Haut Uele provinces, 457 at-risk children were identified but lacked specific UNHCR assistance due to resource constraints. UNHCR, with INTERSOS, strengthened community-based child protection, aiding 53 high-risk children out of 292 identified (Out of the 457 at risk children, 292 deemed at high risk). Only one of three refugee hosting areas for South Sudanese (Biringi) has sufficient child-friendly spaces. This has a negative impact on support mechanisms. Absence of a juvenile court in the refugee hosting part of Haut Uele Province (Aba and Faradje) leads to improper handling of child crime accusations, fostering impunity and disrupting social peace. A UNDP-UNHCR project on local governance aims to address access to justice issues.

In Tanganyika Province, protection monitoring identified human right violations 1,612 violations against the people that we serve. UNHCR supported 103 at-risk children through best interests procedures, while 17 unaccompanied and separated children received material assistance and ongoing monitoring. Support to transitional foster families has notably enhanced living conditions and protection for these vulnerable individuals. Community awareness activities mitigated child protection risks, including rights violations. This prevention and response mechanism permitted reporting and the promotion of refugee children's rights. Collaboration with child protection stakeholders ensured refugee children's inclusion in existing systems, facilitating active participation and timely intervention requests, notably at the juvenile court.

Child protection is addressed by sustainable development goal 16, which aims to end abuse, exploitation, trafficking, and all forms of violence against and torture of children.

6. Outcome Area: Safety and Access to Justice

By 2026, effects of conflict on the protection environment are diminished.

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In Haut Uele and Ituri provinces, UNHCR and partners provided accurate and analytical data to both State (Government) and non-state actors (civil society and others) regarding the protection situation. This information aimed to improve the capacity of these entities to implement appropriate measures for enhancing the protection environment for forcibly displaced people. A total of 26,551 protection incidents against the civilian population were documented in 2023, including cases of extortion of property and arbitrary arrest. Additionally, six refugees were incarcerated in Aru prison, with regular detention monitoring missions conducted. During one of these visits, essential items such as soap, mats, and blankets were provided to those in need.

In Kalemie, measures have been taken to safeguard the well-being and legal rights of refugees and asylum-seekers. The National Refugee Commission (CNR) in Lubumbashi partnered with a law firm to offer legal support to 25 individuals.

In Gbadolite, refugees have access to legal assistance to address rights violations, and UNHCR supported a legal aid law firm in South-Ubangi. Visits to prisons were conducted to evaluate detention conditions and the fairness of judicial processes. UNHCR works with the camp police in Inke, Nzakara, and Mole camps, who conduct preliminary investigations into refugee-related cases.

In Goma, UNHCR and the protection monitoring partner, adapted protection monitoring to address emergencies arising from conflict. Additional staff were deployed to track displaced populations and issue emergency updates. Standardization of protection products such as updates and feedback mechanisms,

and development of digital tools were prioritized. Advocacy efforts successfully highlighted protection issues, such as safe access to food and energy for IDPs, leading to a joint advocacy and protection monitoring plan between UNHCR and MONUSCO, which was implemented during the year. Training sessions covered monitoring procedures, human rights, and thematic areas like gender-based violence and child protection. Positive outcomes from UNHCR's monitoring efforts increased its influence, garnering new funding commitments. Cooperation primarily involved the Protection Cluster and MONUSCO, with plans to engage national human rights institutions further. In South Kivu, 21 court cases involving Burundian refugees were pursued, contributing to the prosecution of perpetrators of gender-based violence.

Through this Outcome Area, UNHCR and partners contribute to sustainable development goal 16, which aims to promote the rule of law and ensure equal access to justice for all. UNHCR's work underscores the importance of establishing legal frameworks and institutions that guarantee the provision of justice for everyone.

7. Outcome Area: Community Engagement and Women's Empowerment

By 2026, persons of concern and host communities enjoy greater social cohesion, have effective, participatory, and balanced management structures in terms of age, gender and diversity and take part in development planning.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	IDPs	61.21%	70.00%	100.00%
7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	63.00%	65.00%	77.12%
7.2 Proportion of people who have access to safe feedback and response mechanisms	Returnees	100.00%	100.00%	85.00%
7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	IDPs	41.45%	50.00%	41.60%
7.3 Proportion of women participating in leadership/management structures	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	45.25%	50.00%	50.00%
7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	IDPs	Unknown	Unknown	Extensive: ≥ 70 points
7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	Unknown	Extensive: ≥ 70 points
7.1 Extent participation of displaced and stateless people across programme phases is supported.	Returnees	Unknown	Unknown	Extensive: ≥ 70 points

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Community engagement and women's empowerment are prominent in sustainable development goals 5 and 16. Their intersection primarily underscores the importance of inclusive and participatory approaches to achieve sustainable development and promote gender equality and social justice.

In Gbadolite, women have been actively included in various empowerment programmes aimed at promoting gender equality and enhancing their economic power. In this regard, 32 Income Generating Activity groups were established. These consist of 20 women-at-risk groups, 10 mixed groups, and two social cohesion

groups, comprised of refugee and indigenous women in vulnerable situations.

In North Kivu and South Kivu, significant efforts are directed towards the empowerment of women and girls. They made up 90% of those benefited by vocational training and infrastructure development. Fifteen women-led structures received support and capacity-building in leadership, language, and GBV awareness in 2023. The active involvement of women in camp management is challenging gender stereotypes and has been a platform for women in leadership. Feedback mechanisms were improved through additional complaint boxes. Some 139 focal persons (including 90 women), were trained in complaints management, facilitating openness and feedback gathering.

In Haut Uele and Ituri, UNHCR and partners prioritized involving refugees in programme implementation. Participatory assessments were conducted to identify needs and solutions. Some 480 refugees, including 240 women, participated in 48 focus groups using the age, gender, and diversity approach. Individual surveys involved 479 adults and 183 children. Refugee committees and sectoral committees were established through elections, facilitating communication between refugees, response actors, and local authorities, with women comprising 24% of these structures.

Some 22 community-based protection structures were established to assist IDPs. These groups are equipped with knowledge and tools for community protection and are responsible for conducting awareness activities and mobilizing communities.

In Kalemie, capacity-building efforts targeted three refugee committees and 12 community structures, providing them with necessary office supplies. Feedback channels such as participatory assessments, suggestion boxes, meetings, and WhatsApp groups were established for forcibly displaced people to voice their opinions on assistance quality. Women's empowerment initiatives led to increased representation in leadership and active participation in decision-making. Furthermore, 11,329 individuals, including refugees, IDPs, returnees, and host community members, received training on protection from sexual exploitation and abuse.

9. Outcome Area: Sustainable Housing and Settlements

By 2026, IDPs targeted by the Shelter Cluster and refugees and returnees have access to adequate, secure, environmentally friendly, and affordable shelter.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	IDPs	Unknown	40.00%	33.37%
9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	27.08%	50.00%	9.40%
9.1 Proportion of people living in habitable and affordable housing	Returnees	Unknown	100.00%	100.00%
9.2 Proportion of people that have energy to ensure lighting	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	Unknown	15.00%	11.92%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Shelter and core relief item (CRI) activities improved the living conditions of refugees, IDPs, and host communities, both in the short and long term. This assistance facilitated access to secure and dignified housing, with attention given to vulnerable groups such as people with disabilities, women-headed households, and the older people.

In North Kivu, UNHCR negotiated with local authorities to acquire 218 hectares of land where 9,500 emergency shelters were constructed. This effort was complemented by the distribution of CRI kits to 194,301 people across both provinces. This integrated approach helped families meet essential needs, thereby reducing their risk of resorting to harmful coping mechanisms. UNHCR also worked with partners to

build basic community infrastructure.

The provision of shelter using durable materials decreased overcrowding among refugee and host communities, leading to an improved quality of life and a reduction in the risk of GBV due to more secure shelter.

In South Kivu, UNHCR built 376 durable shelters, partly through cash assistance, including 145 durable shelters constructed in Mulongwe refugee camp. In Ituri, UNHCR provided 85 emergency shelters for newly arrived refugees in Bele, along with 34 durable shelter solutions.

In Gbadolite, UNHCR constructed 475 transitional shelters for vulnerable individuals, benefiting both refugees and host communities, with an additional 115 shelters refurbished. CRIs were distributed to 4,232 families.

Regarding returnee communities, UNHCR focused on empowering communities by enhancing their construction knowledge and active participation in building their own shelters, thereby promoting resilience and autonomy. In Tanganyika, UNHCR supported 100 families in building shelters through cash assistance, emphasizing land tenure security. Two shelter committees were trained in construction and rehabilitation. In Kananga, as part of the villagization project, UNHCR supported the construction of 300 durable shelters, mostly through cash assistance.

Despite an increase in energy access in 2023, the lack of clean energy for domestic use and powering community facilities remains an issue. Pilot projects such as the installation of solar street lighting systems and the distribution of solar lamps had a positive impact on safety, well-being, and children's school performance, while tree planting contributed to environmental protection.

These actions align with sustainable development goal 11, which focuses on ensuring access to adequate, safe, and affordable housing. Shelter construction for forcibly displaced people has not only ensured safety and well-being but has also promoted better health, reduced disease risks, and improved overall well-being, providing displaced individuals with a sense of dignity and stability.

Overall, some 218,100 individuals (43,620 households) benefitted from shelter construction including 3,545 refugees (709 households), 2,750 returnees (550 households) and 211,805 IDPs (42,361 households).

10. Outcome Area: Healthy Lives

By 2026, refugees and returnees are integrated in national and community healthcare systems.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
10.1 Proportion of children aged 9 months to five years who have received measles vaccination	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	51.31%	90.00%	71.00%
10.2. Proportion of births attended by skilled health personnel	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	99.25%	99.00%	71.01%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Refugees are provided access to primary and secondary healthcare services through the national health system, a process that necessitates significant, multi-partner support to expedite progress towards achieving SDG 3 targets. As part of the ongoing effort to integrate refugees into the national health system, which remains fragile and lacks resilience, the UNHCR, in alignment with the Global Compact for Refugees and the alternative approach to camps, is actively assisting in enhancing the capacity of the national health system within refugee-hosting areas.

In 2023, support was extended to 15 general referral hospitals and 15 health centers, including the provision of medicines and medical supplies, as well as training and providing staff incentives. This initiative resulted in 239,698 new medical consultations, with 35,850 involving Congolese nationals, including 21,083

for reproductive health and 3,044 for addressing malnutrition in children aged 6-59 months. Notably, treatment for severe acute malnutrition encompassed 1,031 cases, while 2,013 cases were for moderate acute malnutrition. Additionally, 3,375 consultations were conducted for mental health issues.

Routine immunization coverage remains low, in the DRC. To counter this, strategies to national catch-up vaccination campaigns against polio and measles were organized with the support of WHO and UNICEF, which have resulted in the vaccination of 24,969 refugee children aged 0-5, i.e., 99.28% coverage. In preparedness and response to epidemics, UNHCR has supported the development of 9 epidemic preparedness and response plans in refugee camp areas.

UNHCR's medical referral system facilitated access to secondary healthcare for 6,377 refugees. Moreover, 6,596 live births occurred, with 99% attended by skilled health workers, and antenatal consultations included HIV testing, leading to the initiation of antiretroviral therapy for pregnant women testing positive. Notably, all 26 children born to HIV-positive mothers received antiretroviral treatment within 72 hours of birth.

A total of 841 HIV-positive refugees received antiretroviral treatment in 2023, with 217 cases undergoing viral load testing, of which 151 achieved virological suppression. Regarding the tuberculosis program, 89 cases were tested for HIV co-infection, with 8 positive cases initiated on treatment. Additionally, 220 people living with HIV/AIDS received food supplements, while 22 urban refugees with HIV/AIDS received cash assistance.

Reproductive and gender-based violence health services catered to 151 survivors, including 45 who received post-exposure prophylaxis within 72 hours. In response to potential epidemics, the UNHCR supported the development of nine epidemic preparedness and response plans in refugee camp areas. Furthermore, 24,969 refugee children aged 0-5 years were vaccinated against measles and polio through national catch-up vaccination campaigns, achieving a vaccination coverage of 99.28%.

11. Outcome Area: Education

By 2026, PoC school age children have improved access to equitable and quality basic education through the national system.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
11.1 Proportion of young people enrolled in tertiary and higher education	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	0.59%	2.00%	0.39%
11.2 Proportion of children and young people enrolled in the national education system	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	23.93%	43.00%	35.83%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

SDG 4 prioritizes inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all, recognizing education as a fundamental human right for sustainable development and societal advancement.

In Gbadolite, the ECW investment directly reached 8,990 refugee and host community girls and boys, including adolescents, in formal and non-formal education programmes.

A total of 6,639 girls and boys (3,134 girls (47%); 3,505 boys (53%)) were enrolled in primary school, of whom 2,621 were refugees (1,276 girls and 1,345 boys). At secondary level 1,591 adolescents were enrolled (574 girls (36%), 1,017 boys (64%)), of whom 451 were refugees (146 girls and 305 boys). 171 teachers, including 19 women and 152 men, and 11 headteachers received incentives, as they are still not on the government payroll, thus boosting teacher motivation and contributing to school retention. School facilities play an important role in encouraging the community to support education for their children. A total of 16 classrooms, the construction of which had started in 2022, were finalised. An additional 6 classrooms, 2 blocks of latrines, and one administrative office were also built in 2023.

Some 760 learners, including 469 girls (234 refugees) and 291 boys (111 refugees), were enrolled in non-

formal education classes in 2023. Those students were enrolled in the three levels of the national cours de rattrapage (CRS), or remedial courses, which provide accelerated learning for the primary level equivalency. The 760 students included 234 students (147 girls and 87 boys), of whom 115 are refugees (85 girls and 30 boys) who enrolled in 2023. Some 31 level 3 students took part in the ENAFEP tests and 29 passed, including 14 girls (12 refugees and 2 nationals) and 15 boys (6 refugees and 9 nationals). This is a 93.5% pass rate. They then enrolled in secondary schools of their choice. All 18 non-formal educators (2 women and 16 men) and 3 administrators (1 woman and 2 men) received incentives, a teaching kit and continued professional development.

In 2023, 99 DAFI scholarship students, including 48 women, were supported (including 69 scholarship recipients from the 2022-2023 academic year and 30 new scholarship recipients from the 2023-2024 academic year). Thanks to this program, 99 young refugees had access to Tertiary Education in the DRC, a contribution to the achievement of the 15by30 strategy aimed at achieving an enrollment rate of 15% of young refugees, men and women, in the higher education by 2030.

In October 2023, UNHCR co-organised with UNESCO a development and validation workshop of the Plan d'Action Operationnel (PAO) pour le secteur de l'éducation in Gemena, South Ubangi. The objective was to help provincial EPST and school personnel develop their Plan d'Action Operationnel that responds to their needs and context. Issues that informed the development of the plan included the lack or poor conditions of infrastructure, the risk linked to natural hazards including flooding, the inclusion of refugees into local schools in the province, ICT training for headteachers to support data collection, and the lack of transport for the inspectors. The workshop provided an opportunity for participants to understand the benefits of educational investments for both the refugee and national communities.

The Instant Network School (INS) programme was expanded by 8 Centres : 1 in Ituri (Biringi), 1 in Haut Uele (Bele) and 6 in Sud Kivu (including 2 in Bukavu, 1 in Baraka, 2 in Lusenda, and 1 in Mulongwe). The total number of INS centres in DRC is now 28 (20 in the Ubangi provinces, including 8 in camps and 12 out of the camps).

12. Outcome Area: Clean Water, Sanitation and Hygiene

By 2026, persons of concern have unfettered access to enough potable water and water for personal hygiene and have access to adequate sanitation facilities.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
12.1 Proportion of people using at least basic drinking water services	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	70.00%	70.00%	58.00%
12.2 Proportion of people with access to a safe household toilet	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	20.00%	60.00%	62.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Throughout the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), UNHCR is dedicated to collaborating with stakeholders to achieve Sustainable Development Goal 6, which aims to ensure access to clean water and sanitation for all, promote hygiene practices, improve water quality, and manage water resources sustainably.

In Gbadolite, a comprehensive effort was undertaken to provide essential services to 90,000 individuals (72,000 refugees and 18,000 host community members). This initiative encompassed the solarization of water supply networks and water source catchment areas, as well as the enhancement of water supply infrastructure in the poles de convergences. Additionally, improvements were made to water drawing capacities from traditional wells. To bolster community self-management, 15 WASH committee members received training in water management, 160 community WASH workers underwent training in hygiene promotion, and 10 repair craftsmen were recruited for maintenance purposes. Regarding sanitation and hygiene, 605 family latrines were constructed for selected refugee and host community households, alongside facilities for persons with specific needs, and three gender-segregated latrines were erected in schools.

In North Kivu and South Kivu provinces, regular monitoring and maintenance of water supply systems were conducted in five facility structures across various locations, in addition to ongoing monitoring of water quality. Furthermore, support was extended to three local water supply committees, and solarization efforts at the Molongwe site were successfully implemented.

UNHCR orchestrated awareness campaigns that reached approximately 16,450 people, and 10 WASH committee members were equipped with materials to disseminate vital hygiene information within their communities. Sanitation work aimed at improving the transit center at Kamvimvira and the Sange reception center persisted. The contributions of the operational partner AFPDE proved invaluable, encompassing the construction of a 120m³ water reservoir at Lusenda camp, maintenance of the water network, and the construction of 556 family latrines in both Lusenda camp and Mulongwe, as well as 11 latrines for persons with specific needs and 30 community sanitary blocks in Mulongwe.

In Aru, the average water access ratio increased from 13.5 to 15.83 liters per person per day. This improvement is attributed to the progressive solarization of 12 water points, effective community management policies, and overall enhancement of the water supply system. Regarding sanitation, 30 emergency latrines, 110 family latrines, and 61 transitional latrine blocks were constructed to cater to families and persons with specific needs. However, access to family latrines remains at 35%.

Despite efforts to enhance water supply, the minimum standard of drinking water per person per day was not met in 2023. The shortage of latrines and showers in refugee settlements and host communities persisted, leading to precarious living situations, overcrowding, and an increased risk of communicable diseases. The average quantity of water supplied increased from 13.6 liters per person per day in early 2023 to 14.8 liters per person per day by the end of 2023.

In addition to supplying adequate and secure water to refugees UNHCR is also invested in ensuring their inclusion in national WASH systems, through active collaboration with stakeholders on key modalities. An inclusion roadmap will be finalised in 2024. In Aru, the water committees are incorporated into the CACs (Cellules d'Animation Communautaire), which serve as basic national community structures.

13. Outcome Area: Self Reliance, Economic Inclusion and Livelihoods

By 2026, persons of concern have access to livelihoods ensuring that an increasing percentage is self-reliant and no longer dependent on humanitarian assistance

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
13.1. Proportion of people with an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	25.00%	13.00%	33.00%
13.2. Proportion of people who self-report positive changes in their income compared to previous year	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	10.00%	15.00%	14.00%
13.3 Proportion of people (working age) who are unemployed	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	45.00%	35.00%	35.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

Considering the economic hurdles encountered by refugees, UNHCR and partner initiated a livelihood programme for 11,835 people in 2023, boosting incomes, job creation, and market access. Centred on agriculture and entrepreneurship, with a focus on young people and women, the programme is aimed at inclusive growth, promoting gender equality by supporting women entrepreneurs. The programme's success underscored its effectiveness in meeting diverse refugee and returnee needs. It broadly included:

Agricultural capacity-building focused on training local farmers, distributing seeds and tools, and

establishing agricultural cooperatives to enhance productivity and facilitate market access. Entrepreneurship promotion through training, microloans, and legal and administrative support to young people and women, as well as marketing and vocational training to foster job creation. Partnerships with the Government, NGOs, and the private sector to leverage diverse expertise and resources to maximize impact and reach.

Specifically, in Haut Uele and Ituri, the programme increased productivity and improved inclusion. During the year, 600 families produced 1,425 tons of groundnut seeds valued at \$54,655. Entrepreneurship initiatives aided 400 individuals, and financial services were extended to 1,606 people.

UNHCR prioritized digital inclusion of refugees as a building block for economic inclusion. Collaborative efforts were undertaken to maximize digital empowerment benefits through increased skills training, equipment provision and connectivity. Through collaboration with the national training institute (INPP), some 4,361 urban refugees were provided with digital skills training and equipment, aiding their socio-professional integration. Partnering with the Vodafone Foundation, UNHCR extended digital inclusion to camps, with 18 centres and 743 educators serving over 20,486 users. Reliable internet access is expected to enhance empowerment, and tailored training on computer literacy in tandem with equipment provision was crucial for access to digital resources.

All these initiatives showcase a multi-faceted approach to addressing vulnerabilities among refugees and returnees and empowering them through the creation of economic opportunities, contributing to their self-reliance in line with sustainable development goals 8, 10, and 17.

14. Outcome Area: Voluntary Return and Sustainable Reintegration

By 2026, refugees and internally displaced persons have adequate information to return in dignity and security and in a sustainable manner.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
14.1 Proportion of returnees with legally recognized identity documents or credentials	Returnees	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

The collaborative efforts of between UNHCR, CNR, and other partners were essential to facilitating the voluntary repatriation of 8,770 refugees to their respective countries of origin. Among them, 4,517 returned to Burundi, 2,328 to the Central African Republic, 1,924 to Rwanda, and one refugee to the Republic of Congo.

Additionally, 1,807 Congolese refugees returned to the DRC from other countries, including 768 from Zambia, 605 from Angola, 219 from South Africa, and 183 from Namibia.

Furthermore, 9,997 IDPs were safely returned to areas of origin characterized by relative stability after receiving adequate information to make informed and voluntary decisions.

The reduction of the planned voluntary repatriation figure from 10,000 to 8,900 was due to resource limitations, which required prioritization. Despite this adjustment, the success of repatriation signified a meaningful step towards finding a durable solution for refugees.

There are several complexities involved in refugee repatriation processes, including logistical challenges, resource constraints, the need for collaboration among multiple stakeholders, security concerns, and the need for intergovernmental cooperation.

Efforts undertaken by UNHCR and Partners contribute to SDG 16 as they promote peace and stability in both the host and home countries. Additionally, the collaboration between UNHCR, CNR, and other partners demonstrates efforts to strengthen institutions and foster cooperation towards achieving peace and justice for refugees and internally displaced persons. The focus on ensuring the safety and dignity of

refugees during repatriation aligns with the principles of justice and inclusivity enshrined in SDG 16.

15. Outcome Area: Resettlement and Complementary Pathways

By 2026, opportunities for refugees in need of resettlement will have increased

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
15.1 Number of refugees submitted by UNHCR for resettlement	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	14	600	419
15.2 Average processing time from resettlement submission to departure under normal priority	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	245.00	730.00	1,095.00
15.3 Number of people admitted through complementary pathways from the host country	Refugees and Asylum-seekers	4	3	16

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In 2023, the UNHCR DRC Representation collaborated closely with teams on the ground to identify refugee protection needs, facilitating the submission of eligible cases for resettlement to third countries. Working in tandem with the regional office (RBSA), IOM, Resettlement Support Center (RSC) Africa, partner organizations, and third countries, the representation monitored pending resettlement cases.

In addition to the unallocated global quota (UGQ), the RBSA allocated a quota of 600 individuals to the UNHCR operation in the DRC for submission on behalf of the government of the United States of America (USA) in 2023, doubling the quota from 2022. By December 31, 2023, out of more than 1,681 individuals assessed for resettlement, the UNHCR office in the DRC submitted 418 individuals, including 159 Burundian refugees, 81 Central African refugees, and 152 South African refugees, among others. Of these, 396 individuals were submitted to the USA, representing 66% of the allocated quota, with 9 to Finland and 13 to France. This marked a significant increase compared to 2022 when only 102 individuals were submitted, primarily following the deployment of a resettlement team towards the end of the year, with 97 individuals being resettled in the USA, representing 32% of the American quota for that year. With submissions of 14 and 10 individuals in 2021 and 2020 respectively, the deployment of the resettlement team in late 2022 provided a tangible durable solution for refugees in the DRC.

Regarding departures to resettlement countries, 16 individuals were resettled in 2023, with 2 in France, 9 in Finland, and 5 in Canada. To streamline resettlement procedures in the DRC in a coordinated and sustainable manner, the resettlement team developed and shared tools with field teams to facilitate the identification and preparation of resettlement files. They also focused on enhancing the capacity of colleagues and focal points in the field to integrate resettlement as a durable solution into protection activities. Four two-day sessions were organized in Aru, Faradje, Gbadolité, and Libenge, with support from the representation office, attended by 97 professionals, including 34 UNHCR staff and 63 partner agents.

To mitigate the risk of fraud throughout the resettlement process, resettlement panels comprising UNHCR protection and field staff were established at each sub-office to validate cases identified for resettlement. In 2023, 23 resettlement panel sessions were conducted, with a total of 164 cases involving 891 individuals examined.

The representation office and field teams also supported DRC authorities and UNHCR partners in conducting Best Interest Determination (BID) panel sessions to assess the best interests of 54 children identified for resettlement. Fifteen BID panel sessions were held, attended by state structures and partner

organizations.

Ten field missions were undertaken by the resettlement team in Aru, Gbadolité, Kalemie (Lubumbashi), Goma, and Mbanza-Ngungu for profiling interviews, resettlement interviews, and the drafting of submissions (RRF), as well as to engage with refugees and support Circuit Rides.

The representation office collaborated with partners such as RSC, IOM, ADSSE, and third countries to monitor cases undergoing resettlement. Between April and June 2023, logistical support was provided to missions in the DRC by the RSC Africa team and the United States Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) for interviewing and collecting documentation from refugees whose cases were submitted for resettlement in the United States between 2013 and 2020. Over 246 households involving 550 refugees participated in these missions in Kinshasa and Mbanza-Ngungu, with 92 deferral cases processed. Following the missions, applicants were notified of their eligibility by USCIS, with minimal rejection observed (5 cases involving 7 individuals), and deferral cases addressed promptly.

Between November and December 2023, the final stages of the departure procedure occurred in Kinshasa, with medical examinations conducted by IOM and cultural orientation sessions by RSC taking place concurrently for refugees accepted by USCIS. Although IOM coordinated the logistical aspects, UNHCR provided close support with expertise and on-the-ground presence. Over 500 individuals underwent medical assessments, including refugees from various locations, with the representation office collaborating closely with partners to accomplish the mission's objectives.

16. Outcome Area: Integration and other Local Solutions

By 2026, pathways to nationality for long lasting refugees will be established and tenure and land rights of IDPs and returnees will be increasingly secured.

Indicators	Population Type	Strategy Baseline	Target (2023)	Actual (2023)
16.1 Proportion of people with secure tenure rights to housing and/or land	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		19.50%	1.00%
16.2 Proportion of people covered by national social protection systems	Refugees and Asylum-seekers		11.00%	11.00%

Progress Against the Desired Outcome

In the greater Kasai region, significant strides were made towards ensuring that forcibly displaced people have secure shelters. This was made possible by the land allocated by the Government to various reception sites (villagization sites). This approach will have several benefits, including improving living conditions, enhancing community resilience, and promoting socioeconomic development.

Regarding Ituri and Haut Uele provinces, while local integration for refugees is not explicitly implemented as a durable solution, UNHCR advocates for the inclusion of refugees in the national social protection framework and for the adoption of policies that support the alternatives-to-camps policy. The DRC, through its refugee law, grants refugees several rights established by international frameworks, ensuring safe access to housing and land for all refugees residing in the designated sites. In Ituri province, UNHCR, the Government of the DRC, partners (humanitarian and development) and the Nexus Group (a loose alliance of donor countries and NGOs in the DRC) initiated a durable solutions project aimed at improving the lives of IDPs. However, there were recurrent land conflicts in the province and sources of tension that require addressing.

Through a land tenure security program developed in collaboration with partners and the Housing Land and Property working group, UNHCR and partners provided forcibly displaced persons with documentation at reduced costs. Technical experts identified plots and facilitated the necessary administrative procedures, with support aimed at securing land rights for the people we serve. This approach will address impediments to solutions for IDPs and promote the rights and well-being of IDPs in Ituri and Haut Uele Provinces.

2.2. Age, Gender and Diversity

In 2023, some 76 participatory evaluations and assessments were conducted across refugee camps, out-of-camp settlements, IDP sites, and in urban settings. These evaluations engaged 44,580 individuals, including 26,423 internally displaced people and 18,157 refugees, ensuring representation across gender and age groups.

The evaluations facilitated the implementation of activities aligned with the perspectives of forcibly displaced people, fostering strong participation from women and girls. Partners responsible for Community-Based Protection adapted contextually appropriate approaches, while women and people with specific needs remained active in decision-making processes in refugee, returnee, and IDP contexts.

Vulnerable populations, including people with specific needs and women, actively engaged in advocacy efforts. Participation in the gender-based violence sub-cluster enabled individuals, particularly those with specific needs, to voice their protection concerns and propose solutions. Moreover, participatory evaluations involving more than 5,000 people emphasized UNHCR's commitment to popularize acts prohibiting harmful customs against women, promote behavior-change initiatives, and enhance the capacity of civil society organizations on women's leadership.

Efforts to combat sexual exploitation and abuse (SEA) were bolstered through regional focal point networks led by UNFPA, involving 357 staff members from partner NGOs, UNHCR, and government authorities. Implementing partners are now required to assess their capacity to address SEA when signing Partnership Agreements, contributing to a more comprehensive approach to safeguarding vulnerable populations. However, challenges persist due to the fluid nature of displacement caused by conflict, highlighting the ongoing need for vigilance and proactive measures to prevent SEA.

Section 3: Resources

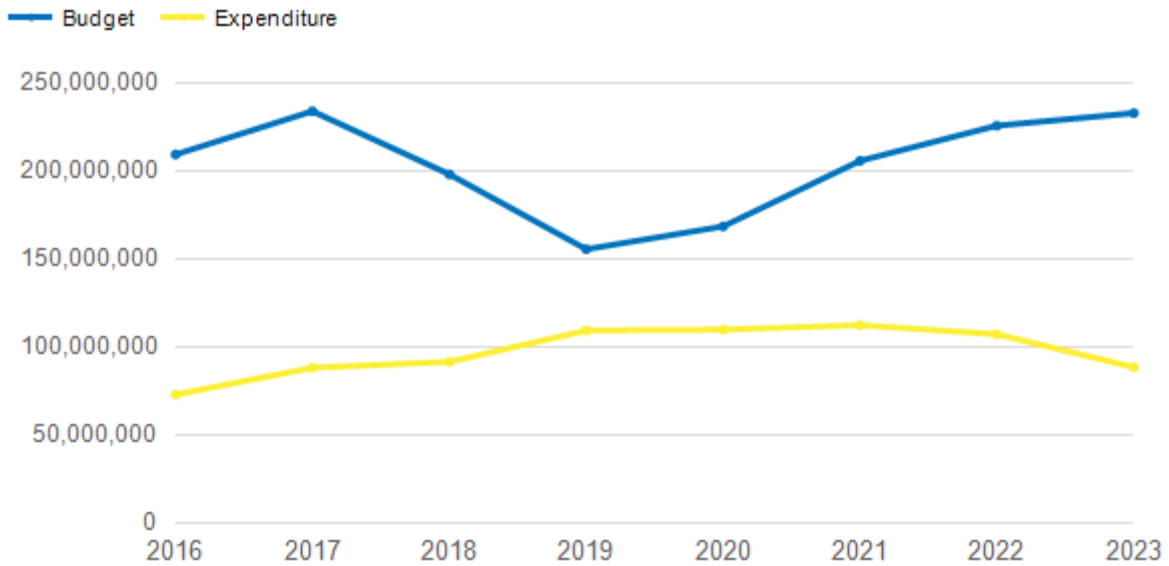
3.1 Financial Data

(Financial figures in USD)

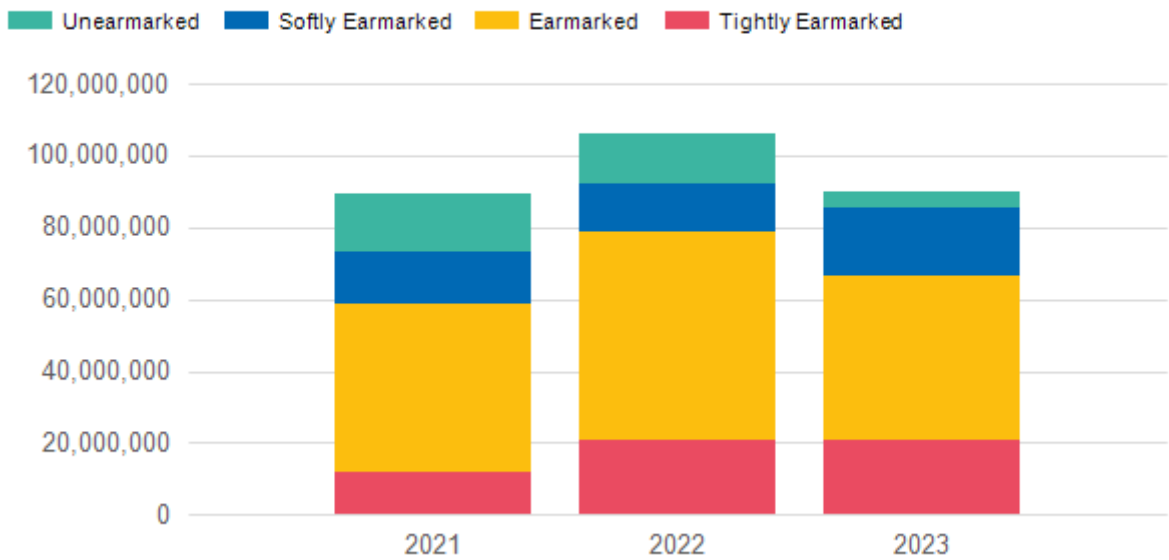
Impact Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
IA1: Protect	61,768,781	23,306,738	37.73%	23,306,738	100.00%
IA2: Assist	91,103,303	39,770,567	43.65%	38,636,645	97.15%
IA3: Empower	27,718,192	12,210,602	44.05%	11,951,318	97.88%
IA4: Solve	51,990,629	14,343,584	27.59%	14,343,584	100.00%
All Impact Areas		1,982,375			
Total	232,580,904	91,613,865	39.39%	88,238,284	96.32%

Outcome Area	Final Budget	Funds Available	Funds Available as % of Budget	Expenditure	Expenditure as % of Funds Available
OA1: Access/Doc	20,378,048	6,656,098	32.66%	6,656,098	100.00%
OA2: Status	3,951,620	1,069,907	27.08%	1,069,907	100.00%
OA3: Policy/Law	4,025,779	2,021,819	50.22%	2,021,819	100.00%
OA4: GBV	18,327,373	5,519,616	30.12%	5,519,616	100.00%
OA5: Children	9,287,571	3,773,114	40.63%	3,773,114	100.00%
OA6: Justice	5,798,389	4,266,184	73.58%	4,266,184	100.00%
OA7: Community	14,634,612	10,073,177	68.83%	9,891,141	98.19%
OA8: Well-being	3,846,201	5,824,000	151.42%	5,824,000	100.00%
OA9: Housing	26,313,796	7,717,357	29.33%	6,583,435	85.31%
OA10: Health	18,429,597	4,153,527	22.54%	4,153,527	100.00%
OA11: Education	9,461,878	6,295,546	66.54%	4,513,565	71.69%
OA12: WASH	15,018,981	2,826,582	18.82%	2,826,582	100.00%
OA13: Livelihood	16,489,716	8,437,905	51.17%	8,360,657	99.08%
OA14: Return	40,235,015	6,488,200	16.13%	6,488,200	100.00%
OA15: Resettle	3,018,151	762,018	25.25%	762,018	100.00%
OA16: Integrate	8,737,462	7,093,366	81.18%	7,093,366	100.00%
EA18: Support	9,725,916	7,148,651	73.50%	7,148,651	100.00%
EA20: External	4,900,797	1,286,406	26.25%	1,286,406	100.00%
All Outcome Areas		200,394			
Total	232,580,904	91,613,865	39.39%	88,238,284	96.32%

Budget and Expenditure Trend



Contributions Trend by Type



3.2. Resources Overview

UNHCR in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) leads the Refugee Coordination Model and through it provides protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers. As part of its approach to solutions, UNHCR also supports the reintegration of refugees and IDP returnees, while ensuring that stateless persons and persons at risk of statelessness are protected. Regarding internally displaced people (IDPs), UNHCR prioritizes bolstering coordination and leadership of the Protection, Shelter, and Camp Coordination and Camp Management (CCCCM) clusters. This ensures enhanced, predictable, and high-quality leadership across all facets of UNHCR's IDP responsibilities, aligning with the IDP policy and the tri-

cluster approach.

However, the reduction of the already limited staffing levels, as part of the restructuring process across the organization, has demanded that the operation severely prioritizes the delivery of assistance.

The operation currently comprises 410 staff members, including 76 in the international professional category, 305 local staff, and 29 affiliated staff, with a distribution of 315 men and 95 women. While gender parity in staffing remains elusive, the DRC Operation actively encourages women to apply for job openings. Moreover, women hold several senior positions within the operation, including the Representative (D2) position.

Efforts are currently underway through staffing reviews to realign the current structure with UNHCR's five-year plan. This restructuring initiative aims to ensure that the operation remains responsive, flexible, and agile in meeting the current needs of forcibly displaced people.

Section 4: Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

4.1 Lessons Learned and Future Outlook

Transitioning to Solar Energy: UNHCR recognizes the need to reduce reliance on fossil fuels, especially in areas with unreliable supply chains, prioritizing solar station installations for long-term efficiency gains. However, a comprehensive analysis of solar energy's benefits and drawbacks is crucial to enhance program efficiency and sustainability while ensuring reliable energy access for all stakeholders.

Livelihoods and Inclusion: UNHCR and partners should invest in semi-mechanization of agriculture and agroforestry to enhance refugee livelihoods' productivity and sustainability. Scaling sustainable energy initiatives like biomass briquettes will reduce reliance on damaging resources and promote economic resilience. Strengthening economic inclusion will support vital needs like education and healthcare, fostering self-reliance. Synergizing these efforts will enhance agricultural output, mitigate environmental degradation, and improve household welfare.

Refugee Empowerment and Integration: A comprehensive study on refugees' socio-economic circumstances is crucial for shaping policies aimed at reducing assistance gradually and empowering self-sufficiency. This analysis will inform decisions and the Refugee Empowerment Strategy.

Additionally, active private sector engagement is crucial for enhancing returnees' socio-economic integration, leveraging expertise and resources for economic participation and local contribution. Allocating resources to sustainable solutions like solar energy and reforestation fosters inclusive, sustainable development, crucial for effective returnee reintegration and community resilience enhancement.

Reintegration: UNHCR and Partners should focus advocacy on access to land for returnees to foster reintegration. By securing land rights, returnees can rebuild their lives and contribute to community development. This can also facilitate smooth transitions and promote dignity, well-being, and long-term prosperity for returnees.



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