

Democratic Republic of the Congo

December 2020

During the COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR DRC is producing a condensed monthly Operational Update. Specific information about UNHCR's response to COVID-19 in DRC can be found [here](#).

Highlights

- Following general election in the Central African Republic, over 12,000 people fled into the provinces of Bas Uele and North Ubangi.
- UNHCR finalized the construction of almost 1,500 emergency shelters in Ituri Province.
- Over 5,300 refugees from the Central African Republic were biometrically registered in Bas Uele Province.
- UNHCR distributed core relief items to over 4,500 displaced households in North Kivu Province.



A mother sits with two of her grand-children in Ndu village after fleeing her village in Bangassou in the Central African Republic © UNHCR/Nentobo

Refugees

PROTECTION

- **During the last week of December, violence and insecurity surrounding the 27 December general election in the Central African Republic (CAR) has forced over 12,000 people to flee** into the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The arrival of at least 10,000 individuals in Ndu village, Bas-Uele Province, which has a population of just 3,500, has placed a massive strain on resources and host families. UNHCR has strengthened its presence along the Ubangi River to respond to the needs of new arrivals, and to prepare for registration and temporary relocation further inland for safety reasons. Insecurity in CAR could affect the voluntary repatriation operation which was relaunched in November 2020 since the COVID-19 pandemic forced border closures.
- UNHCR and the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) facilitated the **voluntary repatriation of 76 Rwandan refugees** living in North Kivu Province.
- Registration and identification of refugees is key for the people concerned, as well as for the asylum state to know who has arrived. In early December, UNHCR and partners **biometrically registered over 5,300 refugees from the Central African Republic** in out of camp settings in Bondo Centre and Baye, Bas-Uele Province. Refugees will be delivered an attestation which will facilitate greater freedom of movement in the host country and facilitate access to basic assistance and protection.
- **UNHCR completed a verification exercise targeting over 5,000 South Sudanese refugees** living outside of camps in Aru Territory, Ituri Province. The exercise provides viable and up to date information and statistics to inform protection and assistance activities and facilitates surveys on voluntary returns.

**HEALTH**

- **UNHCR continues to promote refugees' access to life-saving and essential healthcare.** This include HIV prevention, protection and treatment, reproductive health services, food security and nutrition and hygiene services.
- World Aids Day was celebrated at Meri and Bele settlements in Haut Uele Province and Biringi settlement in Ituri Province. **Over 23,700 South Sudanese refugees and host community members were included in awareness-raising activities on HIV/AIDS** and over 20,000 male condoms were distributed by UNHCR's partner ADES.

**WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)**

- UNHCR and partner AIDES carried out **WASH maintenance and analyses in various sites throughout South Kivu Province.** Residual chlorine in water supplies was analyzed and pipes and tank taps were repaired at Lusenda camp and Mulonge settlement hosting Burundian refugees.

**SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)**

- UNHCR and partner AIRD finalized the construction of **35 shelters at Bele settlement,** Haut Uele Province that will benefit 92 South Sudanese refugees.
- UNHCR and partner ADSSE distributed **core relief items to 119 South Sudanese refugees** who have recently been relocated from Meri settlement to the Bele settlement, both in Haut Uele Province. As of 31 December, almost 2,500 individuals have been relocated to Bele and received shelter, food and agricultural land.

**CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)**

- Refugees in urban areas are struggling to meet their most basic needs due to the economic impact of COVID-19. **UNHCR and partners helped 175 refugee households living in Goma, North Kivu Province to open bank accounts** to allow them to receive emergency cash assistance. In Uvira, South Kivu province, UNHCR conducted a **one-off cash assistance for 250 refugee families** (979 persons) using mobile banking to help cover rent, food and other key expenses.

Statelessness

- On 6 and 7 December, UNHCR handed over **200 supplementary judgements concerning birth registration** of South Sudanese refugee and local children, in an effort to reduce statelessness in Dungu Territory, Haut Uele Province.

Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs)

**PROTECTION**

- UNHCR provided ICT equipment to authorities and local actors in Butembo, Beni and Oicha, Beni Territory, North Kivu Province. The intervention aims to reinforce their capacities to deal with issues related to displacement and protection amongst the affected population.

**SHELTER AND CORE RELIEF ITEMS (CRIs)**

- UNHCR and partner Caritas **distributed core relief items including blankets, mats, jerrycans and solar lamps to over 4,500 internally displaced households** in Beni Territory, North Kivu Province. In addition, 600 mattresses have also been distributed to the most vulnerable.
- In Kigonze, Bule and Drodro, Ituri Province, UNHCR and partner the Danish Refugee Council **finalized the construction of 1,460 emergency shelters** which will be used to relocate new displaced families who arrived since October 2020 in the different sites.
- In order to decongest the spontaneous IDP site next to the General Hospital in Bunia, UNHCR and partner Caritas facilitated the **relocation of 1,375 displaced persons** from the site to the new Kigonze site, Ituri Province. The relocation took place from 21 to 23 December and displaced families received core relief items composed of blankets, mats, jerrycans and soap.
- In Manono Territory, Tanganyika Province, UNHCR and partner AIRD provided **shelter assistance to 342 Congolese returnee families**. To ensure sustainable housing conditions, UNHCR promotes – wherever possible – the use of local construction materials.

**CASH-BASED INTERVENTIONS (CBI)**

- UNHCR and partner Caritas provided **cash assistance to 1,268 displaced households with specific needs** in Beni and Masisi Territories, North Kivu Province.
- UNHCR's implementing partners AIDPROFEN and SAFDEF distributed **cash grants to some 123 girls and women at risk of sexual and gender-based violence** in Katala, Masisi centre, Burungu, Kitshanga and Mweso, in North Kivu Province.
- From 13 to 15 December, UNHCR partner AVSI distributed unconditional, **multi-purpose cash grants to 1,015 displaced and host community women** in Tsere, Shari and Bogoro in Rwampara health zones, Irumu territory, Ituri Province. The cash grants support women who are at risk of sexual violence or sexual exploitation, such as female heads of households or women living with disabilities.

Clusters and Working Groups

- Following reports of accidents caused by landmines, explosives and discovery of ammunitions in some health zones in North Kivu Province, the protection cluster through the landmines working group organized **awareness-raising sessions targeting over 6,000 IDPs, refugees and host community** members in the concerned areas to improve their knowledge on the existence of mines and explosives.

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