

Southern Africa

3 September 2020

Highlights

Since the beginning of UNHCR's COVID-19 response in Southern Africa

 **2.9 million** people reached through COVID-19 risk communication

 **382,567** people received soap to help reduce the spread of COVID-19

 **12,376** children and youth supported with distance and home-based learning



Discussion groups held for children on COVID-19 and child protection in Tongogara refugee camp, Zimbabwe. Photo credit: P. Mugayi/ Terre des hommes

Population Figures

9,466,056 people of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa, including

 770,536 refugees and 312,142 asylum-seekers

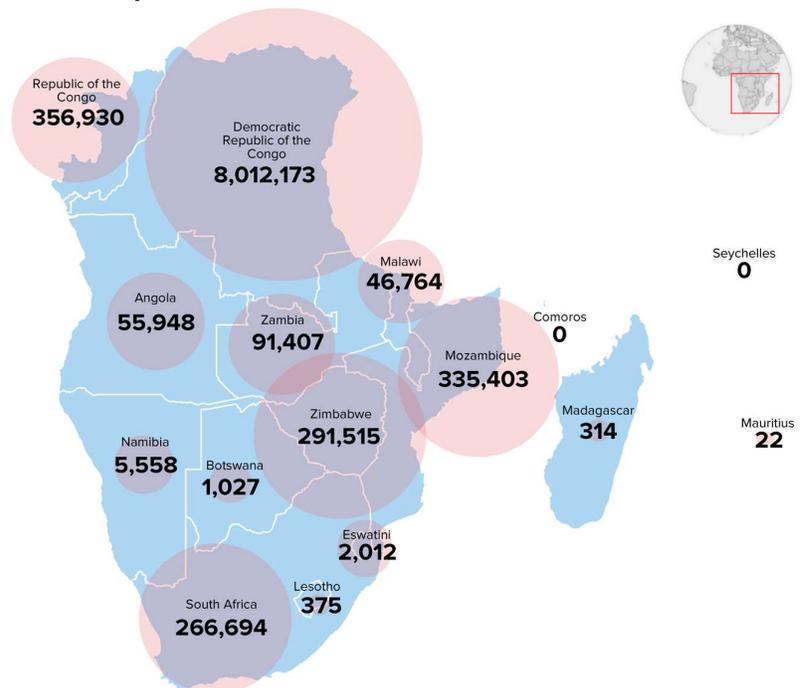
 6,385,489 internally displaced persons (IDPs)

 1,938,223 IDP returnees and 23,248 refugee returnees

 36,418 other people of concern

(as of 31 August 2020)

People of Concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa



Operational Context

As of 1 September 2020, there are a reported 702,804 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the 16 countries covered by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Southern Africa. This includes 49,004 new reported cases over a two-week period. 89 per cent of all reported cases in the region are in South Africa. While Governments across the region continue to take precautionary measures to limit the spread of the virus, many of the stricter measures, such as lockdowns, movement restrictions, and closure of borders, schools and shops are being gradually eased.

This easing of restrictions comes at a time when people of concern – refugees, IDPs, stateless people and other marginalized communities – have become deeply impacted by lost income as a result of limitations on movement and economic activity and have been struggling to put food on the table, pay rent, or cover the cost of utilities. As COVID-19 responses continue to be rolled out across the region, UNHCR is working with governments, the World Health Organization and other UN agencies and NGOs to ensure and expand the inclusion of people of concern in preparedness and response measures for COVID-19, including in social safety nets and other social assistance programs.

UNHCR and partners have committed to a 'stay and deliver' approach and have continued to provide critical services and assistance throughout the pandemic. Programmes have been adapted to observe social distancing and other COVID-19 mitigation measures, including implementation of health protocols at distribution points, the use of hotlines to report protection issues and assistance needs, and support to virtual and distance learning. UNHCR has also been expanding its outreach efforts in the region with the support of partners and community volunteers to spread the message among persons of concern and their host communities about COVID-19 prevention and services.

UNHCR Response

Health and WASH



264,568 people received soap for COVID-19 prevention since March 2020 in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**



80 health workers trained on COVID-19 prevention and response in **Mozambique** since March 2020

UNHCR and partners continued efforts to strengthen health systems and services across the region to prevent and respond to COVID-19. Training for health staff, as well as community health workers and community mobilizers is an important part of this effort. Across the region, 1,925 health workers have been trained on COVID-19 prevention and response. For example, over the past two weeks in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**, 70 medical staff in North and South Ubangi Provinces received training on COVID-19 testing, making a total of 549 health workers trained on COVID-19 by UNHCR in the DRC since the beginning of the COVID-19 response. Similarly, in **Mozambique**, UNHCR conducted a refresher training in Nampula Province for 20 health mobilizers who were hired to support COVID-19 prevention measures. The health mobilizers are both people of concern and people from the host community. The training covered good hygiene and sanitation practices, as well as COVID-19 prevention protocols. UNHCR in Mozambique has provided COVID-19 training to 80 health workers since the beginning of the pandemic.

In **Zambia**, a COVID-19 rapid response team was formed in Mantapala refugee settlement, comprising 20 refugees. The team was trained by UNHCR and the Nchelenge District Health Office to assist health staff at the newly constructed isolation centre to handle and manage COVID-19 cases. 20 community health workers and 16 skilled refugee nurses, clinicians and environmental technicians were also trained to identify cases, raise awareness and conduct surveillance, as well as monitor and observe asymptomatic cases in the community. Further, in Mayukwayukwa refugee settlement, 185 health care workers, community workers, community protection workers and community leaders were trained in identification of persons suspected to have COVID-19, as well as on surveillance of suspected cases, use of personal protective equipment, and co-ordination of awareness programmes at both health facility and community level. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, 485 health workers in Zambia have participated in COVID-19 training provided by UNHCR.

Also, under the health response in Zambia, 20,000 medical masks and 9,000 surgical gloves were dispatched to the three refugee settlements, for use by 70 health care workers in 12 health facilities across the settlements. 50 refugee housing units with a total capacity to accommodate 250 individuals were also installed at the new Mantapala Reception Center, which will serve as a COVID-19 quarantine for new arrivals.

Support to water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) systems remains a priority in Southern Africa, as a key element in the fight against the spread of COVID-19. Over the past two weeks in the **DRC**, UNHCR launched a large-scale soap distribution for IDPs in displacement sites and host communities in Ituri Province to help prevent the spread of COVID-19, including distributing 13,753 bars of soap to people in displacement sites in Kpangba and Kasenyi. In addition, local authorities in these two locations received 1,250 bars of soap for distribution to members of the local community. To accompany the soap distribution, UNHCR is installing handwashing stations in the displacement sites, with 25 handwashing stations so far installed. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, UNHCR and its partners in DRC have provided soap for handwashing to 264,568 people and have installed 3,396 additional handwashing facilities.

In **Zimbabwe**, UNHCR and its WASH partner distributed 600 1-litre bottles of hand sanitizer and three five-litre containers of calcium hypochlorite to Chibuwe, Kondo and Chipangayi health clinics, supporting host communities living near Tongogara refugee camp. UNHCR has been supporting 7 health centres in Zimbabwe with equipment and supplies since the beginning of the COVID-19 response. In addition, disinfection of communal areas within the camp is ongoing, with WASH promoters disseminating messages on handwashing and social distancing at various water points and distribution sites. Over the past two week, UNHCR's WASH partner has continued to ensure that the camp has consistent water supply to facilitate adherence to COVID-19 prevention measures, notably completing the installation of a solar-powered piped water network. The water system is now pumping water into storage tanks serving the clinic, isolation centre, quarantine centre, and the early childhood development centre. The piped water serves 6,500 refugees and asylum-seekers.

Protection, Communication and Community Engagement



15,219 people reached with COVID-19 risk communication since March 2020 in **Zimbabwe**



10,000 people reached with SGBV messaging linked to COVID-19 in **Malawi** since March 2020

Risk communication and awareness-raising on COVID-19 continues across the region, reaching refugees, IDPs and host community through community-based protection groups and community mobilizers, information sessions, flyers and leaflets, and radio show spots. With reports of growing complacency and non-compliance in a context of eased restrictions and rising COVID-19 cases, operations are also targeting their outreach efforts to reach specific demographics who may otherwise be missed in the general campaigns, or who may not understand the messages clearly. In **Malawi**, a child-friendly booklet about sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in the context of COVID-19 was finalized. This booklet includes basic information about SGBV and relevant referral pathways that are in place during the COVID-19 pandemic. The booklet was written using simple words that children can understand and is being distributed throughout the refugee community via community-based organizations. It will also be used as education material during youth activities. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response in Malawi, 10,000 people have been reached by UNHCR and its partners with SGBV messaging linked to COVID-19

Awareness sessions about COVID-19 targeted towards children and youth were also conducted in Tongogara refugee camp, **Zimbabwe**. Over the past two weeks, two focus group discussions were held with 40 children between the ages of nine and 14 years. The children expressed their fears about the continued closure of schools and stated that they missed playing with friends freely and meeting teachers. Child protection staff assessed the children's understanding of COVID-19 and it was evident that the children had received and understood information on COVID-19, including on precautionary measures. The group discussions also provided an opportunity to share the referral pathway for child protection cases. Similarly, to assess knowledge among youth, 110 youth in 6 separate groups participated in a quiz with questions on gender-based violence, child protection and COVID-19 being posed as part of the competition. UNHCR has reached 15,219 people with COVID-19 risk communication in Zimbabwe since the beginning of the response.

Meanwhile, the region's largest risk communication and awareness-raising campaign continued in the **DRC**, through which UNHCR and its partners have reached more than 2.1 million people since the beginning of the

COVID-19 pandemic. During the past two weeks, UNHCR's partner used the opportunity of a food distribution to reach people of concern with awareness-raising sessions on the topic "COVID-19 virus is not a myth but a reality" in Boyabu refugee camp in Sud-Ubangi Province, reaching 13,647 people. In the same province, UNHCR's partner reached 5,080 people (including 401 from the host community) in Mole camp and 1,220 people (including 386 from the host community) in Boyabu camp with information about COVID-19 symptoms and where to seek assistance. Further, UNHCR supported the awareness-raising work of community-based protection groups in the two camps by sharing communication and information material such as flyers and posters for distribution during their activities.

Education



1,259 children and youth supported with distance and home-based learning in **Zimbabwe** since March 2020



868 students screened for COVID-19 prior to examinations in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Schools remain closed in many countries in the region, and UNHCR and partners continue to take innovative measures to help students keep up with their studies. In some countries, lessons have resumed for students in examination classes, and UNHCR has been supporting schools to implement COVID-19 prevention measures for classroom-based learning as well as during the examination period. In **Zimbabwe**, schools remain closed in Tongogara refugee camp, with community education volunteers engaging families to tune in to radio-based lessons. However, some students do not have radios, and therefore 'learning circles' have been formed in the camp to ensure students, especially those in grade 7 examination classes, have access to radios and support to work through the radio lessons. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, UNHCR has supported 1,259 children and youth in Zimbabwe with distance and home-based learning during school closures.

In **Malawi**, schools are set to re-open on 7 September, and UNHCR's education partner has been undertaking preparations in Dzaleka refugee camp to ensure safe school re-opening as per the national guidelines. Preparations for school re-opening have included procurement of materials to facilitate strict adherence to COVID-19 preventive measures such as water buckets for regular handwashing, soap, face masks to be distributed to the learners and equipment for temperature checks. During the period of COVID-19 school closures in Malawi, UNHCR supported 500 children and youth to access distance and home-based education.

While classes have not fully resumed in the **DRC**, end-of-cycle examinations are going ahead. In order to help protect students during the exam period UNHCR's health partner disinfected schools in sites hosting people of concern in Ituri Province, totalling 44 classrooms, 4 offices and 20 latrines. In addition, 868 students were screened using thermo-laser temperature control and were provided with information about COVID-19 prevention measures before taking exams. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, UNHCR has assisted 1,594 students in the DRC to access distance and home-based education.

Challenges

Operations across the region are increasingly encountering complacency and non-compliance with COVID-19 prevention measures – for example wearing masks, handwashing, social distancing. There is a need for sustained, as well as renewed, efforts in terms of risk communication and community engagement, including adopting innovative approaches to ensure impact. This is especially important as restrictions are being gradually lifted, and people of concern along with the host community are returning to work and school. At the same time, concerning reports of rising xenophobia and stigmatization of refugees has been noted in the region, impacting on the physical safety of people of concern as well as on social cohesion and peaceful coexistence with local communities.

In addition, UNHCR, partners and governments also continue to face challenges ensuring adequate supplies of medicine, medical supplies and equipment for COVID-19 due to delays in the delivery of international orders and lack of local providers. In addition, slowness and sparse coverage of COVID-19 testing remains a serious concern in the region, linked to shortages of test kits, limited laboratory capacity, and delays in results being shared. This not only has negative implications for the transmission chain, but it also makes contact tracing difficult. The situation is particularly worrying in refugee and IDP camp settings, as well as in some urban areas where people live in close proximity with one another.

Financial Requirements

On 7 May 2020, the UN launched a revised inter-agency [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) seeking US\$ 6.69 billion, which includes US\$ 745 million for UNHCR's operations in affected countries through December 2020 and as reflected in UNHCR's [revised Coronavirus emergency appeal](#). As of 1 September, US\$ 462 million has been pledged and recorded towards UNHCR's appeal.

In Southern Africa, US\$ 31.2 million is needed under the revised Coronavirus emergency appeal. As of 1 September 2020, the region has received earmarked funding totalling nearly US\$7.7 million, accounting for approximately 25% of financial needs. The Regional Bureau for Southern Africa is grateful to donors who have earmarked contributions to operations in the Southern Africa region for COVID-19 response, including the United States of America (USA), Education Cannot Wait, UN Malawi SDG Acceleration Fund and private donors.

GLOBAL CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEDGES TO THE UNHCR COVID-19 APPEAL | US\$

USA 186M | Germany 62.7M | EU 46.3M | UK 29.6M | Japan 23.9M | African Development Bank 18.3M | Denmark 14.6M | United Nations Foundation 10M | Private donors 9.7M | CERF 6.9M | Canada 6.4M | Education Cannot Wait 6M | Qatar Charity 3.5M | Spain 3.4M | France 3.4M | Ireland 3.3M | Sweden 3M | Sony Corporation 2.9M | Unilever 2.9M | Austria 2.5M | Finland 2.4M | People's Republic of China 2M | Latter-day Saints Charities 2M | UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe 1.7M | Norway 1.4M | Australia for UNHCR 1.3M | USA for UNHCR 1M

UNHCR is also grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked support. Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees, the internally displaced, stateless persons and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk.

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | US\$

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | Private donors Spain 33.1M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Germany 25.9M | Private donors Republic of Korea 17.3M | Switzerland 16.4M | France 14M | Private donors Japan 11.7M

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**Global Financial Requirements:
UNHCR Coronavirus Emergency
Appeal**

