

Operational Context

Across the Southern Africa region, national efforts to contain COVID-19 include varying restrictions on movement, limits on social gatherings, prohibition of public events, suspension of commercial flights, closure of borders, and nation-wide lockdowns. Exceptions are often made for goods and cargo, as well as returning citizens and legal residents to move across borders. While some countries have extended their lockdowns and states of emergency, many are beginning phased approaches to ease COVID-19 restrictions.

UNHCR is working with governments, WHO and other UN agencies and NGOs to secure the inclusion of persons of concern – refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless people and other marginalized communities – in preparedness and response measures for COVID-19. UNHCR has also been expanding its outreach efforts in the region with the support of partners and community volunteers to better engage persons of concern and their host communities with information about COVID-19 prevention and services.

In order to continue monitoring affected communities' perception of COVID-19, UNHCR and partners are carrying out remote surveys to understand the needs, fears and threats expressed by the population. To encourage social distancing, UNHCR has been promoting the use of hotlines to report protection issues, such as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) as well as general assistance needs.

UNHCR Response



Health and WASH

In the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)** UNHCR continued its support to the COVID-19 health response by donating a 4x4 vehicle and a minibus to the National Institute for Biomedical Research (INRB) in Kinshasa, and a 4x4 vehicle to health authorities in Libenge, Sud Ubangi Province, which hosts approximately 35,000 refugees from Central African Republic (CAR). UNHCR also provided 20 handwashing kits to the provincial authorities in Kasai Central Province, as well as 2,000 masks and 2,500 gloves for health centres Tanganyika Province. UNHCR and partners also reinforced COVID-19 prevention measures in Bili camp, which hosts refugees from CAR, with five additional thermometers placed at entry points, making a total of 30 thermometers installed in refugee camps and offices in Nord and Sud Ubangi Provinces. UNHCR also supported the COVID-19 health response in **Zimbabwe** by equipping the isolation centre in Tongogara refugee camp with 500 gowns, 12,000 masks and 20 scrubs for health personnel. The refugee camp has been designated by the Government as one of the COVID-19 hotspots in Manicaland.

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19 in Bele settlement, **DRC**, UNHCR and partners launched the “Tippy Tap” challenge, encouraging South Sudanese refugees to make their own handwashing devices using recycled material, including empty plastic bottles. In Kinshasa, UNHCR and partners have been distributing hygiene kits including soap, masks and hydroalcoholic gel, to refugee families in Kinshasa, so far reaching 91 out of 330 households targeted.



Protection, Communication and Community Engagement

Throughout the region, UNHCR has been continuing to raise awareness among refugees, IDPs and host communities about COVID-19 prevention and response measures. In **DRC**, 6,000 persons were reached by door-to-door awareness-raising messages this week in areas hosting refugees from CAR, in Nord and Sud Ubangi provinces. Meanwhile, in IDP-hosting areas in Ituri Province, community-based protection structures supported by UNHCR reached 2,152 women, men, girls and boys with awareness-raising messages on COVID-19, as well as sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), including in areas currently inaccessible to humanitarian actors. The community-based protection structures thereby play a key role in spreading information on COVID-19, and UNHCR is in regular phone

contact with all community structures it supports to provide advice and up-to-date information about the COVID-19 outbreak in the province.

In **Malawi**, representatives of community-based structures in Dzaleka refugee camp led a live radio programme on Yetu Community Radio to raise awareness on referral pathways and the dedicated phone numbers that refugees can call or text if they are in need of assistance. Community representatives will be provided with one hour of radio time each week to continue messaging to the community. In Brazzaville, **Republic of the Congo**, UNHCR and its social assistance partner continued awareness-raising campaigns on COVID-19 by visiting two orphanages to hold sessions for 56 children, including 7 refugees. In Betou, awareness-raising sessions on COVID-19 prevention measures reached 103 people including 16 from the host community, and more sessions will continue in the coming week.



Assistance

In **South Africa**, UNHCR's Helpline has seen a spike in calls since the nation-wide lockdown began on 26 March, totaling 2,071 over this period. 95 per cent of calls are for help with food and rent from people who were previously self-sufficient and are now unable to work and support their families during the lockdown. To address the growing need, UNHCR has been rolling out emergency assistance through its partners. 4,909 people have been reached with assistance between 27 April and 1 May, including 2,832 people receiving cash-based interventions (CBI), and 2,015 people receiving food parcels. In **Zambia**, UNHCR provided three months of cash assistance to 135 vulnerable people, the majority of whom are new arrivals.



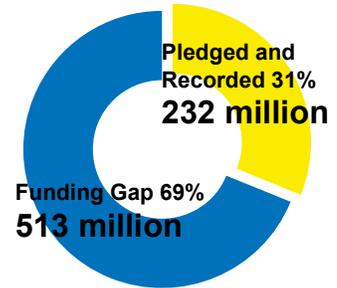
Education and Livelihoods

In response to school closures under COVID-19 restrictions, UNHCR and its partners are supporting distance and virtual learning initiatives in the region. In **DRC**, 429 refugee children from 109 families are following distance learning programmes through Radio Okapi in Lubumbashi, Haut Katanga Province. Meanwhile, in three refugee camps in Nord and Sud Ubangi provinces UNHCR's education partner has reopened the Instant Network Schools to allow refugee students from CAR to prepare for the national exams, and to pursue online training programmes. COVID-19 prevention measures were adopted by organizing lessons in small groups, while respecting social distancing and hygiene measures. Similarly, in **Zambia**, the Government has introduced online and television learning. While refugees can make use of these resources, limited access to infrastructure and technological tools poses a challenge, as do frequent power cuts. To address this issue, UNHCR and education partners are seeking to establish learning centres with the necessary connectivity where students can access lessons.

UNHCR continues to support livelihoods amidst the impact of COVID-19. In **Zambia**, prevention messaging has been mainstreamed into livelihoods programming, in line with the Government precautionary measures. Notably, 10 small-scale meat processors from Meheba refugee settlement who reported loss of business due to meat products going bad as a result of low turnover, were taught meat smoking as a way of preserving and extending the shelf life of their products. UNHCR's livelihoods partner provided two meat smokers for use by meat traders in the settlement, and the initiative was highly welcomed by residents and traders alike. In Nampula Province, **Mozambique**, UNHCR is working with the Government to recruit community workers to support COVID-19 prevention, response, and surveillance activities. The programme is supported by UNHCR's livelihoods programme as part of the wage employment initiative and is open to refugees and asylum-seekers living in Maratane refugee camp, as well as members of the host community.

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](#). US\$232 million has been received towards this appeal globally.



CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEDGES TO THE UNHCR COVID-19 APPEAL | US\$
USA 64M (400,000 earmarked for the DRC operation) | Germany 38M | EU 31.8M | UK 24.8M | Japan 23.9M | Denmark 14.6M | CERF 6.9M | Canada 6.4M | Ireland 3.3M | Sweden 3M | Finland 2.4M | Sony Corporation 3M | Private Donors 1.9m | Education Cannot Wait 1.8M | Qatar Charity 1.5M | Norway 1.4M | Australia 0.8m | Monaco 0.2M | Estonia 0.2M | Iceland 0.1M | Portugal 0.1M | Liechtenstein 0.1M

UNHCR is also grateful to the following donors that have provided unearmarked support that contributes towards addressing needs in the region.

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | US\$

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Germany 25.9M | Private donors Spain 20M | Switzerland 16.4M | Private donors in Republic of Korea 10.5M

CONTACTS

- Joan Allison, Chief, External Engagement Section, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, allison@unhcr.org
- Miranda Gaanderse, Reporting Officer, Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, gaanders@unhcr.org