

Southern Africa

An ambulance drives through floodwater in Mulongwe in the city of Uvira, South Kivu Province, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. UNHCR has been working with local authorities and partners to assist some 80,000 people affected by heavy floods in South Kivu.

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WORKING ENVIRONMENT AND KEY STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

Promoting access to and support for asylum

National asylum and migration systems in the region are overwhelmed and ill-equipped to respond to mixed movements of refugees, asylum-seekers and migrants coming from over 90 countries of origin. This has left thousands of people in legal limbo, with asylum systems facing backlogs that can take months or years to process, and which are dependent on UNHCR for technical and financial support.

To address this, UNHCR will work to improve the quality and integrity of registration and refugee status determination. In June 2020, UNHCR and the Southern African Development Community (SADC) established a five year joint action plan (2020-2024) to strengthen support for SADC Member States. This support will include technical expertise to facilitate regional alignment in managing the response to asylum-seekers, refugees, returnees, IDPs and stateless persons.

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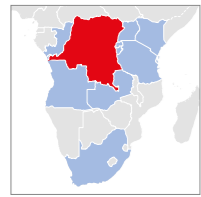
Consequences of COVID-19 on planning, preparedness and response

By mid-October 2020, there had been over 796,000 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the Southern Africa region, including among refugees. UNHCR programmes have been adapted to observe social distancing and other COVID-19 mitigation measures: health protocols are in place at registration and distribution points, and hotlines and community protection structures are being utilized to identify protection issues and assistance needs.

While as of October 2020 the rate of COVID-19 positive cases was decreasing across the region, the risk of resurgence in 2021 remains. UNHCR will continue risk communication to spread information about COVID-19 prevention and services, having reached 2.5 million people in 2020. Strengthening health systems and reinforcing water, sanitation and hygiene services will also remain priorities in 2021. UNHCR will continue to equip health centres, train health-care workers and support isolation and quarantine centres for COVID-19 patients, particularly in refugee camps.

These activities will build on achievements in 2020, including COVID-19 training for 1,900 health staff and the provision of supplies and equipment to 37 health centres. Additional handwashing facilities and soap distributions, as well as individual family latrines, will support good hygiene practices and reduce the risk of spreading COVID-19. This will include maintenance of over 4,700 additional handwashing facilities that were established in 2020, as well as additional soap supplies covering the needs of 458,000 people. UNHCR will also continue to provide cash assistance and core relief items to those most in need and impacted by COVID-19. Finally, the Office will continue to advocate with governments and UN partners to ensure that refugees and host communities are included in COVID-19 preparedness and response plans.

MAJOR SITUATIONS IN SOUTHERN AFRICA IN 2021



THE DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

Since December 2019, an increase in violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo saw the number of IDPs rise to almost 6 million by the end of October 2020. In the provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu, over 1 million people have been displaced in 2020 alone. UNHCR declared an L3 emergency for these provinces in November 2019 that led to the activation of emergency procedures and helped expedite access to additional human, material and financial resources. Fresh violence also erupted in the Kasai region in 2020, causing new displacement.

The country has one of the largest IDP situations globally, and the largest in sub-Saharan Africa. In 2021, UNHCR will strengthen its rapid response to recurrent emergencies, ensure the centrality of protection in all IDP interventions, reinforce advocacy based on its protection monitoring system, consolidate community-based protection approaches, implement solution strategies for IDPs in sites and local communities, ensure targeted assistance to persons at heightened risk, promote peaceful coexistence within affected communities and strengthen community mobilization.

Over 1 million Congolese hosted across 20 African countries make up the largest population of refugees and asylum-seekers in the region. In 2021, UNHCR will continue to lead the coordination of the inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Democratic Republic of the Congo situation. UNHCR, in close coordination with more than 60 partners, will provide protection and assistance to Congolese refugees and asylum-seekers, bolster livelihood opportunities and—in line with the Global Compact on Refugees—support the needs of host populations and strengthen peaceful coexistence.

The health and well-being of refugees and IDPs is a priority, and UNHCR has adjusted its operations in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and in refugee-hosting countries to prevent and respond to COVID-19. These measures will be further strengthened in 2021.

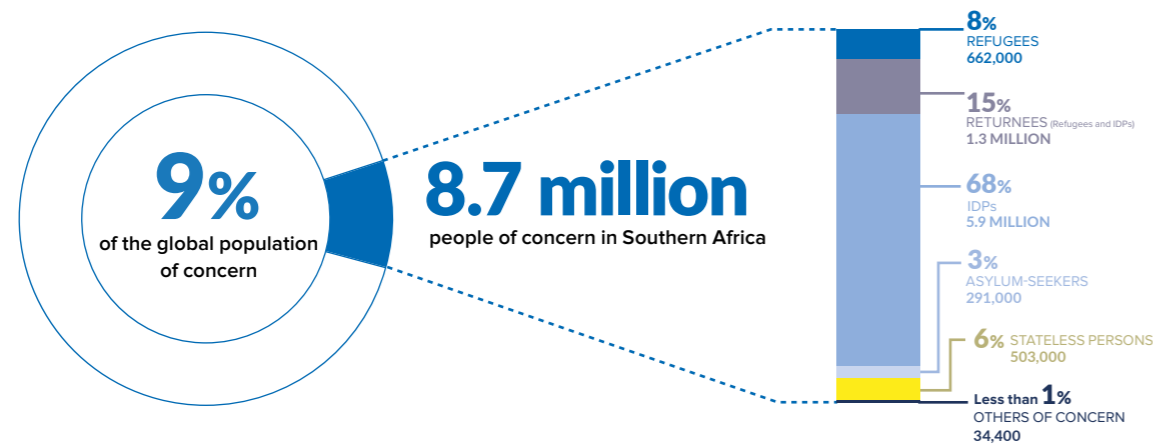
1 million
REFUGEES FROM THE
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE
CONGO IN NEIGHBOURING
COUNTRIES

5 million
IDPs

1.3 million
REFUGEE AND
IDP RETURNÉES

55%
OF PEOPLE OF CONCERN
ARE CHILDREN

2021 PLANNING FIGURES FOR PEOPLE OF CONCERN in Southern Africa



Over 88% of people of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa are refugees, asylum-seekers or IDPs affected by the complex and overlapping humanitarian crises in the Democratic Republic of the Congo. In 2021, the situation in the east of the country will require a strengthening of UNHCR's emergency response. The deteriorating security situation in Mozambique, with internal displacement of over 300,000 people in north-eastern Cabo Delgado Province, will also continue to require a sustained, inter-agency humanitarian response.



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In line with UNHCR's strategy to address mixed movements in Africa, UNHCR will also implement a four-year joint project with the ILO, UNODC and IOM to support SADC countries in strengthening institutional mechanisms for migration management, including review of the legislative frameworks for persons in need of international protection.

Coordinating and delivering protection and solutions for IDPs

The Southern Africa region hosts some 7.1 million IDPs and IDP returnees, mainly in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Mozambique, where the insurgency in the north-eastern province of Cabo Delgado has displaced over 300,000 people.

In the Democratic Republic of the Congo, one of the target operations of UNHCR's IDP Initiative, UNHCR will provide multipurpose cash grants to meet urgent basic needs, support livelihoods and mitigate protection risks. In 2021, some 3,000 households will benefit from multipurpose cash grants; 4,200 households will receive core relief items; 600 women will receive sanitary materials; and 3,000 transitional shelters will be provided to IDP returnees in Ituri Province.

UNHCR has declared an L2 emergency for the IDP situation in northern Mozambique and will continue to co-lead the protection cluster response in Cabo Delgado and Maputo in 2021. UNHCR will work closely with partners to identify and map protection needs, as well as to provide appropriate protection support and services, including in response to gender-based violence. UNHCR will also distribute core relief items to some 45,000 extremely vulnerable individuals.

Working towards durable solutions

Border closures aimed at limiting the spread of COVID-19 led UNHCR to suspend all voluntary repatriation operations from March 2020 onwards. As borders re-open, voluntary repatriation programmes will resume, in line with international health standards and precautionary measures, and subject to available funding. Tripartite consultations involving UNHCR and relevant countries of origin and asylum will also continue regarding the voluntary repatriation of refugees and asylum-seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The Government of Namibia has also requested that the Government of Burundi and UNHCR facilitate the voluntary return of some 500 Burundian refugees residing in Osire refugee camp.

In Zambia, efforts towards the local integration of former Angolan and Rwandan refugees will continue through support for self-reliance and socioeconomic inclusion. In Zimbabwe, the African Development Bank will fund a scheme expanding self-reliance opportunities through agricultural activities. In Namibia, some 2,400 Angolan refugees are receiving help to acquire permanent residency, with 1,800 refugees having already obtained residence permits. Pending the availability of durable solutions, settlement approaches, with refugees living side-by-side with host communities, will be adopted in Malawi and Mozambique, and further developed in Zambia in 2021.

Resettlement in the Southern Africa region has been severely constrained, with third country resettlement quotas having decreased from 4,700 submissions in 2019 to about 1,500 in 2020. UNHCR is mapping possibilities for the region, in line with "The three-year strategy

(2019-2021) on resettlement and complementary pathways" and will design a regional strategy for complementary pathways, including family reunification, education, employment, humanitarian admission and private sponsorship.

Enhancing partnerships

In 2021, UNHCR will seek to further operationalize the Global Compact on Refugees by strengthening its partnership with regional economic communities, in particular SADC. The memorandum of understanding between UNHCR and SADC has been revised to advance the principles of the Compact and operationalize pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum in the region. Cooperation will include exploring a regional mechanism governing freedom of movement, regularization of stay and access to working rights for refugees in transit and destination countries, as well as alternative pathways for skilled migrants. Enhanced partnerships will also be explored with the Pan-African Parliament and the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa.

In 2021, UNHCR will pursue alliances with a range of stakeholders to ensure refugee and host community inclusion in national development plans. Further, UNHCR will contribute to the advancement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Agenda 2063 of the African Union. The Office will leverage its partnership with the World Bank Group to mobilize additional resources in response to situations of displacement, in addition to maintaining its strategic partnership with the Identification for Development (ID4D) initiative in the

Republic of the Congo. Partnerships with the African Development Bank and the French Development Agency will also be enhanced to advocate investments in refugee-hosting areas and to catalyze the economic inclusion of people of concern.

Preventing, addressing and resolving statelessness

Positive advances have been made towards addressing statelessness in the region, albeit with progress slowed by the COVID-19 pandemic. The Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Namibia and Zambia have taken concrete steps towards accession to the statelessness conventions which will be supported by UNHCR in 2021. UNHCR will provide technical support to the Republic of the Congo and Eswatini following their adoption of national action plans to end statelessness. This will include reforms of their nationality laws and enhancement of their civil registration systems. Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Madagascar, Namibia and Zambia, all have national plans awaiting formal endorsement by their Governments. Data collection efforts on the risks of statelessness, as well as the profiles and sizes of affected populations, have been initiated in Angola, the Republic of the Congo, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Eswatini, Madagascar, Namibia, Zambia and Zimbabwe, and will likewise be supported by UNHCR in 2021. In view of the favourable political context in these countries, UNHCR will redouble its efforts to collect reliable data to inform policies and strengthen and promote legal and administrative frameworks relating to nationality and statelessness.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

Implications of underfunding

Basic humanitarian assistance and longer-term development planning and solutions would be affected by underfunding.

Before the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic, WFP food cuts were already seriously affecting people of concern, particularly in Angola, the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Malawi, Mozambique and Zambia. Food shortages due to underfunding are therefore likely to continue in these refugee operations in 2021.

Based on trends in 2020, underfunding will also likely affect UNHCR's COVID-19 response. The planned construction of family latrines was put on hold in 2020, for example, affecting 8,000 refugees and asylum-seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, despite the urgent need to mitigate public health risks (the ratio of people per latrine is 32, compared to the recommended 20).

Emergency shelter interventions for 14,000 vulnerable IDP families in North and South Kivu Provinces, as well as cash programming for 100,000 IDP women at risk in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, will remain halted in the absence of further resources.

With reduced funding, successful community-based protection activities will also have to be significantly downsized in the east of the country.

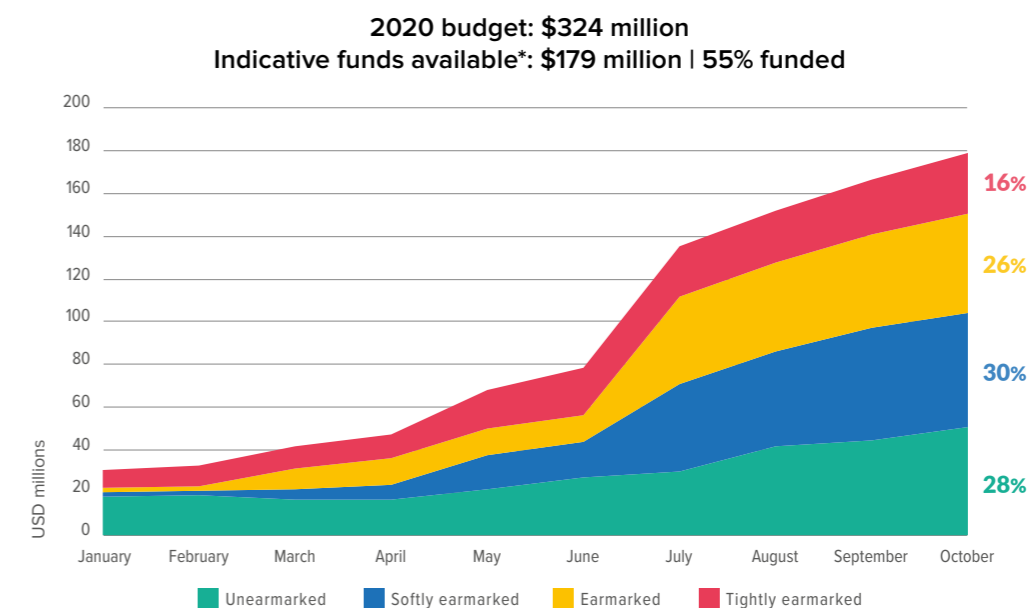
With the resources available in the region having to be prioritized to address basic needs and provide emergency assistance, UNHCR's work on self-reliance and livelihoods will also be constrained.

In Zambia, for example, an initiative to further access employment opportunities and mitigate the negative impact of COVID-19 for 1,500 Congolese refugee youth and women by developing alternative livelihoods, including artisanal activities, will not be implemented without appropriate funding in 2021. Education programming in Zambia will also continue to be affected, with the planned construction and rehabilitation of schools and classrooms suspended, affecting a total of 6,000 refugee students.

Across the region, community-based interventions protecting the most vulnerable children will also be suspended should additional funding not be secured.

Finally, in terms of solutions, underfunding would delay the voluntary return of an estimated 10,000 Congolese refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

2020 EARMARKING AND TIMELINESS OF FUNDING FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA | As of 1 October 2020



* Indicative funds available include carry-over from prior years and an indicative allocation of unearmarked and softly earmarked funds based on the prioritized budget.

BUDGETS FOR SOUTHERN AFRICA | USD

OPERATION	ALL PILLARS	PILLAR 1	PILLAR 2	PILLAR 3	PILLAR 4	TOTAL
	2020 Current budget (as of 30 June 2020)	Refugee programme	Stateless programme	Reintegration projects	IDP projects	
Regional Bureau for Southern Africa ¹	11,338,583	10,437,597	-	-	-	10,437,597
Regional activities for Southern Africa ¹	2,836,098	4,000,000	-	-	-	4,000,000
Angola	22,599,704	27,194,543	120,000	-	-	27,314,543
Congo	29,406,638	24,149,837	1,154,957	-	2,311,039	27,615,833
Democratic Republic of the Congo	168,219,857	104,871,523	6,157,841	8,400,637	68,711,175	188,141,176
Malawi	21,366,778	17,549,902	-	-	-	17,549,902
Mozambique	9,687,853	9,407,839	93,630	-	4,982,240	14,483,709
South Africa Multi-Country Office ²	26,777,290	26,131,268	1,822,541	-	-	27,953,810
Zambia	24,621,490	19,800,193	-	-	-	19,800,193
Zimbabwe	7,594,259	6,906,292	797,952	-	-	7,704,244
TOTAL	324,448,549	250,448,994	10,146,922	8,400,637	76,004,454	345,001,006

¹ Regional Bureau and regional activities cover the whole Southern Africa region.

² Includes activities in Botswana and South Africa and covers also Comoros, Eswatini, Lesotho, Madagascar, Mauritius, Namibia and the Seychelles.

³ Note: budget appropriations are those approved by the UNHCR Executive Committee at its 71st session in October 2020. They are based on a budget cut-off date of 15 June 2020. Any subsequent revisions to budgets will be reflected as they are processed. Updated budget information is made available to Member States through regular updates on budgets and funding to the UNHCR Standing Committee. Information on the 2021 budgets will also be updated online on a monthly basis on Global Focus (<https://reporting.unhcr.org>).