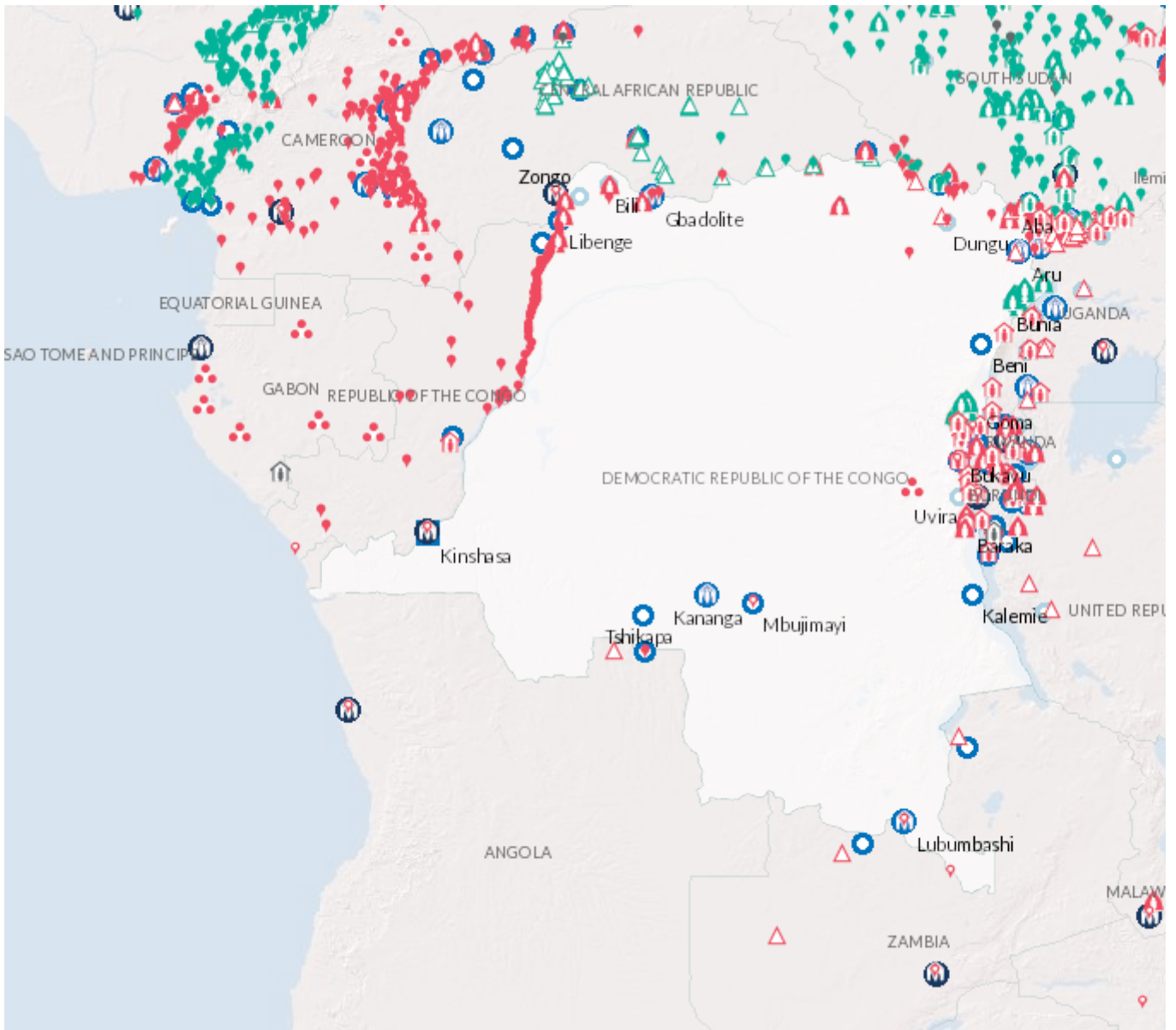


Operation: Democratic Republic of the Congo

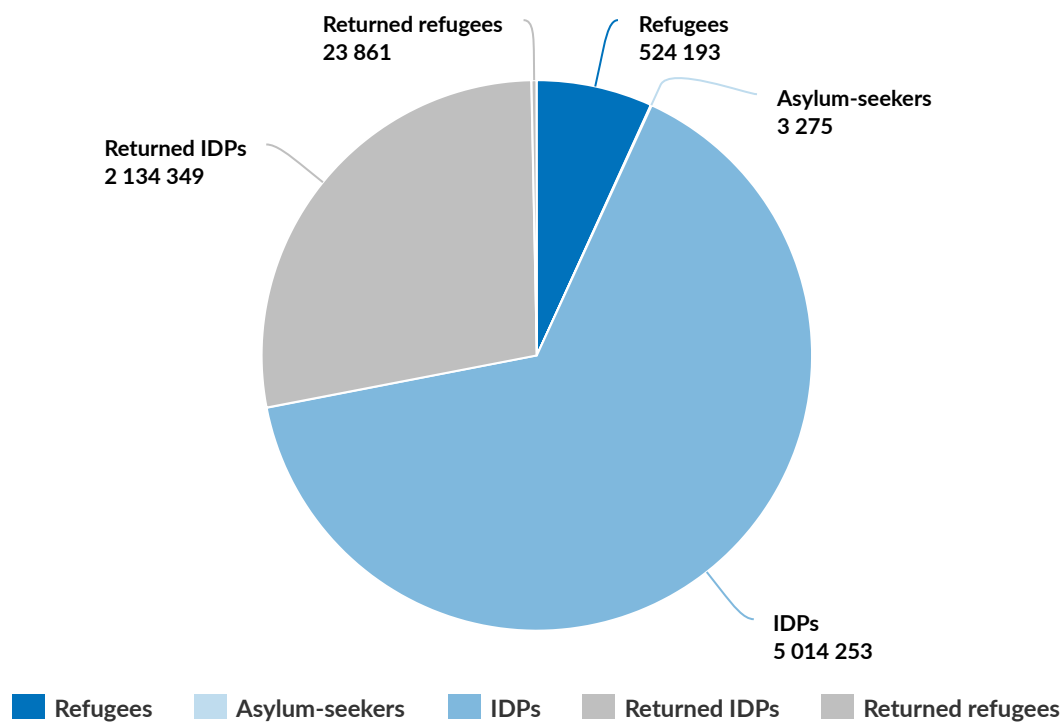


The boundaries and names shown and the designations used on this map do not imply official endorsement or acceptance by the United Nations.

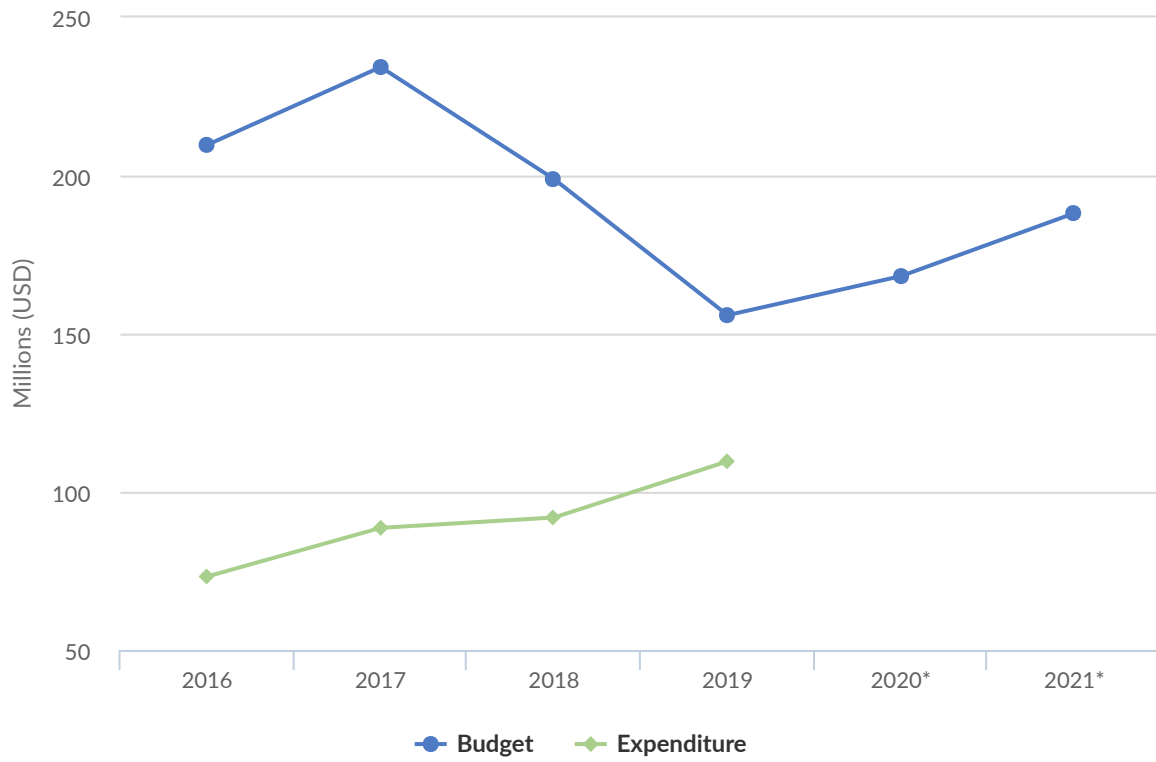
People of Concern

INCREASE IN
52% **2019**

2019	7,699,931
2018	5,059,095
2017	5,145,780



Budgets and Expenditure for Democratic Republic of the Congo



Operational environment

The humanitarian situation in the Democratic Republic of the Congo remains one of the most complex crises in the world, and while there have been some improvements in security in parts of the country, the overall situation remains concerning, with the eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu and Ituri having witnessed a significant deterioration in 2020. The Democratic Republic of the Congo shares international borders with nine countries and as of October 2020, hosts 527,114 refugees and asylum-seekers, mainly from Burundi, the Central African Republic, Rwanda and South Sudan. In addition, the Democratic Republic of the Congo has the largest IDP population in Africa, with more than 5.5 million IDPs. With cyclical and multiple displacements driven by insecurity or disaster leading to the fragmentation of social structures and in a situation of weak rule of law, the capacity of IDPs and host communities to cope with crises continues to be eroded.

The majority of displacements in the country are internal, however increasing violence has also forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee to neighbouring countries. As of October 2020, there were 934,381 Congolese refugees living in neighbouring and nearby countries. While a small number have indicated their interest to return home to western parts of the country, it is anticipated that the vast majority of Congolese refugees will remain in their host countries in 2021, particularly those from eastern DRC, where the situation is not conducive to safe and sustainable returns.

Humanitarian responses for both refugees and IDPs have been complicated by access issues due to insecurity, inadequate or absent basic infrastructure, frequent flooding in some regions, and the resurgence of high-impact epidemics such as Ebola, cholera, and, since March 2020, COVID-19.

The Democratic Republic of the Congo's legal framework grants refugees freedom of movement and residence and access to services on the same basis as nationals. This provides an opportunity for the application of UNHCR's Alternatives to Camp Policy, which will continue to be implemented in many hosting areas, making use of national legislation to facilitate a shift towards community-based responses and empowering people of concern and their communities.

The effective inclusion of all people of concern in national and local security and development plans, and in strengthened national systems will remain a priority. Prevention of fraud and corruption, as well as sexual exploitation and abuse/sexual harassment will also be prioritized by UNHCR in 2021.

In 2021, building on the humanitarian development and peace nexus approach, UNHCR will reinforce its coordination mechanisms and cooperation with external stakeholders. Advocacy will be conducted with Government and development agencies, as well as other partners to encourage interventions in areas where UNHCR is currently the main—if not the only—actor. This approach will also require a focus on building the capacity of partners, and prioritizing resources for training, administrative and technical needs. UNHCR will also proactively engage with the private sector, developing partnerships, according to its operational priorities.

The COVID-19 pandemic has aggravated the economic situation of people of concern, further challenged humanitarian access and put cross-border displacement and repatriation to a halt for half a year in 2020. While repatriation activities were resumed at the end of 2020 and are likely to continue during 2021, the impact of measures to contain the pandemic remain significant, both on the already fragile livelihoods of people of concern and on UNHCR's operations that require additional financial and human resources, as well as time to promote physical distancing and hygiene measures.

Key priorities

In 2021, UNHCR will focus on:

1. **Improving the legal environment and protection mechanisms for refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless people.** This will include advocating the accession, ratification and transposition of international conventions into national law, in particular as it applies to internal displacement and statelessness; alignment of national standards with international conventions; improvement of the national asylum system; and inclusion of the rights of people of concern in sectoral legislative reforms.
 2. **Including refugees, IDPs, returnees and stateless persons in national structures and communities.** This will include advocating the inclusion of people of concern in the national protection system and in development and security plans; participation of communities to strengthen their protection and resilience to build better futures for themselves; and establishment and monitoring of inclusive mechanisms for participation and accountability based on an age, gender and diversity approach, with a particular focus on public services through support to authorities' capacities for crisis management.
 3. **Promoting social cohesion and peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities** through community-based protection projects, and targeted self-reliance and resilience programmes.
 4. **Working towards durable solutions.** This will include promoting durable solution strategies through local integration, voluntary repatriation, sustainable return or, where possible, resettlement and complementary pathways. Analysis on the reasons for flight, obstacles to return such as housing, land and property issues, and factors contributing to the progressive development of conditions conducive to durable solutions will also be undertaken.
 5. **Enhancing protection impact through cluster synergies.** This will include ensuring strong protection monitoring and information management which will provide the protection, shelter and CCCM cluster working groups with timely and quality information from emergency to solutions; and ensuring that UNHCR and the protection cluster will coordinate with emergency response mechanisms active in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to ensure that responses are based on protection considerations.
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