



Central Africa and the Great Lakes

Operational highlights

- UNHCR assisted some 29,000 Congolese refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), as well as 44,000 Burundian, 2,600 Angolan, 6,000 Rwandan and 10,600 Sudanese refugees to return home in safety and dignity.
- The Office provided humanitarian assistance to more than 350,000 camp-based refugees.
- In the context of the cluster approach in the DRC and inter-agency cooperation in the Central African Republic (CAR), UNHCR worked towards improving the physical safety and promoted the human rights of internally displaced persons (IDPs), while assisting the most vulnerable among them.
- UNHCR established standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence in Rwanda, Burundi, the Republic of the Congo (RoC) and the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania).
- The Government of Tanzania and UNHCR signed an agreement to ensure refugees have access to antiretroviral treatment for AIDS as of 2007.
- UNHCR helped the Government of Burundi clear the backlog of pending Rwandan asylum requests. More than 2,700 cases were adjudicated, and UNHCR helped 18,900 Rwandans whose claims were rejected or who had withdrawn their asylum applications to return to Rwanda.

Burundi

Central African Republic

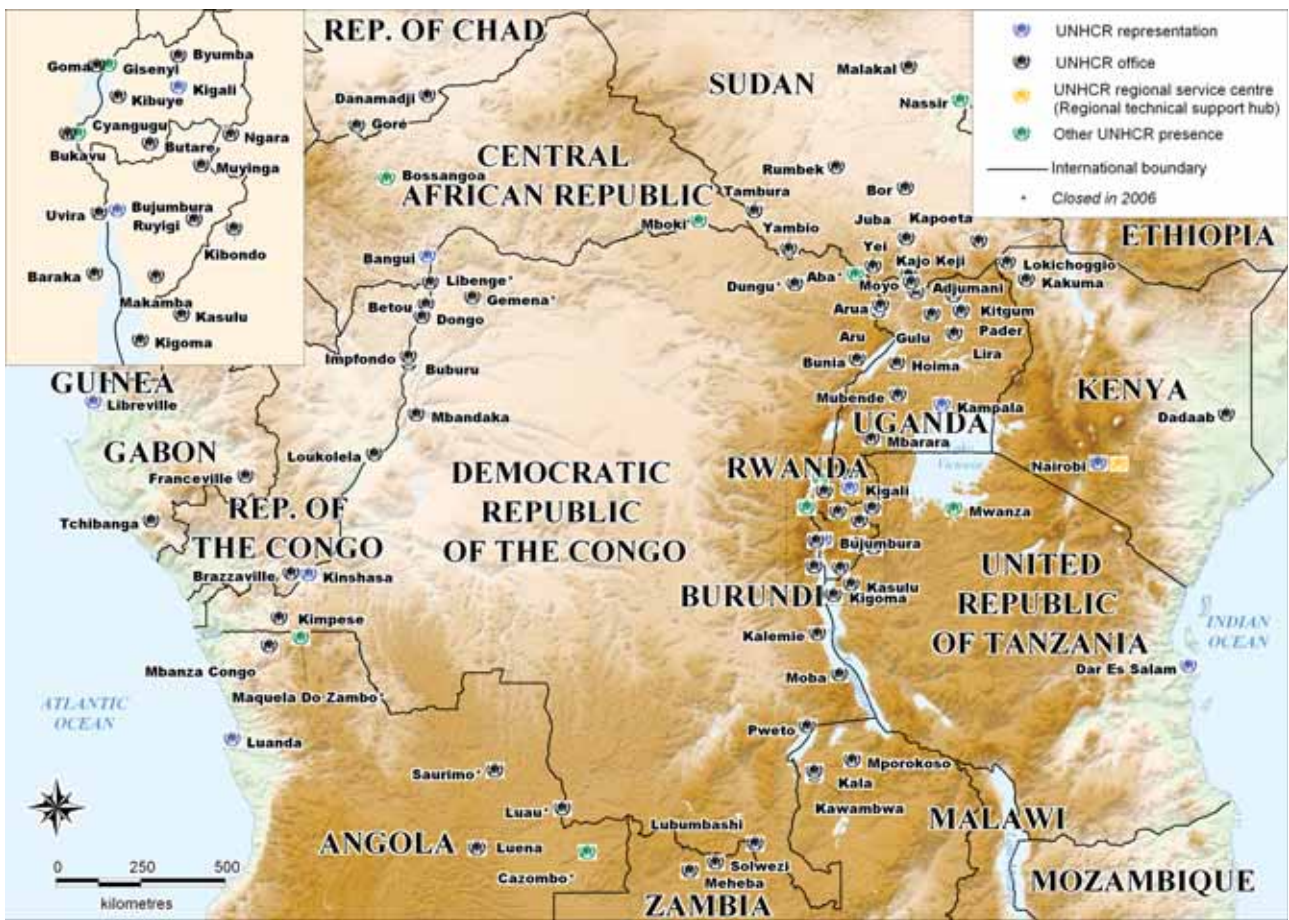
Democratic Republic of the Congo

Gabon

Republic of the Congo

Rwanda

United Republic of Tanzania



Working environment

At the end of 2006, there were still about 2.7 million refugees and others of concern to UNHCR in the Great Lakes and Central Africa region, including 1.7 million IDPs. Most of the refugees in Tanzania, Burundi and Rwanda lived in camps, while refugees in Gabon, the ROC, the DRC and the CAR lived in local settlements.

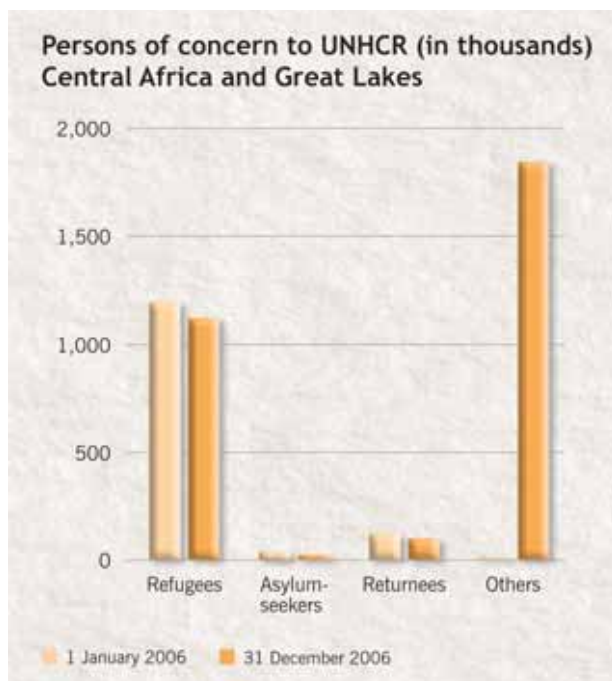
The year 2006 raised hopes for lasting peace in the region. In September, the Burundian Government and the rebel group *Forces nationales de libération* (FNL) signed a ceasefire agreement. The UN peacekeeping

mission in Burundi completed its mandate and was replaced by the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB), which focused on the consolidation of peace and post-conflict issues. The DRC successfully concluded presidential and parliamentary elections. In Rwanda, the Government abolished the death penalty and announced that the *Gacaca* process (whereby traditional courts try suspected perpetrators of the 1994 genocide) would be completed in 2007. The situation in Gabon, the RoC and Tanzania remained stable.

At the same time, several natural disasters and conflicts posed a serious challenge to UNHCR's efforts to find durable solutions for displaced populations in the region. In the DRC, human rights violations and fighting between the national army and an array of Congolese and foreign armed groups forced hundreds of thousands of people to flee their homes, with more than 3,000 Congolese crossing the border into Rwanda and Burundi.

Increasing instability in the northern prefectures of the CAR resulted in the internal displacement of some 150,000 people and caused an additional 70,000 to seek refuge in Chad and Cameroon. UNHCR was also concerned about Tanzania's decision to expel illegal immigrants of Rwandan, Burundian and Congolese nationality, as registered refugees were among those deported. Moreover, floods followed by drought caused food insecurity in Burundi, provoking a new influx of Burundians into Rwanda.

At the second summit of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region, which took place in Nairobi in December, the assembled heads of government signed a



pact on security, stability and development. The pact aimed to promote peace, security, democracy and good governance; further economic development and regional integration; and address humanitarian and social issues. The cluster approach piloted in the DRC and the strengthening of inter-agency cooperation on IDP issues in the CAR led to a more coherent approach to assisting and protecting IDP's in the region.

Achievements and impact

Standard operating procedures to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence were put in place in Rwanda, Burundi, the RoC and Tanzania. Age, gender and diversity mainstreaming, including participatory assessments, was undertaken and Project Profile was rolled out in all country operations. Detailed information on refugees and others of concern was regularly updated, which improved identification, protection, programme planning and profiling.

In Burundi, UNHCR was instrumental in strengthening the Government's capacity to clear the backlog of pending asylum cases and process new claims. This prevented the forced return of asylum-seekers, as had occurred in 2005. More than 2,700 cases were adjudicated and over 200 people were granted refugee status and transferred to Giharo transit centre. The remaining 18,700 people, whose claims had been rejected or who had in the meantime withdrawn their asylum applications, returned voluntarily to Rwanda with UNHCR's assistance.

Tanzania continued to expel illegal immigrants, while some recognized refugees found outside camp perimeters without the necessary permits were also deported. UNHCR obtained the Government's permission to be an observer in the *ad hoc* refugee status determination (RSD) group. The Office also intervened directly on behalf of recognized refugees and succeeded in securing their re-admission into the country.

Throughout the year, UNHCR pursued durable solutions for refugee groups in the region. Accordingly, the Office facilitated the repatriation of some 29,000 DRC refugees and signed a tripartite agreement with Zambia to establish a legal framework for repatriation from that country. In June, UNHCR moved to the promotion phase in the Burundian repatriation operation, and more than 44,000 Burundians returned to their communities of origin in 2006.



In the early morning, 282 Congolese refugees wait for the trucks that will take them back on the first UNHCR convoy from Burundi to the DRC.

While the last camp-based Angolan refugees in the DRC returned home in February, the organized repatriation of 23,000 spontaneously settled Angolan refugees considered as vulnerable began in October 2006 and ended in March 2007, although not all of them had been assisted to return by then. UNHCR organized the return of 5,100 Sudanese refugees from the CAR and another 5,500 Sudanese from the DRC. Finally, UNHCR helped some 6,000 Rwandans return home in safety and dignity.

For long-staying refugee populations who are unwilling to return home, such as the remaining 132,000 Angolans in the DRC and 9,300 RoC refugees in Gabon, UNHCR worked towards their local integration and self-reliance with the support of development partners. In Gabon, the Government agreed to distribute identity cards to all registered refugees. The cluster approach on IDPs and the joint UN Plan of Action in the DRC increased UNHCR's involvement with IDPs at the provincial level, where the Office worked closely with local authorities and NGOs. Here the priority was on community-based reintegration assistance. In the CAR, UNHCR worked through the inter-agency mechanism to assist and protect the increasing number of IDPs in the northern prefectures.

Operations

UNHCR's operations in **Burundi, the CAR, DRC, RoC, Rwanda and Tanzania** are presented in separate chapters.

In **Gabon**, most refugees were from the RoC and were hosted in semi-urban areas. As the majority was self-reliant, they received only limited assistance from UNHCR. The Office persuaded the Government to provide

all registered refugees with identity cards. UNHCR also helped the National Commission for Refugees establish more efficient RSD procedures and clear a backlog of 4,100 asylum cases. Moreover, UNHCR worked closely with other UN agencies to ensure that refugees and their concerns were included in development plans.

Constraints

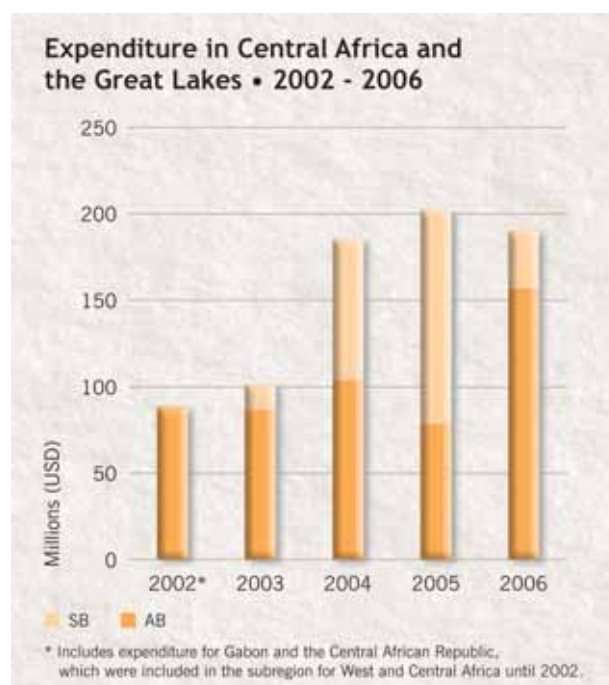
While UNHCR could implement most of the operations as planned, several factors hampered the achievement of some of its objectives. Drought and floods that led to food scarcities in Burundi and strong rains that destroyed roads in the DRC's Fizi region posed serious challenges to UNHCR's repatriation operations. Fear of the *Gacaca* process in Rwanda, ongoing fighting in eastern DRC and northern CAR and uncertainty surrounding the peace negotiations with the FNL rebel group in Burundi also had a negative impact. Logistical constraints affected the return of Angolan refugees from the DRC, while the CAR Government's suspension of repatriation activities delayed the return of Sudanese refugees to Southern Sudan. The late arrival of funds, especially for UNHCR's supplementary programme for repatriation, also stood in the way of UNHCR's achievement of its objectives.

Financial information

Although there was continued donor interest in the Office's work in the subregion, the overall capping of UNHCR's budget in 2006 seriously affected its programme in Central Africa and the Great Lakes. As a result, UNHCR had to reprioritize its protection and assistance activities. Particularly affected were UNHCR's assistance to a new influx of refugees from the DRC in Rwanda and support to refugee-hosting communities in

Tanzania. Moreover, UNHCR drastically reduced its reintegration activities for returnees in Burundi, some of which were taken up by other UN agencies.

UNHCR's expenditures in Central Africa and the Great Lakes subregion have significantly increased since 2002. This is mainly due to the addition of several repatriation-related supplementary programmes. For example, in 2004 UNHCR launched the repatriation operation for Burundian refugees, while in 2005 it started a return and reintegration operation for refugees from the DRC. In 2006, UNHCR initiated the repatriation operation for Sudanese refugees back to Southern Sudan, as well as a supplementary programme for the protection and assistance to IDPs in the DRC. Expenditures under its annual programme increased in 2006 due to the mainstreaming of the Burundi repatriation and integration supplementary appeal.



Budget and expenditure (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	AB	SB ¹	Total	AB	SB	Total
Burundi	39,904,539	536,646	40,441,185	30,509,101	0	30,509,101
Central African Republic	3,340,148	2,280,446	5,620,594	2,026,044	1,670,084	3,696,128
Chad	79,199,049	2,675,271	81,874,320	64,382,528	831,047	65,213,575
Democratic Republic of the Congo	22,276,400	69,147,167	91,423,567	14,389,221	25,817,694	40,206,915
Gabon	3,662,461	0	3,662,461	2,612,429	0	2,612,429
Republic of the Congo	8,198,854	2,760,132	10,958,986	5,581,078	2,035,487	7,616,565
Rwanda	7,856,873	1,009,229	8,866,102	6,211,750	13,151	6,224,901
United Republic of Tanzania	32,214,773	3,517,240	35,732,013	24,452,878	2,945,659	27,398,537
Regional activities ²	6,587,266	0	6,587,266	6,511,545	0	6,511,545
Total	203,240,363	81,926,131	285,166,494	156,676,573	33,313,122	189,989,695

¹ Does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.

² Includes assistance to refugees in the Great Lakes region, such as resettlement, care and maintenance, as well as support costs for UNVs and consultants, light aircraft charters and scholarships for refugee students.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking	Donor	AB	SB
Central Africa and the Great Lakes			
	Canada	1,069,187	0
	Denmark	5,175,429	0
	Finland	3,727,050	0
	Greece	64,103	0
	Japan	2,500,000	0
	Luxembourg	1,317,523	0
	South Africa	86,292	0
	Sweden	11,809,045	0
Sub-total		25,748,629	0
Regional activities			
	Belgium	3,627,570	0
	Ireland	592,417	0
	Norway	1,313,629	0
	Private donors in Italy	446	0
Sub-total		5,534,062	0
Burundi			
	Australia for UNHCR	8,622	0
	Belgium	1,256,281	0
	Burundi	1,210	0
	CERF	1,945,671	0
	Denmark	859,107	0
	European Commission	2,883,850	0
	Finland	1,275,510	0
	Germany	1,392,941	0
	Greece	47,337	0
	Ireland	380,711	0
	Japan	2,000,000	0
	Netherlands	1,205,000	0
	Norway	1,617,412	0
	OPEC Fund for International Development	75,000	0
	Switzerland	972,213	0
	United States	10,255,371	0
Sub-total		26,176,237	0
Central African Republic			
	CERF	716,149	0
	France	395,257	0
	Norway	798,722	0
Sub-total		1,910,128	0
Chad			
	African Union	250,000	0
	Australia for UNHCR	155,953	0
	Canada	1,512,565	0
	Central African Republic	4,017	0
	CERF	3,700,000	0

Earmarking	Donor	AB	SB
	<i>Conselho Português para os Refugiados</i>	104,323	0
	Denmark	1,683,502	0
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe E.V.</i>	127,551	0
	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	105,318	0
	European Commission	7,599,163	0
	France	1,813,785	0
	Germany	3,912,675	318,878
	Ireland	973,128	197,628
	Israel	50,000	0
	Italy	251,256	0
	Japan	4,680,044	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR	132,148	0
	Luxembourg	961,059	0
	Netherlands	3,615,000	0
	Online donations (Headquarters)	7,557	0
	OPEC Fund for International Development	75,000	0
	Private donors in Canada	304,666	0
	Private donors in Greece	191,882	0
	Private donors in Italy	110,024	0
	Private donors in Portugal	628	0
	Spain	2,644,650	0
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling (Netherlands)</i>	357,045	0
	<i>Stiftung RTL - Wir helfen Kindern E.V. (Germany)</i>	320,513	0
	Sweden	1,507,538	0
	Switzerland	1,200,625	0
	United Kingdom	2,983,114	769,231
	United States	22,487,269	1,000,000
	USA for UNHCR	373,451	0
	Zayed Foundation (United Arab Emirates)	59,975	0
Sub-total		64,255,423	2,285,737
Democratic Republic of the Congo			
	Belgium	0	1,785,714
	CERF	0	3,900,538
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe E.V.</i>	0	280,552
	DRC Pooled Fund	0	5,776,791
	<i>España con ACNUR</i>	0	32,720
	European Commission	0	6,373,535
	Finland	0	0
	France	272,068	0
	Germany	314,070	2,347,675
	Ireland	0	1,184,834
	Japan	1,700,000	0
	Luxembourg	604,595	0
	Norway	0	2,212,389
	Online donations (Headquarters)	10,573	0
	Poland	0	50,000

Earmarking	Donor	AB	SB
	Private donors in Canada	56,002	0
	<i>Programme National Multisectoriel de Lutte contre le SIDA</i>	716,900	0
	Spain	1,317,523	440,379
	Switzerland	393,701	0
	United Kingdom	0	521,739
	United States	3,056,170	4,000,000
	USA for UNHCR	0	322,359
Sub-total		8,441,601	29,229,226
Gabon			
	United Nations Programme on HIV and AIDS	15,823	0
	United States	242,437	0
Sub-total		258,260	0
Republic of the Congo			
	CERF	643,611	0
	European Commission	0	346,460
	OPEC Fund for International Development	50,000	0
	United States	1,300,000	0
Sub-total		1,993,611	346,460
Rwanda			
	Germany	126,015	0
	OPEC Fund for International Development	75,000	0
	Private donors in Sweden	15,399	0
	United States	1,191,481	0
	USA for UNHCR	60,319	0
Sub-total		1,468,214	0
United Republic of Tanzania			
	Australia	52,125	0
	Belgium	663,265	0
	Denmark	2,256,954	0
	European Commission	8,766,626	906,892
	France	181,378	0
	Germany	500,213	53,400
	Japan	1,800,000	0
	Norway	19,968	0
	OPEC Fund for International Development	150,000	0
	Spain	0	169,838
	Switzerland	393,701	0
	United Kingdom	297,518	0
	United States	4,847,742	0
Sub-total		19,929,491	1,130,131
Total		155,715,656	32,991,553