



Central Africa and the Great Lakes

Major developments

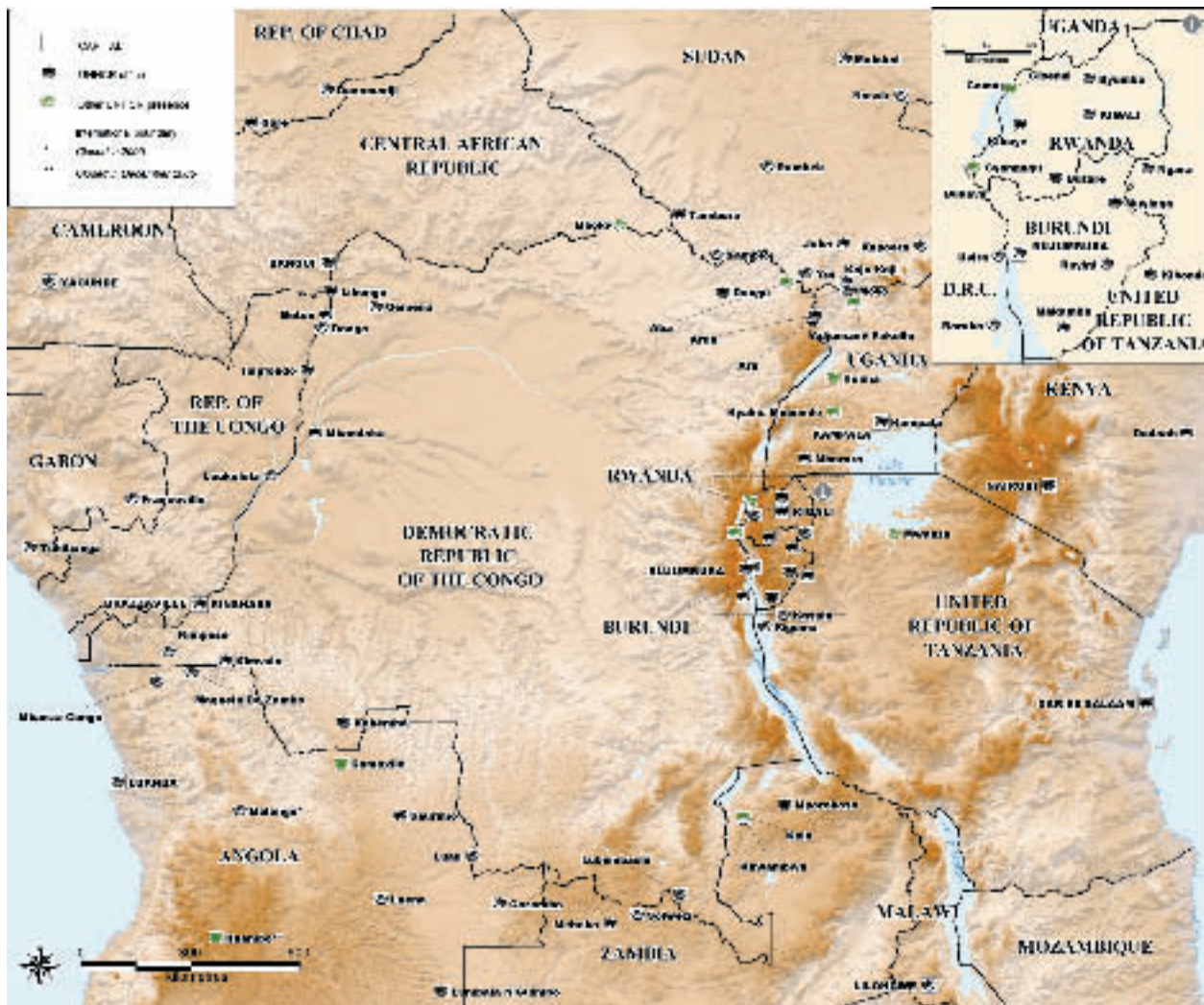
Important political progress was achieved in some of the seven countries in the region. Insecurity continued however to be a cause for concern in parts of the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and in the North of the Central African Republic (CAR).

In Burundi, Pierre Nkurunziza, leader of a former rebel group, became president after democratic elections in August; he has since formed an ethnically balanced Government in line with the Arusha peace agreement. In DRC, the electoral commission succeeded, with considerable support from the donor community and the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC), in registering 25 million voters ahead of a constitutional referendum in December, overcoming major logistical and security problems. The constitution was then approved by more than 80 per cent of the voters, paving the way for the first democratic elections in more than 40 years, currently scheduled for June 2006.

The situation in Gabon, the Republic of the Congo (RoC), Rwanda and the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) remained stable, with presidential elections taking place uneventfully in Gabon and Tanzania. Tanzania continued generously to host more than half a million refugees, mainly from Burundi and the DRC.

These positive political developments were in stark contrast to human rights violations and an alarming deterioration of security in Burundi, eastern DRC and CAR. In

Burundi
Central African Republic
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Gabon
Republic of the Congo
Rwanda
United Republic of Tanzania



Burundi, one last rebel group, the *Parti pour la Libération du Peuple Hutu - Front National de Libération* (FNL), remains outside the transition process and continues to cause insecurity in the North-West, around the capital Bujumbura. In DRC, fighting between the national army and an array of Congolese and foreign armed groups has often forced people to flee their impoverished villages for fear of renewed violence.

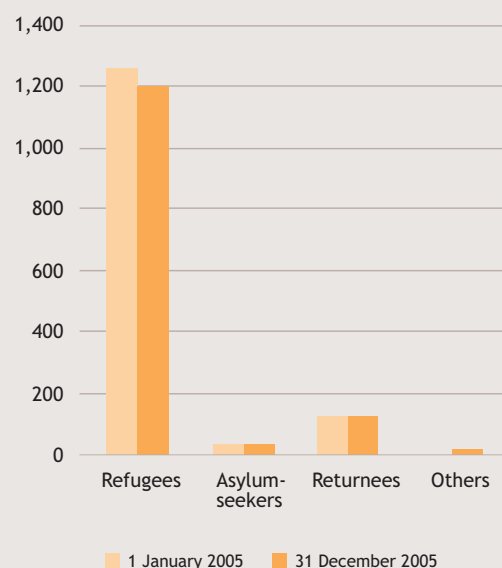
Increasing instability in the North and West of CAR forced some 18,000 people to flee to Chad and Cameroon, dampening hopes of stability raised after presidential elections in April.

The political transition processes in Central Africa and the Great Lakes region were strongly supported by the international community, and the UN peacekeeping missions proved crucial to stabilizing the situation in Burundi and DRC. The electoral registration process in DRC, which was more successful than many observers had expected, was made possible only by the support of international donors.

Challenges and concerns

The patterns of movement of returnees and new refugees were clearly affected by political and humanitarian

Persons of concern to UNHCR (in thousands)



developments throughout the year. While return to Burundi reached a peak after the installation of the new Government, with 16,000 returnees in September alone, the flow decreased to 1,500 in December following a drought and resulting food insecurity which

affected several countries in the region. The reduction in scope of the reintegration activities in Burundi under these circumstances, in contrast to the assistance provided in countries of asylum, may also have influenced the decision not to return.

Similarly, political progress in DRC encouraged a steady flow of returnees, especially towards the end of the year. From the end of April 2005, UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of more than 7,000 refugees from RoC to Equateur Province in the West. Another major operation was launched in October, bringing more than 6,700 people home to Fizi, South Kivu in eastern DRC, from refugee camps in Tanzania.

As noted above, the situation in CAR deteriorated throughout the year and 18,000 additional people fled northern and western CAR to Chad, with as yet no prospect of return.

UNHCR was also very concerned about the expulsion of some 5,000 Rwandan asylum-seekers from Burundi in June, following an agreement between the Governments of Burundi and Rwanda. Shortly after this incident, new arrivals from Rwanda were registered, and by December some 8,700 Rwandans had sought asylum in Burundi.

Progress towards solutions

In the region as a whole, UNHCR offered protection to some 750,000 refugees and asylum-seekers and

assisted more than 470,000. In addition, UNHCR facilitated the return of over 90,000 refugees to countries in the region, and another estimated 25,000 people returned of their own accord. Most of the latter benefited from UNHCR's assistance in the areas of return. The larger repatriation operations brought 61,400 refugees from Tanzania back to Burundi, 6,700 to South Kivu Province in DRC, and more than 7,000 refugees from RoC to Equateur province in DRC. Patterns of return reflected political and humanitarian conditions in the countries of origin. Resettlement continued to be a tool for international protection of refugees in the region, especially those in protracted situations. In 2005, some 3,000 cases were submitted for resettlement to third countries.

As part of the concerted efforts of the United Nations and the African Union to support countries of the Great Lakes region in their search for solutions to protracted problems, the run-up to the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region progressed smoothly in 2005, and all protocols and projects are now in their final stage. They form the "Pact of Security, Stability and Development" which will be signed by the Great Lakes region Heads of State at a summit scheduled to take place in Nairobi later in 2006. Throughout the process, UNHCR has provided technical expertise and financial support towards the formulation of the protocols and projects under the humanitarian and social issues cluster of the Conference. UNHCR regards these initiatives as complementary to its efforts to find durable solutions to the problems of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the region.

Budget and expenditure (USD)						
Country	Final budget			Expenditure		
	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget ¹	Total	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget ¹	Total
Burundi	3,915,182	47,286,183	51,201,365	3,913,521	33,822,871	37,736,392
Central African Republic	2,508,251	2,013,419	4,521,670	2,334,854	1,000,451	3,335,305
Chad	8,859,550	76,259,079	85,118,629	8,651,898	63,384,305	72,036,203
Democratic Republic of the Congo	17,706,998	19,749,937	37,456,935	17,589,782	14,586,816	32,176,598
Gabon	3,237,709	0	3,237,709	2,933,583	0	2,933,583
Republic of the Congo	6,422,970	2,387,539	8,810,509	6,421,743	1,760,246	8,181,989
United Republic of Tanzania	20,702,450	10,867,082	31,569,532	20,374,306	9,083,331	29,457,637
Regional projects ²	8,994,411	0	8,994,411	8,978,784	0	8,978,784
Sub-total	72,347,521	158,563,239	230,910,760	71,198,471	123,638,020	194,836,49
Rwanda	7,257,383	310,100	7,567,483	7,152,706	296,687	7,449,393
Total	79,604,904	158,873,339	238,478,243	78,351,177	123,934,707	202,285,884

¹ The supplementary programme figures apply to the supplementary programmes for Eastern Chad and Darfur, Return and Reintegration of Sudanese Refugees to Southern Sudan, Return and Reintegration of Burundian Refugees, and Repatriation and Reintegration of Congolese (DRC) Refugees.

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

Note: The supplementary programme budget does not include a 7 per cent support cost that is recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.



Democratic Republic of the Congo: A returnee woman is assisted to disembark the ferry in Baraka, on her way home from the United Republic of Tanzania. *UNHCR / N. Takagi*

In 2005, UNHCR was a key partner in the two main regional HIV/AIDS initiatives: the Great Lakes Initiative on HIV/AIDS and the Congo-Oubangui-Chari Initiative. Refugees, returnees, IDPs and host communities are expected to benefit from these funding mechanisms. In addition, HIV/AIDS programmes were implemented as part of the country operations, including, for example, public awareness campaigns in Burundi, access to voluntary counselling and testing for refugees in Rwanda, training workshops for the staff of UNHCR and its partners in the CAR, and the distribution of HIV/AIDS-awareness packages to Angolan refugees in DRC.

Within the inter-agency approach to internal displacement, UNHCR was also assigned the lead role, at the global level, for the protection, camp coordination and management, and emergency shelter clusters. DRC, with an estimated 1.7 million IDPs and another 1.7 million returned IDPs, was selected as one of the pilot countries for the implementation of this new approach, with the participation of many UN agencies and NGOs. In DRC, UNHCR and the MONUC jointly head the protection cluster with the overall aim of preventing displacement, addressing human rights abuses and providing targeted assistance to IDPs and returnees. In addition, a reintegration cluster specific to DRC is jointly chaired by UNHCR and UNDP. The reintegration cluster addresses reintegration questions in a comprehensive way on behalf of all concerned groups, including ex-combatants and returning refugees and IDPs.

Operations

Individual country chapters cover operations in **Burundi, DRC, RoC, Rwanda and Tanzania.**

In **CAR**, 18,000 people fled increasing instability in the North and West over the course of the year, and CAR refugees in Chad were unable to return. The calm post-conflict climate which followed the successful presidential and parliamentary elections in April and June was short-lived. At the same time, CAR continued to host 20,000 refugees from Sudan and 4,300 refugees and asylum-seekers from DRC. UNHCR provided protection and assistance to these refugee populations. Almost 800 Congolese refugees were repatriated in 2005. Towards the end of the year, preparations were under way for a tripartite agreement between CAR, Sudan and UNHCR and the launch of a voluntary repatriation operation from Mboki in the East of CAR to South Sudan. HIV/AIDS programmes in CAR were assessed and relevant multisectoral action plans elaborated.

At the end of the year, UNHCR provided assistance and protection to 8,200 refugees living in **Gabon**, almost 90 per cent of whom originated from RoC. In addition, Gabon hosted 4,500 asylum-seekers. During 2005, durable solutions were found for 430 refugees, of whom 300 were repatriated and 130 resettled to third countries. Local integration continued to be a

prospect for a relative minority. Unlike asylum-seekers, refugees in Gabon enjoy certain economic rights, such as the right to seek employment. UNHCR did organize income-generating activities for the refugees, but the steps they took towards self-sufficiency tended to be hindered by poor infrastructure, high taxes and the relatively high cost of living. A verification of the refugee and asylum-seeker population was completed in 2005 and the distribution of identity cards to these populations will begin in 2006.

Funding

The donor community provided 82 per cent of UNHCR's annual programme budget in the form of earmarked contributions, reflecting high interest in the region. As noted above, the continued interest of the international community in developments in the region will remain of pivotal importance to the future of the countries of Central Africa and the Great Lakes.

UNHCR collaborated closely with other UN agencies in all operations and coordinated its funding appeals under the Consolidated Appeal Process in Burundi, CAR, DRC and RoC, as well as regional activities in the Great Lakes region as a whole.

The major repatriation operations to Burundi and DRC were issued as two supplementary appeals, covering activities in Burundi and DRC respectively as well as in the countries of asylum. In Burundi, the repatriation operation experienced a significant funding shortfall towards the end of the year, but a generous donor response averted the suspension of activities. Nonetheless, some activities had to be reduced in scope. The *Supplementary Appeal for the Repatriation and Reintegration of Congolese (DRC) Refugees* was revised in September 2005 from USD 15.6 million to USD 23.1 million in order to include the facilitated return from Tanzania which began in October. Both appeals attained final funding levels of 71 per cent.

Restricted voluntary contributions (USD)			
Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget
Central Africa and the Great Lakes			
	Belgium	0	1,084,999
	Canada	1,652,893	2,465,791
	Denmark	2,529,511	0
	Finland	1,556,420	259,403
	France	440,344	0
	Ireland	0	648,508
	Luxembourg	600,962	0
	Japan	2,200,000	700,000
	Netherlands	0	2,400,000
	Sweden	7,110,439	2,741,541
	Switzerland	0	1,596,692
	United Kingdom	0	957,854
	United States	0	20,500,000
Sub-total		16,090,568	33,354,789
Regional activities			
	Belgium	3,614,458	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR	3,371	0
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Italy	14,037	0
	Netherlands	63,613	0
	Norway	1,265,823	0
Sub-total		4,961,302	0
Burundi			
	Australia for UNHCR	0	207,512
	Belgium	0	584,795
	Burundi	351	0
	Denmark	0	2,365,931

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget
	European Commission	1,981,506	3,289,300
	Florindon Foundation	0	259,403
	France	12,063	583,836
	Germany	0	1,856,024
	Italy	0	776,197
	Japan	1,300,000	3,678,210
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Italy	0	214,308
	Netherlands	100,000	0
	Norway	0	1,550,388
	OPEC Fund for International Development	0	150,000
	Spain	0	235,294
	United States	197,424	0
Sub-total		3,591,344	15,751,198
Central African Republic			
	Norway	296,160	0
Sub-total		296,160	0
Chad			
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	0	44,693
	Australia for UNHCR	0	351,391
	Canada	439,669	0
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung für UNO-Flüchtlingshilfe</i>	0	32,392
	European Commission	1,815,981	11,912,022
	France	181,490	485,957
	Germany	689,457	2,943,044
	International Islamic Charitable Organization	0	20,176
	Italy	0	261,992
	Japan	3,500,000	0
	Japan Association for UNHCR	1,040	327,152
	Luxembourg	0	323,415
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Canada	29,528	242,352
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in France	2,576	0
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Greece	13,792	108,812
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Italy	0	430,320
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in Switzerland	0	93
	Miscellaneous donors / Private donors in the United Kingdom	0	12,155
	Netherlands	0	1,810,000
	Online donations (Headquarters)	6,687	0
	Portugal	1,176,471	0
	South Africa	0	70,757
	Spain	0	1,125,830
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling</i>	0	302,726
	Switzerland	0	1,349,527
	United Kingdom	0	4,365,225
	United Nations African Mothers Association	0	16,686
	United Nations Foundation	0	5,000
	United States	700,000	22,950,000
	USA for UNHCR	11,713	270,962
	Zayed Foundation	0	139,955
Sub-total		8,568,404	49,902,636

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual programme budget	Supplementary programme budget	
Democratic Republic of the Congo				
		<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR</i>	0	42,500
		Belgium	0	907,990
		European Commission	0	2,850,855
		Finland	1,176,471	0
		France	251,816	194,553
		Germany	0	2,642,008
		Italy	646,831	0
		Japan	1,700,000	0
		Luxembourg	0	0
		Netherlands	482,000	0
		Norway	0	0
		Switzerland	393,701	0
		DRC Pooled Fund	0	624,209
		United States	2,550,000	0
Sub-total		7,200,818	7,262,114	
Republic of the Congo				
		European Commission	0	701,890
		Sweden	620,347	0
		United States	1,000,000	0
Sub-total		1,620,347	701,890	
Rwanda				
		Finland	588,235	0
		Germany	61,566	0
		Japan	500,000	0
		Sweden	1,240,695	0
		United States	800,000	0
Sub-total		3,190,496	0	
United Republic of Tanzania				
		Australia	25,925	0
		Denmark	724,452	0
		European Commission	10,996,119	1,945,525
		Germany	604,922	101,578
		Italy	517,464	0
		Japan	1,800,000	0
		South Africa	92,654	0
		United Kingdom	98,276	0
		United States	3,188,350	0
Sub-total		18,048,162	2,047,103	
Total		63,567,601	109,019,730	

¹ For more information on the earmarking, please refer to the donor profiles.