

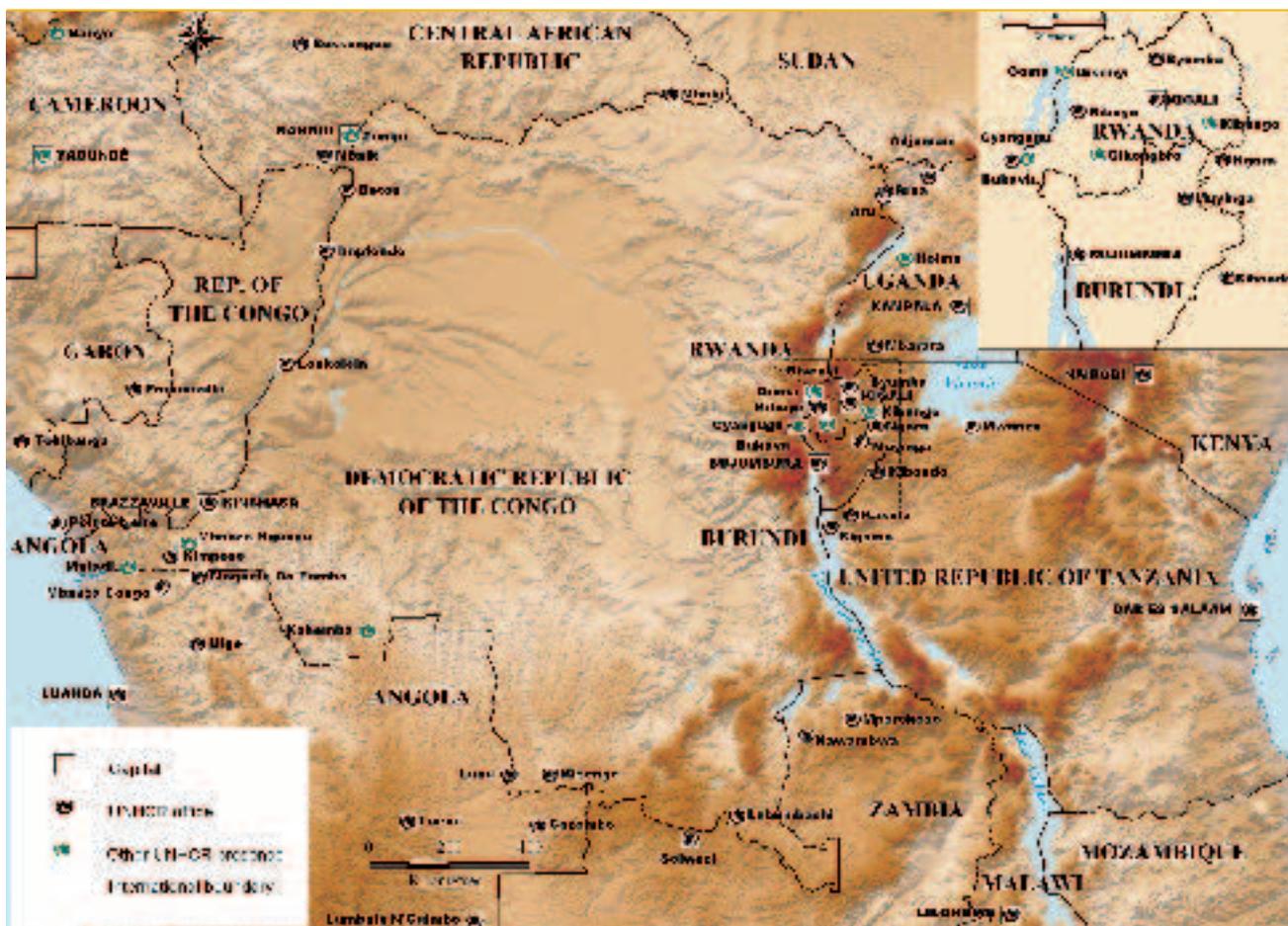
Great Lakes

Major developments

The signing of various peace accords and cease-fire agreements in the period from 2000 to 2002 brought optimism for a resolution of years of instability, especially for the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Unfortunately, these did not yield the tangible peace on the ground that would have enabled UNHCR to realise its planned activities.

In the first half of the year, Burundi teetered on the brink of full-scale civil war, with sporadic fighting between Government and rebel forces. The weakness of the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accords became apparent as hostilities continued despite the efforts of the regional powers, especially the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) and South Africa. The presence of over 700 South African military personnel in Bujumbura did not improve the security situation. On the contrary, attacks and counter-attacks between the rebel and Government forces caused massive civilian casualties. The transitional Government installed in November 2001 was unable to bring the main Hutu groups to the negotiating

Burundi
Democratic Republic of the Congo
Republic of the Congo
Rwanda
United Republic of Tanzania



table, and they remained outside the peace process. This state of uncertainty limited humanitarian access to populations of concern to the Office. Nevertheless, UNHCR observed an increase in spontaneous returns from Tanzania to the northern provinces of Burundi, as the security situation improved; this coincided with growing expressions of hostility towards the Burundians from various elements of Tanzanian society. In response, UNHCR initiated a cautious return of refugees from Tanzania to the northern provinces of Burundi. However, as clashes between the rebels and the Government forces intensified, more Burundians fled to Tanzania, while others were displaced within Burundi.

The DRC continued to witness proxy war between several armed forces. The central Government had lost control over most of the territory to rebel factions, which fought either the central Government or each other as the occasion demanded. Although some of the foreign troops withdrew, the retreating foreign troops sometimes left behind power vacuums that were exploited with devastating conse-

quences for the local population. Some of the worst examples were in Ituri and Kivus provinces, where thousands continued to lose their lives. The international community tried, but failed, to protect the population trapped between warring forces. Many of the Nations Observer forces in the DCR (MONUC) are of the opinion that the continuing civil war in the DRC, has been one of the most devastating the continent has ever witnessed, involving most countries from the region. The troops deployed by MONUC and the efforts of the United Nations programme of Demobilisation, Disarmament, Repatriation, Reintegration and Resettlement (DDRRR) were largely ineffectual. Their mandates were not backed up by sufficient numbers, resources or logistical support in an area with little or no infrastructure.

On a positive note, the peace process in Angola and the signature of tripartite agreements for the return of Angolan refugees led to the establishment of a special programme. Preparatory activities were underway in DRC for the return of large numbers of Angolan refugees in 2003 and 2004.



Tanzania: Due to adverse living conditions in areas surrounding refugee settlements, refugees received food to supplement their daily diet. *UNHCR / L. Taylor*

Rwanda continued to seek the return of its citizens from countries in the region. Rwandan authorities highlighted the fact that the country was relatively stable and was making efforts to build its democratic institutions. With UNHCR's assistance, nearly 35,000 Rwandans returned from neighbouring countries, especially the DRC and Tanzania.

The Republic of the Congo (ROC) burdened with problems from past conflict, continued to rebuild its socio-political infrastructure, but many of the ROC refugees did not return home. They chose to continue to monitor political developments from their countries of asylum.

The United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania) continued to host the largest number of refugees in Africa. In addition, the country hosted extended talks on the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accords. However, the traditional Tanzanian welcome to refugees from war-torn neighbouring countries was stretched to its limit. The public perception was that refugees were contributing to insecurity and that the international community was not sharing enough of the burden. This increased the pressure on refugees to go back to their countries. In an attempt to allay these fears, UNHCR signed a joint communiqué with the Governments of Rwanda and Tanzania paving the way for the return of most of the Rwandese refugees. Over 70,000 Burundian refugees were registered for facilitated return to Burundi and some 31,000 of these were assisted by UNHCR to do so. Over 20,000 persons returned spontaneously. For a variety of

reasons, WFP failed to deliver the full food basket, and this further undermined the quality of protection and assistance provided to the refugees in Tanzania.

Challenges and concerns

In Tanzania, declining resources, political pressure from authorities, and interruptions to the food pipeline placed considerable pressures on refugees to return to their countries of origin, and on the Tanzanian authorities. This was largely also linked to the increasing perception that refugees were not only causing insecurity, but were contributing to the environmental degradation of their host communities. For the Congolese refugees, the Tanzanian authorities insisted on developing a site in Kigoma, which had been allocated in prior years. New arrivals were not allowed to settle in old camps vacated by returning Burundian refugees. However, the proposed site in Kigoma would not be usable without a huge cash outlay on basic infrastructure.

The war in Burundi prevented the majority of Burundian refugees from returning in 2002. The preparatory activities for return did not proceed as foreseen. Planning and implementation were conducted in an atmosphere of uncertainty, entailing constant review and adjustment of planned activities. Politically, the country remained in a state of paralysis and this further weakened an already fragile economy as basic life-sustaining infrastructure was neg-

lected or damaged. Operationally, most of the challenges faced by UNHCR in 2001, continued into 2002, and in some cases became more acute. Access to the southern provinces was limited and monitoring of spontaneous returnees therefore became nearly impossible. Access in Cibitoke province to the Congolese refugees from the Uvira area was at best, intermittent. The Office was staffed at a minimum level and some posts were only filled with staff on mission. The UN security phases (precautions) declared in the country also limited the movement of UNHCR staff to most parts of the country.

In the second half of the year, after Rwanda and the DRC agreed on certain points during talks in Pretoria, South Africa, over 10,000 Congolese refugees of Tutsi origin were forcibly returned to the Kivus by the Rwandan authorities. This forced return was stopped only after a high-level intervention by UNHCR. Relations between UNHCR and the Rwandan authorities became strained by the sudden expulsion of its Deputy Representative. After the expulsion of the DRC refugees, authorities in Rwanda wanted to consolidate the two camps in Gihembe and Kiziba for a variety of reasons, security being the most prominent.

Insufficient access and poor infrastructure continued to hamper operations in the DRC. This was further aggravated by the ongoing civil war. The Office was also forced to use temporary staff as posts were not filled during the year.

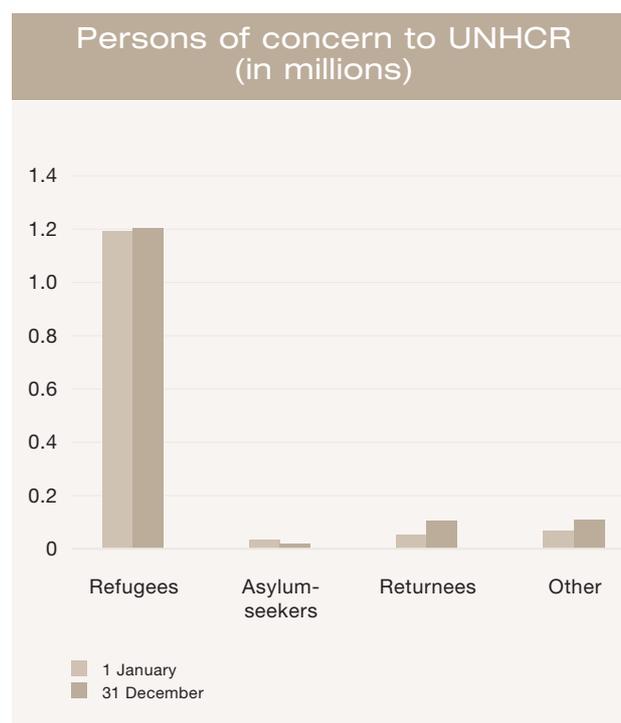
Progress towards solutions

Problems in implementing the Lusaka and Arusha Peace Accords did not deter some of the refugees from returning to their countries of origin. Over 53,000 Burundians from Tanzania chose to return home: some 33,000 were assisted by UNHCR and the rest returned spontaneously. In late October, the Governments of Rwanda and Tanzania met in Geneva during ExCom and signed a joint communiqué with UNHCR, to return the 24,000 Rwandans residing in the Ngara camp of Tanzania. In this context, over 23,000 Rwandans returned with UNHCR's assistance. They were provided with a limited return package. Over 11,000 Rwandans returned from the DRC with UNHCR's assistance, a number of them under the DRRR

process. Ex-combatants were taken to "re-education camps" while their families were provided with material assistance and transportation to their places of origin. The planned movement of 3,400 Somalis in Tanzania to the new Chogo site was postponed to early 2003, due to a delay in the installation of basic amenities.

In close co-ordination with the asylum countries and with the support of the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations for the DRC, UNHCR is changing its approach to the return of Rwandan refugees, estimated to be over 70,000. Having merely facilitated the return of those expressing a wish to go home, UNHCR will now actively promote the return process.

Throughout the region, those refugees who could not return or settle in the countries of asylum were assisted to resettle to third countries, especially the United States and Canada. After a series of consultations with the Government of Rwanda at the end of the year, the Office agreed to enter into tripartite agreements with African countries hosting Rwandese refugees. It was understood that most Rwandans who had left the country before 1994 could safely return as a group. Furthermore, the Government of Rwanda made significant progress in improving the political environment by announcing the planned release of several thou-



sand prisoners, initiating the Gacaca process (local court) and improving law and order in the country. Despite these positive developments, UNHCR continued to proceed cautiously with the return of certain vulnerable categories of persons.

Operations

UNHCR operations in **Burundi**, the **DRC**, **ROC**, **Rwanda** and **Tanzania** are covered in the respective country chapters.

Funding

Most programmes in the region were affected by UNHCR's financial crisis in 2002. Budget cuts in the DRC programme affected direct assistance to refu-

gees and led to reduction or suspension of some logistics activities. The conflict in Uvira in the east of the DRC resulted in over 25,000 refugees fleeing the area to Cibitoke province in Burundi. More than 17,000 of these refugees were assisted by UNHCR using funds from the existing budget. In Tanzania, financial constraints prevented UNHCR from developing a new site allocated by the Government for Congolese refugees. However, the Office was obliged to assist an additional 66,760 refugees composed of 28,000 from Burundi, 18,000 from DRC and 20,760 as a result of the increased birth rate – (representing four per cent of the refugee population of 519,600) in the camps. In Rwanda, UNHCR used existing resources to accommodate the additional needs linked to the reintegration activities for the Rwandan returnees. In the end, UNHCR had to stretch its resources to be able to maintain a minimum level of protection and assistance.

Voluntary Contributions – Restricted / Earmarked (USD)

Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds	
		Income	Contribution
Burundi			
	European Commission	6,710,572	6,710,572
	United States of America	1,240,000	1,240,000
Democratic Republic of the Congo			
	United States of America	4,740,000	4,740,000
	Japan	3,000,000	3,000,000
	Germany	1,910,889	1,910,889
	European Commission	1,474,926	1,474,926
	Netherlands	849,100	849,100
	Luxembourg	591,133	591,133
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling</i> (NET)	87,489	87,489
	Austrian National Bank (AUS)	12,764	12,764
	Private Donors Italy	6,779	6,779
Great Lakes			
	Japan	4,700,000	4,700,000
	Sweden	4,330,421	4,330,421
	Denmark	4,256,854	4,256,854
	Norway	2,924,874	2,924,874
	Belgium	2,558,791	2,558,791
	United States of America	1,530,000	1,530,000
	Finland	874,891	874,891
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Earmarking ¹	Donor	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds	
		Income	Contribution
>>>			
	France	410,190	410,190
	African Union	100,000	100,000
	Private Donors Italy	40,421	40,421
Republic of the Congo			
	United States of America	1,320,000	1,320,000
	Germany	491,642	491,642
	Luxembourg	295,567	295,567
	<i>Deutsche Stiftung (GFR)</i>	174,978	174,978
	<i>Association française de soutien à l'UNHCR (FRA)</i>	23,645	23,645
Rwanda			
	United States of America	1,580,000	1,580,000
	Germany	495,540	495,540
	Norway	229,893	229,893
Tanzania			
	European Commission	11,776,251	11,776,251
	United States of America	4,900,000	4,900,000
	Japan	3,300,000	3,300,000
	Switzerland	950,617	950,617
	Canada	621,118	621,118
	Italy	539,906	539,906
	Germany	431,779	431,779
	Luxembourg	295,567	295,567
	<i>Stichting Vluchteling (NET)</i>	141,700	141,700
	South Africa	18,443	18,443
	Private Donors Tanzania	3,200	3,200
	Private Donors United States of America	500	500
Total		69,940,440	69,940,440

¹ For more information on the various earmarkings, please refer to the Donor Profiles.

Budget and Expenditure (USD)						
Country	Revised Budget			Expenditure		
	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total	Annual Programme Budget and Trust Funds	Supplementary Programme Budget	Total
Burundi	9,587,536	0	9,587,536	9,129,515	0	9,129,515
Democratic Republic of the Congo	28,735,972	841,688	29,577,660	27,048,301	0	27,048,301
Republic of the Congo	7,471,927	0	7,471,927	6,897,566	0	6,897,566
Rwanda	7,930,821	0	7,930,821	7,074,213	0	7,074,213
United Republic of Tanzania	28,897,701	0	28,897,701	27,716,307	0	27,716,307
Regional Projects ¹	7,786,021	0	7,786,021	6,020,417	0	6,020,417
Total	90,409,978	841,688	91,251,666	83,886,319	0	83,886,319

¹ Includes assistance to various refugees in the Great Lakes region, such as resettlement, care and maintenance, as well as supports costs for UNVs and consultants, light aircraft charter costs, and scholarships for refugee students.