

CONGO (Republic of the)

Operational highlights

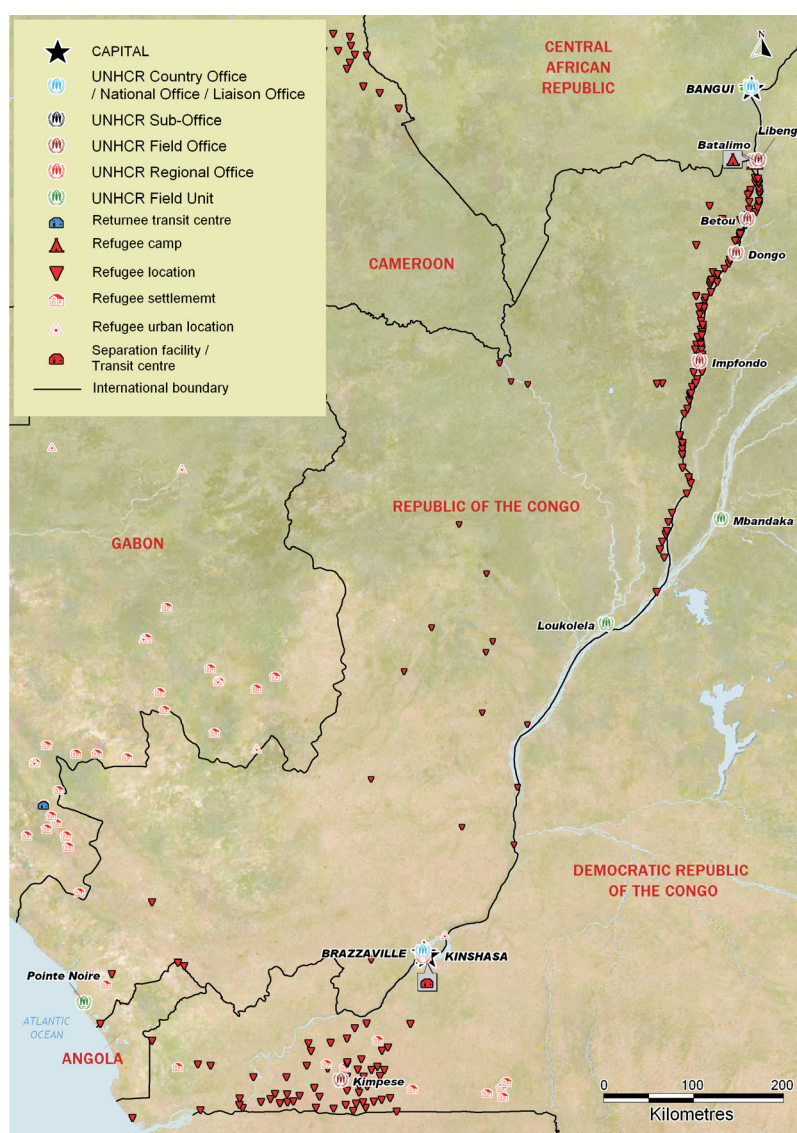
- UNHCR completed the verification of refugees living in the north of the country. More than 131,000 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) living in 102 sites spread over 600 km along the Oubangui River, were registered.
- A verification exercise revealed that the Republic of the Congo (the Congo) was hosting almost 8,000 refugees and some 2,800 asylum-seekers in urban areas.
- With UNHCR's support, the Government established a commission for the revision of the Congo's Asylum Law, which was expected to be adopted in the course of 2012.
- UNCR was involved in the preparation of a contingency plan for a potential influx of refugees from the DRC following the presidential elections of November 2011 in that country. Training sessions were organized for the authorities to help them build their emergency preparedness and response capacity. Fortunately, the influx did not materialize.

Working environment

With the overall security situation remaining stable throughout the year, the working environment proved conducive to ensuring respect for the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers in the Congo. However, with half of the population still living in poverty, living conditions remained harsh for the majority of people of concern to UNHCR. A positive development in 2011 was the decision by the Congolese Government to resume adjudication before the eligibility commissions of all cases pertaining to former combatants. These asylum claims had been pending for many years, some dating back to 2005.

The Congo has enacted three important pieces of legislation: a Child Protection Act, a law on the promotion and protection of indigenous peoples, and another on the protection of people living with HIV and AIDS. In addition, a

bill on gender parity in political and administrative functions was under review by the Government before its referral to Parliament.



Persons of concern

Type of Population	Origin	Total	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Per cent female	Per cent under 18
Refugees	DRC	131,600	131,600	52	58
	Rwanda	8,400	8,400	43	49
	Angola	900	900	48	41
	Various	290	290	37	32
Asylum-seekers	DRC	2,300	2,300	47	39
	Rwanda	200	200	46	27
	Chad	160	160	28	27
	Central African Rep.	130	130	28	30
	Various	220	220	19	16
Others of concern	Various	330	330	49	98
Returnees (refugees)	Gabon	700	700	50	51
	Various	30	30	50	51
Total		145,260	145,260		

¹ The demographic breakdown of returnees refers to the total 730 Congolese returning refugees.

| Achievements and impact |

● Main objectives and targets

In 2011, UNHCR's main objectives were to ensure that at least 85 per cent of adult refugees were provided with individual protection documents; to intensify efforts to prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV); to ensure access to drinking water, primary health care and education; to provide basic domestic and hygiene items to refugee women; to improve refugees' level of self-reliance; and to promote durable solutions.

Favourable protection environment

- As the Congo has not yet ratified the two Statelessness Conventions, UNHCR continued to raise awareness at governmental level of the need to prevent and reduce statelessness. It also sought to improve the national administrative framework so as to afford better protection to people of concern.

Fair protection processes

- The verification exercise conducted in 2011 allowed UNHCR to identify close to 1,300 asylum applications that were still pending. Some had been awaiting decisions since 2005, although the vast majority of unexamined cases dated from 2008, confirming the need to strengthen the authorities' capacity for refugee status determination (RSD). In this respect, the Office continued to encourage the Government to conduct eligibility sessions and organized several training sessions for the newly recruited RSD staff within the *Comité national d'assistance aux réfugiés*.

Security from violence and exploitation

- Some 90 cases of SGBV were reported in 2011 among refugees living in rural areas. About 75 per cent of these cases involved sexual violence against minors, all of whom received medical and psychosocial support. However, despite the offer of legal assistance to survivors, most perpetrators were not brought to justice, creating a situation of impunity that exacerbated the problem. The Government needed to strengthen the capacity of the courts in the Likouala Department, before which a total of 81 complaints were pending at the end of 2011. In spite of these difficulties, the Office provided assistance to SGBV survivors, including legal support. UNHCR further continued its advocacy efforts with the Government in order to sensitize officials and decision makers on the issue of SGBV.

Basic needs and services

- At the end of 2011, out of a total of some 35,000 children aged 6-11 years, more than 27,500, including some 13,400 girls, were attending primary school. This achievement was made possible by the construction of 27 additional

classrooms, and the payment of a monthly allowance to qualified teachers, allowing some 79 per cent of the refugee children in rural areas to be enrolled in primary schools.

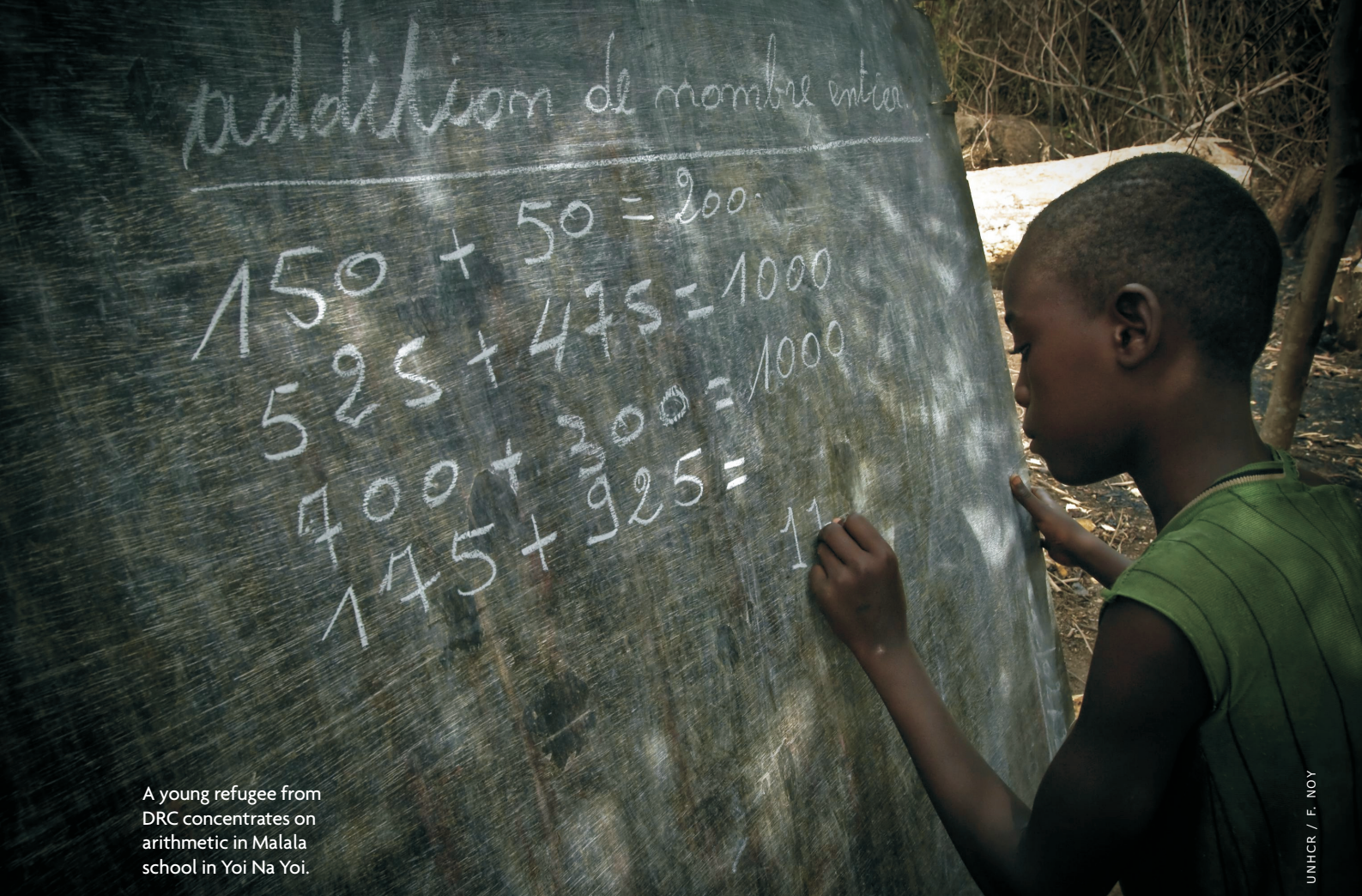
- Health care was provided to the refugees through more than 114,000 consultations and examinations. Some 9,000 women received antenatal care, among them 196 who were less than 19 years of age. Mobile medical services provided health care to those who lived in more remote areas, or were too vulnerable to come to the medical centres.
- In addition, all refugees living with HIV and AIDS (197 known cases) received anti-retroviral therapy.
- The existing nutritional surveillance mechanism identified 196 cases of malnutrition, including 109 severe cases (65 boys and 44 girls). They were treated in different treatment centres in Betou and Impfondo, where they received supplementary feeding and treatment; 99 of the children were restored to health by the end of the year. The 87 moderate cases received outpatient care. The nutritional surveillance mechanism regularly monitored the status of these children. Information sessions on nutrition and diet have been organized for 2,400 mothers, to ensure that they have the basic knowledge to feed their children correctly.
- To improve drinking water supplies, 229 wells were built in Likouala (including one hundred directly by UNHCR), for the benefit of some 68,000 refugees, but the average water consumption per person and per day remained below standards. In addition, some 230 water management committees were established to maintain the wells.

Community participation and self-management

- Some 19,400 refugees (7,600 men and 11,800 women) received agricultural tools and seeds for income-generating activities.
- Thanks to UNHCR's support for refugees working in agriculture, there was a significant increase in access to self-employment opportunities, rising from 45 per cent in 2010, to 80 per cent in 2011. This allowed many families to cover their nutritional needs, and compensate for the reduction of WFP food rations.
- Some 35 per cent of refugee committee members in rural areas and 38 per cent in urban areas were women. Though UNHCR's advocacy efforts have already increased women's participation in these committees, more were required in order to reach equal representation.

Durable solutions

- The overall objective for 2011 was to resettle 70 refugees in need of this solution. By the end of 2011, this target had been surpassed, with 74 people resettled in Australia, Sweden and the United States.



A young refugee from DRC concentrates on arithmetic in Malala school in Yoi Na Yoi.

UNHCR / F. NOY

Logistics and operational support

- Household goods and hygiene materials were procured for 35,000 people, and 77 per cent of the goods were delivered and distributed to beneficiaries. Some 24,000 out of 31,000 adult women received hygiene kits: remaining items were distributed when remote locations became accessible.

Constraints

In Likouala Department, the absence of infrastructure and limited movement by river during the dry period made it difficult at times to implement planned activities.

UNHCR faced serious constraints in implementing the programme combating SGVB. No trials of perpetrators took place due to the lack of competent courts in the Likouala Department.

Financial information

UNHCR's funding requirements for its operation in the Congo amounted to USD 276 million in 2011. However, due to limited resources, the operation only received USD 15.7 million. Earmarked contributions amounted to only USD 1.3 million, making this operation one of the main beneficiaries of unearmarked contributions.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR managed its programme in the Congo with 74 employees working in the Country Office in Brazzaville and two field offices in Betou and Impfondo.

UNHCR's presence in 2011

Number of offices	3
Total staff	74
International	10
National	47
UNVs	17

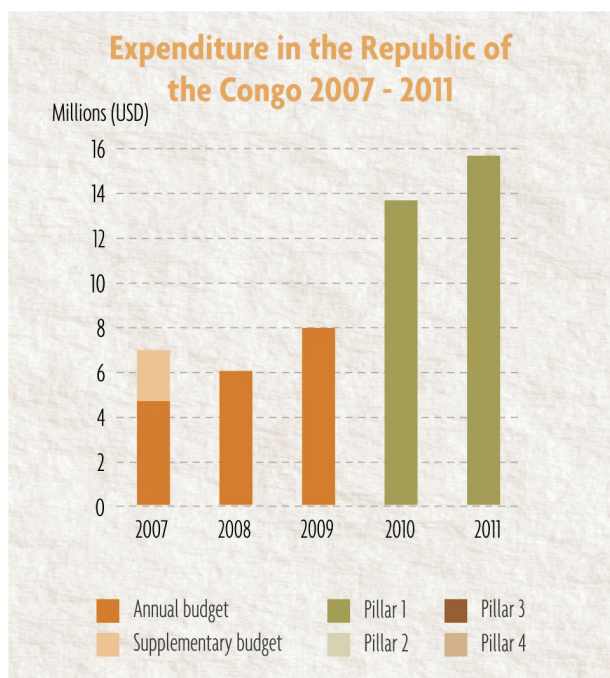
Working with others

UNHCR worked with UN Country Team members to develop a contingency plan for a possible influx of refugees from the DRC in the aftermath of the presidential elections in that country. Under an agreement between UNHCR and World Food Programme, food aid was provided to some 112,000 refugees in 2011, while the UN Population Fund facilitated access to reproductive health in areas where refugees were living.

Overall assessment

UNHCR's objectives in the Congo were only partially achieved due to logistical and financial constraints. The lack of fuel combined with the low level of water during six months made river travel difficult.

Significant progress was made with respect to the asylum law which was prepared by the Government in close collaboration with UNHCR. Consultations were in progress to ensure that the legislation was in line with international standards. Parliament was expected to adopt the new Asylum Law in 2012.



Unmet needs

- Due to limited resources, refugees only received an average of seven litres of clean water per person and per day.
- Refugees opting for local integration were not provided with sufficient livelihood support.
- Only 45 per cent of refugee adolescents were enrolled in secondary school.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies: *Comité national d'assistance aux réfugiés*

NGOs: *Agence d'assistance aux rapatriés et réfugiés, Agence pour la coopération technique et le développement, Commission d'entraide pour les migrants et les réfugiés, International Partnership for Humanitarian and Development, Médecins d'Afrique*

Operational partners

Others: *FAO, IFRC, Médecins Sans Frontières, UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP, WHO*

Budget, income and expenditure in the Congo | USD

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	Total
FINAL BUDGET	27,569,884	27,569,884
Income from contributions	1,326,212	1,326,212
Other funds available	14,350,359	14,350,359
TOTAL FUNDS AVAILABLE	15,676,571	15,676,571

EXPENDITURE BREAKDOWN

Favourable protection environment

International and regional instruments	18,575	18,575
National legal framework	51,448	51,448
National administrative framework	288,140	288,140
Prevention of statelessness	18,575	18,575
Cooperation with partners	18,575	18,575
Environmental protection	230,935	230,935
Subtotal	626,248	626,248

Fair protection processes and documentation

Reception conditions	320,274	320,274
Registration and profiling	353,988	353,988
Access to asylum procedures	14,034	14,034
Fair and efficient status determination	237,148	237,148
Family reunification	152,986	152,986
Individual documentation	152,986	152,986
Civil status documentation	152,986	152,986
Subtotal	1,384,402	1,384,402

	PILLAR 1 Refugee programme	Total
<i>Security from violence and exploitation</i>		
Impact on host communities	109,058	109,058
Gender-based violence	234,181	234,181
Protection of children	168,133	168,133
Freedom of movement	29,437	29,437
Non-arbitrary detention	156,161	156,161
Subtotal	696,970	696,970
<i>Basic needs and essential services</i>		
Nutrition	280,707	280,707
Water	824,614	824,614
Shelter and other infrastructure	46,216	46,216
Basic domestic and hygiene items	2,285,336	2,285,336
Primary health care	1,428,257	1,428,257
HIV and AIDS	73,581	73,581
Education	1,051,187	1,051,187
Sanitation services	504,658	504,658
Services for groups with specific needs	807,987	807,987
Subtotal	7,302,543	7,302,543
<i>Community participation and self-management</i>		
Participatory assessment	204,444	204,444
Community self-management	197,487	197,487
Self-reliance and livelihoods	314,930	314,930
Subtotal	716,861	716,861
<i>Durable solutions</i>		
Durable solutions strategy	147,920	147,920
Voluntary return	261,455	261,455
Resettlement	62,203	62,203
Local integration	210,123	210,123
Subtotal	681,701	681,701
<i>Logistics and operations support</i>		
Supply chain and logistics	653,036	653,036
Programme management and coordination	600,536	600,536
Subtotal	1,253,572	1,253,572
Other objectives	777	777
Balance of instalments with implementing partners	3,013,497	3,013,497
Total	15,676,571	15,676,571