

# Republic of the Congo

## Main Objectives

- Support the National Commission for Refugee Assistance (CNAR) in the implementation of national refugee legislation.
- Provide international protection and humanitarian assistance to refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Central African Republic (CAR) and Angola.
- Distribute appropriate identification documents to all registered refugees in collaboration with the relevant authorities.
- Promote local integration of refugees and support the Government in these efforts.
- Promote local settlement assistance to urban refugees and ensure their access to RSD.
- Make provisions for the reception and reintegration of returnees, mainly from Gabon and DRC.

## Working Environment

### Recent Developments

Political progress was made during 2002, with presidential and legislative elections in the first half of the year. At the same time, at the end of March, an internal conflict flared up in the Pool Region which is still unresolved. In addition to this, the Ninja rebel movement is known to have made sporadic attacks on the railway connecting Pointe Noire to Brazzaville, and sometimes within Brazzaville itself. This civil strife highlights the socio-political fragility of the country.



With such a large number of DRC refugees in RoC, political developments in DRC have had a significant impact on UNHCR's programme in RoC. So far, the peace process has not resulted in any significant repatriation movements.

After many years of war, the RoC economy is almost moribund, and is unlikely to revive in the absence of political stability and national reconciliation. One positive development is France's recent agreement to review the country's outstanding debt and the interest payments due to Bretton Woods institutions.

### Constraints

The northern part of the country, where UNHCR runs its operation, is a region of dense forest that floods frequently during the nine-month rainy

### Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Angolan Refugees	3,430	3,000
Central African Refugees (CAR)	810	1,450
Congolese Refugees (DRC)	30,000	74,000
Urban Refugees	3,500	3,500
<b>Total</b>	<b>37,740</b>	<b>81,950</b>

**Total Requirements: USD 7,522,664**

season. The geography and climate of the region make access to refugee sites arduous and risky. As most of the DRC refugees live on the banks of Oubangui river, boats remain the principal means of transport. Unfortunately, the current fleet of boats and four-wheel drive vehicles badly need to be renewed, however, the financial situation has not permitted this so far. The alternative airstrips in Impfondo and Betou, which are vital for access to the region and the security of staff, are poorly maintained and dangerous.

The ongoing armed conflict is a constant threat to security for both staff and refugees. Refugee protection is precarious in the vast areas bordering the DRC/Equatorial Province. Cross-border movements cause insecurity, and can lead to the violation of refugee women and the forced recruitment of refugee children into armed groups or domestic labour.

There is also friction between refugees and local populations over the use of scarce arable land. This has impeded the local settlement of refugees. Refugees are restricted in their movements, due to their lack of identification documents.

## Strategy

UNHCR will provide support to the National Eligibility Committee (NEC) and the National Committee for Refugee Assistance (CNAR) in order to strengthen their operational capacity to implement refugee legislation efficiently. The results of the refugee registration will allow for the establishment of a refugee population database. A priority for UNHCR in 2003 will be to build capacity for its implementing partners, and local entities in particular.

WFP food distribution is expected to be discontinued at the end of 2002. UNHCR will establish refugee co-operatives which will allow refugees to become self-sufficient through skills-building activities (agriculture and fisheries) and other forms of income generation.

UNHCR's operational activities will be undertaken in collaboration with other UN agencies in order to ensure that refugee assistance fits into the developmental framework.

**Angolan Refugees:** Many of the 18,000 Angolan Refugees are in local settlements around Pointe Noire. UNHCR will continue to assist these refugees with repatriation when requested, and help those remaining to become more self-reliant.

**Central African Refugees (CAR):** It is unlikely that the majority of the refugees will repatriate during 2003; UNHCR will therefore be obliged to provide humanitarian assistance which focuses on their self-reliance. The Office will emphasise education, vocational training and income-generating activities. During 2002 the CAR refugee population increased from 1,575 to 2,838, the new arrivals coming mainly from refugee sites in DRC. The 261 urban Central African refugees will be accommodated in various locations in Brazzaville and will receive humanitarian assistance.

**Refugees from DRC:** Refugees from DRC live on the banks of the Oubangui river in northern Congo. At the end of August 2002, there were more than 86,000 refugees living in this region. Most of them are farmers or fishermen; UNHCR will be able to assist them through appropriate activities.

The refugees will work for co-operatives run by a mix of refugees and local residents. This will promote smooth integration and peaceful co-habitation. Awareness raising campaigns will be conducted among refugees and local populations in order to help the two groups to reach agreement on the use of arable land. At the same time, training on refugee rights and obligations will be dispensed to refugees, local authorities and the general population.

UNHCR will place more emphasis on education. The Office will provide school supplies and equipment in a timely fashion to the refugee sites. If the Ministry of National Education of the DRC recognised the secondary educational programme put in place by UNHCR, DRC children would be able to benefit from secondary school, after their primary education. Special attention will be paid to the enrolment of girls in school. This will involve the issues of teenage pregnancy and early marriage (the main reasons they drop out of school). One aspect of this effort will be the employment of refugee women as school teachers.

UNHCR will develop cultural activities, with particular attention to women's participation in non-traditional activities.

The Office will give priority to the promotion of domestic and personal hygiene, through the regular distribution of hygiene kits and soap for women and children.

Following the registration of refugees, the issuance of identity documents will be a priority.

**Urban Refugees:** UNHCR will facilitate local settlement for urban refugees, with a strong focus on educational support. The Office will inform refugees about how to apply for scholarships and a committee will select candidates for awards. UNHCR will also organise vocational training for the urban refugees to help them to acquire vocational skills.

With the strengthening of the NEC, it is expected that most of the urban asylum-seekers will have access to RSD. UNHCR will continue to conduct home visits in order to maintain an adequate level of contact with the urban refugees. Family tracing

will continue to ensure the reunification of unaccompanied minors with their families.

**Returns:** There are some 20,000 refugees from RoC in Gabon and DRC. Repatriation is expected to take place from both DRC and Gabon during 2003. To this end, UNHCR will identify suitable locations for transit centres. The Office will organise missions to assess the usual sectors, as well as key technical aspects of the infrastructure needed for the reception and reintegration of returnees. UNHCR will ensure collaboration with appropriate partners, thereby promoting sustainable and durable reintegration through development programmes.

## Organisation and Implementation

### Management Structure

In 2003, UNHCR's programme will be implemented by 64 staff, (14 international and 50 national). The Office will manage its operations through a Liaison Office in Brazzaville, a sub-office in Pointe Noire



Fun in a refugee camp. Rwandese refugees – unaccompanied minors doing a dance performance at Ndjoundou camp, Loukolela region. UNHCR / B. Garden

and three field offices in Betou, Loukolela and Impfondo, respectively.

## Co-ordination

UNHCR will organise regular meetings and joint missions with implementing partners and other agencies to ensure a co-ordinated approach to the delivery of services to refugees. The Office will organise training sessions for implementing partners on UNHCR's programme management. UNHCR will strengthen the capacity of local partners, with the ultimate aim of facilitating the Office's eventual phase-out. With the same ultimate aim, the Office will continue its close co-operation and co-ordination with other UN agencies. UNHCR will participate in UN co-ordination meetings at both technical and policy levels. UNHCR will work closely with the Government, especially with the NEC and CNAR.

Offices
<b>Brazzaville</b>
Betou
Impfondo
Loukolela
Pointe-Noire

Partners
<b>Government Agencies</b>
National Committee for Refugee Assistance
National Eligibility Commission
<b>NGOs</b>
<i>Commission épiscopale pour les migrants et les réfugiés</i>
International Rescue Committee
<b>Others</b>
<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>

Budget (USD)			
Country	Annual Programme	Supplementary Programme	Total
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	2,377,829	82,271	2,460,100
Community Services	258,483	0	258,483
Crop Production	100,000	0	100,000
Domestic Needs	297,809	0	297,809
Education	382,978	0	382,978
Forestry	36,582	0	36,582
Health	276,230	0	276,230
Income Generation	89,521	0	89,521
Legal Assistance	134,205	0	134,205
Operational Support (to Agencies)	488,243	0	488,243
Sanitation	40,000	0	40,000
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	50,000	0	50,000
Transport / Logistics	1,186,967	0	1,186,967
Water	36,582	0	36,582
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>5,755,429</b>	<b>82,271</b>	<b>5,837,700</b>
Programme Support	1,684,964	0	1,684,964
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,440,393</b>	<b>82,271</b>	<b>7,522,664</b>