

# Southern Africa

3 July 2020

## Highlights

Since the beginning of UNHCR's COVID-19 response in Southern Africa



**1.4 million** people reached through COVID-19 risk communication



**1,600** health staff trained on COVID-19 prevention and response



**12,327** families received cash assistance to offset economic impacts of COVID-19 restrictions



UNHCR protection staff speaking with advanced-level students in Tongogara refugee camp, Zimbabwe. Photo: TDH/ E. Nyakata

## Population Figures

**8,995,989** people of concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa, including



768,991 refugees and 311,861 asylum-seekers



5,721,781 internally displaced persons (IDPs)



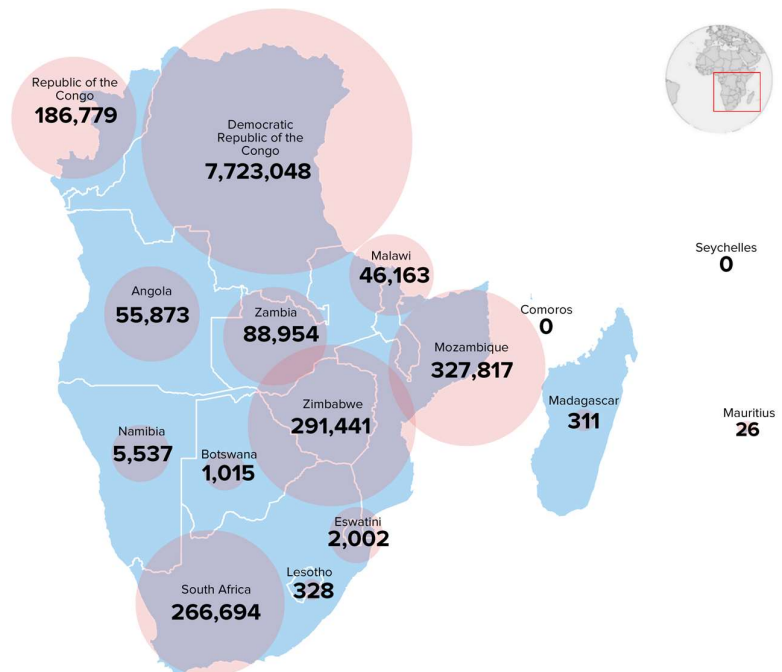
2,134,349 IDP returnees and 23,248 refugee returnees



35,759 other people of concern

(as of 1 July 2020)

## People of Concern to UNHCR in Southern Africa



## Operational Context

As of 1 July 2020, there are a reported 160,771 confirmed cases of COVID-19 in the 16 countries covered by UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Southern Africa, an 89 per cent increase over a two-week period. South Africa continues to report the highest number of confirmed cases. Governments continue to take precautionary measures to limit the spread of the virus, which have varied from strict lockdowns with closure of borders, schools and shops, to lighter approaches of promoting of social distancing and wearing face masks. While many governments have been strengthening COVID-19 prevention and response measures, the number of confirmed cases is increasing in the region, amidst concerns about under-reporting due to limited testing capacity in some countries. Nevertheless, lockdowns and restrictions are gradually being eased in many countries of the region.

UNHCR continues to work with governments, World Health Organization (WHO) and other UN agencies and NGOs to secure the inclusion of persons of concern – refugees, internally displaced persons (IDPs), stateless people and other marginalized communities – in preparedness and response measures for COVID-19.

UNHCR and partners have also committed to a 'stay and deliver' approach, continuing to provide critical services and assistance while adopting social distancing and other COVID-19 mitigation measures. This includes implementation of strict health protocols at distribution points, the use of hotlines to report protection issues and assistance needs, and support to virtual and distance learning and capacity building. UNHCR has also been expanding its outreach efforts in the region with the support of partners and community volunteers to spread the message among persons of concern and their host communities about COVID-19 prevention and services.

## UNHCR Response

### Health and WASH



**573** health staff trained on COVID-19 prevention and response in the **Republic of the Congo** since March 2020



**2,244** people received cloth face masks, including 660 in the host community, since March 2020 in **Angola**

UNHCR and partners continued water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) and health activities across the region, to prevent and respond to COVID-19. The importance of a community-wide approach to COVID-19 prevention in the health and WASH sector has been emphasized in **Angola**, where an assessment revealed the host community near Lóvua settlement was lacking information on COVID-19, and that many did not have face masks or soap for hand washing. To address this gap, especially given the close and frequent interaction between refugees and the host community, UNHCR has provided soap to 370 vulnerable families in the host community, along with 660 masks. In a similar vein, in the **Republic of the Congo (ROC)**, UNHCR and its health partner contributed medications, medical consumables and personal protective equipment to national health centres in the departments of Likouala and Plateaux, and in the city of Brazzaville, to support the national systems in providing adequate health services to communities hosting people of concern during the COVID-19 pandemic. This is in addition to training health staff on COVID-19 prevention and response, which has been taking place in refugee-hosting communities across the country, so far reaching 573 health workers.

Refugees and asylum-seekers also continued to play key roles in COVID-19 prevention in their own communities. In **Zimbabwe**, 16 community health volunteers disinfected 111 water points within Tongogara refugee camp, including 14 boreholes and 97 water taps, with the objective of minimizing cross-contamination at water points. In addition, UNHCR's WASH partner continued to ensure consistent water supply to the camp in order to support frequent hand washing and proper hygiene across the 10 sections of the camp, to minimize the spread of the COVID-19 virus.

To promote better hygiene and hand washing in line with COVID-19 prevention guidance, UNHCR conducted soap distributions in several locations across the **Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)**. Recipients over the past two weeks included 1,633 South Sudanese refugees in the new Bele settlement, 10,152 Burundian refugee households in Lucenda camp, 8,799 IDPs in Kigonze site, and 56,835 IDPs and 17,134 members of the host community in North Kivu Province. Overall, 102,579 people have received soap from UNHCR in the DRC since the beginning of the COVID-19 response. Additionally, UNHCR and its health partner distributed additional equipment to isolation and quarantine centres in areas hosting South Sudanese refugees, including 175 handwashing facilities and 20 beds. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response in the DRC, UNHCR has supported the establishment of seven health centres and four isolation / quarantine centres, and additionally provided equipment to two health centres and two isolation / quarantine centres.

## Protection, Communication and Community Engagement



**55,000** people reached with COVID-19 risk communication since March 2020 in **Malawi**



**8,336** people reached with SGBV messaging linked to COVID-19 in **Zambia** since March 2020

The social and economic impacts of COVID-19 have heightened the risk of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) among people of concern, and UNHCR has been working with partners and community members to raise awareness, adapt referral pathways and strengthen response services. Over the past two weeks in **Zambia**, refugee leaders, women's and men's networks in Lusaka have been trained on COVID-19 prevention measures and SGBV referral pathways. They are now passing on this knowledge to other members of the community via outreach centres. UNHCR has supported this initiative by providing posters on COVID-19 and SGBV referral pathways. A training session on SGBV prevention and response in the context of COVID-19 was also conducted at Makeni transit centre in Lusaka jointly by UNHCR's protection partner and Government, reaching 232 refugees and asylum-seekers. In addition, UNHCR and its protection partner have ensured continuity of protection services amidst COVID-19 restrictions by conducting remote counselling and SGBV case management via phone hotlines. In the month of June 105 refugees and asylum-seekers received counselling through this mechanism.

COVID-19 awareness-raising and risk communication continued across the region, focusing on reducing the spread and mitigating the impact of COVID-19 and related protection issues. In **Malawi**, community-based structures supported by UNHCR engaged in a radio programme on Yetu Community Radio in Dzaleka refugee camp to spread messaging on preventive measures of COVID-19 and shed more light on the referral pathway that has been put in place for COVID-19. The programme was aired live and then re-broadcasted in order to reach a wide audience during different times of the day. Meanwhile, UNHCR conducted small-group discussions in Tongogara refugee camp, **Zimbabwe**, in order to tailor COVID-19 messaging to the specific needs of the audience, and to receive feedback and recommendations as well as answer questions. This included two focus group discussions with 52 people with disabilities (28 males and 24 females), and a group protection counselling session for 28 advanced-level students.

UNHCR also continued a large-scale awareness-raising campaign on COVID-19 in the **DRC**, which has reached more than 1.2 million refugees, IDPs and host community members with messaging via group discussions, flyers, door-to-door messaging and radio spots since the beginning of the COVID-19 response. Over the past two weeks, an estimated 287,000 people were reached with COVID-19 awareness messaging through radio programmes and campaigns in North Kivu Province, Kasai Province, and Kasai Central Province. In addition, 12,855 people received COVID-19 information through community-based protection groups in North Kivu Province, while UNHCR and partners also distributed fliers in areas hosting refugees from Central African Republic (CAR), making a total of 71,501 fliers distributed in these areas since the beginning of the COVID-19 response.

## Assistance



**11,190** people reached since March 2020 with cash assistance to offset the impact of COVID-19 in **South Africa**



**16,508** families received additional core relief items as a result of COVID-19 in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

UNHCR is working with partners and government to assist the most vulnerable persons of concern during this period of COVID-19 lockdown and movement restrictions, including with food and cash assistance. In **South Africa**, the COVID-19 lockdown has severely impacted households due to lost income as a result of limitations on movement and economic activity. The number of refugees and asylum-seekers requesting assistance from UNHCR increased significantly during the most stringent levels of lockdown, notably among those who had previously been self-sufficient but started to struggle to put food on the table, pay rent, or cover the cost of utilities under lockdown. Since the beginning of the COVID-19 response, 11,190 families received cash assistance from UNHCR to help offset the economic impacts of the lockdown, as well as 1,182 food parcels delivered to vulnerable families. Additionally, in **Angola**, 382 refugee families in Luanda received food baskets through a programme funded by UNHCR to support groups at risk during the COVID-19 State of Emergency/Calamity.

Meanwhile, over the past two weeks in the **DRC**, UNHCR has provided targeted support to vulnerable individuals and households. This includes a cash distribution conducted by UNHCR's partner for 120 vulnerable IDP households in North Kivu Province, which was preceded by an awareness-raising campaign on the prevention of COVID-19. UNHCR also started a shelter project targeting 300 IDP households in Fizi Centre, South Kivu Province, to help ensure appropriate social distancing between families. UNHCR and its shelter partner shared information on how to use the construction tools provided, as well as on COVID-19 prevention measures. Overall, 16,508 families in the DRC have received additional relief items from UNHCR in the context of the COVID-19 response.

## Education



**617** children and youths supported with distance and home-based learning in **Zimbabwe**



**403** students assisted with small-group learning sessions in the **Democratic Republic of the Congo**

Schools remain closed in many countries in the region, and UNHCR and partners continue to take measures to help students keep up with their studies. In **Zimbabwe**, UNHCR provided 395 families in Tongogara refugee camp with solar lanterns to support home studies at night, focusing on those families with exam-writing pupils and with students in tertiary education. Overall, UNHCR and partners are supporting 617 children and youth with distance and home-based learning in Zimbabwe.

Meanwhile in the **DRC**, UNHCR and its education partner organized learning sessions in two camps hosting refugees from CAR for 403 final year primary school pupils, who are preparing for National Certificate Exams. The lessons were held in small groups around their shelters, and handwashing stations and social distancing measures were enforced. In addition, to respond to increased numbers of SGBV incidents linked to COVID-19 restrictions, school-age children received general and sex education lessons in small groups of no more than 20 in a camp hosting refugees from CAR. The lessons were given by teachers of the camp's primary school. It should be noted that schools are currently closed in the DRC.

Recognizing the need for continued and catch-up learning in **Zambia**, Government has developed self-study kits for secondary school subjects from grades eight to twelve, including English, Mathematics, Science, Business Studies, Civic Education, Geography and History, among others. To ensure refugees can access and benefit from these resources, UNHCR is seeking funding to print and distribute the self-study kits in the three refugee settlements, as well as to procure and distribute solar powered radios for self-study and catch-up learning.

## World Refugee Day

World Refugee Day (WRD) was commemorated across Southern Africa, with this year's theme *Everyone Can Make a Difference, Every Action Counts*. WRD is an international day designated by the United Nations to honour refugees around the globe, which falls each year on 20 June. WRD celebrates the strength and courage of people who have been forced to flee their home countries to escape conflict or persecution, seeks to build empathy and understanding, and recognizes the resilience of refugees in rebuilding their lives.

This year, against the backdrop of the global COVID-19 pandemic, UNHCR in Southern Africa hosted WRD 2020 with creativity, innovation and care for the safety and wellbeing of everyone concerned. UNHCR's Regional Bureau for Southern Africa launched a **virtual photo exhibition** showcasing positive and powerful stories of refugees, highlighting their resilience and energy to continue their lives despite displacement. UNHCR Southern Africa also launched an **Instagram** account, highlighting strength and ingenuity of refugees, as well as the dedication of those who work to support them.

Across the region, UNHCR staff engaged with the media to highlight the significance of WRD and took the opportunity to convey gratitude for the support of governments, partners and donors in enabling UNHCR to continue meeting and fulfilling its mandate.

In country operations, various activities were held to mark WRD while observing COVID-19 regulations. This included a clean-up campaign in Angola, distribution of masks and agricultural tools in the DRC, poetry competitions for refugee children in ROC, interviews on news programmes in South Africa, week-long radio and television programmes in Zambia, and a socially distanced event at a transit centre in Zimbabwe.



During World Refugee Day activities in Angola, refugees distributed cloth masks they had made to members of the host community.  
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## Challenges

COVID-19 restrictions have impacted the supply and delivery of goods, as suppliers are affected by the shutdown of manufacturing plants around the world, as well as border entry restrictions. For example, in Zambia, COVID-19 related procurement has been affected as suppliers do not have enough stock in the stores and cannot commit to delivering items in less than four weeks. Supply chain gaps and delays in the region notably affect the health sector, creating challenges for people of concern to access health care, including through national systems. UNHCR is working with partners and Government to support health systems to the extent possible, however challenges remain in terms of pre-positioning medicines and sourcing medical supplies and equipment in a timely manner.

In addition, slowness of COVID-19 testing is a challenge in many countries in the region. This is due to shortages of test kits or limited laboratory capacity. Gaps in testing, or delays in receiving results, is having a negative impact on the transmission chain, especially in a context where people live in close proximity to one another, such as in camps and in some low-income urban areas. For example, in areas hosting refugees from CAR in the DRC, there are no laboratories to test for COVID-19 in Nord and Sud Ubangi provinces, and tests must be conducted in neighbouring provinces.

## Financial Requirements

On 7 May 2020, the UN launched a revised inter-agency [Global Humanitarian Response Plan](#) seeking US\$6.69 billion, which includes US\$745 million for UNHCR's operations in affected countries through December 2020 and as reflected in UNHCR's [revised Coronavirus emergency appeal](#). US\$262 million has been pledged and recorded towards UNHCR's appeal.

In Southern Africa, US\$31.2 million is needed under the revised Coronavirus emergency appeal. As of 2 July 2020, the region has received earmarked funding totalling US\$565,000, accounting for approximately 2% of financial needs.

**CONTRIBUTIONS AND PLEDGES TO THE UNHCR COVID-19 APPEAL | US\$**  
 USA 64M (400,000 earmarked for DRC) | EU 43M | Germany 39.8M | UK 24.8M | Japan 23.9M | Denmark 14.6M | United Nations Foundation 10M | CERF 6.9M | Private Donors 6.6M | Canada 6.4M | Ireland 3.3M | Sweden 3M | Sony Corporation 2.9M | Finland 2.4M | Austria 1.8M | Education Cannot Wait 1.8M | Qatar Charity 1.5M | Norway 1.4M | USA for UNHCR 1M

UNHCR is also grateful to the donors that have provided unearmarked support. Contributed without restrictions on its use, unearmarked funding allows UNHCR critical flexibility in how best to reach refugees, the internally displaced, stateless persons and other populations of concern who are in the greatest need and at the greatest risk.

### UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | US\$

Sweden 76.4M | Norway 41.4M | Netherlands 36.1M | Denmark 34.6M | Private donors Spain 33.1M | United Kingdom 31.7M | Germany 25.9M | Private donors Republic of Korea 17.3M | Switzerland 16.4M

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**Global Financial Requirements: UNHCR Coronavirus Emergency Appeal**

