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EASTERN DRC SITUATION

02 May 2025



Recently arrived Congolese refugees fleeing violence in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo, at the Nyakabande transit centre in southwest Uganda, in March 2025. © UNHCR/Yonna Tukundane

HIGHLIGHTS

- Despite the 23 April agreement between the parties to the conflict to implement an immediate ceasefire, **sporadic clashes continue to be reported between armed groups in North and South Kivu. Widespread reports of violations against civilian populations have also been received, including kidnappings, extortion, rape, destruction of property and forced recruitment.**
- The revised [Regional Refugee Response Plan for the DRC Situation](#) has been released, with 107 partners operating across seven neighbouring countries appealing for a combined US\$781.3 M to support close to 1.2 M refugees and asylum seekers from the DRC.
- According to the latest [Integrated Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#) analysis, over 28 million people in DRC are acutely food insecure, the highest figure ever recorded in the country. North Kivu and Tanganyika provinces in eastern DRC have recorded the highest share of acutely food-insecure people at 45 per cent of their respective populations.
- UNHCR and partners continue key protection activities, including **protection monitoring, awareness-raising, referral and case management**
- **Some 139,000 people have fled from the Eastern DRC to neighbouring countries since the beginning of the year.** There has been a reduction in the number of arrivals recorded in Uganda, reportedly due to increased border crossing restrictions.

Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC)

- **Representatives of the DRC, France, Qatar, Rwanda, Togo and the US met in Doha on 30 April on the sidelines of the ongoing peace negotiations between the Government of the DRC and M23.** Bilateral meetings were also convened by the US Senior Adviser for Africa, [Massad Boulos](#), with Congolese and Rwandan representatives in Doha, following the 'declaration of principles' signed between the two countries in Washington last week, which saw them commit to come up with an 'initial draft peace agreement' by 2 May.
- **On 30 April, the [International Committee of the Red Cross \(ICRC\)](#) began accompanying convoys of disarmed soldiers, carrying at least 130 personnel, of the Armed Forces of the Democratic Republic of Congo (FARDC) from Goma to Kinshasa.** Approximately 1,500 disarmed FARDC soldiers had taken refuge at MONUSCO bases in January this year. These convoys follow lengthy negotiations between the parties to the conflict, UN representatives and the ICRC.
- **The phased withdrawal of the Southern African Development Community Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (SAMIDRC) began on 29 April and is ongoing.** Troops and equipment from bases in Goma and Sake, including South African National Defence Force (SANDF) personnel, are being evacuated via Rwanda, following an earlier agreement to provide safe passage. From Rwanda, contingents are transiting to Chato, Tanzania, before returning to their home countries.
- **Despite a recent peace agreement, armed incursions linked to armed groups continue to be reported across North and South Kivu.** In Goma city, such incursions, particularly from elements operating in Virunga National Park, have coincided with a spike in home invasions, killings, kidnappings, rape, and looting. In Mwenga and Uvira territories, armed groups have carried out ambushes and attacks, resulting in the abduction and extortion of civilians.
- **Protection monitoring carried out by the UNHCR-led [Protection Cluster](#) during March continued to observe widespread abuses and human rights violations across Eastern DRC.** In North Kivu, partly attributed to an increase in monitoring coverage in Beni Territory, there was a 182 per cent increase in violations and abuses recorded from the previous month. Some 25 per cent of these incidents comprised extortion and looting, 17 per cent kidnapping or enforced disappearance and eight per cent rape.
- **On 30 April, the 7th convoy for the voluntary repatriation of Rwandan refugees was successfully organized.** A total of 274 Rwandan refugees, comprising 75 families, were voluntarily repatriated to their country of origin in conditions that ensured safety and dignity. This brings the total number of Rwandan refugees repatriated from Goma, North Kivu, in 2025 to 1,502 individuals. As of 30 April, this figure represents 100 per cent of the annual repatriation target, successfully achieved by the end of the first quarter of the year.
- **UNHCR and its partners continue to implement a comprehensive package of protection interventions across North and South Kivu.** These include training refugee committee members and community leaders to promote peaceful coexistence and discourage unnecessary gatherings. Over the past week, a total of 31 community awareness and exchange sessions were held across Lubero, Beni, Goma, Nyiragongo, and Masisi, reaching over 450 people. In South Kivu, child protection and sexual violence cases continued to be identified and followed up in Mulongwe, Lusenda, and Kalehe, with medical and psychosocial support provided to survivors, including minors. Recreational activities were also launched at the Sange reception facility, benefiting around 100 children.
- **The latest [Integrated Phase Classification \(IPC\)](#) reveals a sharp rise in food insecurity across the Democratic Republic of the Congo, with the number of acutely food insecure people increasing from 25.5 million in September 2024 to 28 million in March 2025—including 3.9 million facing emergency levels of hunger (IPC Phase 4). This is the highest figure ever recorded in the country. The ongoing conflict in eastern DRC, marked by mass**

displacement, the destruction of IDP camps, and rising food prices, has been a major driver of worsening food insecurity, particularly in North and South Kivu.

- According to a WHO report, [Eastern DRC](#) continues to face multiple overlapping health emergencies, including cholera, Mpox, and measles. **Since January, 7,103 cholera cases have been reported in North Kivu, South Kivu, and Tanganyika—accounting for 41% of the national total.** South Kivu has seen a sharp rise in recent weeks, with signs of a localized epidemic, particularly in Minova health zone. At the same time, North Kivu has recorded a notable increase in Mpox, and measles cases compared to early 2024. **In response, 200,000 Mpox vaccine doses—the largest single shipment to DRC—were recently delivered by GAVI.**
- **Since the end of March, an outbreak of anthrax has been reported in the northern part of Virunga National Park in North Kivu Province.** While outbreaks of anthrax among wild animals are relatively common, livestock and humans have also been infected, with 16 suspected human cases reported so far, resulting in one fatality. [WHO](#) is currently assessing the risk of further anthrax spread, with awareness campaigns and efforts to vaccinate livestock against anthrax currently underway.

Regional Updates

- **As of 29 April, almost 140,000 people have fled the DRC to neighbouring countries since the beginning of the year,** the majority of whom have arrived in Burundi and Uganda. The latest figures on new arrivals to neighbouring countries are reflected in the Eastern DRC Displacement Dashboard, Burundi CORE, and the Uganda CORE, **which are updated regularly and available on the [Operational Data Portal](#)**
- **The revised [Regional Refugee Response Plan for the DRC Situation](#) has been released,** with 107 partners operating across seven neighbouring countries appealing for a combined US\$781.3 M to support close to 1.2 M refugees and asylum seekers from the DRC, as well as some 950,000 host community members. The revised RRP includes US\$111 million to respond to the new emergencies in Burundi and Uganda and is fully harmonized with the respective country-level inter-agency emergency response plans and appeals.

Country	Total New Arrivals* since 1 Jan (as of 1 May unless specified)	Arrivals in the Past 7 Days
Burundi	71,147 (as of 22 April)	793
Uganda	62,730	3,090
Zambia	1,357 (as of 29 April)	29
Rwanda	1,839 (as of 29 April)	8
Tanzania	2,662 (as of 30 April)	108
TOTAL	139,735	4,028

**For countries where data is available, the new arrivals figure includes returnees as well as refugees from third countries, alongside the Congolese new arrivals. The inclusion of these group reflects that returnee populations and third-country nationals may also have specific international protection and humanitarian needs.*

Burundi

- **The enumeration/ verification of exercise of refugees in Cibitoke Province bordering eastern DRC was launched on 24 April,** carried out by 57 monitors, six area supervisors and three commune coordinators in collaboration with the National Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons (ONPRA). The purpose of the exercise is the establish a clearer picture of the number of refugees residing among the host community in Rugombo and other areas of Cibitoke Province. As of 26 April, a total of 7,548 refugees had so far been

recorded across 1,256 households. At the time of writing the enumeration exercise was ongoing, with the aim to cover all communes within the province.

- **Heavy rainfall continues to impact living conditions at the Musenyi refugee site.** Over the reporting period, further flooding within the site led to the relocation of a number of refugees to a safer area of the site.
- **New arrivals continue to be transferred to the Musenyi refugee site** in Rutana Province, with a further 2,248 refugees relocated from transit centres to the site between 24-26 April. This brings the overall population of the Musenyi site to 17,155 refugees. The following support continues to be provided to the population residing in Musenyi:
 - **Food security:** Since the previous update a further 578 individuals (193 households) received food assistance through UNHCR and its partner Caritas Burundi. This brings the overall number of new arrivals who have received food assistance to over 4,000
 - **NFIs:** The distribution of NFIs to new arrivals is ongoing. Over recent days a further 796 individuals (258 households) have received NFIs, bringing the overall number of recipients to well over 11,000.
 - **Cash assistance:** UNHCR and its financial partner, FinBank, continue to distribute cash to new arrivals. In recent days, a further 834 households have benefited from cash distributions, with almost 3,500 households so far receiving cash.
 - **Shelter:** The lack of family-sized tents remains a critical gap and pressing concern among new arrivals. The majority of new arrivals continue to be hosted in communal tents.
- Between 23 and 27 April, **UNHCR and protection partners at the Musenyi site identified and followed up on 26 unaccompanied or separated children, 28 cases of sexual violence (mostly originating from the DRC), and 54 individuals with specific needs, such as the elderly and persons with disabilities.** An additional 102 cases were received at the protection desk and referred for assessment, verification, and medical follow-up. A protection sector coordination group has been activated in Musenyi to guide priorities and strengthen coordination.
- **On 23 April, the first lady of Burundi, Mrs. Angélique Ndayishimiye, visited refugees at the Musenyi site,** accompanied by Rutana Provincial authorities and national elected officials. She expressed her strong support and donated food items and other essential supplies.

Uganda

- **Since the beginning of 2025, Uganda has received almost 62,00 new arrivals from DRC.** A total of 3,539 new arrivals have been recorded over the seven days from 23-29 April, a reduction in the number of arrivals from the peak levels of over 6,000 per week recorded over the period 15-22 April. The number of arrivals recorded between 1 January and 20 April marks an increase of over 600 per cent compared to the same period in 2024.
- **Kisoro District, which has received the majority of new arrivals from DRC, recorded a 68 per cent reduction in the number of arrivals week-on-week.** This reduction has been attributed to new movement restrictions imposed on the DRC side of the border, where additional levies have reportedly been imposed and/ or people have been prevented from crossing the border.
- **Despite a decline in new arrivals over the past week, transit centres remain critically overcrowded. Nyakabande Transit Centre alone is accommodating 8,799 individuals, nearly eight times its intended capacity.** Expanding the centre is urgent, with immediate needs for additional land, shelters, WASH infrastructure, interview spaces, and protection desks. Other key priorities include cash assistance to address gaps in core relief items, warm clothing for the rainy season, menstrual hygiene kits, solar lighting, and information materials. As previously highlighted, more funding is also needed to hire buses and speed up the relocation of new arrivals to reception centres.

Tanzania

- As of 23 April, over **2,600 asylum seekers from the DRC have arrived in Tanzania** since the beginning of the year through various border crossing points, including the Lake Tanganyika and land borders, through Burundi.

Zambia

- The number of asylum seeker arrivals in Zambia has remained steady, **with 29 individuals recorded over the past seven days. This brings the total number of arrivals since the beginning of the year to over 1,350.** While not large in scale, the consistent flow underscores the continued need for monitoring and support to ensure timely assistance and protection.

Rwanda

- Rwandan refugees continue to return home from the Democratic Republic of the Congo at a steady pace. **On 30 April, UNHCR facilitated the seventh voluntary repatriation convoy from Goma to Rwanda, assisting 274 Rwandan refugees (75 families) to return home in safety and dignity.**

Republic of the Congo (Displacement unrelated to the violence in Eastern DRC)

- **Following the arrival of over 8,000 people to the Republic of the Congo (RoC) from western DRC since the beginning of 2025, UNHCR and the RoC National Commission for Refugees (CNR) have developed a [joint response plan](#) to scale up assistance to those affected.** The plan aims to assist new arrivals and host communities through a combination of unconditional cash grants to enable new arrivals to settle in the host community alongside targeted WASH and shelter interventions to improve conditions in camps and villages where refugees have already settled.
- **A joint mission by UNHCR and the National Committee for Assistance to Refugees (CNAR) to Bouémba, Ngabé, and Makotimpoko found critical gaps in services for over 8,000 newly arrived refugees.** Key needs include food assistance, temporary shelter, safe drinking water, medical support, and school access for nearly 2,000 children. The mission recommended urgent biometric registration, expanded WASH infrastructure, mobile health services, and education support. Strengthening social cohesion and humanitarian coordination was also flagged as essential.

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