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COI QUERY

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Cite as: EUAA, Country of Origin Information Query, DRC, Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kinshasa, 2 October 2024, [url](#)

COI QUERY RESPONSE – Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC)

Returnees and Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs) in Kinshasa

1. Overview on Returnees and IDPS in the DRC

The number of IDPs in the DRC has been ‘steadily rising in recent years’, with the current IDP population as of March 2024 at 7.1 million people.¹ Sources stated that the DRC has the largest IDP population in Africa.² Most IDPs live in the eastern provinces of North Kivu, South Kivu, Ituri, and Tanganyika.³

Most displacements were triggered by armed conflict and violence,⁴ ‘as well as extreme poverty and mining expansion, especially in the North Kivu, Ituri, and South Kivu provinces’.⁵ According to sources, ‘three Non-State Armed Groups, the March 23 Movement (M23), the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF) and the Coopérative pour le développement du Congo (CODECO), and the corresponding conflicts, have ‘caused the vast majority of internal displacements in the DRC in 2024’.⁶ Furthermore, the conflicts in the eastern provinces have increased humanitarian needs for IDPs,⁷ as well as for host communities.⁸

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), described that ‘cycles of displacement are caused by the activities of a multiplicity of armed groups, deep-rooted inter-community tensions over issues of national identity, and access to and management of natural resources’.⁹ Furthermore, IDPs faced ‘serious human rights violations such as extrajudicial executions, enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrest and detention, torture, gender-based violence, restrictions on freedom of movement, recruitment of children by armed groups and attacks on basic social services’.¹⁰

¹ UNHCR, Democratic Republic of the Congo, n.d., [url](#)

² UNHCR, Democratic Republic of the Congo, n.d., [url](#); AI, Amnesty International Report 2023/24, The State of the World’s Human Rights: Democratic Republic of the Congo 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#)

³ IOM, Record High Displacement in DRC at Nearly 7 Million, 30 October 2023, [url](#)

⁴ AI, Amnesty International Report 2023/24, The State of the World’s Human Rights: Democratic Republic of the Congo 2023, 24 April 2024, [url](#); CFR, Global Conflict Tracker: Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 20 June 2024, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 31

⁵ CFR, Global Conflict Tracker: Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 20 June 2024, [url](#)

⁶ IDMC, M23 conflict caused nearly 3 out of every 4 displacements in the DRC this year, 23 September 2024, [url](#)

⁷ CFR, Global Conflict Tracker: Conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo, 20 June 2024, [url](#); USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 31

⁸ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 31

⁹ UNHCR, Democratic Republic of the Congo, n.d., [url](#)

¹⁰ UNHCR, Democratic Republic of the Congo, n.d., [url](#)

2. Treatment of Returnees and IDPs by the state and by society in Kinshasa, including persons who do not speak Lingala

Information on treatment of returnees and IDPs by the state and by society in Kinshasa, including persons who do not speak Lingala, was scarce among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this query. However, the following information may be relevant.

As of 30 November 2023, UNHCR reported that there are 17 539 IDPs and 4 218 returned IDPs in the city of Kinshasa.¹¹ The Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM),¹² a data resource of the International Organization for Migration (IOM), stated that the province of Kinshasa province hosts a total of 392 281 IDPs (6 % of the national total).¹³ The vast majority of IDPs were identified in the Maluku-I health zone (257 440 people, or 65 % of the province's IDP population) and Maluku-II (87 638 people, or 22 %).¹⁴ According to IOM, key informants indicated that IDPs were mainly fleeing ongoing intercommunal conflict in neighboring Mai-Ndombe province between members of the Teke and Yaka communities.¹⁵ The DTM also identified a total of 20 717 returnees in Kinshasa province, mainly in the Maluku II health zone (17 528).¹⁶

Concerning treatment of IDPs in the DRC, according to the 2023 country report by the United States Department of State (USDOS), the government 'assisted in the safe, voluntary return of former Congolese refugees, and facilitating immigration processing' and 'government authorities did not treat refugees differently from citizens'.¹⁷ USDOS added that the government was 'unable to consistently protect or assist IDPs adequately but generally allowed domestic and international humanitarian organizations to assist'.¹⁸ Further, the government was 'unable to consistently promote IDPs' safe, voluntary, and dignified return to their homes, or local integration in areas of displacement'.¹⁹

¹¹ UNHCR, Democratic Republic of the Congo; DRC At a Glance; Situation as of 31 December 2023, 3 February 2024, [url](#)

¹² Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) gathers and analyzes data to disseminate critical multi layered information on the mobility, vulnerabilities, and needs of displaced and mobile populations that enables decision makers and responders to provide these populations with better context specific assistance, IOM, DMT, About DTM, 31 January 2023, [url](#)

¹³ IOM, DTM, Suivi de mouvements de populations Aperçu National des Déplacements : République Démocratique du Congo, October 2023, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁴ IOM, DTM, Suivi de mouvements de populations Aperçu National des Déplacements : République Démocratique du Congo, October 2023, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁵ IOM, DTM, Suivi de mouvements de populations Aperçu National des Déplacements : République Démocratique du Congo, October 2023, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁶ IOM, DTM, Suivi de mouvements de populations Aperçu National des Déplacements : République Démocratique du Congo, October 2023, [url](#), p. 6

¹⁷ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 28-29

¹⁸ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 30

¹⁹ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 30

USDOS further described that ‘combatants and other civilians abused IDPs’, committing acts such as ‘killings, rape and sexual exploitation of women and children, abduction, forced conscription, looting, illegal taxation, and general harassment’.²⁰ Further, USDOS illustrated that ‘women and girls were particularly vulnerable to sexual violence’, and as of September 2023, humanitarian organizations ‘continued reporting high numbers of sexual violence and abuse cases among IDP populations’.²¹ UNHCR estimated that about 60 % of IDPs are children, over 50 % are women, between 2 % and 4 % are elderly and about 15 % are persons living with disabilities.²²

Concerning integration in Kinshasa, according to a 2022 report on socio-economic conditions in Kinshasa by the Danish Immigration Service (DIS), citing Professor of Sociology at the University of Kinshasa, José Bazonz, ‘it is often more difficult for people from the East of the DRC to settle and integrate in Kinshasa because they have little or no family on the city and often do not speak Lingala, the lingua franca, or even French’.²³ The source further affirmed that ‘it is easier for a person from the west to integrate because they can more easily find their way around when faced with problems of precariousness’.²⁴

Concerning treatment of returnees in the DRC, a September 2022 report by Cedoca, the COI research unit of the Belgian Commissioner General for Refugees and Stateless Persons (CGRS), illustrated that persons whose asylum claim has been rejected and who repatriated to the DRC no longer have problems upon arrival from the national authorities, according to external sources.²⁵

The same source, citing information from President Emmanuel Cole of the Bill Clinton Foundation for Peace, a human rights NGO based in Kinshasa and responsible for monitoring the arrivals of repatriated people at Kinshasa airport, specified that since the change of regime, there were no longer any cases of arrests by the National Intelligence Agency (ANR) of repatriated persons and there are no persons belonging to this category in Kinshasa's places of detention.²⁶ Contacted again by Cedoca on 30 August 2022, Emmanuel Cole stated that he did not have any new information on this subject.²⁷

Furthermore, the same source affirmed that there were no signs of mistreatment for returnees and no international report consulted by Cedoca regarding the human rights situation in the

²⁰ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 31

²¹ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 31

²² UNHCR, Democratic Republic of the Congo, n.d., [url](#)

²³ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 13

²⁴ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 47

²⁵ Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, République Démocratique du Congo : Le traitement réservé par les autorités nationales à leurs ressortissants de retour dans le pays, 27 September 2022, [url](#), p. 10

²⁶ Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, République Démocratique du Congo : Le traitement réservé par les autorités nationales à leurs ressortissants de retour dans le pays, 27 September 2022, [url](#), p. 10

²⁷ Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, République Démocratique du Congo : Le traitement réservé par les autorités nationales à leurs ressortissants de retour dans le pays, 27 September 2022, [url](#), p. 10

DRC in 2021 mentioned any potential issues encountered.²⁸ Corroborating information could not be found.

3. Access to employment

Information on access to employment for returnees and IDPs in Kinshasa could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this query. However, the following information may be relevant.

According to Professor José Bazonz cited in the 2022 Danish Immigration Services report, ‘at the community level, there is also another type of solidarity, namely the ‘mutuelles (English equivalent term; ‘mutuals’).²⁹ In Kinshasa, the mutuals assist persons in need and people coming from far away, and the source gave an example of a mutual society in Kinshasa that helped displaced young people from Kasai, following the Kamwina Nsapu conflict, through financial contributions.³⁰

Furthermore, the same source added that ‘the mutuals, members of the community of origin can mobilise to come to the aid of a member who lives in town and has resource problems and is in danger of dying’.³¹ Moreover, the mutual society plays ‘an important role in providing social assistance to members; they operate on the basis of regular or even occasional contributions from members’, and ‘there is a variety of support available to the member: from informal financial support to employment or job placement support’.³²

4. Access to housing

According to USDOS, ‘in most locations IDPs lived in poor conditions without adequate shelter or protection’.³³

Concerning housing in Kinshasa, according to Reuters in February 2024, 2 400 people were living in a makeshift camp outside Kinshasa displaced by the floods of January 2024, reported facing constraints and difficult living conditions.³⁴ In December 2023, Deutsche Welle (DW) reported that approximately 30 internally displaced families, who fled due to land conflicts in Mai-Ndombe province, had been living in difficult conditions at Kinshasa's Nzamu camp in Maluku since August 2022.³⁵ Similarly, another article by Radio France International (RFI),

²⁸ Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, République Démocratique du Congo : Le traitement réservé par les autorités nationales à leurs ressortissants de retour dans le pays, 27 September 2022, [url](#), p. 10

²⁹ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 48

³⁰ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 48

³¹ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 48

³² Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 48

³³ USDOS, 2023 Country Report on Human Rights Practices – Democratic Republic of the Congo, 23 April 2024, [url](#), p. 31

³⁴ Reuters, Thousands homeless after DR Congo's worst floods in sixty years, 16 February 2024, [url](#)

³⁵ DW, RDC : les déplacés de Kwamouth ne veulent pas être oubliés, 29 December 2023, [url](#)

described that IDPs in Maluku lived in ‘precarious’ conditions, were hosted in small crowded houses, and relied ‘on solidarity to obtain what they need to survive’.³⁶ RFI further reported that ‘thousands’ of refugees fleeing violence in Mai-Ndombe are fleeing to Kinshasa and being hosted by families or in churches.³⁷

Further information on access to housing could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this query.

5. Access to support/social services

Concerning returnees’ access to social services, a 2021 Cedoca report, citing Belgium’s Aliens Office, noted that there was no knowledge of any social support programmes for returnees.³⁸

The 2022 Danish Immigration Services report, quoting Professor José Bazonz, illustrated that ‘a person without a social network in Kinshasa will have serious difficulties in adapting and integrating’, and ‘the social assistance provided by the state does not function properly’.³⁹ Furthermore, the source described that ‘this is also true for people who come from far away to settle in the capital’ and ‘such a person first faces the problems of housing, then of work and afterwards the problem of resources’, as well as problems with food and access to healthcare in case of illness.⁴⁰ The source also stated that ‘in the DRC, the family and the church constitute or practically play the role of informal social security’.⁴¹

Further information on access to support/social services for returnees and IDPs in Kinshasa could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this query.

6. Access to healthcare

Information on access to healthcare for returnees and IDPs in Kinshasa could not be found among the sources consulted by the EUAA within the time constraints of this query. However, the following information may be relevant.

According to a November 2023 article by Care, a non-for-profit organisation focused on reducing poverty worldwide, conflicts in the DRC have ‘impeded access to healthcare for more than 8.9 million people, especially in remote and conflict-ridden areas, leading to limited

³⁶ RFI, RDC : Maluku, au nord de Kinshasa, le refuge des déplacés du Mai-Nombé, 13 December 2022, [url](#)

³⁷ RFI, RDC : les réfugiés fuyant les violences dans le Mai-Ndombe affluent à Kinshasa, 21 October 2022, [url](#)

³⁸ Belgium, Cedoca, COI Focus, Democratic Republic of the Congo: The treatment of their nationals returning to the country by the national authorities, 23 July 2021, [url](#), p. 12

³⁹ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 48

⁴⁰ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 48

⁴¹ Denmark, DIS, Country of Origin Information Report on Socioeconomic conditions in Kinshasa, October 2022, [url](#), p. 48



access to essential and life-saving medical services'.⁴² The same source noted that women, comprised of 50.6 %, and children comprised of 40.9 %, of those in need of medical aid.⁴³

⁴² Care, Health sector in DRC crumbles amidst conflict negatively impacting survivors of sexual assault, 14 November 2023, [url](#)

⁴³ Care, Health sector in DRC crumbles amidst conflict negatively impacting survivors of sexual assault, 14 November 2023, [url](#)

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