

PAPMUN2025



**UNITED
NATIONS HIGH
COMMISSIONER
FOR REFUGEES**

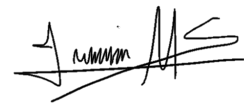
DEAR DELEGATES,

The Chair would like to officially welcome you to The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees committee. We are pleased and honored to be leading the delegations participating in this committee at the first edition of the Prepa Anáhuac Puebla Model United Nations (PAPMUN). As members of the chair our labor and main role is to provide corresponding guidance in the development of the exchange of proposals and ideas so that a meaningful discussion on our topic of interest can be achieved.

The mission of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is to protect and support refugees, internally displaced people (IDPs), stateless individuals, and asylum-seekers around the world. UNHCR's primary goals include ensuring the basic rights and dignity of displaced populations, providing them with critical aid, and facilitating sustainable solutions, such as voluntary repatriation, local integration, or resettlement in safe environments. Providing humanitarian assistance, advocating for global solidarity, and supporting durable solutions so that people can find a place to call "home", are just a few of the key objectives that the UNHCR committee takes into account during all sessions.

Finally, on behalf of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), we extend our deepest gratitude to all delegations for their commitment to this session. Your presence demonstrates an unwavering dedication to safeguarding the rights and dignity of refugees and displaced people worldwide. We recognize the tremendous effort each delegation has to make in preparing to address this critical issue and appreciate the diverse perspectives and solutions you'll bring to the table. Together, we have a unique opportunity to collaborate, innovate, and make a meaningful impact on the lives of millions in need. Thank you for your participation, your insights, and your compassion in advancing this mission.

Sincerely,



ISABELLA MIRANDA SOLANA

President of the committee

The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was established by the United Nations General Assembly December 14, 1950, for a three-year period to “assume the function of providing international protection [...] to refugees who fall within the scope of the present Statute and of seeking permanent solutions for the problem of refugees” (UNHCR, n.d.).

Their first goal was to help more than one million people, especially Europeans, who had fled or lost their homes due to the Second World War. It was successfully extended for five years until a General Assembly resolution in 2003 made the mandate permanent. According to the UNHCR (n.d.), “Refugees are people forced to flee their own country and seek safety in another country. They are unable to return to their own country because of feared persecution as a result of who they are, what they believe in or say, or because of armed conflict, violence or serious public disorder.”

Throughout its history, this agency has been awarded twice the Nobel Prize. In 1954 been the first United Nations agency to receive this distinction “for its efforts to heal the wounds of war by providing help and protection to refugees all over the world” (Nobel Prize, n.d.). As well in 1981 “for promoting the fundamental rights of refugees” (Nobel Prize, n.d.).

As we enter the next decade, the number of displaced individuals continues to grow, surpassing 100 million by the end of 2022. UNHCR is placing greater emphasis on empowering displaced and stateless populations and pursuing sustainable solutions for their challenges. Additionally, efforts are being directed toward addressing the impact of the escalating climate crisis on displacement. Our goal remains a world where every person forced to leave their home has the chance to create a brighter future.

SAFEGUARDING THE HUMAN RIGHTS OF 7 MILLION REFUGEES DISPLACED BY CONFLICT IN DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO.

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) crisis stems from a series of post-colonial battles for power, beginning when the country gained independence from Belgium in 1960. Main factors driving this conflict are poor governance, poor management of post colonial state building, conflict over land and natural resources (minerals such as coltan, gold, diamonds and cobalt), ethical tensions, political rivalries and corruption. "In 2022, insecurity in the DRC was exacerbated by a spike in violence in the eastern provinces of Ituri, North Kivu and South Kivu – internally displacing hundreds of thousands of people and claiming the lives of many more. More than 6.2 million people are displaced within the country and more than 1 million Congolese have sought asylum, mostly within Africa. At the same time, the DRC hosts more than half a million refugees from neighboring countries, three-quarters of whom live outside refugee camps and settlements." (UNHCR, 2023). Armed groups in DRC have thrived as a result of the Mobutu regime that ruled for 32 years. This regime was marked by weak governance and high levels of corruption. Lack of economic opportunities and development pushed many to join armed groups. According to the Global Centre for the Responsibility to Protect (1 September, 2024) "More than 120 militias and armed groups actively operate in Ituri, North Kivu, South Kivu and Tanganyika provinces, many of whom regularly perpetrate widespread violations and abuses against civilians that may amount to crimes against humanity and war crimes."

Consequently to the mentioned conflicts there are approximately 7 million refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) in the Democratic Republic of Congo, making it one of the largest displacement crises globally. The impact of this displacement crisis has resulted in physical, psychological, and economic consequences for the population that is being displaced, who find themselves without basic necessities, security, or hope for the future... During their journeys they face multiple challenges, that include high violence and barely escaping alive.

For the displaced population in the DRC, survival means living in overcrowded camps or makeshift settlements, where access to food, water, shelter, and healthcare is limited. And this lack of proper sanitation, combined with the absence of stable governance, leaves many vulnerable to disease outbreaks, malnutrition, and sexual violence. Women and children are particularly at risk, with reports of sexual abuse, forced recruitment, and trafficking being common among refugees. As these individuals are uprooted from their homes, they lose their livelihoods, identities, and connection to their communities, leading to long-term psychological trauma.

Humanitarian agencies and governments, along with the United Nations (UN) have been involved in the solution of the conflict, providing aid... However, the issue's seriousness requires a more serious, specific, and coordinated response. Refugees deserve protection that is grounded and based in the principles of the International Human Rights Law, this law will ensure the protection of their right to life, education and health care, and will protect the refugees involved from violation and exploitation.

On the other hand, while trying to find a stable and safe solution to the conflict, the global community faces challenges to fulfill the refugees' needs and balancing them with the political, social, and economic demands in the countries involved. Consequently, the United Nations (UN) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNCHR) are responsible to find sustainable solutions that focus on immediate relief and long-term peacebuilding efforts. This includes ensuring the right to return, the restoration of life sustenance, the protection of women and children, and the promotion of dialogue among conflicts.

HISTORY OF THE PROBLEM

While the problem of millions of refugees from the Congo has been reported for decades, the DRC's intern conflicts are deeply rooted in its colonial past, such as regional conflicts or economic exploitation, which have created an unstable environment that continues to displace millions of people.

1885 - 1908

In the late 19th century, the now known as the Democratic Republic of Congo, was under the commands of the King Leopold II (Belgium), and instead of being considered a colony ruled by Belgium it was established as a personal possession of the king, and during this period the Republic was in extreme exploitation by the king... Congolese people were suffering from forced labor, murder commitments, exploitation of natural resources, such as rubber and ivory, diseases and mutilations. "Later many academic research suggest that during Leopold II's rule and its immediate aftermath, Congo's population may have been reduced by as many as 10 million people." (Timeline: Democratic Republic Of Congo's Crisis At A Glance, 2024). In 1908, due to international pressure the Congo Free State was transferred to the Belgian government, becoming the "Belgian Congo." Although the new government tried to help the Congo, it was focused instead in extracting more of their natural resources in the benefit of Belgium.

1960 - 1961

The Democratic Republic of Congo was dependent on Belgium until 1960. Although the republic was part of Belgium's territory for over 50 years, the colonial authorities left the country unprepared for self-governance, creating artificial borders that grouped together numerous ethnic groups without regard for their distinct cultures and histories.

In May 1960 Patrice Lumumba was elected the Democratic Republic of Congo's first Prime Minister, however the transition subsequent to this independence was turbulent and disordered.

Patrice Lumumba attempted to promote national unity and reclaim control over the nation's resources; however, his government was quickly undermined by foreign interests, and "Cold War" politics. Lumumba was eventually

deposed and eliminated in 1961, a tragic event that plunged the country into a prolonged period of instability.

1965 – 1997

Years later the rise of Mobutu Sese Seko in 1965 brought relative stability by eliminating political rivals and consolidating authority, Mobutu also reduced internal power struggles within the government, giving the appearance of a more stable political environment, however it costed the authoritarian rule and rampant corruption. Mobutu's regime failed to build effective state institutions or address regional disparities, allowing ethnic tensions and grievances to decay. By the 1990s, the DRC was ill-equipped to handle the regional spillover of conflicts, particularly the aftermath of the Rwandan Genocide in 1994. The influx of Rwandan refugees in the same year, including genocidal militias, destabilized eastern DRC, sparking the First Congo War (1996–1997) and the removal of Mobutu.

1998 – 2003

Tensions between Kabila and his former allies (Rwanda and Uganda) escalated into a full-scale conflict, aside of these tensions' regional instability from Rwanda Genocide, resource exploitation and shifting political alliances, gave place to the subsequent Second Congo War (1998–2003), involving nine African nations and dozens of militias, and devastating the country. This war, often referred to as Africa's Great War, resulted was one of the deadliest conflicts in modern history, claiming an estimated 5.4 million lives, most due to disease and starvation. Although a peace agreement was signed in 2003, violence has persisted, particularly in resource-rich eastern regions, leaving millions of people displaced.

2003–2016

Armed conflicts involving various rebel groups plagued the DRC. In 2006, for the first time in 40 years DRC's free elections took place and Joseph Kabila was elected president.

2009 – 2013

In March 23, 2009 a peaceful agreement was established between the Congolese government and the National Congress for the Defense of the People. The accord aimed to integrate CNDP fighters into the national army (FARDC) and grant political positions to the leaders of the groups that caused violence in DRC.

The M23 rebel group, also known as the March 23 Movement, is a rebel faction that has significantly contributed to ongoing violence and instability in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). Its creation was in 2012 when approximately 300 soldiers, mostly former members of the National Congress for the Defense of the People (CNDP), rebelled against the DRC government. They accused the government of failing to uphold the terms of the 2009 peace agreement, which had integrated them into the Congolese army. M23 quickly gained notoriety for its ability to capture key towns and cities, including Goma, the capital of North Kivu province. Despite being defeated militarily in late 2013, the group remained a destabilizing force.

2017 – 2023

Since 2017, the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) has been plagued by violence from multiple armed groups, including, Allied Democratic Forces (ADF), Originally a Ugandan Islamist rebel group, the ADF has increasingly targeted civilians in the DRC, committing massacres and terrorist acts, often linked to the Islamic State. And Cooperative for the Development of Congo (CODECO), a militia largely composed of ethnic Lendu, CODECO has attacked Hema communities and clashed with Congolese forces, intensifying ethnic violence. Both groups, alongside others, have exploited the region's instability and natural resources, contributing to widespread human rights abuses, including killings, sexual violence, and the destruction of villages.

SUBTITLES

Lack of access to education, healthcare, and basic needs for refugees.

Conflict and displacement in the DRC have left over 900,000 children out of school, and more than 1,000 schools closed. Refugee children often lack access to formal education due to unsafe conditions, inadequate infrastructure, and limited resources. Those who do attend school often rely on temporary learning spaces with minimal resources. This education gap significantly blocks the long-term development of all displaced children, exposing them to increased risks of violence and exploitation. Efforts by organizations like UNICEF include establishing temporary schools and providing basic learning materials.

On the other hand, having access to healthcare is critically difficult, with displaced populations suffering from widespread disease outbreaks like cholera and measles. Poor sanitation in overcrowded refugee settlements exacerbates these health crises, leading to preventable demises. In 2023, over 42,000 suspected cholera cases and 282,000 measles cases were reported, affecting children.

Food, clean water, shelter, and basic necessities are in short supply. Refugees and internally displaced people often live in overcrowded settlements with deficient sanitation and limited access to clean drinking water. Food insecurity is also severe, with millions at risk of starvation due to the ongoing conflict, climate crises, and just a few agricultural activities. Humanitarian agencies provide emergency assistance; however, the scale of the crisis often overwhelms their capacity.

FUNDING GAPS FOR HUMANITARIAN RESPONSES.

Refugee crisis has imposed significant economic, social, and environmental pressures on the countries safeguarding the refugees, particularly in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, and Zambia bear substantial financial burdens as they strive to provide refugees with essential services, including food, shelter, healthcare, and education. Meanwhile, Uganda's Bidi Bidi refugee settlement, one of the largest in the world, has grown rapidly, damaging public resources and infrastructure.

The influx of refugees also exacerbates social tensions, as competition for jobs, land, and natural resources intensifies. In Rwanda and Burundi, this competition has led to localized disputes, further complicating refugee integration. Cultural and linguistic differences add another layer of complexity, occasionally resulting in fragmented communities.

Healthcare and education systems in host countries are often stretched beyond capacity. Disease outbreaks like cholera and malaria can overwhelm health services, while refugee-hosting regions see overcrowded schools that struggle to accommodate both local children and refugees. Limited funding for these critical sectors heightens the vulnerability of affected populations.

Additionally, refugee settlements contribute to environmental degradation. Large camps near forests, as seen in Tanzania and Zambia, lead to deforestation and the overuse of natural resources, as displaced populations rely on these for fuel and shelter. The strain on ecosystems adds to the challenges faced by host nations already managing limited environmental resources.

CURRENT SITUATION

The conflicts most threatening possibility is the regionalization and expansion of fighting in eastern Congo. In 2023 an offensive by the Rwanda-backed M23 armed group against government troops worsened the humanitarian situation in North Kivu, pushing the number refugees across the country, becoming the highest number of internally displaced people in Africa and the highest number of people in need in humanitarian aid in the entire world. In May 2023 communities in South Kivu experienced catastrophic flooding, worsening the dire situation. DRC's December 2023 elections sparked political tensions between neighboring Rwanda. Weak governance has paved the way for armed groups to operate, wide spreading violence and atrocities against civilians in Ituri and North Kivu provinces. Government forces have committed atrocities including serious abuses such as violating rights through martial law, killing dozens of civilians, repression against journalists, activists, government critics and peaceful protesters along with targeting leaders of opposition political parties. Displaced individuals seek for refugee camps, where resident communities endure unstable living conditions. The eastern provinces of North Kivu and Ituri have been particularly affected. Informal displacement sites have emerged around Goma, the capital of North Kivu, in eastern DRC. Goma's population was around 1.5 million but has received an additional 700,000 displaced people causing overwhelmed displacement camps, food prices rising and fear. It has become an increasingly militarized and dangerous place. For the past years DRC has experienced multiple Ebola outbreaks and an increase of cholera cases. In 2023 DRC was hit by an outbreak of cholera. More than 52,000 cases and 470 deaths were recorded. In 2024 there have been recorded 22,000 cases and 281 deaths between 1 January and 28 July. Chronic malnutrition causes people to recover from Ebola and cholera more difficultly, because these diseases worsen malnutrition. A total of 25.6 million people experienced crisis and emergency levels of food insecurity in 2023 and an estimated of 4.5 million children were acutely malnourished. Some of the main causes of acute malnutrition are low food quality, acute food insecurity, high levels of childhood illnesses, poor hygiene conditions, low access to drinking water and the negative effects of the security situation.

UN ACTIONS

1999

On November 30 the Security Council established the United Nations Organization Mission in the DRC (MONUC), following the signing of the Lusaka ceasefire agreement with five regional States. Later in a series of resolutions, its mandate was expanded for the supervision of the Implementation of the Ceasefire Agreement and multiple related additional tasks.

2006

The country's first free and fair elections were held on 30 July, hitting a milestone for the country's peace process, an opportunity for the consolidation of stability and the creation of the conditions for its development.

2010

On 1 July the Security Council renamed MONUC the United Nations Organization Stabilization Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUSCO). The new mission was authorized to use all necessary means (protection of civilians, humanitarian personnel and humanitarian rights defenders under imminent threat of physical violence and to support the government of the DRC in its stabilization and peace consolidation efforts).

2013

To address underlying causes of conflict and ensure that sustainable peace takes hold in the country and the region Peace, Security and Cooperation Framework for the DRC and the region was signed by representatives of 11 countries of the region in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia. On March 28 MONUSCO created a specialized intervention brigade to strengthen the peacekeeping operation. The brigade was initially set up for a period of one year and with the within in the authorized troop ceiling of 19,815. Consisted of three infantry battalions, one artillery and one special force and reconnaissance company

with the headquarters in Goma and operate under direct command of the MONUSCO Force Commander. They were responsible of neutralizing armed groups, with the objective of contributing to reducing the threat posed by armed groups and to make space for stabilization activities. It was also decided by the Council to extend the intervention brigade mandate beyond one year on the basis of its performance depending on the DRC had made sufficient progress in implementing the Peace and Security Framework for the region.

2014

On March 28 the Security Council extended the mandate of MONUSCO until 31 March 2015. The renewed mandate included MONUSCO's Intervention Brigade on an exceptional basis without creating a precedent or any prejudice. The Council opted to mission's further reconfigurations and mandates should be based on the evolving situation and progress towards several objectives and set with accordance to the priorities.

2015

On March 26 the Security Council extended the mandate of MONUSCO to 31 March 2016, including its intervention brigade. The Council reduced the mission force by 2,000 troops and expressed its intention to make that reduction permanent once significant progress had been achieved on the priorities of the mandate.

2017

On 31 March the Security Council extended to one year the mandate of the MONUSCO, called Kinshasa to quickly hold fair, free and credible elections and reduced the number of troops. On March 31 the Security Council in a resolution decided to keep the MONUSCO until 31 March 2018 and approved 16,215 military personnel, 660 military observers and staff officers, 391 police personnel, and 1,050 personnel of formed police units.

2018

The Security Council renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 31 March 2019. On 29 June the Security Council decided to renew until 1 July 2019 the MONUSCO's mandate. 30 October The Council adopted a resolution addressing the Ebola outbreak in DRC.

2019

On 29 March the MONUSCO mandate was renewed until 20 December 2020, prioritizing a strategic exit plan to transition responsibilities to national institutions. On 26 June the Security Council called the government of the DRC to reiterate the need to investigate the killing of two members of the Group of Experts and the four Congolese nationals accompanying them to bring those responsible to justice. On 19 December the Council decided to extend MONUSCO's mandate until December 20, 2020.

2020

On 25 June the Council acknowledges the continued presence of domestic and foreign armed groups in Eastern DRC, causing human rights abuses, illegal exploitation and trade of natural resources and calling all signatory States to fully implement their commitments per the Peace and Security for the DRC and the region. Decided to renew the mandate of the MONUSCO until 1 July 2021. 18 December the Council decided to extend the mandate of MONUSCO until 20 December 2021.

2021

On 29 June the Council renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 1 July 2022. 20 December the Council renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 20 December 2022.

2022

On 30 June the Council renewed MONUSCO's mandate until 1 July 2023 and renews DRC sanctions regime and the mandate of the group of Experts. On 20 December the Council recalls its previous resolutions and statements of its President concerning the DRC.

2023

On June 27 the Council decides to renew MONUSCO's mandate and the sanctions regime and the mandate of the groups of Experts until July 2024. On December 19 the Council extended MONUSCO's mandate until 20 December 2024.

2024

On 6 August a resolution authorized MONUSCO to provide logistical and operational support to SAMIDRC and requested the Secretary-General to report on the implementation of this resolution and SAMIDRC to report on its activities, including coordination with MONUSCO, by 15 November. Efforts by regional and international players to find a resolution to facilitate dialogue between the DRC and Rwanda led to the signing of ceasefire agreement on 30 July, resulting in ceasefire the period from 15 August to 30 September 2024. Although it was marked by attacks involving the M23 and government forces. Frequent accusations from both sides accusing each other of ceasefire accusations, provoking new displacement.

POSSIBLE SOLUTIONS

"The DRC is considered one of the world's forgotten crises due to its limited visibility and the global inaction it faces. Without an increase in humanitarian capacity and resources, the catastrophic situation in the DRC will continue to worsen." (IOM, 2024).

Local authorities, humanitarian, peacebuilding and development organizations must collaborate to provide displaced populations with basic services. Addressing the root causes of the conflict is essential to strengthen the response to move toward lasting solutions.

VII. COUNTRIES INVOLVED

UNHCR keeps leading the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRP) and made collaborations with Governments of Angola, Burundi, the Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda and over 100 humanitarian partners so that protection, assistance and solutions can be provided to refugees and their host communities. (UNHCR, 2025)



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