

2025

ANNUAL REPORT

DRC STANDBY ROSTER

DRC STANDBY
ROSTER
10 YEARS IN ACTION

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FOREWORD

During a year marked by profound changes and challenges in the humanitarian sector, the DRC Standby Roster continued its steadfast deployment support to UN partners and DRC operations in their efforts to address growing humanitarian needs. 2025 brought structural transition, including reform of the humanitarian system and major reductions in funding. This led to widespread staffing cuts across UN operations and reduced resources to respond to rising needs. At this difficult juncture, the reliable, rapid, and capable support of the DRC Standby Roster through deployments of skilled and experienced personnel was instrumental in sustaining existing relief efforts and responding to newly emerged crises.

Through four different deployment schemes and a turnover of more than 8 million USD, the DRC Standby Roster facilitated 163 deployments of experts in 2025, contributing with a wide variety of technical skills and backgrounds to the work of eight UN agencies and eight DRC operations in 49 countries. It is impossible to capture all achievements in a few words, but it is worth mentioning our deployees' roles in responding to some of the most critical emergencies during 2025. In Sudan, deployees supported scale-up of cash-based transfers to crisis-affected women, accelerated customs clearance of containers with emergency supplies, and negotiated access for humanitarian actors to operate safely and efficiently. Responding to the crisis in Gaza and the Occupied Palestinian Territory, deployees ensured well-functioning platforms and procedures for handling data on needs and activities as well as for safe movement of

humanitarian actors. And in the Democratic Republic of Congo and neighbouring countries, deployees played key roles in cluster coordination, fundraising for shelters, and protection of children displaced by the escalated conflict. Experts deployed to support UNHCR's global resettlement efforts worked tirelessly to help more than 4,600 refugees to secure resettlement in 2025. Unfortunately, the major reduction of the U.S. refugee resettlement quota and funding channeled to UNHCR led to a temporary suspension of the DRC Standby Roster's resettlement deployments effective from the start of 2026. We hope to see the Resettlement Roster reactivated in the coming years.

Despite the challenges of 2025, the DRC Standby Roster remained a trusted partner to eight UN agencies. This is a testament to the commitment of our roster members, who continue to deliver in demanding environments. None of this work would be possible without the dedication of our deployees, the strong collaboration with our partners, and the reliable and flexible support of our donors. Their collective efforts enable the DRC Standby Roster to contribute meaningfully to humanitarian response where it is needed most.



Maria Dyhr Zangenberg
Head of the DRC Standby Roster

DRC STANDBY ROSTER: WHAT WE DO

The Danish Refugee Council (DRC) Standby Roster works to enhance the capacity of United Nations (UN) partners and DRC operations to respond to humanitarian crises and displacement and as such enables faster and more effective support to people in need. This is achieved through the deployment of experts to UN and DRC operations across the world through four different deployment schemes.



HUMANITARIAN RESPONSE ROSTER

The Humanitarian Response Roster has been operating since 1991 and is comprised of around 500 highly qualified experts, representing more than 70 nationalities with a variety of technical profiles such as protection, shelter, information management, and coordination. Through deployment of these experts, the roster supports eight UN partners as well as DRC operations in both emergencies and protracted crises where their capacity is urgently needed.



RESETTLEMENT ROSTER

The UNHCR-DRC Resettlement Resettlement Roster enhances UNHCR's capacity to process resettlement cases, delivering protection and durable solutions to the world's most vulnerable refugees. Through this scheme, DRC deploys skilled and experienced experts in Resettlement, Refugee Status Determination, Best Interest Determination and Assessment, Child Protection, and Complementary Pathways to UNHCR operations globally.



REGISTRATION ROSTER

The UNHCR-DRC Registration Roster supports UNHCR's work within registration and identity management through deployments of experts that strengthen UNHCR operations' capacity to register and identify refugees, asylum seekers and other people of concern to facilitate access to assistance and protection.



GBV & CHILD PROTECTION SCHEME

The UNHCR-DRC GBV & Child Protection Scheme aims to enhance UNHCR's capacity to prevent and respond to gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection risks in both emergency and protracted settings. The deployments of roving experts support local programming, coordination, and capacity building, while reinforcing national protection systems.

THE YEAR IN REVIEW

An overview of activities that defined the year of 2025 for the DRC Standby Roster.

Deployment Response

The DRC Standby Roster facilitated 163 deployments of experts to 49 countries, aiding both UN and DRC operations.



Strategic Focus on Emergencies

Humanitarian Response Roster deployments addressed urgent needs and strongly focused on crises in Sudan, Gaza/oPt, and DR Congo.

Strengthening our Pool of Experts

Recruitment of 24 new roster members, primarily with technical expertise in climate change and renewable energy.



Comprehensive Training Initiatives

Online induction and technical training equipped roster members for effective deployment and support.

Standby Partnership Network

Strong engagement in the Standby Partnership Network, including joining the steering committee and working jointly to strengthen duty of care.

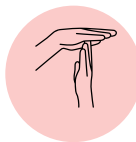


Monitoring Mission Insights

Monitoring missions to Uganda & Kenya, Thailand & Myanmar, and DR Congo assessed impact, deployee wellbeing, staff integration, and sustainability.

Pause of Resettlement Roster

Decision by UNHCR to pause DRC deployments supporting resettlement operations due to reduced funding and resettlement quota.



Deployments in 2025

Insights into the year of deployments across the four deployment schemes.

OVERVIEW



GENDER BALANCE

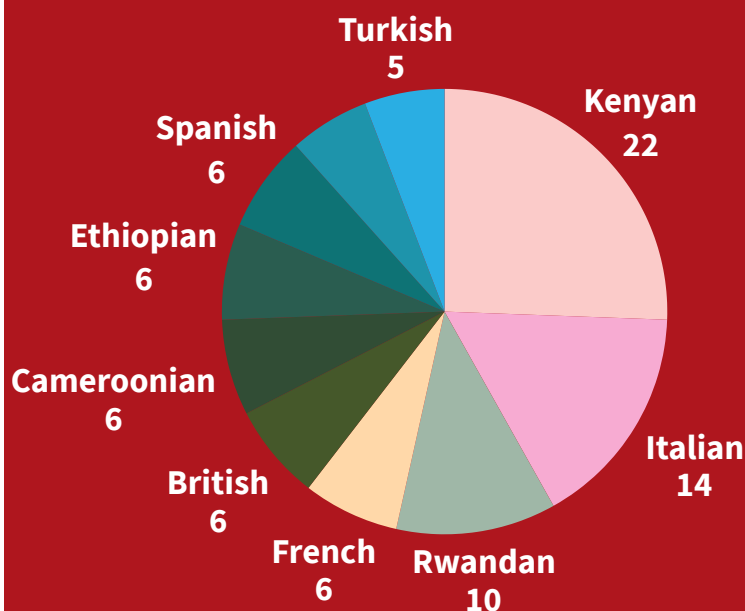


56% MALE
43% FEMALE
1% OTHER



52 NATIONALITIES
WERE DEPLOYED

TOP 10 NATIONALITIES OF DEPLOYEES IN 2025



It remains important for the DRC Standby Roster to maintain a culturally diverse pool of experts, to respond effectively and sensitively to global humanitarian needs.

FASTEST DEPLOYMENT

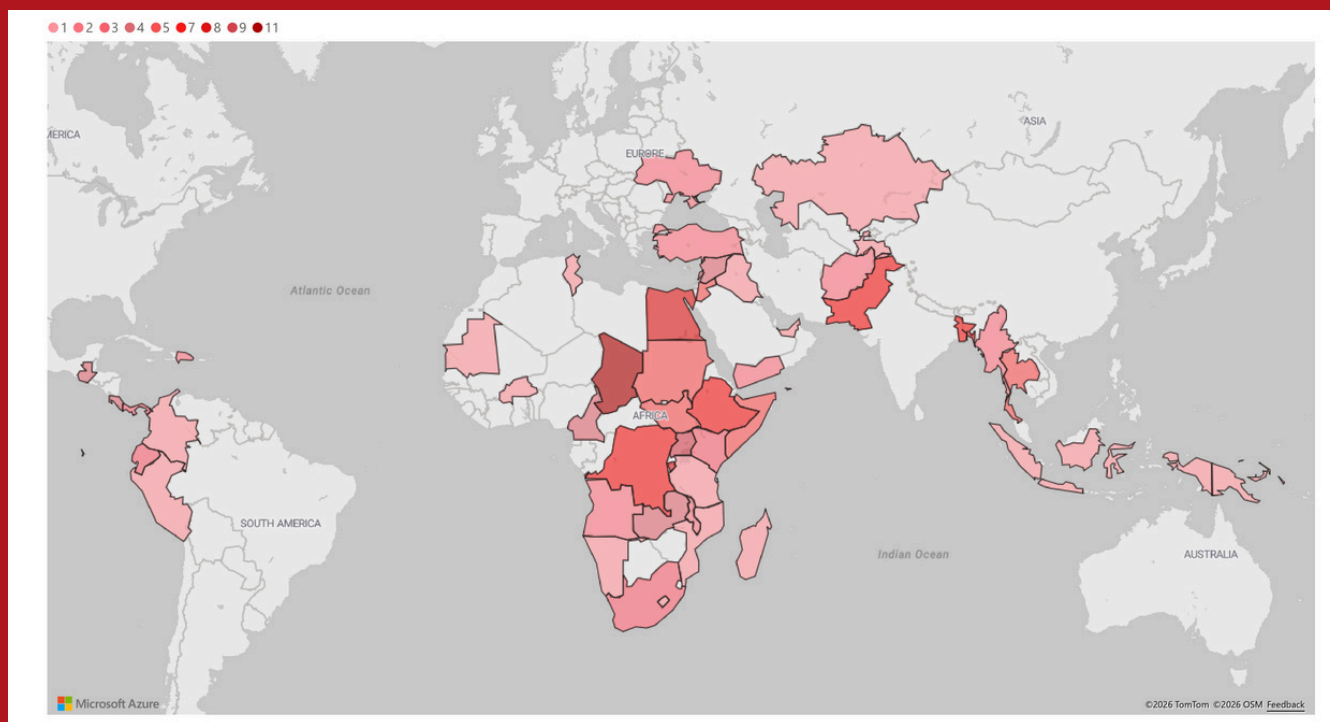
12
DAYS



The fastest deployment started in 2025 - from request received to arrival of the deployee at the duty station - was 12 days.

This was a deployment of a Child Protection Officer to UNHCR Burundi.

2025 DEPLOYMENTS BY COUNTRY



The countries where most experts were deployed to in 2025 were Chad (11 deployments), Uganda (9), Burundi (8), Bangladesh (7), DR Congo (7), Egypt (7), Ethiopia (7), and Pakistan (7).

TOP TECHNICAL PROFILES DEPLOYED*

-  **335** RESETTLEMENT
-  **69** REGISTRATION
-  **49** INFORMATION MANAGEMENT
-  **45** GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE

*In deployment months

The four deployment schemes deployed over 30 different profiles during the course of 2025. The most common are listed above.



371

NEW REQUESTS

The Humanitarian Response Roster received 371 requests for deployments from UN partners over the year.



4,600

REFUGEES

DRC Resettlement deployees helped more than 4,600 refugees to secure resettlement in 2025.

DEPLOYMENT MONTHS BY DONOR



492

UNHCR

214

DANIDA

78

WFP

38

FCDO

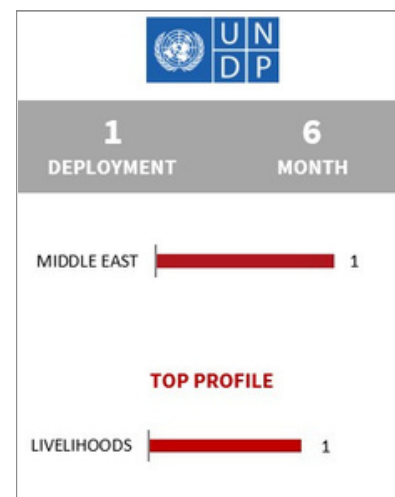
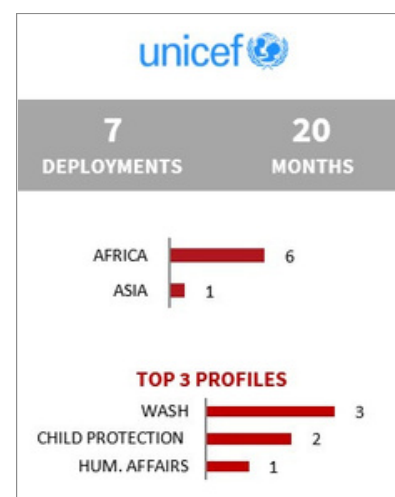
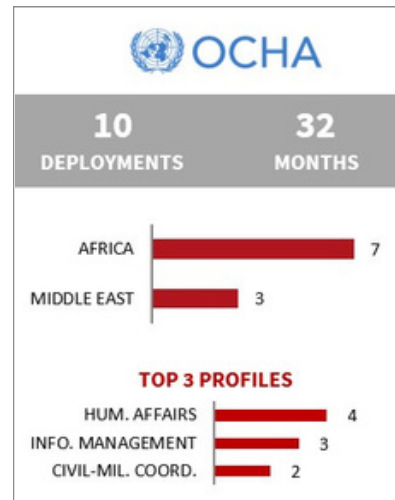
13

UNFPA

3

IOM

DEPLOYMENTS BY AGENCY AND PROFILE



RESPONSES IN THE SPOTLIGHT: SUDAN AND DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF CONGO

While facilitating deployments to a wide range of countries and crises in 2025, the DRC Standby Roster played a particularly significant role in strengthening UN partners' ability to respond to the deep and dire crises in Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.



Rahul Doddi, deployed by the DRC Standby Roster to UNHCR Sudan, meeting with a group of internally displaced persons from North Kordofan and South Kordofan, Sudan. Photo: Fadulelkareem Elahmer, Plan International

Sudan

The Sudanese civil war has led to what is being termed as the largest humanitarian emergency in the world. More than 30 million people need humanitarian assistance and over 15 million have been displaced. The risk of famine persists as nearly 19.5 million are facing acute food insecurity. Already when violence broke out in April 2023 between the Sudanese Armed Forces and the Rapid Support Forces, the DRC Standby Roster was present in several areas of Sudan. Since the onset of the crisis, the DRC Standby Roster has considered deployments to support relief operations in Sudan and neighbouring countries as high priority and therefore alloca-

ted a high level of donor funding to deployments aimed at strengthening humanitarian response efforts in and around Sudan. The level of priority remained unchanged in 2025 with five deployments supporting five different UN agencies' operations in Sudan as well as 11 deployments to UN and DRC operations in Chad – all to various extent responding to the massive influx of Sudanese refugees into Chad, now hosting around 1.3 million Sudanese refugees. The DRC Standby Roster also had five deployees working from different areas of South Sudan, all responding to needs spilling over from the conflict and displacement in Sudan.

The deployments to Sudan delivered significant results in a complex context and challenging work environment, including: development of framework to analyse food security and livelihoods; strengthening cash transfer interventions and supporting scale-up to reach more women in River Nile State; and accelerating the mobilisation of emergency supplies to affected areas across the country, including playing a key role in clearance of more than 60 containers with emergency supplies from the port in Port Sudan.

Two of the deployments to Sudan that were active in 2025 are still active as of June 2026. Shojaat Ali started his deployment as Access Officer with OCHA in September 2025, working to coordinate and facilitate access for humanitarian actors to operate safely and effectively in Northern, River Nile, Khartoum and Aj Jazirah States. After a lengthy visa process, Shojaat Ali arrived in Sudan in the beginning of November and spent the initial phase of the deployment on building working relationships and familiarizing key government counterparts with humanitarian principles and the Joint Operating Principles for Sudan to facilitate humanitarian access and operations.

“This was essential because effective engagement with authorities was the foundation for securing staff movement, logistics, and access, enabling timely humanitarian assistance to reach displaced and vulnerable populations,” Shojaat Ali said.

Rahul Doddi was deployed to UNHCR in Sudan as Regional Shelter & Non-Food Items (NFI) Cluster Coordination Officer in December 2025. Covering the vast area of five Darfur states and three Kordofan states, Rahul Doddi has worked to strengthen the leadership of the cluster at a regional level as well as the coordination of shelter, NFI and site management response. He has also supported local partners to install emergency tents and improvised shelters.

Position	Duty station	Receiving agency
Cash & Voucher Expert	Port Sudan	UNICEF
Logistician	Port Sudan	UNFPA
Information Management Officer	Port Sudan/Gaziantep	WFP
Access Officer	Khartoum	OCHA
Reg. Shelter & NFI Cluster Coord. Officer	Tawila	UNHCR

DRC Standby Roster deployments to Sudan in 2025.

“Local partners are the backbone of the response. Supporting new partners, including women-led organisations, with the right techniques for installing emergency family tents is essential. In regions affected by harsh weather conditions, including severe heat, heavy rains and winds, this ensures the safety, security and dignified living conditions of displaced people,” Rahul Doddi said.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) was already at the start of 2025 faced with a complex and protracted humanitarian crisis, marked by multiple armed conflicts, recurring epidemics, and natural disasters exacerbated by climate change. 21.2 million people needed humanitarian assistance – among the highest levels of needs in the world, and more than 6 million people were internally displaced, while 1.1 million Congolese refugees were hosted in neighbouring countries. The decades-long conflict in eastern DR Congo rapidly escalated in January 2025 with intensified clashes between Congolese security forces and militant groups led by M23, culminating in M23’s capture of Goma. This deepened the already severe cri-

sis and forced hundreds of thousands to flee, many of whom sought safety in neighbouring countries, including Burundi and Uganda.

The DRC Standby Roster has been present in DR Congo for many years, supporting UN partners in their response to the protracted humanitarian crisis. In 2025, six deployments across three of the DRC Standby Roster's deployment schemes were active in different areas DR Congo. Eight experts were deployed to Burundi in 2025 and nine to Uganda – most of them involved in response to the influx of refugees from DR Congo.

Position	Duty station	Receiving agency
Data Management Associate	Aru	UNHCR
CCCM Cluster Coordination Officer	Bunia	UNHCR
Shelter Officer	Bukavu	UNHCR
Integrity Expert	Kinshasa	UNHCR
Information Management Officer	Goma	WFP
Logistics Officer	Kinshasa	WFP

DRC Standby Roster deployments to DR Congo in 2025.

Supporting operations of six different UN agencies, the deployments to DR Congo, Burundi and Uganda made a significant and diverse impact with achievements including: interviews and case assessments for third country resettlement of Congolese refugees; organising camp councils to improve conditions for IDPs in camps in eastern DR Congo; assessment of logistics needs as well as coordination of the Logistics Cluster; and establishing selection criteria for targeting 575 households in South Kivu with cash-for-shelter

assistance and 500 with shelter kits as well as supervising construction of 465 transitional shelters and securing substantial funding for shelter infrastructure improvements.



Sabine Nana (left) and colleagues by the Rusizi River which is crossed by many Congolese refugees seeking protection in Burundi. Photo: UNHCR/Tom Monboe

Six of the deployments addressed either child protection or prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV) and targeted Congolese refugees arriving in Burundi and Uganda. Two of these supported UNHCR's operations in southwestern Uganda, particularly affected by the refugee influx. One updated standard operating procedures for identification and assessment of children at risk and facilitated trainings on core child protection elements for UNHCR staff and partners.

The other focused on localization of the GBV response and prevention efforts and worked on mapping women-led and refugee-led organizations to bring these actors closer to decision-making and GBV programming. In Burundi, one of the DRC Standby Roster deployees, Sabine Nana, co-led the GBV Inter-Agency Task Force and trained hundreds of people, including refugees and host community members, on safe disclosure of GBV cases, referral pathways, PSEA and GBV prevention. You can read more about this deployment on the next page of this report.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

TACKLING GENDER-BASED VIOLENCE DURING CONGOLESE REFUGEE INFLUX TO BURUNDI

As the influx of refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo into Burundi grew significantly in 2025, so too did the risk of gender-based violence. Upon request from UNHCR, the DRC Standby Roster therefore deployed Sabine Nana as GBV Officer to their operation in Rutana, Burundi in April 2025.



Sabine Nana (middle) and colleagues visiting Rugombo Stadium a few kilometres from the border to DR Congo. The stadium hosts thousands of Congolese refugees awaiting relocation to designated refugee sites. Photo: UNHCR/Tom Monboe

Thousands of refugees have fled violence in the Democratic Republic of Congo and crossed into Burundi since the beginning of 2025. To meet urgent needs for gender-based violence response and prevention, Sabine Nana was deployed to support UNHCR's operation in Rutana. The first months of the deployment were full of challenges, achievements, and opportunities to draw on recent deployment experience.

How is the current humanitarian situation?

“Since January 2025, Burundi has received around 70,000 individuals fleeing the conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo. About 25% of these refugees are located in Rutana, specifically

in the Musenyi refugee site. Among them, 51% are women and girls, many of whom are extremely vulnerable,” Sabine said. She explained that women often arrive carrying children, luggage, and the trauma of displacement: “Some are living with chronic illnesses like HIV, and many were unable to access treatment during their journey. This has left them physically and emotionally weakened.” Sabine also highlighted the prevalence of sexual violence: “Many survivors reported being raped in their country of origin and during their flight. Some of them became pregnant as a result. The perpetrators were mostly unknown to them and often identified as military personnel.”

What are the main challenges you've encountered in working with GBV in Burundi?

Sabine: "One of the biggest challenges is the legal restriction on abortion, even in cases of rape. Survivors have to carry pregnancies to term, which leads to stigma and emotional trauma. We've advocated with health facilities and authorities, but the law is very clear."

Another challenge, she mentions, is the shortage of dignity kits: "We receive very few, and they're not enough to meet the needs. Sometimes, the kits don't even contain appropriate items. We conducted a post-distribution monitoring survey, and the feedback was clear: the contents need to be revised to reflect the needs and dignity of the women."

How have you contributed to strengthening GBV coordination mechanisms in Burundi?

Sabine: "I co-lead the GBV Inter-Agency Task Force with UNFPA and government intuitions. We also hold regular case management conferences where we bring together all GBV case managers and other sectors to discuss complex cases and find solutions collaboratively. We've trained around 200 people, including refugees and host community members, on safe disclosure of GBV cases, referral pathways, PSEA and GBV prevention."

How have you engaged local authorities and communities?

Sabine: "We involve both host and refugee communities in our activities, for example during training sessions. We also involve them in events such as international days of celebration and service provision. This helps foster peaceful coexistence and mutual understanding. The relationship between the host community and refugees is peaceful. We try to support this by including both groups in distributions and awareness campaigns."

What lessons from your previous deployment to Chad have you been able to apply?

Sabine: "One of the most impactful lessons I brought from Chad is the importance of women-led organizations in GBV prevention. In Chad, these groups were deeply embedded in the community and played a central role in outreach, survivor support, and awareness-raising. They were trusted voices, and their presence made our interventions more sustainable and culturally grounded. Here in Burundi, we are actively working to identify potential women-led organisations within the refugee community and mixed ones. It's not easy—many of these communities are still in flux, and formal structures are limited—but I believe that empowering local women to lead is essential for long-term impact."

What are your top priorities for further strengthening GBV prevention and response?

Sabine: "It is to bring local government authorities into the fold. Right now, their presence in GBV prevention and response is minimal. There's no dedicated staff focusing on GBV issues which would lend legitimacy to our efforts and encourage broader community participation. Another critical area is improving access to services for survivors, especially in a way that respects their dignity and privacy. We're very cautious not to expose survivors or create situations where they might be stigmatized. To address this, we're exploring community-wide awareness campaigns that don't single out survivors but instead promote general knowledge about GBV, available services, and how to seek help safely."

RECRUITMENT AND CAPACITY BUILDING

In 2025, the DRC Standby Roster continued to strengthen its pool of experts through targeted recruitment, structured onboarding, and selected capacity-building initiatives. These efforts ensured that roster members remain well prepared for deployment and able to respond to evolving humanitarian needs.

To maintain a strong and relevant pool of experts, the DRC Standby Roster continued its targeted recruitment efforts throughout 2025. Ensuring timely deployment of qualified professionals remains at the core of the roster's mandate. In line with evolving humanitarian needs and partner requirements, it is essential to continuously strengthen the roster with experts who possess the right skills and experience and are available for immediate deployment. Recruitment follows a thorough selection process, including screening, interviews, reference check, and tests, to ensure well-qualified candidates with abilities to make

immediate impact are awarded a roster membership. Recruitment efforts in 2025 attracted a large number of applicants, resulting in the onboarding of 24 new roster members. The new members primarily bring expertise in climate change, environmental issues, and renewable energy, reflecting a growing number of deployment requests from UN partners in these areas. Among the newly recruited experts, 42% were women, and approximately two-thirds were from the Global South. Notably, four of the new members were already deployed during 2025. Additionally, a few roster members were recruited for immediate deployment.

Roster members and top technical profiles

The DRC Standby Roster currently has a total of **1,035 active members** on its four different deployment schemes:

- Humanitarian Response Roster: 496 members
- Resettlement Roster: 494 members
- Registration Roster: 74 members
- GBV & Child Protection Deployment Scheme: 24 members

Each roster member has at least one core technical profile assigned to their membership. The top 10 of technical profiles across the four deployment schemes are:

1. Resettlement
2. Protection
3. Registration
4. Gender-Based Violence
5. Child Protection
6. Programme Management
7. Best Interests Determination
8. Humanitarian Affairs
9. Logistics
10. Information Management

Training and capacity building remained a core component of the services provided by the DRC Standby Roster. These efforts aim both to ensure that roster members are well prepared for deployment and to support their professional development in line with evolving trends in the humanitarian sector.

Onboarding roster members

In September 2025, the DRC Standby Roster hosted an online induction training, bringing together 21 participants from across all rosters and schemes – Humanitarian Response, Resettlement, Registration & Identity Management, and the GBV & Child Protection scheme. This diverse group of members joined from 18 countries and represented a wide range of technical areas, including climate change and renewable energy, protection, resettlement, WASH, and logistics.

Over three days, participants were introduced to the core values and operational structure of DRC, explored the practicalities of deployment, and engaged in sessions on safety, safeguarding, humanitarian principles, protection, and stress management. One of the highlights of the training was the opportunity to meet UN focal points. These sessions offered valuable insights into how deployment requests are initiated, coordinated with field offices, and managed across different UN agencies. Participants evaluated the training very positively, with many appreciating the balance between structured learning and open dialogue.

Training opportunities through UN partners

Three trainings hosted by various UN agencies were offered to roster members. One member, Dominic David Maliro, with expertise in shelter and site planning was successful in being selected for a training – the Settlement Planning Technical Training, organised by the International Organization for Migration (IOM). Dominic David Maliro's participation was partly funded by the DRC Standby Roster. Towards the end of the training, we asked Dominic David Maliro to share his reflections on the training:



Dominic David Maliro during the IOM training module in Geneva, Switzerland, September 2025. Photo: Private

"I am extremely grateful for the opportunity afforded through my DRC roster membership to participate in the IOM-facilitated humanitarian settlement planning training. It has been a transformative experience. I am now better equipped to support coordinated, inclusive, and sustainable settlement planning efforts, ensuring that the needs of displaced and vulnerable populations are met effectively. I look forward to applying these skills in future deployments and sharing best practices with colleagues," Dominic David Maliro said.

Strengthening debriefing skills

To strengthen the DRC Standby Roster's debriefing skills, three deployment focal points completed the comprehensive Operational Debriefing Training organised by The Humanitarian in 2025. The training equips participants with the skills to facilitate structured debriefings for humanitarian personnel following deployments and covers areas such as preparing and leading debriefings, active listening, managing sensitive discussions, and translating lessons learned into organisational improvement. Five DRC Standby Roster staff members have now completed the Operational Debriefing Training.

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

EXPANDING CASH ASSISTANCE IN SYRIA AMIDST HISTORICAL CHANGE

During a time of political change in Syria and return of millions of displaced people, Meron Dori was deployed in May 2025 by the DRC Standby Roster as Cash-Based Transfers Expert to WFP in Damascus to support the digitalization of cash assistance and manage quality assurance of the operation's work.

Why did you apply for this deployment?

Meron: "First, I wanted to get closer to WFP's country programmes and get an insight on how cash-based transfer programming (CBT) is designed and delivered. Secondly, my previous experience as a consultant with UNICEF's cross-border mission for North West Syria (NWS), coupled with my consultancy assignment at WFP HQs – one being supporting the NWS nutrition cluster in reviewing their operational guidance on CBT, had already familiarized me with the context. This deployment presented an opportunity to bring my knowledge and experience into play. Finally, the momentum in Syria, the political change and optimism, also motivated me to go and be part of pushing for a long-needed positive change for the people living here."

What is it like to be in Damascus?

Meron: "Syria is rich in culture, and Damascus is a beautiful city, believed to be the oldest continuously inhabited capital in the world. The people here are friendly and generous, making you feel welcome quite quickly. However, the situation here is fluid – security, economy, and social stability can shift, making both work and daily life challenging. Plans can change suddenly due to advisories or restrictions, necessitating constant vigilance. Despite these dynamics, I really enjoy being here – it's a chance to trade strategic planning at HQ level for operations in the field, where our efforts are supposed to make a difference for the people we serve."



Meron Dori, deployed as Cash-Based Transfers Expert to WFP's operation in Damascus, Syria. Photo: WFP/Ghazwan Jabasini

How is it for you to witness such a historical change as the one unfolding in Syria?

Meron: "I have worked in parts of Syria previously, so I have been following the situation and the political change very closely. So, it's very interesting for me to be in Damascus right now in the middle of this historical event. I get to witness the change first-hand when I am walking through the street or shopping at the market – I see hints of resilience and adaptation in how people go about their daily lives. However, while I do sense optimism, I sense the fatigue too. It's evident in people's expressions and conversations, reflecting the toll of enduring years of uncertainties, economic struggles and disruptions to normal life, all leaving their mark."

You came to Syria only a few months after the regime change, and over 2 million people have returned since November 2024. How have you experienced this massive return during your time in the country?

Meron: “While people are returning to Syria, it’s not like I am seeing waves of people arriving in Damascus. Operationally, we are seeing an increased level of need and interventions.

Proper registration, verification and targeting are key to channeling resources to those with the most pressing humanitarian and reintegration needs. Durable solutions require improving services, rebuilding livelihoods and resilience.

Operating in a previously divided country means adapting to new coordination dynamics, joint efforts and harmonization of approaches – a process that is gradually unfolding, reflecting the evolving context.”

In brief, what is the rationale behind cash-based transfers as humanitarian assistance?

Meron: “Cash-based transfer (CBT) programming empowers people by giving them the choice and dignity to decide on how to spend assistance based on their preferences. CBT is usually implemented where it offers a comparative advantage in meeting humanitarian needs allowing people to buy what they truly need, covering cost of multiple items and services. The cash injected could also have a multiplier effect in stimulating the local markets. At the same time, receiving cash-based assistance can also improve financial literacy, encourage engagement with formal financial institutions, and promote the culture of saving and investing. Having said this, it is important to note that cash alone will not bring a desired change. It would often be supplemented by behavioral change activities like trainings and others to ensure a long-lasting impact on the lives and livelihoods of the people we serve.”

What are the current top priorities of the WFP country operation?

Meron: “The current CBT operation’s priorities center on expanding cash assistance and promoting digital payment mechanisms. In addition to the ongoing e-voucher based food assistances, the country office is launching a cash over the counter payment solution, allowing targeted households to receive cash from contracted financial service providers (FSPs). However, challenges such lack of liquidity, underdeveloped financial infrastructure, and limited capacity of financial service providers (FSPs) require innovative solutions. To address these challenges, we are exploring digital payment mechanisms aimed at increasing access to digital payment services and enhancing the overall financial service landscape, in collaboration with like-minded stakeholders. My role supports implementation of these interventions focusing on quality assurance, including the design of risk analysis, and to provide support in securing capable FSPs tailored to diverse operational contexts.”

What did you learn from this deployment that will be useful for you in future work?

Meron: “When I was working at HQ level, I had the opportunity to engage on strategic discussions on nutrition sensitive cash assistance linked to social protection and anticipatory action. Seeing some of the elements actualize through food assistance, nutrition and resilience initiatives on the ground fosters a meaningful connection for me. Engaging with others such as the cash working group drives a joint effort to find solutions to common challenges in Syria – challenges on liquidity, financial infrastructure and regulatory issues are better dealt collectively.

Additionally, the WFP team’s eagerness for innovation is promising, paves a way for learning by doing and enriching our CBT approaches.”

MONITORING MISSIONS: TRACKING IMPACT, CHALLENGES AND WELL-BEING

The DRC Standby Roster conducted three monitoring missions in 2025 to Uganda & Kenya, Thailand, and the Democratic Republic of Congo. They provided an opportunity to engage with deployees and partners, assess effectiveness, and capture key lessons to strengthen future operations.

In 2025, the DRC Standby Roster continued to conduct monitoring missions as a core component of the roster's approach to quality assurance, project evaluation and learning. These missions serve a dual purpose: to assess how deployments contribute to UN operations and humanitarian response efforts, and to ensure the well-being and professional support of deployed experts. Through in-person and remote engagements with deployees, supervisors, and key stakeholders, the missions provide critical insights into the effectiveness, relevance, and sustainability of standby deployments, while also identifying areas for improvement in deployment processes and support structures.

During 2025, monitoring missions were conducted in key humanitarian contexts across Africa and Asia. In February 2025, a mission to Uganda and Kenya enabled engagement with deployments to those two countries as well as to Somalia, Sudan, and Yemen. In June 2025, monitoring took place in Thailand and had a primary focus on deployments responding to displacement due to the crisis in Myanmar. Finally, in November 2025, a mission to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DR Congo) provided insight into one of the world's most complex and protracted crises.

Across all locations, several key findings emerged. DRC Standby Roster deployees continue to play a critical role in addressing capacity gaps and supporting priority functions within UN operations. At the same time, signifi-



Field visit to Mae Sot on the Thai-Myanmar border during a monitoring mission in June 2025. Photo: Nabin Thapaliya

cant funding constraints have increased pressure on humanitarian actors, often requiring deployees to take on broader and evolving responsibilities. While overall deployment experiences were positive, challenges related to workload, onboarding, and well-being remain important areas for continued attention and support.

Uganda & Kenya

The monitoring mission to Kampala and Nairobi enabled interviews with nine deployees across UN operations in Kampala, Nairobi, Mogadishu, and Aden, as well as relevant supervisors and staff. The DRC Standby Roster was highly regarded by receiving operations, with deployees praised for their technical expertise, adaptability, and ability to take on high-priority tasks such as strategic reviews, fundraising, response plan rollout, and coordination. Demand for deployments remained high, driven by ongoing crises in the region and significant impacts of US funding cuts, while resettlement

operations in Uganda were also impacted by the suspension of the US Refugee Admissions Programme (USRAP).

Thailand & Myanmar

The monitoring mission to Bangkok and Mae Sot, including remote monitoring of a deployment to Yangon, provided insight into elements such as compliance, well-being and performance of four deployments to various UNHCR operations and enhanced the DRC Standby Roster's understanding of the humanitarian contexts, in particular with regards to the humanitarian crisis in Myanmar, displacement into Thailand, and the situation in the border area between the two countries.



Following the work of two deployed Child Protection Experts working for UNHCR in Mae Sot.

All four deployees were interviewed, and so were relevant supervisors and staff. The monitoring mission underscored that standby partners play a critical role in strengthening the regional response, and it pointed towards significant challenges such as protracted encampment, statelessness, limited access to undocumented refugees, and staffing cuts due to reduced funding.

Democratic Republic of Congo

The monitoring mission to Kinshasa aimed to assess the effectiveness of deployments in a complex context characterised by massive humanitarian needs and focused on evaluating

deployees' integration, performance, and well-being. A total of five deployees across UNHCR and WFP operations were interviewed, alongside supervisors and key operational staff.

The findings from the monitoring mission confirmed that deployees played a critical role in sustaining operations amid significant funding cuts, staff reductions, and increasing operational demands. Deployees were generally well integrated at the operations and highly valued by their teams. At the same time, challenges related to onboarding, evolving terms of reference, and heavy workloads were identified across deployments, highlighting the need for continued support and adaptation.



Meeting with Derboise Ngo Hongla (left), deployed as Integrity Expert to UNHCR in Kinshasa. Photo: DRC

Lessons learned

Among the key lessons learned and action points identified across the missions were:

- Continue **targeted recruitment** in priority areas such as climate and localisation
- Strengthen **onboarding and support** and prepare deployees for dynamic roles
- Raise **standby mechanism awareness** jointly with partners among UN operations
- Consider increased **financial support flexibility** for starting up deployments
- Align with UN partners to **clarify roles**
- Ensure **transparency on entitlements** and clear communication on this to all involved

STORIES FROM THE FIELD

“THE SUFFERING IN SUDAN IS HEARTBREAKING”

The humanitarian needs in Sudan caused by the war are immense, says Massimo Marghinotti. He was deployed as a Logistician by the DRC Standby Roster to UNFPA in Port Sudan to ensure proper handling and coordination of relief supplies for the women and girls most affected by the war. Not without bumps on the road, the experienced deployee admits, but worth it all the way.



Massimo Marghinotti was deployed to UNFPA in Port Sudan from September 2024 to March 2025. Photo: UNFPA Sudan

The war in Sudan has caused the world’s current largest humanitarian crisis with millions forced to flee their homes. How would you describe the situation on the ground?

Massimo: “The situation in Sudan is quite intense and tragic. The fighting has spread across various regions, and civilians are caught in the crossfire. We see how bombings and fighting and targeting of civilians lead to severe displacement and famine. Millions have fled their homes, and they literally have nothing. No shelter, no water, no access to food or basic health. I have been working in this field for more than 25 years and seen a lot, but this humanitarian crisis is severe, and the suffering in Sudan is heartbreaking.”

Your role in the response to this severe crisis is within logistics and supply chain. Could you describe your main tasks?

Massimo: “I am providing logistical and technical support to UNFPA’s sexual and reproductive health (SRH) and gender-based violence (GBV) programs. For example, I am involved in customs clearance of containers and have been working to secure clearance of several containers with SRH kits and medical items. I am also coordinating warehousing, making sure that we have the necessary storage in place for all the supplies to be distributed. Some items need to be kept between 15 and 25°C, and that can be a challenge in a country like Sudan with high temperatures and big distances to cover.”

What has been your biggest achievement during this deployment?

Massimo: “Shortly after my arrival, I played a key role in the clearance of more than 60 containers with UNFPA supplies from the port here. This happened after close coordination with colleagues in UNFPA’s Supply Chain unit in Copenhagen, and I am proud of how we managed to get things moving quite fast together. Another great achievement was the coordination of a convoy to Khartoum.

This happened over Christmas, and Khartoum had been inaccessible for over a year. We were informed about the planned convoy only one week ahead of departure and worked fast to coordinate UNFPA’s involvement. In short time, we managed to have medical items added to the convoy for distribution.”

What sort of challenges have you faced?

Massimo: “Quite a few, to be honest. First of all, there is a civil war going on, which means that our access to people of concern is very uncertain. We once dispatched a truck with medical supplies along with a convoy, but due to fighting, the convoy had to stop in a town on the way for two weeks, and in the end, we had to bring back the supplies. The fighting has also severely damaged the infrastructure which was already poor. Sudan is a vast country, almost 2 million square kilometers, and paved roads are scarce. This makes transportation of supplies both difficult and very expensive. It also means that we might be reluctant to preposition supplies across the country, so when needs occur somewhere, we have to send most supplies all the way from Port Sudan instead of having the supplies ready for dispatch and distribution in a nearby storage unit. Despite the challenging circumstances, we strive to deliver essential supplies to those in need.

Which lessons learned do you bring with you?

Massimo: “This is not the first time for me to work in Sudan. I was here for three years between 2005 and 2007 and gained a deep understanding back then of the Sudanese culture. My current deployment has been a great opportunity for me to develop my interpersonal and coordination skills as my work has involved close coordination with many colleagues and partners to get things moving.”

It has obviously been a deployment full of challenges. Has it been worth it?

Massimo: “Absolutely. Every deployment enriches you as a person and as a professional. My goal is to help and support people in need, and I feel that we have indeed accomplished this and helped many people during my past six months here. I am grateful I had the chance to bring my skills and experience for the wellbeing of the affected population.”

Massimo Marghinotti's deployment to UNFPA Sudan ended in March 2025. The interview was published in March 2025.



Among Massimo Marghinotti's greatest achievements during his Sudan deployment was the customs clearance of a high number of containers, so UNFPA emergency supplies could be distributed to the people in need. Photo: UNFPA Sudan

THANK YOU

A special thanks to our Members, Donors and Partners.

Over the past 35 years, the DRC Standby Roster has deployed thousands of experts and specialists to UN's humanitarian relief operations and DRC country operations all over the world. However, this would not have been possible without our excellent, loyal and committed members. Currently, the DRC Standby Roster has over 1,000 members across four deployment schemes with a broad variety of profiles and professional backgrounds who make a difference for per-

sons in need every single day. We could not support this vital work without our committed donors, of which a special thank goes to the Danish Ministry of Foreign Affairs, who has supported the DRC Standby Roster since the beginning in 1991. Lastly a warm felt appreciation to the UN agencies, DRC country operations, and the range of partners who have all contributed and played a key role in the work and achievements of the DRC Standby Roster in 2025.



DRC STANDBY ROSTER TEAM

Please meet the DRC Standby Roster staff who worked in the team during 2025.



Kristine Østensen
Head of HR Operations, Analytics & Surge Capacity



Maria Dyhr Zangenberg
Head of the DRC Standby Roster



Jenna Magee
Programme & Operations Coordinator



Pia Terslev Johansen
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