

Minutes of the board meeting of the Danish Refugee Council on 16 September 2026

Present

From the board:

Carsten Stendevad, Chairperson
 Caroline Tromer Dragsdahl (online)
 Charlie Brown
 Henrik Bodskov
 Nilüfer Sahin
 Nina Boel
 Rasmus Stuhr Jakobsen
 Torben Huss (online)
 Ulla Næsby Tawiah, Deputy Chairperson
 Vagn Berthelsen
 Mahmoud Mohamad, observer (Chairperson in DFUNK)

Apologies

Kim Simonsen

From the secretariat:

Charlotte Slente, Secretary General
 Vibeke Bach Madsen, secretary of the Board
 Pia Løvengren Ravn, ED for Finance, Risk, It, Supply chain & Commercial contracts (FRISC), agenda item 3 and 4
 Yann Faivre, Executive Director of Hub West & North Africa, & the Americas, agenda item 5
 James Curtis, Executive Director of Hub East Africa and Great Lakes, agenda item 5
 Lilu Thapa, Executive Director of Hub Middle East & Asia/Europe, agenda item 5

Agenda

	Points		Content
1)	Approval of the agenda / Carsten Stendevad	Decision	Comments on the agenda.
2)	Declaration of conflict of interest / Carsten Stendevad	Decision	Members of the Board declare if they have any conflict of interest in relation to any items discussed at the meeting.
3)	Financial briefing / Pia Løvengren Ravn, ED for Finance, Risk, It, Supply chain & Commercial contracts (FRISC)	Information	Annex to the item Annex 3.0 Cover note financial briefing Annex 3.1 Budget follow-up Jan-July 2026 The Board of Directors is presented with budget follow-up half-year 2026.
4)	Information from the Audit Committee / Torben Huss (the Board's representative in the Audit Committee)	Information	Annex to the item Annex 4.0 2026-08-28 Audit Committee Minutes The Audit Committee held its most recent meeting on 28 August. The Board of Directors is informed of the work of the Audit Committee.
	BREAK		

	Points		Content
5)	THEME Presentation of the DRC operations / Executive Directors of Hubs: - Yann Faivre, West & North Africa, & the Americas - James Curtis, East Africa and Great Lakes - Lilu Thapa, Middle East & Asia/Europe	Information	As the Executive Directors of the Hubs are in Copenhagen, we will take the opportunity to brief the Board of Directors on the activities of the DRC's operations: current situation, funding landscape and strategic focus related to the new global strategy.
6)	Meeting schedule and thematic Board discussions in 2027 / Carsten Stendevad	Decision	Annex to the item Annex 6.0 Cover note Meeting schedule 2027 and content Annex 6.1 Meeting schedule 2027 and content The Board will determine both the meeting schedule and the thematic issues to be discussed at the meetings in 2027.
7)	Information from the Chair and the Secretary General	Information	
8)	AOB		
	Recap after the meeting		The purpose is to evaluate the quality of the board meeting and for the chair to brief the board on his ongoing dialogue with the SG and Executive Management Team

Re 1) Approval of the agenda

The agenda was approved as described above.

Re 2) Declaration of conflict of interest

The chairperson asked the board to state whether they have conflicts of interest in relation to the points discussed at the meeting.

No one had any conflict of interest to declare.

Re 3) Financial briefing

The following annexes to this agenda item were sent to the Board members:

Annex 3.0 *Cover note financial briefing* and Annex 3.1 *Budget follow-up Jan-July 2026*

Pia Løvengren Ravn, ED for Finance, Risk, It, Supply chain & Commercial contracts (FRISC), reviewed the budget follow-up for January to July.

January-July – *Revenue* in July is below the forecast, which is largely due to monthly forecast phasing rather than operational weakness.

The *financial result* during this period is slightly ahead of budget, though this is primarily due to timing effects rather than a change in underlying performance.

Liquidity remains high.

Forecast 2 ensures that the revenue for 2026 will land above budget, but due to the volatile of our operations, management has adopted a cautious planning scenario and implemented a range of cost control measures in HQ to safeguard the year-end result.

⇒ **Summary:** *The Board of Directors engaged in an active discussion with the ED for FRISC on the financial forecasts and financial KPI's. The board acknowledged the progress on the FX risk mitigation initiatives and requested another update at the December board meeting.*

Re 4) Information from the Audit Committee

The following annexes to this agenda item were sent to the Board members:

Annex 4.0 2026-08-28 Audit Committee Minutes

Torben Huss, representative of the Board of Directors in the Audit Committee, informed the Board of Directors about the work of the Audit Committee at their meeting on 28 August.

Solidarity Pool

Solidarity Pool is the DRC's pool for paying taxes, to which all expats contribute.

The Audit Committee has assessed whether there is a need for adjustment in the handling of tax payments for expats. The committee suggest continuing with the Solidarity Pool, reviewed the pool and endorsed the size of the pool for 2027 for the final approval by the Board.

DRC approach to vetting workforce

The DRC approach to vetting has been evolving over time to reflect the increased focus on employee vetting, and particularly the safeguarding of the people of concern and prevention of sexual exploitation, abuse, and harassment (PSEAH) within the humanitarian sector.

DRC background checks are following the international policies and are mandatory to DRC operations. Audit Committee reviewed and endorsed Management's assessment that the current vetting approach is broadly adequate.

Internal Audit quarterly update

The update showed progress in implementing agreed management actions has improved compared with the previous year, demonstrating strengthened follow-up and accountability.

Very high-risk findings remain under active management and follow-up.

Treasury updates

- Investment strategies
The Audit Committee endorsed continuing analysis of investment strategies, acknowledging that further work is required before any final decision.
- FX Management
Continue implementation of the FX action plan.
- Blockchain / Cryptocurrency
The Audit Committee supported further investigation before making any commitment.

⇒ **Decision:** *The Board of Directors engaged in an active discussion on the items raised at the Audit Committee meeting 28 August 2026. The Board will receive the note on DRC's approach to vetting workforce.*

The Board approved the proposal to continue with the DRC Solidarity Pool, and the suggested size of the pool for 2027. The board noted the importance of continuously monitoring tax developments and assess possible implications for the solidarity pool.

Re 5) THEME: Presentation of the DRC operations

DRC Executive Directors for Hubs Yann Faivre (West Africa, North Africa & Latin America), James Curtis (East Africa and Great Lakes), Lilu Thapa (Middle East, Asia & Europe) briefed on the work of the geographical areas: current situation, strategic focus related to the new global strategy and funding landscape.

It would be too extensive to refer to the presentations. Instead, reference is made to the DRC's website, where countries are presented: [Where we work | DRC Danish Refugee Council](#)

⇒ **Summary:** *The Board of Directors engaged in an active discussion around the presentation of the DRC operations and thanked for a thorough briefing, which gave a good overview and understanding of DRC's commitment, strategic outreach and important activities worldwide.*

Re 6) Meeting schedule and thematic Board discussions in 2027

The following annex to this agenda item were sent to the Board members:

Annex 5.0 Cover note Meeting schedule 2027 and content and Annex 5.1 Meeting schedule 2027 and content

⇒ **Decisions:** *The Board of Directors reviewed the proposed meeting schedule and approved. The Board has been invited to the meetings in 2027. Dates are noted at the end of these minutes.*

Re7) Information from the Chairperson and the Secretary-General

- **Strategic investments from the reserves, going forward**

⇒ **Decisions:** *The Board noted that future strategic investments financed from the reserves will be approved by EMT. The Chairperson will be involved in investments of material significance or where the investment entails significant strategic or operational complexity.*

The Board will receive an annual update on results against approved business cases and KPIs.

- **Status on Collaboration and Partnership between DRC and NRC**

The Board was updated on the ongoing collaboration between DRC and NRC, aimed at strengthening the effectiveness and impact of both organisations through increased cooperation in selected operational and support areas.

Current discussions include opportunities for collaboration across relevant support functions and joint initiatives that may enhance efficiency and support to people affected by displacement and conflict.

To support the exploration of future opportunities, DRC and NRC have engaged the Boston Consulting Group (BCG) on a pro-bono basis to help assess options for building on existing collaboration and identifying areas for potential further cooperation. NCR has a long-standing collaboration with BCG which was considered as part of this decision.

The Board was updated on concerns raised by staff regarding DRC's engagement of BCG, in the light of the firm's previous controversial involvement in Gaza-related activities.

The Board had a thorough discussion on the concerns and was informed that the EMT, in consultation with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Board, had approved the engagement following different considerations: the corrective measures implemented by BCG in response to

acknowledged failures; due diligence carried out following the corrective measures and experience shared by peer humanitarian organisations; the limited scope of the engagement; potential implications for reputation and stakeholder trust and any possible breach of DRC's values and humanitarian principles.

DRC has made clear to BCG that we cannot and will not be associated with activities that undermine humanitarian principles or the values that guide our work. BCG leadership has reassured NRC and DRC leadership of the corrective measures they have implemented.

No decisions have been made regarding future steps in the DRC-NRC collaboration. Any potential initiatives will continue to be considered through the established governance processes of both organisations and assessed in line with their humanitarian mandates, organisational values, and responsibilities to affected populations and staff.

- **DRC 70th Anniversary**

The Board was updated on the DRC's 70th anniversary that is marked throughout 2026 through communication, fundraising and engagement initiatives highlighting the organisation's history, current work and future role.

The anniversary week will open on 30 November with an event from 15:00 to 18:00 with a celebration for staff, Board members, member organisations and partners. This will be followed by a Volunteer Day on 1 December and a proposed conference for partners, peer organisations and the media on 2 December [postponed until Q1 in 2027].

A public light installation is also planned in Copenhagen from 30 November to 4 December.

Other initiatives include media activities, anniversary films, digital storytelling and an artistic collaboration with Danish writer Kristina Stoltz and refugees across DRC's countries of operation.

- **Yemen: Escalating Conflict and Regional Spillover Risk (as per 13/9-2026)**

The Board was updated on the deteriorating security situation in Yemen, including intensified conflict in several parts of the country and an increased risk of regional escalation. The evolving situation continues to raise humanitarian concerns and may affect the operating environment for humanitarian organisations in Yemen and the wider region.

The Board noted that DRC is closely monitoring developments and continuously assessing the implications for staff safety and programme delivery. Appropriate risk management and duty-of-care measures have been implemented, and operational adjustments have been made in affected areas as required.

DRC remains committed to supporting conflict-affected populations while prioritising the safety and security of its staff and partners. The organisation continues to review the situation and adapt its response in line with developments on the ground.

- **Ebola outbreak in DR Congo**

The Board received an update on the ongoing Ebola outbreak in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo. The outbreak continues to have severe humanitarian consequences and remains a significant concern for affected communities and response actors. While challenges persist, humanitarian organisations and health authorities continue efforts to contain the outbreak and support affected populations.

The Board was informed that DRC is actively assessing opportunities to strengthen its engagement in affected areas, including through the mobilisation of additional resources to support protection and community-based interventions.

DRC Response: DRC's internal Ebola emergency activation has concluded, and operations have returned to standard management procedures. At the same time, DRC continues its response to the outbreak and remains engaged in supporting affected communities and local response efforts. To ensure continuity, key technical and operational support functions remain in place, and DRC continues to explore opportunities to sustain and expand protection activities in outbreak-affected areas through existing and potential funding mechanisms.

Regional preparedness is ongoing, with reinforced risk management measures in Uganda – including temporary travel restrictions – and contingency planning in South Sudan.

No cases have been reported among DRC staff or dependents, and all safety protocols remain in place.

- **Anticipatory Action and El Niño Preparedness**

The Board was informed that DRC's [El Niño Through a Displacement Lens](#) analysis finds that current forecasts of El Niño point to one of the strongest events on record through the remainder of 2026 and into early 2027. As in 2023, the humanitarian consequences will not be determined by rainfall alone: they will depend on who is exposed, how vulnerable they already are, and how much time responders have before the rains peak.

DRC has activated anticipatory action measures in Ethiopia and Uganda in response to forecasts indicating a severe El Niño event through late 2026 and into early 2027.

Based on DRC's displacement analysis and global climate forecasts, the anticipated effects of El Niño are expected to increase humanitarian needs and displacement risks across several regions, particularly in East Africa. The humanitarian impact will depend not only on weather conditions, but also on existing vulnerabilities and the ability of humanitarian actors to act early and mitigate risks.

DRC is using anticipatory approaches to support preparedness and reduce the potential impacts on at-risk communities. The organisation continues to monitor developments closely and assess potential humanitarian consequences across multiple regions, including East Africa, the Middle East, Latin America, and Asia.

The Board noted the importance of anticipatory action and evidence-based forecasting as part of DRC's efforts to strengthen resilience, reduce displacement risks where possible, and improve the effectiveness of humanitarian response.

Re 8) AOB

No further business was transacted under this item.

Board meetings in 2026

Board meeting #5 7 December

Board meetings in 2027

Board meeting #1 1 March

Board meeting #2 Seminar 18 May

Board meeting #3	21 June
Board meeting #4	16 September
Board meeting #5	6 December