



## **The Life of Refugee in DR Congo**

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Often people wonder what the life is like in refugee camps. This topic forces us to address issues of war, because that is the main reason people live within the camps. Here in the Eastern regions of DR Congo, people have returned to the camps many times as political-military alliances have produced massacres and displaced peoples. As a result, refugees are not localized into one region but are living dispersed throughout the regions. The following details will incorporate others' testimonials and will focus upon children through a series of selected topics.

During the 90's several refugee groups gathered within camps, unfortunately uniformed armies of neighboring countries attacked the refugees, who were aided by both Congolese allies and cross-boarder ethnic solidarities. The refugees became targets of such attacks and fled, however the armies often search out refugee groups whom they have accused of housing former military officers of previous génocidaires.

After such a time the refugees were without any safe places for their livelihood and were forced to disperse in the forest areas or within churches. Many others fled great distances crossing forests, rivers, and sometimes leaving DR Congo. Currently, the power is held by the pro-Tutsi Rwandans. Recall that the majority of Hutu refugees live within this Tutsi controlled region of the Great Lakes. Another group of the refugees are fleeing from the Northern conflict ridden region of Uganda.

With a history in need of justice, many have sought after worthy repayment for their suffering. DR Congo knew that certain events during 2004 provoked insurrections and resistance movements, including the importing of weapons. All those living within the refugee dispersal areas have been impacted by various recent events and governmental decisions such as (focusing upon the North Kivu region): (a) Post-traumatic stress found within children, often NGOs have had little positive changes within these persistence cases; (b) as refugees are largely Ugandan and Rwandan, divisions separate the refugees physically, culturally, religiously, ethnically, and ideologically; (c) children greatly do not differentiate between those seeking to help and those seeking to hurt; (d) humanitarian groups as well are afraid to work within the region. The camps in North Kivu, within the territory of Beni, include: Eringeti, Mukulya, Mavivi, Kangaimbi, Maimoya, Lume, Komanda, Tuha, Boikene, Oicha, Tamende, Mbau, Mamove and Mamiki. It should be mentioned that there are differences between the transnational groups and the diaspora groups of refugees. The effects of war are more than physical and psychological, but are also economical and behavioural.

The refugee peoples are wonderful peoples with whom RESPECT and ArtHum have been working with for several years. The communities are often small groupings associated with churches rather than large refugee camps. At the sign of any danger all the children run, who are unaccustomed to humanitarian workers. Refugee peoples often have to deal with other groups, governmental and military, wanting their eviction. It should be noted that HCR and other agencies do not work in these areas because of insecure conditions. Some wonder how long agencies need until they are willing to work within these areas. Finally, certain refugee groups are in danger with the peace process under way in DR Congo, many prefer to keep their status unknown. Some have been able to become integrated within communities living in DR Congo however thousands still remain in the mountainsides alongside militias, for reasons of survival. They remain there without assistance from humanitarian agencies. Some work has been done to demobilize the militias within the DDRR process under the observation of the UN (MONUC). There remain major problems for the refugee peoples in DR Congo and it is currently without a solution.