

Minutes of the board meeting of the Danish Refugee Council on 15 September 2025

Present

From the board:

Carsten Stendevad, Chairperson
 Caroline Tromer Dragsdahl
 Henrik Bodskov
 Kim Simonsen
 Nina Boel
 Rasmus Stuhr Jakobsen
 Torben Huss
 Ulla Næsby Tawiah, Vice Chairperson
 Tarek Kelani, observer (Chairperson in DFUNK)

Apologies

Vagn Berthelsen

From the secretariat:

Charlotte Slente, Secretary General
 Vibeke Bach Madsen, secretary of the board
 Pia Løvengren Ravn, CFO, under items 3 and 4
 Yann Faivre, Executive Director of Region West
 Africa & the Americas, under item 5
 James Curtis, Executive Director of Region East
 Africa and Great Lakes, under item 5
 Lilu Thapa, Executive Director of Region Middle
 East & North Africa, under item 5
 Gerry Garvey, Executive Director of Region
 Asia/Europe, under item 5

Carsten Stendevad participated virtually.

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, CFO	Information	Annex to the item Annex 3.0 Cover note financial briefing Annex 3.1 Budget follow-up Jan-July 2025 The Board of Directors is presented with budget follow-up half-year 2025.
4)	Information from the Audit Committee / Torben Huss (the Board's representative in the Audit Committee)	Information	The Audit Committee held its most recent meeting on 29 August. The Board of Directors is informed of the work of the Audit Committee.
	BREAK		

	Points		Content
5)	THEME Presentation of the DRC regions / Executive Directors of regions: - Yann Faivre, West Africa, & the Americas - James Curtis, East Africa and Great Lakes - Lilu Thapa, Middle East & North Africa - Gerry Garvey, Asia/Europe	Information	As the Executive Directors of the regions are in Copenhagen, we will take the opportunity to brief the Board of Directors on the activities of the DRC's four regions: current situation, strategic focus and main activities. Board members are advised to read <i>Update from regions and HQ departments</i> which was sent to the Board members by email on 4 September 2025.
6)	Appointment of external member of the Board of Directors / Ulla Næsby Tawiah	Decision	Annex to the item Annex 6.0 Cover note on Appointment of external member of the Board Annex 6.1 Profile for third appointed member of the Board The Board follow-up on the appointment of a third external member of the Board of Directors
7)	Information from the Chair and the Secretary General	Information	Annex to the item Annex 7.1 Board meetings in 2026
8)	AOB		

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.

Carsten Stendevad announced that he potentially had a conflict of interest in connection with the item on the appointment of an external board member, as there was a proposal that DRC should cover travel expenses for board members who are not resident in Denmark. Today, Carsten covers all expenses in connection with his participation in board meetings and meetings of the Council. With the proposal that has been made, this can be changed.

Re 3) Financial orientation

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 2025*

Pia Løvengren Ravn, CFO, the budget follow-up for January to July.

January-July – *Revenues* are still below the forecast made in April/May 2025.

The *financial result* for the period is lower than budgeted, mainly due to negative exchange rates. This is not fully offset by interest income.

Liquidity remains high.

As a result of the uncertainties surrounding the DRC, the preparation of forecast no. 2 will be brought forward, just as forecast no. 1 was brought forward.

As previously announced, 2025 will be a transition year for the new adapted organization, and it is to be expected that it will be difficult to live up to the budgeted result for the year. This is mainly due to the US cut in aid funds and the consequent adjustment of the organization.

⇒ **Summary:** *The Board of Directors thanked for a clear review of the budget follow-up and the actions taken and planned to manage the financial risks.*

The Board of Directors will appreciate that the reporting going forward will include both the original budget for the year and the forecast that is reported on.

Re 4) Information from the Audit Committee

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 29 August.

Solidarity Pool

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

The audit committee reviewed the pool and determined the size of the pool for 2026.

The audit committee will later assess whether there is a need for adjustment in the handling of tax payments for expats.

The external auditor's strategy for 2025

The external auditor's strategy for 2025 has included a focus on the consequences of the changes in US aid. In addition, there is an increased focus on the collaboration and the connection between external and internal auditing.

⇒ **Summary:** *The Board of Directors thanked the work of the two members of the Board of Directors and the Audit Committee. The Secretariat will ensure that the Board of Directors receives minutes of the Audit Committee meetings.*

Re 5) THEME: Presentation of DRC's regions

DRC Executive Directors for Regions Yann Faivre (West Africa, Latin America), James Curtis (East Africa and Great Lakes), Lilu Thapa (Middle East, North Africa) and Gerry Garvey (Asia, Europe) briefed on the work of the regions: the current situation, strategic focus and main activities.

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

⇒ **Summary:** *The Board of Directors thanked for an exciting briefing, which gave a good overview of DRC's commitment and important activities worldwide.*

Re 6) Appointment of an external board member

The following annexes to this agenda item were sent to the Board members: Annex 6.0 *Cover note on Appointment of external member of the Board* and Annex 6.1 *Profile for third appointed member of the Board*

Ulla Næsby Tawiah, Vice Chairperson, opened the point.

At the meeting on 23 June, the Board of Directors assessed whether there was a need to supplement a third external member of the Board of Directors. They agreed to recruit an external board member with competencies in global branding, global communication and global public affairs.

The chairpersonship had prepared a proposal for a recruitment process and prepared a draft profile.

In relation to the profile of the external board member, it must be ensured that it is clear that this is strategic sparring. There is consideration as to whether a point should be added about knowledge of fundraising.

The up to three external board members are in addition to the 6 board members elected by the Council and DRC's member organizations.

The board considered how the recruitment could best take place and discussed the possibility of making an advertisement but concluded that it would require too many resources to handle an advertisement and responses to applicants in a good and proper way.

⇒ **Decision:** *The Board of Directors endorsed the proposed profile, which will be shared with relevant search agencies (pro bono) and in the Board's network. Other opportunities to identify the right external candidate for the Board of Directors will be assessed on an ongoing basis.*

The chairpersonship will be responsible for the recruitment and will present the board to the relevant candidates. The Board is open to international candidates for the position.

The Board of Directors determined that it will be possible to get reimbursement of travel and hotel expenses for board members living outside Denmark.

Re 7) Information from the Chairperson and the Secretary-General

The following annex to this agenda item were sent to the Board members: *7.1 Board meetings in 2026.*

- **Ukraine: Missile attack on a humanitarian demining site**

On 4 September two DRC colleagues from the demining team in Ukraine, Oleksandr Turlukivskyi and Serhii Molyboha, were killed as a result of a missile strike in Chernihiv district. The incident also left eight of our staff members injured.

At the time of the incident, DRC teams were conducting purely civilian humanitarian activities—working to clear landmines and explosive remnants of war in order to protect communities and enable safe access to essential infrastructure, farmland, and homes.

This strike on a civilian humanitarian operation represents a serious violation of International Humanitarian Law (IHL). Humanitarian workers, as well as the communities they serve, must never be targeted while carrying out life-saving activities. DRC calls on all parties to respect and uphold international law and to guarantee the safety and protection of humanitarian personnel and operations at all times.

DRC remains committed to its mission of protecting people affected by conflict and displacement in Ukraine. Despite the risks and challenges, our demining teams undertake this vital work to prevent further loss of life from landmines and unexploded ordnance.

This tragedy is a stark reminder of the dangers humanitarian teams face while carrying out life-saving work in conflict areas. Despite the risks, our teams remain deeply committed to protecting communities and helping restore safety and dignity.

- **Situation in Afghanistan**

On 31 August 2025 at 11:47 pm local time, a 6+ magnitude earthquake struck Afghanistan's Nangarhar Province near the Pakistan border. Another earthquake struck near Jalalabad 4 September with a 6+ magnitude – this according to early report with less casualties.

Preliminary reports indicate that at least 800 people have been killed in the affected provinces, with a further estimated 2,000 people injured, many of them residing in deeply remote and mountainous areas with key access routes blocked by rocks and landslides. The number of victims is expected to increase as search and rescue teams reach the affected areas.

The de facto authorities (DfA) have launched an immediate response. Jalalabad and Asadabad Hospitals are serving as the main referral points for earthquake victims. Heavy machinery is deployed to remove the road blockages. Some road segments have reportedly been reopened; however, a number of isolated communities can only be reached by foot with travel time currently up to 3 hours from the point of obstruction.

No colleagues from the DRC were injured, and the DRC's operational areas, buildings, etc. were not affected.

The DRC is present in the affected area with expertise in WASI (WASH, Shelter & Infrastructure), HDP (Humanitarian Disarmament and Peacebuilding), Protection and EcRec (Economic Recovery).

- **Situation in Sudan**

Sudan is experiencing escalating humanitarian crisis, specifically in El Fasher (North Darfur) and Kadugli (South Kordofan). Sustained sieges have led to serious protection risks, famine-like conditions and health crises. The situation is deteriorating rapidly and may trigger mass casualties or displacement events.

In El Fasher, a city of approximately 260,000 people, intensified conflict has blocked humanitarian access, collapsed markets and health services, and left both residents and internally displaced persons facing acute food and water shortages. Kadugli, with a population of 92,000, is under siege, experiencing similar access restrictions, displacement, and cholera outbreaks.

DRC has no operational presence in North Darfur but maintains active programming in Central Darfur and South Kordofan.

DRC is positioned to respond in its current operational areas but faces logistical staffing challenges in scaling up. Advocacy efforts remain limited due to the complex operating environment. The situation is fluid and may require rapid response planning should humanitarian corridors open or conditions deteriorate further.

- **Board meetings in 2026**

Board meetings have been called for 2026. Dates are noted at the end of the minutes.

Re 8) Any other

There was nothing to the point.

Board meetings in 2025

Board of Directors/5	8 December
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Board meetings in 2026

Board of Directors/1	February 26
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Board of Directors/2	Seminar May 18 to 19
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Board of Directors/3	June 22
Board of Directors/4	14 September
Board of Directors/5	7 December