

Refugees don't want to leave

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Maputo - Most refugees in Mozambique were not willing to return to their countries of origin despite prevailing peace, the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) has said.

Antonio Guterres of the UNHCR, who was visiting Mozambique, told reporters this week most of the refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) had said they wanted to go to Europe, United States and Canada instead of returning home.

He said this preference was becoming a "headache" to the UNHCR, which returns refugees to their countries of origin.

Repatriation of refugees from Maratane refugee camp in the northern province of Nampula started early this year after the peace agreement in the DRC.

More than 6 000 refugees from the DRC live in the camp and more than 300 refugees from that country have voluntarily returned.

Guterres said the UNHCR would soon procure other means of repatriating the refugees, who were only being moved to their countries of origin by aircraft, in order to quicken the process. - Sapa