

Working environment

The context

Three years after presidential and legislative elections, the political and humanitarian situation in Burundi continues to be troubling. The country, which is among the poorest in sub-Saharan Africa, has been affected by rising prices for food, fuel and basic commodities. While security is generally described as satisfactory by large parts of the population, poverty has contributed to an increase in banditry.

The peace process between the Government and the last active rebel group, *Palipehutu-Forces nationales de libération* (FNL), is continuing after a major setback in 2008. Both parties signed a ceasefire agreement in 2006. But despite this agreement large-scale hostilities broke out in April 2008 in the north-west of the country, leading to the displacement of thousands of families in that region. In May 2008, the FNL agreed to an immediate cessation of all hostilities. Negotiations between the rebels and the Government in August 2008 allowed those displaced by the fighting to return home.

Due to the deteriorating security situation, the United Nations extended its security alert to the whole country in January. In response to the armed confrontations in April, the security alert was further heightened for Bujumbura Rural and Bubanza provinces on 6 May.

Burundi hosts more than 32,000 refugees, mostly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). They live both in camps and urban areas. Many had hoped that the Goma Peace Accords would pave the road towards stability in South Kivu province however; the agreements have not been implemented.

The needs

Despite UNHCR's efforts to improve living conditions in areas of return and refugee camps, some problems have yet to be overcome. Participatory assessments undertaken in refugee sites and areas of major return enabled UNHCR and partners to identify the needs of these communities. The key findings point to the limited access to education for girls, lack of study facilities and poorly trained teachers, lack of income-generating activities in the camps, insufficient sanitary kits for refugee women and the lack of

medicine for returnees with chronic diseases. The rising number of returnees will increase the need for reintegration assistance in 2009, as compared to previous years.

The majority of returnees are in need of shelter assistance, since four out of five returnee families need to reconstruct their houses. The lack of adequate housing has led to a number of health and protection problems. Moreover, access to land remains a major problem, especially for those who fled Burundi in 1972. According to monitoring reports, more than 80 per cent of these long-term refugees have no access to land upon return. In most cases, their family land has been occupied by others.

In the health sector, access to anti-retroviral treatment is available to returning Burundians only in urban areas. Malaria prevention programmes, reproductive-health services and malnutrition interventions need to be strengthened for all groups of concern. UNHCR's standard procedures to reduce sexual and gender-based violence are being implemented, but need to be monitored and evaluated.

Main objectives

Ensure the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in safety and dignity.

- Ensure effective reintegration for both the 1993 and 1972 groups of returnees.
- Help the socio-economic reintegration of returnees by providing shelter and income-generating activities.
- Provide international protection and assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers.
- Facilitate the voluntary return of refugees from the DRC.
- Support government bodies responsible for returnees and refugees, including a new asylum office.

Key targets

- Some 30,000 camp-based Burundian refugees return voluntarily; they receive transport assistance and an improved returnee package containing a cash grant, food rations for six months and non-food items.
- About 15,000 refugees from the old settlements in Tanzania return home voluntarily and received cash grants; families with specific needs receive food.
- At least 95 per cent of returnees receive identity documents and birth certificates.
- Returnees benefit from programmes to reduce HIV and AIDS as well as sexual and gender-based violence.
- Some 7,300 families with specific needs receive construction materials to build their own homes.
- Mediation resolves 60 per cent of identified property disputes peacefully.
- A Government asylum office is established and a new asylum law is applied to all refugees.
- Food and non-food items are distributed regularly to camp-based refugees, and minimum standards of assistance are maintained.
- Camp-based refugees, especially women and girls, are helped to engage in income-generating activities.
- The school attendance rate for girls rises to 50 per cent.
- Training for teachers is improved and school uniforms and school materials are provided to children.

Strategy and activities

Due to the decision of the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania to close refugee camps, the planning figure for return and reintegration in 2009 had been revised upward. It is expected that 30,000 camp-based refugees and another 15,000 from the old

Planning figures

Type of population	Origin	Jan 2009		Dec 2009	
		Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR	Total in country	Of whom assisted by UNHCR
Refugees	DRC	32,000	32,000	23,000	23,000
	Rwanda	560	200	560	200
Asylum-seekers	DRC	7,790	7,790	5,920	5,920
	Various	20	20	30	30
Returnees (refugees)		90,000	90,000	45,000	45,000
Total		130,370	130,010	74,510	74,150

settlements in Tanzania will return. UNHCR will monitor the repatriation process and work with its partners to resolve land disputes. All returnees will be medically screened and receive cash grants, returnee packages (only for camp-based returnees) and counselling at transit centres on issues such as HIV and AIDS, prior to relocation to their communes of origin.

UNHCR will continue to lobby for other UN agencies and development actors to begin reintegration activities, as the landless returnees (especially those from the 1972 group) will face difficult socio-economic conditions. Local welcome committees will help returnees to reintegrate into their communities.

In 2009, UNHCR will continue to protect and assist some 19,000 camp-based refugees from the DRC living in Gasorwe, Musasa and Gihinga. In early 2008, UNHCR began negotiations with local authorities to integrate some 220 Rwandan refugees living in Giharo camp in Rutana Province.

According to Government policy, all refugees in need of assistance must live in camps. Urban refugees with specific medical or protection concerns receive treatment and assistance. These individuals will benefit from income-generating activities as they await improvements in security in areas of return in the DRC and the resumption of voluntary repatriation, which was halted in 2007.

Meanwhile, the discussions between the Burundian and DRC authorities on the voluntary repatriation of DRC refugees will continue and the search for durable solutions for those unable or unwilling to return will be pursued. Due to the scarcity of land and socio-economic challenges in Burundi, the prospects for local integration of the DRC refugees are dim. Those with protection or medical concerns will be submitted for resettlement.

Once the refugee law is promulgated and the planned national asylum office established, UNHCR will help to build the capacity of the concerned authorities.

Constraints

Extreme poverty in return areas is a major impediment for returnees, most of whom are subsistence farmers. Facing camp closures in Tanzania, refugees with specific needs began to return in increasing numbers in 2008. Protection challenges are mainly linked to problems in repossessing property. Reintegration is further slowed by the lack of shelter and income-generating opportunities.

UNHCR's work has been hampered by the volatile security situation and consequent restrictions on staff mobility. Increased pressure from the Tanzanian Government on landless refugees to return may lead to social tensions in Burundi. This is of special concern to



Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo in Gihinga camp.

UNHCR / A. Kirchhof

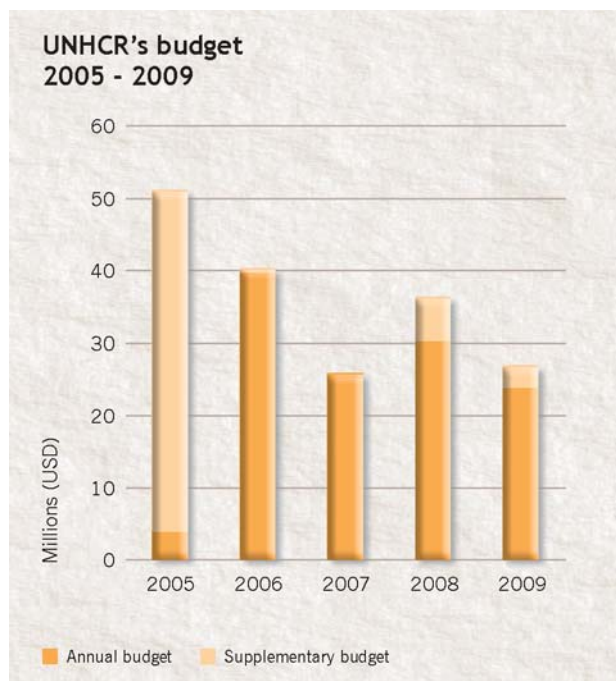
those refugees who left Burundi in 1972, as many of them have lost all ties with their communities of origin.

Organization and implementation

UNHCR presence	
Number of offices	5
Total staff	133
International	20
National	100
JPOs	3
UNVs	10

Coordination

UNHCR works in close collaboration with the national authorities, its implementing partners and donors, the United Nations Integrated Office in Burundi (BINUB) and UN sister agencies. The main governmental counterparts are the Ministry of the Interior and Communal Development and the Ministry of National Solidarity, Repatriation, National Reconstruction, Human Rights and Gender. The Office works closely with a number of special government agencies, such as the *Commission nationale des terres et autres biens*.



UNHCR will continue to play a key role in the *Integrated Commission for Repatriation and Reintegration*, which brings together key ministries, UN agencies and donor representatives in order to define common approaches.

Regular cross-border meetings will be held with UNHCR offices in Tanzania and the DRC to assess the progress of the organized voluntary repatriation. Repatriation from Tanzania is planned for completion by the end of 2009.

Financial information

The large repatriation operation of Burundian refugees in 2005 was covered under a supplementary programme. Repatriation and reintegration activities were subsequently mainstreamed into the annual budget which increased in 2006 accordingly. In 2008 and 2009, the supplementary budget reflects the return of Burundi's 1972 refugees from the old settlements in Tanzania. With the number of returnees decreasing, the supplementary budget is declining too. The annual budget in 2008 rose due to intensified repatriation activities of camp-based refugees.

Partners

Implementing partners

Government agencies: *Ministère de la Solidarité Nationale, du Rapatriement, de la Reconstruction Nationale, des Droits de la personne Humaine et du Genre (Projet d'Appui au Rapatriement et à la Réintégration des Sinistrés - PARES)*, *Ministère de l'Intérieur et du Développement Communal (Centre national d'identification)*, *Ministère de la Sécurité Publique (Police de l'air, des frontières et des étrangers)*

NGOs: African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes, African Humanitarian Action, *Association des Femmes Juristes, Conseil pour l'Éducation et le Développement, FENACOBU, Handicap International France*, International Rescue Committee, *Ligue Iteka*, Norwegian Refugee Council, Stop SIDA, Transcultural Psychosocial Organization / Health Net International, World Outreach International

Others: *Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit*

Operational partners

Government agencies: *Centre national de la lutte contre le SIDA*

NGOs: Norwegian Refugee Council, *Solidarité*

Others: BINUB, FAO, ICRC, UNICEF, WFP, WHO

Budget (USD)						
Activities and services	2008			2009		
	Annual budget	Supplementary budget ¹	Total	Annual budget	Supplementary budget Burundian refugees (1972) in Tanzania	Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	5,337,456	521,113	5,858,569	5,637,850	535,954	6,173,804
Community services	586,000	0	586,000	500,000	0	500,000
Crop production	70,000	0	70,000	0	0	0
Domestic needs	505,000	1,605,800	2,110,800	1,550,000	688,200	2,238,200
Education	318,000	0	318,000	400,000	0	400,000
Fisheries	30,000	0	30,000	0	0	0
Food	36,000	0	36,000	40,000	0	40,000
Forestry	190,000	0	190,000	100,000	0	100,000
Health	1,007,000	298,680	1,305,680	1,400,000	87,720	1,487,720
Income generation	180,000	0	180,000	200,000	0	200,000
Legal assistance	1,576,000	250,110	1,826,110	1,050,000	107,190	1,157,190
Operational support (to agencies)	950,000	123,200	1,073,200	1,964,000	52,800	2,016,800
Sanitation	30,000	0	30,000	86,000	0	86,000
Shelter and infrastructure	4,062,000	1,451,100	5,513,100	4,022,000	621,900	4,643,900
Transport and logistics	3,400,000	1,492,260	4,892,260	3,178,000	639,540	3,817,540
Water	60,000	0	60,000	110,000	0	110,000
Total operations	18,337,456	5,742,263	24,079,719	20,237,850	2,733,304	22,971,154
Programme support	3,495,768	0	3,495,768	3,889,208	0	3,889,208
Total	21,833,225	5,742,263	27,575,488	24,127,058	2,733,304	26,860,362

¹ Includes supplementary programmes for finding durable solutions for 1972 Burundian refugees in Tanzania (USD 5,648,263) and for anaemia control and prevention (USD 94,000).

Note: Supplementary programme budgets exclude 7 per cent support costs that are recovered from contributions to meet indirect costs for UNHCR.