



UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés



JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

21st Meeting of the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania

Dar es Salaam, Tanzania, 29 November 2019

The 21st Meeting of the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania was held at Parliament Office Dar es Salaam, on 29 November 2019.

The Delegation of the United Republic of Tanzania was led by H.E. Kangi Lugola Minister of Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Delegation of the Republic of Burundi was led by H.E. Mr. Pascal Barandagiye, Minister of Interior, Patriotic Formation and Local Development of the Republic of Burundi.

The Delegation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was led by Mr. George Okoth-Obbo, UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner, Operations.

In their opening statements, the Heads of Delegation:

- **Acknowledged** the spirit and the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania of 8 May 2001 (hereby referred to as the Tripartite Agreement), which has since then guided all voluntary returns to Burundi from Tanzania in accordance with national and international laws;
- **Noted** that from September 2017 to 07 November 2019, the concerned parties have jointly facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 79,728 Burundian refugees from the United Republic of Tanzania in safety and dignity;
- **Recognized** the traditional hospitality and generosity of the Government and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania, which has been receiving thousands of refugees for

decades. Following the validation exercise conducted from August to October 2019, the United Republic of Tanzania currently hosts 278,275 refugees and asylum seekers, of which approximately 166,000 are Burundian, most of whom arrived since April 2015;

- **Appreciated** the commitment from the parties to continue facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania who are willing to return to their country of origin in accordance with the principles guiding voluntary repatriation;
- **Noted** that while some refugees may opt to return now, others may still have well-founded reasons for not seeking to return at the present time, and will continue to benefit from international protection;
- **Welcomed** that the United Republic of Tanzania, in the pursuance of its international obligations, will continue to keep its doors open to those refugees who meet the relevant criteria of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees read together with its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa;
- **Recognized** the firm willingness of the Government of Burundi to receive its citizens who voluntarily want to go back home and noting that the reception capacity in Burundi has significantly improved since the last tripartite meeting on 28 March 2018;
- **Noting** that the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania highlighted that peace is extended throughout the territory of the Republic of Burundi and this constitutes an undeniable reality.


The Tripartite Commission agreed to:

1. Continue to facilitate the voluntary repatriation process for those Burundian refugees whose registered intention to return and the voluntariness of their decision has been verified. Maintain the capacity and preparedness to transport from Tanzania and receive in Burundi up to 2,000 voluntary returns per week, on convoys of up to 1,000 each;
2. Pursue the meaningful reintegration of all returning refugees in a sustainable and durable manner by:
 - a. Strengthening the coordination of reintegration activities for all Burundian returnees – assisted and self-organized;
 - b. Consult on innovative and secure modalities for the provision of support to all returnees within the limits authorised by the Burundian Government in line with the new Cash transfer methodology;
 - c. Organizing of joint resource mobilization activities, noting the need to assure donors of the voluntariness of return;

3. The Government of Tanzania to address the issue of individual documentation including birth, death and marriage certificates for refugees with the support of UNHCR;
4. The two Governments to continue facilitating free and unhindered access to refugees and returnees in the territories for purposes of meeting the objectives of the Tripartite Agreement in accordance with national and international laws;
5. Take note that there are self-organized returnees in need of assistance to reintegrate and will develop modalities to provide support at the community level;
6. The international community be requested to support the voluntary repatriation and reintegration process;
7. The TWG report is hereby appended as **Annex I** and the updated Work Plan as **Annex II**;
8. The TWG convening more regularly to address specific issues and review the progress made as per the attached Work Plan.
9. The Parties will review the Tripartite Agreement.


H.E. Mr. Pascal Barandagiye

Minister of Interior, Patriotic Formation
and Local Development
of the Republic of Burundi
For the Government of the
Republic of Burundi


H.E. Mr. Kangi Lugola

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Mr. George Okoth-Obbo

UNHCR Assistant High Commissioner, Operations
For the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

Dar-es Salaam, Tanzania, 29 November 2019