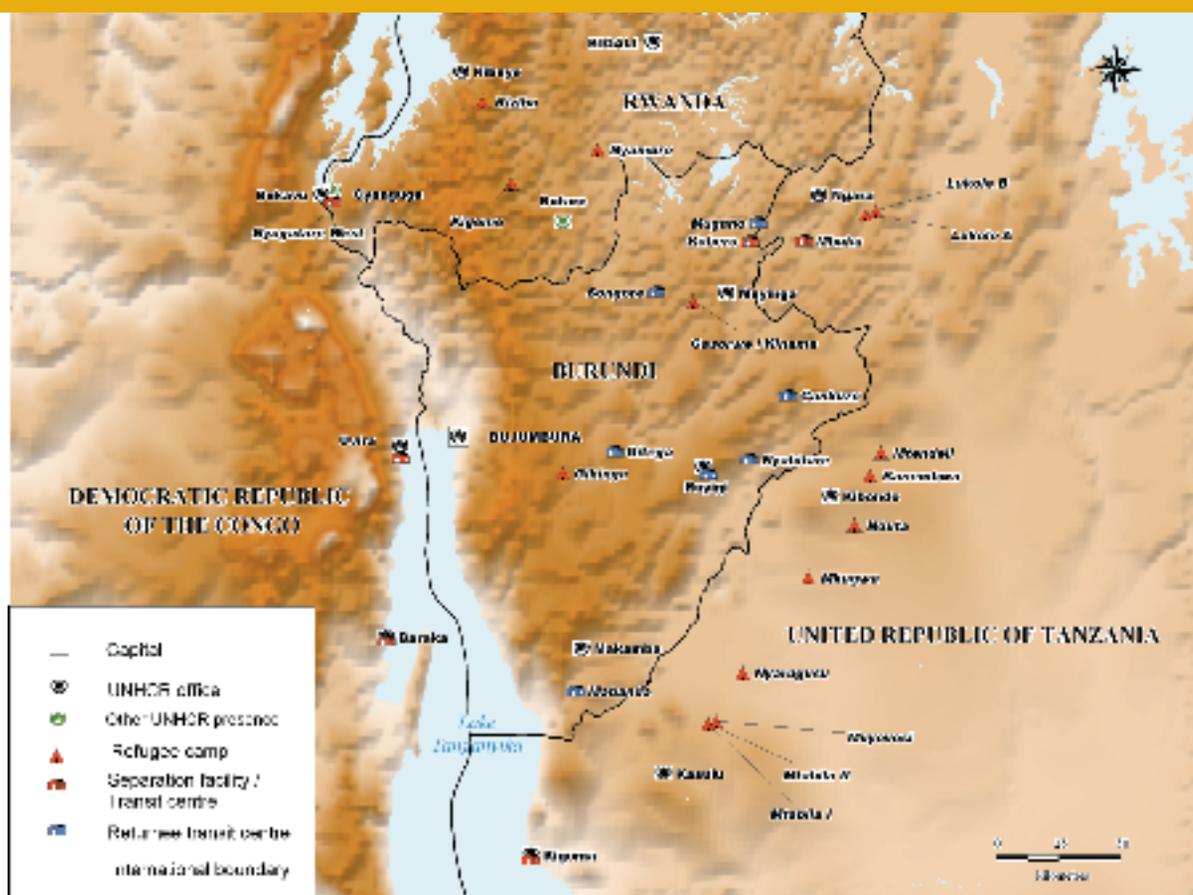


Burundi



Main objectives

- Facilitate the repatriation of 150,000 Burundian refugees mainly from the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and other neighbouring countries.
- Contribute to the improvement of living conditions in areas of return and facilitate the reintegration of Burundian returnees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) into their communities of origin by providing economic, social and psychological support and by promoting self-reliance projects.
- Continue to provide protection and basic assistance to camp-based DRC refugees until the security situation in the South Kivu area is conducive to their voluntary repatriation.
- Facilitate the voluntary and sustainable return of 10,000 DRC refugees in Burundi who wish to repatriate.
- Support the newly appointed Government in strengthening the national structures responsible for refugee and returnee matters and in the adoption of the draft refugee law.

Planning figures		
Population	Jan. 2006	Dec. 2006
Returnees	150,000	150,000
DRC (refugees)	48,400	37,600
IDP returnees	50,000	40,000
Asylum-seekers (DRC)	11,900	3,000
Other refugees	230	80
Total	260,530	230,680

Total requirements: USD 37,770,808

Working environment

Recent developments

The transitional period brought about by the 2000 Arusha Peace Accords came to a conclusion with the inauguration in August 2005 of the newly elected President Nkurunziza, a member of the main ex-rebel movement *Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie/Forces pour la défense de la démocratie* (CNDD/FDD). A new cabinet was recently appointed.

Although still fragile, security in most parts of the country has improved considerably, allowing UNHCR to facilitate the return of refugees to 13 out of 17 provinces. Humanitarian conditions likewise improved, in part due to the continued presence and support of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB). The mission, which started in June 2004, entailed the deployment of 5,350 troops in early 2005, and has been extended to December 2005. ONUB supports the Government of Burundi in the training of police staff, the demobilization process and the reintegration of ex-combatants. By early September 2005, more than 16,500 ex-combatants had been demobilized. The only remaining rebel group, the *Front national de libération* (FNL), still active in Bujumbura Rural, Bururi, Cibitoke and Bubanza Provinces, is currently in discussions with the new Government.

The pace of return slowed down considerably during the period of political uncertainty from October 2004 to June 2005 when the elections were postponed and renewed violence was feared. During the first eight months of 2005, UNHCR facilitated the repatriation of some 38,000 Burundian refugees mainly from Tanzania, bringing the total number of returnees to 264,000 since the beginning of the operation in 2002.

UNHCR works in close cooperation with the national authorities, its partners and UN sister agencies to improve living conditions in the areas of return and thereby ensure the sustainability of returns.

Constraints

The main constraint remains the fragile security situation in many areas. Whether or not security levels will improve depends on the stabilization of the political situation following the elections as well as on the outcome of negotiations with the FNL. The proliferation of weapons also needs to be addressed urgently by the new Government.

Security measures for the protection of UN staff in volatile areas in Burundi are unavoidable. Nevertheless, they significantly impede the mobility of UNHCR staff and the capacity of the Office to facilitate voluntary repatriation in four provinces to which most of the "1972 refugees" are likely to return (these are Burundians who left their country either in 1972 or before the 1993 events).

The absence of a consistent policy for the return of IDPs leaves a significant gap in the provision of assistance to returnees and their communities. There is currently no agency with an appropriate mandate for this population, and only 10 per cent of IDPs who have returned benefit from UNHCR's shelter programme. However, following the mission to Burundi by the OCHA Inter-Agency Internal Displacement Division in early June 2005, it is expected that a local Inter-Agency Standing Committee (IASC) will be established by the UN Country Team; in this framework, UNHCR could play a leading role in protection, camp coordination and emergency shelter.

The uncertainty of available funds is also a major impediment to the successful reintegration of returnees. Funding problems delayed the implementation of the shelter programme and of community stabilization projects, which aim at rehabilitating social infrastructure and developing income-generating activities, and several activities had to be drastically reduced in scope.

Strategy

Protection and solutions

At the time of publication, the most recent statistics showed Burundi hosting over 48,000 refugees,

mainly from the DRC (of whom 8,000 are camp-based refugees hosted in Gasorwe and Gihinga). Among these refugees are survivors of the Gatumba massacre who still feel threatened, and now suffer from serious medical conditions, as well as some urban refugees who could not be locally integrated.

UNHCR will review the option of facilitating the return of Congolese refugees should conditions in DRC improve. Meanwhile, UNHCR is seeking to improve security in cooperation with the Government of Burundi and ONUB, in particular with a view to ensuring the civilian character of camps. The adoption of a national law on asylum will also enable UNHCR to substantially increase its support to the Government of Burundi's national asylum system (establishing a permanent structure and appropriate procedures, including training).

In April 2005, an estimated 8,000 Rwandans originating from Butare and Gikongoro Prefecture fled across the border into the northern provinces of Burundi following the setting up of the *Gacaca* (community tribunals which are providing an opportunity for genocide survivors, defendants and witnesses to present their cases in an open and participatory environment). After a series of bilateral consultations, authorities in Burundi and Rwanda agreed in June 2005 to forcibly repatriate these Rwandan refugees. Roughly 5,000 were deported while others went into hiding in the forests or with Burundian families. The recent registration exercise in the northern provinces of Muyinga, Ngozi and Kirundo revealed the presence of over 2,300 Rwandan asylum-seekers (refugees who had evaded forced return in June 2005 plus new arrivals). Assistance (comprising food and non-food items) is being provided for them. A joint plan of action by UNHCR and Burundian authorities involves registering the concerned population (already completed) and holding interviews with a view to either advising them to return to Rwanda, or to proceed to formal refugee status determination (RSD). However, this plan has not yet been approved by the Government.

In western Tanzania, as of the end of August 2005, some 225,000 Burundian refugees were

receiving assistance in camps, with another 198,000 living in settlements near the border without assistance. There are also more than 19,000 Burundian refugees in DRC, many of whom may opt to return in 2006.

Continued monitoring of returnees not only verifies that they are living in safety and facilitates their administrative and legal reintegration but also helps to gather accurate information on living and security conditions in communities of origin. In Burundi, this enables UNHCR to make appropriate interventions in terms of general advocacy and also to intervene in individual cases should there be reports of violations of returnees' rights. In the country of asylum, this information is disseminated to the refugees still living in exile to enable them to make an informed decision on return.

Returnee monitoring is conducted within the framework of an agreement with a local human rights NGO. More than 90 observers cover all provinces of Burundi, with a higher number in provinces of major return. A letter of understanding was also signed in 2004 with an international NGO setting up a pilot project, which includes the monitoring of IDPs in the province of Makamba. This project could be further expanded if UNHCR is called upon to expand its work on behalf of the IDP population in Burundi.

UNHCR will continue to facilitate voluntary repatriation under conditions of safety and dignity. At their final destination, locally formed *Comités d'accueil* will ensure that returnees are welcomed and receive guidance on the recovery of their property and reintegration into their communities. Particular attention will be paid to organizing reconciliation activities between Hutus and Tutsis and supporters of different political parties to avoid disputes between returnees and others. UNHCR will support traditional conflict resolution structures and, together with its partners, seek to familiarize the population with the state legal system and, whenever possible, resolve conflicts directly (most are land disputes).

Assistance

UNHCR will continue to run reception facilities along the border with Tanzania to accommodate returnees arriving either in UNHCR-facilitated convoys or spontaneously. From there, the Office will provide onward transport to communities of origin. Returnees will receive a package of basic domestic items from UNHCR and a three-month food ration from WFP. The houses of most returnees are damaged beyond repair and, as returnees are considered to have special needs, they will be covered by a housing scheme whereby they will receive materials which cannot be easily made or found, such as corrugated iron sheets for roofing, nails and locally produced doors and windows. The returnees will then provide the remaining materials and labour.

UNHCR will continue to provide assistance to local communities so as to increase the absorption capacity of return areas and to promote dialogue between the returnees and the receiving population. As agreed with UNICEF and WHO, the Office will focus on basic rehabilitation and reconstruction of schools and health centres in areas of return. Meanwhile, UNICEF will ensure that the infrastructure is functional by providing basic equipment, health kits and supporting human resources. WHO will deploy staff to help coordinate health activities and also provide health kits. Income-generating activities will be further developed in return areas in collaboration with relevant partners.

UNHCR will provide basic assistance to DRC refugees in established camps in Gasorwe and Gihinga and will support a health clinic and school facilities for refugees in Bujumbura town. Together with its partners, the Office is regularly updating contingency plans for a sudden arrival of DRC and



A returnee mother and her child, just returned from Tanzania, awaiting registration at Gisuru reception centre. UNHCR / A. Brekke

Burundi

Rwandan refugees as well as Burundian returnees from Tanzania.

UNHCR will ensure that by-laws and administrative procedures are put in place to deal with the land issues raised by returnees. It will help the line ministry in charge of refugee matters to draft the refugee law and strengthen the Eligibility Committee and the Technical Group in charge of protection issues.

Desired impact

UNHCR's objective in Burundi is to facilitate the return of Burundian refugees, and to monitor and support their reintegration into their communities

as stated in the Supplementary Appeal for the Return and Reintegration of Burundian Refugees. The overall aim is to achieve sustainable return, the peaceful coexistence of the different populations and lasting peace. It is hoped that refugees from DRC as well as other refugees will be able to live in refugee camps in safety and dignity and repatriate when conditions are favourable. The adoption of asylum legislation should significantly speed up the process of recognizing refugees in Burundi and ensure their access to all basic services.

Organization and implementation

Management structure

Operations in Burundi will be managed through the representative office in Bujumbura, a sub-office in Ruyigi and two field offices in Muyinga and Makamba which will work closely with UNHCR offices in Tanzania (Ngara, Kasulu and Kibondo), DRC and Rwanda. In 2006, there will be 44 international staff, 121 local staff, one secondee, one consultant from the Surge Project and 10 UNVs.

Coordination

The joint planning workshop with all actors and beneficiaries held in February 2005 provided a forum to review and prioritize the needs and gaps identified during the field visits. Various MOUs concluded in 2004 with WHO, UNICEF, FAO, UNDP and the World Bank will remain in force, covering health, education and food supply as well as multisectoral activities designed to complement existing arrangements. The Office will participate in activities facilitated by OCHA, in the Consolidated Appeals Process and in the application of the IASC Needs Assessment Framework Matrix. Consistency in policy development was monitored until August 2005 through the Steering Group of the *Cellule inter-agence de réinsertion* (CIR), a UN body set up by UNHCR, UNDP and the World Bank to facilitate policy development and coordination in the context of the "4Rs" initiative (

Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation, and Reconstruction). The CIR closed down in August 2005 and its activities will be taken over by UNHCR, OCHA and UNDP.

Offices

Bujumbura

Makamba
Muyinga
Ruyigi

Partners

Government agencies

Commission nationale pour la réinsertion des sinistrés
Ministère de l'action sociale et de la promotion de la femme
Ministère de l'intérieur et de la sécurité publique
Police de l'air, des frontières et des étrangers

NGOs

Action contre la faim
African Centre for the Constructive Resolution of Disputes
African Community Resource Centre
African Humanitarian Action
Association des femmes juristes
Association pour la paix et le développement
Austrian Relief Programme
CARITAS
Centre pour l'autosuffisance et le développement intégré
Comunità Impegno Servizio Volontariato
Conseil pour l'éducation et le développement
International Rescue Committee
Ligue Iteka
Maison Shalom
Solidarités
Studio Tubane
World Outreach Initiatives
World Vision International

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Budget (USD)			
Activities and services	Annual Programme Budget	Supplementary Programme Budget¹	Total
Protection, monitoring and coordination	8,606,312	250,000	8,856,312
Community services	408,200	4,092	412,292
Crop production	874,400	0	874,400
Domestic needs	1,981,660	26,596	2,008,256
Education	4,966,470	0	4,966,470
Food	0	6,206	6,206
Forestry	395,820	60,000	455,820
Health	1,251,680	5,000	1,256,680
Income generation	400,000	0	400,000
Legal assistance	767,280	60,000	827,280
Operational support (to agencies)	1,475,970	25,000	1,500,970
Sanitation	100,500	0	100,500
Shelter/other infrastructure	8,875,920	50,000	8,925,920
Transport/logistics	2,114,200	40,000	2,154,200
Water	387,900	9,752	397,652
Total operations	32,606,312	536,646	33,142,958
Programme support	4,627,850	0	4,627,850
Total	37,234,162	536,646	37,770,808

¹ The figures refer to the supplementary programme for the repatriation and reintegration of Congolese (DRC) refugees.

Note: The Supplementary Programme Budget does not include a 7% support cost (USD 37,565) that is recovered from each contribution received to meet indirect costs in UNHCR (field and headquarters).