

# Burundi

## Main Objectives

- Support the Burundi Government in the adoption of national refugee legislation to ensure that asylum-seekers are protected and receive material assistance.
- Promote peaceful co-existence between refugees and the local communities that host them.
- Ensure the facilitated voluntary repatriation of the Burundian refugees from Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), the Republic of the Congo (RoC) and other asylum countries, and work towards voluntary repatriation of refugees in Burundi. Support the Government of Burundi in the provision of assistance to the spontaneous returnees in the east and south of the country and to those returning from other neighbouring countries.
- Contribute to the improvement of the lives of the displaced persons and the vulnerable in the areas of mass return – in order to maintain peaceful co-existence among the returnees, the internally displaced and the local communities.



## Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2003	Dec. 2003
Congolese Refugees (DRC)	27,036	39,036
Rwandan Refugees	1,134	1,634
Urban Refugees	8,276	10,276
Returnees	47,884 <sup>1</sup>	100,000
Assisted IDPs	20,000	30,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>104,330</b>	<b>180,946</b>

<sup>1</sup> Up to October 2002, some 45,684 were registered as returnees.

## Total Requirements: USD 6,691,466

consider a phased repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania. Then in March the facilitated voluntary repatriation began, as recommended by the Tripartite Commission representing the Governments of Tanzania, Burundi and UNHCR. By October, some 45,684 returnees were registered. The return of 26,534 was facilitated by UNHCR from Tanzanian refugee camps. Spontaneous returns accounted for another 19,150 from throughout Tanzania and other neighbouring countries. Despite some political progress, the National Assembly has not yet adopted legislation that would significantly boost the peace process. Notably, no legislation has been adopted

## Working Environment

### Recent Developments

The political institutions provided for in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accord came into being as stipulated with the establishment of the National Assembly and the Senate. This marked a significant step towards peace and allowed UNHCR to

on genocide, provisional immunity for returning political dissidents or a Truth and Reconciliation Commission.

It is in this climate of uncertainty that the Transitional Government and various parties to the conflict have begun talks with the support of the international community and the Heads of State in the sub-region (Gabon and Tanzania) facilitated by South Africa. In August 2002, a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) was signed between the Government of Burundi and the National Council for the Defence of Democracy-Defence Forces of Democracy (CNDD-FDD), one of the parties to the conflict. The MOU was perceived as non-inclusive by other parties to the conflict, resulting in further

displacement of over 375,000 persons living in 211 sites throughout the country.

The absence of a cease-fire remains the main impediment in the search for peace and the effective resumption of bilateral and multilateral co-operation on the pledges made during the Paris and Geneva roundtables on Burundi in 2000 and 2001 respectively. The Burundian economy, already weakened by nine years of war, is severely affected. Despite a satisfactory harvest of the main subsistence crops, overall agricultural production has been hampered by the displacement of the population and several other factors have contributed to general instability in the country as well as economic stagnation. Most of the population live below



Rwandese refugees in Ntamba camp engaging in income-generating activities. UNHCR / A. Holmann

the poverty level and more than 1,200,000 persons live in extreme poverty. The devaluation of the Burundian currency by 20 per cent has drastically reduced the purchasing power of ordinary people.

In spite of the prevailing instability and fresh outbreaks of conflict in south Kivu in the DRC, UNHCR has registered only 527 new asylum-seekers from that region. At the same time, pressure is being put on Burundi by the Government of Rwanda to repatriate Congolese refugees of Banyamulenge origin.

## Constraints

The absence of durable peace in the country has precluded adherence to a long-term plan of action. UNHCR has had to revise plans repeatedly in order to take account of new situations as they evolve. The lack of a cease-fire agreement between the Government of Burundi and the parties to the conflict continues to impact negatively on the political and security situation throughout the country. The prevailing insecurity, particularly in the southern and eastern regions, has precluded the implementation of facilitated repatriation and integration in those regions.

## Strategy

### Protection and Solutions

In an attempt to make better plans for the refugee assistance programme, UNHCR, in collaboration with Government technical services departments, registered and screened refugees living in Burundi. The exercise was completed in the transit centres of Bujumbura and Cibitoke, but has not yet been completed for the urban refugees. Institutional support will continue to be provided to the Government in the form of training, sensitisation meetings, material and financial contributions to the various protection projects. The Consultative Commission For Foreigners has been put in place and this will make it possible for refugees to be provided with much needed identification documentation. UNHCR has helped the Interior Ministry (*Ministère de l'Intérieur*) to begin work on getting an asylum law on to the statute books. UNHCR also plans to help the Ministry to establish an operational unit which will take care of refugee affairs.

## Assistance

UNHCR will actively support the Government in the drafting of a national refugee law. To this end, two consultants will be hired, in early 2003, to conduct research and help the Interior Ministry with the drafting. The work of the parties to the Tripartite Commission on the repatriation of Burundi refugees from Tanzania will be facilitated and consolidated through periodic meetings to ensure and uphold the voluntary character of the repatriation.

While health services will be provided to urban refugees, primary health care will be extended to all refugees in camps and, in some instances, to local communities. Separated children and unaccompanied minors will benefit from special assistance with tracing and reunification with family members. Efforts will also be made in collaboration with the local authorities to find suitable foster parents for those children whose parents cannot be traced.

Refugee children will benefit from primary education and attempts will be made to find places for refugee children in local schools such that the DRC curriculum is modified for delivery in Bujumbura. UNHCR will assist local authorities to rehabilitate existing educational and health structures. UNHCR will also help to identify suitable areas, and if necessary re-model the landscape, with a view to creating conditions for a durable voluntary repatriation in areas of massive return.

Refugee women will be empowered through income-generating activities and adult literacy classes. Transport and logistics will be revitalised and better structured in order to facilitate all these activities in a consistent manner.

## Desired Impact

UNHCR seeks to contribute to the overall peace and reconciliation process in Burundi and to ensure that there is a culture of respect for human rights in the country. Such a culture will, in the long run, facilitate peaceful co-existence among the different communities. UNHCR will work closely with the Government on the adoption of refugee legislation. This will improve the conditions of asylum for refugees.

## Organisation and Implementation

### Management Structure

In 2003, the Office will operate from Bujumbura with a Field office in Muyinga. There will be five international and 36 national staff, as well as four UNVs.

### Co-ordination

Humanitarian activities undertaken by each UN agency in Burundi, are co-ordinated by the Resident UN Co-ordinator. All the humanitarian

organisations are members of the contact group, which meets every week to discuss the humanitarian situation in the country. OCHA is responsible for collecting and disseminating information. UNHCR and UNICEF regularly meet to discuss the activities to be carried out in favour of unaccompanied minor returnees. A Memorandum of Agreement will be signed by the two organisations. Since January 2002, UNHCR and WFP have worked together on the provision and distribution of food items to refugees and returnees under the terms of an MOU.

UNHCR will continue to work with OHCHR on refugee and returnee related issues through meetings and training sessions. The Office continues to collaborate with the *Ministère de la réinsertion et de la réinstallation des déplacés et des rapatriés* (MRRDR). An ongoing UNHCR/MRRDR project deals mainly with the reception and physical protection of returnees as they go back to their communes of origin. As regards refugee affairs, UNHCR maintains its co-operation with the *Ministère de l'Intérieur* and the other institutions under its supervision such as the *Police de l'Air et des Frontières* (PAFE). A consultative commission for foreigners has been established by ministerial decree to deal with refugee issues.

Offices
Bujumbura
Muyinga
Ruyigi (Inter-Agency Office)

Partners
<b>Government Agencies</b>
<i>Ministère de l'action sociale et de la promotion de la femme</i>
<i>Ministère de la justice et garde des Sceaux</i>
<i>Ministère de la réforme institutionnelle et des droits de l'homme</i>
<i>Ministère de la réinsertion et de la réinstallation des déplacés et des rapatriés</i>
<i>Ministère de la santé publique</i>
<i>Office de l'intérieur et de la sécurité publique</i>
Office of Education Project (BPE)
<i>Police de l'Air, des Frontières et des Etrangers</i>
Provincial Authority for Agriculture and Animal Husbandry
<b>NGOs</b>
<i>Agence de coopération et de recherche pour le développement</i>
<i>Association burundaise pour le bien-être familial</i>
Austrian Relief Programme
International Law Group
INTERSOS
<i>La Ligue Iteka</i>
Norwegian Refugee Council
Réseau / Network des Citoyens
<b>Others</b>
<i>Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit</i>
ETRAGAM
<i>Laboratoire national du bâtiment et des travaux publics</i>
SOBIMAC

Budget (USD)	
Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	531,344
Community Services	277,000
Crop Production	75,000
Domestic Needs	759,516
Education	547,000
Food	13,596
Health	395,200
Income Generation	62,500
Legal Assistance	409,484
Operational Support (to Agencies)	283,034
Sanitation	93,000
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	620,000
Transport / Logistics	950,000
Water	223,370
<b>Total Operations</b>	<b>5,240,044</b>
Programme Support	1,451,422
<b>Total</b>	<b>6,691,466</b>