

Burundi

Main objectives

- Ensure that the repatriation of Burundian refugees takes place in conditions of safety and dignity.
- Help Burundian returnees to reintegrate into their home communities.
- Continue to provide protection and basic assistance to Congolese refugees, until their return becomes feasible.
- Assist the remaining Rwandan refugees who wish to voluntarily repatriate.
- Support the Government in the adoption of a refugee law and in the strengthening of national structures responsible for refugee and returnee affairs.
- Promote peaceful co-existence between refugees and the host community.



Working environment

Recent developments

Negotiations on the cessation of hostilities in Burundi continue with a certain degree of success. The cease-fire agreements were signed in late 2002 between the Transitional Government and the *Front national de libération* (FNL), and the *Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie - Forces pour la défense de la démocratie* (CNDD-FDD), respectively, have not yet been fully implemented. Nevertheless, there are indications that the Government and the leadership of the CNDD-FDD (the larger of the two movements) are willing to seek a peaceful solution to their differences. By mid-2003, a mood of cautious optimism prevailed, with compromises on both sides during negotiations which have been carefully nurtured by the international community, especially Burundi's neighbours. This gave rise to renewed hope that the outstanding contentions would be resolved in time for democratic elections to be held in Burundi by the end of 2004, as provided for in the 2000 Arusha Accord. This timeframe puts pressure on all sides to reach an early compromise. To date, the CNDD-

Planning figures

Population	Jan. 2004	Dec. 2004
Asylum-seekers	7,700	4,700
DRC (refugees)	35,000	32,000
IDPs	100,000	100,000
Other refugees	100	0
Returnee IDPs	25,000	50,000
Returnee refugees	100,000	200,000
Total	268,200	386,700

Total requirements: USD 6,720,331

FDD has not yet signed the Arusha Accord. Whereas the number of armed incursions between the rebel forces and the army of the Government of Burundi has decreased as a result of these ongoing peace initiatives, the level of banditry and petty theft has increased throughout the country. This is linked to declining economic opportunities and high levels of unemployment. Furthermore, it is estimated that about 300,000 persons are displaced throughout the country. This poses serious humanitarian challenges, which are compounded by the difficulties that humanitarian agencies experience in gaining access to many of the affected regions.

The demobilisation of former CNDD-FDD combatants has begun, with 193 registered in the first of four sites of containment. However, the process is behind schedule in the absence of a definitive peace agreement between the two sides. Furthermore, the deployment of the African Union's Mission in Burundi (AMIB), whose mandate includes the oversight of the demobilisation

process, has been delayed by logistical and financial constraints.

Despite the absence of peace in many parts of Burundi, Burundian refugees continue to return from Tanzania to the northern and central provinces. Between January and mid-September 2003, nearly 60,000 persons returned, two-thirds of them spontaneously, while one-third opted for UNHCR-facilitated transport. A Tripartite Agreement was signed in late August 2003 by the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania, and UNHCR recommended an assessment of the security conditions in the four provinces along the south eastern border with Tanzania. While UNHCR has not facilitated return to some of the provinces along this border in the past, a positive security assessment would allow UNHCR's active involvement in assisting refugees to return to these areas. If a peace agreement is signed between the CNDD-FDD and the Burundian Government, it is expected that refugees will return in larger numbers.

UNHCR continues to provide protection and assistance to Congolese refugees in Burundi. As a consequence of increased rebel activity in the eastern provinces of the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in late 2002 and 2003, there are approximately 35,000 DRC refugees on Burundian soil. Most of the refugees are located in a camp in the province of Muyinga, in a transit centre in the province of Cibitoke near the Congolese border, and in Bujumbura.

Constraints

The absence of a peace agreement causes insecurity in many provinces and obstructs UNHCR's humanitarian activities as well as those of other relief and developmental agencies. The unpredictability of the security situation has also led to different and often conflicting analyses, which hamper the implementation of a consistent strategy for returnees and the provision of adequate assistance to refugees. This is to be addressed by the inter-agency assessment missions in the border areas and by the cross-border meetings with the Tanzanian authorities. The absence of peace in the eastern provinces of DRC also prevents the return of Congolese refugees in large numbers. Limited financial resources have hampered the delivery of assistance to these groups.

Strategy

Protection and durable solutions

Repatriation remains the preferred solution for the Congolese refugees in Burundi as well as the small

number of Rwandan refugees, some of whom are being considered for resettlement to third countries. In accordance with the High Commissioner's policy priorities on refugee women, UNHCR will continue with its efforts to address allegations of gender-based violence among refugees and to assure the safety and dignity of the population, particularly in the camps and the transit centres. One of the major challenges for returnees entails dealing with the activities of armed bandits in areas of return. UNHCR's tasks involve continued monitoring of the safety and living conditions of returnees and ongoing advocacy with the Government and others on the importance of a secure environment in areas of return. These issues will be pursued further with the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania, as well as with operational partners in return areas. UNHCR, the Government and other agencies also promote mine awareness among the returnees in border areas.

In addition, UNHCR closely collaborates with the Ministry of the Interior, which has overall responsibility for refugees in Burundi. There is ongoing co-operation in the drafting of a comprehensive refugee law.

Assistance

UNHCR's policy is to provide support to individual returnees and their families, to help them become more self-reliant. This often means, in the first instance, ensuring that they have access to basic public services. Frequently that cannot be achieved without tackling a range of problems affecting the community as whole, such as the availability of potable water, health care, roads, schools and basic infrastructure. The intended result is to increase the absorption capacity of the returnees' communities.

In 2004, the strategy of the Office in Burundi will be based on the global "4Rs" strategy (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction). Programmes include the rehabilitation of public infrastructure, the reconstruction of destroyed returnee houses, socio-economic reintegration, and, wherever necessary, reconciliation activities to bring together returnees and local populations. UNHCR's primary focus is on the most vulnerable refugees and their families. These include households headed by single persons, women and the elderly. To prevent friction between returnees and their receiving communities, UNHCR's assistance will also reach the most vulnerable members of these communities. Rehabilitation activities will be implemented mainly in the form of quick impact projects, which will be co-ordinated with development agencies. UNHCR will also help with the prevention of environmental degradation.

Health care is available to all refugees, either through health clinics established by UNHCR in Bujumbura, in the transit centre, and in the refugee camps, or through national health structures, which have clearly established referral mechanisms for specialised health care. Special care and monitoring will be provided for separated and unaccompanied children, pregnant women, sick and handicapped persons, and older refugees. Reproductive health, STD clinics and HIV/AIDS prevention will be strengthened, if financial resources permit. In collaboration with the local authorities and implementing partners, UNHCR will also try to find suitable foster families for unaccompanied refugee minors.

In 2004, UNHCR and its partners will work on improving the success rate of pupils in public schools and in the schools in the camp in Muyinga. Primary education and vocational training opportunities will continue to be extended to adolescents and women refugees. UNHCR will also encourage women to assume positions of leadership in refugee settlements and to participate more actively in food distribution and modification to the lay-out of camps.

Desired impact

The objective for UNHCR in 2004 is to contribute to improving conditions in areas of return and to minimise the exposure of returnees to serious risks caused by continued fighting. This involves careful assessment of

the conditions in the return areas and the facilitation of repatriation to these areas when conditions permit. UNHCR will strive to ensure that refugees who choose to return are accepted by their home communities. By providing assistance to the most vulnerable families and by helping to rebuild public infrastructure, the Office will also enhance the self-reliance of returnees and their communities. UNHCR's main priorities include the elimination of gender-based violence, water, food, health, education and other basic services.

Organisation and implementation

Management structure

In 2004, the Office will operate from Bujumbura with a field office in Muyinga and a United Nations inter-agency office, managed by OCHA, in Ruyigi. There will be five international and 35 national staff, as well as six UNVs and two technical consultants.

Co-ordination

Reintegration activities undertaken by the UN agencies in Burundi are co-ordinated by the *Cellule inter-agence de coordination de réinsertion*, of which UNHCR is part. The other UN agencies involved in the co-ordinated humanitarian efforts are OCHA, WFP, UNICEF and UNFPA.



A registration centre set up for refugees from the DRC in Gatumba. UNHCR / M. Cavinato

There are ongoing efforts to strengthen the delivery of humanitarian assistance in a co-ordinated fashion with the Government, UN agencies, donors, concerned countries, and with NGOs and international organisations operating in areas of return. This is essential if the reintegration of returnees is to be sustainable. To this end, UNHCR, UNDP and the World Bank have signed a Memorandum of Understanding and have established a co-ordination unit for United Nations activities aimed at the reintegration of returnees. Other partnerships with WFP, the Government and NGOs are governed by instruments such as a Joint Action Plan (with WFP), a Tripartite Agreement (with the Government) or sub-agreements (with the Government and NGOs). UNHCR will also continue working closely with the Government and other agencies, to co-ordinate support to the *Commission nationale pour la réinsertion des sinistrés* (CNRS), the body provided for in the Arusha Accord to ensure the reintegration of demobilised combatants, refugees and displaced persons.

UNHCR's assistance programme for repatriation is being governed by an inter-agency *Comité de pilotage*, chaired by the European Union Head of Delegation and by the *Ministère de la réinsertion et de la réinstallation des déplacés et des rapatriés*. It reviews projects submitted to it by the *Comité technique de suivi*, which is jointly chaired by the Ministry and UNHCR.

UNHCR will continue to work with UNHCHR on human rights issues affecting refugees and returnees. This work involves training on human rights and efforts to build the monitoring of refugee and returnee rights into the routine functions of national structures.

UNHCR's main governmental interlocutor is the Ministry of the Interior, particularly the *Police de l'air, des frontières et des étrangers* (PAFE). The Ministry of the Interior and UNHCR have established a technical group, the *Groupe Technique de Protection* (GTP), which meets every week to review all issues relating to refugee protection.

Partners

Government agencies

Ministère de l'action sociale et de la promotion de la femme

Ministère de l'intérieur et police de l'air, de la frontière et des étrangers

Ministère de la justice et garde des sceaux

Ministère de la réinsertion et de la réinstallation des rapatriés et des déplacés

NGOs

African Humanitarian Aid

Alliance Burundaise de coopération et de développement

Austrian Relief Programme

Centre de recherche pour l'inculturation et de développement

Centre pour l'autosuffisance et le développement intègre

International Law Group

International Rescue Committee

La ligue iteka

Others

Deutsche Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Budget (USD)

Activities and services	Annual Programme
Protection, monitoring and co-ordination	763,231
Community services	161,941
Crop production	18,657
Domestic needs	100,094
Education	205,224
Food	20,806
Forestry	79,291
Health	750,348
Income generation	214,552
Legal assistance	566,337
Operational support (to agencies)	519,615
Sanitation	38,247
Shelter / other infrastructure	618,964
Transport / logistics	1,055,449
Water	57,775
Total Operations	5,170,531
Programme support	1,549,800
Total	6,720,331