

BURUNDI

INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Uphold the rights of asylum-seekers in Burundi, particularly those fleeing conflict in neighbouring countries, and provide them with essential assistance and services where security conditions permit;
- Undertake systematic reviews of the planned repatriation of Burundian refugees from the United Republic of Tanzania to ensure sustainable return and reintegration if and when conditions permit.
- Ensure sustainable reintegration of returning populations and assist internally displaced populations in areas of return.

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, PROGRESS ACHIEVED, AND CONSTRAINTS

The year started with considerable optimism that the parties to the conflict would be able to move the peace process forward with the arrival, in late 2001, of the Transitional Government and its various constituent institutions. Unfortunately, the Transitional Government, despite sustained efforts was unable to achieve a cease-fire or enact key bills in parliament. Nevertheless, UNHCR was able to assist over 20, 000 facilitated returnees and an additional 16,000 returned spontaneously. The durability of these returns has however been threatened by renewed fighting over the last month and half in the Southern provinces. This recent development has constrained UNHCR's capacity to monitor returns or to widen preparations for repatriation to the main areas of return. Against this backdrop, there are increased fears that some of the returnees may have ended up in internally displaced camps while seeking safety from the fighting. UNHCR will continue to monitor the situation and make appropriate plans to address the problem.

Congolese and Other Refugees

Of the 27,896 refugees in Burundi, some 6,660 housed in camps and 3,365 in urban areas receive humanitarian assistance under UNHCR's mandate. The majority of these refugees come from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). After prolonged negotiations, the Government of Burundi agreed that the refugees would be moved from several locations, in different provinces where they were formerly dispersed, to a new refugee campsite in Muyinga Province. In May 2002, the refugees were registered and they began to transfer from Rugombo and Ngagara to Muyinga. To date, about 600 refugees have moved to the new site. Although as of 30 June, the former camps at Rugombo and Ngagara were officially closed, some refugees refused to be transferred. Those who stayed at the old sites were assisted with water and sanitation services.

Generally, the Government of Burundi respects the right of refugees to asylum, notwithstanding the fact that there is no mechanism in place for the systematic application of asylum principles. Between January and June 2002, there were several reports of incidents of deportation of so-called deserters and ex-combatants from the DRC. This resulted in deep concern amongst the Banyamulenge refugees. UNHCR held several meetings with the authorities with the aim of dissipating the increasing fear amongst the refugees of possible "*refoulement*". The Office organised seminars on the principles of international protection, notably for the human rights observers enrolled to monitor the return of Burundian refugees, and for journalists. Another seminar is planned later in the year for members of the national Eligibility Commission. However, due to funding constraints, the implementation of the activities planned for the development of a human rights culture and the peace and

reconciliation programme was only carried out to a limited extent.

Between January and May 2002, UNHCR, in co-ordination with WFP, distributed food rations to 3,274 refugees in Rugombo and Ngagara camps. From June onwards, food was distributed to the 600 refugees in the newly established Gasorwe refugee camp. In addition to the installation kit, comprising blankets, soap, mosquito nets and sleeping mats, all of these refugees received various non-food items, including kitchen sets, clothes, soap, mosquito nets and firewood.

The water sources and latrines were maintained and rehabilitated at the Rugombo and Ngagara camps. The new camp in Gasorwe is equipped with a motorised water pump, which provides a regular water

supply. Since January 2002, 50 houses were rehabilitated at the Ngagara campsite and in June 2002, 624 houses were built at the new site at Gasorwe, as well as 52 communal kitchens, five latrines, 16 classrooms and a dispensary.

Refugees were able to benefit from health care, and an awareness campaign on HIV/AIDS was launched at Rugombo camp. UNHCR provided education assistance for 832 children at the primary level, of whom 398 were girls, and 40 students at the secondary level of whom 14 were girls. 70 young dropouts attended English courses, and 34 students (10 girls) benefited from courses to bring them up to a level to allow them to continue their education in the normal stream.

Progress as measured against indicators

Impact/Performance Indicators	Actual Progress
Refugees at the campsites in need of assistance receive food rations.	3,274 refugees receive a monthly food ration, transported and distributed by UNHCR's implementing partners.
All refugee children have access to primary school.	For the first half of 2002, 832 students received primary education (47 per cent girls).
All refugees have access to potable water.	From January to May 2002, all refugees at the campsites received 16 litres of water per day.
All refugees have a shelter.	At the new Gasorwe refugee camp, 624 houses were built (20 per cent of the camp's capacity). The site capacity currently stands at 3,120 refugees.

Burundian Returnees

The implementation of the Peace and Reconciliation Agreement prompted, in the early months of the year, the return of exiled political leaders, the positive evolution of the political situation and improvement of security, especially in the north of the country. This influenced the adoption of a Tri-partite Commission and in turn, the launch of the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees to northern provinces through the Kobero border. Since 28 March 2002, some 15,396 Burundians have been assisted by UNHCR to return. They were transported from the border to their communes of origin through transit centres. At the transit centres, they received a returnee package composed of three months' food rations and soap, agriculture tools, plastic sheeting, kitchen sets, blankets, jerry cans, hairdressing, and clothes. In parallel,

about 15,764 Burundians returned spontaneously and were registered at the Kobero entry points. The returnees benefited from basic humanitarian assistance for transportation, food and non-food items until the beginning of June. To date, a total of 37,217 Burundian refugees have repatriated.

Within the framework of ensuring sustainable reintegration of returning populations, UNHCR continued to manage two pilot projects financed by a major donor and the World Bank. The projects were implemented with 22 operational partners in the following sectors: logistics, food and non-food items, unaccompanied minors, education, health care, access to the judicial system, water, treatment against HIV/AIDS. As a part of these projects, the trucking fleet was maintained, reception centres in Songore, Mugano, Nyabitare, Ruyigi, Gitega

and Mabanda and six transit centres were rehabilitated, and a registration centre was built at Makamba. In co-operation with the Ministry of Education, UNHCR organised and facilitated the national examinations at the end of the primary school year for 3,263 Burundian students in refugee camps in Tanzania. In addition, three primary schools were constructed in Bururi Province and one in Cankuzo Province. Two primary schools were rehabilitated in Kirundo Province. At the same time, two vocational centres were rehabilitated, allowing 14 teachers to undertake refresher courses and resume work after three years of inactivity. UNHCR built a health and reproductive centre in Bururi which is run by a local NGO to sensitise mainly young people to the ravages of HIV/AIDS and family planning.

UNHCR organised training sessions for 648 administrative and local government staff from seven provinces on topics such as the organisation of judicial competency, the Land Act, and the Law of Succession. Similarly, 125 magistrates received training on human rights issues, the writing of judgements, the Law on Succession, and the Land Act. Administrative tribunals received furniture, stationery and other equipment.

Income-generating activities were especially emphasised for women, as well as agricultural projects and catering in the Province of Muyinga. Some 485 women of various ethnic origins were able to supplement their incomes and cover health care for their children. Over 315 women benefited from an adult literacy programme to equip them to better manage their activities. 2,910 women were enrolled in six peace education courses.

Daily monitoring visits conducted in the northern provinces of the country by the UNHCR field office in Muyinga and the staff in Bujumbura showed that the returnees faced few serious security problems. However, 75 per cent of the returnees have complained that they are facing difficulties in gaining access to housing. Unfortunately, due to the insecurity in the region and the absence of UNHCR or other international agencies in some areas, only a few monitoring missions could be undertaken in the eastern and southern provinces.

Growing insecurity seriously restricted UNHCR operations. Only eight out of 16 provinces, mostly in the north and centre of the country, could be adequately covered.

Progress as measured against indicators

Impact/Performance Indicators	Actual Progress
Repatriation of 100,000 refugees in 2002.	31,080 refugees were repatriated.
Support and reinforcement of the Burundian judiciary system in seven provinces.	648 local government and administrative staff, 125 magistrates and judicial officers received training in various aspects of the law and practice, human rights and administrative procedures in several provinces. Furniture and other equipment was provided to support 35 courts of law and administrative tribunals in seven provinces.
Register follow-up on tracing and reunite 1,000 non-accompanied children with family members.	402 non-accompanied minors and other children returned home. 107 children were reunited with parents or close family members.
Reinforcement of the education system, especially for 19 primary schools and two vocational centres for the integration of returnee children.	Six schools rehabilitated and / or constructed for over 2,500 beneficiaries. Two vocational centres rehabilitated benefiting 100 students in vocational training.

REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITY ACTIVITIES FOR JULY-DECEMBER 2002

Congolese Refugees

With the relocation of the Congolese refugees to the new camp of Gasorwe, UNHCR will continue to ensure international protection and provide humanitarian assistance to the refugees. During the second half of the year, the work of the Eligibility Commission on the determination of refugee status will be reactivated.

Burundian Returnees

With regard to the UNHCR policy towards the ongoing facilitated voluntary return to the northern provinces was adopted in May 2002. The security situation prevailing in the southern provinces precludes any facilitation

by UNHCR. However, continuing, spontaneous returns from Tanzania continue to be recorded. Some of these returnees are feared to have ended up in the Internally Displaced Camp sites because of the security situation. UNHCR is currently unable to assist these spontaneous returnees in the eastern and southern provinces.

UNHCR will continue to transport returnees and provide food and non-food items in the North and will support activities related to the preparation of the repatriation and the reintegration of recent returnees. At the same time, UNHCR will monitor the political situation in Burundi, and if the circumstances change to warrant a change in the repatriation policy, the Office will be in a position to readily take advantage of the situation.

Financial Data (USD)

Annual Programme Budget			
Initial Budget	Revised Budget	Total Funds Available	Obligation Level
6,516,928	6,503,536	9,972,246	3,170,730