

# BURUNDI

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## INITIAL OBJECTIVES

- Facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Burundi refugees in neighbouring countries, security conditions permitting, and provide initial assistance for their reintegration.
- Protect and assist refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and elsewhere, and identify lasting solutions, including voluntary repatriation and resettlement.
- Assist vulnerable groups and some internally displaced persons (IDPs) in areas that are likely to receive large numbers of returnees.

## MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, ACHIEVEMENTS AND CONSTRAINTS

### *Congolese and Other Refugees*

Due to the volatile situation in the eastern part of the DRC, Congolese refugees have continued to seek asylum in Burundi. Between January and June an estimated 3,000 refugees arrived in the country, bringing the total number of refugees hosted in Burundi to some 33,000, most of them from the DRC. The refugees are accommodated in two sites located in the Province of Cibitoke (Rugombo) and in Bujumbura town (Ngagara). Ongoing negotiations with the Government to establish a single camp location for all refugee groups in an area away from the border have not yet produced results.

UNHCR has been transporting and distributing WFP food rations to all refugees in the Rugombo site. In this site, the Office

has been providing health care services and non-food items, and a primary school with 663 pupils has been staffed and furnished. Due to lack of space, only a few new plots of land were allocated to inhabitants. While awaiting the possible establishment of a single camp location, UNHCR continued to press for more land to be allocated to the Rugombo site. In the meantime, 49 shelters, six kitchen blocks and four latrines were built to increase the site's capacity.

In Ngagara camp, which is located in Bujumbura town, all inhabitants have been receiving an average of 20 litres of water per day. Some 40 latrines were constructed in the first half of the year, and more than 500 persons were referred to the local health clinic and provided with medical care. In order to avoid tensions over assistance provided to the refugees, UNHCR has also been extending limited support to the local population in the form of basic water, sanitation and health care services.

While the majority of the urban refugees have been in Burundi since the early seventies, a recent registration exercise indicated an increasing number of new arrivals. The total population of urban refugees is estimated at 28,000. UNHCR has been providing humanitarian assistance to 2,600 of them, as well as offering limited self-reliance support to some. In addition, UNHCR has assisted a small number of Rwandan refugees, including nine unaccompanied minors, to return to their country, and facilitated the reunification of 14 Congolese, Rwandan and Angolan families.

**Progress as measured against selected indicators**

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Refugees are provided with food, thus avoiding malnutrition	Refugees received monthly food rations. Shortfalls were quickly identified and communicated to WFP
Refugees are sheltered in habitable housing	The Rugombo site was rehabilitated and its accommodation capacity increased.
All refugee children of school-going age receive primary education.	Nine new classrooms, 141 desks and 11 additional teachers increased the capacity of schools in Rugombo. All pupils and teachers were provided with educational materials.

***Burundian Returnees***

Despite the signing of a Peace and Reconciliation Agreement late last year, conditions inside Burundi remained non-conducive to large-scale repatriation of refugees. Nonetheless, to prepare the ground for possible future return movements, UNHCR resumed tripartite talks with the Governments of Tanzania and Burundi, which led to the signing of a tripartite agreement on voluntary repatriation on 8 May.

Pending the improvement of conditions for large-scale return, UNHCR continued to focus its activities on the provision of initial reintegration assistance to a limited number of returnees. (By June, an estimated 14,600 persons had returned to areas accessible to UNHCR). In the Muyinga province, 5,000 basic assistance packages were distributed to returnees. These comprised plastic sheeting, blankets, soap, jerry cans, hoes and seeds. UNHCR also provided spontaneous returnees with transportation to their area of origin, and, together with the *Ministère à la réintégration et à la réinstallation des déplacés et des rapatriés*, ensured that they were registered and provided with identity documents. Furthermore, emphasis was placed on the strengthening of the response capacity of local institutions and infrastructure, especially in the main areas of return in the eastern provinces. In this

context, UNHCR has been implementing projects to enhance existing health, water and educational facilities.

For the benefit of some 21,000 locals and IDPs, a post-conflict pilot project, initiated in collaboration with the World Bank, has been working towards the rehabilitation and reconstruction of social infrastructures, as well as reconciliation between different groups. As part of this project, three schools, one water supply system and one health centre were built. Besides, UNHCR continued providing support to the *Ministère de l'action sociale et de la promotion de la femme* as a contribution to the gradual empowerment of women. Some 30 income-generating projects were thus initiated, helping women to attain greater economic independence. Other activities included limited assistance to IDP families, who mainly benefited from UNHCR's shelter programme. A total of 408 roofing kits were distributed to former IDPs who returned to their communities of origin. Some 105 vulnerable returnees in Ruyigi and Muyinga provinces have so far participated in income-generating projects, which prepare them for economic independence. In addition, some 44 widows' associations in Muyinga have benefited from income-generating measures such as the distribution of seeds, livestock (mostly goats) and other agricultural inputs.

**Progress as measured against selected indicators**

INDICATORS	PROGRESS
Improved access to housing in Giteranyi, Muyinga Province through the construction of 680 houses.	Over 60 per cent of planned houses were built and some 408 roofing kits distributed.
Repatriating refugees assisted to return to their area of origin in a timely manner.	Some 5,700 returnees received transportation assistance to reach their respective area of origin in Muyinga province.
Improved infrastructure available in returnee areas in the eastern part of Burundi.	Ten schools and two health centres were built during the reporting period.

## REVISED OBJECTIVES AND PRIORITIES FOR JULY-DECEMBER

### *Congolese and Other Refugees*

Given current conditions in the DRC, a further influx of refugees to Burundi is to be expected. As a result of its recent internal review, UNHCR will continue to provide assistance to urban refugees, but will have to rely increasingly on other organisations to provide humanitarian assistance to camp-based refugees. In the absence of an agreement with the Government on the identification of a single camp location for all refugees, UNHCR will have to find temporary solutions for the various beneficiary groups.

### *Burundian Returnees*

Preparatory measures for a future large-scale return of Burundian refugees will aim at

improving the capacity of the local population to receive the returnees by creating a basis for social and economic development. More time will be devoted to following up on the modalities of the tripartite agreement and the strengthening of the tripartite commission.

Despite the planned reduction of UNHCR staff in Burundi by 60 per cent, the effective application of procedures and international refugee standards as well as the proper management of programme activities will not be compromised. In line with the High Commissioner's policy set out in Action 3, UNHCR Burundi will ensure that donors are fully informed about the Office's objectives, policies and programmes.

## FINANCIAL DATA (USD)

	<b>Initial Budget</b>	<b>Revised Budget</b>	<b>Total Funds Available<sup>1</sup></b>	<b>Total Funds Obligated</b>
<b>APB</b>	10,311,424	6,867,482	8,209,817	3,339,560

<sup>1</sup>Includes income from unrestricted contributions, income from contributions restricted to the regional, sub-regional and/or country level, opening balance and adjustments.