

Return and Reintegration of Burundian Refugees

SUPPLEMENTARY APPEAL

July 2004 — December 2005



The first group of returnees in Gisuru Transit Centre in Ruyigi waiting to be registered, January 2004. (UNHCR/Lau/Mundia)

INTRODUCTION

As a result of ten years of civil war, hundreds of thousands of Burundians are either internally displaced or are refugees in neighbouring countries. There are some 777,000* Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania (Tanzania), the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda and other countries in the region. Nearly half of these refugees have been provided with protection and humanitarian assistance in camps situated in Kagera and Kigoma regions of Tanzania since 1993.

In recent years, Tanzania has hosted the Burundi peace and reconciliation process, which culminated in the Arusha Peace and Reconciliation Accords of late 2000. However, until recently, intermittent fighting continued between the Government of Burundi and rebel forces, resulting in heavy civilian casualties and many population displacements within and across Burundi's borders. Yet, there are now tangible signs that both parties may finally honour the peace accords, thus paving the way for the majority of the refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs) to return to their places of origin.

In light of these developments, and while some repatriation has been ongoing in the past, UNHCR is now planning to facilitate the voluntary return and reintegration of most of the Burundian refugees, including those who left Burundi in 1972. This poses significant challenges to a society fractured by so many years of civil war and economic decline. Returnees will return to areas inhabited by equally deprived Burundians who chose not to move despite the war. Moreover, there are also an estimated 140,000 internally displaced persons in sites scattered all over the country.

In order to surmount these challenges, UNHCR will cooperate with other key partners, including the Burundian authorities, donors, NGOs and other UN Agencies with the competent mandate and resources to ensure that the return is durable. While UNHCR's overall repatriation and reintegration programme will extend into 2006, this document appeals for USD 83.3 million to fund operations in Tanzania, DRC and Burundi for the period up to the end of 2005. This tentative budget will need to be reviewed as the operation progresses.

RECENT DEVELOPMENTS

The 2000 Arusha Accords constitute the political platform and reference point for power sharing during the transitional period. These Accords were complemented by cease-fire agreements between the Government and the rebel groups. Unfortunately, not all parties acceded to the Accords. However, after the major rebel group CNDD-FDD signed an agreement with the Government in November 2003, security was restored in a large part of the country, except for rural areas around Bujumbura where the FNL-Palipehutu rebel group is still active. Many attempts to involve this group in the peace process have not yielded any tangible results, but it is hoped that regional conciliation efforts, in particular the South African mediation process, and UN initiatives will eventually lead to a peaceful solution.

Within the provisions of the Arusha Accords, the transition period should end in November 2004, paving the way for elections and the subsequent forming of a Government of National Unity. However, disagreements continue to exist regarding the timing of the planned elections as well as the content of the electoral code. Fur-

* As of June 2004, over 287,000 Burundian refugees were living in camps in Tanzania in the two regions of Kagera and Kigoma. According to Tanzanian authorities, there are also an estimated 170,000 Burundian refugees living in settlements and another 300,000 living spontaneously in villages - most of whom fled Burundi in 1972. These refugees are not provided with material assistance by UNHCR; but their plight remains of concern to the Office. In addition, there are some 20,000 Burundian refugees in DRC and some 350 in Rwanda.



Returnees prepare for their transfer from Gisuru transit centre in Ruyigi to their communes of origin, January 2004.
(UNHCR/Lau/Mundia)

ther difficulties arise from the fact that the FNL is still outside the current peace arrangements. Nevertheless, in spite of the ongoing impasse between the Transitional Government and the rebels, over 54,000 refugees have returned to Burundi since the beginning of the year: 50,000 of the returns were facilitated and some 4,000 refugees returned spontaneously.

The UN Security Council adopted a resolution in May 2004 authorizing the deployment of the United Nations Operation in Burundi (ONUB). As a result, 5,650 peacekeeping soldiers will soon be deployed in the areas of return. They will be supported by a civilian component as well as civilian police. The mandate of the ONUB mission explicitly includes support to humanitarian work. It will thus support and greatly enhance security for returnees as well as improve UNHCR's monitoring capacity. It is therefore likely that many more refugees will choose to return to their home country once the deployment of ONUB has been completed.

STRATEGY

Main Objectives:

- In collaboration with the Governments of Burundi and neighbouring countries, as well as other stakeholders, ensure that refugees and IDPs make a free and informed choice to return to places of their choice;
- Assist the Burundian Government and implementing partners in facilitating and, eventually, promoting the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees and ensure that their return is of a voluntary nature;
- Strengthen and reinforce national institutions, local communities and their institutions and civil society actors in Burundi through a variety of capacity-building measures;
- Receive and register refugees at transit centres, issue identity documents and ensure their transportation to final desti-

- nations;
- Ensure that the return is durable by reinforcing community services and promoting economic activities in areas of return;
- Support the rehabilitation process of the environment in former refugee camp sites.

Despite serious constraints posed by the conflict, substantial work has been achieved in some of the returnee areas over the last three years where UNHCR has had access. With the support of the international community and the European Union in particular, UNHCR has been able to rehabilitate some social and community infrastructure such as health centres, schools, roads and housing for over 190,000 refugees (facilitated and spontaneous) that have repatriated to their places of origin in the past three years. UNHCR will build on these achievements by working with the Burundian authorities and other interested parties to ensure that resources are provided to enable the returnees, IDPs and host communities to rebuild their lives.

UNHCR's programmes will be governed by an overall strategy of facilitating the voluntary repatriation and reintegration of Burundian refugees in areas that are deemed safe for return. To ensure that the return is durable, the Office plans to provide an enhanced returnee kit to the returnees and to support Community Stabilizing Projects (CSP). The latter aim to benefit returned refugees and IDPs, and the recipient communities, in particular the most vulnerable Burundian families that never left the country. Activities include the stabilization of return areas in sectors such as shelter, water, clinics, health, sanitation, markets and schools. UNHCR will also help build up the capacity of the relevant line ministries, such as the *Ministère de la Réinsertion et de la Réinstallation des Déplacés et des Rapatriés* (MRRDR), which includes the *Commission Nationale de Réhabilitation des Sinistrés* (CNRS), UNHCR's main counterpart in the repatriation programme. In addition, it will assist in building the capacities of local communities and their institutions, as well as civil society actors. The Office will engage in supporting the establishment of laws, procedures

and institutions necessary for the restoration of national protection (e.g. restitution of property rights). Furthermore, it will continue to work towards reinforcing national capacities in the field of promotion of human rights and justice. UNHCR will, from the outset, work closely with other parties such as development agencies to ensure that its activities are consistent with broader national reconstruction objectives outlined in the last Forum for Burundi Development Partners meeting held in Brussels in January 2004.

Some of the refugees may opt to remain in the countries of asylum for genuine reasons, and will continue to receive protection and assistance. UNHCR will support clean-up activities in the vacated camps as well as the rehabilitation of the surrounding environment. Camps may have to be consolidated for more effective provision of services.

OPERATIONS

Beneficiaries

To date, there are 287,000 assisted Burundian refugees in the Kagera and Kigoma regions in western Tanzania. Based on the statistics provided by the Government of Tanzania, there are also some 170,000 Burundians living in settlements in the Rukwa, Tabora and Kigoma regions and another group of 300,000 living in villages mainly in the Kigoma region. There are also approximately 20,000 Burundian refugees in DRC and a further 350 in Rwanda, many of whom will opt to return to Burundi in the coming two to three years. Given Rwanda's proximity and the relatively good roads, their journey to Burundi is not expected to pose any difficulties. On the other hand, the security situation and the very poor road conditions in DRC will certainly present some challenges to those returning to Burundi.

UNHCR plans to repatriate and provide initial re-integration assistance to some 150,000 refugees in 2004. The planning figure for 2005 is a further 150,000 persons.

UNHCR's policy has been to assist the most vulnerable of the local population in areas of return to avoid tension between the refugees coming back home and the populations, which include the IDPs returning to the same locations as the refugees. They have been exposed to similar circumstances which prompted their flight and they are likely to have suffered the same forms of discrimination and experienced the same difficulties in restarting their lives. While cooperating with other UN agencies to avoid duplication, UNHCR will assist about 7,000 IDP families in areas where they will co-habit with former refugees. Priority will be given to vulnerable groups, such as single-headed families, disabled persons and others.

Part of UNHCR's programme will consist of Community Stabilizing Projects, including the rehabilitation of primary schools, health centres and public infrastructure (e.g. access roads and small markets). The nature and design of these programmes will therefore indirectly benefit the local population in areas with a relatively high concentration of returnees, such as Makamba, Rutana, Ruyigi, Cankuzo, Muyinga, Kirundo, Karuzi, Gitega, Ngozi and Bururi.



A returnee receives nails for constructing his individual house in Muyinga province.
(SADC/Roberto Knuesel)

Repatriation

UNHCR will provide accurate, complete and up-to-date information on conditions prevailing in the country of origin, especially in areas of return. The returnees will be provided with a standardized repatriation package to ensure a dignified and sustainable return. UNHCR will continue to promote the creation of acceptable conditions for return and it will exercise its returnee monitoring function to better inform the decision-making process when moving from facilitation to promotion of repatriation. Once UNHCR's own assessment has confirmed that overall conditions in Burundi are conducive for return in safety and dignity, the Office will move from the facilitation to the promotion of return.

In Tanzania, additional transit centres will be opened for the operation along Burundi's border to allow for a smooth transfer of returnees. Together with its partners, UNHCR will facilitate the returnees' transport back to their communes of origin and provide them with food and water during the transfer. It will also provide medical screening and vaccinations before departure. A budget has been allocated for the construction of Departure Centres and the demolition or rehabilitation of the refugee infrastructure.

Equally, refugee hosting areas will be rehabilitated under the forestry sector. Those repatriating will also receive legal assistance.

Reintegration

In Burundi, reception facilities will be provided for the returnees and reintegration activities will be expanded. It is planned that WFP will supply food to the returnees at least until the first harvest. UNHCR will ensure that refugees have access to potable water and it will provide materials for the construc-

tion of family-based latrines. The Office, together with its partners, will support mobile health clinics in returnee areas and habitually conduct health screenings in the transit centres. Complementing UNICEF, UNHCR will also contribute to the development of a primary school system in return areas. The individual housing programme is the most important component for the reintegration of Burundian refugees as most of their houses are destroyed beyond repair after a decade of absence. UNHCR will provide the necessary materials for the construction of shelters, while the returnees will provide labour as well as easily available materials themselves. Community services will be provided and income-generation activities will be conducted. UNHCR will also support the preservation of the environment in Burundi. To ensure the sustainability of return, UNHCR will promote dialogue between the returnees and the receiving population.



Returnees prepare the site of a new communal building in Ruyigi province (SADC/Roberto Knuesel)

Support to operations

The anticipated large-scale return will necessitate the reinforcement of UNHCR's capacity in Burundi, in Tanzania and to a lesser extent in DRC. Additional staff will be hired and UNHCR's returnee monitoring presence will be increased. The Office currently has two field offices in Makamba and Muyinga and a sub-office in Ruyigi. These offices require an increase in both national and international staff to facilitate the implementation of UNHCR's programme.

COORDINATION

Considering the multitude of assistance programmes in Burundi, effective coordination mechanisms are critical to ensure complementarity and guarantee the success of the repatriation and reintegration programme. UNHCR has been consulting and coordinating with other key UN agencies to enter into solid relationships that allow a smooth implementation of the return and repatriation programme. As a result, several Memoranda of Understanding (MOUs) have been established with agencies such as WHO, UNICEF, FAO, UNDP and the World Bank, covering the health, education and food sectors as well as multi-sectoral activities to complement and supplement existing arrangements.

The Contact Group run by OCHA will coordinate the exchange of information on the activities of humanitarian/developmental agencies. Consistency in policy development will be monitored 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 (Repatriation, Reintegration, Rehabilitation and Reconstruction) initiative. Furthermore, UNHCR will work closely with the *Ministère de la Réinsertion et de la Réinstallation des Déplacés et des Rapatriés* and will render support to its tasks in the context of return and reintegration. It will also support the *Com-*



Returnees prepare to board UNHCR repatriation trucks in Gisuru transit centre for their final journey home, January 2004. (UNHCR/Lau/Mundia)



Returnees receive food rations upon their arrival in Gisuru transit centre, January 2004. (UNHCR/Lau/Mundia)

mission Nationale de Réhabilitation des Sinistrés
(CNRS). This will be complemented with cross-sector coordination meetings, which will set the objectives and technical standards of the sector and ensure a clear division of responsibilities between actors. UNHCR is actively collaborating with the UN Country Team in the Consolidated Appeals Process and its 2004 programme is included in the *2004 UN Consolidated Inter-Agency Appeal for Burundi*, as will be the 2005 programme.

SUPPLEMENTARY PROGRAMME FOR THE RETURN AND REINTEGRATION OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

Overall Requirements 1 July 2004 - 31 December 2005
(in US Dollars)

ACTIVITIES AND SERVICES	July - December 2004					January - December 2005					TOTAL 2004-2005
	BURUNDI	DRC	TANZANIA	HQ	TOTAL	BURUNDI	DRC	TANZANIA	HQ	TOTAL	
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	2,680,029	200,000	606,321	-	3,486,350	9,124,481	596,412	4,120,878	-	13,841,771	17,328,121
Community Services	430,000	40,000	-	-	470,000	900,000	120,000	160,000	-	1,180,000	1,650,000
Crop Production	450,000	-	-	-	450,000	1,100,000	-	-	-	1,100,000	1,550,000
Domestic Needs/Household Support	800,000	40,000	-	-	840,000	3,100,000	80,000	-	-	3,180,000	4,020,000
Education	999,769	-	-	-	999,769	4,200,000	-	-	-	4,200,000	5,199,769
Food	420,000	-	-	-	420,000	810,000	-	-	-	810,000	1,230,000
Forestry	400,000	-	-	-	400,000	900,000	-	-	-	900,000	1,300,000
Health/Nutrition	800,000	20,000	-	-	820,000	1,800,000	40,000	310,000	-	2,150,000	2,970,000
Income Generation	600,000	-	-	-	600,000	1,300,000	-	-	-	1,300,000	1,900,000
Legal Assistance / Protection	700,000	40,000	-	-	740,000	1,100,000	90,000	350,000	-	1,540,000	2,280,000
Operational Support (to Agencies)	1,200,000	60,000	100,000	-	1,360,000	2,472,276	180,000	550,000	-	3,202,276	4,562,276
Sanitation	300,000	20,000	-	-	320,000	1,332,000	30,000	250,000	-	1,612,000	1,932,000
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	3,800,000	30,000	-	-	3,830,000	12,350,000	55,000	350,000	-	12,755,000	16,585,000
Transport / Logistics	1,500,000	150,000	1,800,000	-	3,450,000	2,590,000	605,000	1,600,000	-	4,795,000	8,245,000
Water (non-agricultural)	400,000	-	-	-	400,000	1,200,000	-	420,000	-	1,620,000	2,020,000
Total Operations	15,479,798	600,000	2,506,321	-	18,586,119	44,278,757	1,796,412	8,110,878	-	54,186,047	72,772,166
Support Costs (7%) (*)	1,083,586	42,000	175,442	-	1,301,028	3,099,513	125,749	567,762	-	3,793,024	5,094,052
Programme Support	838,503	-	61,000	181,975	1,081,478	3,067,426	-	756,210	528,668	4,352,304	5,433,782
Grand Total	17,401,887	642,000	2,742,763	181,975	20,988,625 (*)	50,445,696	1,922,161	9,434,850	528,668	62,331,375	83,300,000

(*) A 7% support cost has been added to the total operational requirements and will be recovered from each contribution to meet indirect support costs in UNHCR (Field and HQs).

(**) The a/m budgetary requirements are supplementary to the 2004 Annual Budget approved appropriation of USD 13,498,228. (Grand Total AB/ISB USD 34,466,853 for 2004 to provide Repatriation Assistance to Burundian Refugees).



