



**UNHCR
BURUNDI**

Bulletin 2 • Kavumu Special Edition

Editorial



Donors' sign at the camp entrance © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

Discover the design, features and highlights of the new Kavumu camp across the bulletin articles... In December 2012, the Government of Burundi generously granted a piece of land of 81 hectares in the province of Cankuzo to accommodate refugees fleeing insecurity in eastern DRC. [With a total capacity of 13,000 refugees, the new camp was officially opened on 15th of May 2013.](#)

A motto: EMPOWERMENT!



First area built in less than a month © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

It is on this note that Jérôme Merlin, head of UNHCR Field Office in Ruyigi, began his speech for the camp opening. He stressed the importance of [the involvement of refugees in the camp development and especially in the construction of their homes.](#)

Immediately after their arrival, refugees received poles, pegs and other materials in order to build their shelters (that is to say, a kitchen, a living room and 3 bedrooms). UNHCR raised awareness among men concerning the need for supporting vulnerable people. Among the 192 refugees from the first convoy, only 24 were adult men to build the 39 shelters. UNHCR was in no doubt: with the technical support of COPED, the refugees took up the challenge!

A new camp for refugees ... and the local population!



One of the six water ramp already built © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

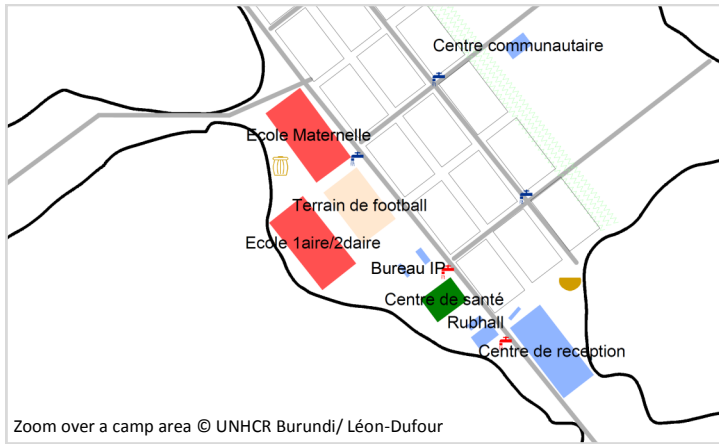
The refugees receive humanitarian assistance but many assistance projects also benefit the local population:

- Kavumu local population has [access to the water fountain](#) located at the camp entrance and the other two terminals placed in their interest on the 13km-long water supply to the camp (one at the source and the other at Kavumu public school). The camp itself has been designed to have a minimal impact on the environment (trees preservation and promotion of low-energy cooking).
- The local population benefits from the [services of the camp health centre for free](#). UNHCR also facilitates [birth registration in the surrounding villages](#), as it does already in camp for refugee children.
- More than [1,000 people from the local community](#) have been involved in the construction of the site and its access road. Local teachers have been recruited to ensure catch-up classes for refugee children arrived during the school year.
- A camp also involves [exchanges between the local population and refugees, be it commercial, relational or cultural](#). A committee of refugees and local representatives has been established to discuss issues of common interest and the organization of socio-cultural activities. The traditional dances organized by Kavumu inhabitants to welcome the first convoy of refugees already predict a peaceful cohabitation between the two communities.



Health centre © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

Did you know?



- The 81 hectares of the camp will include **2544 houses** divided into 53 areas. 960 houses are expected to be built in 2013.
- The surface of a house varies between **27.5 m² and 35m²** for 5-7 persons.
- To build a house, one needs **60 poles, 12kg of nails, metal sheets 16, 500 reeds and two reels of rope.**
- A water tower under construction will supply **388,800 litres of water a day**, or about 20L of water per person a day!
- It took **four months and more than 1,000 people from the local community for the site preparation, construction** of the camp basic infrastructures and its access road, using labour-intensive methods.

Kavumu, the result of a close collaboration...



The opening of Kavumu camp would not have been possible without the support of UNHCR's partners:

- The Office National pour la Protection des Réfugiés et des Apatrides (**ONPRA**) manages and administers the camp and coordinates the partners activities.
- African Humanitarian Action (**AHA**) takes care of the medical needs of refugees.
- International Rescue Committee (**IRC**) is responsible for education and also the identification of unaccompanied minors and separated children needs in collaboration with other partners.
- The Conseil pour l'Education et le Développement (**COPED**)



provides support for shelter, water and sanitation.

- **CARITAS** distributes every month the food ration and basic non-food items.
- The World Food Programme (**WFP**) provides food for the refugees.
- The Refugee Education Trust (**RET**) is responsible for literacy and peace education.
- Avocat Sans Frontières (**ASF**) provides capacity building and judicial monitoring sexual and gender-based violence cases.
- **UNHCR** coordinates the protection, and assistance operations and is involved in the physical verification of refugees.

... and a major investment!



Building a camp means building an entire village. It was first necessary to service the site while preserving the environment and preventing erosion. A gravity supply system is being finalized, with a 13km-long pipeline and a water tower. In addition to shelters, the camp has a reception centre for new arrivals, classrooms for up to 300 students (other classrooms are under construction), a health centre, a food distribution centre, administrative offices for partners, but also a police station and two rub-halls to store materials.

The costs of the construction and the camp running for a year are estimated at USD 2,550,000, partially funded by Japan and ECHO.

But who really are the first Kavumu refugees ?



Children at Kajaga transit centre, before joining the first convoy to Kavumu.

© UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

They were 192 in the first convoy, 102 in the second, and 115 in the third. But who really are these refugees and what do they flee?

For the three first convoys, the observation is the same: **almost two-thirds of the refugees are under 18, one quarter of them less than 5 years old ...** Among adults, many mothers forced to abandon their husbands and property to protect children and new-borns. Most of these refugees flee inter-ethnic conflicts in the Rusizi plain (Uvira district) and exactions perpetrated by armed forces and rebel groups in other cities such as Uvira, Kiliba, Sange, Luvungi Luberizi, Kamanyola, Fizi and Baraka.

Looking for refuge and security...



Cishemere transit centre © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

Esther, 23 years old, fled eastern DRC with his young son when her husband, a mayorship candidate, was assassinated by members of another ethnic group fighting for power. Unfortunately, Esther story is not singular. **From 28 March to 16 April 2013, 264 people arrived at the transit centre of Cishemere, welcomed by the Red Cross of Burundi. Among these refugees, 175 children...** All of them crossed Burundi borders hoping to find refuge and security.

With a total capacity of 1200 persons, the transit centres of Cishemere (in the province of Cibitoke) and Kajaga (in Bujumbura Mairie) have recently been opened. Refugees stay there a few days, the time for ONPRA to determine their refugee status. They are then transferred to the Kavumu camp where they are assisted by UNHCR and its partners.

From Kajaga to Kavumu... the long road of the first convoy

Irene is happy. A local helps her to carry food donated by the WFP, as she just arrived in Kavumu camp after two days of travel.

Tuesday, April 10, at 9 am, **she embarked along with 191 other refugees on four trucks and two buses for vulnerable persons.**

Tuesday night, they spent the night at Ruyigi transit centre after having received a set of non-food items (blankets, mats, buckets, jerry cans, mosquito nets, soap) and a hot meal distributed

by CARITAS. They finally arrived on Wednesday noon in Kavumu camp where they received a hygiene kit for women, firewood as well as a ration card and food for a month. At 16 o'clock, fires smoked and children already started to play in the Temporary Accommodation Centre of Kavumu camp.

Follow their story on our facebook page!



Irene, helped by a local, is holding WFP food on her bike © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski



Lunch break for the convoy © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

A colourful opening ceremony, as a symbol of an harmonious atmosphere between locals and refugees!



Burundian drummers and Congolese dancers © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski



Members of the international community and Burundian authorities © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski

« We gave up everything and came over here. Today, there won't be farming for us! » laughed two Kavumu inhabitants, happy with the benefits of the new camp. A lot of them came from Kavumu to welcome Congolese refugees during the opening ceremony of the camp, Wednesday, 15th of April 2013, in the presence of the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Province Governor.

Speeches, drummers shows, Burundian and Congolese traditional dances, facilities tour and meetings with refugees followed one after the other in the presence of the Netherlands Ambassador, the Executive Secretary of the International Conference of the Great Lakes Region, representatives of the international community (EU, Belgium, France, Russia and the USA) as well as the WFP Deputy country director and a representative from UNICEF. The already fruitful cooperation between refugees and locals (including for the shelters construction) and the respect for the environment have been highlighted by the various stakeholders.

En vrac



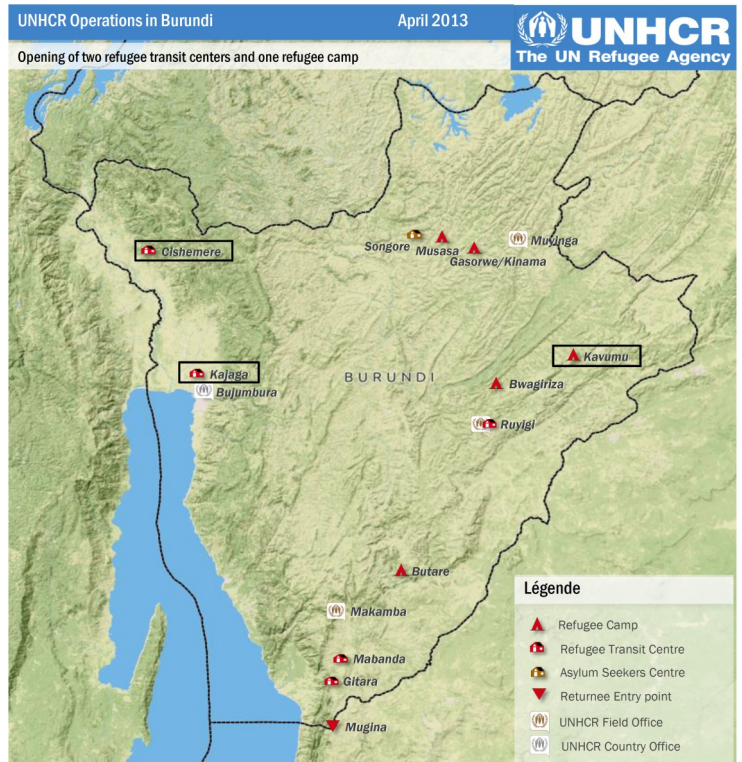
Refugee representative during the opening ceremony © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski



Congolese dances during the opening ceremony © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski



Children playing in front of a installation kit in a « room » of the Temporary Accommodation Centre © UNHCR Burundi/ Wittorski



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