



## Burundi Weekly Humanitarian News

22 – 28 SEPTEMBER 2008

# Activities and Updates

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### Assistance to Burundians expelled from Tanzania

The Government project for the reintegration of war-affected persons (PARESI) registered 202 Burundians (62 families) expelled from Tanzania who arrived through the entry points of Gisuru / Ruyigi Province 11 persons (9 families), Mishiha / Cankuzo Province 33 persons (12 families), Mabanda / Makamba Province 139 persons (35 families) and Kobero / Muyinga Province 19 persons (6 families).

### Protection

During the reporting period, the Human Rights Council extended the mandate of the Independent Expert on the human situation in Burundi until the creation of a national Independent human rights commission. The council further urged the Government of Burundi to maintain its efforts in the area of transitional justice in collaboration with the United Nations and the civil society.

Meanwhile, on the ground HR&JOs continued to monitor closely the deterioration of the relations between the Government and the opposition parties as well as the civil society. Indeed, the Government's recurrent violation of the rights to freedom of assembly and association, and freedom of expression might result in an escalation situation. As indicated in the independent expert's latest report, the CNDD-FDD led Government regularly denies most political parties the chance to carry out their political activities. Moreover, efforts made to promote a culture of free information are being jeopardised when the judicial authorities are used, such in the recent summoning of several media specialists and civil society members before the tribunal de grande instance (TGI) of Bujumbura Mairie. In some cases, the latter were subsequently arrested and jailed pending their trial. The HR&JD remains highly concerned about this trend, particularly in the context of the 2010 elections.

This week also, HR&JOs continued the awareness-raising campaign within the framework of the integrated strategy to fight sexual violence against women and children. A total of 618 participants attended the twelve sessions held in 8 different provinces. In the meantime, the HR&JD also participated in the National Steering Committee of the Pan African Conference on the African Decade of Persons with Disabilities' General Assembly. Discussions focused on the approval of the Committee's organigramme as well as budgetary aspects of the forthcoming celebration on 3rd December of the International Day of the disabled. This marks a crucial step towards the awareness, the promotion and protection of the rights of people living with disabilities.

### 2009A seeds Fairs

The preparations for the season 2009A began in mid-September 2008. Among the 254,850 vulnerable households targeted by the humanitarian community working to Burundi, 176,540 will be assisted by the FAO and its partners, including 20,400 through seeds fairs.

Besides the ongoing distributions of agricultural inputs, the seeds fairs were actually organized on the markets of Mbuye, Gahombo, Kigamba of the Muramvya provinces, Kayanza and Cankuzo during the week of September 22<sup>nd</sup> to 27<sup>th</sup>. Nearly 5,000 households received a hoe, 20 grams marsh seeds and a kit of seeds worth 10,000 FBU or 10US\$.

The fair system allows beneficiaries to select seeds from local producers. This contributes to generating additional income in rural area. The bestsellers among programme beneficiaries are bean, corn and potato seeds.

The producers of seeds freely compete for costumers and the prices are negotiated. This allows relatively prices lower. At Kayanza market, the average price of bean was of 860 FBU, in Cankuzo, it was of 900 FBU/kg and in Muramvya 800 FBU/kg. The next fairs will be held in the

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provinces of Bujumbura Rural, Ruyigi and Muramvya.



Seeds fair in Gahombo, Kayanza Province)

### Update on food aid distribution

WFP distributed 971 MT of food aid to 73,811 beneficiaries through its various partner's programmes.

### Assessment of the impact of rains and hailstorms in Muyinga Province

Hailstorms struck the Nyamurenza commune in the province of Ngozi on the night between September 23rd and 24th. Seven hills were affected; Gasegerwa, Gicu, Kaganda, Gitare, Nyarusange, Shoza and Kinyovu). As a result of the storm, there were five casualties including two fatalities. Some infrastructures such as the youth and women centres were damaged; the communal centre's roof had also been damaged along with some homes. In addition, 200 families were affected when hail destroyed crops of corn and beans in the marshlands between Gatare and Kinyovu. On the hills; cassava, banana and coffee plantations were mostly affected by the hail.

### Assessment of the impact of hail and rainstorms in Kayanza Province

A rainstorm hit the province of Kayanza on September 17<sup>th</sup> and 18<sup>th</sup>. The hills of the Gahombo commune were particularly affected. Crops in the marshlands of Rumira, Ruzingati, Kiyange and Gakuro were completely destroyed flash floods. Beans, corn, tobacco and vegetables were grown on the marshlands. It is expected that as a result of the destruction of the crops in the marshlands, approximately 2,400 families exploiting these marshes will lose around one month worth food of consumption and according to discussions with a focus group men and women met in the marsh of Rumira; they will not be able to make up this deficit by their own means.

Also the destruction of the tobacco cultivated in the marshes will represent a loss of earnings for many households.



Crops covered by earth after the flash floods (Kayanza Province)

### Feedback from Refugees International mission to Burundi

According to Refugees International, Burundi is facing enormous challenges reintegrating thousands of refugees who spent decades in exile. To ensure long-term stability, the government of Burundi should address more vigorously land and property disputes between returnees and residents, and donor countries should strengthen local government bodies and help them boost services and livelihood opportunities for returnees. R.I. recommended the following:

- The government of Burundi should increase the capacity of the land commission, consider how to incorporate locally developed conflict resolution mechanisms, and legislate a solution to the 1972 cases of state land redistribution.
- The government of Burundi should invest in expanding basic services, livelihood creation and long-term economic development programs in areas of high returns.
- Donor countries should provide greater technical assistance to decentralized state structures and maintain funding levels for recovery activities.
- UNHCR should work closely with the government of Burundi to facilitate the social cohesion and the creation of community structures within the 'peace villages' program.

The Humanitarian Coordinator in Burundi recently recommended to the Emergency Relief Coordinator projects worth 3.6US\$ millions to address the issues of reintegration in Burundi.