

Editorial

Stay ready and prepared to receive, protect and assist asylum seekers in safety and dignity: *a strategy that yielded good results during the influx of Congolese asylum seekers in August and September 2013, in Cibitoke Province . This situation found Cishemere Transit Center operational and UNHCR partners already mobilized to receive up to 450 Congolese asylum seekers per day. Transfers to the Kavumu refugee camp were organized in order to accommodate new arrivals. Local and national authorities supported the partners and assisted in the reception of the newcomers especially in the first moments of the influx. In Kavumu camp, new arrivals received a more comprehensive assistance. At the same time had taken place the expulsion of Burundians living illegally in Tanzania, which has been more difficult to coordinate due to the number of arrivals estimated at 30,000 and lack of means to assist them.*

1,500 Congolese asylum seekers from the Ruzizi plain cross into Burundi



Congolese asylum-seekers at Buganda /Cibitoke awaiting their transfer at Cishemere transit center© UNHCR Burundi



The Burundian Red Cross distributing food items to newly arrived asylum seekers.©UNHCR Burundi

Since mid August, UNHCR and its partners have faced an influx of over 1,500 Congolese asylum seekers from the Ruzizi plain (Luvungi, Luberizi,...). They flee Inter-ethnic conflicts and abuses caused by non-identified rebel groups and the FARDC. Testimonies of several asylum seekers indicate that there were at least eight people killed and wounded among the civilian population. The population and the administration of the Commune of Buganda in Cibitoke Province welcomed some 3,000 asylum-seekers during the first moments of their escape before their transfer to Cishemere transit centre. They were quickly registered and assisted before being transferred to Kavumu camp in Cankuzo Province, while others [have preferred to return to the Burundian host families until the situation became normal again in the villages in the DRC](#) .

Some 32 households of 144 people have however preferred to return to their homes in the DRC. They left the Cishemere transit centre and returned to their villages on their own.

The event took place in August during school holidays and some children staying with their parents were victims of the unrest. More than 50 children have been identified and registered as separated children. The later have received appropriate assistance including psychological support as well tracing and family reunification.

Additional health services were organized as night duty services and an ambulance on standby day and night in Cishemere transit centre. [The safety of the transit centre was reinforced.](#)

The influx has slowed down in mid-September. 44% of asylum seekers were women. A joint mission of the UNHCR Representative and the Resident Coordinator was organized in Kavumu refugee to take stock of the situation of the new asylum seekers.

More than 30, 000 Burundians expelled from in August and September 2013



Resident Humanitarian Resident, UNHCR Representative and a Representative of the Burundian Ministry of External Relations talk with Burundians expelled from Tanzania© UNHCR Burundi.



Burundians expelled from Tanzania, a few hours after crossing the border© UNHCR Burundi.



UNHCR Burundi Representative addressing Burundians expelled from Tanzania© UNHCR Burundi.

30,000 Burundians, a smaller number of Rwandans, Congolese and Tanzanians identified as illegal immigrants by the Tanzanian authorities were recently expelled from Tanzania to Burundi. The first expellees arrived on August 14, 2013. UNHCR has identified among the expelled persons a few refugees whose status was still active. For these, appropriate measures were taken including distribution of a return package for those who expressed the wish to return to their villages of origin. For the rest of this small number of refouled refugees wishing to return to Tanzania, discussions of a possible return to Tanzania were initiated by UNHCR Tanzania.

The first expelled persons travelled on their own following instructions of the Tanzanian President on July 25, 2013 to expel illegal migrants. Since September 9, the expulsion was made in a more systematic and organised manner. Officers from the Tanzanian Home Affairs Ministry escorted convoys of expelled persons to the border, and in some cases, beyond it within the Burundian territory. They left them under the Burundian Government's responsibility.

UNHCR follows with much attention this expulsion movement and actively participates in the coordination of assistance with Burundi's authorities and other stakeholders such as IOM, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, and the Burundian Red Cross. Joint inter-agency needs assessment missions were organized on the basis of which an application for CERF funds was made and approved. Since the first arrivals, UNHCR has made the protection monitoring at the border and in the reception centres (schools, transit centres).

Reports and observations refer to the use of violence during the expulsion (marks of blows, broken body parts, burns). Many children were separated and persons with specific needs such as pregnant women were further impacted by the expulsion. Families of mixed couples (Tanzania/Burundi) were separated during the expulsion. A briefing note on the situation of the expelled persons was prepared and is available on request.

UNHCR distributed water and contributed alongside IOM in the logistical organisation of transfers for the evictees to their communes of origin. Return areas are located mainly in the Provinces of Makamba, Bururi, Rutana and Ruyigi. These same locations had earlier received some 33, 000 returnees from Mtabila in Tanzania by the end of 2012. This situation may render the social and economic conditions of the population even more precarious because of additional pressure on resources.

Two issues remain to address: First, the conditions in the transit centers are inappropriate and below standards. Deaths have been reported in transit centers. Secondly, 800 landless families without reference should be given special attention otherwise they may find themselves in a precarious situation inside their country.

On 4 September 2013, Ms. Rosine Sori-Coulibaly, Deputy UN Secretary General Special Representative and Resident Humanitarian Coordinator in Burundi, and Ms. Catherine Huck, UNHCR Representative in Burundi accompanied by a Representative of the Ministry of External Relations, conducted a mission to inquire into the situation of the expelled Burundians from Tanzania in the Province of Muyinga and Rutana.

Repatriation and reintegration of Burundian refugees



A returnee in front of his house built by UNHCR © UNHCR Burundi.

Burundians continue to repatriate regularly but in small numbers, mainly from Tanzania. These are mainly former refugees in Mtabila camp. The repatriation movement of Burundian refugees from the DRC has accelerated during this quarter given the deterioration of the situation in the South Kivu: Some 800 persons returned since the beginning of year.

With regards to reintegration, the shelter project is being normally implemented. Out of 1000 shelters planned in 2013, 977 have been completed, including 645 in Makamba, 155 in Bururi and Rutana 200. 33 landless households that remained in the of temporary accommodation center have permanently left them. They moved to their land where they built their homes. It should be noted nevertheless that delays in the delivery of official letters proving returnees' ownship of allocated houses and land that have been distributed to them by the Government have caused discontent of the beneficiaries. About 350 returnees from the Nyanzalac Commune (Makamba) have demonstrated early September.

University education for refugees and returnees



Recipients of the 2008 DAFI scholarship © UNHCR A. Kirchhof.

Since 1992 the German Albert Einstein Academic Initiative for Refugees (DAFI) awards scholarships to refugees in the country of asylum. DAFI is funded by the Federal Government of Germany and administered by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in collaboration with the Refugee Education Trust (RET) in order to assist returnees and refugees to access higher education. Since its establishment in 1992, DAFI has awarded scholarships to more than 6,000 deserving refugees, so that they can study in universities and faculties in the host country and, more recently, in their country of origin, once back. In Burundi the DAFI project began in 2008. Since then, 113 scholarships have been granted to refugees and returnees. 42 of these 113 students will complete university studies in December 2013. For the current year, 37 refugees and returnees will benefit from new scholarships. UNHCR has partnered with *Université Lumière de Bujumbura*, which has agreed to enrol these students and to offer them to choose from the following faculties: Information Technology, Management and Administration, Law, Communication, Clinical Psychology, Political Science and International Relations, Theology, Science of Accounting, and Finance and Health Science. The competition between candidates is tough. For example, out of 300 applications registered at the beginning of the last quarter of this year, only 25 candidates, (including nine girls were selected): four from Bujumbura, five from Bwagiriza camp, five from Musasa camp, six from Gasorwe/Kinama camp and five returnees. One of the qualifying criteria for this scholarship is to graduate with a score between 60-65%, in addition to a State diploma. The DAFI programme is a unique opportunity for refugees and returnees to pursue university studies.



Recipients of the DAFI scholarship during award ceremony. 2010 © UNHCR B. Ntwari

UNHCR donates brick presses to the National Solidarity Ministry



One of the Bricks presse donated by UNHCR to the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender© PARESI

The UNHCR Office in Burundi has granted a donation of four brick presses to the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human rights and Gender. These brick presses have been purchased and utilized in the construction of social and community infrastructure, such as schools in the communes of return. These brick presses will be used by PARESI, UNHCR partner for shelter project in charge of reintegration of returnees in the Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender. "The machines that we have just acquired will contribute to the reintegration of vulnerable landless returnees through the construction of houses made of stabilized bricks with cement in the peace villages," observed, Fabien Yamuremye, Director of PARESI.

Three other brick presses have been delivered to the Council for Education and development (COPED) which, in the past, had used such machines to build five primary schools in the Province of Cankuzo.

"Food For Peace" /USAID Washington delegation visits refugee camps



FFP Delegation greeting a refugee woman during the verification operation in Bujumbura© UNHCR.B.Ntwari

"Food For Peace" (FFP) of USAID Washington/USA Delegation stayed in Burundi during the month of September 2013. They visited Ruyigi, Cankuzo, and Makamba Provinces. After visiting the verification operation of the urban refugees in Bujumbura, the Delegation visited the Bwagiriza refugee camp to witness the success of the food vouchers and money transfers (Cash & Vouchers) typically used by WFP in Bwagiriza, Musasa and Kinama camps. The FFP Delegation was able to discuss with the beneficiaries as well as with residents who take part in food fairs. All agreed on the effectiveness of this system.

In Makamba, the Delegation visited the integrated rural villages in Musenyi, and the Muyogoro site, where landless returnees currently staying in Gitara II temporary accommodation will build their house. The Delegation also visited the expelled persons' transit center in Mabanda, a school canteen in Gatabo run with the USAID funding. The school canteen programme will positively impact 5 156 returnee children from four of the communes of Makamba having hosted the largest number of returnees.

Child Protection

In its overall plan of protection, UNHCR Burundi prioritizes the protection of children. In this context, UNHCR's implementing partner for Child Protection in Burundi, IRC, was reinforced in June 2013 by a UNHCR Child Protection team based in Muyinga and Ruyigi. The main focus of the UNHCR Child Protection team is to undertake Best Interest Determinations (BIDs) for children at risk, including all unaccompanied and separated children identified in the camps.

Undertaking BIDs is an important aspect of Child Protection. It permits multi-functional teams to focus on individual children's needs in terms of care, health and educational needs, as well as durable solutions. The BID is done with a view to ensuring protection and appropriate assistance of the child according to his/her specific needs, but the ultimate aim is to find a durable solution. In certain cases, it is necessary to find a temporary solution like a host family if it is a separated or an unaccompanied minor. In terms of identifying the best interest of a child, it is essential to consider the possibility of finding the child's parents, if they are still alive. This is the reason why tracing for parents or family members is compulsory before deciding which option is the best among local integration, return to home country and resettlement.

An innovative project, to facilitate immediate tracing for newly arrived children, was initiated in September, following an influx in August of Congolese asylum-seekers, and a boy has voluntarily returned to his family in the DRC. Efforts to find the families of other children wanting to return are underway with the support of ICRC. Undertaking BIDs in the context of a resettlement operation is not an easy task, since the prospect of resettlement can contribute to distortion of information, both by the child and the host family seeking resettlement opportunities, whereas UNHCR and its partners rely on true and verified information. In early October, a workshop on the protection of children was held in Ruyigi 27 colleagues in the ONPRA, IRC, AHA and UNHCR (protection, Community outreach and child protection).

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Refugee children awaiting his determination of status at ONPRA© UNHCR A. ENACHE

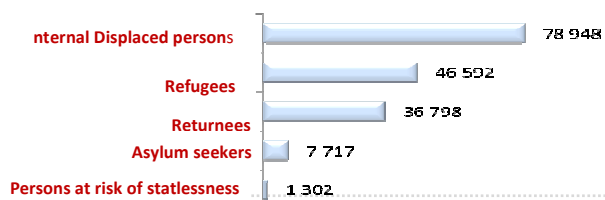
Verification of urban refugees in Bujumbura



Refugees awaiting verification at ONPRA © UNHCR
Burundi/ Ntwari

General information

Population of concern to UNHCR as of 30 September 2013



Budget cuts

Following many refugee crises in the world that require the intervention of UNHCR, internal reallocation of funds at global level was made. Thus, UNHCR operations in Burundi was impacted by a significant cut of 785 000 USD from its annual operational budget of 14 741 427 USD.

In order to minimize the impacts of this budget reduction on beneficiaries, UNHCR and its implementing partners agreed on priority activities to be carried out until the end of 2013. A document on the budgetary impacts is available upon request.

Verification of refugees residing in the Bujumbura Mairie began on 13 August at the National Office for the Protection of Refugees and stateless persons (ONPRA). Refugees have responded massively to the appeal by UNHCR and ONPRA to verify and update their data (family composition, age, gender). A week before the end of this operation, 2 256 families of 12 141 urban refugee had reported to the ONPRA to be verified and have their information data updated.

The particularity of the verification exercise in urban settings is that refugees do not reside in the camps but live in dispersed and varied urban neighborhoods.

Transportation arrangement to and from ONPRA was made for refugees with disabilities or those who are sick. They were also given priority when it came to verification interviews.

First observations reveal that there are many refugee children whose families cannot afford paying for their schooling. The verification of urban asylum seekers will be organized soon after urban refugees have been verified.

| TOTAL BUDGET | | USD 13 970 427 |
|----------------------------------|--|-----------------------|
| Recorded Contributions | | |
| CERF | | 605,502 |
| CIRGL | | 82,000 |
| Japan | | 5, 000, 000 |
| European Union | | 1, 303, 781 |
| Denmark | | 1,200,001 |
| Switzerland | | 269, 978 |
| USA | | 685,400 |
| TOTAL | | 9, 233, 632 |
| FUNDING LEVEL | | 66% |
| FUNDING GAP (operations) | | USD 4 722 7952 |

UNHCR Burundi thanks its partners

| | |
|------------------------------|---|
| Government structures | Project d'appui à la Réinsertion des Sinistrés -PARESI (Ministry of National Solidarity, Human Rights and Gender) ; CNI project and National Office for the Protection of Refugees and Stateless Persons-ONPRA (Ministry of Interior) ; National Commission for land and other property (CNTB). |
| Implementing partners | IRC ; AHA ; Ligue Iteka ; CARITAS BURUNDI ; RET ; COPED ; HIF ; ASF ; CRB. |
| Operational partners | WFP(food) ; UNICEF (education, water) ; FAO (seeds, tools) ; UNDP (reintegration) ; OMS (Health) ; OIM (shelter) ; UNAIDS ; CIRGL ; HCDH. |

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