

SITUATION REPORT

5 Feb – 11 Feb 2007

UNITED NATIONS
Office for the Coordination of
Humanitarian Affairs in Burundi
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ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES

Torrential rains: The looming food crisis in many parts of central and eastern Burundi is starting to get world media attention after WFP released a press communiqué on 06/02/07 warning that two million people in Burundi need urgent assistance until June to prevent a food crisis following the devastating torrential rains.

The situation is particularly worrying in some parts of Karuzi, Gitega, Rutana, Ruyigi, Cankuzo and Kayanza provinces, according to reports from local administration and NGOs on the ground. FAO and WFP are finalizing distribution plans for seeds and food protection rations in view of the second agricultural season 2007B.

The Burundi Red Cross (CRB) finalized distribution of non food items in Gatumba, Mitumbuzi commune, Bujumbura Rural province. CRB is in the process of reviewing the list of vulnerable persons in other areas of Mutimbuzi commune and also in Kabezi commune.

Update on Burundians Expelled from Tanzania: The Executive Representative of the Secretary General (ERSG), UNHCR and OCHA met with the Tanzanian Ambassador to discuss the issue of expelled Burundians from Tanzania. Further talks are expected to be initiated with the Government.

During the reporting week 123 persons were transferred back to their communes of origin by the Governmental project for reintegration of war-affected persons (PARESI). However, some landless persons recently expelled from Tanzania have not been able to reintegrate with their families or to find a place to settle in Burundi. Groups of persons are squatting next to communal offices in Kayanza, Bugabira (Kirundo) and Kigamba (Cankuzo). OCHA, UN agencies and NGOs are working on a plan to setup temporary housing sites in these provinces.

Coordination: CARE the focal point NGO in Gitega province in collaboration with OCHA organized a coordination meeting for partners on 8th and 9th February 2007. The first day was dedicated to field visits while the second day was for review and presentation of activities for 2007. Field visits showed that the NGOs are aiming at strengthening community based associations in order to make it possible for the vulnerable persons to meet their basic needs and to improve the access to quality social services.



Field Visit - Cassava Multiplication Site supported by CARE, Korane colline, Giheta commune

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Repatriation: The number of returning persons decreased considerably in the last two weeks of January 2007. The total number of persons repatriated for the month was 1,746. During the reporting week, UNHCR registered 200 returnees. Out of the 200, 118 originated from Muyinga province with 85 from Nyanza Lac commune and 52 from Giteranyi commune.

The main reason explaining the refugees' reluctance to return home is the acute food shortage prevailing in many areas of return following the torrential rains. However, political tension within the ruling party CNDD-FDD and further delays in the implementation of the ceasefire agreement between the government of Burundi and Palipehutu-FNL cannot be ignored.

Protection and Human Rights: Organizations in charge of the protection of Human Rights in Bujumbura Mairie and Bujumbura Rural pointed out the continued mistreatment of prisoners by some police agents. OHCHR organized a meeting for persons in charge of the police in order to review the rights of arrested persons whose cases are still under investigation.

PROTECTION AND SECURITY

Security and Accessibility: The security situation in Bujumbura Rural, Cibitoke and Bubanza is relatively fine. No confrontation between the elements of FNL and the national police has been observed on the ground lately. The military on the ground noted only acts that it qualifies as provocation, in particular the fact that the FNL combatants appear in broad daylight in military gear and with weapons, and also hold meetings with the population.

The mediation has resumed contact with the Government and the FNL movement in order to find solutions to the blocking points hindering the implementation of the ceasefire agreement. Initially, the priorities include the release of political prisoners and the setting-up of a joint commission for monitoring and verification. The FNL delegation arrived in Bujumbura on Saturday 10/02/07. The 6 FNL prisoners who were being held in the premises of the intelligence service were released on Sunday 11/02/07 and they were handed over to the mediator. BINUB Human Rights monitors were present at their release. The two commissions for monitoring of the implementation of the ceasefire agreement are expected to begin work from 19/02/07.