

SITUATION REPORT

2 – 8 July 2007

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Office for the Coordination of
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ACTIVITIES AND UPDATES

UNHCR launches new measures to promote voluntary repatriation.

In an effort to promote the voluntary return of Burundian refugees to their home country from the camps in northwestern Tanzania, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in consultation with the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania, as well as key donors, UN Agencies and operational partners; is launching a new measure which consists of allocating an individual cash grant amounting to Burundian Francs 50,000 per returnee (see annex 1: press release below). This additional measure will complement the assistance currently being provided upon arrival in Burundi which comprises of household items and four months food ration.

Meanwhile, due to preparations of the cash grant process, return convoys were postponed during the reporting week. Some 154,000 Burundian refugees are currently in Tanzanian camps. Since the beginning of the facilitated repatriation process in 2002, UNHCR has registered 343,199 Burundian returnees.

Update on Burundians expelled from Tanzania

Expelled persons continue to arrive from Tanzania. During the week under review the Government project for the reintegration of war-affected persons (PARESI) registered 240 persons (124 families) expelled from Tanzania: 136 at the entry point of Kobero (Muyinga) and 104 in Mishiha (Cankuzo). Since January 2007, PARESI has recorded 4,157 expelled persons (2,198 families).

UNICEF in collaboration with the Burundian Red Cross (BRC) society delivered non food aid to expelled persons sheltered in the transit center of Kinazi in the province of Muyinga. The assistance provided comprised of: clothing for children and adults, 500 blankets, 500 jerry cans, 500 buckets, 90 boxes of soap, 500 plastic sheetings and 500 mats.

OCHA conducted a two-day mission in Makamba to assess progress made in setting up a new transit site for expelled persons from Kigoma (Tanzania) who are expected to arrive at any time. A site was identified in Musenyi in the commune of Mabanda, 7 Km from the entry point of Mugina. According to the BRC coordinator in Makamba province, construction of the site should be completed by the end of July. The International Committee for the Red Cross has visited the site in preparation for the construction of water points.

Update on food aid distribution

Over the reporting week, WFP delivered 293 MT of food assistance to 29,197 beneficiaries. As mentioned in the previous weekly report, no target distributions are being organized during this crop harvest season. Based on the scenario of the return of at least 60,000 to 80,000 Burundians from the northwestern refugee camps in Tanzania between July and December of this year, the WFP Country Office has revised the quantity of food needs upwards which will enable the provision of six months food rations to returnees, whilst maintaining the level of assistance as planned for the other programmes – food for work, school feeding, nutrition and assistance to refugees. It should be noted that under the retained scenario, WFP will assist 430,000 most vulnerable persons with seed protection rations and 480,000 through targeted distributions between November and December.

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Assistance to orphans and other vulnerable children

The national association *Famille pour Vaincre le SIDA* (FVS/AMADE) has issued certificates in cooking skills to 25 orphans and vulnerable children who dropped out of school. This training which started in mid November 2006 and ended on June 30th 2007 was attended by 29 orphans. It is worth noting that 20 of the 25 who successfully completed the training have already found a job with either a hotel or a restaurant in their province of origin, Bururi.

Agriculture / Food Security

Experts from the International Institute for Tropical Agriculture (IITA), the regional Research Institute for Agriculture and Zoology (IRAZ), FAO, the National institute for agricultural research (ISABU), the University of Burundi and Catholic Relief Services (CRS) NGO visited the provinces of Cibitoke and Makamba in May 2007 to enquire into the existence of a banana bacterial disease known as Banana Xanthomonas Wilt (BXW). The mission collected banana samples which were sent to the Central Science Laboratory in the United Kingdom for analysis. Results confirming the existence of BXW were released last week. The existence of BXW was first highlighted by a team of researchers conducted by CRS in late October 2006. Measures to combat this devastating banana disease include the complete destruction of every affected banana tree, the strict observance of hygiene for tools and hands after cutting an affected plant, the limitation of movements of people and animals to avoid spreading the bacterium; only safe shooting must be planted.



Photo: Affected bananas in Kibago commune (Makamba province), FAO, May 2007

UNICEF assists vulnerable persons

Over the reporting week, UNICEF carried out the distribution of humanitarian assistance to vulnerable persons in the provinces of Bujumbura Rural and Bubanza. In Bujumbura Rural, a total of 580 iron sheets and 45 kgs of nails were distributed for the construction of a primary school through Dalla Parte Degli Ultimi (DAPADU) NGO. Furthermore, 100 treated mosquito nets and 200 pieces of cloth were given to HIV/AIDS patients in the treatment center run by Gruppo volontariato Civile (GVC) NGO in the commune of Kabezi in Bujumbura Rural. Additionally, 481 pieces of plastic sheetings were supplied to vulnerable persons including widows and older persons in the commune of Mpanda in the province of Bubanza.

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Latest developments

Assistance to war-affected persons

As part of continued assistance for war-affected persons, the Minister of National Solidarity officially launched the construction of 1,200 houses on July 10th in the province of Bubanza. Identified sites are Muyange, Buhomba, Mutamba and Nyarunazi in the province of Bubanza. A ceremony took place in Muyange where 300 houses will be built.

Annex 1: Press Release

Dar es Salaam, Wednesday, 4 July 2007

Cash Grants for Returning Refugees to Burundi

The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in consultation with the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania, as well as key donors, UN Agencies and operational partners is launching a new measure in its efforts to promote the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees to their home country. The additional measure will be a cash grant to every registered refugee returning from the four Burundian camps in northwestern Tanzania.

The individual cash grant amounting to Burundian Francs (BIF) 50,000 per returnee will complement the assistance presently being provided upon arrival in Burundi namely household items plus four months food ration. It is envisaged that the grant will further assist returning refugees to restart life back home where the socio-economic conditions continue to be difficult.

The cash grant will be available on a "first come first served basis" - subject to the availability of funds. For those registered refugees returning from Tanzania, the cash grant programme will commence on 10 July. The cash grant will be distributed to returnees through a network of local co-operatives (COOPEC) upon arrival back in Burundi. All measures for proper implementation and monitoring have been put in place both in Burundi and Tanzania.

Judging by the pace of return in past years, UNHCR anticipates an increase in the number of Burundian refugees wishing to go home during the period July – November following the end of the school year, rainy season and harvest. The UNHCR 2007 planning figure for voluntary repatriation has been set at 60,000 returns from Tanzania. Since the beginning of the year 3,539 Burundians have repatriated from Tanzania under the auspices of UNHCR.

The announcement of the introduction of the additional measure has been welcomed by both the Tanzanian and Burundi governments as a timely initiative by UNHCR and its partners to promote the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees and to facilitate their initial stage of reintegration.

There are currently 153,000 Burundian refugees in the camps in northwestern Tanzania. Since UNHCR started to facilitate the return of Burundians in 2002, some 300,000 Burundians - mainly returnees from Tanzania - have come back home.

Public Information Unit
UNHCR
Representation Office

Tel (022) 215 00 75
P.O. Box 2666
Dar es Salaam

Fax (022) 215 28 16
paulr@unhcr.org
www.unhcr.org