

VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

UPDATE AS OF 31 DECEMBER 2020

RETURN TRENDS BY MONTH SINCE SEPTEMBER 2017

UNHCR and partners have facilitated voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees since 2017, with the majority being from Tanzania, and smaller numbers assisted to return from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Kenya. Until recently almost all returns from Rwanda and Uganda were self-organized. Following the conclusion of elections in Burundi in May 2020, increased interest in voluntary return has been expressed by refugees living in several countries. Based on tripartite consultations and assessments to ensure the voluntariness of return, UNHCR began to facilitate returns from Rwanda in August 2020, and recommenced returns from the DRC in September 2020. There are ongoing plans to initiate facilitated returns from Namibia and potentially other countries in East and Southern Africa in 2021.

KEY FIGURES – ASSISTED REPATRIATION



8 000

7,500 7,000 6.500

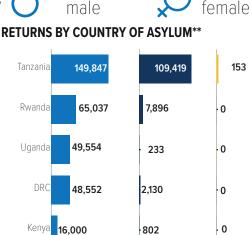
5,500 5,000

4.500



272 convoys **7 48%**

6.044



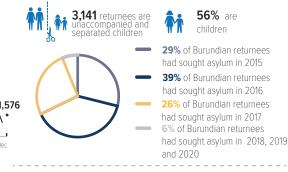
52%

 # of registered
 # of assisted returns since

 Burundian refugees
 September 2017

of Burundian refugees pre-registered for VolRep pending travel arragements

POPULATION PROFILE AT A GLANCE



OVERVIEW

2020

1. UNHCR and partners are providing assistance to refugees who have decided to return to Burundi so that they may do so in safety and dignity, as well as to support social cohesion and sustainable return at the community level.

2. Additional funding is critically needed to ensure that returns can continue as well as to strengthen returnee monitoring and support sustainable reintegration.

3. The voluntary return operations from Tanzania, DRC and Rwanda to Burundi are taking place under the framework of the Tripartite Agreements between these governments and UNHCR. All parties have agreed to ensure returns are voluntary.

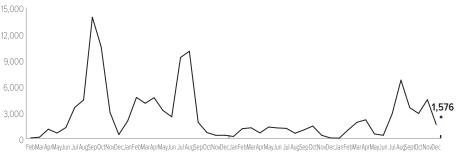
4. While the governments of Burundi and Tanzania have undertaken to promote refugee return, neither UNHCR nor other governments are doing so at this time. All have acknowledged the importance of refugees having the opportunity to make a free and informed choice about repatriation.

5. While returnees are generally being welcomed back by the Government of Burundi and their communities of origin without incident, returnee monitoring indicates many do face a number of reintegration challenges.

500

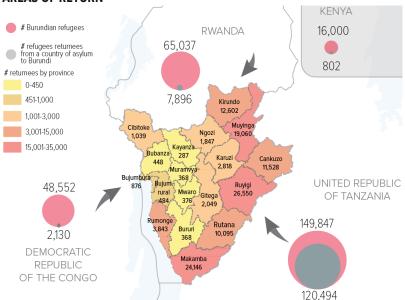
2017 2018 2019 2020

REGISTRATION FOR VOLREP IN TANZANIA 2017-2020



SeptOctNovDecJanFebMarAprMayJun Jul Au&epiOctNovDedJanFebMarAprMayJun Jul Au&epiOctNovDedJanFebMarAprMayJun Jul Au&epiOctNovDec

AREAS OF RETURN***



Includes assisted returns from Tanzania (120,494), Rwanda (7,896), DRC (2,130), Kenya (802), Uganda (233), Zambia (5),Cameroon (2), Gabon (1), Senegal (1) and Burkina Faso (1).
 ** Excludes number of refugees from Zambia, Senegal, Cameroon and Burkina Faso.
 *** Excludes number of refugees from DRC, Cameroon and Burkina Faso.

RETURN MONITORING IN BURUNDI

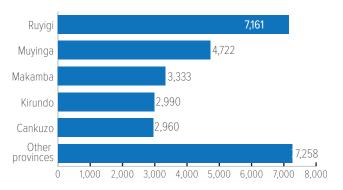
METHODOLOGY

Protection monitoring of returnees to Burundi is an essential protection activity for UNHCR and its commitment under the Tripartite Agreement. It aims to collect, process, analyse and disseminate in a systematic and regular way, the data and information on: 1) The conditions of return of assisted returnees; and 2) The level of reintegration in return areas.

The purpose is to propose an effective protection response by area of intervention and for advocacy purposes (towards sectors of intervention, development actors, donors and government authorities). The figures below reflect data collected from January to September 2020.

MONITORING PROGRESS

By 31 December 2020, **28,584** interviews with returnee families were conducted (see below the breakdown by province).



CIVIL DOCUMENTATION DISPLACEMENT VULNERABILITY 145 **12%** returnee HHs 72% of returnee HHs 47% of returnee HHs 88% of refugees report their children have vulnerabilities. report that HH members returned to their place of most often characterized have a identification received a **birth** origin by chronically ill and/or card certificate disabled family members **EDUCATION HEALTH CARE** WATER ACCESS TO HOUSING 36% returnee HHs 95% returnee HHs have access to water could access housing 48% of returnee **79%** of they owned prior to fleeing 48% could not access it after arrival returnee HHs have children attend school, of 54% of those having access to water use public wells/fountains access to health (another 19% didnot own housing before flight). 83% of those who which **34% primary** care school and 14% cannot access previous housin report it being inhabitable secondary school upon arrival. LIVELIHOODS TOP 3 PRIORITIES IN THE USE OF CASH ASSISTANCE ACCESS TO LAND All refugees who have returned with the assistance of UNHCR receive an initial return package in Burundi consisting of a cash grant, basic household supplies, and food items. Returnees report the cash grant was used for the following top priority 82% of returnee HHs expenses: report having access to 93% of returnee heads of households 13% HHs have a problem accessing land and 5% HHs did not own land before are subsistence 1. Household items (38%) farmers 2. Shelter (24%) leaving 3. Land rental (19%)

For more information please contact:

UNHCR Burundi: Brigitte Mukanga Eno, Deputy Representative, <u>eno@unhcr.org;</u> Gwendolyn Roeske, Snr Prot. Officer, <u>roeske@unhcr.org;</u> Ana Maria Rivas, Prot. Officer (Monit. analyst), <u>rivasa@unhcr.org;</u>Felix Ndama Wa Ndama, Assc PIM Officer, <u>ndamawan@unhcr.org</u> UNHCR Regional Bureau for the East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lake: Anna Minuto, Snr. IMO, <u>minuto@unhcr.org</u>; UNHCR Tanzania: Antonio Canhandula, UNHCR Representative, <u>canhandu@unhcr.org</u>; George Kuchio, Deputy Representative, <u>kuchiog@unhcr.org</u>