

**BURUNDI PROTECTION
MONITORING**

**REINTEGRATION
TRENDS**

Updated as of 31 July 2022



@UNHCR / Bernard NTWARI

Protection monitoring is necessary to enable evidence-based advocacy and appropriate programmatic responses.

In Burundi, returnee protection monitoring will be strengthened.

Contents

Repatriation of Burundian refugees	3
Protection Monitoring overview	4
Protection	5
<i>Justice</i>	5
<i>Gender Based Violence (GBV)</i>	6
<i>Child protection</i>	6
<i>Civil documentation</i>	6
<i>Peaceful cohabitation</i>	6
Education	7
Health	8
Water, hygiene and sanitation	9
Shelter and land	10
Food security and livelihoods	11

Overview

The facilitated voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees to their country of origin passed the 200,000 mark at the end of July 2022. This activity has been ongoing since September 2017. The UNHCR operation in Burundi is engaged in a process of repatriation of Burundian refugees by supporting the Burundian government to facilitate the return of Burundian refugees who have voluntarily chosen to return home. The repatriation process of Burundian refugees accelerated in 2020 following the call for their return by the new authorities of the country. According to the UNHCR and the governments of the countries of asylum, more than 300,000 Burundian refugees and asylum seekers are still dispersed, more than 90% of them in the countries of the East and Horn of Africa and Great Lakes (EHAGL) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo, as of 31 July 2022.

Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Kenya are the main asylum countries hosting the largest number of Burundian refugees. Tripartite meetings and technical working groups are held annually to improve the practical arrangements for organizing and facilitating voluntary repatriation convoys of Burundian refugees.

Key information

Since 2017

200,566
repatriated individuals

552
convoys and
flights

In 2022

14,793
repatriated individuals

87
convoys and
flights

Breakdown by country of asylum

Country of Asylum	Burundian Refugees returned in 2021	Burundian Refugees returned in 2022	Burundian refugees returned since 2017
Tanzania	30,061	2,658	142,138
Rwanda	22,973	3,319	34,188
DRC	7,289	2,726	12,145
Kenya	1024	795	2,621
Zambia	5	7	21
Cameroun	6		8
Uganda	3,856	5,188	9,277
Mozambique	47	95	142
Sudan	11		11
Benin	5		5
Senegal	2		3
Guinee Bissau		1	1
Nigeria		4	4
Other Countries			2
Total	65,279	14,793	200,566

The average repatriation rate is 2,000 individuals per month in 2022. Many of these refugees return mainly to the provinces of Kirundo, Muyinga, Cankuzo, Makamba, Rutana and Cibitoke.

Protection monitoring overview

The government has prioritized the repatriation of Burundian refugees, which is also outlined in the National Development Plan 2018-2027 (page 119). To better track, and subsequently respond to the protection concerns and the on-going challenges faced by returnees as they re-settle in Burundi, UNHCR is proposing to put in place an improved and comprehensive returnee monitoring system. Protection Monitoring activities seek to build a solid foundation to support the implementation of the next phase of the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Reintegration of Affected Persons in Burundi.

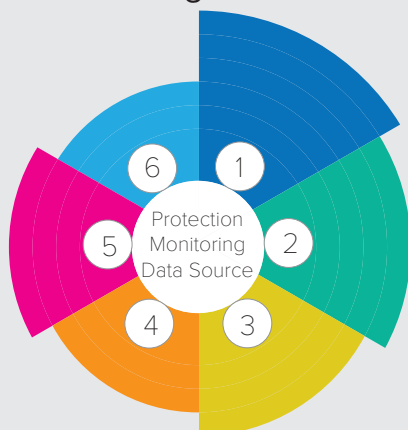
The Protection Monitoring was initially established in September 2017 after the start of repatriation Tanzania and was revised in 2019 for the first time. It has just been revised again in April 2022 to better understand the level of reintegration of returnees and also to effectively address operational needs. The new protection monitoring strategy has been deployed for three months as a pilot (May to July 2022).

Methodology

For this activity, primary data is collected through household, community and local government level surveys and is complemented by focus group discussions and data being collected from transit center as well as protection monitoring surveys. In addition, an expanded mechanism is put in place to frequently update the data in a timely manner the government, development, and humanitarian and UNHCR alike. The data analyzed to produce this report cover the months of May, June, and July 2022. Returnees who arrived between December 2021 and June 2022 were included in the collection. Protection monitoring covered 18 provinces in Burundi, prioritizing the main areas of population concentration.

UNHCR's protection monitoring in areas of return. This was also to documents protection incidents, the socio-economic situation of returnees in their place of return across a broad range of sectors in five categories: (i) access to basic social services, (ii) livelihoods, (iii) security and cohabitation, (iv) access to justice, (v) secondary movement. UNHCR's partner, CEJP, deployed 8 focal points and 150 enumerators in the areas of return. Focus groups were held to collect qualitative information to support the information. The data was collected by the monitors via the Kobo collect tool and transcribed into monthly reports. Based on the findings and data, UNHCR has adapted its activities and projects, including those of implementing partners, to the needs of returnees.

Protection Monitoring Data Source



- 1 Household survey
- 2 Protection incident
- 3 Focus groups
- 4 Repatriation data
- 5 Zone profiling
- 6 Secondary Data review



Protection

Key information



Access to Justice

Data from the commune profiling exercise conducted in 2020 shows that there is at least one physical judicial structure in each commune. Currently, there is also a staff defined according to Burundian codes and laws.

In this domain, respondents indicated that the main obstacles common to all, including returnees, were the slowness of the judicial system in resolving problems. For returnees who do not go to the judicial system when they have a problem, two main reasons were put forward by returnees to explain why they do not file cases before court : (1) lack of sufficient financial means as filing a case has a cost and (2) fear of retaliation from those who did not flee.

In addition, it was raised in the focus groups that the perception of justice by most of the returnees is that no one can have justice without resorting to corruption. Furthermore, it is worth mentioning that courts have many needs in terms of equipment.



There is at least one judicial structure in each commune

Other figures



82% of respondents confirmed that the security situation is generally good and that there is coordination and collaboration between the security services and the population.



More than **one-third** of returnees living in border areas cross the border back and forth to engage in temporary labor.



68% of respondents reported that the adults in the household can have a national ID card. **30%** of those who do not have one are 3-month-old returnees.

Gender Based Violence (GBV)

During the focus group discussions, men and young people said that they were not aware of cases of GBV among returnees. The women said that they knew about cases of GBV among returnees and that these cases were usually handled by the courts and the administration. They also indicated that they did not have any information on the existence of prevention and management mechanisms for these cases. Access to justice, including legal advice and support from communal courts, remains a major gap. UNHCR through its partner “Icirore Amahoro” (ICCA) has been able to support some vulnerable returnees in the provinces of Makamba, Rutana Kirundo, Muyinga, Ruyigi etc.; which means that this support is not available in all areas of return and more support from partners is needed.

Child protection

During the pilot phase, it was observed that the rate of access to education for returnee children is largely low. Three basic reasons were cited by the interviewees. The main reasons were the extreme poverty of some households (lack of uniforms/clothes, materials and school fees), the lack of available places in the school and the lack of food. In the areas of return visited, most children were observed to be alone during the day, as their parents left in the early morning to look for income-generating activities in the nearby farms. Children were observed to be in need of shoes and clothing.

Civil documentation

Regarding access to civil documentation, most participants stated that they have easy access to administrative and civil status documents. The only obstacle would be that all these documents cost BIF 500 for the National Identity Card (CNI) and BIF 1,000 for birth certificates, whereas many returnees do not have the means. They proposed to make these documents accessible for returnees who do not have the means. They also proposed that the CNI be issued to them at the transit center as soon as they arrive.

During the group discussion, participants pointed out that in addition to the fees set for access to civil status documents, some communal administrators charge returnees a lump sum of BIF 5,000 and BIF 3,000 at the level of the hill authorities.


Peaceful cohabitation

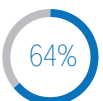
Upon their return to Burundi, the Burundian government, UNHCR and its partners mobilized to facilitate their reintegration into communities. In their communes, returnees are welcomed by the communal administrator before going to their hills of final destination of return. 81% of returnees interviewed confirmed that they were welcomed by the community and lived in good relationship with community members and the authorities in their locality of return.

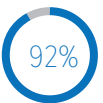


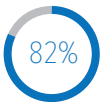
Education

Key information

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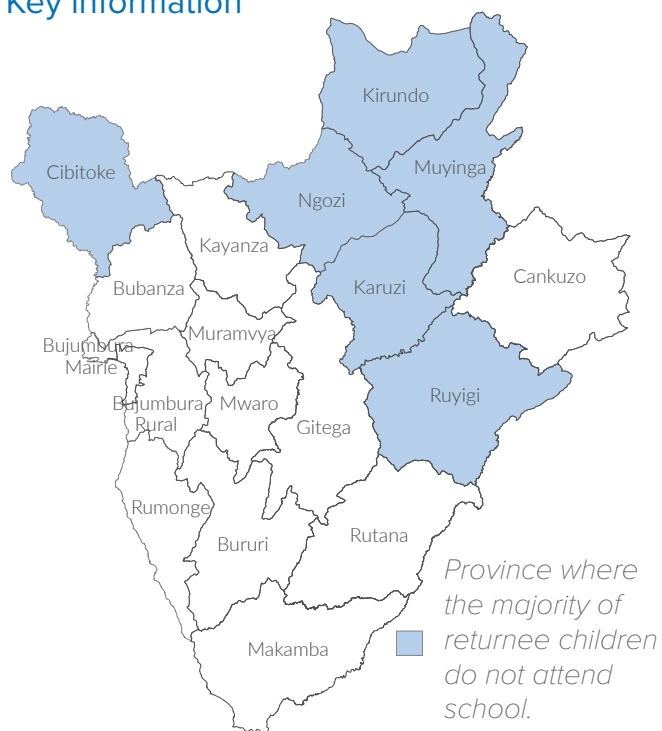
69% of children repatriated during the pilot phase of protection monitoring do not attend school.
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64% of children repatriated in 2022 received a birth certificate in their return area. This has an impact on access to school
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92% of repatriated children who attend school are at the fundamental level (between 1st and 9th grade).
- 

82% of returnee parents say they cannot afford to send their children to school.

Key information



More than one-third of repatriated children (36%) were at risk of being stateless. Despite the government's efforts to establish a moratorium on the registration of birth for repatriated children whose birth has exceeded the legal deadline for registration, the average number of children with this document is still unsatisfactory, although it has increased compared to 2021 (48%).

Access to Education

During the pilot phase, it was observed that the number of refugee children of school going age is largely low. Three basic reasons were cited by the interviewees. The extreme poverty of some households (lack of uniforms/clothes, materials and school fees), lack of available school places and lack of food. Focus group discussions' participants mentioned inadequate schools, lack of school equipment (desks and textbooks), and lack of qualified teachers in some areas as other reasons why some returnee children do not attend school.

Some respondents described other factors such as the direct and indirect costs of education (tuition, school fees, contributions to teachers' salaries, school supplies. and distance to be contributing to poor quality of education.



Returnee children are at **risk of not attending school**. Given the level of poverty, children's education is no longer a priority for most households.

To address the main problems, returnees proposed *building new classrooms, purchasing new equipment (desks, textbooks, etc.), increasing the number of teachers, distributing food and school materials to vulnerable returnee households, and exempting children of vulnerable returnees from school fees.*

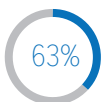


Health

Key information



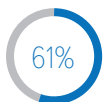
73% of returnees do not have a health insurance card (CAM).



63% of returnees say they do not have access to health services due to lack of financial means.



83% of returnee children arriving in 2022 were vaccinated against measles in their asylum countries.



61% of returnees surveyed say that medical assistance is not satisfactory in the areas of return.

Protection monitoring data show that 89% of communes are covered by health facilities. Some provinces ranking lower than others. The major problem is the level of access to health services, particularly in terms of the presence of facilities, distance, equipment, availability of health care personnel and medicines, etc.

Family health

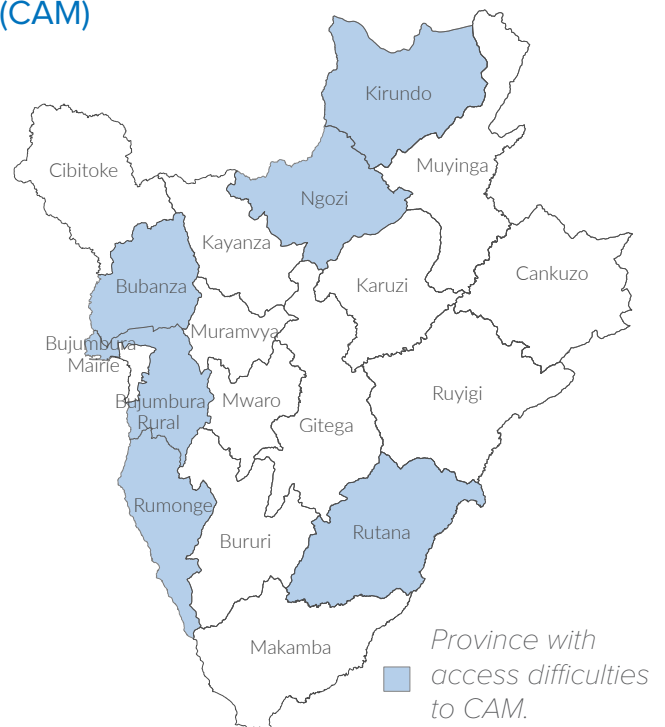
The policy of the issuance of health insurance card (CAM) for all categories of families, which cost three thousand francs, has been suspended. Thus, this CAM is now only given to vulnerable people who are identified by the administration. The other categories of families are obliged to subscribe to private health insurance companies which are expensive (twenty thousand and more per year). As a result, many families decide not to apply for a health insurance card a health card and find themselves at risk of being treated at exorbitant costs.

Article 44 of the new law on the budget of the Republic of Burundi for the fiscal year 2021/2022 categorizes the population according to the amount of contributions for the health insurance card. In this regard, advocacy at the level of the Ministry of Health is necessary so that returnees are categorized as vulnerable groups and therefore exempted from the contribution fees for this card at least during the first year of their return to Burundi.

Returnees with serious medical conditions, such as ongoing medical care, still present a burden to already vulnerable families. A mobilization of humanitarian actors to support this is more than necessary. For example, mobile clinics in the areas of return or access to free specialized health care for at least the first year upon return to the country.

These problems are much more serious in the provinces where access to health insurance cards is difficult.

Accessibility to health insurance cards (CAM)





Water, Hygiene and Sanitation

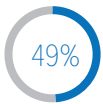
Key information



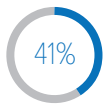
57% of households in 2022 reported finding drinking water more than two kilometers away.



38% of households surveyed stated that the amount of water used per household is not sufficient.



49% of returnees surveyed have access to water source within 30 minutes of their home.



41% of returnees in 2022 reported using improved toilets in the return areas.

Access to water

Results from the Joint Monitoring Programme for Water Supply, Sanitation and Hygiene (JMP) show that 80 percent of households nationwide have access to an improved water source for drinking, but only 61% have access to a source within 30 minutes of their home⁽¹⁾. It should be noted that inequalities between those who take less than 30 minutes and those who take more than 30 minutes to get water are significant, especially in rural areas.

The low rate of access to drinking water at shorter distances (49%) among returnees can be explained by the fact that 86% of returnees return to rural areas. The rate of access to safe water is reduced by 2% between returnees arriving in 2021 and those arriving in 2022.



It is worth noting that **access to drinking water is less in the southern provinces** (Makamba, Rumonge, Rutana), also in Muyinga in the North, than in other parts of the country.

⁽¹⁾ Demographic and Health Survey (UNICEF/WHO, JMP 2021)

Focus groups participants also reported that there is no drinking water supply on many hills and water from springs dries up during the dry season.

Hygiene and sanitation

In terms of basic sanitation, about **60% of returnees use unimproved toilets**. These unimproved toilets are covered, for the most part, with cloth, dobe bricks or dead leaves and often have no door or roof.

Focus group participants indicated that some households do not have latrines and those that do, are in very poor condition due to lack of resources. Latrines in schools are also reported to be in very poor condition.



3 out of 5 returnees use unimproved toilets

Protection Monitoring data conducted at the household level show that over 1/3 of returnee households use shared toilets. This situation is similar in rural areas as in urban centres (cities).

In terms of hygiene, there seem to be a general problem of sanitation of latrines. Between the host community and returnees, differences are limited. It should also be noted that shared latrines are less clean than private latrines.

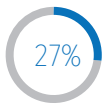
In schools, the situation remains alarming. Many schools have toilets in very poor condition.

In addition, despite the many programmes or projects implemented, such as the Water Sector Programme (PROSECEAU), the Agence de l'Hydraulique et de l'Assainissement en Milieu Rural (AHAMR) and REGIDESO projects, the supply of drinking water to repatriated households remains a serious issue.



Shelter and land

Key information



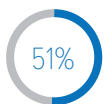
27% of returnees in 2022 live in their own homes. This is 10% less than those who arrived in 2021.



58% of returnees live in transitional shelters, **31%** of which are rented houses.



60% of returnees in 2022 used their Cash Grant to buy land, of which **33%** bought agricultural land.



51% of houses where returnees live are in poor condition, 4% of which are in critical condition.

Other figures

24% of returnees live in adobe wall houses (wood+mud) against **17%** who live in baked brick/cement wall houses.

48% of returnees report having had accommodation before leaving for the country of asylum. **15%** had access to their former accommodation immediately upon arrival (without difficulty)

73% of returnees who own land did not work their fields during the past agricultural season due to lack of tools and seeds.



60% of returnees cannot return to their former homes because they were destroyed by the weather.

In 2020 and 2021, approximately 70% of returnees had access to shelter, of which 37% to their own houses. In 2022, **75%** of returnees have access to housing immediately after their return. The nuance is that **1 out of 2 returnees in 2022 live in rented houses (48%)**. Even if more than half of the returnees have access to housing, it remains a temporary occupancy as occupation can refer also to something else. Analyses of the data collected by the Protection Monitoring system show that more than a third of returnees live from daily work in the community fields. This activity does not cover the whole year. It can be deduced that this activity does not ensure the payment for an annual cycle.

Since the increase of cash grant in the return package in 2020, more and more returnees are buying a piece of land, either to build a house or farmland in the community.

For those who have chosen to build a house, the majority face financial and other difficulties in obtaining materials for solid walls as well as iron sheets to cover their houses. Some of them use straw and other tarpaulins to roof their houses.

Despite the shelter distribution project (Sheets, poles, nails, doors and windows) launched by UNHCR since 2021, there is still a great need in this area, as returnee households receive little assistance.

Returnees are requesting systematic **assistance in shelter kits to rebuild their dwellings**.

Problems with access to land

In Burundi, access to land is a concern to many as the plots are generally small.





In the focus group discussion, it was reported that returnees are currently very interested in land. Given the size of the country, land has become too scarce. This situation is said to cause recurrent land conflicts within the community.

Because of the unequal land distribution, most returnees and/or peasant households cannot produce for consumption and sale. As a result, per capita, food production continues to decline over time, although overall rural food consumption is increasing.



Food Security and Livelihoods

Key information

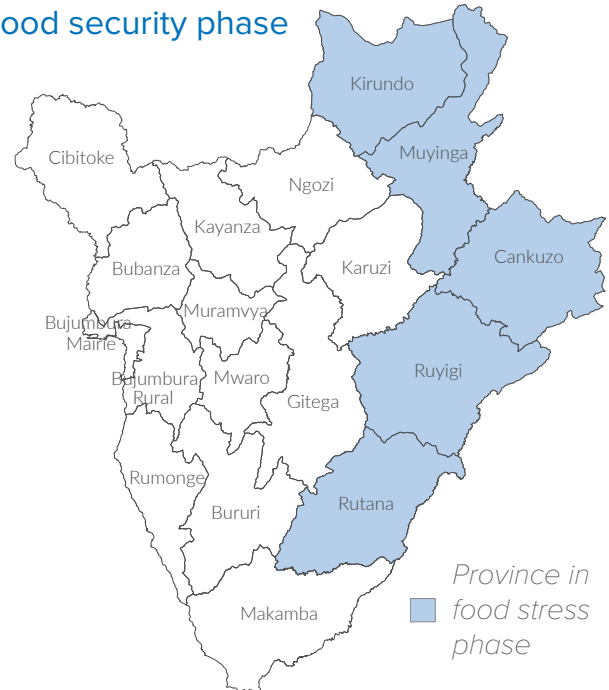
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61% of the returnees eat one meal per day.
- 
71% of returnees report that they never had food assistance in their area of return.
- 
62% of returnee households worked as daily workers to provide for the family's basic needs.
- 
71% of returnee households earn less than BIF 25,000 on average per month (US\$12.5).

In most parts of the country, food stocks from the good harvest of the 2022 A season support minimum food security outcomes (Consumer Price Index Phase 1). Livelihood zones in the Northern and Eastern depressions continue to experience food stress outcomes (CPI Phase 2) due to limited access to cross-border trade income due to COVID-19-related border restrictions (FEWS NET Burundi, April 2022).

This food stress phase received 34% of returnees who arrived in 2022. Protection Monitoring data shows that once returnees have exhausted the three-month rations they received upon arrival, they enter the food stress phase.

Even with nationally acceptable household food availability and access, returnees face enormous challenges during the resilience period before reaching the reintegration level. Data collected between May and July 2022 indicate that 61% of returnees eat only one meal per day, which is likely to have an impact on children's health and growth due to inadequate nutritional intake.

Food security phase



The main source of livelihood for returnees

The returnee population consists primarily of agricultural workers. For those who returned to the Eastern and Northern provinces, the border areas, access is limited due to the high cost of COVID-19 tests to cross the Tanzanian border and the closure of the Burundian side of the Rwandan border.

Given the high demand for employment in the agricultural sector, not to mention the fact that supply is scarce, the daily pay rate is too low. In this situation, the livelihoods of households do not allow them to have sufficient access to essential social services and to food to meet children's nutritional needs.

When mentioning this problem, returnees proposed in the focus groups to diversify their sources of income by learning handicrafts, commerce/ business, animal husbandry, carpentry, masonry, etc., but also assisting in income-generating activities.

Implementing partners



Donor of the Protection Monitoring project in Burundi



Co-funded by
European Union

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