

Burundi

July - August 2024

The Musenyi refugee site was officially inaugurated by the Minister of Interior, Public Security, and Community Development, with UNHCR Representative. The integrated site aims to accommodate 10 000 refugees. As of August 31st, 1217, refugees live and share facilities with host community in Musenyi.

Moreover, during the reporting period, **4813 individuals**, (2708 in July and 2105 in August) were **voluntarily repatriated** to their home country of Burundi.

In addition, **1375 refugee identity cards were distributed** to refugees by UNHCR and ONPRA ensuring that each refugee is officially recognized within the country of asylum, and has access to rights, protection, services, and opportunities.

Operational Context

In July as in August, the security situation in Burundi was generally calm, although tainted by various criminality incidents across the country. These incidents did not affect UNHCR's activities in Burundi. However, the persistent shortage of fuels continued to pose a significant problem.



Inauguration of the Musenyi Primary School by the Minister of Interior, Public Security, and Community Development, alongside UNHCR Representative and KOICA delegation. The school is attended by children from refugees, returnees, and host communities.

Update On Achievements



PROTECTION

Achievements and Impact

- **In July and August 1375 refugees received their identity cards distributed** by UNHCR and ONPRA. The **refugee card provides refugees with legal recognition** in the country of asylum and **allows them to enjoy their fundamental rights**. The issuance of these cards reflects ongoing efforts to strengthen the legal and social protection of refugees in Burundi.
- In July and August, **54 newborn babies were registered to obtain birth certificates** in the Kinama and Musasa refugee camps. As of August 31st, a total of **56 702 refugees live in the 5 refugees camps** in the North and East of Burundi with Kavumu refugee camp being the most populated camp with 18 524 refugees.
- **A training session on civil registration** was held in July in Makamba Province **to enhance the skills of child protection actors and improve access to civil registration services** in Burundi. Participants included government partners, local and international NGOs, and field experts. The training focused on facilitating birth registration, paternity acknowledgment, and the transcription of civil status documents to address the challenges faced by beneficiaries, particularly in obtaining vital records for themselves and their children. More efforts are needed to raise awareness of the importance of birth registration and the issuing of civil status certificates.
- During the period of July and August 2024, a total of **218 (138 July, 80 August) GBV incidents were reported and attended to by UNHCR and its partners** Save the Children and International Rescue Committee in Burundi. There is a rise of identification of GBV cases in the camps. In addition to this a total of 62 older cases have been monitored, including cases of rape, physical assault, psychological violence, and denial of resources in the camps of Kinama and Musasa. **The majority of the GBV survivors were women**. Many of these cases reflect the impact of cultural attitudes and morals that limit women, as well as the economic dependency of girls and women. The gender dimension is often not discussed within the community. **The majority of reported GBV incidents were perpetrated by individuals who were intimate partners or former partners of the survivors**. UNHCR and its partners are actively assisting survivors who report threats from known perpetrators by exploring solutions such as relocating to safe havens. This approach aims to ensure the safety and well-being of survivors affected by GBV.
- In August 2024, as part of efforts to prevent and respond to GBV, **dignity kits were distributed to 173 survivors** in the Kinama and Musasa refugee camps. At Kinama camp, 91 survivors (89 women and 2 men) received in total 91 basins (20 liters each), 91 boxes of moisturizing cream, 455 laundry soaps (5 per person), 273 bathing soaps (3 per person), 183 sanitary pads. At Musasa camp, 82 survivors and other vulnerable women received dignity kits including 82 basins (20 liters

each), 410 laundry soaps, 266 bathing soaps, 156 sanitary pads for 78 women. In addition, from August 7-8, 2024, **UNHCR's partner IRC organized training for GBV focal points and partners**. The training covered GBV concepts, guiding principles, empathy, accountability to beneficiaries, and an update on partner mapping to enhance coordination and support.

- On August 6, **the Musenyi refugee site** (former Giharo site) **was officially inaugurated by the Minister of Interior, Public Security, and Community Development, alongside** the UNHCR Representative in Burundi. The event was attended by representatives of ministries, local officials, and partner organizations. The Musenyi refugee site is an integrated site where refugees and host communities share gradually facilities and services.
- On August 8th and 28th, **two convoys of a total of 602 refugees (144 households) were relocated from Cishemere asylum seekers transit center in Cibitoke Province to the Musenyi refugee site** in Rutana Province.

As of August 31st, **1217, refugees** (312 households including 602 women, 615 men – among them 688 children) **are living in better conditions at the site**.



- During the months of July and August, **410 refugees most of whom have been living in a protracted refugee situation, were resettled** in Australia, Canada, and the United States. UNHCR facilitated pre-departure formalities in coordination with the Government of Burundi through ONPRA and IOM. **Since January 2024, a cumulative total of 2,056 individuals departed for resettlement. Resettlement is one of the durable solutions that put an end to refugee problems.**
- **As July and August are vacation months, UNHCR and partner JRS carried out various activities to keep students busy and avoid any youth delinquency during the holidays. key initiatives included sports competitions; football and athletics tournaments in northern camps with 2 girls' and 4 boys' football teams per camp. Educational and Recreational Activities**

through **Ideas Box**, 2,665 children learned about child rights, hygiene, basic IT, and engaged in reading, drawing, and cinema. **Skills development**: supervision of children on vacation continued with the support of a local volunteer association, CINA Company. 30 young people at the Musasa camp learned new skills (7 boys, 23 girls) in cooking and soap-making, 73 participants (70 girls, 3 boys) were trained in hairstyling and 120 children (65 under 11 and 55 aged 12-21) had some English lessons to improve communication.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **713 new asylum seekers arrived in Burundi in July (423) and August (291).** The arrival of new asylum seekers increases the population in the Cishemere transit center, located in Cibitoke Province, which has now reached its accommodation capacity. **There are significant needs in the shelter sector, and funding is urgently required to address the overcrowding at the asylum seekers transit center, to ensure adequate, safe, and dignified housing for asylum-seeking and refugees' families.**



EDUCATION

Achievements and Impact

- On August 6, **the Musenyi Primary School was officially inaugurated by the Minister of Interior, Public Security, and Community Development, alongside** the UNHCR Representative in Burundi and KOICA that financed the school's infrastructure. The school has an administrative block, two blocks of 8 classrooms each, and sanitary blocks. The event was attended by representatives of ministries, local officials, and partner organizations. The school will be attended by children from the refugee community, from returnees as well as children from the host community.



- 57% of refugee children had accessed education at the end of the 2023-2024 school year. **With support from UNHCR and its partner JRS, 3,356 students sat for end-of-cycle exams under the DRC educational system, while 50 participated in the exams of Burundi's education system.** Among

them, 2,611 students successfully passed their exams, while 489 are still awaiting the results of the DRC State exams.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- At the end of the 2023-2024 school year, 39,751 refugee children (20,140 boys and 19,611 girls) aged 3-17 years old, along with 14,160 young people (7,187 men and 6,973 women) aged 18-24, totaling 53,911 individuals (27,327 boys and 26,584 girls), had unmet needs for quality education, vocational, and technical training. They represented 62% of the 87,100 refugees under UNHCR's mandate in Burundi. However, **43% of refugee children and adolescents aged 3-17 years old (16,947), remained entirely excluded from any educational system.** Among them, 8,659 boys and 8,288 girls did not benefit from any educational opportunities by the end of the school year. **This significant gap underscores the urgent need for strengthened educational interventions to address systemic barriers and ensure inclusive access to education for all refugee children and youth.**
- **Less than 1% of young people aged 18-24 have accessed tertiary education, despite scholarships provided through the DAFI and UNHCR programs** to 120 young people (95 refugees and 25 returnees), including 34 girls and 86 boys although women and girls accounted for 49% of the beneficiaries targeted by these interventions. This underscores persistent challenges in achieving equitable access to higher education for young women and girls, despite targeted efforts. **These figures highlight the need for more support for tertiary education and for enhanced strategies to address gender disparities** and other barriers to tertiary education, ensuring that vulnerable youth, particularly young women, can fully realize their potential.
- The needs in the education sector remain significant, particularly due to the **poor condition of infrastructure** for instance at the Kinama refugee camp's preschool, and the **insufficient electricity and water** in the schools within the camps. There is an **urgent need for increased support to provide electrification of schools** in the camps to ensure a conducive learning environment and **to provide reliable access to clean water.**



HEALTH

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- UNHCR and HealthNet TPO conducted Group discussions in Kinama and Musasa Camps with women, men, and youth to address mental health challenges, gather insights, and identify prevention strategies to prevent any harm including suicide. **Key findings highlighted high stress levels among refugees, worsening living conditions, and their direct impact on mental health.** Refugees recommended several measures including family and group therapy sessions, youth awareness campaigns on substance abuse, expanded training and employment opportunities for youth, advocacy for increased humanitarian assistance and more recreational spaces. Based on these insights, a mental health action plan is being developed in collaboration with partners to provide targeted responses.

**SHELTER AND NFIS****Achievements and Impact**

- In July and August **1235 refugees (335 households) living in Musenyi refugee site** located in Giharo commune, Rutana Province **received 6070 kg of briquettes and 302.5 kg of soaps**. This assistance aimed to help them meet their daily needs, such as cooking and hygiene, while also reducing dependency on firewood. In addition, **newly arrived families received kitchen sets, solar lamps, mosquito nets and blankets**. In addition, on August 14, 2024, **newly arrived women, and girls (10- 49 years) benefited from dignity kits** donated by UNFPA. The kits included buckets, loincloths, sanitary pads, skin cream, underwear, T-shirts, and laundry soaps. **These efforts aim to enhance the well-being and dignity of refugees** while fostering integration with host communities.
- In July and August, as part of reintegration efforts, **150 households** (70 repatriated households and 30 households selected from the most vulnerable persons in the local community in Mishiha Commune, Ruyigi Province and 50 households in Nyanza-Lac, Makamba Province) —**received shelter kits to rehabilitate their houses**. Each kit included 24 roofing sheets, 22 poles, 2 kg of nails for the sheets, 2 kg of nails for the poles, one door, and two windows. UNHCR partner COPED also provided technical assistance. **This activity aims to support both returnees and vulnerable host communities, thereby fostering social cohesion** and facilitating sustainable reintegration for returnees.
- UNHCR's partner COPED completed the construction of two-house blocks at the Musenyi site, each consisting of 48 houses, and began work on two additional blocks. **By August 31, 2024, a total of 144 houses had been constructed on the site**. Additional progress included the completion of the sheeting for the nursery school, installation of the roof on the health post, ongoing work on the community dormitory, progress on roofing the community kitchen, plastering and floor preparation in the partners' offices underway and the installation of garbage bins across houses to improve sanitation.



Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- **The shelter sector remains critically underfunded with significant needs that need to be urgently addressed to provide adequate and decent shelter** contributing to the improvement of living conditions and well-being of asylum seekers, refugees, and returnees.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

Achievements and Impact

- Throughout the months of July and August, UNHCR and partners continued to welcome repatriation convoys on a regular basis. **In July, 2,708 individuals**—including 572 women, 453 men, and 1,683 children from 831 households **and in August 2105 individuals—were voluntarily repatriated to their home country, Burundi.** All returnees were received in safety and dignity at the transit centers, where various activities were carried out, including biometric controls, protection case management, the issuance of certificates of recognition as returnees issued by the *Direction Générale du Rapatriement, de la Réintégration et de la Réinsertion (DGRRR)*. These certificates enable returnees to access free or low-cost documentation, such as ID cards, birth certificates, and marriage certificates, in their local communities of return. In addition, UNHCR's legal partner the *Barreau de Bujumbura* provided judicial assistance and conducted awareness sessions at the transit centers covering key topics to prevent disputes and enhance legal protection. Prior to their departure from transit centers, returnees received their return package in cash assistance to meet a variety of needs in their respective areas of return.
- **Children who make up three-quarters of returnees, receive targeted support from UNHCR and its partners, including child protection and case management activities and responses** during their stay at the transit centers. These activities at the child-friendly space include interactive sessions with a variety of themes such as Burundi's history, the national anthem, family roles, children's rights and responsibilities, the importance of school, and educational games designed to promote child protection.

Identified Needs and Remaining Gaps

- Occasionally, convoys include unaccompanied children who are hosted by individuals within camps or rural areas. Many of these children have lost their biological parents during exile, leaving no trace of relatives in the country of asylum or origin. Addressing these cases requires family tracing, a process currently managed by Save the Children International (SCI) with support from decentralized structures in return areas, and at no financial cost to the families. However, since the cessation of ICRC's activities in the repatriation program, SCI has lacked the necessary budget to sustain family tracing efforts. There is an urgent need to mobilize resources to ensure continued support for unaccompanied children seeking reunification with their families.

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