

# Burundi

January 2025

■ **As of January 31st, Musenyi refugee site hosts 2704, refugees** (761 households including 1303 women, 1401 men – among them 1702 school age children) who are living in better conditions.

Moreover, during the reporting period, **213 new asylum seekers arrived in Burundi.** Asylum seekers transit center have reached their accommodation capacity. **Funding is urgently required to address the overcrowding in asylum seekers transit centers.**

In addition, **182 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 and protection.

## Operational Context

In January, 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.



*Three newly constructed blocks at the Gitara transit Center in Makamba province. The transit center receives Burundian returnees who chose voluntary repatriation to their home country.*

## Update On Achievements



### PROTECTION

#### Achievements and Impact

- **182 refugees received their identity cards provided** 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 protection of refugees in Burundi.
- In January 2025, **369 refugees were received during legal protection interviews in refugee camps**. The main needs included family reunification, documentation, follow-up on resettlement cases, access to justice, security concerns, assistance issues, birth and marriage registration, and health-related problems. Cases requiring specialized intervention were referred to the appropriate services. Particular attention was given to concerns from persons with albinism in Kavumu refugee camp, who fear abductions due to occult-related beliefs. Additionally, the legal protection partner, **UNHCR legal partner, *le Barreau de Bujumbura* provided support to refugees in need of legal assistance** by referring them to the relevant authorities for the initiation of investigations and prosecutions, as well as for legal advice, guidance, and access to competent courts.
- In January 2025, a total of **30 GBV incidents were reported and attended to by UNHCR and its partners** Save the Children and International Rescue Committee. Out of those incidents' women were the most affected with 23 cases and 3 for girls. GBV cases reflect the impact of cultural attitudes and morals that limit women, as well as their economic dependency. **The majority of reported GBV incidents are perpetrated by known individuals to the survivors**.
- **As part of child protection efforts**, 100 at-risk children were identified and supported in three refugee camps: 23 children in Kavumu, 33 children in Bwagiriza, and 44 children in Nyankanda. These follow-ups led to the opening of **cases to determine the Best Interest of the Child to ensure their safety and well-being**. Additionally, a case management meeting in Bwagiriza refugee camp resulted in the reunification of four minor children with their maternal aunt. **This reunification was made possible through the joint efforts** of ONPRA, Save the Children, and UNHCR, **highlighting the importance of coordinated action to provide these children with a stable and protective family environment**.

#### Identified Needs and Gaps

- **In January, 213 new asylum seekers arrived in Burundi**. 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

- Construction work continued at the Gitara returnee transit center in Makamba Province, where three additional blocks were completed. Additionally, **as part of the refugee response, a third school with ten classrooms is under construction:** the Butegeri Fundamental School in Giharo commune, Rutana province. **This school will serve refugees, returnees, and the host community.**



*Ongoing construction work at the Butegeri school in Giharo, Rutana Province*

- As part of inclusion efforts into the Burundian education system, and efforts to the implementation of agreements between the Ministry of National Education and Scientific Research (MENRS) and UNHCR Burundi, a mission was conducted in refugee camps and returnee areas in Gasorwe and Masanganzira, Muyinga Province to raise awareness on the diploma equivalency process. Refugees raised questions about the necessity of obtaining equivalency, the requirement to submit original documents, and the Burundian government's plans to improve education for Congolese refugees in Burundi. Additionally, a meeting between MENRS and UNHCR focused on facilitating the issuance of equivalency certificates for refugees and returnees, as well as the administration of Burundi's national exams for Burundian refugee students who are following the Burundian school program in Tanzanian refugee camps. MENRS is decentralizing the equivalency process to ease access, with awareness materials under development.

### Identified Needs and Gaps

- The needs in the education sector remain significant, particularly due to the **poor condition of infrastructure** and the **insufficient electricity and water** in schools. There is an **urgent need for increased support to the education sector** for refugees in the camps as well as returnees in areas of return.

**HEALTH****Achievements and Impact**

- In January, in Nyakanda, Bwagiriza et Kavumu refugee camps, **3,768 medical consultations and 636 in Musenyi site were conducted for refugees and 330 for the host population**, with **2,045 malaria cases recorded**. A major concern is the lack of mosquito net on hospital beds, increasing the risk of infection within health centers. Regarding the monkeypox (Mpox) epidemic, no cases were reported in January.

**Identified Needs and Gaps**

- **The absence of mosquito net poles in health centers** exposes patients to a higher risk of malaria. Despite awareness campaigns and the distribution of mosquito nets to refugees, **malaria cases continue to rise in the camps** with an increasing number of cases among children under five.
- The reduction of medical staff in camp health centers due to budget cuts has led to issues of efficiency and quality in the healthcare services provided to refugees.

**LIVELIHOOD****Achievements and Impact**

- As part of livelihood initiatives, refugees have continued income-generating activities at the Musenyi site. The Susuruka cooperative recently began harvesting its rice crop. It also produced 1,022 pieces of bread, selling 583 while the remainder was used for refugee consumption. Additionally, the group, composed of 27 refugees and members of the local community, manufactures soap, which is sold to both refugees and the host community. **Supporting refugee self-reliance is essential for several reasons, including enhancing food security, reducing dependency on humanitarian assistance**, and fostering economic inclusion, particularly in the agricultural sector.

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

- In January, UNHCR and its partner CARITAS continued the distribution of ANTA items (clothing and shoes) which was organized for the regularization of refugees in the Kavumu, Nyankanda, and Bwagiriza refugee camps as well as in Musenyi refugee site in Rutana Province. Refugees who were absent during the initial distribution, along with Persons with Specific Needs received these items provided by the ANTA-Sport group. In total, an additional 1,239 people were assisted: 824 in Kavumu, 256 in Nyankanda, 124 in Bwagiriza and 35 in Musenyi site.



- **As part of efforts to reintegrate Burundian returnees into their areas of return in their country, UNHCR and its partner COPED, have started a shelter kit distribution** in Gisagara commune, Cankuzo province. 48 households have already received the shelter kits, and another 52 will soon receive the shelter assistance. **Shelter kits are essential to ensuring a safe and dignified living environment for Burundian returnees** who have chosen to return to their home country. They play a crucial role in their reintegration, stability, and protection.
- Essential items distributions were conducted for refugees at the Musenyi site in Rutana Province. A total of 396 households newly arrived refugees at the site received NFI (279 jerrycans, 196 kitchen kits as well as mosquito nets, blankets and solar lamps). In addition, UNHCR partner Caritas also distributed food assistance to Persons with Specific Needs over 50 years old and individuals with disabilities. A total of 225 kg of



rice and 207 kg of beans was distributed, with 57 beneficiaries. **This support aims to ensure a basic level of food security for the most vulnerable individuals.**

*Distribution at the Musenyi refugee site in Giharo commune, Rutana Province*

- In January an infrastructure assessment mission was conducted in Makamba province to evaluate the status and quality of key facilities which are under construction thanks to our donors. These constructions include: the Gitara Transit Center (assessment of a shelter under construction and a completed health post), the Butegeri Fundamental School and Musenyi health post (monitoring ongoing construction), the sanitation and site improvement work at Musenyi in Giharo commune. The mission also carried out the technical inspection of newly constructed buildings at Gasana Fundamental School in Kayogoro commune. The infrastructure includes: 3 blocks with 9 classrooms, a director's office with electricity, two separate latrine blocks for boys and girls. **These infrastructures will benefit refugees, returnees and the host community.**

A post-distribution monitoring mission was conducted in Kabonga zone, Nyanza-Lac commune, Makamba Province where 98 returnee households had received a shelter kit. Two cases highlighted the impact of the assistance: - a mother who returned to Kabonga used her return package to build a house, contribute to the education of her children, and start a small business processing and selling cassava flour. - A single mother with school-aged children, used her return package to make bricks, pay masons, and purchase additional nails. With CBI repatriation support, she invested in pig farming

and rented farmland to enhance her self-reliance. Some of the highlighted gaps concern incomplete shelter kits with returnees having to purchase missing material.

- Throughout January, construction work on houses and latrine blocks continued at the Musenyi refugee site in Giharo commune, Rutana Province. **As of January 31st, Musenyi refugee site hosts 2704, refugees** (761 households including 1303 women, 1401 men – among them 1702 school age children) who are living in better conditions.



### Identified Needs and 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. For instance, for returnees, the **insufficiency of complete shelter kits leaves vulnerable households without adequate housing and weakens their living conditions** as returnees who voluntarily return to their home country and are struggling with precarious reintegration conditions. The shortage of shelter exposes them to increased social and economic vulnerability especially for the most vulnerable.



### DURABLE SOLUTIONS

#### Achievements and Impact

- **In January, 65 individuals (28 from Tanzania, 37 from Malawi—were voluntarily repatriated to their home country, Burundi.** They were received in safety and dignity and were issued with certificates of recognition as returnees delivered 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. Prior to their departure from transit centers, returnees received their return package in food and cash assistance to meet a variety of needs in their respective areas of return.

### Contacts

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