

Democratic Republic of the Congo:

2019 Mid Year Report

BURUNDI REGIONAL RRP

January - June 2019



45,336

BURUNDIAN REFUGEES HOSTED IN THE DRC (30 JUNE 2019)

US\$ 66 M

REQUIRED IN DRC IN 2019

8

RRP PARTNERS IN DRC IN 2019

SITUATION OVERVIEW

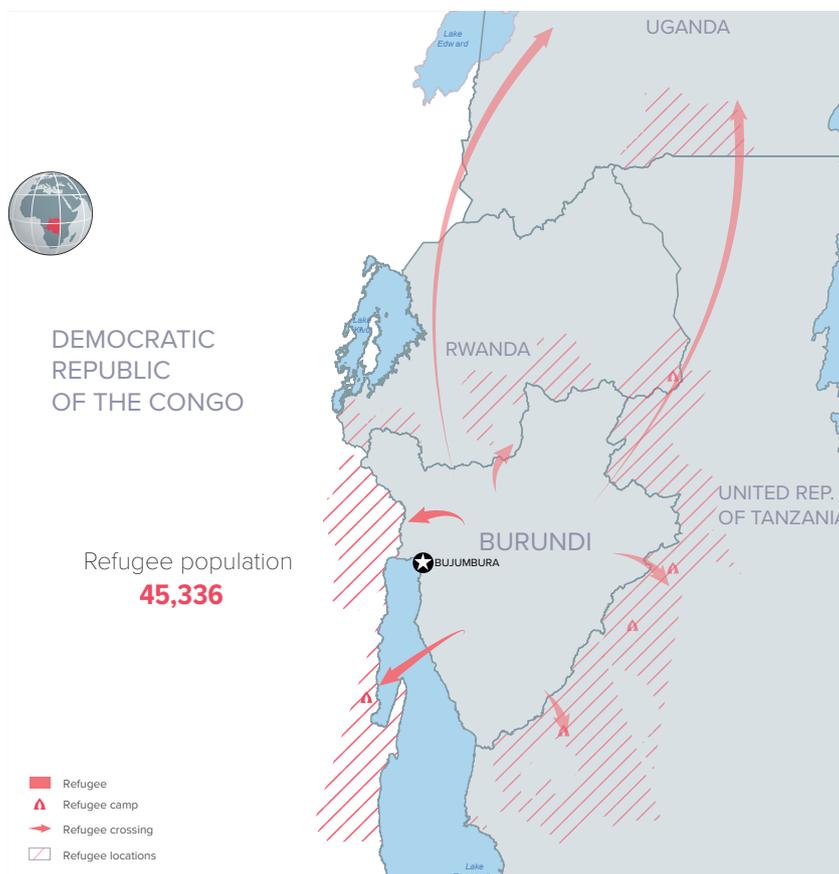
The security situation in South Kivu, and in particular in the southern part of the province where most of the Burundian refugees are settled, was relatively calm during the first three months of the year. However, this deteriorated from April 2019 onwards due to an inter-ethnic conflict between the Banyamulenge and the Babembe-Bafuliru – Banyindu communities. This situation was exacerbated by military offensives by the Congolese national army (FARDC) in June causing new internal displacements. In addition, some armed groups remain operational in the area, including a number of Burundi-affiliated groups. However, refugees living in Lusenda and Mulongwe settlements were not affected and continue benefiting from UNHCR support.

The number of Burundian refugees remained stable, and as of 30 June, the DRC was hosting 45,336 refugees with a majority living in South Kivu Province, especially in Lusenda (29,799) and in Mulongwe (7,221) settlements. An estimated 5,500 Burundian refugees live in communities outside of camps, while the rest have settled in

urban areas. They are vulnerable to the same security risks as the host population and for the few who remain without documentation, freedom of movement is limited for security reasons. Even though most have been registered in the Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) and hold valid refugee ID cards, those who travel for work, study or other reasons face protection risks including harassment, arbitrary detention by authorities, accusations of being linked to the armed groups operating in the area, and the same physical abuse as their neighbours – including sexual and gender-based violence.

Around 60 per cent of refugees are children. Adolescents and youth face a risk of being forcibly recruited by armed groups and of being sexually exploited, while the whole population continues to be at risk of SGBV in an area that is still dealing with internal conflict and with weak State and security infrastructure.

Lusenda refugee camp remains overcrowded, putting severe pressure on the provision of services (including hygiene and sanitation, nutrition, infrastructure and shelter, etc.). To ease this situation, a new refugee settlement in the locality of Mulongwe (Fizi Territory, near the town of Baraka) was opened in November 2017, however cuts in assistance, and in particular food assistance, have resulted in increased tensions between refugees and local communities.



Protection

1,155

Burundian refugees are registered on an individual basis with minimum set of data required

203

refugee children received individual case management



Due to **underfunding**, only 12.5% of the needed child protection assessments were conducted



By law, asylum-seekers arriving into the DRC have 30 days to declare themselves to competent authorities or face arrest. The presence of Burundian armed groups in South Kivu, which has led to the stigmatization of Burundians and in particular young men, makes it all the more important that this deadline be respected to avoid refoulement, arbitrary detentions or other forms of harassment.

During the first half of 2019, RRP partners have continued to conduct border monitoring to prevent cases of refoulement, with training sessions offered to border and local authorities. Asylum-seekers arriving at official border points will continue to be directed towards UNHCR/CNR-managed Transit Centers. UNHCR's Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) was used to register new asylum-seekers and verify older caseloads. During the reporting period, 1,155 refugees were registered on an individual basis with minimum set of data required while 849 PoC were assisted with civil status registration or documentation

Nearly 60 per cent of the Burundian refugee population are children under 18 years of age. A total 43 children (29 girls, 14 boys) were victims of abuse, violence and exploitation in camps and sites, with 39 per cent experiencing sexual violence.

In addition, many children arrive in the DRC without their parents, making them unaccompanied or separated children (UASC), exposing them to even more risks. During the first half of 2019, RRP partners systematically identified children at risk and conducted 35 Best Interest Assessments (BIA), with 11 best interest determination decisions taken by BID panel and one cross-border family reunification facilitated. Some 106 separated children were identified and registered, including 57 unaccompanied children who were placed in alternative care arrangements, and had their cases followed-up. In addition, 897 adolescents were supported by participating in targeted programmes. There are four community based networks for child protection (RECOPES), two in Lusenda and two in Mulongwe, that deals with child protection incidents, identification and family tracing for unaccompanied and separated children. Some 20 members of the RECOPES were trained and 27 sensitization sessions organized by members of the Burundian refugee community at Lusenda camp and Mulongwe site on various themes related to children's rights. Finally, during the reporting period, eight awareness raising campaigns on SGBV prevention and response were conducted in order to support prevention of SGBV cases.

Education

79.4% Burundian refugee children enrolled in **primary education**

1,472 students enrolled in **secondary education**

Additional classrooms and support to national education infrastructures are among the priority needs

Refugee children attended national Congolese schools in neighbouring communities. Access to primary and secondary schools in the DRC is conditioned on the payment of school fees by parents. Burundian refugee parents experience systematic difficulty in paying school fees and buying uniforms and school supplies for their children. The quality of teaching could be improved and classrooms are overcrowded and under-equipped. In these conditions, it is difficult for new refugee children who have just been relocated to Mulongwe to integrate themselves in the education programme resulting in high risks of drop out.

Access to secondary education is extremely limited for nationals and refugees alike. The absence of secondary

education opportunities exposes young Burundian refugees to risks of sexual and gender-based violence and exploitation. Girls can be compelled to resort to dangerous and desperate coping mechanisms such as survival sex. Transactional sexual relationships that arise in direct response to the need to meet basic needs, covering education-related expenses being one of them. Children are also often encouraged by their parents to fend for themselves to meet their needs and their families'. However, engaging in transactional sexual relationships leaves girls vulnerable to health, physical and emotional risks, and unwanted sexual and reproductive health outcomes including sexually transmitted infections (STIs), unintended pregnancies and unsafe abortions. The practice is also associated with increased risk of rape and physical violence. Therefore enhancing enrolment of girls in secondary education, through support of RRP partners directly constitutes a prevention measure to this risk.

Food

 **\$12**
monthly food vouchers were distributed

 **35,378**
Burundian Refugees living in Lusenda and Mulonge received full food rations

6,832
refugees living out-of-camp did not receive any food assistance

The food assistance provided in Mulongwe and Lusenda has had a great impact on refugees living in the camp/site. In the absence of this assistance, the nutritional status would be drastic since the limited working opportunities do not allow the majority of refugees to depend on other assistance than the humanitarian. The ongoing efforts around Mulongwe to involve refugees and local populations in crop production activities are limited and need more financial support to help refugees reach food sufficiency and empowerment. The limited presence of other UN Agencies and development actors in the areas in also a significant challenge that needs to be addressed at the inter-agency level.

Health & Nutrition

1,172
persons were referred to **secondary and tertiary health structures**

 **100%**
of Burundian refugees have access to national/government primary health care facilities

Limited access to drugs and other medicines due to lack of funds



At the end of June 2019, although 100% of refugees from Burundi had access to national health systems, it is to be noted that these systems need strong support in order to provide standard basic health care. Despite the efforts of RRP partners, health services in areas hosting Burundian refugees remain below acceptable standards. Structural challenges include insufficient numbers of healthcare providers, recurrent shortages in basic medication, dilapidated healthcare structures, insufficient equipment in reference hospitals and limited capacity for medical evacuations and surgical emergencies.

Limited services in camps, in hosting areas and transit centres led to an increase in patient referrals to reference hospitals. The frequent lack of funding for even basic medical inputs means that refugees do not receive adequate levels of care.

Adequate care for refugees admitted into nutrition supplementation programmes is hampered by untimely shortages of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food (RUTF) and Ready-to-Use Supplementary Food (RUSF). This situation negatively impacts the patients' exit and cure rate. Providers that treat HIV/AIDS cases would highly benefit from capacity-building.

The majority of these challenges can only be addressed as part of a multi-year programme with national and provincial authorities, and requires the support of development actors willing to invest in the upgrading of health standards in the province, for which RRP partners strongly advocate.



Livelihoods & Environment

30 
small business
associations formed and
or supported

3,061 individuals
**received production kits or
inputs** for agriculture/
livestock/fisheries activities



Only **35%**
of refugees have access
to fishing and agricultural
activities

The overall priority guiding the refugee response in South Kivu is to promote the capacity of refugees to lead an independent life. Until now, this has been done mostly through projects aiming to foster self-reliance, in particular through agriculture and fishing. However these projects require expertise and engagement from a wide range of actors beyond RRP partners, and it has proved difficult to attract such actors to Fizi territory. Due to limited resources, new arrivals are forced to stay longer at transit centres before they can be assigned a plot for shelter and given access to small scale farming activities to encourage self-reliance in Mulongwe. The continued arrival of Burundian refugees into Fizi territory of South Kivu has put pressure on already scarce resources and services in host communities. The presence of large numbers of refugees has also impacted the environment, leading to deforestation. Some refugees have been given access to land. All these facts contributed to creating additional sources of tension between the two communities, while limiting self-reliance and livelihoods prospects for refugees and the host communities. Only 35 per cent of the refugee population have access to agricultural and fishing activities, which heightens the dependency on assistance.



Shelter & NFIs

 **7,292** refugees
households living in
semi-permanent
shelter

637
emergency shelters were
renovated with provision of
new plastic sheets

1,958 
families in
Lusenda
still live in emergency
shelters, due to lack of funds

In Lusenda, 1,958 families still live in emergency shelters, made of plastic sheeting. As funds become available, RRP partners will support them to upgrade and improve their shelter into semi-permanent through cash for construction materials and technical assistance. New arrivals are directed to the Mulongwe site, where they receive technical and material support through conditional cash transfers in order to build their shelters using local construction techniques.

RRP partners have also been reinforcing the awareness-raising among families to upgrade their shelters into something more durable using local construction materials (mud brick, thatched walls, etc.). As a result, 637 emergency shelters were renovated, with the provision of new plastic sheets during the reporting period. Local associations of builders and carpenters, established in 2018, and composed of refugees and host communities in Lusenda, continued to provide support to vulnerable refugees in the construction of their shelters and to build community structures.



WASH

19 litres
of water per
person
per day met 

100%
of refugee households
received sufficient soap
on a monthly basis



69% of refugee
households remained
without access to a
family latrine

Cholera is endemic in the territory of Fizi, and ignorance of basic hygiene and sanitation measures is a permanent challenge in reception structures for Burundian refugees, as well as in Lusenda and Mulongwe. However, in the first half of 2019, the promotion of environmental health and hygiene standards helped keep accommodation

and reception facilities free of confirmed cholera cases. In addition, social and behavior change communication approach also helped to strengthen and sustain best hygiene practices amongst the refugees. Several hygiene campaigns reached a total of 17,700 persons of concern.

At the end of June 2019, 100 per cent of refugee households in Lusenda and Mulongwe have access to showers (with a ratio of less than 20 persons per shower). However there is a shortage of latrines and family showers in Lusenda, and a lack of latrines and showers for newcomers to be relocated to Mulongwe. Community latrines and showers in Transit Centres and at Assembly Points tend to degrade easily, requiring constant maintenance.

Overall, the WASH situation remains critical with WASH indicators below standards with only 19l of water/person/day available and 45 per cent of the overall population in need of latrines. In Lusenda there are regular interruptions of the water pumps due to malfunctions, weather hazards or vandalism, in addition to regular wear and tear. The water points in all sites operate during daylight hours and allow for maximum safety for all users. Water committees were established in Mulongwe since 2018, and during the first half of 2019, one was set-up in Lusenda, in order to empower beneficiaries in water and sanitation management (both for maintenance and financial resource management).

CRRF

DRC is not a CRRF country, however efforts are underway to work along CRRF lines in many parts of the country, including in the territory of Fizi. Refugees attend national schools and health treatment centres, and UNHCR has contributed to the building of health centres in communities close to the sites. The Mulongwe site is being developed along an “alternative to camp” model, with refugees and local communities taking joint decisions on use of resources. All livelihood projects target both refugees and local communities, including through setting up local agricultural cooperatives. UNHCR is working at the provincial level to include refugee-hosting areas in provincial development plans and with operational partners – NGOs, UNICEF, FAO – to target refugee-hosting areas. Discussions are underway with the World Bank to include the needs of refugee hosting areas in their 2020-2025 planning. A study on the impact of existing programming on hosting communities is about to start, which will inform the next phase of programmes in social protection and other sectors.

RRP PARTNERS

- Association des Femmes pour la Promotion et le Développement Endogène
- Danish Refugee Council
- FAO Food and Agriculture Organization
- United Nations Children’s Fund
- United Nations Development Programme
- United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
- United Nations Population Fund
- World Food Programme

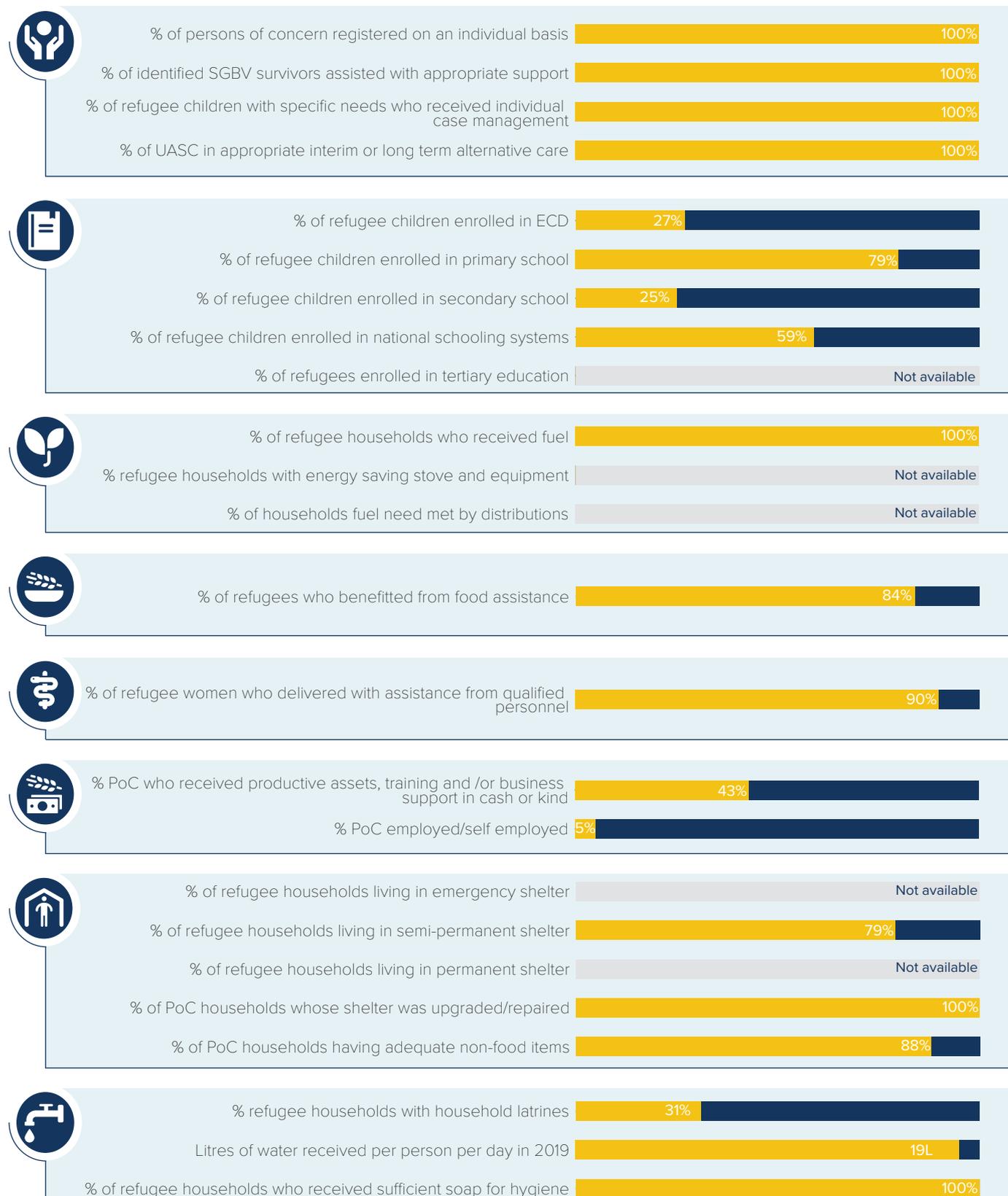
FOR MORE INFORMATION

Burundi Data Portal - <http://data2.unhcr.org/en/situations/burundi>

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