

BURUNDI

 **17,724**

As of August 31st, Musenyi refugee site hosts 17,724, refugees whom 15,473 are newly arrived refugee who were relocated to Musenyi the last six months. Among them 51% are women, 49% men and children account for 53% of the whole refugee population in Musenyi.

 **4,099**

During the reporting period, 4 099 newly arrived refugees were accommodated in transit centers. Facilities such as Cishemere and Makombe have since reached their full capacity resulting in overcrowded conditions. Funding is required to expand accommodation and improve living conditions in transit centres.

 **7,99**

In addition, 799 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.



Newly constructed infrastructures at the Nyabitare transit Center funded by KOICA. The transit center receives Burundian returnees who chose voluntary repatriation to their home country. @UNHCR/Burundi

Operational Context

In August, the security situation in Burundi remained generally calm, despite isolated incidents reported across the country. These did not affect UNHCR's operations. However, the ongoing fuel shortage continued to pose significant challenges. UNHCR and its partners continue to provide assistance to long-term refugees residing in the five camps of Nyakanda, Kinama, Musasa, Bwagiriza, and Kavumu which together hosts 56,017 refugees with Kavumu camp hosting the largest number, 18,949 individuals. Refugees in all camps remain in need of continued support to ensure their protection and access to basic services.

Update on Achievements



Protection

In August 2025, UNHCR, together with ONPRA and partners, conducted border monitoring and protection activities at entry points and at Cishemere and Makombe Transit Centers, where a total of **255 new arrivals from South Kivu/Democratic Republic of Congo were recorded, including 171 children and minors.** Most reported fleeing insecurity, armed violence, and rights violations. UNHCR coordinated with authorities and partners to provide immediate assistance, particularly to unaccompanied and separated children, persons with medical needs, and survivors of violence and trauma, with urgent cases referred to specialized medical, psychosocial, and child protection services.

As part of efforts to strengthen the legal protection of refugees, **UNHCR and ONPRA issued identity cards to 799 refugees and family composition certificates to 818 refugee households.** These official documents provide refugees with legal recognition in the country of asylum and **enable them to enjoy their fundamental rights.** The issuance of such documentation underscores ongoing efforts to reinforce the legal protection of refugees in Burundi.

During this reporting period, as part of the protection of persons at risk, UNHCR and partners strengthened assistance to women, girls, and children through targeted interventions. A total of **115 refugee women and girls received dignity kits to support their well-being and dignity** while contributing to safer environments. **Child protection efforts identified and assisted 68 at-risk children across refugee camps** (6 in Kavumu, 26 in Bwagiriza, 26 in Nyankanda, and over 10 at the Musenyi site), leading to the opening of 29 Best Interest Procedures to ensure their safety and well-being. In addition, coordinated case management efforts in Nyankanda camp enabled the reunification of four children with their biological families, and demonstrating the importance of joint action between ONPRA, UNHCR and partner Save the Children.

Identified Needs and Gaps

Since the influx of refugees from the DRC, the population in transit centers—particularly at the Cishemere Transit Center in Cibitoke—has **increased significantly.** **Women, children, older persons, and other vulnerable individuals are living in difficult conditions,** marked by overcrowding, despite UNHCR’s ongoing efforts. Urgent support in shelter and protection is needed to ensure safe, adequate, and dignified living conditions for refugee families.

At the Musenyi refugee site, a dedicated space for **early childhood development and structured activities for young children remains a major challenge.** Creating such spaces is key to their well-being, helping them stay safe, and be better protected within the community.

In August 2025, UNHCR and its legal partner, the Bujumbura Bar Association, provided legal protection and assistance to refugees across the five camps and Musenyi refugee site. Key needs included family reunification, legal documentation, resettlement follow-up, access to justice, security concerns, civil registration, and health issues, with cases requiring specialized support referred to appropriate services. Detention visits were conducted identifying 39 refugee detainees held for offenses such as theft, bodily harm, and domestic violence. **Legal assistance was also provided to returnees, with most cases related to land disputes.**

UNHCR, with ONPRA and Save the Children, trained 63 voluntary foster families and block leaders in Musenyi refugee site on how to provide safe and survivor-centered care for GBV survivors. The session addressed the types and consequences of GBV, the role of foster families, and the importance of respectful, ethical and coordinated support. Such trainings are helping participants to gain knowledge and skills to welcome and protect survivors with dignity, while strengthening community-based protection systems and reducing the risks of secondary trauma or abuse.

As part of efforts to strengthen social cohesion, UNHCR with ONPRA and the Eastern Regional Commissioner’s Office, organized a basketball match in Muyinga between refugees and the host community. The event, attended by the Governor of Buhumuza Province and community representatives also marked the inauguration of lighting for the basketball and volleyball courts provided by UNHCR. such sports initiatives promote interaction, dialogue and offers young people a positive environment.

SEVEN PRIORITIES OF NEEDS AT CISHEMERE TRANSIT

- 1 SHELTER AND OVERCROWDING**
The transit centre is critically overcrowded, with many families sleeping in non-designated spaces.
- 2 FOOD AND NUTRITION**
Residents receive insufficient food rations, and malnutrition risks are high, especially for young children.
- 3 ACCESS TO HEALTHCARE**
Refugees lack timely and adequate access to health services for various illnesses and conditions.
- 4 PSYCHOSOCIAL SUPPORT AND TRAUMA CARE**
Most individuals show signs of psychological distress, yet structured trauma care services are minimal or unavailable.
- 5 WATER, SANITATION, AND HYGIENE**
Widespread gaps in water access and lack of adequate sanitation facilities create health problems.
- 6 CHILD PROTECTION AND ACCESS TO EDUCATION**
Many unaccompanied children lack birth certificates and are unable to attend school.
- 7 LACK OF LIVELIHOODS AND DEPENDENCE ON AID**
Without income-generating opportunities, households



Education



The construction of the Kigage Primary School in Gisuru, **funded by KOICA has been fully completed.** The project includes 10 classrooms, an administrative block, two six-door latrine blocks, and a solar power system. Infrastructure is expected to significantly improve learning conditions for children and support the local education system.

925 refugee children (471 boys and 454 girls) **participated in accelerated courses** (in Kirundi, reading, and mathematics) **organized by UNHCR and its education partner JRS,** together with teachers and school directors in Bwagiriza, Kavumu and Nyakanda camps. **These courses,** continuing until December 2025, aim to support children’s learning and inclusion in the Burundian education system. In addition, during August, educational support continued until the start of the school term, with JRS, Save the Children, and ONPRA, providing reading sessions and educational videos, helping maintaining children’s engagement and learning. Meanwhile, IRC engaged 1,120 children in recreational and creative activities across Musasa and Kinama camps in the reporting period.

153 Burundian teachers were recruited by UNHCR and JRS at the Musenyi refugee site **to give remedial lessons in Kirundi, French, and mathematics to 5,047 Congolese refugee children aged** 5 to 14. These three-month classes, running until the end of November 2025, support educational continuity and introduce children to Kirundi, the national language of instruction, facilitating their integration into the Burundian education system.

Identified Needs and Gaps

5,614 refugee children (3001 girls and 2613 boys) aged 3 to 18 at the Musenyi site remain out of school due to the lack of nearby schools and 447 adolescents require reintegration into post-primary education. **This situation is alarming, as these children risk not only losing an entire year of schooling but are also exposed to increased protection risks,** including exploitation, violence, and vulnerability to abuse. Support from donors, through child protection actors is crucial to implement educational and protection solutions for these refugee children.



Health

In August, a total of 6,624 medical consultations for refugees and 438 for the host population were recorded in Nyakanda, Bwagiriza, and Kavumu camps, while at the **Musenyi refugee site reported 4,248 consultations for refugees and 1,418 for the host community. Malaria remained the most common condition,** with all cases receiving appropriate treatment. Additionally, 46 cases of pulmonary tuberculosis were identified and managed. **Mental health services reached, 110 new patients mostly among newly arrived refugees** at Musenyi. Regarding nutrition, 392 new cases of severe acute malnutrition were identified and provided with appropriate treatment.

Identified Needs and Gaps

A key gap identified is the limited use of formal health services by some refugees who are continuing to rely on superstitious practices or unsafe traditional surgery, which has led to preventable deaths. UNHCR and its health partner HNTPO organize a sensitization session at the Gitara transit center, encouraging refugees to seek available medical care and raising awareness on the dangers of such practices.



Shelter and NFI

At Musenyi site, **construction and WASH works are progressing well** despite challenging soil conditions, thanks to coordinated efforts of ZOA, UNICEF, AIDE, the Burundi Red Cross, and Fondation STAMM. Achievements include 72 latrine and shower blocks completed or underway, 315 tents installed at the extension site, and 500 shelter units finalized. Temporary shelters are being demolished as durable housing advances, ensuring improved living conditions for refugee families.

In addition, **KOICA funding enabled the completion of key infrastructure at the Nyabitare Transit Center**, including an office block for the DGRRR, a listening and consultation office, four isolation rooms, and three accommodation rooms. These new constructions enhance the transit center's capacity to provide safe and adequate services to Burundian returnees.

A total of **1,488 refugees (806 women and 682 men) at the Musenyi site received non-food items** distributed by IRC to support their basic needs. Among them, 600 households were provided with kitchen items, while 2,000 individuals each received a kit containing a plastic mat, a 20-liter jerrycan, a blanket, and a basin.

Identified Needs and Gaps

In August, 177 damaged shelters were identified in Nyakanda, Bwagiriza, and Kavumu camps by UNHCR, ONPRA, COPED, and Save the Children, requiring urgent rehabilitation to ensure safe and dignified living conditions for refugees. COPED has already begun rehabilitation, but additional **support is needed to cover shelter gaps and respond to urgent needs, particularly for newly arrived refugees** from the recent influx.

Refugees in transit centers face increasing hardship due to the suspension of briquette distributions for the past two months. The lack of cooking fuel forces many families to sell part of their limited food rations to buy briquettes, further exacerbating food insecurity and highlighting the urgent need for support to ensure refugees can cook meals safely and maintain basic dignity.



Durable Solutions

UNHCR facilitated a live broadcast from Rumandari village in Muyinga, **connecting Burundian refugees in four camps in Tanzania with returnees** and a women's artisan association in Burundi. **The session aimed to inform, reassure, and encourage refugees to consider voluntary return** as a durable solution. Refugees in Tanzania actively engaged by asking questions, while returnees and host community members shared testimonies about safety, livelihood and reintegration opportunities, and the assistance received. Partners such as DGRRR, IRC, FinBank, and COPED shared the concrete support available for those who choose to return.

As part of reintegration activities, UNHCR and its partners, DGRRR and COPED, distributed shelter kits to 100 vulnerable returnee households identified in Gisagara Commune, Buhumuza Province. Each kit includes 24 corrugated sheets, nails, doors, and windows, enables returnees to complete the construction of their homes. Additionally, 50 households in Mutaho Commune (Gitega), have been identified for an upcoming distribution of shelter kits distribution

In August, **1,737 Burundian refugees voluntarily returned to their home country Burundi**. They were received in safety and dignity at the Nyabitare Transit Center and where the Direction Générale du Rapatriement, de la Réintégration et de la Réinsertion (DGRRR) issued them with certificates of recognition as returnees, enabling access to civil documentation. Before departure to their areas of return, they received food and cash assistance packages to cover their immediate needs.

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