BURUNDI

The World Refugee Day on 23 June in Bujumbura ©UNHCR/B. Ntwari

Operational highlights

- **The Governments of the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi, together with UNHCR, convened the second Tripartite Commission in Kinshasa (2-4 June 2026) to discuss the facilitated voluntary returns**. Parties reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring that returns remain voluntary, safe and dignified, while agreeing to strengthen registration, intention surveys, cross-border coordination, sensitization, and resource mobilization to support return and reintegration efforts. The next tripartite meeting will be hosted by Burundi.
- The **World Refugee Day** was commemorated on 23 June in Bujumbura, providing an opportunity to also mark the **75th anniversary of the 1951 Refugee Convention**. The event brought together government representatives, partners, donors and refugees to recognize the contributions, resilience and aspirations of refugee communities. Other events took place in the refugee-hosting areas during the reporting period.
- **During the reporting period, the biometric registration exercise at Busuma was concluded**. The total population in Busuma stands now at **54,343 refugees** (***Document - COMMUNIQUE CONJOINT - Achevement de l'enregistrement biometrique des refugies congolais sur le site de Busuma***).
- **The facilitated voluntary return** to the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) continued with **3,773 during the month**, bringing the cumulative number of returnees to 8,233 since the operation began on 23 April 2026. Children accounted for more than 60 per cent of returnees, while women slightly outnumbered men.
- As of the reporting period, the **Cishemere Transit Centre hosts 3,163 individuals (1,003 households), while the Makombe Transit Centre hosts 617 individuals (209 households)**. Humanitarian conditions in both transit centres remain challenging, with significant protection concerns and limited access to basic services.

Protection

- **Protection activities** continued through protection counselling, with **77 refugees** have received individual counselling on issues including family reunification, household separation, documentation, assistance for persons with specific needs and other protection concerns, with appropriate responses provided through direct assistance or referrals.

- **Legal assistance** and detention monitoring continued, with 44 refugees released following legal and judicial follow-up, while 1 refugee remained in detention during the reporting period. In addition, the Bujumbura Bar Association conducted four awareness-raising sessions on refugees' rights and responsibilities and on children's rights, reaching a total of 525 participants contributing to increased knowledge of their rights by refugees.

- **Capacity-building** was also provided by Burundi Bar Associationto approximately 40 local authorities and stakeholders on international refugee protection, access to justice, solutions and prevention of statelessness. In addition, **150 refugees**, mainly community leaders and persons with disabilities, were trained by the Association for the Promotion of Entrepreneurship in Burundi (APE) on gender-based violence (GBV), violence against children, and existing reporting and referral mechanisms, strengthening community-based protection capacities.

- **Gender Based Violence (GBV) survivors** were supported through specialized services such as case management, psychosocial support, dignity kits and cash-based assistance. Community awareness and prevention activities reached refugees and community leaders, while coordination among partners was strengthened through improved use of GBVIMS.

- **Child protection** remained a key priority, with **318 Best Interests Determinations (BIDs)** and **488 Best Interests Assessments (BIAs)** completed since the beginning of the response. Among these, **170 children** were approved for the facilitated voluntary return to DRC. To date, 34 unaccompanied children and 454 separated children have gone back to DRC through facilitated returns. Birth registration efforts continued, with 184 births registered during the reporting period, contributing to the prevention of statelessness and ensuring children's access to legal identity. **bringing the total number to 937 children with birth certificates**. This represents a step towards ensuring legal identity, amid an **estimated 3,000 births recorded at Busuma since the influx began in December 2025.**

- **Persons with specific needs** continued to receive targeted support, with approximately 25 per cent of the refugee population identified as having specific needs. During the reporting period, 562 persons with specific needs received cash assistance from Care International, while additional vulnerable individuals received non-food items and other tailored support.

- **Peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities** was strengthened through dialogue sessions involving 57 refugees and 17 host community members, as well as a mixed committee meeting attended by 9 refugees and 5 Burundians. While relations remained generally positive, environmental degradation and alcohol abuse were identified as potential sources of tension. Recommendations were developed to address these risks, while shared initiatives such as water supply services and the mixed market were recognized as key contributors to social cohesion and harmonious coexistence.

- **Accountability to affected populations** and community engagement mechanisms were strengthened through ongoing efforts to harmonize feedback and complaints systems. Social cohesion activities, including community dialogues and World Refugee Day events, brought together refugees, host communities and humanitarian actors to promote peaceful coexistence and address concerns related to access to services, freedom of movement and community relations.
- **PSEA** activities were strengthened through training of 41 participants, risk analysis, and improved coordination mechanisms. **Ongoing work aims to harmonize complaint mechanisms across partners and improve access for refugees**.

Health & Nutrition

- Health facilities delivered **27,843 consultations (23,444 refugees and 4,399 nationals)** and reported 72 cases with tuberculosis and 1810 cases with watery diarrhea
- Measles remains of concern with 20 cases identified during the covered period.
- Nutrition screening is ongoing routinely and to date, a total of 530 children aged 6–59 months and 132 pregnant and lactating women with moderate acute malnutrition, as well as 244 cases with severe acute malnutrition, are currently receiving follow-up care.
- Health staff have not yet received training on Ebola virus disease preparedness and response. In addition, the MSF isolation facility is not conditioned to manage suspected or confirmed Ebola cases.
- The overall health situation remains challenging due to limited staffing, insufficient laboratory capacity, inappropriate heath infrastructures, and funding constraints affecting the sustainability of health services.

Cash Assistance and Food Support

- **Multipurpose cash assistance distributions continued from** WFP and its partner, with distributions of 37,000 BIF per person for food support. These interventions contribute to improving food access despite occasional operational constraints.
- **Cash assistance for the facilitated voluntary return operation supported 3,773 refugees (922 households)** for the reporting period.

Shelter and Infrastructure

- Shelter gaps remain critical: only **45.5% of the population is adequately accommodated**, leaving **54.5% without proper shelter**.
- **To date, 96 shelters were reallocated to 96 households (507 individuals)** following the facilitated voluntary returns.

WASH

- **Water supply remains critically low**, despite a slight increase to approximately 8.3 litres per person per day, with a daily production of around 386,000 litres.
- **WASH infrastructure works are ongoing**, including the construction of water reservoirs, distribution networks, development of multiple water sources and sanitation facilities. However, **access to sanitation remains insufficient**, with approximately 47 persons per latrine (of which, some are emergency latrines soon to be decommissioned) and 296 persons per shower.

Environment

- The deterioration of roads and drainage channels in Busuma site is worsening, rendering some routes impassable, including access for water tankers supplying certain areas. Soil erosion is also affecting site infrastructure, particularly emergency latrines, which are gradually deteriorating from the bottom of the pits. This situation poses a risk to the safety of refugees.
- Deforestation continues as refugee households have limited access to alternative cooking fuel. Over time, this may increase pressure on natural resources and contribute to tensions between refugee and host communities.

Needs and Gaps

- The response remains critically underfunded. Additional resources are urgently required to sustain life-saving assistance, strengthen protection services, improve living conditions and support peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities.
- Humanitarian needs remain significant across Busuma, Cishemere and Makombe. Refugees continue to face limited access to adequate shelter, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services, healthcare, education and livelihood opportunities. Overcrowding place additional pressure on already stretched services and infrastructure.
- Protection needs remain high, particularly for women, children and persons with specific needs. Continued investment is required to ensure access to protection services, child protection, GBV prevention and response, legal assistance, psychosocial support and community-based protection mechanisms.
- Food security and basic assistance remain a key concern. Limited resources constrain the provision of essential assistance, including core relief items, cash assistance and targeted support for the most vulnerable households.
- Environmental pressures continue to increase as refugee households rely on firewood for cooking due to the lack of alternative energy sources. Continued deforestation risks exacerbating tensions between refugees and host communities and underscores the need for investment in sustainable energy solutions.
- Several partnerships have already come to an end, while others are at risk of ending due to funding constraints, jeopardizing the continuity of critical protection and assistance services in Busuma, where response capacities are already overstretched.

UNHCR and its partners express their sincere gratitude to the donors whose generous contributions have supported the refugee response in Burundi.

Sectors	Partners
Coordination	ONPRA et HCR
Shelter	HCR/COPED et Croix Rouge du Burundi
WASH	HCR/COPED, MSF, UNICEF, Croix Rouge du Burundi, PEFE, World Vision International/Tear Fund, Terres des Hommes, ADRA, Fondation STAMM et Food For The Hungry, AID, AHAMR, WHH
Health	HCR/HealthNet TPO, MSF, ministère de la Santé, UNFPA/ABUBEF, OMS/Global Development Community Burundi
Nutrition	PAM, CARITAS/CRS, WeWorld GVC, Concern
Food	PAM/CARITAS, AIRD et Actalliance Forum Burundi
Non-Food Items (NFIs)	HCR/AIRD, ZOA, Croix Rouge du Burundi, World Vision International, ADRA, Terre des Hommes, CARITAS, MSF, IRC, Actalliance Forum Burundi, Fondation STAMM, UN Women et FFH
Protection	ONPRA, HCR, Croix Rouge du Burundi, Save The Children, Barreau de Bujumbura, SAD, Spring Communities, UPHWO, Terres des Hommes, PEFE, IRC, CRS,LRC, WVI, FFH, UNICEF, UNFPA, ONU femmes, FLM, CARE International Association des Femmes Handicapees du Burundi. World Relief. JRS
Logistics	HCR/AIRD

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