

RWANDA

EMERGENCY UPDATE ON BURUNDIAN INFLUX

16 – 22 April 2015

HIGHLIGHTS

KEY FIGURES

9,521 (as of 21 April)

Burundian refugees have crossed into Rwanda.

Further breakdown of the above figure:

6,964

Refugees in Bugesera Reception Center.

2,557

Refugees in Nyanza Reception Center.

62%

Are children.

PRIORITIES

- Establishment/development of the new camp;
- Rapid transportation of refugees in the reception centers to the new camp;
- Continue providing essential protection and assistance services to the refugees in the existing Bugesera and Nyanza reception centers, with a particular focus on health, WASH and shelter.

- On 22nd April, the first convoy of 400 refugees left the overcrowded Nyanza reception center to the new refugee camp, Mahama (under construction). The Government of Rwanda has allocated 50 hectares of land in the Mahama sector of Kirehe District in the eastern province

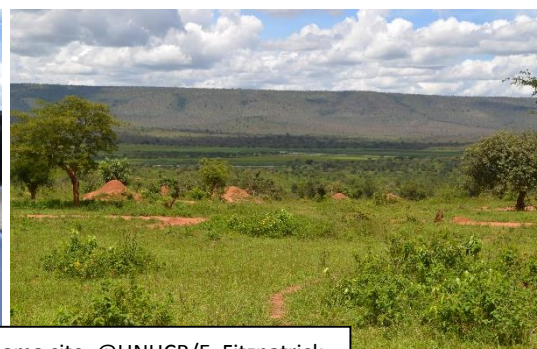


Refugees in Nyanza reception center getting ready to depart for Mahama refugee camp. @UNHCR/J. Novela

for a new refugee camp to host some 20,000 individuals. On 17th April, the Deputy Representative of UNHCR, the Special Advisor to the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) and the Mayor of Kihere District led a rapid assessment mission accompanied by WFP, UNICEF, ADRA, ARC, World Vision and Plan International to assess the new site. MIDIMAR, UNHCR and partners have been quick in response by mapping out the site, mobilizing staff to erect tents and hangars, establishing temporary WASH facilities and overseeing logistics. UNHCR headquarters has deployed a WASH engineer and site planning expert to provide technical support in the construction of the new camp.



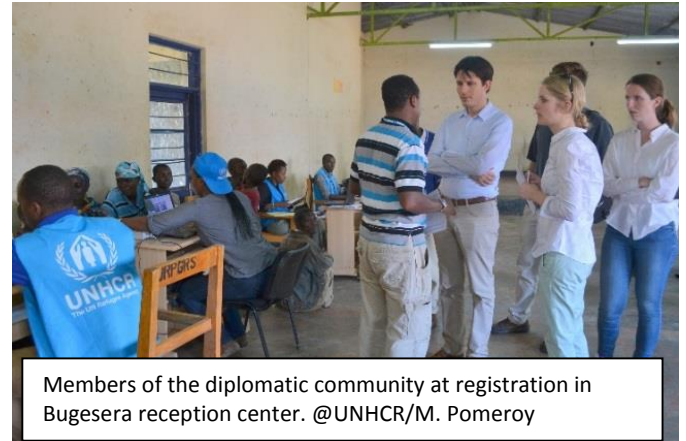
Rapid Assessment Mission at Mahama site. @UNHCR/E. Fitzpatrick



Family shelters in the new Mahama refugee camp. @UNHCR/M.Marara

- The first high level Refugee Coordination Meeting (RCM) convened on 20th April at MIDIMAR's premises, co-chaired by the Honorable Minister of MIDIMAR and the Representative of UNHCR. The RCM is a policy and decision making forum, which was attended by heads of UN agencies, Government of Rwanda counterparts and partners. The RCM will discuss the current situation of Burundian refugees in Rwanda as well as challenges faced and solutions envisaged. While regular technical coordination meetings take place at camp levels, MIDIMAR and UNHCR colleagues in the field are tasked to organize daily refugee technical coordination meetings in the two reception centers, i.e. Bugesera and Nyanza, and soon the new Mahama camp.

- On 20th April, officials of the Embassy of the United States, Embassy of the Netherlands, and Embassy of Germany visited Bugesera Reception Center in order to see firsthand the conditions of newly arriving Burundian refugees, the response coordinated by UNHCR and MIDIMAR, and to speak to refugees directly regarding their experiences and motivations for fleeing to Rwanda. Led by the MIDIMAR Camp Manager and UNHCR protection staff based on-site, the delegation visited hangars where refugees are being accommodated before their transfer to the new camp, Mahama.



Members of the diplomatic community at registration in Bugesera reception center. @UNHCR/M. Pomeroy

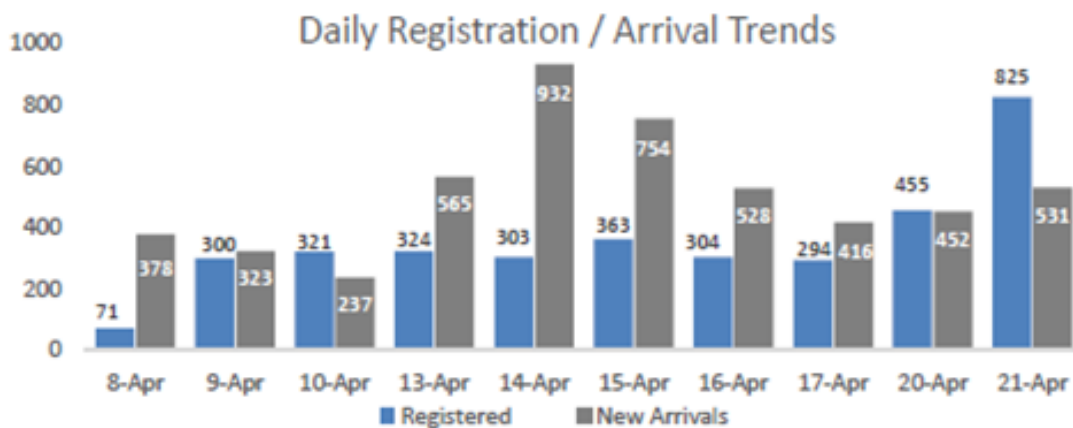
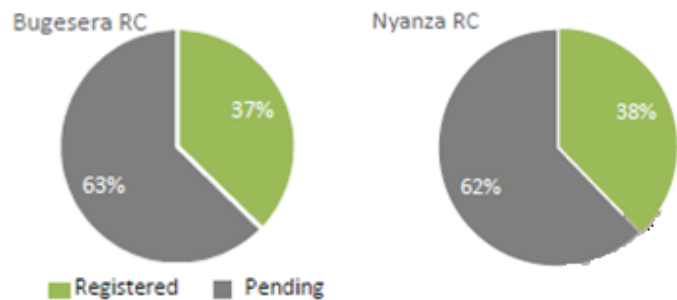
- On 17th April, UNHCR hosted a meeting for Ambassadors and officials of diplomatic missions and donor agencies in Kigali in order to provide an update on the current refugee influx from Burundi. The UNHCR Representative, Mr. Saber Azam, provided an overview of the situation, including statistics and demographics of the refugee population and the response coordinated by UNHCR and MIDIMAR. The UN Resident Coordinator and key UN partners, WFP and UNICEF, provided complementary updates, while several Ambassadors shared their perspectives on the political context based on recent visits to Burundi.
- On 16th April, MIDIMAR and local authorities accompanied a delegation of Burundian government officials from Kirundo Province, local leaders, religious leaders, police, professionals and some residents of Kirundo to visit Bugesera reception center and meet with the Burundian refugees. The main objective of the visit was for them to understand the reasons behind the flight of compatriots and to convince them to return home. The Governor of Kirundo stated that no one would force the population to go back to Burundi but that it was his wish and that of the government of Burundi that the refugees return. The officials from MIDIMAR reiterated the responsibility of Rwanda in receiving refugees and stated that there would be no forced returns. The refugees were divided into four groups according to their area or origin and individuals from the delegation joined the groups to discuss with them the issues they were raising. In conclusion, the overall feeling was that the refugees were not convinced of peace and protection in Burundi and of the possibility of return.
- Basic services are in place to provide essential protection and cater to the needs of refugees in the existing Bugesera and Nyanza reception centers. However, as both reception centers are overcrowded, challenges are emerging, particularly in the areas of WASH and health.
- In the new refugee camp, Mahama (as shown on the first page), shelter, security, health, WASH and sanitation teams have been deployed to properly receive the newly relocated refugees from the reception centers.



Refugee in Bugesera receiving essential non-food items. @UNHCR/S. Masengesho

STATISTICS

Registration poses a challenge as UNHCR is collecting comprehensive bio-data, including photos and fingerprints. With limited staff and large numbers of new arrivals each day, there is a backlog in registration.



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World Food Programme



ICRC



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Rwanda Red Cross Society

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