

BURUNDI SITUATION

UNHCR REGIONAL UPDATE

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KEY FIGURES

34,984

Number of Burundian refugees who have sought asylum in neighboring countries since the beginning of April 2015

24,795

Number of refugees in Rwanda

7,189

Number of refugees in DRC

3,000

Number of refugees in Tanzania

PRIORITIES

- Relocation of refugees to safety from border areas
- Preparation of refugee sites allocated by governments of host countries
- Life-saving emergency protection and assistance interventions including in the sectors of registration, shelter, domestic items, food, water, sanitation, hygiene, health.
- Identification and protection of children including family tracing, family reunification and alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children.
- Prepositioning of relief items for anticipated mass outflows into neighboring countries

Highlights

- The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of Rwanda has issued a statement expressing serious concern over the deteriorating situation in Burundi. It cites the Minister of Foreign Affairs, Louise Mushikiwabo, as saying: “We take seriously the reports of links to FDLR, the hundreds refugees crossing into Rwanda daily and above all the imperative of protection of civilians. We appeal to leaders of Burundi to do everything in their power to bring the country back to a peaceful situation. We will continue to work with the region and the international community to support peace.”

Burundi

- The situation in the country remains tense with shops closed and not much business happening in the capital.
- Areas where Congolese refugees are located (Ruyigi and Muyinga) remain relatively calm.



*Burundians refugees at Bugesera reception centre line up for registration.
[Photo: UNHCR]*

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Rwanda

- The daily arrival rate has decreased from a peak of over 1,000/day to an average of 300 per day over the last few days.
- UNHCR is conducting biometric registration of new arrivals: Level 1 registration in reception centres and Level 2 registration at the refugee camp.
- A large number of unaccompanied and separated children has been identified; ICRC has joined the emergency response for family tracing and reunification. Child protection and SGBV referral mechanisms are established.
- Recently more young men have been arriving. More affluent people are seen driving cars with Burundian license plates in Rwanda. Some are reluctant to go to camps. New arrivals are coming from Kirundo, Ngozi and Muyinga provinces as well as Bujumbura.
- Bugesera reception centre remains congested with about 10,000 people although relocation to Mahama is continuing. Nyanza reception centre is less congested and able to accommodate new arrivals. Refugees continue to be relocated to Mahama camp.
- The population of Mahama is 13,000 refugees, as of 4 May.
- UNHCR is to establish an office in Kirehe district close to where Mahama camp is located.
- Additional staff have been deployed to support refugee response operations.
- A CERF rapid response proposal to cover the initial urgent needs for the refugee response is being developed under UNHCR's leadership with OCHA's support.

Democratic Republic of Congo

- The SRSG in DRC and Head of the MONUSCO, Mr Martin Kobler, visited Uvira territory and held meetings with IDPs from Mutarule (Ruzizi Plain) and Burundian refugees at Kavimvira transit centre. IDPs and refugees raised concerns related to safety, disarmament, impunity and assistance. The SRSG promised that the UN will forward their concerns to the Government and make all efforts to identify solutions to their problems.
- New arrivals reached the number of 7,189 (Burundian refugees and DRC returnees) with an arrival rate of 325 per day. The peak was on 25 – 26 April 2015. So

far the new arrivals, mainly female, have been hosted by local communities. .

- Under the co-lead of the *Commission Nationale pour les Réfugiés* (CNR) and UNHCR, arrangements are being made to settle 6,000 refugees in Uvira territory and 4,000 in Fizi. A new site has been identified where refugees will be out-of-camp and will settle with local populations in order to benefit from existing government facilities such as schools, health posts, and security presence.
- UNHCR has asked DRC authorities that new arrivals from Burundi be granted *prima facie* refugee status.
- Biometric registration will be conducted once refugees have settled in the designated area. UNHCR's assistance will be provided only to refugees who have opted to staying in the settlement areas.
- UNHCR started sensitization missions with the support of the local authorities and the CNR. However, the burden on hosting families that are already very poor is high.
- Relocation of refugees from the border with Burundi is a key priority to prevent protection incidents.
- ICRC has fielded a mission to register and conduct family tracing for 49 Burundian unaccompanied minors identified so far.
- WFP approved the procurement of food for 1,000 Burundian refugees over 30 days.
- 23 Kits were distributed to breastfeeding women in the Kavimvira (19) and PR Sange (4) transit centres.
- MONUSCO contributed 5,000 litres of water to Kavimvira transit site and will continue to do so daily.

Tanzania

- Up to 3,000 refugees in the country including those reportedly on islands on Lake Tanganyika. Many are arriving on the islands, making it difficult to access. Authorities also reports refugees arriving through Rwanda and Uganda to Kigera.
- A boat was hired to transport them from the islands to the NMC transit centre in Kigoma; thereafter they will be relocated by road to Nyarugusu camp.
- Refugees include persons who were previously repatriated in 2008.
- Reports of refugees arriving through Rwanda and Uganda to Kigera according to authorities