SITUATION REPORT: INFLUX OF FORCIBLY DISPLACED PEOPLE FROM EASTERN DRC TO BURUNDI

Update as of December 11, 2025

New arrivals waiting in Ndava their primarily registration by ONPRA and UNHCR for transfer to Bweru @UNHCR_Burundi

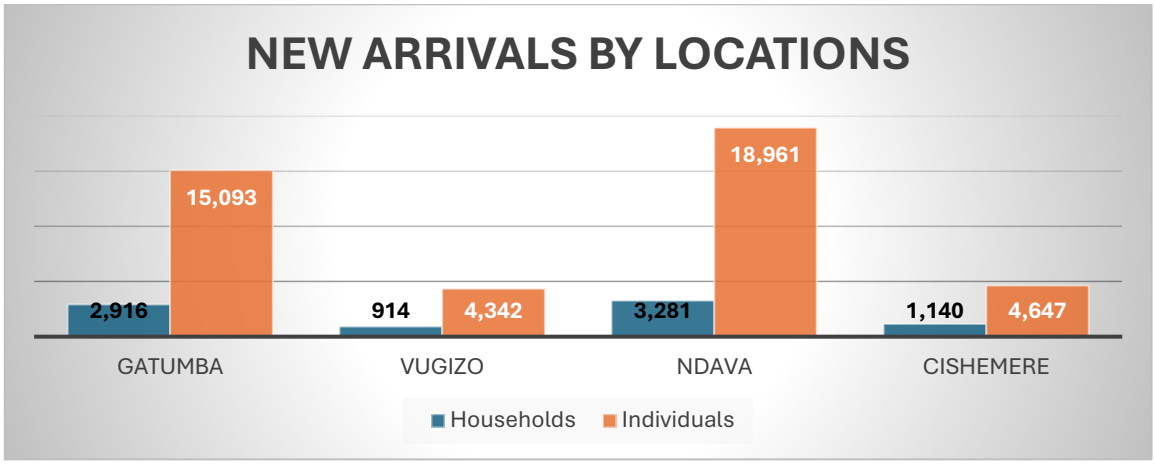
Overview

Since 5 December 2025, renewed violence in eastern DRC has triggered a sharp and continuous movement of forcibly displaced persons into Burundi. The pressure on border entry points—especially Buganda, Gatumba, Vugizo, Ndava, and Cishemere—remains intense. The government of Burundi and UNHCR are struggling to keep pace with identification, particularly in Ndava, where arrivals continue at scale. While in Gatumba, the identification remains challenging. The humanitarian footprint is expanding rapidly as authorities and partners race to stabilize their interventions while managing one of the largest cross-border influxes recorded in recent years.

Population Arrivals

Between 6 and 11 December, **50,068 individuals** were preliminarily identified across four entry zones. Upon to Burundian authorities the real number is likely higher given ongoing

identification gaps. Women and men remain evenly represented (51%/49%), while children under 18 account for nearly half (48%) of the population.



Returnees Assistance

As part of its support to Burundian arrivals, **IOM facilitated transportation assistance for 250 individuals** returning to their areas of origin with operations set to continue in the coming days. IOM also ensured **water distribution** for all transported Burundians, helping to meet immediate needs during transit. In addition, since 9 December, IOM has been providing **technical support to the DGRRR registration process** at the Ndava site, reinforcing government efforts to ensure orderly and dignified registration of Burundians.

Relocation to Bweru Refugee Site

To decongest overcrowding in Ndava and Gatumba, and address rising protection needs, authorities organized convoys to the **Bweru (Busuma)** site and Ruyigi Transit Center in Buhumuza Province. A total of **3,823 people** were relocated over three days:

- 1,301 people from Ndava on December 09th. 1,202 people from Ndava on December 10th. 749 from Gatumba and 571 from Ndava on December 11th.

Transit facilities are severely overstretched: the Ruyigi Transit Center currently hosts **1,000 people**, nearly triple its intended capacity of **350**. This has prompted accelerated shelter plans to improve living conditions.

Bweru Site Development

During the reporting period, significant progress has been made by UNHCR and partners in transforming Bweru (Busuma) into a functional refugee site, despite the scale and speed of arrivals. As the main access road had been cleared, terracing work will be finalized on **12 December**; earthworks were completed for **two residential zones** (48 shelters each); plotting finalized for Zone 1 and due for completion for Zone 2 on 12 December. terracing underway for **five communal hangars**, with a capacity of 100 individuals each; foundations

prepared for the **registration hangar**; and assembly of two hangar structures already in progress.

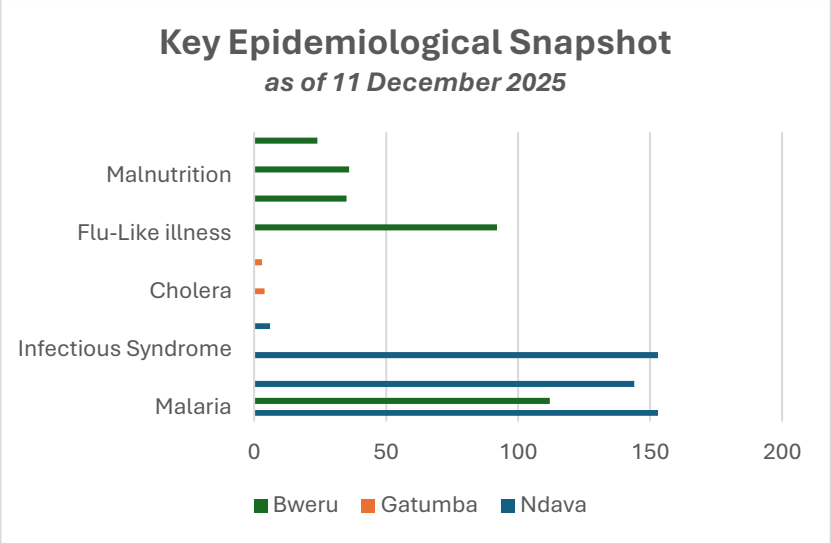
Twenty Refugee Housing Units (RHUs) were installed, including structures designated for the mobile clinic and staff workspaces. In parallel, 400 family tents were transferred to the site, with installation scheduled to begin on 12 December to rapidly expand shelter capacity. Families awaiting relocation are temporarily accommodated in nearby churches and at the Ruyigi Transit Center, with priority given to women, children, and other vulnerable individuals.

WASH infrastructure is gradually being reinforced. A 10-door emergency latrine block has been completed, while construction of additional blocks is underway to meet rising needs. A water tanker is positioned onsite to ensure minimum supply, and refugees can collect water from the source, located 400 meters away. UNHCR is expected to deploy additional water bladders in the coming days to increase storage capacity.

Support to refugees continues through multi-agency contributions. The Burundi Red Cross has distributed essential household items, including 112 buckets, 102 jerrycans, 18 blankets, and 47 cups. WFP, through CARITAS, has provided hot meals to around 2,000 refugees in Bweru, while UNHCR, through AIRD, has ensured hot meal distribution for those temporarily accommodated at the Ruyigi Transit Center. Starting from 12 December

Health Situation

The health landscape across Ndava, Gatumba and Bweru has grown increasingly complex as rising population density, inadequate WASH infrastructure, and continuous arrivals converge into a set of acute public health challenges.



In **Kansega–Ndava**, the combination of overcrowding and minimal sanitation is fueling a surge of communicable diseases. The Ministry of Health and UNHCR partner, HealthNet TPO, reported a concerning mix of malaria, diarrheal illnesses, and suspected measles—an epidemiological pattern typical of rapid displacement settings. Ten children with severe acute malnutrition were stabilized and transferred to the district hospital, while vaccination campaigns targeting children and pregnant women continue in an effort to curb new outbreaks. Yet, the absence of latrines, limited water availability, and a lack of WASH kits continue to undermine basic prevention efforts.

In **Gatumba**, the situation has escalated into a public health alert following the confirmation of cholera cases and the detection of suspected Mpox patients, who were transferred to CHUK for specialized care. Immediate needs revolve around safe water supply, deployable latrines, WASH kits, and disinfection operations to prevent wider transmission.

Meanwhile, **Bweru** site is already absorbing a heavy clinical workload. Over 400 consultations were conducted shortly after the first transfers, with malaria, respiratory infections, and intestinal parasites emerging as the dominant conditions. Malnutrition is also rising sharply, with 36 cases identified—most of them children under five and pregnant or breastfeeding women. The absence of nutritional supplies means that moderate acute malnutrition cases cannot yet be managed on site. HealthNet TPO has reinforced its presence by installing medical tents and expanding surveillance, but shortages in personnel, medicines, equipment, water and sanitation continue to restrict service capacity.

Across all sites, partners are scaling up emergency care, nutritional screening, vaccination, referrals, and health promotion. However, the system remains stretched, and without rapid reinforcement, risks will continue to escalate in the coming days.

Protection Concerns

Based on provisional data, vulnerabilities among new arrivals are significant. **Women at risk** account for **36%** of the population, followed by **single parents (33%)**, **elderly individuals (19%)**, **children and adolescents (5%)**, **persons with disabilities (2%)**, self-identified **survivors of sexual and gender-based violence (1%)**, and **unaccompanied or separated children (1%)**. Notably, **45% of household focal points are women**, highlighting the need for targeted protection measures. UNHCR teams are prioritizing risk identification, border protection monitoring, family reunification, and support for individuals with specific needs.

Coordination & Next Priorities

The response is led by the Government in close partnership with UNHCR. The rapid mobilization of WFP, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, MSF, Save the Children, HealthNet TPO, AIRD, COPED, the Burundi Red Cross, and CARITAS has contributed to establishing the foundations of a coordinated response; however, these efforts remain insufficient to adequately address the needs among the newly arrived population.

Immediate priorities:

- Urgently decongest Ndava and Gatumba by scaling up relocation convoys and expanding reception capacity at Bweru site.
- Fast-track installation of family tents and communal shelters, and reinforce food assistance, health system and protection services.
- Accelerate registration and identity verification to ensure to protection of refugees.

The situation remains highly dynamic, and the success of the response now hinges on sustained coordination and rapid deployment of resources.