

BURUNDI SITUATION

UNHCR REGIONAL UPDATE

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KEY FIGURES

48,288

Refugees in Tanzania (13 May)

26,000

Refugees in Rwanda (13 May)

9,000

Refugees in DRC (13 May)

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

- Tanzania continues to report high numbers of new arrivals even as the situation in Burundi remains uncertain.
- Clarifying the confusion regarding the number of people in Kagunga, the Government Refugee Service Department has stated that the estimated number 30,000 and that agencies may need to be prepared if the number of nearly 90,000 person was correct. It goes without saying that the actual number of people in Kagunga is difficult to assess precisely. There is still a group of people estimated to be 10,000 on the other side of the border in Burundi.
- The situation on the overcrowded Kagunga Island is deplorable, with village leaders expressing concerns regarding increasing tension and potential friction between the local population and asylum seekers. The absence of adequate latrines and sanitation services is a specific concern raising fears of disease outbreak.
- Road conditions in the area of operations are bad. On rainy days only light vehicles and 4WD heavy duty vehicles can reach some of the villages. The roads within the camp are also in very poor condition, causing delays in movement of people within the camp.



The crowd of asylum seekers on Kagunga Island is growing by the day, waiting anxiously to be transported to the Tanzanian mainland by UNHCR. Many of them sleep in the open for days.
[UNHCR/T.Monboe]

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Operational Context

- The Regional Commissioner for Kigoma has agreed that the Lake Tanganika Stadium in Kigoma could be used as reception center for people coming off the boat from Kagunga, as soon as latrines are built.
- UNHCR and the Government Refugee Service Department organized a meeting of the Refugee Working Group attended by all relevant actors in Dar-es-Salaam. The following strategy was shared with all stakeholders:
 1. *Increase rate of removal of refugees out of Kagunga*: It is imperative to increase the rate at which refugees are moved from Kagunga village. UNHCR has identified a ship which will initially carry 300 passengers but will only operate during the day and will not carry women and children. In addition, assessment mission will be carried out tomorrow to explore the possibility of moving refugees out of Kagunga by road without having to reenter Burundi.
 2. *Create a Reception center in Kagunga*: Despite efforts to increase transportation, a good number of people will remain in Kagunga village for some time. They face terrible/catastrophic conditions, especially in the WASH and health sectors. In order to avoid an outbreak of contagious diseases, it is vital to establish a reception centre. It was agreed that food will not be distributed yet in Kagunga as it appears that most of the people have been managing with the food they brought with them and by fishing. Food distribution in Kagunga would most likely create a pull factor.
 3. *Accelerate the pace of shelter erection in Nyarungusu camp* in order to decongest the reception centers and schools presently being used to receive the new arrivals.
 4. *Establish a transit center in Kigoma and a reception centre Manyovu* in order to better control the flow of people arriving in Nyarungusu and therefore better manage the absorption capacity in Nyarungusu camp.
 5. *Lake Tanganyika Stadium has been identified as the transit center for Kigoma*. The Government has agreed that the army will help in digging latrines so that it can become operational as soon as possible. UNHCR also envisaged having the same assistance from the Army for Kagunga and Manyovu reception centre.
 6. *Manyovu reception center is also relevant in order to create an alternative attractive route from Burundi* so that more people would flee through this entry point rather than through Kagunga.
 7. UNHCR has been assisting the authorities in finalizing a *contingency plan for Kagera region*. Should the number from there arise, the authorities have already identified sites for reception centres, a transit center and, if need be, a refugee camp.

Kagunga village

- There is now advance preparation for the removal of sick, pregnant, and elderly individuals from the peninsula.
- On 11 May, representatives from UNWFP, Caritas, TRCS, and IOM visited Kagunga. TRCS and WFP staff members have been camped at Kagunga since 12 May. Also on 12 May, three additional protection staff from UNHCR Kasulu were added to the Kagunga team. They will identify and profile asylum seekers with special needs to be prioritized during the loading process.

Challenges

- The government has identified a site 3km from Nyarungusu to establish a new camp. Nyarugusu camp can accommodate up to 30,000 new arrivals. Above that number the new site will have to be used. However, the road between the two sites is a swamp and will require major rehabilitation.
- Sufficient shelter is a challenge in Nyarugusu Camp in light of the large number of new arrivals each day.

- Schools, which are closed through 17 May, are being used to accommodate new arrivals.