

Burundi

AT A GLANCE

Main Objectives and Activities

Assist and sustain the voluntary return and reintegration of refugees; promote peace and stability in order to prevent further population displacements; provide protection and material assistance to refugees and asylum-seekers while searching for durable solutions including resettlement.

Impact

- UNHCR, in co-operation with the Government of Burundi, provided international protection and humanitarian assistance to camp-based and urban refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
- UNHCR opened a new transit facility in Bujumbura to boost capacity to respond to the needs of some 5,500 newly-arrived Congolese (DRC) refugees.
- A total of 85 refugees were assisted to repatriate voluntarily, mainly to Rwanda and Somalia. Sixty refugees were resettled in third countries.
- UNHCR monitored and provided assistance to more than 6,800 Burundi returnees, most of whom returned spontaneously from Tanzania during the course of the year.
- The gradual empowerment of women continued: 36 refugee women from Rugombo took part in a programme to promote literacy, hygiene and nutrition as well as the rights of women.
- In some areas of return, UNHCR initiated a number of agricultural and animal husbandry projects, delivered



Persons of Concern

Main Refugee Origin/Type of Population	Total in Country	Of whom UNHCR assisted	Per cent Female	Per cent under 18
Burundi (IDPs)	56,000	-	60	-
DRC (Refugees)	25,800	5,700	56	62
Burundi (Returnees)	6,800	2,200	-	-
DRC (Asylum-seekers)	6,000	5,700	-	-
Rwanda (Refugees)	1,300	-	57	62

Income and Expenditure (USD)

Revised Budget	Annual Programme Budget			
	Income from Contributions ¹	Other Funds Available ²	Total Funds Available	Total Expenditure
4,929,525	2,443,398	1,925,811	4,369,209	4,333,328

¹ Includes income from contributions earmarked at the country level.

² Includes allocations by UNHCR from unearmarked or broadly earmarked contributions, opening balance and adjustments.

The above figures do not include costs at Headquarters.

through local associations, to enhance self-sufficiency among women.

- UNHCR constructed additional educational infrastructure and distributed educational materials to children in Burundi.

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

The Context

The relatively stable security situation at the beginning of the year enabled the UN to partially lift country-wide security restrictions in Burundi and made it possible for humanitarian agencies to gain access to the provinces in the north and north-east of the country.

Within the framework of the Arusha peace process, a joint UN plan was elaborated to prepare Burundi society to receive returnees and to facilitate their subsequent reintegration, while at the same time creating a basis for social and economic development. In this plan, UNHCR's role is to facilitate voluntary repatriation and support initial reintegration activities. In preparation for eventual implementation of the plan, UNHCR undertook preparatory activities aimed at increasing the absorption capacity of potential areas of return. However, despite various initiatives by the mediator of the Arusha peace process, former South African President Nelson Mandela, there was no tangible progress to warrant mass return of Burundi refugees living in neighbouring countries.

The Arusha peace agreement was signed in August, but as some of the warring parties refused to sign, most issues were left unresolved, including the implementation of a cease-fire. Hostilities continued and even escalated in many parts of the country, causing the

flight of more than 80,000 Burundians, mainly to Tanzania. Moreover, the north-west provinces of the country continued to suffer severe drought, which resulted in serious malnutrition among the population. Many people fled to Tanzania in search of food. In response to a request from FAO, UNHCR put its trucks at the service of WFP for the distribution of food in the drought-affected areas. The continuing instability also led to increased internal displacement, causing the population of the "regroupment" camps to increase. During the year, and under pressure from the international community, some of these camps were dismantled and the displaced population returned to their homes.

Continuing fighting in the DRC prompted some 5,500 Congolese to seek asylum in Burundi. To accommodate the new arrivals, UNHCR established the Ngagara transit centre in Bujumbura Mairie and provided beneficiaries with humanitarian assistance. The 2,657 Congolese refugees living in Rugombo camp in Cibitoke Province continued to receive protection and assistance.

In December, following round-table discussions held in Paris, Burundi was promised international assistance to reinforce the peace process.

Constraints

Continuing violence and slow progress in the peace process were the major obstacles to UNHCR's programme in Burundi. The areas most susceptible to hos-



ilities were Bujumbura and the south-east provinces, which were also the main areas of return. The already difficult working environment was further exacerbated by drought in most of the country and an outbreak of highland malaria.

Funding

In 2000, the budget was reduced by 40 per cent, which adversely affected a great number of planned activities. Reconstruction, involving primary schools, housing, and water supply systems, was halted; of 3,058 planned new houses, only 1,873 were built. In Ruyigi Province, 60 per cent of the infrastructure was completed, but a school of 12 classrooms could not benefit from the 2,230-metre water supply system that had originally been envisaged, and only 22,000 school kits could be distributed (the planning figure was 27,000). The vaccination programme at Ngagara transit centre was interrupted, as was the distribution of mosquito nets.

ACHIEVEMENTS AND IMPACT

Protection and Solutions

The organised voluntary repatriation of Burundi refugees from neighbouring countries did not resume in 2000. However, UNHCR estimates that in 2000 there were about 6,800 returnees, of whom most repatriated spontaneously, mainly from Tanzania. In collaboration with the *Ministère de la réinsertion et de la réintégration des rapatriés et déplacés* (MRRDR), UNHCR provided returnees with identity documents at entry points. To ensure that returnees arrived in safety and dignity and were given access to land, housing and other basic services, UNHCR maintained a monitoring presence in areas of return, i.e. Cibitoke, Muyinga, Kirundo, Cankuzo, Ruyigi, Rutana and Makamba Provinces.

A positive development in 2000 was the draft tripartite agreement for the voluntary repatriation of Burundi refugees from Tanzania, which was discussed and finalised at a meeting between UNHCR and the two Governments in Bujumbura in December.

During the year, UNHCR continued to assist the Government in refugee status determination and recognised refugees were provided with identity cards. Some 500 Congolese (DRC) asylum-seekers were provided with temporary residence permits, and the authorities also continued to renew the temporary permits that had been handed out to asylum-seekers over the previous two years.

With UNHCR's assistance, 85 refugees repatriated voluntarily, mainly to Rwanda and Somalia, while 60

refugees were resettled in third countries. UNHCR also continued to assist the most vulnerable amongst the urban refugees; during the first part of the year, these refugees were provided with food, medical care, educational assistance and funding for income-generating activities. Due to funding constraints, these activities were however limited to medical care during the second part of the year.

Activities and Assistance

Community Services: There were close to 1,400 unaccompanied minors in Burundi in 2000. UNHCR managed to reunite 20 families and place 88 children in either foster families or foster homes. By the end of the year, some 300 children in various countries were still awaiting authorisation from their host government to reunite with their families in Burundi. A group of 41 young refugees were given sports equipment in an attempt to combat juvenile delinquency.

Crop Production: UNHCR provided a trucking fleet to enable other UN agencies to distribute seeds to 40,000 families in north-west Burundi.

Domestic Needs/Household Support: UNHCR provided 858 repatriation packages to returnee families from Tanzania, and 1,474 packages to landless returnees in Kirundo Province. These comprised plastic bags, blankets, soap, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sleeping mats and hoes. Some of these items were also distributed to 20,000 displaced persons in Cankuzo, Ruyigi, Rutana and Makamba Provinces.

Education: In Ruyigi, Muyinga and Cibitoke, UNHCR constructed four schools (30 classrooms) for 2,268 primary school children. Under the "Education for Peace and Reconciliation" programme, UNHCR also distributed school kits to 22,000 children in Ngozi, Muyinga, Ruyigi and Cankuzo Provinces. The kits included pens, notebooks, rulers and school uniforms. With assistance from the Government of Burundi, a national examination was held for the first time for Burundi pupils finishing primary school in camps in Tanzania (1,874 candidates). The aim was to facilitate the immediate integration of Burundi students into the national school system when they (eventually) repatriate.

Food: To obtain flour for the refugees, UNHCR provided funds to grind grains.

Health/Nutrition: To improve access to primary health care in areas of potential return, UNHCR rehabilitated a health centre in Ruyigi and constructed a new health centre in Cibitoke Province. A total of 2,177 refugees received medical care.

Income Generation: Under the framework of the Women for Peace and Development Project, six training sessions were held for the benefit of some 150 families (in six associations) in Giteranyi Commune (Muyinga Province). The training focused on agriculture and animal husbandry. The participating families were subsequently given hoes, seeds and cattle.

Legal Assistance: In collaboration with MRRDR, UNHCR helped to enhance the Government's capacity to assist refugees. Two training seminars were organised for the local authorities on the issues of displacement and reintegration. UNHCR also conducted three seminars for the military, focusing on their role of providing security in refugee camps and areas of return, as well as UNHCR's mandate and the rights of refugees and returnees. Camp security in Rugombo was enhanced by a military post and Ngagara now enjoys a municipal police presence. UNHCR also provided institutional and material support to the *Police de l'air, des frontières et des étrangers* and to the *Bureau d'étude et appui aux associations et ONG locales et Internationales* to improve their services to refugees and returnees.

Operational Support (to Agencies): The Office covered the expenses of some international implementing partners, including office rental, communication and office equipment, accounting services and bank charges.

Shelter/Other Infrastructure: UNHCR supported the construction of 1,873 houses in Cibitoke, Kirundo and Muyinga Provinces. In addition to technical supervision, UNHCR supplied metal sheets, windows and nails to more than 9,360 people. For the Congolese refugees in the Ngagara transit site, UNHCR helped construct 126 accommodation units, 18 cooking centres, a nutrition centre, a health centre, and the cleaning facilities for a transit centre. To improve living conditions for the Congolese refugees at the Rugombo

site, UNHCR helped to rehabilitate 24 housing facilities, 40 latrines, three cooking facilities, ten compost centres, six classrooms and a ten-shower bathing facility. During rebel movements, the Ruyigi Province suffered heavy damage to its basic sanitary facilities and UNHCR therefore undertook to strengthen the sanitary infrastructure both for the returnees and the receiving communities. The water supply system in Ruyigi Province was reconstructed, thereby providing water to 1,112 households, as well as a medical centre and a primary school.

Transport/Logistics: Regular maintenance was carried out on the existing transport fleet of 60 light vehicles and 32 trucks. UNHCR also provided logistical support, including the management of five warehouses, for the distribution of food and non-food items, seeds and housing kits to returnees and displaced persons. UNHCR distributed 253 metric tons of cereal, 79 metric tons of vegetables and 12 metric tons of oil to 3,184 camp-based and urban refugees.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management

UNHCR maintained three offices in Burundi: the main office in Bujumbura and two offices in Muyinga and Ruyigi. In 2000, staff included 11 internationals, 82 nationals and two UNVs.

Working with Others

In 2000, UNHCR worked with five international NGOs. All humanitarian activities in Burundi were coordinated by the UN Resident Representative. The principal mechanism for the exchange of information was the contact group that met weekly and brought together the principal humanitarian actors in Burundi. UNHCR also collaborated with FAO in the distribution of seeds to refugees and returnees, and continued its co-operation with the World Bank on social infrastructure projects. In collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, UNHCR made initial representations on behalf of Congolese refugees held in detention.

OVERALL ASSESSMENT

The persistent violence in Burundi, coupled with lack of progress in the peace process, did not favour the mass voluntary repatriation of Burundi refugees from neighbouring countries. While it was originally estimated that 130,500 refugees would be assisted to return, the reality



was unfortunately only 6,840 returns, most of them unplanned and unassisted. Nevertheless, UNHCR was able to continue to implement preparatory activities aimed at increasing the absorption capacity of areas of return. These focused mainly on ameliorating existing infrastructure.

UNHCR's main obstacles - the persistent violence and stalled peace process - were compounded by drought in most of the country and an unusual outbreak of highland malaria. The early collaboration with both multilateral and bilateral donors (in planning for the mass voluntary repatriation of Burundi refugees from neighbouring countries) was a well-conceived but unfortunately frustrated effort. The ultimate success of this operation will hinge on more positive political developments.

Offices

Bujumbura – Muyinga – Ruyigi

Partners

Government Agencies

Bureau des projets d'éducation du ministère de l'éducation
Ministère de l'action sociale et de la promotion de la femme (Projet FEPADÉ)

Ministère de la réinsertion et de la réinstallation des déplacés et des rapatriés

NGOs

Austrian Relief Programme

International Rescue Committee

Intersos

OXFAM Quebec

Stichting Rwanda Onderwijs 2000 (Netherlands)

Other

Gesellschaft für Technische Zusammenarbeit

Financial Report (USD)				
Expenditure Breakdown	Current Year's Projects		Prior Years' Projects	
		notes		notes
Protection, Monitoring and Co-ordination	1,114,507		3	
Community Services	75,575		1,445	
Crop Production	3,732		63,484	
Domestic Needs / Household Support	39,787		15,061	
Education	364,112		8,806	
Food	589		0	
Health / Nutrition	124,970		11,827	
Income Generation	23,644		0	
Legal Assistance	30,043		14,616	
Operational Support (to Agencies)	159,961		27,874	
Sanitation	0		430	
Shelter / Other Infrastructure	102,189		234	
Transport / Logistics	342,019		157,170	
Water	0		7,820	
Instalments with Implementing Partners	399,012		(33,084)	
Sub-total Operational	2,780,140		275,686	
Programme Support	1,220,093		103,323	
Sub-total Disbursements / Deliveries	4,000,233	(3)	379,009	(6)
Unliquidated Obligations	333,095	(3)	0	
Total	4,333,328	(1) (3)	379,009	

Instalments with Implementing Partners

Payments Made	1,219,845		146,764	
Reporting Received	820,833		179,848	
Balance	399,012		(33,084)	
Outstanding 1 January	0		1,812,883	
Refunded to UNHCR	0		32,354	
Currency Adjustment	0		10,932	
Outstanding 31 December	399,012		1,758,377	

Unliquidated Obligations

Outstanding 1 January	0		828,329	(6)
New Obligations	4,333,328	(1)	0	
Disbursements	4,000,233	(3)	379,009	(6)
Cancellations	0		449,320	(6)
Outstanding 31 December	333,095	(3)	0	

Figures which cross reference to Accounts: (1) Annex to Statement 1 – (3) Schedule 3 – (6) Schedule 6