

BURUNDI SITUATION

REGIONAL INTER AGENCY PLAN OF ACTION FOR THE PROTECTION OF REFUGEE CHILDREN



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CREDITS

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Introduction

The political crisis and ensuing destabilization and deterioration of the economic situation in Burundi has since April 2015 led to the outflow of more than 400,000 Burundian refugees to neighbouring countries, primarily the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda. During 2017, the refugee population increased by more than 60,000, bringing the total Burundian refugee population (including a smaller population who had sought asylum prior to April 2015) to 427,784 as of 31 October 2017. Security incidents in Burundi, continuing political tensions, and a stalled peace process coupled with rising food insecurity has resulted in the deterioration of the humanitarian situation including ongoing population displacement and refugee outflow. Refugees are no longer being granted refugee status on a prima facie basis in Tanzania, Uganda, and DRC, while the policy remains in place in Rwanda.

Out of the refugee population 230,000 are children, representing approximately 54 per cent.

In response to this crisis, and in light of the serious impact on children, UNHCR and child protection partners have come together to jointly agree on a Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Refugee Children for the period January to December 2018. The regional partners who have contributed to the Plan of Action include: UNHCR, UNICEF, Save the Children, Plan International, IRC, Legal Aid Forum, and World Vision. National partners have contributed to the process at the country level. This Regional Plan of action sets a common vision for the protection of Burundian refugee children and outlines three regional priority areas for child protection.

These regional priorities are aimed to enhance the child protection response in areas where gaps have been identified but also where there is potential for maximizing the impact of programmes for better outcomes for children. The regional priorities complement and amplify country specific priorities and strategies. A regional perspective on key areas of child protection are also intended to enhance learning between operations, to harmonize and create synergies for more effective programmes. The participating agencies are committed to strengthen interventions in these areas during the coming year. The Regional Child Protection Network, chaired by UNHCR, will collectively support the child protection response in the Burundi situation in particular in these identified priority areas. The Regional Plan of Action for the Protection of Children, is fully aligned with and complements the Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) for the Burundi situation for January to December 2018.

Regional Overview

Tanzania is the largest host of Burundian refugees in the region with 256,000 refugees as of October 31, 2017, of whom 236,000 are camp based. In Rwanda, there are 88,000 Burundian refugees mostly hosted in Mahama camp, with others residing in urban areas. The DRC hosts 45,000 Burundian refugees, predominantly in Lusenda camp in South Kivu, with the remaining families in transit centres or hosted by communities in Katanga, Maniema and North Kivu provinces. In Uganda, there are 39,000 Burundian refugees, hosted in the previously existing Nakivale settlement. Regionally, 86 per cent of Burundian refugees are hosted in camps, with 14 per cent living in urban areas. In 2016 and 2017, some refugees began to return to Burundi by their own means, predominantly from Tanzania as well as Rwanda. A ministerial tripartite meeting was held between the Governments of Burundi and Tanzania with UNHCR at the end of August 2017 where modalities were put in place to assist an estimated 12,000 Burundian refugees to return to Burundi from Tanzania in the last quarter of 2017. The 2018 Burundi RRRP anticipates up to 60,000 Burundian refugees may choose to return voluntarily in 2018.

BURUNDIAN REFUGEE POPULATION - 2017

427,784

REFUGEE POPULATION

54%

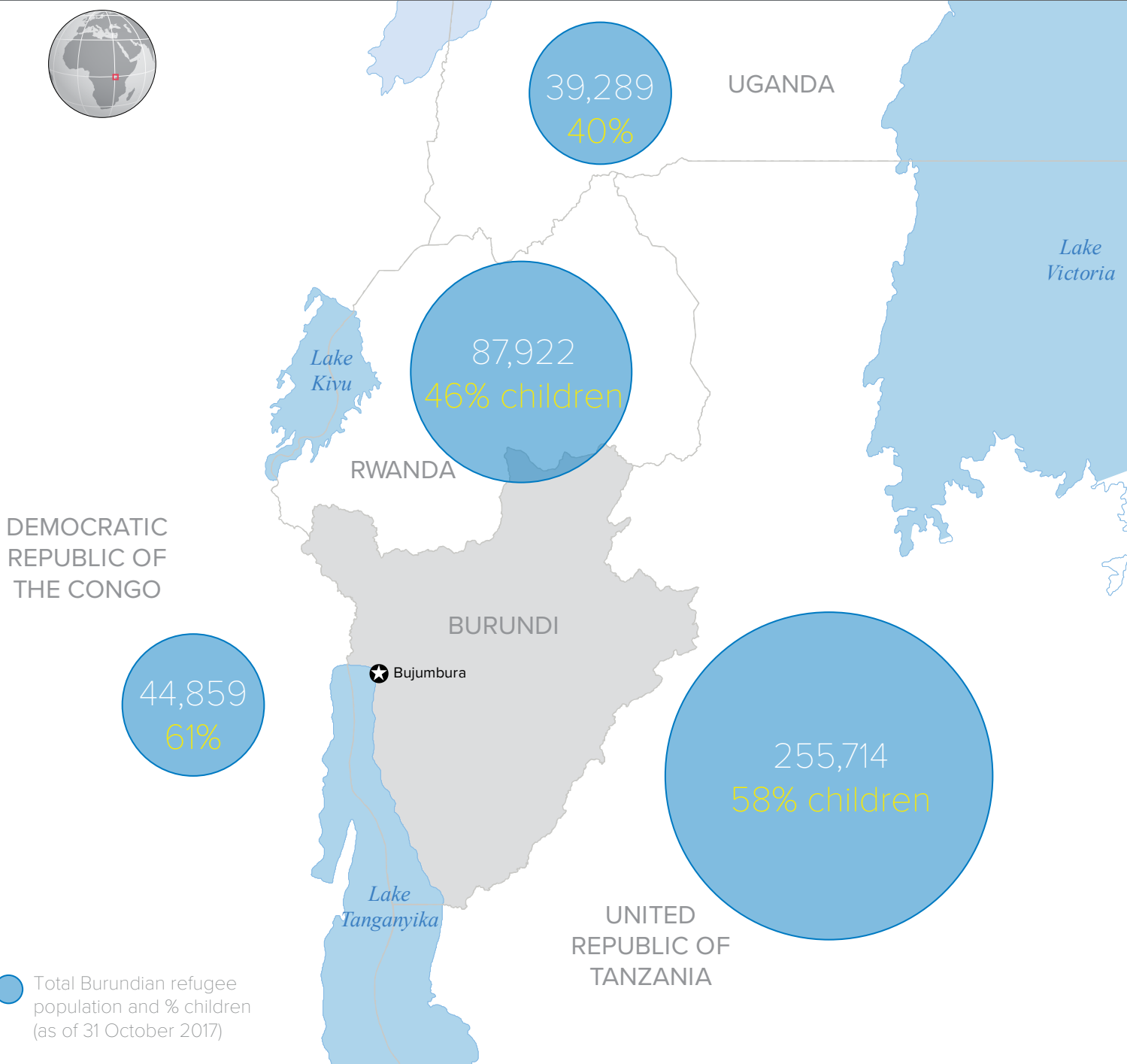
REFUGEE CHILDREN

49%

GIRLS

51%

BOYS



● Total Burundian refugee population and % children (as of 31 October 2017)

PLANNED RESPONSE - 2018

234,000

PROJECTED REFUGEE CHILDREN

10,120

CHILDREN WITH SPECIFIC NEEDS TARGETED

3,615

UNACCOMPANIED AND SEPARATED CHILDREN TARGETED

BURUNDI REFUGEE SITUATION

The 7 major risk facing refugee children

PSYCHOLOGICAL DISTRESS

Many refugee children are in need of psychosocial support due to their exposure to violence and other forms of traumatic events. The erosion of community and family networks, crowded and poor living conditions, and lack of recreation and educational opportunities are also significant stressors for children.

FAMILY SEPARATION

The main risks for separated and unaccompanied children include psychosocial distress and trauma, child recruitment, abuse and exploitation, child labour, drug use and begging. Family separation sometimes occurs at the border, which can create risk of smuggling through unofficial crossing points and create high protection risks for children

CHILD RECRUITMENT BY ARMED GROUPS AND USE OF CHILDREN BY POLITICAL GROUPS

A significant concern is the mobilization of adolescents. Boys are particularly at risk of recruitment. Some have been detained for alleged participation in protests and/or armed groups. The presence of armed groups in some countries of asylum causes a risk of recruitment.

CHILD LABOUR

To cope with economic hardship, exacerbated by encampment policies in some countries which limit access to work/self-reliance initiatives and the protracted situation, some families are forcing their children to work and contribute to household income.

PHYSICAL VIOLENCE

The deterioration of community structures and family safety nets have resulted in an increase in domestic violence, including physical and emotional violence against children.

ACCESS TO EDUCATION

The large number of children not attending school is also contributing to an increase in protection risks.

SEXUAL AND GENDER BASED VIOLENCE

There are major concerns regarding SGBV, especially regarding the high number of girls who have been subjected to such forms of violence before and during the flight. Within the community there is a reluctance to report SGBV incidents, which compromises children's access to services

Child Protection Situation

Regionally, over 230,000 Burundian refugees are children (as of 31 October 2017), representing 54 per cent of the total population, including 28,000 Burundian refugee children in the DRC (61 per cent), 41,000 in Rwanda (46 per cent), 148,000 in Tanzania (58 per cent) and 16,000 in Uganda (40 per cent). Since the crisis began in April 2015, over 8,500 unaccompanied and separated children have sought asylum in the region. Some 53 per cent of these children were unaccompanied, which is quite high compared to the usual global trend. Burundian refugee youth (15-24 years of age) constitute 28 per cent refugees (this number is 17% in DRC, 22% in Rwanda and 32% in Tanzania) and gender distribution nearly 50-50. Family separation, early marriage, teenage pregnancy, child neglect, child labour, domestic violence, SGBV, psycho-sociadistress have been identified as common child protection concerns in the region. A number of Burundian refugee children have also ended up living and/or working in the streets and have found themselves in detention, situations which also result in specific protection risks for children. An overview of specific child protection risks are presented in the next section, highlighting specific areas which child protection partners and relevant government entities are collectively trying to address.

Current Child Protection Response

Family tracing and reunification as well as SGBV prevention and response mechanisms were established as an immediate priority at the onset of the emergency and have been scaled up over the course of the Burundi refugee response across the region. Child protection programmes have been established and include specialized case management services and the establishment of community based child protection networks and mechanisms. A number of interesting initiatives are also underway i.e. a child-led foster care monitoring programme is being implemented in Tanzania and in Uganda foster families are pre-screened and pre-selected and placed on a roster to ensure timely care arrangements for children at risk. Child-friendly spaces are available for children in order to support their physical and psychological development, to promote their psychosocial well-being and to help a number of children heal from traumatic events they have experienced. Life skills training, vocational training and peer education is provided to older children to prepare them for the future. Emergency shelters are supposed to be gradually upgraded to semi-durable structures, providing more safety and privacy for families and children. However significant number of families are still awaiting to be housed in more durable shelters due to lack of financial resources to cover the needs. Referral pathways have been established in order to allow survivors of SGBV to report incidents and receive appropriate assistance. Protection actors are working closely with local justice systems to ensure access to justice for survivors of SGBV; in DRC, survivors can access justice through mobile courts. Despite the tremendous efforts and progress made to respond to the crisis, certain aspects of the child protection response still need to be strengthened and/or expanded to meet the current needs. A major protection gap includes the lack of sufficient case workers for the increasing number of children at heightened risk requiring individual follow up and support. As more children are placed in foster care, there is a continuous need to expand and strengthen monitoring mechanisms in order to ensure early identification and mitigation of protection risks. Unaccompanied and separated children who have chosen to repatriate to Burundi –and other children with particular protection needs - will require special attention to ensure that they are provided with continuum of care and protection services. Providing education to primary school-aged children has been a priority in all refugee sites. However, classrooms are often overcrowded and the need for additional camp space to decongest educational infrastructure is high. For children who have completed primary education, it will be important to increase secondary and tertiary education opportunities, for which collaboration with host communities, local authorities and the Government will be vital. Adolescents and youth are facing specific protection risks and targeted interventions are needed to mitigate these risks. Efforts have been made to address the needs of youth i.e. through a youth entrepreneurship programme which has been launched in Tanzania, and has seen young people set up small businesses. In Rwanda, community based child protection mechanisms have been developed in line with the national child protection system.

Regional Priorities

In order to address the common gaps identified and to further enhance the current child protection response and move towards a more systematic and coherent response, three regional priorities have been identified for the overall Burundi response. The priorities were agreed upon during an inter-agency regional child protection workshop held in Nairobi in November 2016.

The following areas of child protection constitute agreed regional priorities for the Burundi refugee response for the period January to December 2018:

- Protection of adolescents and youth strengthened through targeted interventions
- Children in need of alternative care receive appropriate care and support
- Effective case management services are provided to at-risk-children

Based on the regional priorities UNHCR and child protection partners have developed country specific pathways which constitute country-specific interventions to address needs in the three identified priority areas. Countries have also adopted specific targets and indicators to monitor progress.

KEY STRATEGIC APPROACHES



Partnership

Continued leveraging of partnerships with the host governments, international organizations, refugee and host communities to ensure a constructive and dynamic child protection response.



Coordination

Proactive coordination of child protection actors at regional, national and local level will continue to be strengthened to ensure coherence of interventions and maximise the use of resources in addressing the needs of children.



National child protection systems

Promote harmonization of the refugee child protection response with national child protection procedures and stronger linkages with national child protection/social welfare systems, including access of refugee children to existing services.



Community-based child protection

Support and promote initiatives which seek to involve communities in prevention and response to child protection risks.



Learning and capacity building

Sharing lessons learnt and good/promising practices between country operations.
Building capacity of child protection actors to better prevent risks and respond to child protection needs.



Regional Approach and support

Promote regional approaches to the child protection response as outlined in this Regional Plan of Action. The Regional Child Protection Network will support the implementation of the Plan and thereby promote cohesive child protection responses through regional coordination, technical support, cross-border information sharing, capacity building and advocacy.



Priority 1

Protection of adolescents and youth strengthened through targeted interventions

Youth and adolescents face specific protection risks and yet there are limited programmes specifically targeting this age group. Some of the risks are linked to behaviours that lead to substance abuse, violence and teenage pregnancy, but adolescents are also at risk of exploitation in informal labour markets and at risk of being lured by armed groups. Adolescents and youth also represent an untapped potential. Programmes which support and facilitate young people’s participation in community activities and help them develop their own initiatives would be an important element in order to take youth programming to the next level

Indicator: # of adolescents participating in targeted programmes





	 DRC	 RWANDA	 UGANDA	 TANZANIA
Target:	80% of adolescent have access to targeted programmes	10% of adolescent have access to targeted programmes	70% of adolescent have access to targeted programmes	30% of adolescents have access to targeted programmes
Pathway 1	Out-of-school adolescents can access alternative learning opportunities to develop their skills (e.g. language, computer, competencies for economic and social advancement)	Improve protection of youth and adolescents through structured adolescents and youth committees and sport activities, exploring new partnerships such as the International Olympic Committee.	Identify and support already existing local entrepreneur groups and youth-led initiatives to provide them with livelihoods through facilitating access to credit and mentoring	Develop a youth strategy to ensure more coherent and coordinated approaches
Pathway 2	Develop targeted interventions for youth and adolescent to facilitate participation, strengthen resilience, and promote peaceful coexistence	Develop/enhance life skills, literacy and numeracy programs and promote access to sexual reproductive health services and HIV In addition to violence prevention services and economic empowerment opportunities for out of schools adolescents	Develop targeted programmes that promote adolescent and youth participation, resilience, empowerment, leadership, and peaceful coexistence, with the engagement of youth from refugee and host community	Evidence based life skills programme led by community members (at scale)
Pathway 3	Advocacy to ensure increased access to secondary education and vocational training programs	Advocacy to integrate adolescents and youth into national programs (e.g. education, vocational training, sport, social support, health)	Advocacy to ensure increased access to post primary education and vocational training	Access to Life skills and vocational training programme

Priority 2

Children in need of alternative care receive appropriate care and support

A high number of Burundian children and adolescents fled on their own or became separated from parents and caregivers during flight. This has increased the demand for alternative care options for children who are unaccompanied or separated and for other children in need of foster care placement. While mechanisms for alternative care have been put in place in all operations, there is a need to further strengthen this aspect of child protection programmes. The response can benefit from increased harmonization between operations and sharing of experiences. Across the region there is a need to explore alternative care options that suit older teenagers, to seek ways to strengthen follow up with children and support for foster families, and to further align alternative care procedures for refugees with national alternative care policies.

Indicator: # of children placed in alternative care;
of unaccompanied children in alternative care who receive regular monitoring visits

	 DRC	 RWANDA	 UGANDA	 TANZANIA
Target:	100% of identified UASC in appropriate interim or long term alternative care	80% of identified UASC in appropriate interim or long term alternative care	80% of identified UASC in appropriate interim or long term alternative care	100% of identified UASC in Mtendeli, Nduta and Nyarugusu camps in appropriate interim or long term alternative care
Pathway 1	Ensure prior identification of foster families and build their capacity to foster children in need of alternative care arrangements	Build capacity of identified foster parents on child protection and their roles/ responsibilities in coordination with the national child protection actors such as the National Commission for Children (NCC)	Identify and train potential foster care families who are ready to foster children in need of care	Disseminate national guidelines on alternative care
Pathway 2	Establish/reinforce community based mechanisms to monitor alternative care arrangements through volunteers/community workers	Develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) on alternative care arrangements in harmonization with the national alternative care system	Strengthening alternative care arrangements through provision of livelihood support to families caring for unaccompanied or separated children, and for other children in need of care	Strengthen monitoring and follow-up of children placed in alternative care arrangements
Pathway 3	Ensure adequate and regular support, monitoring, follow up of the " <i>Famille d'Accueil Temporaire (FAT)</i> ", including home visits and regular re-evaluation of families	Strengthen monitoring of alternative care arrangements through community-based child protection mechanism	Strengthen monitoring and follow-up of children placed in alternative care arrangements	Include foster families caring for unaccompanied or separated children in livelihood programs

Priority 3

Effective case management service are provided to at-risk-children

Despite the efforts to strengthen specialised child protection services to refugee children at risk and/or victims of violence, there is still a need to reinforce case management procedures to ensure that children at risk are systematically identified and access appropriate services. Case management of individual children is time consuming and given limited resources it is important that procedures are streamlined and cases are prioritized in order to maximize limited human and financial resources. In addition, capacity building and mentoring of child protection actors and frontline workers in case management is a continuous process. Procedures can also be further strengthened through increased sharing of good practice and tools between operations.

Indicator: # of best interest assessments conducted;
of children with specific needs identified



DRC



RWANDA



UGANDA



TANZANIA

	DRC	RWANDA	UGANDA	TANZANIA
Target:	100% of children with specific needs receive individual assistance	74% of children with specific needs receive individual assistance	70% of children with specific needs receive individual assistance	100% of children with specific needs receive individual assistance
Pathway 1	Strengthen mechanisms to identify, prioritize and refer children at risk including through community based child protection (RECOPE) and the use of Best Interest Assessments	Develop information sharing protocols and enhance information management system	Strengthen identification, registration, assessment, prioritization, referral and follow-up of children at risk using the Best Interest Assessment tools	Strengthen the use of the Best Interest Assessments process and including the risk prioritization tool to ensure children received appropriate child protection services and follow up
Pathway 2	Children in need of individual case management are receiving timely adequate child protection services through reinforcement of coordination among child protection actors and capacity building of staff, partners and government counterparts	Build capacity of case workers and others who have a role on child protection case management through training and coaching including sessions to provide psycho-social support to case workers	Strengthen the capacity of various service providers in the social welfare, education, health, livelihood sectors etc. to ensure that children receive coordinated support. (through strengthening and dissemination of referral pathways and SOP for dealing with children at risks or survivors of SGBV)	Reinforce capacity of community structures and disseminate IEC material to increase outreach to children at risks and actively contribute to their protection
Pathway 3	Reinforce information sharing mechanism with actors involved in refugee protection issues and systematic update of data base	Strengthen community based child protection mechanisms through training on safe identification and referral, prevention activities to mitigate protection risks	Train and support community-based child protection structures to identify and refer boys and girls that are at particular risk	Strengthen the protection of refugee children through mainstreaming into national child protection system



Working together



