



# **COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN**

## **OVERVIEW**

**Country: United Republic of Tanzania**

**Planning Year: 2006**

## 2006 COUNTRY OPERATIONS PLAN FOR TANZANIA OVERVIEW

### 1. Protection and socio-economic operational environment

By the end of February 2005, just over 400,000 refugees are assisted by UNHCR in Tanzania. Of these 244,000 are from Burundi and 154,000 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC). The remaining number is from Somalia and elsewhere. A further 198,000 Burundians, consisting of a group who fled in the early seventies and their descendants, are also registered with the government in three self-sufficient settlements, which were assisted by UNHCR until the mid nineties. An additional number, estimated by the Government to be as high as 200,000 persons from Burundi and the DRC, are not registered and live in villages outside the camps and settlements. While the Government views all these persons as illegal immigrants, many left Burundi and the DRC under the same circumstances as the refugees in the camps and they are likely to merit refugee status.

Despite a decrease due to the voluntary repatriation of some 83,000 Burundian refugees in 2004, Tanzania still remains the continent's largest host to refugees. A further substantive decrease – perhaps by up to 100,000 refugees – is expected to occur in 2005 *if* there is progress in the peace processes in Burundi and the DRC. Assuming the best will unfold in Burundi and in the DRC, the weight of the programme will shift during 2006 from care and maintenance to a much expanded voluntary repatriation and increased local settlement activities. There will nevertheless still be a need for a significant care and maintenance programme and sustaining of an emergency response capacity, given the inherent volatility of the region. There will also be a need to address the significant gaps in the assistance programme, most notably with regard to firewood/the environment, the primary education sector and HIV AIDS prevention and treatment.

Tanzania, as many of its leaders and politicians repeatedly state, is a tired and reluctant host. Restrictions on freedom of movement of refugees, foreseen in the 1998 Refugee Act but first imposed in 2003, grew more acute in early 2005. Anti refugee statements have been used as a rallying cry by politicians and are likely to grow more frequent in the lead up to the elections in October 2005. Until the majority of refugees now in Tanzania return, the protection environment is expected to remain difficult. Thus in 2006, continued determined efforts will be required by UNHCR to ensure the asylum tradition can be sustained for those who are still here and those who may still need to come.

Even with generally positive political developments in Burundi and the DRC, there is always the potential for new violence and involuntary population flows in these countries as well as elsewhere in the region. Many factors contributed to the undermining of the asylum tradition in Tanzania in recent years. Disproportionate UNHCR budget cuts between 2002 and 2004 have been one such factor. To sustain asylum in Tanzania in 2006 and beyond, an appropriate UNHCR budget for care and maintenance and most importantly for refugee hosting areas and local settlement activities will be essential.

Under Tanzanian law all refugees have to be in camps. With the exception of the small settlement for Somali refugees in Tanga region North of Dar-es-Salaam, all camps are in the border regions in North Western Tanzania. Development donations to Tanzania are increasingly focussed on direct budget support and project financing is discouraged by the Government. Attracting bi-lateral development funding for refugee hosting areas is thus expected to grow more difficult. By contrast, donor contributions to the UNHCR Tanzania programme have been generous (in 2004 more generous than the much reduced budget could accommodate). With appropriate assistance, protection and external relations strategies, early consultations with donors have indicated this tendency is expected to be sustained in 2006.

## **2. Operational goals and potential for durable solutions**

In Tanzania in 2004 the emphasis shifted increasingly to achieving early durable solutions for the three main refugee groups: the Burundians, the DRC Congolese and the Somalis. With the opening of two new crossing points in 2004 a total of 83,000 Burundian refugees returned with assistance from UNHCR. While this fell well short of the planning figure of 150,000, it still represented a significant increase over previous years. With regard to the DRC, the number of spontaneous returns in 2004 was around 2,400 thousands and the figure is expected to increase in 2005. While the focus will shift increasingly away from care and maintenance towards durable solutions, the pace at which solutions can be achieved is dependant on many factors, the majority of which are beyond UNHCR's control.

**Burundian refugees** - with regard to Burundi, since the signing of a ceasefire and a peace deal with the major armed resistance movement, the CNDD-FDD in October/November 2003 there has been progress in the peace process, but the progress has been slow, uneven and the result of enormous pressure by regional and international actors. A series of elections which were to culminate in the first democratically elected Burundian Government in recent decades, have been twice delayed and are now scheduled to take place in the course of 2005. A national referendum on the new constitution was successfully carried out on 28 February 2005 with a high turn out rate. This is a hopeful signal that the other elections will take place as scheduled. Talks with the remaining rebels, the FNL, who claimed responsibility for the 13 August 2004 massacre of 160 DRC refugees in Gatumba, Burundi, have been initiated and faltered repeatedly. Conflict with this rebel group continues in Bujumbura rural. A UN peace-keeping mission, ONUB is operational since June 2004 and other key components of the peace process, notably demilitarization and integration of the army are proceeding, but at a slow pace. While there is no longer fighting in most of the country, the aftermath of conflict: banditry, insecurity, lawlessness, destroyed infrastructure, food shortages, rampant human rights abuses and tensions – are still acutely felt.

This COP is based on the assumption – by no means a given - that the peace process will continue to progress in Burundi. It is also based on the assumption that elections will be held in the first half of 2005 and these will pass peacefully allowing UNHCR to move from facilitation to promotion of return in late 2005 or early 2006. This would allow for the return of the majority of Burundian refugees in late 2005 and

during 2006. This in turn will allow for camp closures and a significant phase down of UNHCR presence at the end of 2006.

With the repatriation of the majority of the Burundian refugees from the camps, there will be a demand from the governments concerned for increased focus on refugees outside the camps, both those in the old settlements and those in villages. This will require the initiation of new volrep and local integration activities in 2006 and imply a realignment of UNHCR offices and staff resources.

**Congolese Refugees-** with regard to the DRC, the assumption on which this COP is based is also that the peace process will be consolidated. It should be noted, however, that as of early 2005, observers tend to be less optimistic about the prospect of durable peace in the DRC than they are about peace in Burundi. Throughout 2004, and in early 2005, there have been periodic out breaks of fighting in North and South Kivu as well as in Ituri region provoking new displacement. The elections, originally scheduled to occur in mid 2005 have been postponed and voter registration has not yet commenced (the commencement of voter registration is expected to be a major pull factor). Throughout Eastern DRC, infrastructure is destroyed and authority of the central Government is limited. This situation is expected to improve gradually, not least as more agencies and more MONUC troops are deploying to the East.

Over eighty five percent of the DRC refugees in Tanzania come from one district in DRC, Fizi. This district has not seen major combat recently and a significant and highly vocal portion of the refugee community in Tanzanian are eager to return soon. Infrastructure is destroyed throughout the district and the dominant armed group, the Mayi-Mayi has not yet laid down their arms. The district remains in UN security Phase Four. Fizi is contaminated with mines posing a serious threat to returnees. With improvements of security in the area and the extension of UNHCR presence, it is expected that facilitated return from Tanzania will begin in late 2005 and intensify in 2006. Return to DRC will be particularly logistically demanding. It will necessitate an increase in resources, but should allow for a progressive phase down of the care maintenance programme benefiting DRC refugees in late 2006 and early 2007.

**Somali Refugees-** a modest number of Somali refugees moved to a new site, called Chogo, in early 2003 where sufficient land, once cleared, is available for cultivation and eventual self sufficiency. The drawing up of an elaborate strategy involving all relevant stakeholders to achieve self sufficiency was initiated in early 2005. The most important steps towards self sufficiency should be taken in late 2005. Assuming good harvests, full phase out of assistance should be possible in the first half of 2006, although it should be noted that the final date requested for phase out by Somali refugee leaders and local authorities is end 2007. A pre-requisite for the final phase out will be satisfactory food security assessments and individual needs assessments of vulnerable groups.

UNHCR Tanzania initiated a major resettlement programme in 2004, which is to be expanded in 2005. The expanded programme will have to be sustained in 2006.

A reassessment of implementing arrangements will be undertaken in mid 2005 with a view to further streamlining these in 2006. Furthermore, on the basis of returns, a joint evaluation with the Government will be undertaken for the potential of further camp

closures and consolidations and resulting camp clean-up needs. The findings will be integrated in the revised 2006 programme. In addition a major re-registration exercise will be undertaken in 2005 and the continuous verification system introduced. This system will need sustaining in 2006.

In summary, based on the assumption of continued consolidation of the peace processes in both the DRC and Burundi, the principal 2006 objectives are:

- The promotion of return to Burundi incorporating both refugees in camps and settlements and Burundians outside camps;
- The facilitation of return to the DRC of refugees from Lugufu and Nyarugusu;
- Continued care and maintenance of DRC and Burundi refugees who are unable to return;
- The promotion of refugee law and assistance to the Tanzanian authorities in securing refugee camps ensuring that they retain an exclusively civilian and humanitarian character;
- Continued preventive and responsive programmes aimed at reducing the incidences of sexual and gender based violence, sexual exploitation, and HIV/AIDS in the refugee camps;
- Promoting self-reliance of remaining Burundian refugees in settlements and camps with a view to integration;
- The closure and clean up of camps;
- Continue to support the local communities in Northwestern Tanzania hosting large numbers of refugees;
- The completion of the local integration of Somalis;
- Upholding asylum in Tanzania for influxes from the region and ICs from elsewhere;
- Maintaining and enhancing standards of emergency preparedness in Tanzania;
- Resettlement of those for whom no other solution is feasible;
- Consolidating a system of continuous registration.