

BURUNDI SITUATION

UNHCR REGIONAL UPDATE

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KEY FIGURES

26,000

Number of Burundian refugees who have sought asylum in neighboring countries since the beginning of April 2015

500

Estimated number of Burundian asylum seekers dispersed in border areas of Tanzania

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

- UNHCR will organize a Regional Contingency Planning on 11 May in Nairobi.

Burundi

- Access to refugee hosting areas in Burundi remains difficult, although UNHCR is in telephone contact with leaders of different refugee communities.



Women fleeing in Burundi.

- In Bujumbura today, demonstrations continued, with stone throwing and burning of tires even as the US President Barack Obama's special envoy arrived in the city.
- Reports from Muyinga indicate that between 500 and 1,000 persons are crossing the border daily.
- Many unions have called for boycotts or disturbances of ceremonies planned to mark Labour Day tomorrow.

Tanzania

- In the last two days Nyarugusu has received thirty-six asylum seekers from Burundi with about 500 others reported at diverse border points to be transported to Nyarugusu camp by 1 May. Their dispersal presents immense logistical challenges for the Tanzania operation.
- From 25 April UNHCR started to be informed of the presence of asylum seekers in Kigoma region, starting with a family of eight (female head of household with her six children and a separated child), later joined by the husband, originating from Makamba province was reported in Kililema ward. UNHCR met them on 26 April and they explained that they fled Burundi due to fear of electoral violence. They were moved to Nyarugusu camp on 20 April.
- In the ensuing days, local authorities have informed UNHCR about new arrivals while others arrived spontaneously in Nyarugusu camp. In addition to the groups that have been reported and assisted, authorities have shared information that more people may have entered and for the moment remain in various villages.
- Notably, in Manyovu (a border area), all guest houses are fully booked, while this is normally not the case at this period of the year.

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Operational Context (Tanzania)

- A fatigue with the cycle of violence in Burundi contributed to some difficulties with asylum seekers being able to access the territory of Tanzania. Instructions from the Minister for Home Affairs, reflecting the position of the President, have contributed to an easing of restrictive attitudes and measures. The Representative has been in daily touch with the Minister, as well as the two relevant Regional Commissioners.
- It was agreed with the authorities that the first 10,000 people would be accommodated in Nyarungusu camp. If the number were to reach up to 35,000 people there will be two options: to extend Nyarungusu camp or to open new camps in Kakonko region (next to Kibondo district). The Government has encouraged the use of Karago and Mtendeli which were former refugee camps).

Protection

- UNHCR and the Refugee Service Department will organise three trainings on refugee protection for Regional and District authorities in Kigoma, Kibondo (Kigoma region) and in Bukoba (Kagera region), in cooperation with UNICEF, UNFPA and IOM. The first one will take place on 7 and 8 May in Kigoma. They will be followed by briefing and clarification sessions at the Ward and Village levels.
- There is a lack of established UNHCR presence and reception centres to act as collection points for arriving asylum seekers near to border points. Without staff in this area, UNHCR is relying on information about the new arrivals received from village leaders. Moreover, essential services for the asylum seekers reported to be in the diverse unplanned border points such as food and emergency medical treatment cannot be provided in as timely a manner as is needed.
- Provision of “wet feeding” has been arranged with WFP and is being prepared communally at the Reception Center in Nyarungusu and a similar arrangement is established at NMC in Kigoma.

Shelter and Site Planning

- With the number of asylum seekers increasing, there is a challenge of accommodation at Nyarungusu camp. A temporary shelter has been prepared through refurbishment of the existing two temporary shelter structures at the Reception Centre. Erection of rub halls to accommodate the additional arriving asylum seekers is on-going. Additional temporary accommodation arrangements (provision of tents, construction of additional temporary shelters, or else) is required.

Logistics and Supply Chain Management

- The operation has insufficient appropriate means to transport asylum seekers from diverse border points. Some border points are located in the remote areas and are difficult to be accessed by road. Still others are located in the water locked areas boats are needed to transport arriving asylum seekers. The entry point of Kagunga and Kiziba can only be accessed by boat. The capacity of the immigration boat which is currently used to ferry asylum is insufficient for the number of asylum seekers reported in Kiziba and Kagunga.
- NFI stocks are limited and are expected to be exhausted in the near future, hence the replenishment of NFIs such as kitchen sets, mattresses, sanitary materials, etc. is urgently required. Available non-food items (blankets, metal cups, jerry cans, soap, buckets, etc.) will be provided to all asylum seekers at Nyarungusu and requisition of the unavailable items has been processed. Initial prepositioning of blankets, jerry cans, cups and soaps for estimated 400 asylum seekers will be implemented at NMC Transit Centre as of 30 April.