



UNHCR
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
Haut Commissariat des Nations Unies pour les réfugiés



JOINT COMMUNIQUÉ

23rd Meeting of the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania

Gitega, Burundi, 12 May 2023

The 23rd Meeting of the Tripartite Commission for the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania was held at Tropitel Hotel, Gitega, on 12 May 2023.

The United Republic of Tanzania Delegation was led by **H.E. Jumanne SAGINI**, Deputy Minister of Home Affairs of the United Republic of Tanzania.

The Delegation of the Republic of Burundi was led by **H.E. Mr. Martin Niteretse**, Minister of Interior, Community Development and Public security of the Republic of Burundi.

The Delegation of the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) was led by **Ms. Brigitte Mukanga Eno**, UNHCR Representative in Burundi.

The tripartite commission:

- **Acknowledged** the spirit and the provisions of the Tripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees in Tanzania of 8 May 2001 (hereby referred to as the Tripartite Agreement), which has since then guided all voluntary returns to Burundi from Tanzania in conformity with international conventions and national laws;
- **Noted** that from September 2017 to 10 May 2023, the concerned parties have jointly facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 146,204 Burundian refugees from the United Republic of Tanzania in safety and dignity;
- **Appreciated** the commitment from the parties to continue facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania who are willing to return to their country of origin in accordance with the principles guiding voluntary repatriation;

- **Recalled** a decision of the 22nd TC for parties to consider embarking on promoting voluntary repatriation contingent to conducive conditioning in areas of return and availability of resources for sustainable reintegration;
- **Appreciated** the commitment from the parties to abide by the domestic, regional and international laws which govern the principle of non-refoulment as stipulated in the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees read together with its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa;
- **Recognized** the traditional hospitality and generosity of the Government and the people of the United Republic of Tanzania, which has been receiving thousands of refugees for decades;
- **Noted** that while some refugees may opt to return now, others may still have well-founded reasons acceptable by all parties for not seeking to return after promotion of voluntary repatriation and will continue to benefit from international protection;
- **Recognized** the firm willingness of the Government of Burundi to receive its citizens who voluntarily want to go back home and noting that the reception capacity in Burundi has significantly improved since the last tripartite meeting on 19 May 2021;
- **Noting** that the Governments of Burundi and the United Republic of Tanzania highlighted that peace is extended throughout the territory of the Republic of Burundi and this constitutes an undeniable reality;
- **Welcomed** that the United Republic of Tanzania, in the pursuance of its international obligations, will continue to keep its doors open to those refugees who meet the relevant criteria of the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees read together with its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa;

The Tripartite Commission decides to:

1. Move from facilitation to promotion of voluntary repatriation and develop a well-defined timeline and roadmap based on the assessment of the impact of the repatriation to be considered during the 28th TWG meeting to be held in November 2023 in Tanzania.
2. Enhance joint sensitization missions of Burundian refugees in the United Republic of Tanzania on voluntary return through, inter alia, dissemination of information on the prevailing conditions in their areas of return and the participation of the Burundian provincial administration and Burundian returnees in sensitization campaigns including on land dispute resolution mechanisms.

3. Put in place mechanisms enabling the attainment of two convoys per week with a minimum of 700 people per convoy as agreed by the parties during the 22nd TC meeting held in Bujumbura.
4. Facilitate the recognition of school certificates obtained by refugees in the country of asylum upon return to Burundi and the review of the cost-effectiveness of administration of Burundian examinations in the United Republic of Tanzania.
5. Organize joint donor cross-border missions aimed at mobilizing additional resources to support sustainable reintegration.
6. Scale up “Go and See”, and “Come and Tell” sensitization visits jointly with the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government of Burundi and UNHCR, including Burundian returnees to enable more refugees to make an informed decision on voluntary return.
7. Provide in advance, accurate information regarding customable items requiring declaration for speedy clearance.
8. Adopt the report and the workplan of the 27th Technical Working Group of the Tripartite Commission of the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees hosted in the United Republic of Tanzania appended in Annex I and II respectively.

Gitega, Burundi, 12 May 2023

H.E. Mr. Martin Niteretse

Minister of Interior, Community Development
and Public Security
of the Republic of Burundi

For the Government of the
Republic of Burundi

H.E. Mr. Jumanne Sagini

Deputy Minister of Home Affairs
of the United Republic of
Tanzania

For the Government of the
United Republic of Tanzania

Ms. Brigitte Mukanga Eno

UNHCR Representative for Burundi

For the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

