

BURUNDI



IN SHORT

Main Objectives

Although the main objectives as listed below hold true for 2000, they are subject to events beyond UNHCR's control. The serious security incident of October 1999 (see Recent Developments) prompted UNHCR to evacuate all non-essential staff, leaving a skeleton team in Bujumbura to run a reduced programme. Fluctuating, short-term objectives will therefore apply until UNHCR is able to establish a full presence and achieve the following :

- Sustain the return and reintegration of refugees and promote peace and stability in order to prevent further population displacement.
- Identify lasting solutions for the refugees, including resettlement for a few of them.



Planning Figures

Population	Jan. 2000	Dec. 2000
Congolese Refugees (from DRC)*	19,500	16,200
Rwandan Refugees**	2,000	1,000
Burundi Returnees***	260,000	395,500
Total	281,500	412,700

* According to the Government there are 19,000 urban refugees in Burundi since the 1960s'. UNHCR is assisting 460 of them.
 ** Includes 1,100 urban refugees and 900 rural refugees. UNHCR is assisting 20 of them.
 *** Includes the returns since 1996. The initial plan for 2000 is 130,500 returns, but in view of the volatile situation in Burundi, a major review of such planning figures is being undertaken.

Total Requirements

USD 15,404,721

WORKING ENVIRONMENT

Recent Developments

1999 began with new hopes for the country when, in January, the political leaders of the region unanimously suspended economic sanctions imposed on Burundi (since July 1996), while Burundi and Tanzania revived the tripartite mechanism between their respective governments and UNHCR on the issue of repatriation. Meanwhile, the peace process in Arusha gained momentum when the eighteen parties involved regrouped into three factions to propose the establishment of a transitional government.

But this positive climate was dampened when the tripartite meeting, announced for March 1999, was postponed indefinitely. Furthermore, a series of rebel attacks in the eastern province of Ruyigi in April 1999 seriously hindered the repatriation operations in an area that had been calm for two years. Then, in July, violence began to flare up on the outskirts of Bujumbura, claiming many civilian lives. As a result, the Government started to regroup the population in late September 1999, in order to facilitate the control of insecure areas. During a visit to a site for 4,000 displaced persons in Rutana province a convoy of humanitarian workers was attacked by rebels, leading to nine deaths. Following that incident, UNSECOORD declared the country as being in security phase IV, which meant that all non-essential staff were withdrawn and activities reduced to a minimum. Repatriation was only to be promoted to areas in Burundi which fulfilled the following three conditions imposed by UNHCR: no security incidents for a considerable period of time; unhindered UNHCR access to returnees for the purpose of monitoring and assistance; no forced movement of populations. In October 1999 none of these conditions were met, so UNHCR suspended its repatriation programme.

Constraints

At the beginning of 1999 the country was just starting to recover from the disastrous effects of the economic embargo imposed since 1996: but now general insecurity reigns again, and precludes the repatriation and reintegration of refugees and internally displaced persons (IDPs).

Although the majority of the thousand-odd Congolese refugees who fled the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) in 1998 have now returned home, the conflict in the DRC is still an

important cause of regional instability (for which contingency preparedness must be maintained).

STRATEGY

Protection and Solutions

Since the end of 1996, more than 200,000 Burundi refugees have returned to their country. On her mission to Burundi in February 1998, the High Commissioner noted that many people were spontaneously repatriating, so UNHCR decided to accelerate the process. From January to August 1999, nearly 9,000 returned from Tanzania under UNHCR's auspices. UNHCR provided them with a return package, and monitored their reintegration.

Assistance

If the internal and external peace processes are revived, and the security situation meets UNHCR's conditions, the Office will resume its activities. The country will, however, need a huge economic input to help it recover from years of deprivation, including an embargo. This in turn will improve security, which will hasten the return to their homes of Burundi refugees and IDPs. In such a context, UNHCR will distribute seeds and agricultural tools to the returnees and IDPs and Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) will help improve the economic and social infrastructure, including the water supply, health services, housing and education. To increase the absorption capacity of the places of origin, UNHCR will also initiate projects on a community-based, participating approach, with the financial support of the World Bank Post-Conflict Fund. While special emphasis will be given to UNDP/UNHCR cooperation, through the Joint Operation Cell, all these activities will be developed in close cooperation with other UN agencies and humanitarian actors. UNHCR will aim to provide vulnerable returnees with access to household kits and proper housing in their place of origin. Considering the large number of unaccompanied minors, UNHCR will provide this group with special assistance and use advanced tracing techniques based on information from Tanzania, to seek the parents of minors still in camps in that country. UNHCR will also raise awareness of the rights of children among the authorities and humanitarian staff, and will continue to help make peasant women more aware of their rights through targeted women's projects.



Desired Impact

By promoting humanitarian principles and through innovative projects, UNHCR hopes to help the country to receive far more returnees, once security and political conditions allow. Conversely, by providing assistance to the most vulnerable returnees and IDPs, (through the rehabilitation, for example, of public facilities, or the distribution of household kits) UNHCR aims to prevent further outflows, and provide at least a minimal standard of nutrition, health, and education.

ORGANISATION AND IMPLEMENTATION

Management Structure

Until October 1999, the office was headed by a Representative responsible for 15 internationals, 95 nationals and six United Nations Volunteers. In view of the deterioration in security, only a skeleton staff now remains in Bujumbura.

Coordination

All humanitarian activities in Burundi are being coordinated by the UN Resident Coordinator who also acts as the Humanitarian Coordinator. She is assisted by the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs. The main mechanism for the exchange of information is the weekly Contact Group meeting, which brings together the main humanitarian actors from UN, NGO and donor agencies. The Contact Group coordination system in Bujumbura is broken up into a number of sub-committees by sector, each coordinated by a lead agency. UNHCR's support to the *Ministère de la réinsertion et de la réinstallation des déplacés et des rapatriés* will continue, in order to reinforce local capacity to address returnee needs. Coordination with NGOs in the context of PARinAC will also be pursued on a weekly basis.

Offices

Bujumbura ⁽¹⁾ Gitega	Muyinga Ruyigi
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⁽¹⁾ All offices except Bujumbura have been closed, but could be re-opened, once the security situation improves.

Partners

Government Agencies

*Bureau des projets d'éducation
du ministère de l'éducation
Ministère de la réinsertion et de la
réinstallation des déplacés et des rapatriés*

NGOs

Action Aid Burundi
Austrian Relief Programme
*Deutsche Gesellschaft für
Technische Zusammenarbeit*
Interos
International Medical Corps
Norwegian Refugee Council
OXFAM-Québec

Other

Food and Agriculture Organisation
World Bank

Budget (USD)

Activities and Services	Annual Programme
Protection, Monitoring and Coordination	2,311,007
Community Services	501,600
Crop Production	1,200,000
Domestic Needs/ Household Support	163,440
Education	1,200,000
Health/Nutrition	1,517,700
Income Generation	8,000
Legal Assistance	468,560
Operational Support (to Agencies)	1,101,400
Shelter/Other Infrastructure	1,500,000
Transport/Logistics	3,230,000
Water (non-agricultural)	19,600
Total Operations	13,221,307
Programme Support	2,183,414
Total	15,404,721

