

# BURUNDI REGIONAL REFUGEE RESPONSE PLAN

January - December 2021



**CREDITS:**

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All statistics are provisional and subject to change.

For more information on the Burundi crisis go to: [Burundi Information Sharing Portal](#)

**FRONT COVER PHOTOGRAPH:**

Tanzania. A Burundian refugee family with their Refugee Housing Unit (RHU) in Kigoma Refugee Camp

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# Foreword

With the Burundi refugee situation approaching its seventh year, 312,615 Burundian refugees continue to be hosted by four main asylum countries, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda.

The relative stabilization of the country following the 2015 crisis and the mostly peaceful political transition in May 2020 offer new perspectives for solutions to this protracted refugee crisis. While not promoting returns in the current context, UNHCR supports Burundian refugees to exercise their right to return as long as their decision to return is voluntary, based on a free and informed choice, and that the returns take place in safety and dignity.

Since July 2020, an increasing number of Burundian refugees expressed their intention to return home, and 39,411 Burundian refugees were assisted in their voluntary repatriation over the course of the year. Preparations are underway to further scale up voluntary return operations, based on planning figures for some 143,000 Burundian refugees to return to their country of origin in 2021.

It is, however, evident that the majority of Burundian refugees will still continue to be in need of international protection throughout 2021. The Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan was among the most critically underfunded refugee situations globally in 2020, receiving only 40 per cent of the resources required. This led to acute gaps, including food ration cuts, inadequate shelters, lack of medicines, deficient WASH infrastructure and insufficient livelihoods activities. The COVID-19 pandemic further compounded the situation. Increased support for this Regional Refugee Response Plan is crucial to ensure meaningful protection and essential humanitarian assistance for the Burundian refugee population. It is important to avoid that undue pressures, reduced livelihoods and increased hardship become push factors for refugees to prematurely return to Burundi. It is therefore vital that refugees who are not seeking to repatriate at this time receive support to meet their basic needs and that their right to asylum is fully respected. A stronger investment in education and vocational skills, as well as diversified livelihoods support will contribute to the resilience of refugees in this

transition phase and will facilitate their reintegration in Burundi, when they are able to safely return home.

The 2021 Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan takes a comprehensive and solutions-oriented approach with emphasis on the inclusion of refugees in national systems and integrated service delivery with host communities to the extent possible. The goals of socio-economic inclusion and livelihood activities are to strengthen self-reliance of refugees and empower them to contribute to their host communities. This document is complemented by the 2021 Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan developed by partners in Burundi to provide adequate reception facilities, strengthen the absorption capacity in return areas and promote the sustainability of voluntary returns.

In order to present the entire refugee response in the context of the current dynamics, the 2021 Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan includes a regional overview, summaries of the refugee response plans in asylum countries, as well as a chapter on the envisaged voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees.

We appreciate the strong dedication of all partners to enhance the protection of Burundian refugees and work towards durable solutions for this long-standing refugee situation. We are grateful to the host countries and communities for their support.

Last but not least, we recognize the crucial role of the donor community to sustain our collective efforts and call on all actors across the humanitarian-development nexus to contribute toward progressively resolving this refugee situation. We are looking forward to working together through a whole of society approach and based on the principle of responsibility-sharing in a spirit of solidarity, as envisaged by the Global Compact on Refugees to achieve comprehensive solutions for Burundian refugees throughout the region.



A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'C. Salami'.

**Clementine Nkweta Salami**

UNHCR Regional Director, Regional Bureau for East and Horn of Africa, and the Great Lakes

## 2021 PLANNED RESPONSE

# 172,000

PROJECTED REFUGEE  
POPULATION BY END OF  
2021

# 143,000

PROJECTED RETURNEES  
IN 2021

# US\$ 222.6M

REQUIREMENTS 2021

# 34

PARTNERS INVOLVED IN  
2021



DEMOCRATIC  
REPUBLIC  
OF THE CONGO

38,500

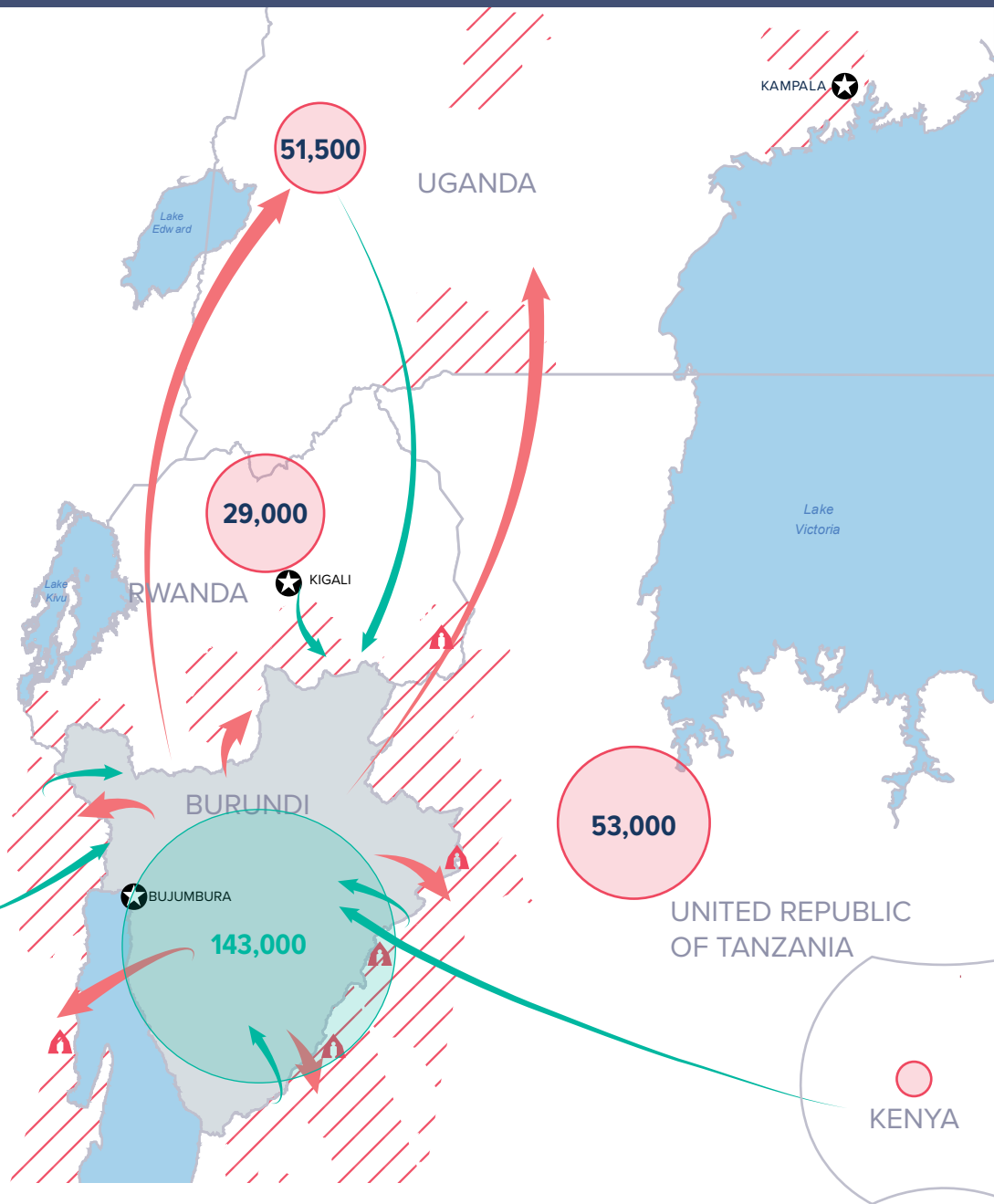
29,000

51,500

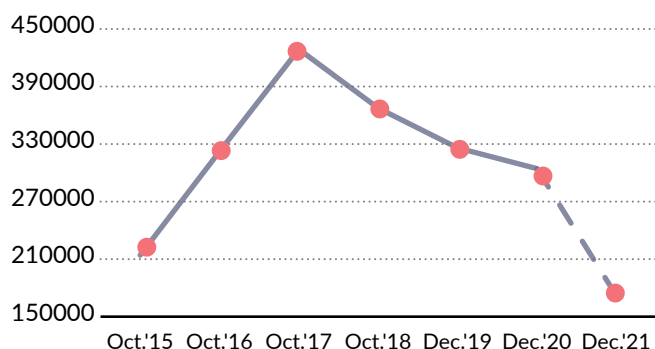
53,000

143,000

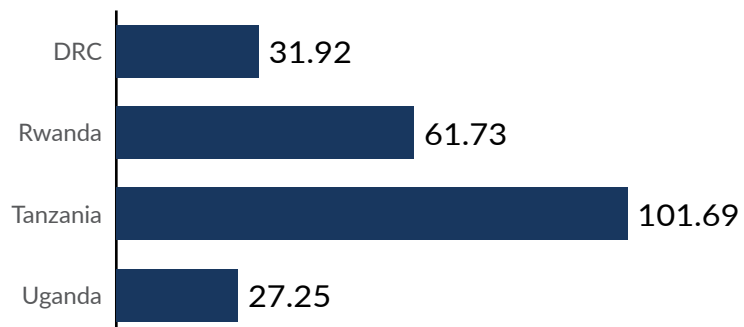
- Refugees
- Assisted returns
- ▲ Refugee camp
- Refugee crossing
- Refugee returning
- / / / Refugee locations



Refugee Population Trends 2015 - 2021



2021 Requirements | in millions US\$



# Introduction

The 2021 Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan (RRRP) outlines the multi-agency response strategy and financial requirements of 34 partners supporting host governments to provide protection and assistance to Burundian refugees across the four main asylum countries. The updated plan developed in accordance with the Refugee Coordination Model takes a comprehensive and solutions-oriented approach and includes the impact on host communities, as well as support to refugees returning to Burundi. The 2021 RRRP for the Burundi situation envisages stronger engagement with development and peacebuilding partners to enhance services and infrastructure in refugee hosting and return areas. In light of increasing numbers of refugee returns to Burundi since August 2020, and the continued high number of voluntary repatriations anticipated in 2021, an inter-agency 2021 Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan (JRRRP) is being developed to enhance the absorption capacity and reintegration opportunities in return areas in Burundi, complementing the RRRP.

Despite heightened tensions in Burundi during the May 2020 elections, there was no major forced displacement inside Burundi or across borders. The new Government of Burundi has urged refugees who had fled the country, including government critics and human rights activists, to return home. Since August 2020, an increasing number of voluntary returns have been facilitated from Tanzania and Rwanda, as well as from DRC. Whereas UNHCR will continue to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of Burundi refugees who express their wish to return, it remains crucial to provide international protection to the refugees who are not seeking to return at this time and to fully respect their right to asylum.

Refugees from Burundi have different profiles and have sought asylum for different reasons, including political

and human rights concerns, as well as related socio-economic factors. As a result, some may find a measure of safety upon return to areas whereas others would still be in continued need of international protection.

The DRC, Rwanda and Uganda have developed refugee responses in line with the Global Compact on Refugees, granting freedom of movement to refugees, providing refugees access to national social services and supporting the goal of self-reliance. Efforts towards greater autonomy of refugees is however severely hampered as a result of many constraints on the ground, including inadequate resources, lack of economic opportunities, poor infrastructure and security-related challenges. Tanzania maintains an encampment policy and restrictive livelihood environment.

The large majority of the refugee population remains dependent on humanitarian assistance and lives in densely populated camps with inadequate shelter, health services and WASH infrastructures coupled with food ration cuts in several countries due to underfunding. The COVID-19 pandemic further exacerbated the situation.

Burundian refugees face multiple protection risks, in particular gender-based violence (GBV) including survival sex and early marriages as a result of limited access to livelihoods, school closures, overcrowded shelters, lack of domestic energy supply and reduced humanitarian assistance. Refugee children (over 50% of the refugee population) are exposed to particular risks. The situation of unaccompanied and separated children is particularly concerning, as many suffer neglect and adolescents have increasingly resorted to negative coping mechanisms. In the context of the refugee response, RRRP partners will continue to prioritize support to children, women and persons living with

disabilities or with other specific needs and consolidate community-based protection mechanisms. Psychosocial and mental health support will be scaled up.

There is an urgent need to create better conditions to promote the self-reliance of refugees in asylum countries, through increased livelihood opportunities, expansion of cash-based interventions promoting refugees' financial inclusion and contribution to the local economy, and stronger socio-economic inclusion of refugees (in particular in the areas of health, education and jobs). RRRP partners aim to integrate the refugee response with development plans and efforts to promote socio-economic growth, by expanding livelihood interventions in refugee camps, hosting districts and urban areas and ensuring inclusion of refugees within national systems and services. Partnerships with the private sector will be strengthened to enhance refugees' work opportunities through advocacy and policy efforts.

In the second half of 2020, the operations in asylum countries were redirected from contingency planning for possible further influxes of Burundian refugees towards intention surveys, counselling and facilitation of

voluntary returns. As of December 2020, a total of 107,169 Burundian refugees have been assisted to return to their country from Tanzania (since the Voluntary Repatriation for Burundian refugees from Tanzania started in September 2017), of which a total of 30,636 refugees repatriated in 2020. The increased departures in the second half of 2020 reduced overcrowding in some of the refugee camps.

The projected voluntary repatriation of over 140,000 Burundi refugees in 2021, mainly from Tanzania (93,000) and Rwanda (40,000), requires the reinforcement of counselling, registration and departure centres, the renovation and/or construction of transit facilities and the recruitment of additional qualified staff to carry out pre-departure formalities and logistical support. COVID-19 testing must be organized for all departing refugees, and upgrading of health and WASH facilities will also be required.

In 2021, RRRP partners will continue to preserve access to asylum and ensure reception, protection and assistance for Burundian refugees, including new arrivals, with targeted assistance for persons with

### Projected Burundi Refugee Population, with Age and Sex Breakdown

Refugee Population 31 Dec. 2020	Projected Returns 2021	Projected Refugee Population 31 Dec. 2021	Age	Female	Male	Total
			0-4	10%	10%	20%

预览已结束，完整报告链接和二维码如下：

[https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5\\_18091](https://www.yunbaogao.cn/report/index/report?reportId=5_18091)

