

2021 BURUNDI REFUGEE RETURN AND REINTEGRATION PLAN

January - December 2021



Cover photograph:

A young Burundian refugee washes his hands before boarding a bus with his family to voluntarily return home after living in exile in Rwanda since 2015.

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Foreword

This Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan (2021) stems from a strong commitment by Burundian authorities, UNHCR, UNDP and partners to support sustainable solutions for returning refugees, in a manner that enables them to rebuild their lives with dignity and in peace. The Plan provides for the implementation of activities that empower returning refugees, enhance the resilience of both returnees and local populations in areas of return, and promote social cohesion and peaceful coexistence, thereby contributing to the stability of the Great Lakes region as a whole. Since 2017, more than 120,000 Burundians have returned to their country. Despite the COVID-19 pandemic, which resulted in both international and domestic movement restrictions, almost 41,000 refugees returned to Burundi in 2020 from Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), Uganda and Kenya. This upward trend is expected to continue in 2021.

The increasing interest shown by refugees to return to Burundi, combined with the challenging context, highlights the need for innovative and long-term interventions to support returnees and host communities to achieve self-reliance and resilience. With this in mind, this strategy focuses on the implementation of livelihood projects, the search for markets for the exploitation of value chains, and the strengthening of programmes to access and improve health services, water and sanitation, education, social protection and human rights, through an inclusive, nationally led, and community-driven approach.

The Government of Burundi is working to ensure that returnees are able to re-establish themselves into their communities by promoting their economic and social integration through its institutional body, the Directorate General for Repatriation, Resettlement, Reintegration of Returnees and War-Displaced Persons. Various initiatives are being put in place, including the National Strategy for the Socio-Economic Reintegration of Disaster Victims (2017-2021) adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2017 and the National Development Plan for the period 2018-2027, which aims at a threefold objective: the legal protection of refugees repatriated to reintegration zones, the strengthening of security conditions in host communities and support for the reception process, and the national platform on the reintegration of returnees, to name but a few.

Our efforts require the cooperation and participation of a wide range of actors to sustain safe and dignified repatriation, restore individual rights at the local level, and support the strengthening of state and local structures necessary to ensure sustainable reintegration. The success of this Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan (2021) will depend heavily on the mobilization of sufficient and timely funding. In conclusion, the Government of Burundi is convinced that this Plan represents an important step in the search for solutions and could set the benchmarks for longer-term development prospects benefiting both returning and local communities, who remain the driving actors throughout this process.

Chief Police Commissioner, Gen. Gervais Ndirakobuca
Minister of the Interior, Community Development And Public Security

PLANNED RESPONSE

143,000

PROJECTED RETURNS IN 2021

120,000

ASSISTED RETURNS BY END-2020

US\$ 104.3M

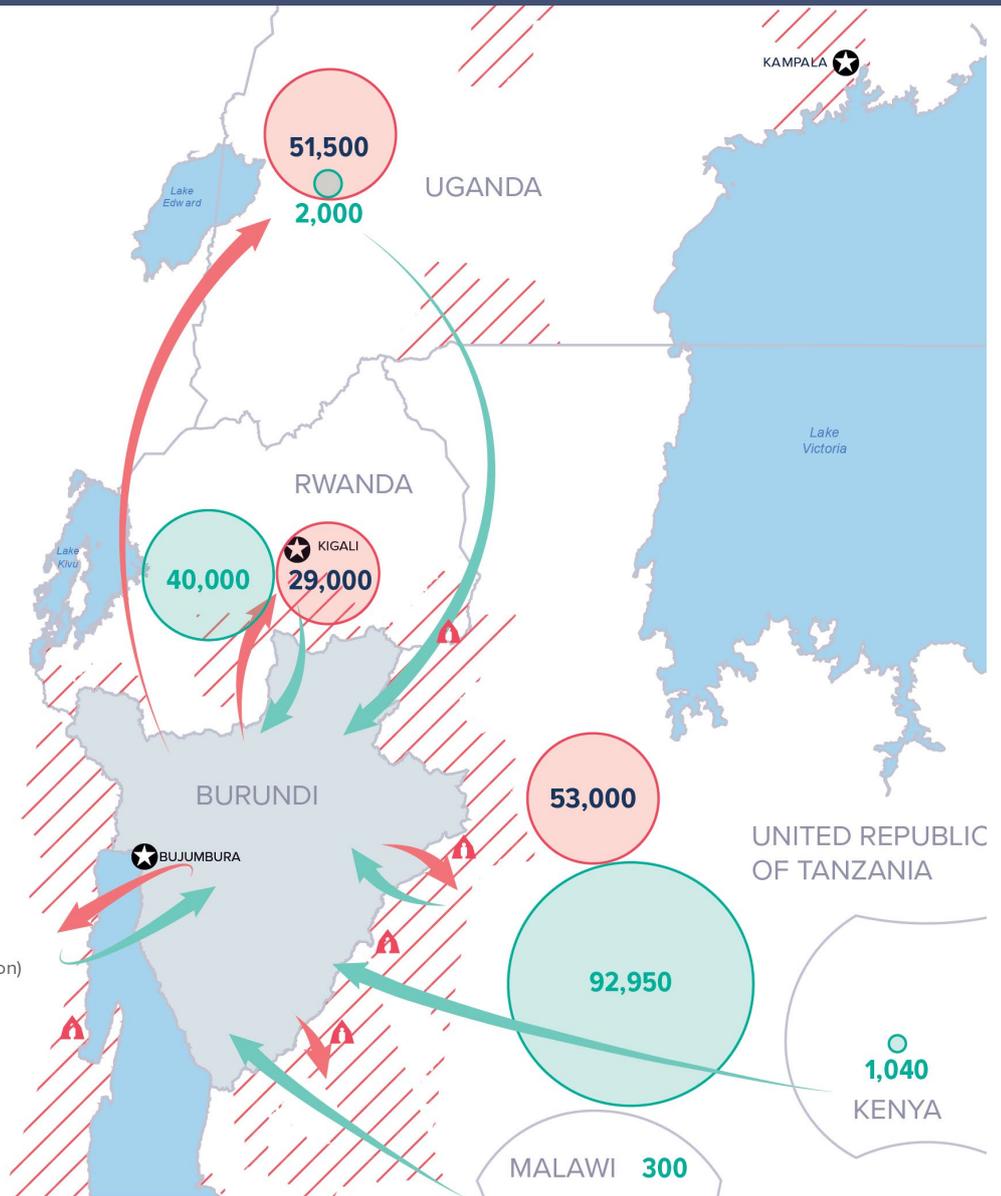
REQUIREMENTS FOR 2021



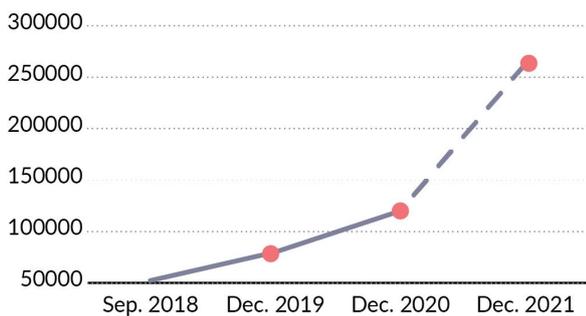
DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

38,500
6,000

- Refugees and asylum seekers (2021 projection)
- Assisted returns (2021 projection)
- ▲ Refugee camp
- ➔ Refugee crossing
- ➔ Refugee returning
- Refugee locations



Returns Trends 2018 - 2021



Introduction

The 2021 Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan is an integrated inter-agency response plan, with both humanitarian and development-oriented components, designed to support the safe and dignified return home of Burundian refugees in the sub region and beyond, and to promote their resilience and sustainable reintegration. Sustainability of the refugee returns to Burundi is indispensable for national and regional security and for achieving progressive development in Burundi and the region.

Following the election of President Ndayishimiye in June 2020 and his call for Burundians living in exile to return, an increase in interest in voluntary return has been observed in various countries hosting Burundian refugees. Indeed, the relative stability that has prevailed following the elections and the peaceful political transition has provided an opportunity to pursue durable solutions for thousands of Burundian refugees in neighbouring countries and others further afield.

However, the socio-economic and political situation in Burundi continues to adversely impact the lives of Burundians. According to the Human Development Report 2020, Burundi ranks 185 out of 189 in the Human Development Index (HDI). The World Bank estimates that 75 per cent of the population lives below the poverty threshold, with youth unemployment standing at 65 per cent according to the African Development Bank. Burundi has one of the highest stunting rates in the world, estimated at 54 per cent (JANSFA 2019) and rural children are more at risk of being stunted than their urban counterparts. The refugee returnees are among the most vulnerable segments of the population and the areas they are returning to in substantial numbers, such as Makamba, Kirundo and Ruyigi, are among the poorest and chronically food and nutrition insecure provinces of Burundi. These provinces are also affected by the socio-economic impact of COVID-19. Against this backdrop, the socio-economic re-integration of up to 400,000 Burundian refugees expected to return over the next few years cannot be sustained without significant development assistance.

Besides socio-economic challenges, Burundi faces the additional complications brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic.¹ On 16 March 2020, Burundi closed its borders and the Melchior Ndadaye International Airport to prevent the spread of the virus, a measure that remained in place till 10 November 2020, when the airport was re-opened to commercial flights. Amidst the pandemic, the voluntary repatriation (VolRep) process continued uninterrupted until mid- May 2020, when it was suspended once again, in connection with the start of the electoral period. UNHCR and its partners took advantage of this pause to establish adequate COVID-19 prevention measures, control infrastructure and testing procedures for returnees upon arrival in Burundi. The VolRep activities resumed on 2 July from Tanzania, followed by Rwanda and DRC, and Uganda towards the end of the year, with considerable increases in monthly returns, averaging 7,000 individuals/month in September and November 2020.

As serious socio-economic challenges prevail in return areas, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic, it is imperative that humanitarian and development stakeholders at provincial and communal levels work jointly to support a sustainable return and reintegration process. In addition to the right to return in safety and dignity, the returnees are entitled to the same rights as well as equal access to civil documentation, services, productive assets and opportunities as other citizens. Recognizing the importance of promoting durable reintegration, in 2017, Burundi published its National Strategy for the socio-economic reintegration of victims affected by forced displacement 2017-2021 (*Stratégie Nationale de Reintegration socio-économique des personnes sinistrées au Burundi*) that articulates the three government priorities for reintegration, namely 1) enable displaced people to have access to land and shelters upon return to the chosen areas of residency;

¹ As of November 2020, according to WHO and the Burundian Ministry of Health, Burundi has recorded a total of 689 positive cases and one death since the beginning of the pandemic.

2) provide economic opportunities with support to the local markets and job creation; and 3) allow full social cohesion with participation in community and social lives.

The international community is embracing a comprehensive approach to support Burundi's voluntary repatriation and reintegration process and the leveraging of synergies across the humanitarian-development-nexus. The 2021 JRRRP endeavours to achieve these synergies through a linkage between humanitarian and resilience/development interventions. Robust support by donors and other stakeholders is crucial to ensure the sustainable reintegration of refugee returnees who have already returned, and those who are expected to return in the coming year(s).

Background

Whereas conditions in Burundi are not yet conducive to allow for the promotion of voluntary repatriation, UNHCR is supporting Burundian refugees in the exercise of their right to return, as long as their decision is voluntary, free and informed, and that their return takes place in safety and dignity.

The 2015 political crisis slowed down the country's economic development trajectory, thereby constraining peacebuilding and social cohesion. Rising unemployment and the collapse of social services have resulted in a sharp deterioration in living conditions. In the aftermath of the political crisis, international sanctions and insecurity affected the country's economy, leading to market instability, price increases, food insecurity and supply shortages. In 2019, Burundi experienced even more frequent and severe shortages of fuel and currency, which contributed to a flourishing black market.

With a population of approximately 12 million, Burundi is one of the most densely populated countries in Africa. According to the October 2020 World Economic Outlook of the International Monetary Fund, Burundi GDP per capita stood at a meagre USD 267. The economy remains heavily reliant on agriculture, which accounts for more than a third of the country's Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Low agricultural productivity (lowest in the region) and inadequate processing and value-added capacity, combined with imbalance of trade and poor access to electricity (4 per cent) as well as aggravating climate change impacts (drought, floods, landslides and erosion) continue to slow down economic growth. Ranked 171 out of 181 countries on resilience to natural disasters and climate change, according to the *Notre Dame Global Adaptation Initiative*, Burundi is highly vulnerable to external shocks, such as droughts, soil erosion, landslides, floods, strong winds, torrential rains, and ensuing land disputes and conflicts.

Refugee returns and, at times, secondary displacements are exerting additional pressure in the already extremely vulnerable and fragile Burundian communities. Most refugees have returned to the provinces of Makamba, Kirundo and Ruyigi, provinces which lack the required social and economic infrastructure for a sustainable reintegration of refugee returnees. These are also the provinces with the highest number of internally displaced persons (IDPs) and victims of natural disasters (HRP 2020) facing persistent food insecurity. The challenges faced in the areas of highest return include:

- Funding shortages for humanitarian interventions and development support;
- Concerns in connection with the fragile socio-political environment, inter-ethnic dynamics and localized violence;
- Protection concerns and needs in-transit from asylum countries;
- Specific needs of returnee women and children;
- Difficulties in tracking refugee returnees' locations to determine their protection and material assistance needs;

- Inadequate income generation schemes to enable rural populations to diversify their livelihoods and strengthen household resilience;
- Inefficient or negative coping mechanisms in the face of food insecurity;
- Scarcity of land, compounded by lack of compensation measures for expropriated families' properties, and consequent soil depletion;
- Challenges related to strengthening and upgrading education and health systems and WASH as primary basic services to ensure that returns are sustainable;
- Complications related to implementing a nuanced approach for inclusion of returnees within local and national systems; and
- Risk of onward movements or further displacement if basic services and protection are not in place in the return areas.



Scope of the JRRRP

The 2021 JRRRP represents an integrated response to immediate humanitarian needs as well as to the longer-term resilience and reintegration needs of Burundian returnees and their communities of return. In 2021, Burundi is expected to receive returnees from the United Republic of Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Uganda and Kenya.

The voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania started in September 2017, and 109,419 refugees have been assisted to return home to date. An increase in the return trend from Tanzania has been observed since July 2020, bringing the total number of assisted returns in 2020 to 30,636 individuals. Meanwhile, thousands of Burundian refugees in Rwanda requested to benefit from the facilitated repatriation programme. Following these requests, on 13 August 2020, UNHCR organized a tripartite meeting, with the

involvement of the Governments of Rwanda and Burundi, which reconfirmed the validity of the principles and provisions of the 2005 Tripartite Agreement on the Voluntary Repatriation of Burundians refugees in Rwanda, in addition to the participants' commitment to work together in facilitating the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees from Rwanda. Since 27 August 2020, almost 8,000 individuals have returned from Rwanda, while 12,000 more have formally expressed their intention to return. In Uganda, 600 Burundian refugees also requested to be assisted with voluntary returns to Burundi, 231 were assisted to repatriate by air (with two charter flights) in December 2020 with the remaining number to return in the first three months of 2021. A total of 1,946 individuals have been received from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) since 23 September 2020, and some 6000 more have registered their intention to return. Tripartite discussions were also held between the Governments of Burundi and Namibia and UNHCR on the voluntary repatriation of an estimated 500 Burundian refugees in Namibia.

As of the end of December 2020, close to 363,000 Burundian refugees remain in exile in Tanzania, Uganda, Rwanda, Democratic Republic of the Congo, Kenya, Mozambique, Malawi, South Africa and Zambia. It is important to note that this number includes some refugees who had fled their homes in Burundi prior to the April 2015 events. It is expected that 142,890 of them may opt to repatriate in 2021, including 92,950 from Tanzania; 6,000 from the DRC; 40,000 from Rwanda; 2,000 from Uganda and 1,040 from Kenya. Failure to ensure an adequate response to the needs of the anticipated returnees will not only compound the many existing protection and reintegration challenges faced by those who have already returned, but may also reverse the gains made thus far, triggering secondary displacement and onward movements, within Burundi and into exile across international borders. Moreover, the increased number of returnees requires the urgent expansion and upgrading of reception facilities in line with COVID-19 prevention and response measures, in addition to necessitating more robust reintegration support.

	Assisted Refugee Returns by 31 December 2020	Projected Returns (Assisted and Self-Organized) by 31 Dec. 2021
DRC	2,130	6,000
Rwanda	7,896	40,000
Tanzania	109,419	92,950
Uganda	233	2,000
Kenya	802	1,040
Malawi	-	300
Zambia	9	100
Namibia	-	500
Total	120,494	142,890

The 2021 JRRRP targets those who will be repatriated in 2021, as well as those who have already returned to Burundi between 2017 and 2020; the inclusion of the latter category in the Plan is premised on the fact that both the assisted and self-organised returnees since 2017 have received no or very limited reintegration support to date. The total number of self-organized refugee returns is hard to estimate. However, approximately 8,000 individuals were identified during protection monitoring in 2019. There are indications that self-organized returns continued in 2020, especially from Rwanda. Most reintegration interventions will

also target vulnerable host community members; this being a measure aimed at facilitating social cohesion and addressing immediate vulnerabilities.

Specifically, the 2021 JRRRP will target the following categories of persons:

- 263,384 refugee returnees, including:
 - A total of 120,494 assisted returnees who returned to Burundi since 2017 and have not received appropriate assistance for adequate reintegration; and
 - 142,890 assisted and self-organised refugee returnees projected to return from the five main countries of asylum in 2021.
- 87,378 members of host communities in the six main provinces of return: Ruyigi (24,566), Makamba (18,855), Muyinga (16,445), Cankunzo (10,451), Rutana (8,884), Kirundo (8,177) which have a high level of vulnerability (source OCHA). These are also provinces targeted by the 2021 HRP. The Severity Analysis conducted for 2021, shows that Cankunzo, Kirundo and Ruyigi are provinces classified at level 4 in a scale of 1 to 5 (with 5 as more humanitarian interventions are needed). The remaining three provinces are classified at level 3.



Support to Countries of Origin & Voluntary Repatriation

Voluntary repatriation in conditions of safety and dignity remains the preferred solution in most refugee situations. The overriding priorities are to promote enabling conditions for voluntary repatriation in full respect for the principle of non-refoulement, to ensure the exercise of a free and informed choice and to mobilize support to facilitate voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation. Voluntary repatriation is not necessarily

conditional upon political solutions having been arrived at in the country of origin; the right of a refugee to return to her/his country of origin being a fundamental human right. It is also recognized that there are situations where refugees voluntarily return outside the context of a formal voluntary repatriation framework, and that these returnees should also be included in protection and assistance programmes. While enabling voluntary repatriation is first and foremost the responsibility of the country of origin towards its own nationals, the international community stands ready to provide support, including to facilitate sustainability of the returns.

Accordingly, without prejudice to ongoing support to countries continuing to host refugees from Burundi, this plan outlines measures and resources required by the JRRRP partners that will contribute to removing obstacles to return and enable conditions conducive to durable reintegration. In some instances, stepping up support to return areas has been specifically agreed between refugee host governments and Burundi. To that end, during the last Tripartite Commission meeting between the Governments of Tanzania and Burundi and UNHCR (November 2019), commitments were made to support national capacities, basic services and livelihood opportunities in areas of origin in Burundi.

Linking Humanitarian & Resilience Frameworks

The integrated nature of the Sustainable Development Goals requires a new approach, which places durable solutions for the refugees and other forcibly displaced persons at the centre of the development agenda. The JRRRP reflects this shift and is fully in line with the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, anchored in the principle of leaving no one behind.

The JRRRP is informed by the Global Compact for Refugees, which explicitly calls for the mobilization of support to underpin safe and dignified repatriation and durable reintegration. While recognizing that voluntary repatriation is first and foremost the responsibility of the country of origin towards its own people, the GCR confirms the commitment of the international community to provide support, including to facilitate the sustainability of returns. Accordingly, the international community will contribute resources and expertise to support countries of origin to address root causes, to remove obstacles to return, and to enable conditions favourable to voluntary repatriation.

The JRRRP is also an operationalization of the 'New Way of Working', which offers a concrete path to remove unnecessary barriers to humanitarian and development collaboration in order to enable meaningful and sustained progress. It emphasizes partnerships among UN agencies, international and local NGOs, private sector, civil society actors and governments.

Reintegration activities under this plan are guided by the Secretary General's decision ² on durable solutions for returning refugees. The framework provides the principles for the UN's engagement throughout the durable solutions process. It reaffirms inter-alia the State's responsibility in support of the national and local authorities, and national civil society, to ensure they lead and own the process.

JRRRP partners recognize the central role of the Government of Burundi in ensuring safe and dignified repatriation and durable and harmonious reintegration. Therefore, the goals underpinning the JRRRP are fully consistent and anchored in National Strategies and priorities. The JRRRP specifically aligns with the following objectives of the National Development Plan (2018-2027): (i) legal protection of refugee returnees

² Decision No. 2011/20 – Durable Solutions : Follow-up to the Secretary General 's 2009 report on peacebuilding and Policy Committee Decision No.2011/20 – Durable Solutions : Ending displacement in the aftermath of conflict, See Annex 1 & 2 of : Decision on Durable Solutions and an accompanying Preliminary Framework on Ending Displacement in the Aftermath of Conflict: https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/durable_solutions_guide_011116.pdf

in the areas of reintegration; (ii) strengthen security conditions in the host communities; (iii) support to the repatriation process.

It also seeks to support the implementation of the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Reintegration of Affected Persons in Burundi (2017-2021) adopted by the Council of Ministers in 2017. The strategy pursues the following three main objectives: (i) to reinstate refugee returnees and other affected persons in their communities; (ii) to enhance their means of economic livelihoods through access to local markets, formal and informal employment opportunities; and (iii) to empower them to resume their previous lives as peaceful and productive members of the community.

In addition, the JRRRP conforms to the overarching objective of the Burundi United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework Guidance (UNDCFG) 2019-2023 (former United Nations Development Plan, UNDAF) to ensure that no one is left behind. Under the UNDAF, the UN Burundi country team reaffirmed its joint commitment to work with and for communities and groups at risk of being left behind from the national development process or marginalized, including inter-alia: refugees, refugee returnees, IDPs, IDP returnees, vulnerable host communities and persons at risk of statelessness. During the programming phase of the UNDAF, UN agencies in Burundi explicitly committed to ensure the needs of those at risk of being left behind would be addressed through targeted intervention packages, aiming at their social inclusion and strengthening their resilience. Ultimately, the goal is for all community members at risk to be able to fully realize their rights as individuals and members of Burundian society. The need to address return and reintegration is also echoed by the UN-Wide Resilience Framework for Burundi, which includes the response to forced displacement as a priority to build resilience in Burundi.

The JRRRP is also aligned with the overall objectives of the Humanitarian Response Plan to provide emergency assistance to the most vulnerable populations to address their immediate needs and to strengthen their resilience. The HRP targets all people in need of humanitarian assistance in Burundi prioritizing the most vulnerable provinces with the highest numbers of IDPs, refugee returnees with food insecurity and victims of natural disasters. The JRRRP will give further impetus to catalyzing resources and coordinating support to returnees and communities in return areas and extends support to reintegration and building resilience³. Relevant activities undertaken under the JRRRP framework will also be reflected in the HRP monitoring and reporting. In addition, the JRRRP complements the National Strategy for Socio-Economic Reintegration and strengthens the linkages between humanitarian assistance and development interventions to enhance the self-reliance of returnees and affected communities.

The JRRRP also complements the 2021 Regional Refugee Response Plan for the Burundi situation and the associated country Refugee Response Plans for DRC, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, which outline the interagency response plan for over 312,000 Burundian refugees in countries of asylum at the end of 2020. Each RRP includes a chapter dedicated to durable solutions and anticipated refugee returns.

³ The multisectorial response to returnees under the HRP targets a population of 130,000 and the associated funding requirement is US\$ 10 million.

Needs Analysis

The JRRRP proposed interventions are guided by protection monitoring activities conducted by UNHCR in return areas, using a community-based protection approach and an age, gender and diversity mainstreaming (AGDM) methodology.

UNHCR undertakes regular returnee protection monitoring since 2019⁴. Since January 2020, the protection monitoring system has revealed an increase in the number of returnees not found in the return areas during the monitoring exercises. By November 2020 an estimated 33 per cent (4698 households) of those refugees returning to rural communities have not been found at their respective return areas and have presumably moved onward⁵. This is a substantial increase as compared to the percentage of returnees not found in 2019 (9%). The increase is likely to have been caused by a combination of factors ranging from difficulties in accessing socio-economic opportunities, including lack of livelihoods, shelter or land upon and after return, access to schools and health services, or security concerns, including local conflicts, but also harassment, persecution and discrimination by local communities or others.

Protection monitoring has further revealed that 31 per cent of the returnees were unsatisfied with the overall level of reintegration, also considering the following:

- Insufficient access to shelter: at 36% of returnees could access housing upon arrival; 63% of returnees reported to live in temporary homes upon arrival; 50% of returnees have access to their old homes 3 months after return.
- Insufficient daily nutritional intake: 56% of returnees report consuming only one meal per day. Almost all returnee households rely on food obtained from their own gardens (93%) and/or fields - households struggle to get food during the period they do not produce. 81% of households declared that they are not satisfied with their level of food security because of the low dietary diversity.
- Lack of access to livelihoods: 88% of returnee heads of households are subsistence farmers, but most of them declared not having the adequate resources to produce their land
- Lack of school attendance: 52% of returnee children do not attend school.
- Lack of access to administrative and national documentation procedures: only 46% of children reported having a birth certificate; 72% of returnee households reported that household members have a national identification card.

Protection

Based on findings from UNHCR's protection monitoring activities, the return package is not sufficient to support returnees' reintegration, and the community-based protection structures and public support services require reinforcement. Urgent protection needs persist upon return and the response to them should be oriented towards the identification of durable solutions right from the start. At the same time, host communities

⁴ Protection monitoring was set up in September 2017 after the repatriation process started in Tanzania and was revised in early 2019 to better address the operational needs. Currently, all 18 provinces of Burundi are covered by UNHCR Protection Monitoring activities. From January to September 2020, 26,575 protection monitoring interviews with families were conducted.

⁵ The community-based monitors collect data on returnees not found by interviewing other family members, relatives and neighbors. The findings were: A) Returnees in onward movement to neighboring countries: 46% of 1,731 returnee households have possibly moved to Tanzania (956 households), Uganda (67 households), DRC (13 households). 20% or 768 HH of the returnees are estimated to reside in Burundi in places other than their return location and may be internally displaced persons.

need to be supported in their resilience building efforts, in order to effectively ensure social cohesion. The deterioration of living conditions as well as family separation (also due to secondary displacement) expose the most vulnerable individuals - including women at risk, children and youth, persons with disabilities and persons with other specific needs - to additional protection risks, such as survival sex, forced labor, trafficking and harmful coping mechanisms.

The most pressing protection needs include access to administrative documentation, including birth registration for children; medical care and psycho-social, legal and material assistance to survivors/witnesses of violence, abuse and exploitation; and access to diversified income generating activities, particularly for women and youth. For women at high risk of violence, as well as GBV survivors living in Burundi, safe housing is a critical gap due to the absence of national or communal safe havens to guarantee the physical integrity and provide mental health support interventions for these women.

As of November 2020, the most affected provinces, according to Protection Monitoring, which considered different indicators, such as access to basic services, against the current response capacity, are: Kirundo, Ruyigi, Muyinga and Gitega. Cankuzo, Makamba and Rutana provinces were found to present a medium level of vulnerability, with challenges also due to their geographical location at the border with DRC, Rwanda and Tanzania:

There is a specific need of reinforcing the capacity, accountability and knowledge of justice actors, increasing the availability of lawyers, legal aid support and Conseil des Notables systems, support to returnees to obtain legal documents and land property/rights documents.



Child Protection

In Burundi, children constitute more than 50 per cent of the population and most returnees (57 per cent according to protection monitoring conducted in June 2020) are under 18 years old. Despite lack of official child protection data/assessments, actors have noted a significant increase in numbers of children at risk of violence, psychological abuse, sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking, exacerbated by the difficult socio-economic situation.

The protection assessments also demonstrated a high rate of returnee children out of school during 2020. This situation has led a large number of children and adolescents to leave their homes and start working, which puts them at an increased risk of sexual exploitation, abuse and trafficking.

Unaccompanied and separated children (UASC): 2,755 UASCs have been identified among the returnees who require special attention, including family tracing, reunification or alternative care arrangement for children whose families have not been identified.

Civil documentation, in particular birth certificates: The absence of civil affairs structures at transit centres, with the capacity to provide identification documents immediately upon return, remains a gap that is hampering children's access to basic social services, including access to health and education (52 per cent of returnee children do not have access to schooling).

54 per cent of returnee households report their children not having any birth certificates. Most refugee returnee children hold a notification of birth issued by health partners in Tanzania. This birth notification does not have the same legal standing as a birth certificate under either Tanzanian or Burundian law. The absence of a recognized birth certificate may create risks of statelessness, particularly when returnee children are born out of wedlock or to parents of different nationalities.

Social Cohesion

22 per cent of the returnees interviewed at the return areas upon arrival indicated that they felt that the security situation in the country had not improved since their flight. Secondary sources of the protection monitoring methodology revealed stereotypes and prejudices by local communities against returnees, affecting social cohesion and returnees' access to rights and/or services, and at times leading to discrimination and harassment towards returnees. The situation is compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic and the erroneous perception of returnees' being "virus carriers". Meanwhile, whereas the local authorities/administration are making efforts to tackle these challenges, they are not always sufficiently equipped to promote awareness and openness to inclusion and diversity.

Returnees need to be included in more active and regular community dialogues and joint community activities and events to ensure peaceful coexistence and social cohesion; in the meantime, awareness raising campaigns on human rights and on their rights to access public services are strongly needed.

Vulnerable Refugee Returnee Women and Gender Based Violence (GBV)

Women and girls of concern to UNHCR are likely to experience challenges and protection risks such as gender based violence (GBV). Intimate partner violence continues to be a risk for returning refugee women and girls, who often lack effective community support mechanisms and awareness of the legal procedures available to address these risks. Poor socio-economic situations expose returning refugee women and girls to increased risks of sexual abuse and exploitation. In parallel, access to regular GBV services can be a challenge for survivors due to lack of awareness of the mechanisms available to support survivors and combat sexual violence. Underreporting, linked to social stigma and/or lack of access to survivor care

services, means that limited reliable information is available on sexual and gender-based violence trends and patterns in the areas of return. Nevertheless, given the very precarious socio-economic conditions in return areas and evident protection challenges, risks of GBV exposure for women and girls must be mitigated.

Between January and June 2020, 214 SGBV cases were identified by protection mechanisms implemented at the Voluntary Repatriation Transit Centres and by the protection monitoring system in place at the return areas. Those cases were immediately referred/responded to through the established case management systems and local referral pathways.

The lack of a standardized GBV case management system, which would guarantee a safe and ethically sound collection of information, as well as the confidential management of the collected data, poses difficulties to capturing reliable information on survivors' legal access to law enforcement agencies. Past evaluations have indicated that women and girls may not feel comfortable or safe in some public spaces. At the same time, rape was mentioned during 2019 focus group discussions by a number of female participants as a primary source of fear. In addition, there have been reports of cases of sexual exploitation and abuse as well as intimidation of survivors by perpetrators of sexual violence, including through threats of retaliation.

On the same note, the analysis of the responses given by the interviewees reveals a high trend of domestic violence (sexual violence, as well as other types of violence linked to domestic abuse etc.) with a significant increase in cases in the context of movement restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, which requires reinforced awareness sessions with the entire returnee community. Group discussions around certain themes related to child protection, gender equality and violence against women and girls must be intensified and specific training on safe identification and referrals should be delivered to social workers, humanitarian staff and members of the local community.

Women and girls have also indicated not being promptly and properly counseled at the clinics and health facilities on their rights and on how to submit a criminal complaint against perpetrators, which reflects a critical gap in awareness and knowledge of legal redress mechanisms. This needs to be urgently addressed to mitigate the protection risks to which these women and girls may be exposed.

Moreover, returnee women reported that they are frequently abandoned by their legal husbands or the de-facto male partners upon return to Burundi. This scenario exposes returnee women to denial of resources, destitution and economic hardship, in addition to other protection risks.

According to the protection assessments concluded by UNHCR, women often lose their marital status in the country of origin or in the country of asylum. Cases where a man and a woman lived together without a legal certificate, which is illegal in Burundi, were also identified. These scenarios can impede their formal reintegration and leave spouses and children without any income, emotional or economic support. There is a need to support the authorities in addressing such cases, by means of regularizing their marital status, with the primary objective of protecting vulnerable women and their families.

Positive measures that have been taken by the Government of Burundi testify to its willingness and ability to adopt a national strategy to fight against, mitigate and prevent GBV. To this end, it is noteworthy that Burundi has elaborated a National Plan of Action to implement the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) Resolution 1325⁶, in addition to the adoption of a criminal code that integrates prevention, survivors' assistance and the punishment of GBV perpetrators. The code was further reinforced through the adoption of GBV legislation in October 2016.

⁶ UNSC Resolution 1325 available at <https://www.un.org/womenwatch/osagi/wps/>

Moreover, gender focal points have been trained and established within the judiciary and in all ministries, including those of national defense and public security, and a Specialized Police Unit for GBV cases in different provinces will soon be piloted. However, a gap persists with regard to the returnees' awareness about the relevant national laws, national referral pathways, legal procedures and systems.

Housing, land and property (HLP) and shelter for returnees

The state of being landless with no tenancy rights reduces refugee returnees' reintegration prospects. According to protection monitoring data, 37.5 per cent of returnees do not have access to the homes they owned prior to exile and 26 per cent did not have any proper housing before fleeing the country. This means that 63 per cent of returnees do not have access to adequate housing upon return. A substantial number of the returnees live in shared houses with the local communities (21.5 per cent), which increases the risk of social conflict, as well as exposure to sexual and other types of violence and exploitation. Access to housing remains one of the main challenges preventing effective reintegration. Households that have access to land (82%) report not having enough resources to develop and live on this land (90 per cent of households declare agriculture is the main source of income).

Protection monitoring in the predominant areas of return has shown that an overwhelming majority of refugee returnees found their property (land, housing etc.) either occupied, destroyed or no longer in a habitable condition. These reports have also shown that a large segment of the returnees was compelled to reside with family or friends upon their return in exchange for shelter or/ work. In 2020, 63 per cent of returnees reported living in temporary homes upon arrival. Most of the temporary shelters are observed to be in very poor condition (71 per cent), 27 per cent are in relatively good/medium conditions and only 2 per cent are categorised as being in good condition. In this context, returnees have neither the time nor the means to regain or farm their own land. Temporary shelters create additional protection risks as more roofing maintenance is required and returnees, often women and girls, walk long distances to find roofing materials to rehabilitate these structures, further adding to the risk of GBV.

Returnees with specific protection needs (especially older persons and children) who are identified at reception and transferred to return areas face problems with regard to access to shelter, land for cultivation and livelihoods. Moreover, in the absence of a special national programme to assist older refugee returnees, they fall within the category of people most at risk of becoming homeless. UNHCR protection monitoring findings have revealed the existence of conflicts between "returnees" and "residents" over land expropriation or occupation. Such disputes are referred to the local authorities and the local courts systems in the return areas, and experience has shown that generally the authorities support returnees to regain their land. However, women still experience difficulties in the face of "customary law", which discriminates against them by excluding them from family succession. In some cases, legal aid intervenes to decide in favor of the women, but most women indicated that they are now aware of their rights but do not know how to claim them.

Education

The main risks are the high rate of school drop-outs; 52 per cent of returnee children do not attend school. Reintegration interventions such as establishment of clubs to enhance integration into local communities, support to attend school, or accelerated learning programmes particularly for children who have missed a substantial amount of schooling are very limited. In particular, those aged 15-17 years face greater challenges in integrating into the national education systems in formal high schools or institutions for vocational training, which often results in children abandoning their education and homes, and traveling to other regions or neighbouring countries in search of better opportunities.

Lack of school supplies, compounded by insufficient classrooms, was highlighted as a major problem by refugee returnees in their areas of return. Returnee children reported that they found it particularly difficult to

join in the middle of the academic school year, which starts in September. Returnee children often 1) have been out of school for long periods of time and return to Burundi after the academic year has commenced, 2) have insufficient French language skills to be reintegrated in the formal education system, and 3) are often required to contribute to the family's livelihoods and are therefore not enrolled or able to attend school.

In addition, inter agency needs assessments conducted in June 2020 highlighted key challenges on the individual and community levels with reference to access to education. Teachers note that many children need special remedial courses in French before they can attain the level required to resume their studies effectively in Burundi. The children who did their entire prior schooling in English in Tanzania were adversely impacted. The intervention of the Ministry of Education, in addition to UNICEF support, is pivotal to overcome these important challenges to reintegration. Some schools have also expressed difficulty in assessing the equivalency or proficiency attained by refugee returnee pupils during their period of exile.



Health

While most refugee returnees have reported access to health services, in some communes of return this access is constrained by a lack of medical personnel and long distances that returnees must travel in order to reach the nearest health centre. Access to health care services is rendered at a cost for returnees and the previous social safety net for the most economically impoverished households is no longer in existence.

The Ministry of Health introduced the Medical Insurance Card (CAM), to allow all Burundian citizens without insurance to have access to health care. The card costs 5000 FBU (2.67 USD) and covers the card holder and his/her dependants under the age of 18. The card is supposed to give access to medical consultations and basic healthcare to returnees at public health institutions. However, the CAM does not provide

comprehensive healthcare coverage to the medical needs of returnees, considering that health facilities are generally far from the areas of return. Many returnees do not have the financial means to buy the card. 92 per cent of households among those that do not have access to health services, responded that the reason was lack of financial resources.

Food Security & Nutrition

In addition to the fragile political environment and related challenges, the economic context is marked by widespread poverty. The Burundian economy is agriculture-based, consisting mainly of subsistence agriculture. Food insecurity, especially in rural areas where returnees are hosted, is on the rise, with most children suffering malnutrition.

WFP's Post Distribution Monitoring, combined with UNHCR returnee monitoring, has shown that the assistance provided to each household, by way of three months rations as part of the refugee returnee kit, has proven to be insufficient. The rations are often shared with family and friends in communities of return, rapidly depleted and often do not last for the intended period of three months.

57 per cent of returnees reported that they consume only one meal per day, while 82 per cent of households declared that they are not satisfied with their level of food security because of the low dietary diversity.

According to WFP, Burundi has the highest hunger score in the world and is the 9th food security crisis in the world. This is compounded by the fact that 50 per cent of the Burundian population are facing chronic food insecurity and need immediate assistance. The presence of returnees in provinces already affected by food insecurity puts additional pressure on available resources. Unless interventions are implemented to promote more sustainable livelihoods and ensure community cohesion, there is a likelihood of increasing tension between the returnee and resident communities. The shrinking economy, compounded by worsening unemployment of youth (65 per cent in 2020) and cuts in basic services are further affecting the self-reliance of the most vulnerable households in the six targeted provinces (Kirundo, Muyinga, Ruyigi, Makamba, Cankuzo and Rutana).

Consequently, there is a need to consider the provision of targeted assistance beyond the three-months food assistance, especially for refugee returnees who have limited or no access to land or arrive in the agricultural off-season. Additional livelihoods assistance may further contribute to the reintegration of returnees, thus mitigating multiple challenges they face, especially during the lean season.

Livelihoods

While the overall security situation remains relatively calm across Burundi, the socio-economic situation continued to deteriorate, compounded by the COVID-19 pandemic. Most of the State infrastructure within areas of return is inadequate to respond to the basic needs of the host population and the returnees. Therefore, meaningful activities to facilitate the returnees' reintegration, to strengthen the resilience of both the returnees and their host communities, as well as to support social cohesion is paramount to ensure the sustainability of return and reintegration.

Refugee returnee households are often compelled to monetize their food rations to address unmet needs, such as shelter, and other expenses linked to health, education and day-to-day survival. A main gap is the need of agricultural inputs and training, such as high-quality seeds, restored soils, fertilizers, insecticides,

pesticides, water, tools, irrigation systems and good practices learning, to resume agricultural activities and to start the production of food for families' consumption needs and for the market.

The limited access to land weakens the returnee households' income generation. There is a need of diversifying sources of income for those households who are depending on subsistence agriculture productions for survival. A sound market analysis is required before launching income generation activities which constitute a sustainable means to a living. Taking into account that the provinces of return provide limited opportunities to engage in economic activities outside the agriculture sector, the needs focus on the lack of opportunity of provision of cash assistance and community based labour intensive programmes and/or cash-for-work schemes, opportunities to establish IGAs, including through access infrastructures, renewable energy, financial resources, vocational training and skills development.

Agricultural production remains extremely low due to different constraints and challenges including the progressive fragmentation of farms resulting from high demographic growth and vulnerability to climate change as agriculture is highly dependent on rainfall and on traditional farming methods with no or little investments. In 2020, the population suffered from an unfavourable rainfall, particularly in the northern and eastern provinces of the country, which are among the main areas of return. Heads of households have shown an eagerness to work to meet their level of food security; however, they lack the financial means to purchase tools, hire a farm labour, and make the necessary investments to face climatic hazards and infestations. The rural population should be prioritized for humanitarian assistance in the form of seeds and food during lean periods.

WASH

Water access is available in almost the whole country: 93 per cent of households have access to water for domestic use. Nevertheless, returnees raised challenges relating to lack of technical maintenance of the water supply (such as the faucets, developed sources of water) and the climatic hazards mainly during the rainy season; the floods and violent currents of water destroy the structure of public water provision from the communal. Poor sanitation in areas of return is also a significant challenge, especially in areas at higher risk of water borne diseases including cholera.

Using a GBV mainstreaming perspective to identify potential protection risks experienced by the community, a focus group discussion carried out in 2019 indicated that women and girls who are responsible within their households to procure water, faced security risks while walking long distances. Sexual violence was named by most participants as a primary source of fear due to their exposure to opportunistic attacks while waiting in line to collect water at the communal taps.

Strategy and Planned Response

Overall strategy

The 2021 Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan is an integrated inter-agency response plan with both humanitarian and development-oriented components, designed to ensure the voluntary, safe and dignified repatriation of Burundian returnees and to promote their resilience and sustainable reintegration. The JRRRP considers internal strategies elaborated by JRRRP partners to respond to repatriation and reintegration needs and has aligned its activities accordingly. The Plan operationalises both the UN-Wide Resilience Framework for Burundi and the 'New Way of Working', bridging the humanitarian-development-peace divide.

Based on international principles and standards governing the voluntary repatriation of refugees, the JRRRP aims to mobilize support for voluntary repatriation, through the exercise of free and informed choices, and for sustainable returns and reintegration, which is the primary responsibility of the country of origin with the support of the international community.

This plan aims to ensure a coherent and coordinated response to the needs of returning refugees and communities in areas of return, by humanitarian and development actors, in collaboration with the Burundian authorities. Humanitarian actors will implement their responses with due consideration to the objective of long-term resilience and in alignment with the development response. In collaboration with the authorities, humanitarian and development actors will work together in meeting the following needs, with a particular focus on women, children, young and marginalized people:

- Ensuring a dignified and efficient reception of refugee returnees, including registration, profiling, support at the border and the transit centres, transport, as well as the provision of immediate assistance for the most vulnerable.
- Creating a safe environment and ensuring access to essential services, including food, safe and adequate shelter, water and sanitation, health and nutrition, education, protection, critical infrastructure, income-generating activities and self-reliance opportunities. This includes supporting service provision in the communities of return.
- Promoting durable solutions for displacement-affected populations, including IDPs, in the areas of return.
- Supporting and reinforcing existing social capital assets that can facilitate mediation and conflict resolution efforts for the peaceful coexistence of communities.
- Strengthening the Rule of Law and creating conducive conditions for safe access to justice and administrative and legal support services, with a specific focus on birth registration of children born in displacement.
- Responding to the specific needs of children and adolescent girls and boys, including their participation in community initiatives for peacebuilding and social cohesion.

The framework of the strategy is articulated around sets of specific objectives for voluntary repatriation and reintegration. The core components of the **repatriation** are physical, legal and material safety, in addition to national reconciliation⁷ between the returnees and the host communities. The JRRRP achieves these aspects through the following objectives:

- Protection
 - Ensure repatriation is carried out voluntarily and in full respect to the safety and dignity of the refugee returnees
 - Improve border monitoring
- Food Security
 - Ensure refugee returnees receive appropriate assistance at arrival and for the first three months
- Shelter and NFIs
 - Ensure refugee returnees receive appropriate assistance at arrival and for the first three months

Reintegration is a process that should result in equal legal rights and opportunities for returnees and their compatriots and allow for the equal access of returnees to social services and productive assets, such as land and economic opportunities. Besides, the host communities can benefit greatly from returnees, as they bring new skills, resources, higher standards of education, health and gender equality, which they may have

⁷ UNHCR, *Handbook for Repatriation and Reintegration Activities*, Geneva, May 2004, p.37

acquired in the asylum countries.⁸ The JRRRP considers the challenges to preserve refugees' gains made in exile and therefore approaches reintegration as a transformative process underpinning the overall development of Burundi. The reintegration objectives intend to:

- **Protection**
 - Ensure population in target areas has access to justice and legal support
 - Strengthen the existing referral pathways for GBV with the aim of ensuring the full enjoyment of rights, reduction of risks and reinforced multi-sectoral response
 - Provide children with adequate child protection services, including documentation, support to children and young people's groups and networks, and family reunification
 - Reinforce social cohesion, peaceful cohabitation, gender and human rights relations, and participatory community development
 - Community outreach: continued identification and assessment of the needs of vulnerable population, understanding community perception of vulnerability
- **Housing, Land and Property (HLP)**
 - Ensure vulnerable populations have dignified shelters and access to land
- **Education**
 - Ensure access to quality education: accelerated learning programmes, informal education such as learning through agricultural or craft activities which may be organized by adolescents themselves or community-based organizations, others arrangements that enable the transition of out-of-school children into mainstream education.
- **Health & Nutrition:**
 - Improve access to quality health and nutrition services
 - Support COVID-19 prevention and response capacity
- **Livelihoods and skills development**
 - Facilitate access to farming lands
 - Carry out a rigorous market analysis when income-generation is attempted
 - Organize vocational training / Life skills training
 - Build agriculture skills and assets to improve food security
 - Strengthen household alternative livelihood strategies to support household self-reliance
 - Develop and implement individual and group reintegration strategies for all settings
- **WASH**
 - Ensure the population of concern has access to clean and potable water and adequate sanitation facilities

Planned Response

The overarching objective of the JRRRP in 2021 and its budgetary requirements is to uphold the exercise of the right of return for all Burundian refugees and further their effective socio-economic reintegration and their access to basic services without facing any discrimination and in a protective environment. The planned response for 2021 will be anchored in targeted reintegration activities to be carried out in the areas of highest return, through a protection and gender mainstreaming perspective. It is essential to establish stronger links with key actors within the economic reintegration sector such as the ILO and certain ministries (Finance, Labour), the private sector, the World Bank, UNDP and other UN agencies.

Following an evaluation conducted by UNHCR in 2020, the current amount of cash given per adult and child refugee returnee is deemed insufficient given the reintegration needs. To the extent possible, certain components of the refugee returnee kit, including basic household items, could be monetized, subject to a

⁸ Ibid, p.38

positive assessment of the local market. Interventions will be undertaken in two realms: Return package for the first three months upon return, and a longer-term resilience community-based support focusing on the following key areas:

Repatriation - Immediate intervention to address humanitarian needs

The immediate needs upon return (first three months package) are also reflected in and consistent with the Burundi 2021 Humanitarian Response Plan. Under the lead of UNHCR, all actors will contribute to the rehabilitation of transit centres, including the construction of a new transit facility to increase reception capacity. JRRRP partners in charge of logistics will provide refugee returnees with secondary transport from transit centres to their respective areas of origin to ensure that they reach their home area safely. A refugee returnee kit will be provided to each household, which includes three months ration, a cash grant and Non-Food Items (NFIs).

In 2020, UNHCR increased the cash grant from 75\$ to 150\$ per adult; and from 35\$ to 75\$ per child distributed via mobile cash technology. Despite the increase, the return package does not meet the returnees' needs for 3 months.

Where needed, refugee returnees and their families will be supported to access the necessary civil documentation that may have been destroyed or lost during the flight or when in exile. Partners will undertake protection monitoring for refugee returns, identifying vulnerable returnees and providing relevant protection support and referrals for vulnerable children, GBV survivors, persons with disabilities and other returnees with specific protection needs.

COVID-19 Prevention Measures during Voluntary Repatriation

UNHCR, together with the concerned governments and partners adopted a range of COVID-19 prevention measures to protect the returnees as well as UNHCR and partners' staff and to mitigate against the spread of the virus during voluntary repatriation activities. These measures include, inter alia, the following:

- In the country of asylum: Pre-departure medical screenings and awareness campaigns are conducted and include COVID-19 symptom checks (temperature and other symptoms) for three consecutive days prior to departure, rapid tests and physical distancing measures.
- Upon arrival in Burundi: Systematic hand washing, and temperature screening is conducted by health personnel of the National Institute of Public Health present at the borders. Mandatory temperature checks, washing stations, crowd control and physical distancing measures have been established at the border entry points. In addition, UNHCR Burundi has created isolation units within each of its transit centres, installed handwashing stations, stipulated the use of masks, gloves (mainly used by the receiving staff), hand sanitizer and physical distancing measures.
- UNHCR is supporting the Government of Burundi to decentralize the COVID-19 testing and response. All Burundian returnees are subjected to a COVID-19 rapid test, and those who test positive are placed in isolation, following which a second COVID-19 test using PCR GenExpert technology is carried out. Those who test positive are transferred to the designated national hospital for treatment and follow-up, while those who test negative are transported to their return locations.
- UNHCR is also supporting the MoH in return areas conducting COVID-19 community surveillance; when there is an alert from the community monitors, the health district alerts the MoH and with UNHCR support a rapid intervention team is deployed to the affected area to assist the suspected case, also in addition to conducting a tracing of active contact cases.



Repatriation Activities

PROTECTION					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
OBJECTIVE: Ensure repatriation is carried out respecting the safety and dignity of the refugee returnees					
1	Reception of refugee returnees in transit centers	DRC, UNHCR	142,890 refugee returnees	Bujumbura Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Ruyigi Kirundo	1,517,740
2	Secondary transportation	UNHCR			
3	Documentation and verification	UNHCR			
4	Immediate assistance to vulnerable people	DRC, IRC, WELTHUNGER HILFE.			
5	Return Protection Monitoring	DRC, UNHCR			

OBJECTIVE: Improve border monitoring					
1	Border Monitoring	UNHCR, WELTHUNGER HILFE	142,890 refugee returnees	Makamba Kirundo Muyinga Ngozi Ruyigi	1,597,005
Protection Total					3,114,745
CASH BASED INTERVENTION					
1	Cash transfer via provided telephone	UNHCR	142,890 refugee returnees, 42,867 host community	Bujumbura Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Kirundo	19,668,434
CBI Total					19,668,434
FOOD SECURITY					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
OBJECTIVE: Ensure refugee returnees receive appropriate assistance at arrival and for the first three months					
1	Food assistance for three months	WELTHUNGER HILFE, WFP	142,890 refugee returnees	Bujumbura Muyinga Ngozi Ruyigi Kirundo	8,383,758
Food Security Total					8,383,758
SHELTER AND NFIs					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
OBJECTIVE: Ensure refugee returnees receive appropriate assistance at arrival and for the first three months					
1	Provision of protection package (NFI and cash support for three months)	WELTHUNGER HILFE, Help a Child, UNHCR	142,890 refugee returnees	Bujumbura Cibitoke Makamba Muyinga Rutana Kirundo Ngozi Ruyigi	5,069,112
Shelter and NFIs Total					5,069,112
REPATRIATION TOTAL					36,236,049

Reintegration - Resilience and Development

Conditions in the areas of return remain extremely challenging and poverty is widespread (34 per cent of returnees declared being unsatisfied with the level of reintegration). The Reintegration programme for

Burundians is not only a “return”, but a process of working with an emerging society to strengthen and support its capacity to create a protective environment, to work with beneficiaries themselves to ensure they develop to their full potential, and to prevent further violations and abuse. JRRRP partners will undertake activities to ensure the dignified and safe reintegration of refugee returnees, in addition to promoting lasting socio-economic solutions, and short- and long-term livelihoods opportunities in communities to which they return.

An integral part of ensuring the sustainability of returns is to enhance local protection mechanisms and promote social cohesion. Relevant problems faced by returnees include harmful traditional practices, domestic violence, public violence, child neglect and criminal behaviour, neglect of persons with specific needs, and exclusion or discrimination based on gender, ethnicity and other grounds. It is vital to examine critically the life and coping mechanisms in communities of return, recognizing that they are offering support and assistance, but could potentially also generate threats and harm.

The JRRRP supports a whole of government approach. As such, for the reintegration activities, JRRRP partners will collaborate closely with communal-level, provincial and national authorities and relevant line ministries of health, education, social welfare and human rights and others. A key role is foreseen for the General Directorate responsible for the Repatriation, Reintegration and Reinstallation of returnees and war displaced persons (DGRRR), which reports to the Ministry of the Interior, Patriotic Training and Local Development. The JRRRP will coordinate all reintegration activities with the DGRRR. JRRRP partners will endeavour to ensure that the capacities of national and local stakeholders are recognized, reinforced and mobilized in support of the reintegration process. Linking durable reintegration with existing national and local planning processes and interventions is essential for sustainability. Where relevant and feasible, the interventions will be linked to the Local and Sub-national Development Plans, Sectoral Investment Plans and others. JRRRP partners will continue their efforts to this effect beyond the specific reintegration activities outlined within the scope of the 2021 JRRRP.

A core objective of the JRRRP is to assist displacement-affected communities by strengthening their absorption capacity, collective resilience, and boosting socio-economic recovery and development to ensure that the reintegration support can be durable and beneficial for the entire population. Reintegration activities seek to strengthen social networks and build resilience capacities, asset accumulation and risk mitigation. A corollary objective is to reduce tensions between host community members, refugee returnees and other vulnerable populations, such as IDPs, where already scarce resources are further stretched by subsequent arrivals. To achieve this, the JRRRP adopts an area-based approach whereby assistance is provided to communities based on their needs.

Effective and accountable humanitarian and development responses require: (i) continuous and meaningful engagement with persons of concern; (ii) understanding their needs and protection risks; (iii) building on their capacities; and (iv) pursuing protection, assistance, and solutions that consider their perspectives and priorities. In this scenario, the importance of providing support to individuals, households and groups of people with specific needs is recognized. The empowerment of women and the promotion of gender equality will consequently be central to the participatory and community-based approaches. By mainstreaming the inclusion of women and girls in decision-making processes, quickly identifying harmful coping mechanisms and working to mitigate risks, prevent and respond to sexual and gender-based violence (GBV), the reintegration process can be sustainable and equitable.

In addition, equitable treatment will be afforded to returning refugees to promote the reintegration process. The reintegration activities will not differentiate between “assisted” and “spontaneous” returnees.

The JRRRP puts communities and population of concern in the lead and gives them ownership of the process of identifying and prioritizing the needs and areas of support. Local and sub-national authorities should also

be in the lead in the coordination. At the centre of the reintegration approach will be the role of local and regional partners (including the local authorities, CSOs, CBOs, private sector etc) in leading the planning, coordination and monitoring, accompanied by the JRRRP partners, to ensure adequate governance and service delivery for the population in the localities under their administrations. This is done by promoting inclusive and participatory processes of engagement and oversight that include affected communities, representing refugee returnees, IDPs, and host communities. This will be the basis of an inclusive participatory process of engagement and planning as well as oversight at the local level, which will facilitate the implementation of the national and local level development plans. As such, a key principle of the JRRRP is support to the local authorities and communities to engage in the preparation of the planning, implementation, monitoring and oversight, specifically to ensure the implementation of a durable reintegration approach in the areas of return.

Reintegration Planned Response

Protection activities will include reinforcing the capacity and accountability of justice actors and enhancing access to legal aid by refugee returnees. This will include strengthening the paralegals network to facilitate access to legal and administrative services, addressing issues of social taboos and stigmatisation returnees may often face back home, supporting existing community participation mechanisms and training of justice actors, police and other law enforcement officials.

Child protection will be enhanced through community monitoring mechanisms, family reunification and alternative care arrangements for unaccompanied and separated children, reintegration support for vulnerable children and monitoring and reporting on violations against children. In addition, efforts will be made to enhance the timely issuance of birth certificates and other legal documents.



Existing referral pathways for SGBV will be strengthened with priority given to the most affected provinces according to the protection evaluations upon return (vulnerability assessments conducted in June 2020). JRRRP partners will strengthen the quality, inclusiveness and accessibility of services for survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and violence against women and girls (VAWG), as well as undertake prevention activities, communal campaigns and risk mitigation assessments.

Resilience interventions that seek to ensure both returning and host communities' full enjoyment of rights with a view to reinforcing local integration and peaceful coexistence will also be implemented, primarily in the form of support to livelihoods and other long-term development activities at community level.

Peace-building activities within the most affected communities, focusing on schools and prioritizing the creation of protective environments for children and youth, will also be carried out. Projects of community stabilization will be promoted in the provinces of major returns in order to reinforce social cohesion through initiatives of peaceful management (community dialogues, socio-cultural activities and awareness-raising campaigns on human rights, access to public services etc).

Housing, Land and property. A major challenge and impediment to reintegration, as confirmed by the returnee protection monitoring, relates to returnees' securing adequate housing and land resources. JRRRP partners will provide dignified shelter and housing assistance. This will be achieved through the provision of rent assistance or shelter kits. Activities will also include support to legal aid, as well as community dialogue and negotiation processes, to determine land and property ownership and obtain documentation.

Education. To ensure all children, either returnees or from host communities, have access to quality education, JRRRP partners will collaborate with the Ministry of Education to address existing and anticipated challenges. This will be done through the physical upgrading of school facilities and provision of school materials. To promote enrolment and address child malnutrition, school feeding programs will be supported – complementing activities implemented under the health and nutrition response. To ensure the reintegration of refugee returnee children into primary, secondary and tertiary education catch up sessions will be offered and learning programs will be established for out of school children.

Health and nutrition interventions will focus on the needs of both refugee returnees and the host communities. JRRRP partners will provide health and nutrition support in areas of return, including immunisation and screening, nutrition education campaigns, expansion of malnutrition treatment programmes and Blanket Supplementary Feeding for children under two years old, pregnant women and lactating mothers for undernutrition prevention for up to 600,000 individuals. In addition, targeted interventions will be made to enhance COVID prevention and response capacity in the return areas.

Livelihoods programming is key to reintegration and resilience building and will target both returnees and host communities. Agriculture being the predominant livelihoods activity in the areas of return, support will be provided to strengthen agricultural livelihoods. This will be done through provision of agriculture tools and inputs and targeted investments in productive infrastructures. Moreover, off-farm income generation will be supported through promoting value addition and other agriculture related income generating activities. Support will also encompass capacity building interventions for small holder farmers in production, post-harvest handling, and marketing, and support to government and community efforts to promote the sustainable use of natural resources, including soil and erosion management.

Considering population pressure and limitations on available agriculture land in rural Burundi, JRRRP partners will also support alternative livelihoods to promote self-reliance and improve household resilience. Women and youth will receive particular attention. Activities will include Quick Impact Projects (QIPs) and

community-based labour-intensive programs or cash-for-work schemes. Selected households of returnees and host communities will be supporting in establishing income generating activities (IGAs) through building skills and knowledge and facilitating access to financial resources.⁹ Particularly vulnerable household will be identified through community self-selection processes and targeted for direct cash assistance. Short-term 'safety-net' oriented livelihoods stabilization activities will be provided in alignment with broader social protection schemes and policies that exist at the national level.¹⁰ Options for 'green' and climate resilient livelihoods will be explored and implemented.

WASH. Efforts will be made to ensure people in return areas have access to clean and potable water and adequate sanitation facilities. This activity is particularly pertinent to support broader health and WASH interventions in the context of the ongoing COVID pandemic.

Reintegration Activities

PROTECTION					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
Objective: Ensure population in target areas has access to justice and legal support					
1	Reinforce the capacity, accountability and knowledge of justice actors	UNDP	147,490 returnees 47,395 host community	Bujumbura Cankuzo Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Rutana Ruyigi	2,928,219
2	Ensure availability of lawyers, legal aid support and paralegal systems	IRC, UNDP, UNHCR			
OBJECTIVE: Provide children with adequate child protection services, including documentation and family reunification					
1	Provision of birth certificates and other legal documents	IRC, UNICEF	177,890 returnees 67,867 host community	Bujumbura Cankuzo Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Rutana Ruyigi	1,361,219
2	Provision of adequate child protection services, including family reunification	IRC, UNICEF, UNHCR			
OBJECTIVE: Reinforce social cohesion, peaceful cohabitation, gender and human rights relations, and participatory community development					
1	Support to community dialogues to peace and social cohesion	WELTHUNGER HILFE, IOM, Help a Child, JRS, UNICEF, UNDP	186,000 returnees 258,979 host community	Cankuzo Kirundo Makamba Muyinga	7,858,000

⁹ This will include an adaptation of the 'Graduation model,' which is a safety-net delivery assistance model initially developed and implemented by the WB (and also implemented jointly with UNHCR in various countries in support of self-reliance of refugee population)

¹⁰ This can also include any COVID-19 related Social Protection policies and interventions.

2	Conduct awareness raising on human rights, access to public services and gender relations, etc.	WELTHUNGER HILFE, IOM, Help a Child, UNICEF, UNDP		Rumonge Rutana Ruyigi	
3	Support to joint community activities and events	WELTHUNGER HILFE, IOM, Help a Child, JRS, UNDP			
OBJECTIVE: Strengthen the existing referral pathways for SGBV with the aim of ensuring their full enjoyment of rights, reduction of risks and reinforced multi-sectoral response					
1	Support to health center and SGBV services including through specialized organization	IOM, IRC, UN Women	256,121 returnees 45,788 host community	Bubanza Bujumbura Bujumbura rural Bururi Cankuzo Cibitoke Gitera Karusi Kayanza Kirundo Makamba Muramvya Muyinga Mwaro Ngozi Rumonge Rutana Ruyigi	2,719,317
2	Distribution of dignity kits	IRC, UN Women, UNFPA, UNHCR			
3	Conduct raising awareness, prevention campaigns and training on SGBV	IRC, UN Women, UNHCR			
Protection Total					14,866,756
EDUCATION					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
Objective: Ensure access to quality education					
1	Construction/rehabilitation of schools and classrooms	WELTHUNGER HILFE, Help a Child, JRS, UNHCR	44,582 school-age returnee children 54,017 host community	Bujumbura Cankuzo Cibitoke Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Rumonge Rutana Ruyigi	12,243,691
2	Provision of training and school materials	Help a Child, JRS, UNICEF, UNHCR			
3	Support school feeding	WELTHUNGER HILFE			
4	Establish learning programs for out of school children	Help a Child, JRS, UNICEF, UNHCR			
Education Total					12,243,691
HEALTH AND NUTRITION					

	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
Objective: Improve access to quality health and nutrition services					
1	Ensure availability of medical staff, supplies and case management	IOM, UNICEF, UNHCR	142,890 returnees 286,867 host community	Bujumbura Cankuzo Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Rumonge Rutana Ruyigi	8,508,579
2	Strengthen surveillance and referral systems	IOM, UNHCR			
3	Ensure screening and follow up of Severe Acute Malnutrition (SAM) and moderate acute malnutrition (MAM)	WELTHUNGER -HILFE			
4	Ensure availability of screening, counselling and treatment of HIV/AIDS	UNHCR			
OBJECTIVE: Support COVID prevention and response capacity					
1	Covid 19 prevention activities	UN Women, UNHCR	142,890 returnees 42,867 host community	Bujumbura Bujumbura rural Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Ruyigi	34,000*
2	Covid 19 isolation and quarantine facilities	UNHCR			
3	Covid 19 testing and treatment activities	UNHCR			
Health and Nutrition Total					8,542,579
HOUSING, LAND AND PROPERTY					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
Objective: Ensure vulnerable populations have dignified shelters and access to land					
1	Provision of emergency shelter	IOM, UNHCR	192,890 returnees, 72,867 host community	Bujumbura Cankuzo Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Rutana Ruyigi	11,283,396
2	Provision of rental support	IOM			
3	Support legal and community processes to determine land and property ownership and obtain documentation	IOM			
Housing, Land and Property Total					11,283,396

LIVELIHOODS AND SKILLS DEVELOPMENT					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
OBJECTIVE: Build agriculture skills and assets to improve food security					
1	Provision of agricultural kits and tools	WELTHUNGER HILFE, FAO, Help a Child	21,380 returnees 17,700 host community	Cankuzo Gitera Karusi Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Rumonge Rutana Ruyigi	7,657,323
2	Investments in productive equipment/infrastructures and/or energy	Help a Child			
3	Strengthening of capacities of smallholder farmers for increased production, post-harvest handling and marketing	WELTHUNGER HILFE, Help a Child, WFP			
4	Sustainable use and management of natural resources, including soil and erosion management	Help a Child, WFP			
5	Support income generation initiatives through value addition and other agriculture related income generating activities	FAO, Help a Child, WFP			
OBJECTIVE: Strengthen household alternative livelihood strategies to support household self-reliance					
1	Support households through Quick Impact Projects	IOM, UNDP, UNHCR	259,890 returnees 245,293 host community	Bujumbura Cankuzo Kirundo Makamba Muyinga Ngozi Rutana Ruyigi	6,637,597
2	Provision of cash assistance	UNDP, UNHCR			
3	Community based labour-intensive programmes and/or cash-for work schemes	IOM, UNDP			
4	Support households to establish IGAs, including through access to financial resources; graduation approach	UNDP, UNHCR			

5	Vocational training and skills development	UNDP, UNHCR			
Livelihoods and Skills Development Total					14,294,920
WASH					
	ACTIVITIES	PARTNERS	TARGET POPULATION	TARGET PROVINCES	FINANCIAL REQUIREMENTS (USD)
Objective: Ensure population of concern has access to clean and potable water and adequate sanitation facilities					
1	Provision of potable water and hygiene promotion	WELTHUNGER HILFE, IOM, IRC, UNICEF, UNHCR	101,000 returnees	Bujumbura Cankuzo Kirundo Makamba	6,880,586
2	Construction and rehabilitation of latrines	IOM, UNHCR	626,000 host community	Muyinga Ngozi Rutana Ruyigi	
WASH Total					6,880,586
REINTEGRATION TOTAL					68,111,929

Partnership and Coordination

During the last tripartite technical working group on the voluntary return of Burundian refugees organized in Kigoma, Tanzania, from 22 to 24 July 2020, it was recommended to create a platform for the coordination of reintegration of the returnees. Responding to the need to harmonize interventions and enhance coordination among the international community, the JRRRP presents a coordinated framework bringing together a wide range of partners, UN agencies and NGOs, to support repatriation as well as reintegration.

The 2021 JRRRP brings together some 20 partners in Burundi and includes Government ministries, UN agencies and NGOs, notably the Ministry of Interior, the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender, the Ministry of Education, the Ministry of Health, the Ministry of Youth, UNHCR, UNDP, UNICEF, UNFPA, FAO, UN Women, WFP, WHO, UNAIDS, IOM, CARE, DRC, IRC, JRS and Welthunger Hilfe. The Director General for Repatriation, Reintegration and Reinstallation of the Ministry of Interior manages the coordination of refugee returns with the support of UNDP (as the lead for reintegration) and UNHCR (as the lead for repatriation) and the other JRRRP partners.

As highlighted in the 'Linking Humanitarian and Resilience Frameworks' section, the 2021 JRRRP is closely linked to existing humanitarian and development plans, including the National Development Plan, the UNDAF, the HRP and the Burundi Regional RRP. The JRRRP seeks to capitalise on existing coordination mechanisms, such as the ECHO-funded DRC coordinated cross-border referral mechanism, and monitoring systems, including the ongoing UNHCR returnee protection monitoring, to ensure an integrated and comprehensive reintegration response.

In addition to existing coordination mechanisms for the voluntary return of Burundians refugees, the Director General for Repatriation, Reintegration and Reinstallation, UNDP and UNHCR in coordination with other stakeholders will revitalize a national coordination mechanism and action plan to promote durable solutions and resilience at community level. The JRRRP will be an integral part of these national efforts and constitutes the international community's coordinated support framework.

The integrated nature of the Plan and the complexities of the proposed actions require a strong coordination mechanism. Partners engaged in the same sectors are expected to develop joint programming and planning, coordinate activities within the same sectors and eventually – though not mandatory - develop joint programmes.

2021 Financial Requirements Summary

By Agency and Type

Agency* **	Repatriation Requirements	Reintegration Requirements	Grand Total
FAO		3,200,000	3,200,000
Help a Child	400,000	690,000	1,090,000
IOM		25,500,000	25,500,000
UN Women		234,598	234,598
UNFPA		214,500	214,500
UNICEF		3,645,000	3,645,000
UNDP		3,899,000	3,899,000
WFP	8,383,758	4,317,323	12,701,081
UNHCR	27,452,291	15,471,508	42,923,800
IRC		540,000	540,000
JRS		10,400,000	10,400,000
Grand Total	36,236,049	68,111,929	104,347,979

*Financial requirements from Welthungerhilfe were unavailable at the time of publishing.

**DRC is not reflected in the financial requirement table as they are working under a partnership agreement with UNHCR.

By Sector and Type

Sector	Repatriation	Reintegration	Grand Total
Education		12,243,691	12,243,691
Food Security	8,383,758		8,383,758
Health & Nutrition		8,542,579	8,542,579
Housing, Land and Property		11,283,396	11,283,396
Livelihoods and skills development		14,294,920	14,294,920
Protection	3,114,745	14,866,756	17,981,501
Shelter and NFIs	5,069,112		5,069,112
WASH		6,880,586	6,880,586
CBI	19,668,434		19,668,434
Grand Total	36,236,049	68,111,929	104,347,979