



## BURUNDI: REFUGEE AND IDP RETURNEES

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*The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 181 countries.*

### In Brief

**CHF 90,525 (USD 70,000 OR EUR 58,000) HAS BEEN ALLOCATED FROM THE FEDERATION'S DISASTER RELIEF EMERGENCY FUND (DREF) TO PREPARE FOR ASSISTING SOME 356,000 BENEFICIARIES<sup>1</sup> FOR 3 MONTHS.**

**UN earmarked funds to repay DREF are encouraged.**

*For further information please contact:*

- **In Burundi:** Anselme Katyunguruza, Secretary General, Burundi Red Cross Society, Bujumbura; email: [croixrougeburundi2000@yahoo.fr](mailto:croixrougeburundi2000@yahoo.fr); Phone + 257.21.62.46; 257.21.88.70/1/2; Fax + 257.21.11.01
- **In Kenya:** Anitta Underlin, Federation Head of East Africa Regional Delegation, Nairobi, email: [anitta.underlin@ifrc.org](mailto:anitta.underlin@ifrc.org); Phone +254.20.283.50.00; Fax +254.20.271.27.77
- **In Geneva:** Amna Al Ahmar, Federation Regional Officer for Eastern Africa, Africa Department.; email: [amna.alahmar@ifrc.org](mailto:amna.alahmar@ifrc.org); Phone +41.22.730.44.27; Fax +41.22.733.03.95

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the [Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organisations \(NGO's\) in Disaster Relief](#) and is committed to the [Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response \(Sphere\)](#) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

For longer-term programmes in this or other countries or regions, please refer to the Federation's Annual Appeal. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for national society profiles, please also access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

### The situation

Since its independence in 1964, Burundi has been faced with social and political instability resulting in population movements, particularly in 1972-1973 and 1993. The inter-ethnic violence in the wake of the assassination of President Melchoir Ndadaye in 1993 resulted in the movement of 9% of the population of Burundi to neighbouring countries (refugees) and 12% inside Burundi (internally displaced persons - IDPs), according to UNOCHA estimates. An armed conflict followed which resulted in 300,000 deaths, the collapse of the economy, and severe disruption of the society as a whole.

<sup>1</sup> *This figure is an estimate, and represents the total refugee, IDP, and other caseload.*

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A series of negotiations between the warring factions led to the signing of the Arusha Peace Accord in August 2000. Subsequently, a ceasefire agreement was signed between the major factions in October 2003, the UN peace-keeping mission was deployed in May 2004, and a power sharing agreement on 17 November 2005.

The general security conditions have improved since 2003, when both refugees and IDPs started returning to their home villages.

In the Kagera and Kigoma refugee camps in Tanzania there are currently an estimated 233,000 Burundi “new caseload” refugees, who fled Burundi in 1993. The “old caseload” of around 198,000 Burundi refugees have been living with friends and relatives in several villages in the Kigoma region since 1972. The Tanzanian Government estimates that there are an additional 200,000 Burundians live in Tanzanian villages situated along the border with Burundi. Most of these refugees came from the rural areas.

Some 53,300 Burundian refugees returned in 2002, 82,400 returned in 2003, and in 2004, a total of 90,300 returns were recorded. In 2005, 35,500 refugees crossed the border back to Burundi (January to August 2005), of which 13,662 (42%) crossed in August alone, the month of the presidential elections.

Approximately half of the returns happened spontaneously. These refugees return on their own, without any support from the international community, to resettle without any means into overcrowded communities without appropriate infrastructure.

**IDPs:** The national IDP survey conducted by the UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in February to May 2005 showed that the total population of IDPs living in protected sites had decreased from 145,034 in mid-2004 to 116,799 people in 2005. The total number of IDP sites also decreased from 170 to 160 during the same period. These overall results confirm the trends of return to zones of origin that had started in early 2004. At present, about 58% of the total IDP population in Burundi is concentrated in the northern and central provinces.

**Internal and cross-border population movements:** In the period between October 2004 and May 2005, waves of population movements took place from the northern to eastern provinces of Burundi and into Rwanda, affecting an estimated 9,000 Burundians, over 7,000 of whom have left for Rwanda.

## **Red Cross and Red Crescent action**

The Burundi Red Cross, assisted by the Federation, will identify strategies which strengthen community infrastructures and community organizations in order to deliver basic services to vulnerable people (local and returnees). This strategy will link humanitarian assistance to the recovery phase. The national society and the Federation will prepare for a possible sudden and massive influx of returnees and to implement vulnerability reduction strategies while strengthening villages’ basic capacities for both local vulnerable people and returnees.

The first phase in this strategy is designed to cope with a sudden and massive influx of returnees into Burundi, and if this happens to be in a position to quickly deploy a team to the field in order to assess the possible impact of this population movement, to recommend strategies and priority interventions, and to develop strategic partnerships inside and outside the Movement.

The field mission will also develop an appeal and plans to fund selected priority interventions. A disaster management delegate will be recruited for three months to strengthen the Burundi Red Cross Society. The delegate will continue to maintain and improve relations within the Movement and with other partners (networking); and will follow up on mission recommendations and start assisting the national society in setting up operations in an appropriate manner.

After three months the disaster management delegate will be replaced by a programme delegate whose recruitment process will start soon. The budget for this operation covers the costs of a team leader, public health, water and sanitation and organizational development positions. The mission will start on 16 January, and will run until 30

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January. A DM delegate will be recruited for three months to strengthen the BRC in order to follow on the mission recommendations and start working on operation set up.

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