Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Children continue to be disproportionately affected by the prolonged instability and election-related violence in Burundi. A flare in violence, around 29 June legislative elections and Burundi’s Independence Day on 1 July led to the increase in the total number of confirmed child deaths, which currently stands at eight.

Migrations across borders have continued, with over 20,000 additional Burundians – mostly women and children - crossing over into neighbouring countries since 30 June. Cholera cases along the southern border has slowed and currently stands at 180, and indication that the epidemic is under control.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

Joint assessment missions conducted in May identified priorities including WASH (cholera prevention and response), food security/ nutrition, and protection. UNICEF continues development of agreements with partners at sectoral level to define and prepare for urgent response.

Key figures

- **180** Confirmed cholera cases in Burundi (Ministry of Health, 14 July)
- **8 children** Killed in protest-related incidents, some by gunfire (UNICEF, 14 July)
- **86 children** Formerly held on protest-related charges released (UNICEF, 14 July)
- **Over 165,000** Burundian refugees neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 14 July)
- **58%** Children under 5 with chronic malnutrition (DHS 2010)

Funding requirement: **USD 4.4M.**

Highlights

- A majority refugees fleeing Burundi to neighboring countries are women and children in urgent need of protection and humanitarian assistance.
- **Child Protection concern continue to increase**, a total of 8 children have died directly as a result of the ongoing violence that erupted in April.
- **Worrying indication of some children access to their basic right to education being constrained.** Twelve students were reported to have been excluded from their secondary school on the grounds of their political affiliation. A mission is currently underway to investigate the reasons for their dismissal.
- A total of 180 cholera cases have been confirmed in Burundi, with only 2 cases in the last 5 days of the reporting period, a positive indicator of preventive and control measure put in place by Unicef and partners.
- Only 23% of UNICEF funding request (USD $1M out of USD 4.4 million) has been received. Timely funding remains critical for UNICEF’s operations.
Humanitarian Strategy

UNICEF’s preparedness and response strategy has focused on support to existing structures, such as management of severe acute malnutrition at community and facility levels, including additional therapeutic feeding. UNICEF has been providing crucial support to cold chains for resumption of EPI services. UNICEF continues to facilitate children and women’s access to potable water and items for improving their personal hygiene.

UNICEF’s Response with Partners

Health & Nutrition
- Since the beginning of the outbreak on 14 May, a total of 180 cholera cases have been reported. The Ministry of Health has revised the number of cholera deaths and is now reporting 5 deaths in total (as of 13 July). The epidemic now seems to be under control, with only 2 new cases in the two Cholera Treatment Centres reported in the last 5 days of the reporting period. UNICEF is providing cholera kits and additional human resources through an agreement with Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA).
- With a view on the medium-term impact of the current socio-political crisis, UNICEF raised awareness among key health partners about the deterioration of the health system. Health partners are now discussing solutions to avoid a collapse of the health system or to develop alternative temporary mechanisms notably to ensure essential drugs for children and women and the functioning of health centres and district hospitals.
- After the community screening of acute malnutrition conducted by UNICEF/Concern Worldwide in Kirundo province (results showed 6% of global acute malnutrition and 1.5% severe acute malnutrition), WFP and MoH are conducting a similar survey in the health district of Nyanza lac which is affected by strong population movements towards Tanzania. UNICEF was able to secure enough ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) for the second semester of 2015.

Education
- UNICEF and UNHCR have discussed the possibility of organizing national 6th grade exam for refugee children in Rwanda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda.
- Twelve students were allegedly excluded from the Cumba school, Muyinga commune, in Muyinga province on the grounds of their political affiliation. The Ombudsman commission is currently on mission in Muyinga to further investigate and follow up on the cases.
- Meanwhile, many children have returned to school in order to finish their school year in accordance with directives of the Ministry of Education.

WASH
- UNICEF visited the faith-based organization in Bujumbura which currently accommodates 140 children in order to assess additional needs linked to the increase of new arrivals with the mounting security issues in the capital. UNICEF has also been in touch with UNFPA to cover the needs of girls and women, particularly for menstrual hygiene management.
- In coordination with 12 other partners, UNICEF led the WASH sectoral assessment in 9 priority provinces for data collection on 6-11 July. The findings will serve to develop an updated sectoral response plan.
- For the cholera cases in Nyanza-Lac, UNICEF held coordination meeting with the three key partners (AHA, CADEVI and RCB), as well as local health officials. Recommendations were provided for further collaboration particularly on cholera prevention in view of the period of endemic cholera in September-October. The WASH pre-positioned stock update and additional supply needs are being communicated regularly between UNICEF and RCB.

Child Protection
- Child-Friendly Spaces have been set up by members of the technical working group on Child-Friendly Spaces and begun operating across Bujumbura Mairie. These will be operational for the upcoming 3-4 months. Training for 60 animators on psychosocial support is being planned in order to adequately address rising needs among children.
- Following meetings of the UNICEF Child Protection team and the General Direction of Penitentiary Affairs on 7 July, 2 of the additional 5 children arrested on protest-related charges have been released. UNICEF partner Terre des Hommes assisted them with the transport back to their families and will ensure the follow up.
In order to ensure the protection of children moving across borders, a meeting was held between the national Child Protection Working Group and the Burundian immigration services (PAFE). This will be followed by a consultation between the PAFE and the Ministry of Solidarity in order to identify and establish appropriate mechanisms regulating the movement of orphans across borders.

**Communications for Development (C4D)**
- First results of the U-report poll on handwashing indicate that non-availability and especially high prices of soap are main barriers to handwashing with soap as a preventive measure in the context of cholera.
- In the province of Nyanza Lac, the official launch of the awareness campaign for the prevention of cholera has been delayed due to security reasons. Nevertheless, first steps introducing the campaign to the local authorities to ensure their buy in have been done. Together, the Governor of the province, health authorities and local administrators have identified the different stakeholders and duty bearers to be involved in the awareness campaign, such as in the areas of education and health.
- 15 of 120 youth peer educators have been identified to raise awareness in their respective communities and some radio spots to support the campaign are under development by a local community.
- 2 youths have become master trainers on the Tippy Tap mechanism for the hand washing which is accessible for the community.

**Supply and Logistics**
- 8,092 cartons of Ready-to-Use Therapeutic Food from Somalia country office have arrived and will be distributed to the 45 sanitary districts of Burundi. Meanwhile, RUTF was also delivered to the Nyanza-Lac area.
- Most trailers were unloaded ahead of election week to ensure no trailers are stacked during that critical period.

**Media and External Communication**
- UNICEF continued to highlight the situation of children in Burundi through social media actions on Twitter and Facebook, with Facebook post reach increasing as much as 30% over previous weeks.
- The external communications team continues to coordinate with the regional office and UNICEF headquarters for the production and publication of human interest stories and multimedia content on the UNICEF global website, the UNICEF intranet and social media channels.
- Several interviews were given by the Communications Specialist to local and overseas media, including South African media interested in regional dynamics.

**FUNDING**
UNICEF **Burundi’s 2015 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal** has been revised to USD 4.4 million, of which USD 1 million received to date. Given recent developments with the possibility of continued deterioration, UNICEF is reviewing its requirements to meet the humanitarian needs of women and children affected by the current political crisis.