Facts & Figures

Over 262,000 Burundian refugees fled to neighbouring countries since April 2015 (UNHCR)

Number of new Burundian refugees in Tanzania since 1st April – 138,440 (UNHCR)

Number of new Burundian refugees in Rwanda since 1st April – 77,678 (UNHCR)

Number of new Burundian refugees in DRC since 1st April – 22,905

Number of new Burundian refugees in Uganda since 1st January – 23,773 (UNHCR)

Number of internally displaced in Burundi – 41,752

Burundi ranks 184th out of 187 in the UN’s Human Development Index

Child mortality: 104/1000 or 12th highest in the world (UNICEF)

EU humanitarian assistance to the Burundi refugee crisis

Since the onset of the crisis in April 2015, €36.2 million was allocated to respond to the most acute needs.

EU development assistance to Burundi under the 11th European Development Fund (EDF, 2014-2020): €432 million

Key messages

- Burundi’s president Pierre Nkurunziza’s bid for a third term in office, announced on 25 April 2015, was met with strong opposition, causing clashes with police and unrest. Controversial elections were held on the 21st of July with several incidents. Mr Nkurunziza was eventually elected for a 3rd term. Since then the situation has been fragile with attacks and killings taking place.

- Up to date, over 262,000 individuals have fled Burundi and sought refuge in neighbouring countries.

- 60% of all refugees are children, and among them, a high level of unaccompanied minors is being reported in all camps hosting refugees from Burundi. Tanzania, Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Uganda, saw the sharpest number of refugee arrivals.

- The European Commission has so far released €36.2 million in humanitarian aid funding since the start of the crisis, mostly to help meet Burundi refugees’ basic needs, support the construction of news camps, and improve living conditions in the overcrowded camps in the hosting countries. Special attention is being given to water and sanitation considering that cholera is endemic in the region, as well as to child protection.
Humanitarian situation and needs

Background
Tumultuous events over the past decades in Burundi have prompted several huge waves of refugees. Mass killings in 1972 led 150 000 people to flee the country. Twenty years later, in 1993, the assassination of Burundi’s president sparked an exodus of half a million people and ignited a civil war that claimed 300 000 lives and lasted 12 years. The internationally brokered Arusha peace accords put an end to the conflict and heralded a period of relative stability, until recently.

Refugee movement started after the announcement on 25th of April that current Burundian President Pierre Nkurunziza would run for a third term. Since election-day (21 July 2015), killings and various human rights abuses continue to be reported. The situation remains fragile and several hundred Burundians refugees continue to arrive in neighbouring countries every week.

Humanitarian needs
Over 262,000 Burundians have fled to neighbouring countries. In all host countries (Tanzania, Rwanda, DRC and Uganda), new camps and/or settlements have been created to host the new refugees. In the two main recipient countries, Tanzania and Rwanda, the sudden influx led to overcrowding and overstretched facilities. Conditions in the transit and reception centres have been dire.

In Tanzania a cholera outbreak claimed the lives of at least 35 people in June 2015, but was successfully contained thanks to immediate action of humanitarian organisations through cholera treatment centres and improved water, sanitation and hygiene.

The Nyarugusu camp, already hosting 64 000 refugees from DRC, was expanded to accommodate the new refugees from Burundi. It has now more than doubled in size, becoming the third single most populous refugee camp in the world. This overcrowding poses serious concerns for health, access to water and sanitation, and the overall protection of refugees. There is a lack of individual shelter available to accommodate the refugees, but also insufficient water provision, education and health facilities. Two new camps in Tanzania have been opened in order to transfer refugees from Nyarugusu and to host the new refugees that keep arriving on a daily basis from Burundi.

In Burundi, 41,752 people have been displaced as a result of the ongoing crisis. About 3.6 million people in Burundi are food insecure and 150,000 children under five suffer from acute malnutrition.(OCHA)

The European Union's Humanitarian Response

The European Commission is closely monitoring the Burundi crisis and has already released €36.2 million in humanitarian funding, mostly to meet the immediate needs of Burundian refugees in the region. Part of the aid is also allocated to respond to the protection and assistance needs of the population within Burundi.

Aid is mainly channeled to address needs in the areas of shelter and food as well as water, sanitation and hygiene to stop the possible surge of diseases and epidemics, notably measles and cholera. The Commission’s operational partners are taking measures to reduce risks of violence and abuse in refugee camps, and provide support and protection to the victims.

Examples of EU funded projects

Tanzania has the highest number of Burundians refugees, with more than 138 400 individuals. OXFAM GB, with funding from the European Commission, has deployed activities in Nyarugusu Camp to provide safe water supply, access to hygiene and sanitation as well as fuel efficient stoves for Burundians refugees. Congestion is burdening the camp, as it already hosted thousands of refugees from DRC.