Burundian refugees

An estimated 325,000 people from Burundi have fled to neighbouring countries, particularly the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda, following election-related violence that began in April 2015. Tanzania hosts the largest number of Burundian refugees at 177,852 people, adding to the pre-existing caseload of 61,663 refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Sixty per cent of the Burundian refugee population in Tanzania is under age 18 and 20 per cent are under age 5. Rwanda is hosting an estimated 81,515 Burundian refugees, of which 47 per cent are children under 18. In addition there are 2,112 unaccompanied or separated children (UASC). While the socio-political situation in Burundi remains tense and unpredictable, cross-border influxes are expected to continue; the Burundian refugee population in the region is projected to exceed 524,000 by the end of 2017. Although governments and partner assistance continues, transit facilities and camps are overcrowded. Children are bearing the brunt of the crisis, with overstretched health and nutrition facilities and water and sanitation shortages increasing the risk of disease outbreaks. Protection concerns such as sexual and gender-based violence are significant. Inadequate numbers of schools and limited education supplies are making it difficult for children to access quality education.

Humanitarian strategy

UNICEF is working closely with governments, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and partners to support immediate life-saving interventions and expand services for the growing populations of children and women in camps and within host communities. UNICEF’s response includes the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services and technical assistance; screening and management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM); the promotion of appropriate infant and young child feeding practices; immunization against measles and polio; and outreach activities for behaviour change. Child protection interventions focus on prevention of and response to violence against children through access to services such as registration of UASC, family tracing and access to child-friendly spaces. In Tanzania, efforts will include strengthening a comprehensive case management system for vulnerable children through the ongoing deployment of social welfare officers. UNICEF will support children to continue to access quality early learning and basic education; provide learning and teaching materials and teacher training; and assist children to prepare for primary school examinations. WASH-in-schools will be strengthened by improving access to sanitation and hand-washing facilities and hygiene education.

Results from 2016

As of 31 October 2016, UNICEF had received US$3.3 million against the US$9 million appeal (37 per cent funded). More than 100,000 refugees in Rwanda and Tanzania gained access to safe water through a combination of boreholes, treated surface water and trucking. To improve hygiene practices, 140,000 refugees in both countries were reached with either buckets and soap or safe hygiene messages or a combination of support. More than 80,000 pupils in Tanzania were supported to access safe water and improved sanitation facilities through schools. Approximately, 886 children under 5 were treated for SAM. In Rwanda, nutrition screening, provision of ready-to-use therapeutic food, monitoring and capacity building of health providers reduced the rate of SAM among refugee children. In addition, routine immunization, essential supplies and preparedness for cholera and typhoid helped to prevent disease outbreaks. More than 46,900 children were immunized against measles and polio in Tanzania. Close to 69,000 refugee children in both countries were enrolled in school and received school supplies. Efforts continue to improve learning materials and teacher capacity. UNICEF supported case management of children with acute protection concerns, including 4,500 UASC, and up to 18,000 refugee children per week attended child-friendly spaces to learn and play. Where possible, funds were reprogrammed to support refugee children’s access to services, particularly with health and education services.

Humanitarian Action for Children

2017 programme targets

Rwanda
- 12,000 children under 5 provided with routine immunization
- 10,000 people provided with access to safe water (7.5-15 litres per person per day)
- 10,000 people provided with appropriate sanitation services
- 50,000 children, including UASC, provided with appropriate care and protection services
- 19,000 school-aged children accessing quality education
- 20,000 children aged 0 to 6 years benefiting from the provision of early childhood development (ECD) services through centre and home-based care
- 400 children under 5 with SAM admitted to therapeutic services

Tanzania
- 54,000 children under 5 received vitamin A supplementation
- 60,000 children under 5 vaccinated against measles and polio
- 50,000 children have adequate WASH facilities in schools and child-friendly spaces
- 50,000 children, including UASC, provided with appropriate care and protection services
- 90,000 school-aged children accessing quality education
- 1,500 children under 5 with SAM admitted to therapeutic services

Total people in need: 432,430
Total children (<18) in need: 244,560
Total people to be reached in 2017: 352,820
Total children to be reached in 2017: 225,450
Children under 5 with SAM admitted to therapeutic feeding programmes

Rwanda 360 307
Tanzania 2,860 579

Children under 5 provided with vitamin A supplementation

Tanzania 55,000 40,445

Who to contact for further information:

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www.unicef.org/appeals/burundian_refugees

UNICEF 2016 targets UNICEF total results

NUTRITION

Children under 5 with SAM admitted to therapeutic feeding programmes

Rwanda 360 307
Tanzania 2,860 579

Children under 5 provided with vitamin A supplementation

Tanzania 55,000 40,445

HEALTH

Children under 5 provided with routine immunization

Rwanda 1,500 4,603

Children vaccinated against measles and polio

Tanzania 12,000 46,915

WATER, SANITATION AND HYGIENE

People reached with safe hygiene messages and promotional activities

Rwanda 60,000 51,419

Refugees provided with safe water (7.5–15 litres per person per day)

Tanzania 60,000 81,564

CHILD PROTECTION

Most vulnerable children, including UASC, provided with case management services

Rwanda 6,000 1,548
Tanzania 4,000 2,971

EDUCATION

School-aged children, including pre-school aged children and adolescents, have access to basic quality education

Rwanda 17,000 19,422
Tanzania 50,000 49,114

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT

Children benefiting from the provision of ECD services through centre and home-based approaches

Rwanda 14,000 5,400

Results are through 31 October 2016 unless noted.

(i) Results are low as the target set was high based on the expected trend of worsening SAM. Cases did not increase and therefore admission was lower than expected.

(ii) (23,142 measles; 23,773 polio)

(iii) Given the additional influx, the water supply network was extended to reach an extra 21,000 refugees in Tanzania, which was made possible by a fully funded WASH response. In addition, chola cases dropped quickly during the influx and funds were diverted to support the expansion of the network.

(iv) For Rwanda, targets were developed based on a projected figure of 200,000 Burundian refugee children to be received in 2016. The actual refugee figure was 81,834, which explains why results were less than planned.

(v) The target of 14,000 was for all children aged 0 to 6 years for both centre-based ECD and home-based ECD. All children, 5,400, aged 3 to 6 years in centre-based ECD. However, the remaining children aged 0 to 6 years (about 8,600) were to begin home-based care, which did not start during the reporting period.

Funding requirements

For 2017, the UNICEF response to the Burundian refugee situation in Rwanda and Tanzania requires US$9.5 million to meet the humanitarian needs of refugee children and women, as well as affected host communities. Requirements are in line with UNICEF inputs to the 2017 inter-agency Regional Refugee Response Plan for Burundi. Without additional funding, UNICEF will not be able to support the national responses in Rwanda and Tanzania to sustain and scale up a multi-sector response to the critical needs of vulnerable refugee children and women from Burundi, including additional influxes expected throughout 2017.

1This includes 114,000 affected people (refugees and host community members) in Rwanda, of which 53,500 are children, and 318,430 affected people (refugees and host community members) in Tanzania, of which 191,060 are children, as per the Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan.

2This includes 114,000 people to be reached (refugees and host community members) in Rwanda and 238,820 people to be reached (refugees and host community members) in Tanzania. Of these, 53,500 are children in Rwanda and 171,950 are children in Tanzania, as per the Regional Refugee Response Plan.

3Democratic Republic of the Congo and Uganda have separate Humanitarian Action for Children appeals, which incorporate the needs of Burundian refugees. This Burundi Refugee Humanitarian Action for Children appeals cover Tanzania and Rwanda. There is also a standalone Burundi Humanitarian Action for Children appeal.


4Ibid.