Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Overall, the political and security situation in Burundi remains volatile, with recurrent attacks taking place in Bujumbura and a general climate of fear in affected areas. This continues to impact the situation of women and children and increase humanitarian needs. The number of displaced people registered has increased to 25,081 in three provinces, Makamba, Kirundo and Rutana (IOM, 29 January 2016). The total number of refugees in neighboring countries has increased to 237,497, of which 54 per cent are children (UNHCR, 29 January 2016).

On 28 December 2015, the end of year radio broadcast from the Presidential Office announced a number of new measures. This includes an “austerity budget“ which was reduced by 18 per cent compared to 2015, with social sectors being particularly hit. The overall budget of the Ministry of Education is reduced by a third, the

Highlights

- In an end of year radio broadcast, the Government announced its austerity budget for 2016, which forecasts significant cuts to the health, education and social affairs sector budgets, suggesting increasing difficulties in providing basic social services for children and women.

- The number of children admitted for severe acute malnutrition in Bujumbura doubled between October and December 2015. UNICEF continues to monitor the nutrition situation of children through the national Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) database, though timely and quality data collection is becoming noticeably difficult.

- Since 9 December, the cumulative number of cholera cases in Nyanza Lac district is 22, with all cases receiving the necessary care and services in the Kabonga Cholera Treatment Center resulting. There have been no new cases since 8 January.

- A 33-member delegation of the United Nations Security Council, led by Angola, France and the United States, paid a visit to Burundi on 21 and 22 January, during which the Council met with the President of Burundi, authorities, civil society, media, parts of the United Nations Country Team, and other key stakeholders.

Key figures

- 25,081 People internally displaced in Makamba, Rutana, Kirundo (IOM, 28 January 2015)

- 237,497 Refugees seeking asylum in neighboring countries (UNHCR, 29 January 2016)

- 1 in 4 Children attending Child-Friendly Spaces who show signs of psychological trauma (UNICEF, 29 January 2016)

- 22/0 Cholera cases/deaths in the district of Nyanza Lac (UNICEF, 29 January 2016)

- 0% funded UNICEF Burundi 2016 HAC: US$16.54m
total budget of the Ministry of Health is cut in half, and budgets of the Ministries relevant for the provision of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) services as well as the Ministry in charge of Human Rights, including child protection, represent less than a third of their 2015 budget.

It should be noted that this new budget reflects the expected suspension of external aid. Foreign resources now represent only 30.2 per cent of the overall budget, compared to 49.5 per cent in the 2015 budget. Particularly for health and education, external aid has been reduced by 87 per cent and 87.9 percent, respectively. These reductions place the gains made for children and women in Burundi over the past years at great risk.

In the same radio broadcast, President Pierre Nkurunziza announced stricter laws and monitoring of NGOs and media, along with changes to ICT (digital) legislation that will increase monitoring of social media.

**Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination**

UNICEF actively participates in the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) and inter-sectoral meetings, which lead strategic and cross-sectoral coordination of the humanitarian response. The UNICEF Representative, as acting Resident Coordinator (RC), closely engaged in the United Nations Security Council (UNSC) mission to Burundi. The 33-member delegation of the UNSC, led by Angola, France and the United States, visited Burundi on 21 and 22 January, and met with the President of Burundi, the UNCT, authorities, civil society, media and other key stakeholders. However, to date, there have been few new developments from the high-profile meetings.

A multisector inter-agency rapid assessment (MIRA), to assess the impact of the crisis on women and children and their access to essential basic services in the city of Bujumbura, is ongoing in the sectors of protection including gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection, health, water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH), markets/livelihoods, shelter and non-food items. Results from the MIRA will support the identification of humanitarian needs and required response in support of the affected populations.

The new RC ad interim, Paolo Lembo, who comes with an extensive humanitarian background, took office on 18 January 2016. Mr. Lembo will cover the RC role for an interim period of eight weeks.

**Humanitarian Strategy**

UNICEF is working with inter-agency partners on an improved overall narrative on the humanitarian situation. In addition, the Central Emergency Response Fund (CERF) strategy was finalized prioritizing under-funded sectors: Food Security, Protection, Health, Nutrition, WASH and Shelter/NFI. UNICEF will submit CERF proposals for the sectors of Protection, WASH, Health and Nutrition for an amount of US$3.125 million.

UNICEF Burundi’s 2016 Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC) was launched in January for US$ 16.54 million to address the most urgent needs of children and women affected by the current crisis (for more details see [http://www.unicef.org/appeals/burundi.html](http://www.unicef.org/appeals/burundi.html)). UNICEF will collaborate with national and international partners to facilitate emergency response and build resilience, particularly among the most vulnerable women and children of Burundi.

**UNICEF’s Response with Partners**

**Health & Nutrition**

UNICEF procured and distributed essential drugs to cover priority needs in the 900 health centers and district hospitals in 46 districts. Discussions are ongoing with partners such as WHO, UNFPA, among others, to fill the gap for 4 months until a solution is found.

Between December 9th 2015 and January 8th 2016, a total of 22 cholera cases (0 deceased) were reported in UNICEF-supported Kabonga Cholera Treatment Center (CTC) in the southern district of Nyanza Lac. No new
cases have been identified since January 8th 2016. UNICEF continues its support to the Ministry of Health (MoH) to improve the reporting of cholera cases using the mobile-based application RapidPro in cholera prone districts, including Nyanza-Lac.

Initial results from UNICEF-led health center monitoring highlighted a lack of motivation among MoH staff at health center level, with many having left their position and not yet replaced. Results also indicate a reduction in women’s use of health services due to perceived lack of essential drugs and therapeutic food. UNICEF’s Communication for Development (C4D), Health and Nutrition teams are working with partners to disseminate radio spots announcing the renewed availability of essential medicines and therapeutic food.

The delivery of therapeutic food (RUTF and therapeutic milk) to 46 districts nationwide is ongoing and will support approximately 9,700 children under 5 for a period of approximately 2 months. However, the joint nutrition supply management and severe acute malnutrition monitoring with the central Medical Warehouse and MoH is becoming difficult due to the lack of staff and funding.

UNICEF is monitoring the nutrition situation of children through the national Community-based Management of Acute Malnutrition (CMAM) database, but timely and quality data collection is becoming very difficult. Recent data shows that severe acute malnutrition may have doubled and in the most violence-affected neighborhoods of Bujumbura Mairie (the capital). The number of admissions of severe acute malnourished children increased from 135 to 268 between October and December, with more than twofold increase in the most affected neighborhoods of Bujumbura.

In 2016, UNICEF in collaboration with NGO partners and Government continues to implement temporary solutions to improve timely nutrition monitoring through sentinel sites or parallel data collection, in collaboration with MoH, while strengthening health centers capacity for weekly SMS reporting via Rapid Pro. Efforts continue to mobilize timely funds to scale-up provincial mass screening and treatment of children under 5 suffering from acute malnutrition in an effort to keep good track of developments in this area.

**Child Protection**

During the reporting period, UNICEF advocacy secured the release of three girls who were arbitrarily arrested and accused of threatening the interior security of the country and belonging to an armed group. The girls were held without legal consul or assistance. A UNICEF partner is providing temporary shelter for the girls and psychosocial support as the family tracing and reintegration process is completed.

UNICEF and partners continue to support the reintegration of 53 children who were charged with involvement in armed groups, along with five children charged with involvement in an insurrectional group who were reintegrated with their families or caretakers on 30 November 2015.

Since the beginning of the crisis in April 2015, violations of grave child rights violations are being closely monitored, while ensuring access to basic services and/or conducting advocacy related to the following cases:

- 22 children killed (19 boys, three girls): Since the beginning of the crisis children have been caught in clashes and exposed to various forms of violence. UNICEF urged all parties to ensure that children are
safe, and advocated with the Government and security forces to strengthen efforts to ensure children’s safety during police operations.

- Two girl survivors of sexual violence: The girls were supported to receive access to health and psychosocial support services.
- Seven children injured: UNICEF monitored cases and provided referrals for those still requiring medical assistance.
- Seven schools occupied in Bujumbura-Mairie: The education and child protection sections are advocating to ensure schools are maintained as zones of peace.
- 106 children detained for “participation in demonstrations” and 111 children detained for “association with armed groups/participation in an insurrectional movement”: In collaboration with the Ombudsman’s office, OHCHR, and other partners, most of the children were released and advocacy continues. UNICEF and partners provided legal support, and helped at least 58 children reintegrate back into their families as well as three children who required temporary shelter before reintegration.

In 2016, UNICEF and partners will scale up activities in Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) and strengthen the monitoring and reporting of programme results. Partners will also benefit from training and capacity building to strengthen prevention, monitoring and response to violations. Training for social workers and medical professionals on gender-based violence (GBV) will increase the capacity to respond adequately to the needs of GBV survivors. Systematic collaboration with the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights (OHCHR), the Ombudsman’s Office and the Independent Human Rights Office of Burundi (CNIDH) will seek to provide more effective advocacy for children. Referrals and response activities will continue, including psychosocial support, legal and medical assistance, and family reunification or temporary placement.

**Education**

To date, the emergency capacity building programme, which aims to strengthen the emergency preparedness and response to the ongoing political and El Niño crisis, has benefitted 129 districts education managers, 50 teachers and headmaster. The emergency unit of the Ministry of Education (MoE) was also supported to conduct regular assessments and monitoring field visits in affected areas to ensure a better appropriation of national authorities and improve their response capacity. In addition, 2,000 teachers were trained on CFS modules on psychosocial support to children suffering from trauma caused by recurrent attacks and increasing insecurity especially in Bujumbura city.

In the memorandum signed by UNICEF and the Ombudsman in June 2015 for the respect of child rights focused on education and protection, a commission with representatives of the Ombudsman office, MoE, teachers syndicates, parents association, and faith-based organizations was set up and is meeting regularly with the financial and technical support of UNICEF.

UNICEF continues to engage in issues related to refugee children in neighboring countries, particularly with access to education. Teaching and learning materials were sent to the host countries to ensure learning continuity for the school-aged children. In most neighboring countries, refugee children are also benefiting from integration into national schools after a few months of language catch up programme. Efforts continue to pursue a dialogue on school exams and certification to facilitate student mobility and school reintegration in the region. The issue of national exams for refugee children has not been solved yet.

In 2016, UNICEF will strengthen its advocacy for schools as zones of peace to provide children with safe and protective learning environments and continuous access to basic education. In addition, Disaster Risk Reduction (DRR) activities, related to the increasing flooding in Burundi, need to be implemented in schools through capacity development of key education and protection actors to mitigate the impact on schools closure and student learning.
In WASH the partnership with the Burundi Red Cross (BRC) remains key to providing timely emergency WASH response to the affected population in floods, displacement and cholera outbreaks situations. Given the cross-border issues, such as displacement of population, particularly with Tanzania, this effective collaboration mitigated the spread of cholera in the South of Burundi. To that effect, Tanzania and Rwanda to support effective behavior change communication for Burundi refugees and hosts communities.

The main challenges in 2016 will be the suspension and withdrawal of donor support to the WASH sector, coupled with the government austerity budget for 2016, which will impact access to WASH services for affected populations. Given the continued movement of populations due to the political crisis and El Nino effects there is increased risk of cholera outbreaks, and additional resources are required to scale up preventive actions, preparedness and response in high risks areas.

Communication for Development (C4D)
C4D continued its efforts to strengthen Cholera response and prevention in high risks areas. Cholera transmission was successfully stopped in the province of Makamba with the combined efforts of UNICEF, partners CADEVI and the Province of the Anglican Church of Burundi (PEAB), which included radio shows, door to door visits, theatre performances, school involvement, church participation and interactive games for children. The cholera outreach and health promotion messages were successfully delivered by 120 youth educators and 116 communal follow up committees. To date, these groups reached more than 29,280 households (162,250 community members) through cholera prevention awareness activities, in addition to reaching 16,250 people through radio broadcasts.

The cholera prevention efforts in Nyanza Lac and Rumonge communes were also successful with the help of Anglican Church. The approach included training 60 agents of change and two local WASH committees leading the fight against cholera. This allowed 10,498 people to be reached with cholera prevention methods in schools, churches, and communities.

As a result of this successful cholera campaign, C4D is now able to shift its focus to awareness-raising activities on six key lifesaving practices in the communes of Kayogoro, Kibago, and Vugizo in Makamba province. Mothers will learn six key lifesaving practices: exclusive breastfeeding for six months, complimentary breastfeeding and nutrition after six months, mosquito net use for children and pregnant mothers, how to use oral rehydration salts with diarrhea, proper handwashing practices, and recognizing key dangers signs signaling the need to seek immediate clinic health care. Some 141 peer educators trained on these practices have begun the process of going door-to-door reaching the goal of 30,000 households ensuring mothers know and exercise the six key practices. Should cholera reappear, peer educators are enabled to immediately adapt messaging to cholera prevention.

A survey was completed to better understand why so many people practice open defecation and have not built latrines, with the support of UNICEF’s partner, Tubiyage, a famous national performance group. Some 840 households were interviewed and questioned about their hygiene practices, water management, latrine use and hand washing frequency. The results will be used for community theatre performances according to the
themes identified during the research using the Community-Led Total Sanitation methodology. The performances take key phrases acquired during the interviews that are funny, instructive and educational.

Media and External Communication
In the context of the media attention on the visit of the UNSC on 21 and 22 January, UNICEF drafted a series of tweets to highlight the impact of the crisis on children and UNICEF’s recommendations, with tweets placed among top tweets under the #Burundi hashtag and generating over 50 retweets. UNICEF also achieved media coverage in the same context in top-tier media such as Voice of America and facilitated additional international media visits to Child-Friendly Spaces.

Funding
In 2016, UNICEF Burundi is appealing for USD 16,540,000. No funds have been received to date. With the increase in violence coupled by the effects of El Niño, UNICEF is scaling up to respond to the rising humanitarian needs in a context of heightened vulnerability, protection violations, floods and cholera, as well as displacement. In a context of reduced foreign donor support and government cuts in the social sector budgets, UNICEF will be required to be at the forefront of monitoring and responding to gaps in the provision of basic social services as well as the evolving child protection crisis in the country.

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<th>Appeal Sector</th>
<th>2016 UNICEF Humanitarian Requirements</th>
<th>Funds Received Against 2016 HAC (US$)</th>
<th>Funding Gap Against 2016 HAC (US$)</th>
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Next SitRep: 29/02/2016

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