Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

In the capital Bujumbura, targeted neighborhoods continue to experience frequent cordon and search operations. Furthermore, politically orientated violence is now subsequently also spreading outside of the ‘traditional’ neighborhoods. On October 13th, at least 13 people, including three children as well as a staff member of the International Organisation for Migration, were killed in a police operation in Ngagara.

Beyond these atrocities, socio-economic consequences of the crisis threaten to void achieved progress and to further deteriorate the well-being of Burundi’s more than five million children. Socio-economic deterioration of the country is expected if donor nations continue suspension of cooperation with the Government of Burundi and withdrawal of bilateral aid. On September 29th 2015, the European Union announced targeted sanctions against three key members of ruling regime and one person involved in the May coup attempt. The sanctions along with the Dutch Government withdrawal from security sector reform projects and the US military suspension of the African Contingency Operations Training and Assistance further isolates Burundi from the international community. In October 2015 during the absence of the Belgian Ambassador, the Burundian Government suspended the agreement with the Belgian embassy.

Highlights

- On October 13th, 3 children as well as a staff member of the International Organisation for Migration were killed in a police operation in Ngagara which killed at least 13 people in total. Security forces continue to conduct operations including cordon and night time shooting in contested neighborhoods of Bujumbura.

- The children charged with involvement in armed groups have been transferred to the re-education center in Rumonge. The family assessment is underway to ensure the conditions for safe reintegration are met.

- Minors continue to be at high risk on police raids and the number of children arrested continues to be high. UNICEF and its partners are following up all these case to ensure their prompt and safe release.

Key figures

- At least 198 People killed in Burundi since 26 April 2015, 63 of them in the last three weeks alone, 15 of them children (OHCHR, 23 October)

- 66 Minors still detained & charged with ‘involvement in armed groups’ (UNICEF, 29 October)

- Over 207,167 Number of refugees seeking asylum in neighbouring countries (UNHCR, 27 October)
Burundi is already one of the poorest countries in the world and highly-aid dependent with budget shares of up to 80% of social sector Ministries relying on external aid. Thus, a shortfall in funding severely threatens access to adequate nutrition, health facilities and quality education for children. Especially, in the health sector, the Government is confronted with shortages of essential drugs and is calling for support.

**Humanitarian leadership and coordination**

Joint efforts of agencies and development partners resulted in the revision of the Inter-agency Contingency Plan, which was finalized and disseminated beginning of October by OCHA. Due to an anticipated elevated risk of flooding by end of this year, the National Platform for Disaster and Risk Reduction requested support of all development organisations in developing a national contingency plan outlining preparedness and response activities for the El Nino phenomenon. While the WASH emergency sectoral group identified specific interventions for water supply, sanitation, and hygiene promotion as their priority risk reduction and preparedness activities, the education emergency sectoral group is currently supporting the Government in the organization of the annual data collection of the education system for the 2015-16 school year.

In addition, UNICEF, already co-leading the WASH, Education and Nutrition emergency sectoral groups, was requested to support and co-lead alongside the Ministry of Health and the WHO, the activities in the Health emergency sectoral group.

**Humanitarian Strategy**

UNICEF’s preparedness and response considers both the deteriorating services due to the political crises and the potential of natural disasters in the coming period, and 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 ensure continuation of EPI services, and ensuring access for children and women to water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene. Support for the Back to School campaign also came at a critical moment for providing normalcy to children, many of whom had not been attending school during the last months of the past school year.

**UNICEF’s Response with Partners**

**Health & Nutrition**

While in the nutrition sector, the nutrition programme of the Ministry of Health is demonstrating its good ownership, the Ministry of Health needs further support to make effective the health sector meetings, which UNICEF was requested to co-lead. The political nature of the crisis is partially explaining the difficulties in coordinating this sector. Currently, the main health and nutrition risks are: shortage in stocks of essential drugs, potential impact of the economic degradation and food insecurity on children’s nutritional status, cholera outbreak and the difficulty to organize the second round of the envisaged *Mother and Child Health Week* together with the introduction of polio vaccination (VPI) before the end of 2015.

Under the leadership of the Belgian Embassy, the Health sector group lead amongst all financial and technical partners, UNICEF and partners discussed the essential drug shortage. Despite persistent advocacy, most donors are withdrawing their support or are still hesitant to engage. UNICEF urgently needs resources to cover priority needs in health centers and district hospitals, estimated at 2.4 millions USD for the 6 coming months.

There is still cholera in Burundi. In October, a cholera outbreak started in the Province of Bubanza (North) with a total of 52 cases and 1 death (total for October, as of 25th October). UNICEF supported the MoH for the management of cholera cases by providing two cholera kits (one for each district), and support was provided to the Burundian Red Cross in their activities on cholera prevention and desinfection.

Additionally, Burundi is facing the risk of the El Nino phenomenon. The WFP alerted of a lean harvesting season (October-November) and the lack of seeds for the on-going planting season. In October, UNICEF was able to
ensure nationwide distribution of therapeutic feeding products (Plumpy Nuts), but the reporting of acute malnutrition cases by the MoH is slow and does not allow timely monitoring of the situation.

Moreover, the collaboration with MoH is hampered due to the sudden change of key government focal persons (the Minister of Health and the Permanent Secretary were replaced as well as some directors). In the meantime, GAVI has announced the channeling of its Health Systems Strengthening (HSS) funding through UNICEF rather than through the government. However, the MoU is not yet finalized, resulting in insufficient funding to support important activities such as the foreseen Mother and Child Health Week, which is organized for November by the MoH with UNICEF support.

Education
After the annual Back to School campaign of the Minstry of Education, which UNICEF sucessfully supported by providing school kits and teaching materials to more than 250,000 school children in seven of the most deprived provinces and 10 districts in 420 primary schools, the Ministry of Education is now preparing the annual data collection of the education system for the 2015-16 school year. This exercise will allow UNICEF to gain more information as to the number of children who were able to complete the previous school year.

WASH
Following the hygiene promotion training for 25 educators, UNICEF provided materials, including jerrycans and buckets, to facilitate the handwashing practices in the 6 Child Friendly Spaces in the capital Bujumbura, to the benefit of 7,800 children. UNICEF also continues to support child protection activities and makes efforts to ensure decent hygiene conditions in the centre for children living in the street in the capital by providing soap to 300 children every week for the coming two months. Furthermore, UNICEF is supporting the re-education centres in Rumonge and Ruyigi with buckets, jerrycans and soap.

At the occasion of the global handwashing day, the Ministry of Health organised hygiene promotion activities in two communes in Rutana with UNICEF support. The celebration of the day was held on October, 15th with line Ministries and sectoral partners present. The key hygiene message (namely, the importance of handwashing with soap) to avoid cholera outbreak was also shared through radio broadcasts and at a media conference, as well through U-report messages.

In efforts to control the cholera outbreak in Bubumza, UNICEF supports the Burundian Red Cross not only in desinfection activitites, but also in efforts to provide water to the hospital of Gihanga. Furthermore, hygiene promotion in three targeted collines in the commune of Gihanga commune is coupled with the provision of hygiene kit (water treatment tablets, soap, jerrycans and buckets) for 1150 households in the area.

Child Protection
On September 30th, following persistent advocacy by UNICEF and OHCHR, the President pardoned the 53 children who were charged with involvement in armed groups. Moreover, following a joint visit of the UNICEF Representative and the Ministry of Justice to the prison of Rumonge on 2 October, the children were transferred from the prison of Rumonge, where they were being detained with adults, to the re-education center on 19 October. UNICEF provided 20 mattresses and the NGO Terre des Hommes is supplying water to the re-education center. Furthermore, an emergency reintegration process for these children has been set up and a coordination committee composed of members of the Ministry of Justice, the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender, UNICEF and Terre des Hommes will ensure the follow up of the process. At the same time, individual assessments of the children are continuing with the support of two Government social workers, Tdh and Foundation Stamm. In addition, UNICEF in cooperation with the Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender organized a refresher training on case management for the government social workers and NGO staff who will be tasked with reintegration.

Also, UNICEF continues to follow up on 20 minors, who were arrested and charged with involvement in armed groups and sent to the Ruyigi re-education center in August 2015. A total of 16 minors have been released after
public trials and four children are still awaiting hearing by judges. Reintegration activities are currently conducted by implementing partners.

To address the psychosocial support needs for children in Bujumbura, UNICEF continues to support a network of Child-Friendly Spaces (CFS) throughout the capital. 28 spaces are now operational, providing much needed access to basic services and psychosocial support services to children adversely affected by the current volatile situation. The psychosocial platform deploys social workers and counsellors, who offer psychosocial support and counselling for children.

**Communication for Development (C4D)**

A total of 116 follow-up committees were established for hygiene promotion at community level. Local administrative authorities and a health district team, as well as community health agents supervise the committees’ work to ensure sustainability in the previous areas of intervention. Such C4D activities will be extended to other communes of the province of Makamba. Activities will include hygiene promotion in communities and in 36 schools, tippy tap installation and life skills development including HIV/Aids prevention amongst youth and adolescents.

A communication strategy for cholera and diarrhea prevention and WASH is currently being prepared in consultation with the regional C4D team. The communication strategy will reflect current activities and consider preparedness and response measures for the future.

The C4D section also supported the introduction of the IPV polio vaccine. In this context, a conference on the new polio vaccine was held with participation of communication staff of the EPI program featuring several C4D documents, including the Polio Communication Strategy, which were introduced and validated for national use. The crisis committee was established and its Terms of Reference were validated. Job aids and IEC materials have also been approved. UNICEF commenced the roll-out of the national training programme. Next steps include the development of IPC (intra-personal communication) skills and the elaboration of a monitoring and evaluation program.

**Media and External Communication**

Following the killing of an entire family in Bujumbura on October 13th, a series of three tweets were drafted and sent from UNICEF Africa’s account expressing UNICEF’s shock and outrage at the killings and calling on all parties to protect children. The tweets garnered 147 direct retweets and 47 favorites.

The Communication team continues to cover the ongoing emergency and ongoing regular programmatic interventions. A photo essay on Child-Friendly Spaces was published on Facebook and additional footage on Child-Friendly Spaces was shot for an upcoming video package, while four new webstories were sent for publication.
Funding

UNICEF Burundi is appealing for USD 8,700,000, of which USD 3,640,690 has been received to date. This amount includes US$ 419,972 carried forward from 2014.

Without additional funding of USD 5,059,310 UNICEF will not be able to scale up response to the humanitarian needs or continue supporting the continuation of critical basic social services, most notably health sector needs related to the stockout of essential drugs as well as the evolving child protection crises in the country.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Appeal Sector</th>
<th>Original 2015 HAC Requirements (US$)</th>
<th>Revised 2015 HAC Requirement (US$)</th>
<th>Funds Received Against 2015 HAC (US$)</th>
<th>Funding gap (US$)</th>
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<td>WASH</td>
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<td><strong>Total funding available</strong></td>
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<td><strong>3,640,690</strong></td>
<td><strong>5,059,310</strong></td>
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Next SitRep: 27/11/2015

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