Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

The political and security situation in Burundi remains volatile, with a number of attacks, arrests and assassinations occurring during the reporting period that could cause the situation to escalate given the tense political and security landscape. The volatile context continues to affect the humanitarian situation and spur displacement, with more than 6,300 new departures registered in the past month. The total number of Burundi refugees in neighboring countries has increased to 253,600, while the official number of internally displaced people in three of the border provinces still stands at 25,081 (IOM, 29 Jan 2016).

High-level advocacy continues in favor of the protection and well-being of children in the volatile context. Following the announcement in February of the release of some 2,000 prisoners by President Nkurunziza, UNICEF’s Representative sent a letter to the Minister of Justice on 14 March requesting a list of the children among this group and requesting the transfer of all children currently detained in the prisons to the re-education centers. As a result, the first group of 13 children who benefited from the presidential pardon were transferred to the re-education centers of Rumonge and Ruyigi, and the process of their reintegration is ongoing with partner NGOs IRC, Terre des Hommes, FVS-AMADE, Fondation Stamm and government social workers (CDFC).

Recurrent violence continues to affect the psychological wellbeing of children. Some 28 Child-Friendly Spaces continue to operate in the capital, bringing much-needed psychosocial support to 4,159 children. To enable

Highlights

- Following advocacy by UNICEF and partners, 13 children detained in adult prisons were transferred into an environment appropriate for children at the reeducation centers in Rumonge and Ruyigi.
- The number of malaria cases remains high compared to previous years, but is decreasing. UNICEF continues to provide technical support to the Ministry of Health in coordination with WHO to monitor the situation and strengthen data collection and analysis.
- Recurrent violence continues to affect the psychological wellbeing of children. UNICEF is supporting 28 Child-Friendly Spaces in the capital to provide psychological support and recreational activities for children. In addition, teachers in vulnerable neighborhoods are being trained in the identification of cases of trauma among children.

Key figures

253,600
Burundi Refugees seeking asylum in neighboring countries
(UNHCR, 27 March 2016)

1,615,855
Reported malaria cases
(MOH, January-March 2016)

759
Deaths due to Malaria
(MOH, January-March 2016)

83% Unfunded
UNICEF Burundi
2016 HAC: US$16.54m
(UNICEF, 31 March 2016)
teachers to identify and refer cases of trauma in the areas of Cibitoke, Musaga, Nyakabiga, Ngagara and Bwiza, two focal points per school have been identified and will be trained to serve as bridges with the Child-Friendly Spaces and with the psychosocial platform.

Thanks to the efforts of the Ministry of Health (MoH) and its partners, the number of cases of malaria in the country is decreasing while the situation is being closely monitored, especially in the 18 highly affected health districts. From January to mid-March, there were 1,615,855 malaria cases recorded with 759 deaths (this is almost double compared to the same period in 2015, which recorded 870,764 cases and 407 deceased). As co-lead of the health sector, UNICEF is providing technical support for data collection, data management and situation analysis to further inform coordination and response.

No new cholera cases have been reported since January when three cases were treated in Nyanza Lac district in the south of the country.

**Humanitarian Leadership and Coordination**

UNICEF actively participates in the UNCT and inter-sectoral meetings, which lead strategic and cross-sectoral coordination of the humanitarian response.

UNICEF facilitated and provided technical support to the sector Working Groups on Education, WASH and Nutrition and co-led the Health and Child Protection sectors to finalize sectoral plans and related projects that contributed to the Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP). The overall budget asked for UNICEF is 22% out of US $62.3 million HRP appeal, which will target 442,000 people in need.

**Humanitarian Strategy**

The under-funded CERF strategy and related budget of US$ 13 million was approved by the CERF Secretariat to respond to six prioritized sectors: Food Security, Protection, Health, Nutrition, WASH and Shelter/NFI. UNICEF received a total of US$ 3.090 million to address urgent needs in Protection, WASH, Health and Nutrition.

The Humanitarian Response Plan (HRP) has been finalized, endorsed by the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) on 3 March 2016 and presented by the Head of OCHA a.i. on 8 March 2016 in Nairobi during a donor and partner meeting convened by OCHA and UNHCR. All participants commended OCHA and humanitarian partners for the development of both the HNO and the HRP on such short notice and the prioritization of protection needs, access to essential social services, and strengthening of resilience and social cohesion. The HRP will be launched at an upcoming high-level event in the coming weeks.

UNICEF participated to the United Nations Country Team (UNCT) retreat that was held in Nairobi on 17-19 of March 2016 with a specific focus on developing a shared understanding and analysis of the current context, as well as the possible scenarios within which the UNCT will conduct its work in the next 12-18 months.

UNICEF continues to scale up its emergency programme, within the framework of the 2016 Humanitarian Action for Children (HAC), to provide an integrated response to the most vulnerable women and children of Burundi.

**UNICEF’s Response with Partners**

**Child Protection**

Fewer grave child rights violations were identified in March, however, the protection context remains unpredictable. UNICEF and a partner are advocating for the transfer of two girls who were allegedly tortured by security forces for care, while another UNICEF partner is providing care for a boy hit by eight bullets.
Regular visits to detention cells by UNICEF, OHCHR and partners led to the identification of 19 cases of detained children. Advocacy is still ongoing for the release of six girls held at the independent human rights body (CNIDH) accused of involvement with an armed group. The charges against the girls have been dropped. Partners stand ready to conduct family tracing and reintegration, along with temporary care for the girls who cannot safely return to their communities.

UNICEF conducted high-level advocacy for the transfer of six boys charged with participation in armed groups and advocated for five boys currently detained in the central prison in poor conditions alongside adults to be sent to re-education centers for children. The 11 children were transferred to the Rumonge re-education centre on 24 March and are benefiting from health care and psychosocial support. Their cases will be expedited with the new agreement on legal assistance developed with the Association des Femmes Juristes du Burundi (AFJB) and the Observatoire Inezia pour les Droits de l’Enfant au Burundi (OIDEB).

UNICEF continues to mobilize support for better protection of children living in the streets of Bujumbura in a context of prevailing insecurity. In cooperation with partner NGO GIRIYUJA, plans for the reintegration of 82 children living in the streets is being prepared, in addition to providing support to the 41 children recently reintegrated in their families.

A monitoring visit conducted by UNICEF in early March revealed many cases of school dropouts identified by the community-based Child Protection Committees (CPC). For instance, the CPC of Kiremba in the Commune Muyinga reported 60 children who left the school in early March to go to border areas of Tanzania. These children are at great risk to child protection violations. Meanwhile, the CPC of Busiga in the province of Ngozi managed to retain 35 children who had initially left the school to look for work.

**Health & Nutrition**

UNICEF conducted its monthly supervision in 18 health centres to monitor the use of essential drugs. Results showed that the medication is distributed at the health centre level free of charge for pregnant women and children under five, and that health care providers were present on site.

However, less than two months after a distribution in February meant to cover 10,000 children, there is a shortage of ready-to-use therapeutic food (RUTF) for the management of severe acute malnutrition (SAM). Due to the deterioration of the socio-economic situation and the high prevalence of malaria, there may be an increase in the number of SAM cases, but its magnitude is unknown due to delayed reporting and the lack of follow-up from the MoH. With CERF funding UNICEF will start in April mass screening of children under five in the 6 most affected provinces to identify and provide therapeutic feeding treatment to the increasing number of children suffering from SAM, which will help ensure better understanding of the malnutrition situation facing children.

UNICEF placed an order of 13,600 cartons of RUTF to cover the needs of 15,000 children with newly received funds from the Government of Japan. The first RUTF delivery is expected by the end of April and resource mobilization continues to cover additional needs until December 2016 given that there continues to be a gap in the pipeline of RUTF.

**WASH**

The Burundian Red Cross (BRC) continues with the WASH response in the two flood displacement sites in Rumonge province where 1,728 people live, including 975 women and 306 children under five. At the Cashi site, WASH sectoral partner, Norwegian Church Aid (NCA) in coordination with the BRC, constructed additional toilet facilities, which are within the Sphere standards (an average of 19-24 people par cabin).

Apart from the internal socio-political situation, Burundi continues to host and support Congolese refugees. At the Kavumu camp in Cankuzo province, about 8,500 refugees had water access of approx. 8.3 litres per person
per day in 2015, close to the minimum Sphere standards of 7.5 litres. Upon request of UNHCR, UNICEF partner COPED completed the construction of a new gravity water supply system at the end of February 2016, which can serve up to 13,000 people with 25 litres/person/day. It is currently serving more than 10,410 people, including 9,300 refugees in the camp (1,900 women and 5,990 children), a nursery, primary school and high school in the camp as well as a primary school with 460 students and 70 households (650 people) in the host community.

Communication for Development (C4D)

In response to continued vulnerability to cholera, C4D activities have expanded into the education system of Makamba, where principals, teachers and schoolchildren are learning key practices on diarrhea and cholera prevention. The activity is reaching 23,246 children. This month 407 teachers are being trained how to use C4D teaching materials and developing skills in hygiene and sanitation. The objective is to help the teachers find solutions that they can implement despite local barriers, which are usually lack of water (only 10% of the schools nationwide have water available for handwashing), lack of soap, toilet paper and bathroom cleaning materials. In this pilot program, teachers in 36 schools are learning how to set up “tippy-tap” handwashing devices, which are especially appropriate for schools with no running water. Operated by a foot lever, tippy-taps reduce chances for bacteria transmission as the user touches only the soap.

In addition, 200-liter reservoir tanks are being installed in schools to ensure a constant supply of water. Teachers are educating students with posters, cholera flipcharts, and hand washing demonstrations and by supervising the daily maintenance of tippy-taps and the cleaning of the latrines. Hygiene clubs are being established in each school. The goal is to educate students in the theory and practice of hygiene and sanitation and to help them develop good habits that will stay with them into adulthood.

Education

UNICEF as the new Grant Agent (Managing Entity) for the remaining funds of the Global Partnership in Education (GPE), which total US $20 million, developed an action plan, which was discussed with the former partners of the Education Basket Funds during a workshop held in Nairobi from 8-10 March 2016. This action plan was shared with the Ministry of Education to ensure coherence with national priorities and needs.

The overall goal of the action plan is to ensure the sustainability of the education system in Burundi during this critical period. In Tanzania, which hosts a large Burundian refugee population, the programme will provide refugees with teaching and learning materials in support of the utilization of the Burundian curriculum.

Furthermore, UNICEF Burundi continues to follow up the issue of the Education of Burundian refugees’
schoolchildren in Tanzania, Rwanda, DRC and Uganda, on how the Government of Burundi can best address the challenge of certification of learning in refugee camps.

**Social Policy**
The ongoing discussion on the rechanneling of development funding through alternative mechanisms continues to be of concern. Access to essential social services for children and women is of great concern given the lack of resources to keep basic services running.

UNICEF continues to closely monitor allocations of donor resources and national resource mobilization. Furthermore, regular consultations around a US $30 million cash transfer project as part of the country’s national social protection strategy are in progress. A World Bank delegation visited Burundi on 14-25 March 2016 to discuss with the Government and UNICEF (Social Policy sector leads) how to take into account newly emerged fragility in basic services.

**Media and External Communication**
Visibility of the situation of children in Burundi remains high, in particular on digital channels, thanks to the significant amount of written and multimedia content produced during field visits with support of the Regional Office. UNICEF’s Burundi Representative gave an interview, which was published in the EU-UNICEF newsletter, as well as on UNICEF’s global blog. A second blog on the need for continued investment in children in Burundi was also published in March.

In addition to crisis-related content, UNICEF Burundi photos were featured on global channels on World Water Day to draw attention to children affected by climate change and natural disasters.

**Funding**
In 2016, UNICEF Burundi is appealing for 16,540,000, for which only US$ 3,234,000 has been received to date. With the increase in violence coupled by the effects of El Nino, UNICEF is scaling up its humanitarian response to respond to the increasing needs of women and children in a context of heightened vulnerability, increasing protection violations, recurrent floods, and displacement for which timely and adequate funds are required.