Children continue to be disproportionately affected by the prolonged instability and election-related violence in Burundi. Escalating violence around the capital in the days preceding the 29 June legislative elections led to the death of a four-year-old child by stray bullet to the stomach on 28 June, increasing the total number of confirmed child deaths to six.

The number of confirmed cholera cases has risen sharply, with 169 confirmed as of 30 June, due to a shortage of drinking water along Lake Tanganyika and reliance of local populations on water from the lake.

Migrations across borders have accelerated, with thousands of women and children crossing in the three days preceding the 29 June elections.

Humanitarian leadership and coordination

Joint assessment missions conducted in May identified priorities including WASH (cholera prevention and response), food security/nutrition, and protection. Discussion with partners at sectoral level is ongoing to define urgent response including funding requirements.
UNICEF’s preparedness and response strategy 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 cold chains for resumption of EPI services. UNICEF ensures children and women’s access to water for drinking, cooking and personal hygiene.

UNICEF’s Response with Partners

Health & Nutrition
The number of cholera cases recently increased due to shortage of drinking water along the Lake Tanganyika and therefore people rely on water coming from the Lake. Since the beginning of the outbreak on May 14th, a total of 169 cholera cases were reported and 1 death (Ministry of Health data, 30 June). Two Cholera Treatment Centers are in place in two public health centers. UNICEF is providing cholera kits and additional human resources through an agreement with Africa Humanitarian Action – AHA. As the epidemic is now within the Burundian community (before all cases were refugees coming from Tanzania), Health, WASH and C4D sections are working together to conduct a community awareness campaign in the district of Nyanza Lac with distribution of Aquatabs.

The deterioration of the health system due notably to the non-payment of performance-based financing (PBF) to all public and accredited health centres (since on average 10 months), non-payment of Medical District Bureau running costs and the difficulty to get essential drugs at the National Drug Store is aggravated by the current crisis. Health workers are demotivated and this poses a challenge for the proper management of the cholera epidemic.

A community screening of acute malnutrition was conducted from 15 to 19 June in Kirundo province through an agreement with Concern Worldwide in order to understand the alarmingly high level of acute malnutrition reported on the Rwandan side. 97,447 children aged 6-59 months (82% coverage) were screened for acute malnutrition. Preliminary results showed 6% of global acute malnutrition (GAM) and 1.5% severe acute malnutrition (SAM). The on-going harvest period may have buffered the prevalence.

Education
From 17th to 19th June, the national exam for grade 10 took place. Due to the crisis situation and massive movement of population towards neighboring countries, the absence of many pupils was noticed more than in previous years.

UNICEF Burundi is working with neighboring countries to identify the number of children in refugee camps who still need to take their end of year school exams.

In the framework of the peace building programme implementation, UNICEF supported the development of new Child Friendly School module integrating peace building for teachers’ in-service training.

WASH
As a preparedness measure, UNICEF agreed with 12 other partners, including relevant government departments to conduct a WASH situation assessment early July in 9 priority provinces (17 communes). The outcome would serve as the sectoral common baseline for cholera prevention and response as well as humanitarian assistance in case of massive return of refugees from neighbouring countries.

In light of an increase of cholera cases in the commune of Nyanza-Lac, UNICEF is enhancing the capacity for cholera treatment and prevention with local partners working in the sector of Health, WASH and C4D, with a first local coordination meeting held to increase collaboration and effective interventions. Based on the rapid assessment jointly done at the Bukeye CTC, required hygiene materials and technical support is being provided to ensure the access to adequate WASH conditions and information at the CTC and the surrounding communities.

Child Protection
Following meetings of the child protection sub group on child-friendly spaces (Play International, War Child, APRODEM) and in view of increasing need for psychosocial support for children in the capital, it was decided that safe spaces for children will be extended to all the communes of Bujumbura Mairie.
Since the beginning of the clashes, 86 children out of 95 caught up in the demonstrations and charged with involvement in “insurrectional movements” have been released following advocacy by UNICEF and partners.

In addition, in order to shine light on the movement of the children across borders, mainly to Rwanda, a meeting was held with the directors of residential centres and the local administration of Bujumbura on 24 June.

**Communications for Development (C4D)**

Key messages on promotion of good hygiene and sanitation were sent to more than 40 000 U-reporters to increase awareness on cholera prevention. In addition, an awareness campaign for the prevention of cholera will be strengthened in the Nyanza Lac commune and surrounding communities. A mixed communication strategy (use of mass media, community dialogue and interpersonal communication) will be used by the partner to reach 30 000 people in the coming month. Through U-report, a poll will be sent to assess reasons why people do not wash their hands with soap at critical moments.

**Supply and Logistics**

As part of ongoing cholera response, an additional cholera kit was provided to NGO partner AHA alongside medical gloves and boots; while 2 water tanks of 10,000 litres were delivered to UNHCR to cater for an increase of some 6,000 Congolese refugees who have moved from host communities into the camps to seek safety.

8,000 RUTF cartons borrowed from Somalia office are expected in Bujumbura on 6 July 2015.

**Media and External Communication**

A statement by the Regional Director on the case of the 16 June grenade attack in a school was released and followed up by tweets and a series of interviews with key media (RTNB, RFI, Voice of America and SABC) by the UNICEF Representative in Burundi and the Communications Specialist.

A series of three tweets were sent out from UNICEF Africa to break the news of the death of the 4-year-old child, garnering over 100 retweets in the first half-day and the interest of Al Jazeera, who immediately filed a story on the case.

**FUNDING**

UNICEF Burundi’s 2015 Humanitarian Action for Children appeal is $2.5 million, of which $896,639 received to date. Given recent developments with the possibility of continued deterioration, UNICEF is reviewing its requirements to meet the humanitarian needs of women and children affected by the current political crisis.

**Next SitRep: 15/07/2015**

---

**Who to contact for further information:**

- **Bo Viktor Nylund**
  - Representative, Burundi
  - Tel: +257 79655305
  - Email: bvnylund@unicef.org

- **Natascha Paddison**
  - Deputy Representative, Burundi
  - Tel: +257 79985995
  - Email: npaddison@unicef.org

- **Eliane Luthi**
  - Communications Specialist, Burundi
  - Tel: +257 78189388
  - Email: eluthi@unicef.org