



Burundi

Flash Report # 1

DRC Refugees

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for every child

UNICEF Burundi | Conflict upsurge in Eastern DR Congo – Refugee influx into Burundi

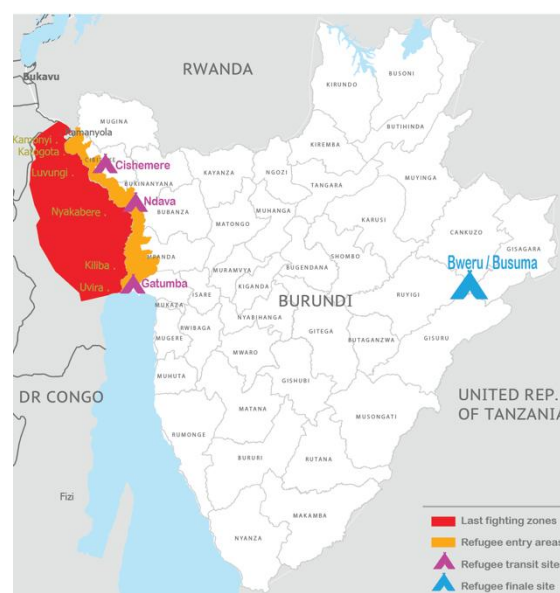
Highlights

The rapid escalation of violence linked to the M23 offensive in Uvira, South Kivu (DRC), since 5 December has resulted in a large influx of refugees and returnees into Burundi.

As of 11 December, an estimated **50,000 people** had crossed the border, with **20,001** individuals formally registered (ONPRA–UNHCR). New arrivals are initially accommodated in severely congested transit sites, notably Ndava, Cishemere and Gatumba, prior to relocation to the **Bweru/Busuma** refugee settlement in Ruyigi Province, which currently lacks adequate basic infrastructure and essential services. People on pirogues are also reported to arrive in Rumonge since December 12 (UNHCR).

As of 12 December, **4,932 refugees** had been relocated to Bweru/Busuma. The situation presents **elevated protection, security and health risks**, particularly related to **cholera and Mpox**, as well as heightened vulnerabilities among **children and women**.

UNICEF Burundi has activated its emergency response, conducted rapid assessments, and is delivering **priority life-saving interventions** across WASH, Child Protection, Health, Nutrition and Education sectors, in close coordination with the Government, humanitarian partners and the Regional Office.



Situation Overview & Humanitarian Needs

Transit and reception conditions remain **challenging**, with overcrowding and limited access to basic services in Ndava, Cishemere, and Gatumba. At **Bweru/Busuma**, critical gaps exist in **shelter, WASH infrastructure, health services, and child-protection services**, generating urgent humanitarian needs, particularly for **children, women, and other vulnerable groups**.

Health and nutrition risks are high: poor sanitation and crowding increase the likelihood of **cholera and Mpox transmission**, while children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding women face elevated **malnutrition risks**. The risk of vaccine-preventable diseases, particularly measles, as well as malaria, remains critically high.

Protection risks include **gender-based violence, family separations, and unaccompanied or separated children** at transit and reception sites. **Education is disrupted**, with language barriers, psychosocial distress, and insufficient local school capacity limiting continuity of learning.

Humanitarian partners are mobilizing to address **life-saving gaps in WASH, Health, Nutrition, Child Protection, and Education**, while scaling up **child-focused services, psychosocial support, and preventive interventions** in the most affected sites.

Situation in Numbers

 **~50 000** : #congolese refugees since the recent influx of 6 December 2025 (UNHCR)

 **35 828** : #congolese refugees since the February 2025 influx (UNHCR)

Financial requirements (gap)

 **Wash**: \$ 1,273,667
 **Child Protection**: \$883,200
 **Health**: \$ 902,400
 **Nutrition**: \$ 449,379
 **Education**: \$ 320,000
SPA: \$928,000
Cross sectoral: \$ 464 000

Strategic priorities – Inter Agency Coordination

UNICEF Burundi, as the **sector lead for WASH, Education, Child Protection; Co-lead for Nutrition**, is collaborating with the Government and humanitarian partners to implement **inter-agency strategic priorities** in response to the refugee influx. The main objectives are as follows:



Protection: ensure a safe and differentiated environment for all population groups, with a focus on **children and other vulnerable populations** (women and girls at risk, unaccompanied/separated children, older persons, persons with disabilities, GBV survivors). This includes **border monitoring and household registration** to identify and support those most at risk.



Life-saving assistance: provide **safe water, emergency latrines and shelters, hot meals, and health/nutrition screening** to the most vulnerable, in line with UNICEF-led WASH and Nutrition interventions.



Decongestion & site development: reduce overcrowding in **Ndava, Cishemere, Makombe, and Musenyi** through orderly relocations, while **operationalizing Bweru/Busuma as a permanent reception site**, ensuring minimum standards in WASH, health, and child-friendly spaces.



Coordination & resource mobilization: support **ONPRA and DGRRR leadership**, strengthen **information management and monitoring tools** (5W, common statistics, sitreps), and **intensify advocacy with donors** to rapidly fund priority response activities, ensuring effective inter-agency coordination across all sectors.

Every Dollar Counts

Every \$1 counts. Every day, children fleeing violence in eastern DRC face hunger, disease, and violence in overcrowded transit sites in Burundi. Your support can provide safe water, nutritious food, shelter, and protection. Act now – every child deserves a chance to survive and thrive.

UNICEF's Response – Sectoral Overview

UNICEF Burundi has activated its emergency management team and is coordinating closely with the Government of Burundi, UN agencies and NGOs to plan for the response and ensure inter-agency alignment. Immediate actions include:

Wash:

Rapid assessments were conducted at entry, transit, and Bweru/Busuma reception sites (9–10 December). UNICEF deployed **3 emergency water bladders (10,000 L each)** and **60 latrines** (20 in Ndava, 20 in Gatumba and there will be 20 latrines in Bweru next week), and is preparing **additional water systems, latrines, and hygiene kits** for the most affected families. **Cholera prevention and response** activities are coordinated with health partners, with **CATI teams** ready for rapid deployment if needed

Child Protection

UNICEF initiated **identification and referral of unaccompanied and separated children (UASC)**. **Child-friendly spaces** and psychosocial support are provided via **tarpaulins and socio-recreational kits** to partner NGOs at Kansega and Gatumba. A **permanent child-friendly space** and psychosocial interventions are being established at Bweru

Health & Nutrition

UNICEF conducted **health assessments** at key sites to support **WASH-led cholera and disease prevention**. **Event-based surveillance** is operational, with rapid response teams ready for potential outbreaks. Routine immunization at the Gatumba site with a WHO-UNICEF team is underway; From Thursday to Friday, 419 women and children have already been vaccinated. Simultaneously, UNICEF is providing **supplies for severe acute malnutrition treatment** and preparing an **integrated nutrition package** for **children, pregnant and breastfeeding women, and adolescent girls**.

Education

UNICEF is working to ensure **safe and protective learning environments** in the final settlement sites through **temporary rehabilitation of classrooms, provision of learning materials, and teacher training on psychosocial support and inclusive education**. Efforts also focus on **strengthening child protection and gender-sensitive approaches and promoting continuity of learning through catch-up and remedial classes**, with support from **ONPRA and UNHCR** to identify children in need of schooling.

France Bégin

Country Representative Burundi

Tel: +257 79 96 00 44

Email: fbegin@unicef.org

Mame Selbee Diouf

Deputy Representative Burundi

Tel: +257 79 37 21 62

Email: msdiouf@unicef.org

Fatou Tandiag

Chief Communication

Tel: +257 76 388 000

Email: ftandiag@unicef.org