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# Information bulletin: Burundi Pre Election civil unrest and Population Movement in Rwanda and Tanzania

 International Federation  
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

	<b>Date of issue: 18 May 2015</b>
<b>Date of disaster : April 2015</b>	<b>Point of contact (name and title):</b> <u>Anselme Katiyunguruza</u> , Secretary General Burundi Red Cross Society; <u>Adam Alhaj Kimbisa</u> Secretary General Tanzania Red Cross Society; <u>Apollinaire Karamaga</u> ; Secretary General Rwanda Red Cross
<b>Host National Societies:</b> Burundi Red Cross Society, Rwanda Red Cross Society, Tanzania Red Cross Society	
<b>Number of people affected:</b> Rwanda 26,070, Tanzania approx. 90,000 (unverified), Burundi to be confirmed	<b>Number of people to be assisted:</b> assessments are ongoing.
<b>N° of National Societies currently involved in the operation:</b> International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies, International Committee of the Red Cross, Burundi Red Cross Society, Rwanda Red Cross Society, Tanzania Red Cross Society, Danish Red Cross Society, Netherlands Red Cross, Belgian Red Cross-CF, Belgian Red Cross-FL, Norwegian Red Cross, Finnish Red Cross, Spanish Red Cross.	
<b>N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation:</b> UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF OCHA IOM, ADRA, Care international, Catholic Relief Services (CRS), Ministry of Health, Plan Rwanda and World Vision (with local NGOs).	

*This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time.*

## The situation

The next presidential elections in Burundi are set to take place in June 2015 and tension and violence have intensified in recent weeks following the president's announcement to run for a third presidential term. Since the attempted coup on May 13<sup>th</sup> in Burundi, the situation is unclear and remains highly volatile and unpredictable. From late April through mid-May thousands of Burundians demonstrated in Bujumbura to protest the president's decision to run for a third term. Dozens have been killed, hundreds injured and over 115,000 have fled to Rwanda and Tanzania.

Throughout the unrest, the Burundi Red Cross Society has been offering first aid and evacuation services in Bujumbura. They currently have 3 first aid mobile response teams to cover the most affected communes within the city.



**Burundian Red Cross evacuation of injured man in Bujumbura**

IFRC regional office is supporting Burundi Red Cross, Tanzania Red Cross, and Rwanda Red Cross Societies to respond to the humanitarian needs in their respective countries.

### Burundi : Situation and Needs

Confrontations between the protesters and the police started on Sunday 26<sup>th</sup> April in three communes of Bujumbura: Musaga (south area), Nyakabiga (central area) and Cibitoke commune (north area). The clashes began to spread to other communes of the capital and slightly outside in the second week of May. From May 7<sup>th</sup> clashes also began between the pro-government militia (Imbonerakure) and those opposing the President. Since the attempted coup on May 13<sup>th</sup>, the situation is unclear and remains highly volatile and unpredictable.



Burundi Red Cross evacuation of injured person in Bujumbura

At this stage, one of the primary needs continues to be first aid for those injured through violence.

Since the beginning of the protest, dozens were killed, hundreds injured and over 120,000 Burundians have fled into neighbouring countries and an estimated 10,000 are still waiting to cross Lake Tanganyika.

### Rwanda : Situation and Needs

As of May 13<sup>th</sup>, UNHCR declared that 26,070 Burundian refugees had crossed into Rwanda. Other sources report that an additional 10,000 others are waiting at the border to cross into Rwanda. The refugees have entered via 25 different entry points (with 2 larger crossing points) and are directed to 3 transit centres (Nyanza-Muyira, Bugesera-Gashora, Rusizi-Nyagatare). On average the refugees are spending 2-3 days at the entry points, where there are very few humanitarian actors, and one to three weeks in the three transit centres before being sent to the permanent camp of Kirehe-Mahama. RRCS is providing basic services at the entry points. The number of children admitted in the camp continues to increase, as compared to adults who themselves choose to stay behind to take care of their properties. As of May 15, more than 21,000 refugees have been reallocated to a permanent camp.

On May 7<sup>th</sup>, the WFP said they are preparing to support 100,000 Burundian refugees in Rwanda in the coming months, and that some camps already host over 15,000 people. Key needs include first aid, psychosocial support, water, hygiene & sanitation, shelter, protection and NFIs. Many of the refugees have arrived injured, traumatized and empty handed from their homes in Burundi.

Family tracing is also a major need for many of the refugees who have been separated from their family members. Of the 26,070 refugees registered, more than 50% are children under 18, many of whom would be with only one or neither of their parents. A large majority of the arriving families are also female-led which renders them more vulnerable to violence, insecurity and compromised livelihoods.

### Tanzania: Situation and Needs

Since late April, 2015 there has been a continuous influx of people from Burundi entering Tanzania. On May 7<sup>th</sup>, the number increased dramatically with the official opening of the Tanzanian border, and currently there are an estimated 90,000 refugees in the small Tanzanian island of Kagunga. This small village is overwhelmed by the influx and there are critical needs in shelter, sanitation, water, and medical care. These needs were initially identified on May 7<sup>th</sup> through a joint assessment (with TRCS), and confirmed by the ongoing monitoring of Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS).

There are inadequate sanitation facilities and limited access to safe water. Minimal health services have been offered to the refugees, and with the many unvaccinated children, the coming rain and poor sanitation facilities, this could quickly lead to disease outbreak within the refugee population. No shelter options have been made available to the incoming refugees, and the rapid joint assessment recorded 3 deaths within a 2 day period.



Refugees waiting in Kagunga village, Tanzania

The only means of transport within Tanzania to reach Kagunga village from Kigoma is by boat through Lake Tanganyika. The refugees are ferried daily to the Kigoma port, using the *MV Liemba* ship, which can carry 600 people. From the port the refugees are transported by buses to Nyarugusu camp in Kasulu, located about 120 kilometres away from Kigoma town, the regional headquarters. UNHCR and other agencies working in Nyarugusu refugee camp are providing basic services and supplies, including health, food, shelter, water and sanitation.

## Red Cross and Red Crescent action

**International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent (IFRC)** Eastern Africa and Indian Ocean Island Regional office (EAIOI) has been supporting the Burundi Red Cross in developing an Elections Contingency Plan. This has been a joint exercise which involved the ICRC in-country office, Disaster Management, Humanitarian Diplomacy, WASH, Health, Communication and Beneficiary Communication departments of the Burundi Red Cross. The IFRC EAIOI office and Africa Zone Office has helped the Rwanda Red Cross to launch a Disaster Response Emergency Fund (DREF) operation (244,580 Swiss Francs) is also currently helping the Tanzania Red Cross to prepare and Emergency Appeal. All Movement actors are monitoring the situation in Burundi in order to identify an appropriate way forward.

**Burundi Red Cross** began deploying first aid mobile response teams in Bujumbura from late April 2015. The 3 teams offer onsite first aid treatment, evacuation of the injured to hospitals, and some referrals of pregnant women caught up in the violence. Additional first aids mobile teams are planned to be deployed in all communes of Bujumbura and in all branches in the country depending on the needs. The Burundi Red Cross continues to monitor the situation in other provinces. As of the 27<sup>th</sup> April, many preparedness activities (to prepare the response and reduce risk of violence) were put on hold as the Burundi Red Cross Society (BRCS) team shifted to the first phase of response activities.

**The Rwandan Red Cross Society'** volunteers have continued to support the registration process at entry points at the border and within 2 transit camps and one permanent camp, to distribute food and non-food items, to work



NFI distribution in Bugesera-Gashoratransit camp

on hygiene community sensitization, distribution of tents, identification of the most vulnerable that need special care, support family tracing and first aid services. The Government of Rwanda has allocated hectares of land in the Mahama sector of Kirehe District in the eastern province for a new refugee camp to host up to 20,000 individuals. Camp coordination and management of all camp issues is being handled by the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) with UNCHR, as well as camp site identification and relocation of the communities for the camping of the refugees.

Following the approval of the DREF operation on May 8<sup>th</sup> (244,580 CHF), the Rwandan Red Cross will shortly be able to expand their activities in first aid, hygiene

promotion (partly through mobile cinema), and the distribution of NFIs, shelter and clothing items. IFRC has also launched Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) alert to provide additional human resource support to Rwanda Red Cross Society in supporting Burundian refugees.

**The Tanzania Red Cross Society (TRCS)** local branch in Kigoma participated in a government-led assessment on May 7th, and is in regular contact with the TRCS disaster management department at the national headquarters (NHQ), for situation updates. Assessment findings indicate that urgent humanitarian interventions are needed in health, water and sanitation, staffing as well as security, transportation and registrations of arrivals.

TRCS staff and volunteers in Nyarugusu camp are currently assisting the arriving refugees by providing lifesaving interventions including: the provision of first aid, conducting medical screening to all new arrivals (immunization, treatment of common communicable diseases, and screening for malnutrition); treatment to reduce suffering from other debilitating diseases; and the provision of health education through the Health Information Team (HIT), particularly on the prevention of communicable diseases.

TRCS is currently finalizing an Emergency Appeal to allow them to reach 6,000 people mainly vulnerable women with first aid services, mosquito nets, medical screening, water and sanitation services, and Non Food Items. This Appeal is likely to be expanded following the Field Assessment Coordination Team (FACT) assessment to begin the week of May 18th. IFRC has also launched Regional Disaster Response Team (RDRT) alert to provide

additional human resource support to Tanzania Red Cross Society in supporting Burundian refugees. Ministry of External Affairs Government of Tanzania has sent an official request to Tanzania Red Cross and IFRC to support in responding to the urgent needs of Burundi refugees.

## Contact information

**For further information specifically related to this operation please contact:**

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## How we work

All IFRC assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct for the International Red Cross and Red Crescent Movement and Non-Governmental Organizations (NGO's) in Disaster Relief and the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response (Sphere) in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable.

The IFRC's vision is to inspire, encourage, facilitate and promote at all times all forms of humanitarian activities by National Societies, with a view to preventing and alleviating human suffering, and thereby contributing to the maintenance and promotion of human dignity and peace in the world.

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