

OPERATIONS UPDATE



International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies
Fédération Internationale des Sociétés de la Croix-Rouge et du Croissant-Rouge
Federación Internacional de Sociedades de la Cruz Roja y de la Media Luna Roja
الاتحاد الدولي لجمعيات الصليب الأحمر والهلال الأحمر

BURUNDI: HUMANITARIAN ASSISTANCE TO RETURNEES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

29 May 2006

The Federation's mission is to improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity. It is the world's largest humanitarian organization and its millions of volunteers are active in over 183 countries.

In Brief

Appeal No. MDRBI001; Operations Update no. 1; Period covered: 25 March to 7 May 2006; Appeal coverage: 23.9 %; [Click here to go directly to the Contributions List on the website.](#)

Appeal history:

- **Launched on 24 March 2006 for CHF 1,580,238 (USD 1,253,659 or EUR 1,000,784) for 12 months to assist 22,000 beneficiaries and other vulnerable groups through targeted shelter, food, seed, health as well as water and sanitation interventions- <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDRBI001A.pdf>**
- **Disaster Relief Emergency Funds (DREF) allocated: CHF 90,525.**

Outstanding needs: CHF 1,202,478 (USD 953,969 or EUR 761,544).

Related Emergency or Annual Appeals: East Africa Sub-regional programmes: Appeal 2006-2007- Refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/annual06/MAA64003.pdf>

East Africa: Regional Drought Response; MDR64001 - <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDR64001.pdf>.

Ethiopia: Drought; Appeal no. MDRET001 - <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDRET001.pdf>.

Kenya: Drought; Appeal no. MDRKE001 - <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDRKE001.pdf>.

Rwanda: Drought; Appeal no. MDRRW001 - <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDRRW001.pdf>

Tanzania: Drought; Appeal no. MDRTZ001 - <http://www.ifrc.org/docs/appeals/06/MDRTZ001.pdf>.

Operational Summary: According to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a large influx of returnees is expected between July and September 2006. Several meetings have been held by UNHCR and the Burundi Red Cross¹ (BRC) with the purpose of identifying a preliminary strategy for the forthcoming influx of returnees. The final destinations of returnees have been tentatively specified by UNHCR delegations in the four pilot provinces; Makamba, Muyinga, Kirundo and Ruyigi. However, the final UNHCR lists of returnees and vulnerable groups are still under development in Burundi and Tanzania. However, the general indecision of the returnees to leave a more developed country and return to their lesser developed native locations is the main obstacle in the implementation of the operation. The suffering within their new communities could also create internal tensions.

In the initial stages, the operational focus was the provision of support to the BRC in establishing basic disaster management (DM) structures in the four pilot provinces– by nominating DM coordinators, training volunteers in disaster response team (DRT) modules and first aid as well as Vulnerability and Capacity Assessment (VCA). Additionally, technical support has been given in assessing the level of disaster preparedness stocks, designing the national society's disaster response plan and in establishing strategic partnerships with other operational partners.

¹ Burundi Red Cross- refer to <http://www.ifrc.org/where/country/check.asp?countryid=39>

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Through this operation, the BRC has an opportunity to strengthen its image with the government of Burundi, donors and the targeted population as well as to strengthen its DM capacity in order to respond quickly and adequately in emergencies.

Two months after the launch of the appeal, the response has been poor; the Appeal's coverage is presently at only 13.2%. The implications of such a situation is that, despite guarantees of adequate assistance including that provided by the Red Cross, many would-be returnees remain undecided about going back home and starting a new life. The regional delegation's media and communications manager will travel to Burundi during the last week of May. The purpose of his mission is to gather and disseminate the latest information on the situation with a view of bringing the need to support the appeal to the attention of both Movement and external partners and thus contribute to encouraging Burundians to return home.

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This operation is aligned with the International Federation's Global Agenda, which sets out four broad goals to meet the Federation's mission to "improve the lives of vulnerable people by mobilizing the power of humanity".

Global Agenda Goals:

- **Reduce the numbers of deaths, injuries and impact from disasters.**
- **Reduce the number of deaths, illnesses and impact from diseases and public health emergencies.**
- **Increase local community, civil society and Red Cross Red Crescent capacity to address the most urgent situations of vulnerability.**
- **Reduce intolerance, discrimination and social exclusion and promote respect for diversity and human dignity.**

All International Federation assistance seeks to adhere to the Code of Conduct and is committed to the Humanitarian Charter and Minimum Standards in Disaster Response in delivering assistance to the most vulnerable. For support to or for further information concerning Federation programmes or operations in this or other countries, or for a full description of the national society profile, please access the Federation's website at <http://www.ifrc.org>

Background

In January 2006, CHF 90,525 was allocated from the Federation's Disaster Relief Emergency Fund (DREF) to enable the Burundi Red Cross (BRC) to assess both the humanitarian and food security situation in the country. The assessment was conducted in January and February 2006 with the assistance of the regional delegation in Nairobi and a Field Assessment and Coordination Team (FACT). From the assessment findings, strategies have been identified to support vulnerable returnees in their trek to and integration into their new communities, namely in the provinces of Makamba, Muyinga, Kirundo and Ruyigi, while strengthening community infrastructures to deliver basic services to vulnerable people (both locals and returnees). In total, the operation 1 targets 22,000 beneficiaries including 10,000 assisted returnees as well as 500 women headed households (2,500), 1,500 vulnerable families (7,500) and 2,000 pregnant women.

Operational developments

Within the framework of bilateral cooperation between the national society and the UN Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO), the distribution of seeds received from FAO has been carried out in the Northern and Eastern Provinces of the country. Several meetings have been held with World Food Programme (WFP) in order to identify food security strategies in the four provinces targeted through this operation. The WFP and FAO workshops for the BRC volunteers in the targeted provinces, in food and crops monitoring are scheduled for June to July 2006 after the final UNHCR lists of returnees and vulnerable groups have been released

According to UNHCR, the largest influx of returnees is expected between July and September 2006. Several meetings have been held with UNHCR and the Burundi Red Cross with the purpose of identifying a preliminary strategy for the forthcoming influx of returnees. The final destinations of returnees have been tentatively specified with UNHCR delegations in the four pilot provinces of Makamba, Muyinga, Kirundo and Ruyigi. However, the final UNHCR lists of returnees and vulnerable groups are still under development both in Burundi and Tanzania.

It is anticipated that during this operation about 22,000 returnees and vulnerable groups will receive professional and adequate assistance from the BRC volunteers trained in disaster response team (DRT), SPHERE minimum standards in disaster response and community-based first aid (CBFA) modules, leading to improved and increased awareness in disaster preparedness and response and CBFA amongst the targeted population.

In the initial stages, the operational focus was the provision of support to the BRC in establishing its initial disaster management (DM) structure in the four pilot provinces through nominating of DM coordinators at provincial level, training of volunteers in disaster response team (DRT) modules and first aid, and VCA training at provincial level. Technical support has also been given in assessing the level of disaster preparedness stocks, designing the national society's disaster response plan as well as establishing strategic partnerships between the BRC and other operational partners.



A Burundi Red Cross/Federation team conducts field interviews during a VCA exercise.

Through this operation, the national society has an opportunity to reinforce its image with the Burundian government, donors and the targeted population, and strengthen its potential in disaster management in order to respond quickly and adequately in emergencies. However, the general doubt and indecision of the returnees to leave a more developed country and return to their less developed native locations has been the main obstacle in the implementation of the operation. The problems within their new communities could also create internal tensions.

Two months following the launch of the appeal, the response is only 13.2%. The implications of such a situation is that, despite guarantees of adequate assistance including that provided by the Red Cross, many would-be returnees remain undecided about going back home and starting a new life. The regional delegation media and communication manager will travel to Burundi during the last week of to gather and disseminate the latest information on the situation with a view to bringing to the attention of both Movement and external partners the need to support the appeal, and thus encourage Burundians, who have endured untold suffering as refugees, to return to the comfort of their roots.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

Goal: To provide humanitarian assistance, including food security, livelihood, water and sanitation, and health support, to the most vulnerable returnees and the communities receiving them.

Objective 1: To provide information, first aid, and material assistance to 10,000 of the most vulnerable groups among the returnees.

Progress

- The mission of the Burundi Red Cross and its planned disaster management activities has been discussed with the Ministry of Civil Protection for the purpose of rapid and direct involvement by the national society in the elaboration of the State emergency plan.
- A detailed VCA was conducted in March 2006 in 17 Red Cross provincial branches, following which a disaster management structure was established in all the four provinces of Kirundo, Makamba, Muyinga and Ruyigi.
- The first version of the Burundi Red Cross disaster response plan (in French) is expected to be finalized by the end of May 2006.
- An action plan in disaster management and preparedness for May, June and July was finalized at the end of April 2006.
- From April 2006 to date, three workshops on DRT, SPHERE's Minimum Standards in Disaster Response and first aid were held in three provinces, namely; Makamba, Muyinga and Ruyigi for BRC volunteers. A similar workshop was held for 25 volunteers in Kirundo at the end of last year, bringing the total number of volunteers trained to 100.
- During these workshops, the BRC volunteers were also trained in camp selection, camp set up and management, logistics and resources mobilization, distribution of relief items, registration of refugees in the camps, first aid, as well as WatSan in order to assist returnees and vulnerable groups in an appropriate manner.
- An assessment of current disaster preparedness stock levels was conducted this month at the BRC headquarters in May in order to facilitate its quick deployment to requested locations. At present there are 1,550 new family size mosquito nets, 587 blankets, 744 plastic plates, 182 buckets, 1,096 mugs and 792 pieces of soap. This stock could be quickly transported to the field in emergencies.

Impact

- The BRC volunteers strengthened their theoretical knowledge and skills through the 4-day trainings in DRT modules and visits to UNHCR transit camps in the respective provinces.
- Gender issues and the Red Cross/Red Crescent Movement Fundamental Principles and Humanitarian Values are constantly being addressed in various stages of the operation's implementation, including during workshops and trainings, and substantial developments have been achieved to date. However, further improvements are required.

Objective 2: To provide appropriate shelter, modelled on UNHCR designs for 500 vulnerable female-headed households in locations that may include Makamba, Ruyigi, Kirundo, and Muyinga.



Burundi Red Cross volunteers at the UNHCR transit camp in Ruyigi province.

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Progress

- Information campaigns on community involvement in the operation, to be conducted in all four provinces, have been designed for implementation by the 100 BRC volunteers trained in disaster management.
- The availability of building materials in local markets has been confirmed. However, the procurement and tendering processes are still pending.
- The availability of local masons at provincial level, for future employment in the construction works has been confirmed.

Objective 3: To increase the resilience of 2,000 vulnerable returnees' households through distribution of mosaic-resistant manioc seeds, tools and one-time food and non food items distribution (500 vulnerable female-headed households in locations such as Makamba, Ruyigi, Kirundo, and Muyinga and 1,500 who are still be vulnerable after the UNHCR's three month food basket concludes).

No progress has been implemented under this objective.

Objective 4: To contribute to a reduced incidence of malaria amongst vulnerable pregnant women lacking access to health care in areas that may include Makamba, Ruyigi, Kirundo, and Muyinga through the provision of 2,000 insecticide-treated bed nets, through health promotion activities for the community, and through guidance to volunteers on pertinent methodologies.

Progress

- The identification and targeting of returnees and local pregnant women lacking access to health services for the distribution of mosquito nets, in areas that may include Kirundo, Makamba, Muyinga and Ruyigi, is planned to start from June to July 2006.
- 100 BRC volunteers have been trained on health issues, including CBFA, safe water, diarrhoea, WatSan, and guidelines for community action and cleaning campaigns. Educational sessions in the community on health issues and self-hygiene are scheduled for July to August 2006.
- The designs of booklets and leaflets on self-hygiene and clean water are ready, and their publication is scheduled for July to August 2006.

Objective 5: To improve community access to 50 safe water sources, to construct latrines for 50 of the most vulnerable families (returnees and from host community), and to increase awareness regarding good general water and sanitation behaviours in the main destination communities of returnees through water source rehabilitation activities in Makamba, Ruyigi, Kirundo, Muyinga.

Progress

- Water sources and latrines rehabilitation activities have been planned and discussed with the concerned authorities and local partners. Construction engineers have already been selected in the respective provinces to supervise construction work scheduled to begin during the second half of the year.

Objective 6: Reinforce the capacity of the national society for appropriate management, implementation and coordination of project activities in areas that may include Makamba, Ruyigi, Kirundo, and Muyinga.

Progress

- A total of 100 BRC volunteers from Kirundo, Makamba, Muyinga and Ruyigi have received training in DRT, SPHERE's Minimum Standards in Disaster Response, first aid and CBFA. Training workshops were also conducted in camp selection, camp set up and management, logistics and resources mobilization, distribution of relief items, registration of refugees in the camps, first aid, as well as WatSan in order to assist returnees and vulnerable groups in an appropriate manner.
- Provincial DM coordinators were appointed for the Red Cross provincial branches in May 2006. A one-day training on VCA and rapid assessment for the newly appointed provincial DM coordinators is planned for the first half of May 2006 in Bujumbura.
- A two-day workshop on planning, coordination and cooperation in disaster management is planned for mid-May 2006 in Bujumbura for the national society and its operational partners, including the Ministry of Civil Protection, Ministry of Health and Ministry of Education and the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

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Federation coordination

Several meetings with operational partners, namely; UNHCR, WFP, UNDP and FAO have been held during the reporting period. Specific meetings on the involvement of the Burundi Red Cross in the elaboration of the State emergency plan have also been held with the Ministry of Civil Protection.

Communications – advocacy and public information

The Federation's regional media and communications manager is currently supporting the communication needs of this operation. Both the Federation's Secretariat and its regional delegation continue to lobby for support for this operation. A DREF Bulletin on humanitarian assistance to internally displaced people (IDP) and returnees was issued in January. Regional drought response information is available on the Federation website.

Capacity of the national society

Due to the fact that at present, the Burundi Red Cross does not have mechanisms for quick and adequate response in emergencies, the Federation deployed a disaster management delegate in the country to support the up start of activities for the returnees operation in the country, evaluate its potential in disaster management and elaborate an integrated disaster preparedness and response strategy and related plan, create Disaster Response Teams and train volunteers on disaster management and first aid in pilot provinces, and to strengthen its partnerships at all levels. Technical support continues to be provided by the disaster management and programme departments in the regional delegation in Nairobi that have been augmented by additional food security, water and sanitation, logistics and drought operation management delegates in the newly established food security unit.

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