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Information bulletin

Democratic Republic of Congo: Population Movement

 International Federation
of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies

Date of issue: 22 June 2015	
Date of disaster : May 2015	Point of contact: M. Dominique Lutula Kitoko; Président of the DRC Red Cross
Host National Society: DRC Red Cross	
Number of people affected: 22,464	
N° of other partner organizations involved in the operation (if available and relevant): UNHCR, WFP (World Food Programme), CNR (National Commission for Refugees), OCHA (Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs), OXFAM , CARITAS, DGM (Directorate General for Migration)	

This bulletin is being issued for information only and reflects the current situation and details available at this time. The International Federation of Red Cross and Red Crescent Societies (IFRC) is not seeking funding or other assistance from donors for this operation. The Democratic Republic of Congo Red Cross will, however, accept direct assistance to provide support to the affected population.

The situation

Violence surrounding upcoming presidential elections in Burundi have resulted in people fleeing to neighbouring countries. Refugees are crossing daily into the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) seeking refuge in Fizi, Uvira and Walungu areas of South Kivu Province.

New arrivals are mostly being hosted by other Burundian refugee families, who arrived in 2010, while others are accommodated in makeshift sites (Lubarika, Luvungi and Sange). They are gradually being transferred to the new camp at Fizi / Lusenda, about 60 km from the town of Uvira and 30 km from Baraka.

These refugees entered and continue to enter the DRC through different points including:

- Kamanyola border in Walungu, via Rwanda;
- The Ruzizi River which borders Burundi (Ndunda, Ngendo, Rusabage, Kaberagule, Kiliba villages etc.) via canoe;
- Kavinvira border at Uvira Centre, later passing through to the Ruzizi plain to settled in various localities such as: Kiliba, Sange, Luvungi and Lubarika , right up to Kamanyola.
- Fizi territory, via the towns of Swima, Nundu, Baraka, and the Ubwari peninsula, crossing Lake Tanganyika aboard canoes.



Makeshift shelters for refugees in Luvungi / Ruzizi Plain © DRC RC
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NUMBER OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES AND CONGOLESE RETURNEES

Localities	Burundian refugees		Congolese returnees		Pre-existing Burundian refugees	
	Families	Individuals	Families	Individuals	Families	Individuals
Uvira	2,740	8,025	800	4,000	1,800	9,000
Fizi	513	1,439				
Total	3,253	9,464	800	4,000	1,800	9,000

Source : CNR, HCR and OCHA

NB : The figures for new refugees and returnees are dated from ending March to 28 May 2015. As regards the former refugees, they have been in the DRC since 2010.

Most of Burundian refugees are from the Hutu ethnic group. In addition to these refugees, there are also Congolese returnees from camps in Burundi, as well as economic migrants. This far, no organization is providing assistance to the latter two categories. It should be highlighted that on arrival, these refugees lived in host families in the villages mentioned above. In addition, 722 new refugees were reported in the city of Bukavu and some of them already presented themselves at the CNR office in Bukavu on the week commencing 15 June 2015.

Given the influx of refugees, the National Commission for Refugees (CNR) began to work in collaboration with Territorial Administration, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), the DGM and the provincial government to bring a large number of refugees to the settlement and transit sites, which were initially intended for Rwandan refugees before their repatriation from the DRC. From Monday 1 June 2015, following meetings between the Government, UNHCR and other humanitarian organisations, the Lusenda site in Fizi territory was identified for the construction of a camp, which will accommodate 5,000 households.

As of 15 June 2015, 800 people were already installed in makeshift shelters at the Lusenda site, while the transfer from transit sites to Lusenda is now ongoing. Much of the space at the Lusenda camp is unusable due to the terrain, and as such CNR and UNCHR are in discussion with the government, for another site in Munguli, located in Swima locality, since the Lusenda is not sufficient to accommodate all of new arrivals. Please note that the Mukwezi and Munguli sites have already been prospected.

Needs Assessment:

The Burundi refugees have immediate needs in areas including, food, shelter, water, non-food items, health and care etc. The shortage of drinking water forces households to consume water from the Ruzizi River and Lake Tanganyika. In addition, the refugees arrived with minimal household items and very little food and are now resorting to selling their assets for survival, leading to destitution. The patients amongst these vulnerable were treated free of charge at the Uvira General Hospital and at the Red Cross healthcare centre in Kavinvira.

Ongoing activities by other actors:

Upon the arrival of refugees, the DGM and CNR supported the pre-registration of refugees in Fizi, Uvira and Walungu. For better organization purposes, all humanitarian organizations involved with this Burundi refugee issue, met UNHCR, whose mandate is to ensure the protection of refugees, in Bukavu to establish the strategies and learn more on the decisions taken. Meanwhile, under the coordination of the United Nations Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (UNOCHA), operational teams are in the field in Fizi and Uvira, implementing the strategies and decisions taken in Bukavu.

Thus, the work on the ground has been organized as follows:

- AIRD: Construction of Lusenda camp
- ADES: Health and drinking water
- OXFAM: Camp sanitation
- CNR: Administration and security of the site with the support of the National Police
- WFP: Food distribution for 7 days to refugees who were already registered at Kamanyola, Lubarika, Luvungi, Sange, Uvira-Centre
- OXFAM: Drinking Water Supply
- CARITAS: Distribution of food items at the Luvungi Transit Centre.
- UNHCR: Supervision and distribution of food items in the camp.

Red Cross and Red Crescent action

The International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC) has built two (2) blocks of eight (8) latrines each, two (2) blocks of eight (8) shower rooms each and provided trash cans in Luvungi and Ruzizi. In addition, the ICRC proceeded with the distribution of food items, including: rice, beans, corn flour, etc. The DRC Red Cross (DRC RC) on its own part, has led some activities namely:

- Training / Recycling of eight (8) volunteers in restoring family links (RFL), one (1) each in Luvungi, Sange, Kiliba, Mulongwe, Makobola, Fizi- Centre and two (2) in Baraka
- Awareness raising of community leaders on the restoration of family links and the promotion of hygiene in the context of prevention against epidemics. These activities were carried out by some 142 first aid volunteers from Red Cross committees across all refugee entry points.

The IFRC provided financial support to the DRC RC to conduct an assessment mission on the ground. This mission allowed the NS to identify the various refugee entry points entry, to know the number of new refugees (3,253 households i.e. 9,464 individuals), the number of Congolese returnees (800 households) and the number of old refugees (4,000 i.e., 1,800 households and 9,000 individuals). It also enabled the DRC RC discuss with these refugees and returnees to know and understand their main problems.

Planned activities by the DRC RC:

The DRC RC is planning to respond to the needs of the refugees in the following sectors:

- Water / sanitation (facilitate access to clean water, promotion of hygiene, latrine construction)
- Relief / Distribution of NFIs
- Restoration of family links (RFL)
- Health and care (provide support to the Uvira healthcare centre in pharmaceuticals, etc.)
- Strengthen NS capacity (refresher training of first aid volunteers of all three territories in distribution techniques, awareness raising against diseases related to dirty hands, environmental sanitation, etc.).

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 (NGOs) 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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The IFRC's work is guided by Strategy 2020 which puts forward three strategic aims:

1. Save lives, protect livelihoods, and strengthen recovery from disaster and crises.
2. Enable healthy and safe living.
3. Promote social inclusion and a culture of non-violence and peace.