

GREAT LAKES REGION - BURUNDI: ASSISTANCE TO REFUGEES AND VULNERABLE GROUPS

4 August 1998

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situation as at 30 June 1998*

It has been decided to provide donors with a one-country situation report on the Great Lakes Appeal each month, together with an annex on the appeal coverage and outstanding needs for the entire region.

In Burundi, subject of this month's report, although the bulk of the focus of Federation/Burundi Red Cross programmes is on relief work in camps for returnees, some developmental, social and community projects are underway.

The context

Following the departure of Rwandan refugees in 1996, the Burundi Red Cross (BRC) and the Federation reoriented their activities towards some 650,000 vulnerable people in Burundi. Federation/BRC currently focuses on the provinces of Kirundo, Muyinga, Ngozi, Kayanza, Bujumbura city and environs, Karuzi, Muramvya and recently Makamba et Rutana. It should be noted that humanitarian assistance cannot be provided in one third of the country as security is a major problem and that about 350,000 Burundi refugees are still in camps in Tanzania and may return, voluntarily or not, to their country of origin at any time. The Federation is therefore striving to strengthen the NS's operational capacity and to promote its institutional development.

Latest events

The negotiations in Arusha from 15 to 21 June involving 17 factions representing almost all the political parties in Burundi led to the adoption of a joint statement calling for the suspension of hostilities from 20 July. However seven signatories expressed reserves with regard to the final document, including the Burundi Government and the Tutsi-dominated UPRONA and PARENA parties. Of major concern was the passage dealing with the suspension of hostilities between the armed parties; the Government of Burundi preferring the expression "armed factions". Failure to mention the lifting of the embargo against Burundi was also a cause of dispute.

These negotiations have not stopped armed clashes between the rebels and the military: approximately 120 persons have been killed this month, 50 in the region of Makamba alone. The Governors of Muramvya and Ngozi were recently attacked in broad daylight 30 kilometres from Bujumbura.

The UNICEF office in Burundi has warned about the increase of malnutrition in the country. Close to 36,000 of the 50,000 treated in the 248 nutrition centres in the country, suffer from chronic malnutrition -- out of whom 32,500 are children under the age of five.

Red Cross action

As available funds are decreasing, it has been decided to close the Ngozi sub-delegation. Twenty national staff members will be dismissed and the expatriate delegate will not be replaced.

Relief programme •

Seed distribution: Bean seeds provided by the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) and of seeds for market-garden crops purchased by the Federation were distributed in Kirundo, Makamba and Ngozi. Some problems with the quality of the seed have been noted and reported to the FAO.

Distribution of bean seeds and seeds for market-garden crops*

Province	Number of households	Number of beneficiaries	Beans (kg.)	Market garden crops (kg.)	Total (kg.)
Kirundo		5'856.00	6'100.00		6'100.00
Makamba	6'224.00	28'283.00	31'100.00	17.00	31'117.00
Ngozi	4'572.00	24'245.00	45'320.00	69.00	45'389.00
Total	10'796.00	58'384.00	82'520.00	86.00	82'606.00

*3,349 hoes were also distributed to the same number of households in Ngozi at the same time as the seed.

Food distribution: Repatriating Burundians in transit camps at Gatumba and Mugano, (from Democratic Republic of Congo and Tanzania respectively) and prisoners in Ngozi received daily rations of 350 gr of cereals, 120 gr. of pulses, 20 gr. of oil and 5 gr. of salt per person per day.

Chart 2 - Food distribution

Distrib site	Number benef.	Maize Meal (kg.)	Maize (kg.)	Beans (kg.)	Oil (kg.)	Salt (kg.)	Biscuits (kg.)	Total (kg.)
Mugano	447.00	8'835.00	0.00	4'423.00	327.00	191.00	0.00	13'776.00
Gatumba	703.00	8'265.00	0.00	2'361.00	394.00	98.00	0.00	11'118.00
Ngozi	2'345.00	0.00	6'086.00	2'098.00	184.00	84.00	0.00	8'452.00
Total	3'495.00	17'100.00	6'086.00	8'882.00	905.00	373.00	0.00	33'346.00

2,811 food rations were distributed on a weekly basis at the transit camp at Gatumba, bringing the number of beneficiaries to 703 per month. Repatriates at Mugano receive a three-month WFP allocation.

Non-food distributions: Burundians repatriating from Tanzania received 600 articles (tarpaulins, blankets, cans) and 492 kg. of soap; vulnerable persons in Bujumbura (750 beneficiaries) and environs (173 beneficiaries), and Ngozi (447 beneficiaries) received 2,615 articles in all (blankets, cooking sets, hoes, cloth, used clothing, cans, soap and tarpaulins).

Social welfare projects •

At "Twiheberanire" home street-children receive training enabling them to find a place in their family and in society. Construction work will be completed in August.

The BRC will decide whether a centre donated by the commune of Ngozi for an advancement of women project can be repaired rather than building a new one. Construction of the Muyinga centre is scheduled for the coming quarter.

Income generation projects •

An income generation project is connected with each of the social welfare projects. A poultry raising project is planned for Bujumbura and Muyinga but has not yet been started due to the embargo.

Community projects •

A national farm project supports rural groups and enables them to revive their activities. Three BRC agronomists are involved in this project in six provinces, advising and providing support to the farming groups on food crops (beans, sorghum, potatoes), market-garden crops and fish farming. The seed production programme has been submitted to USAID for funding.

A national reconstruction programme aims to assist reconstruction of community infrastructures such as houses and classrooms. The Red Cross contributes through the purchase of nails, windows and tools. A tunnel oven (to manufacture tiles) and brickyard projects are also run by Red Cross groups. Problems with the contractor have somewhat delayed this programme in Kayanza province but a solution is being worked out.

Institutional development •

Institutional development has included a day of reflection on how the Red Cross branches and the provincial and communal offices in Kayanza operate; guidance for youth groups in three secondary schools in Ngozi province; increasing awareness of the Movement in two lower secondary schools and in one upper secondary school in Muramvya and the establishment of youth groups in each.

Outstanding needs

A detailed chart is attached indicating human resource and financial needs for the programmes in Burundi and the other countries in the Great Lakes region. For more information please contact Roger Bracke, Team Leader for the Great Lakes, on ++4122 7394207, email: bracke@ifrc.org

Conclusion

Several delegates have completed their missions and were replaced in June, including the head of delegation. The BRC still focuses its programmes on relief activities but social and community programmes are beginning to develop too. It has been strongly recommended that the many local branches created last year be linked to the various relief, social welfare and community programmes.

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