UNHCR and partners have facilitated voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees since 2017, with the majority being from Tanzania, and smaller numbers assisted to return from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC) and Kenya. Until recently almost all returns from Rwanda and Uganda were self-organized. Following the conclusion of elections in Burundi in May 2020, increased interest in voluntary return has been expressed by refugees living in several countries. Based on tripartite consultations and assessments to ensure the voluntariness of return, UNHCR began to facilitate returns from Rwanda in August 2020, and recommenced returns from the DRC in September 2020. There are ongoing plans to initiate facilitated returns from Namibia and potentially other countries in East and Southern Africa in 2021.

### Key Figures – Assisted Repatriation

- **164,990** individuals
- **55,018** households
- **379** convoys

### Return Trends by Month Since September 2017

- **48%** male
- **52%** female

### Returns by Country of Asylum

- **Tanzania**: 137,363
- **Rwanda**: 47,911
- **Uganda**: 51,066
- **DRC**: 44,193
- **Kenya**: 16,000
- **2017**: 1,947

### Registration for Volrep in Tanzania 2017-2021

- **3,959** returnees are unaccompanied and separated children
- **56%** are children

### Population Profile at a Glance

- 29% of Burundian returnees had sought asylum in 2015
- 39% of Burundian returnees had sought asylum in 2016
- 26% of Burundian returnees had sought asylum in 2017
- 6% of Burundian returnees had sought asylum in 2018, 2019 and 2020

### Overview

1. UNHCR and partners are providing assistance to refugees who have decided to return to Burundi so that they may do so in safety and dignity, as well as to support social cohesion and sustainable return at the community level.
2. Additional funding is critically needed to ensure that returns can continue as well as to strengthen returnee monitoring and support sustainable reintegration.
3. The voluntary return operations from Tanzania, DRC and Rwanda to Burundi are taking place under the framework of the Tripartite Agreements between these governments and UNHCR. All parties have agreed to ensure returns are voluntary.
4. While the governments of Burundi and Tanzania have undertaken to promote refugee return, neither UNHCR nor other governments are doing so at this time. All have acknowledged the importance of refugees having the opportunity to make a free and informed choice about repatriation.
5. While returnees are generally being welcomed back by the Government of Burundi and their communities of origin without incident, returnee monitoring indicates many do face a number of reintegration challenges.
RETURN MONITORING IN BURUNDI

METHODOLOGY
Protection monitoring of returnees to Burundi is an essential protection activity for UNHCR and its commitment under the Tripartite Agreement. It aims to collect, process, analyse and disseminate in a systematic and regular way, the data and information on: 1) The conditions of return of assisted returnees, and 2) The level of reintegration in return areas.

The purpose is to propose an effective protection response by area of intervention and for advocacy purposes (towards sectors of intervention, development actors, donors and government authorities). The figures below reflect data collected from January 2020 to June 2021.

MONITORING PROGRESS
By 30 June 2021, 33,486 interviews with returnee families were conducted (see below the breakdown by province).

CIVIL DOCUMENTATION
- 72% of returnee HHs report that HH members have a identification card

DISPLACEMENT
- 48% of returnee HHs report their children received a birth certificate

VULNERABILITY
- 88% of refugees returned to their place of origin
- 12% returnee HHs have vulnerabilities, most often characterized by chronically ill and/or disabled family members

EDUCATION
- 50% of returnee children attend school, of which 35% primary school and 15% secondary school

HEALTH CARE
- 80% of returnee HHs have access to health care

WATER
- 95% returnee HHs have access to water
- 53% of those having access to water use public wells/fountains

ACCESS TO HOUSING
- 34% returnee HHs could access housing they owned prior to fleeing
- 37% could not access it after arrival (another 28% did not own housing before flight)
- 58% of those who cannot access previous housing report it being inhabitable upon arrival

LIVELIHOODS
- 92% of returnee heads of households are subsistence farmers

ACCESS TO LAND
- 81% of returnee HHs report having access to land
- 13% HHs have a problem accessing land and 6% HHs did not own land before leaving

TOP 3 PRIORITIES IN THE USE OF CASH ASSISTANCE
All refugees who have returned with the assistance of UNHCR receive an initial return package in Burundi consisting of a cash grant, basic household supplies, and food items. Returnees report the cash grant was used for the following top priority expenses:

1. Household items (35%)
2. Shelter (22%)
3. Land rental (19%)

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