



Press Release

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New Cross-Border Project Launched to Support Burundian Refugees in Tanzania and Burundi

Nyarugusu Camp, Kigoma Region – The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania, the Government of the Republic of Burundi, the European Union (EU), the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), in collaboration with the International Rescue Committee (IRC), Danish Refugee Council (DRC), and Icirore c' Amahoro (ICCA), together with refugees launched today a four-year project aimed at strengthening the protection and resilience of Burundian refugees in Tanzania and returnees in Burundi.

Funded by the European Union (EU) with a contribution of EUR 8 million (USD 8.8 million), the project runs from 1 October 2023 to 30 September 2027 and will support 338,579 Burundian refugees in the Nyarugusu and Nduta camps, as well as host communities in Tanzania's Kigoma region. The project will focus on improving access to civil documentation, providing quality education for returnees, and enhancing vocational skills. The project also seeks to overcome critical barriers to the voluntary return of Burundian refugees and help them rebuild their lives back home.

“There is no doubt that the current situation in Burundi warrants the return of the Burundian refugee but we have observed the hesitation of some Burundian refugees to return home. In this regard, as we welcome the support from the EU, we must understand that Burundian refugee situation in Tanzania is unique, necessitating a unique approach to dealing with it. The Government of Tanzania is willing to engage in discussions to find an agreeable approach to establish a common ground in finding durable solution for all Burundian refugees hosted in Tanzania by 2025,” said Hon. Tobias Andengenye, Kigoma Regional Commissioner, Tanzania.

The project will help returnees in Burundi access essential civil documentation, reintegrate into the local education system, and recognize vocational training certificates earned in Tanzania. It will also strengthen legal and protection services in Burundi by building local capacities to ensure these services continue after refugees return.

“This project reflects the European Union's strong and unwavering commitment to working alongside the Tanzanian government to protect and support refugees who have sought safety in Tanzania. We are dedicated to upholding their dignity and helping them rebuild their lives in a secure environment,” said Christine Grau, EU Ambassador to Tanzania.

For her part, Elisabetta Pietrobon, EU Ambassador to Burundi said: “The voluntary return and reintegration of Burundian refugees from Tanzania to Burundi is a key step towards promoting peace, stability, and development in the Great Lakes region. The program will benefit directly more than 96,000 refugees, 4,800 members of hosting communities and 52,000 returnees.”



“For repatriating Burundian refugees, skills acquired in Tanzania will help them with reintegration and adaptability back home as they will have an opportunity to put their skills to use and also train members of their community as a way of contributing to strengthening their communities back home,” Zulqarnain Hussain Anjum, UNHCR Deputy Representative in Tanzania.

UNHCR appreciates the EU’s support in finding durable solutions for Burundian refugees in the region and for joining hands with other development actors to rebuild Burundian lives for a peaceful and sustainable future.

“The consortium of NGO implementing partners is committed to combining their efforts and respective expertise in a complementary and synergistic action aimed at providing lasting solutions to the Burundian refugee crisis in the Great Lakes region,” said Valentin Lubunga Kibukila, IRC Country Director in Burundi.

Since the start of the voluntary repatriation exercise in September 2017, more than 177,000 refugees have returned home to Burundi from Tanzania. As of the end of August 2024, around 145,000 Burundian refugees are hosted in Tanzania.

“The reintegration needs remain huge. We still need more financial support for voluntary return and the reintegration of former refugees in Burundi. The EU cross border project is a timely and significant contribution to a smooth reintegration of Burundian returnees,” said, Brigitte Mukanga-Eno, UNHCR Representative in Burundi.

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