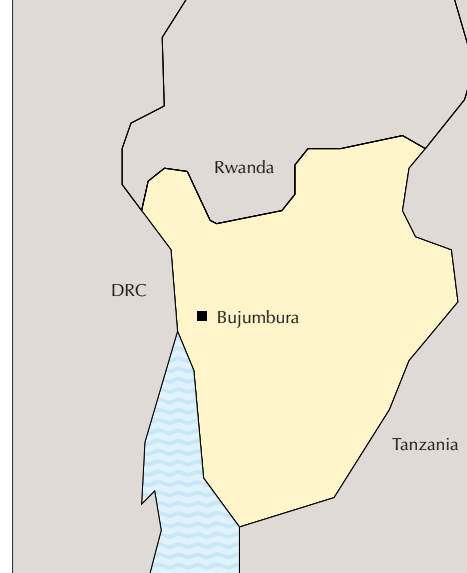


Burundi



Quick facts

Number of IDPs	Up to 100,000
Percentage of total population	Up to 1.2%
Start of current displacement situation	1993
Peak number of IDPs (Year)	800,000 (1999)
New displacement	0
Causes of displacement	Armed conflict, generalised violence
Human development index	166



Up to 100,000 IDPs were living in 2010 in settlements in the north and centre of Burundi, the majority of them ethnic Tutsi. They had been displaced by inter-ethnic and inter-communal violence which broke out after the 1993 coup and the fighting between government forces and rebel groups which followed. The security situation improved after the last rebel group laid down its arms in 2008, and there has been no new conflict-induced displacement since then. The relatively peaceful presidential elections of June 2010, which gave a second mandate to Pierre Nkurunziza, indicated the improvement in security; nonetheless, the main opposition parties withdrew their candidates following allegations of fraud during local elections. No specific problems were reported regarding IDPs' right to vote during the elections.

While many of the difficulties facing IDPs are shared by the rest of the population of the fourth least-developed country in the world, they lack security of tenure in the settlements they live in, and many are far from the land on which they depend for survival.

Burundi is the least urbanised country in the world, and the homes and land of most Burundians are scattered across the hilly countryside; IDPs also live in rural areas, but in more concentrated settlements numbering from a few hundred to several thousand people. Due to the crowded arrangement of settlements, young couples have difficulty in finding space to build a home for themselves.

Reflecting the wider discrimination against their ethnic group, internally displaced Batwa people are marginalised and live in particularly difficult conditions, in huts with leaf roofing set apart from other IDPs.

As land plots in the settlements are small, IDPs generally live from farming the land they originally owned. While the majority still have access to their original fields, the land can be several hours walk away from their settlement, and so IDPs and particularly the older and sick people among them, often struggle to cultivate it. The distance to their fields also means that they cannot raise livestock or protect their crops from theft. Many widows and orphaned girls cannot access their land, because it has been taken over by family members.

The last comprehensive survey of the settlements, conducted by OCHA in 2005, found that over 50 per cent of IDPs had no intention of returning to their places of origin. Since then, few have returned, mostly because better basic services are available around the settlements, but also because they have

increasingly established ties with other IDPs and surrounding communities. Older people also remember with fear their displacement and the former neighbours who caused it. The country has experienced widespread violence and banditry over the years, and living closer together rather than in traditional scattered upland homes has made IDPs feel safer.

Large IDP settlements have attracted people from surrounding communities. IDPs report good relationships with their non-displaced neighbours and participate in community affairs and social events. Their children generally attend primary schools in neighbouring communities without fear of discrimination. While the health centres outside the settlements are generally overcrowded, poorly stocked, and unaffordable for poor Burundians, IDPs do at least have equal access to them.

The sustainability of many IDPs' situations is threatened by their insecure tenure in the settlements and the outstanding claims on the land. Many IDPs were settled by the government on privately-owned land, and many owners are now trying to take possession again. In 2006, the government established the National Commission for Land and Other Possessions (CNTB) to resolve land and other property disputes involving people affected by the conflict. Some people claiming to own the land of IDP settlements have turned to the Commission, but IDPs have generally used mediation by traditional chiefs and local authorities to settle disputes, as they find them more accessible and quicker to issue decisions.

The Ministry of National Solidarity, Refugee Return and Social Reintegration is in charge of supporting the reintegration of IDPs and returnees. In March 2010, the government adopted a "socio-economic reintegration strategy for people affected by the conflict" and set up a technical working group to develop a policy for durable solutions. The group convened for the first time in October. The participation of UNHCR in this new working group signalled an increased engagement of the UN in the search for durable solutions. The UN had introduced the cluster system in Burundi in 2008 but it had made little difference to IDPs.

Burundi has ratified the Great Lakes Pact and signed the Kampala Convention in 2009; however it had not ratified the Convention by the end of 2010.