

# THE BURUNDI REFUGEE SITUATION

# Introduction

- Entering 5<sup>th</sup> year since 2015 refugee outflow, **349,000** Burundi refugees are hosted in the region:
  - United Republic of Tanzania – **200,000**
  - Rwanda – **70,000**
  - Democratic Republic of Congo – **43,000**
  - Uganda – **36,000**
- Also in:
  - Kenya – **13,000**
  - Southern Africa (South Africa, Mozambique, Malawi, Zambia) – **30,000**
- Over **60,000** Burundian refugees have been assisted to return since 2017. Others have returned without assistance.
- New arrivals seeking asylum continue in relatively smaller numbers.
- **\*Protracted Burundi refugee population from 1972 and 1990s still in the region – 50,000 to 75,000**



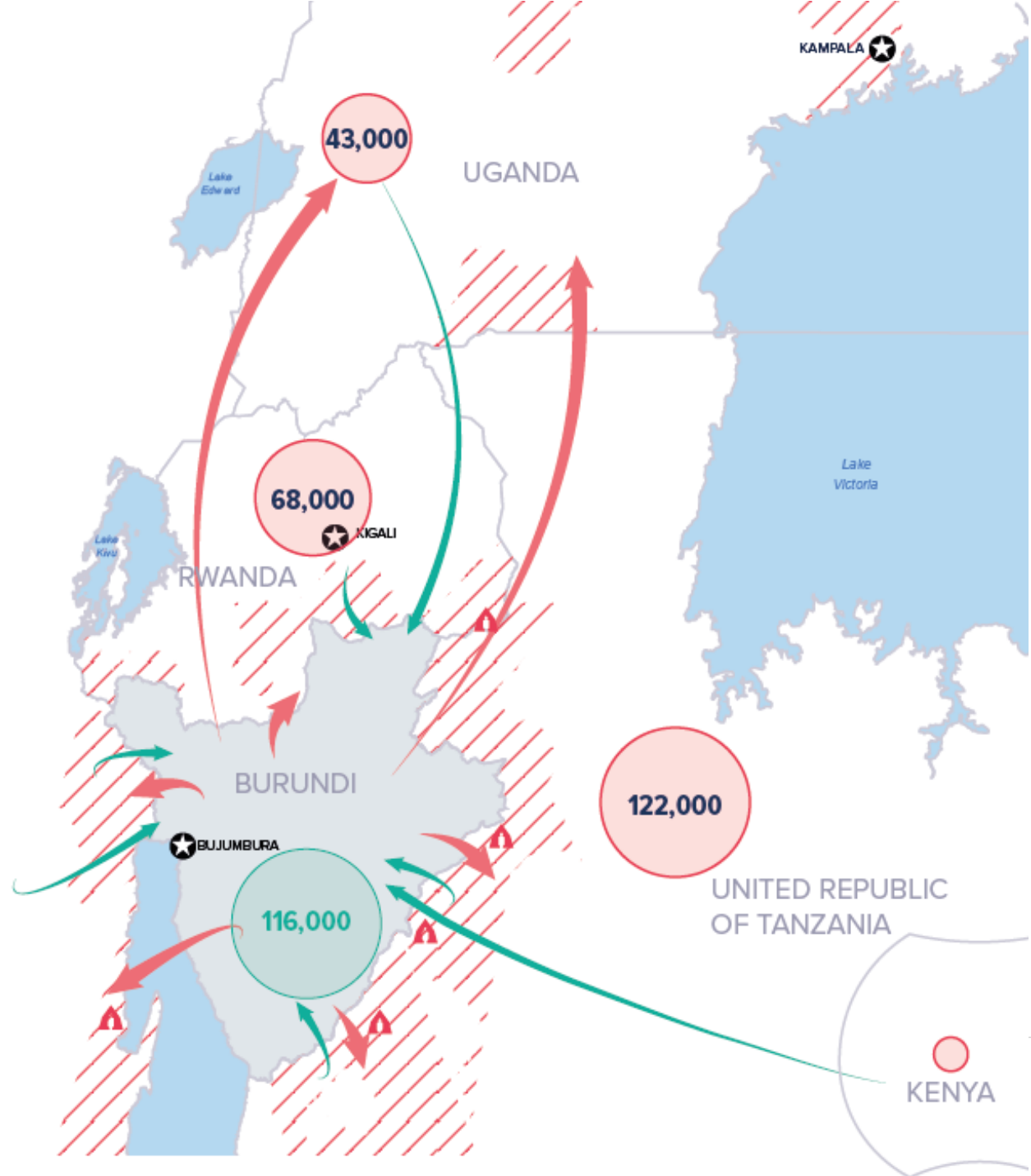
# 2019 Planning Figures

**394,000 Burundians** to be supported in 2019 thru the Regional Refugee Response Plan including:

- **278,000** refugees remaining in countries of asylum by end 2019
- **116,000** projected returnees

DEMOCRATIC REPUBLIC OF THE CONGO

45,000



- Refugees
- Assisted returns
- Refugee camp
- Refugee crossing
- Refugee returning
- Refugee locations

## Legal and Policy Framework of Asylum Countries

- Most countries in the region have moved from *prima facie* recognition of Burundian refugees to individual status determination.
- All countries have national laws largely in line with relevant conventions.
- Policies range from full freedom of movement to strict encampment.
- Different procedures around the right to work and own businesses.
- Some countries are moving toward full inclusion in national social services.
- Refugees are included in National Development Plans in several countries.
- Countries have started to provide nationally recognized identity documents.
- Legal provisions do exist for formal local integration but have been utilized to varying degrees.

# Durable Solutions Prospects

## Voluntary Repatriation

- UNHCR is not promoting returns to Burundi at this time.
- Working with the Government of Burundi and host countries to assist voluntary repatriation in safety and dignity for those who have made a free and informed choice to return.
- Since 2017, more than 60,000 Burundian refugees assisted to return voluntarily, mainly from Tanzania, with several hundred assisted to return from Kenya (586) and DRC (88).
- Others returning on their own from Rwanda and elsewhere.
- Up to 116,000 more are projected to return in 2019.
- 11,000 Burundian refugees are signed up and awaiting assistance to return from Tanzania.
- Several hundred in DRC, Kenya, and Rwanda have requested assistance to return.

# Durable Solutions Prospects

## *Tripartite Agreements*

- Returns from Tanzania are happening under the framework of a Tripartite Commission and Agreement (signed in 2001 and reactivated in 2017)
- With DRC, Standard Operating Procedures (*arrangements particuliers*) were developed for a group of Burundian refugees repatriated from Lusenda in August 2017. (a Tripartite Agreement from 2009 has not been re-activated)
- Additional tripartite meetings or structured dialogue at technical level with Government of Burundi and other governments would be useful to establish a framework and modalities for the return process.

# 2017-2018 Voluntary Repatriation

## KEY FIGURES – ASSISTED REPATRIATION



**58,546\***  
individuals



**19,376**  
households



**98** convoys

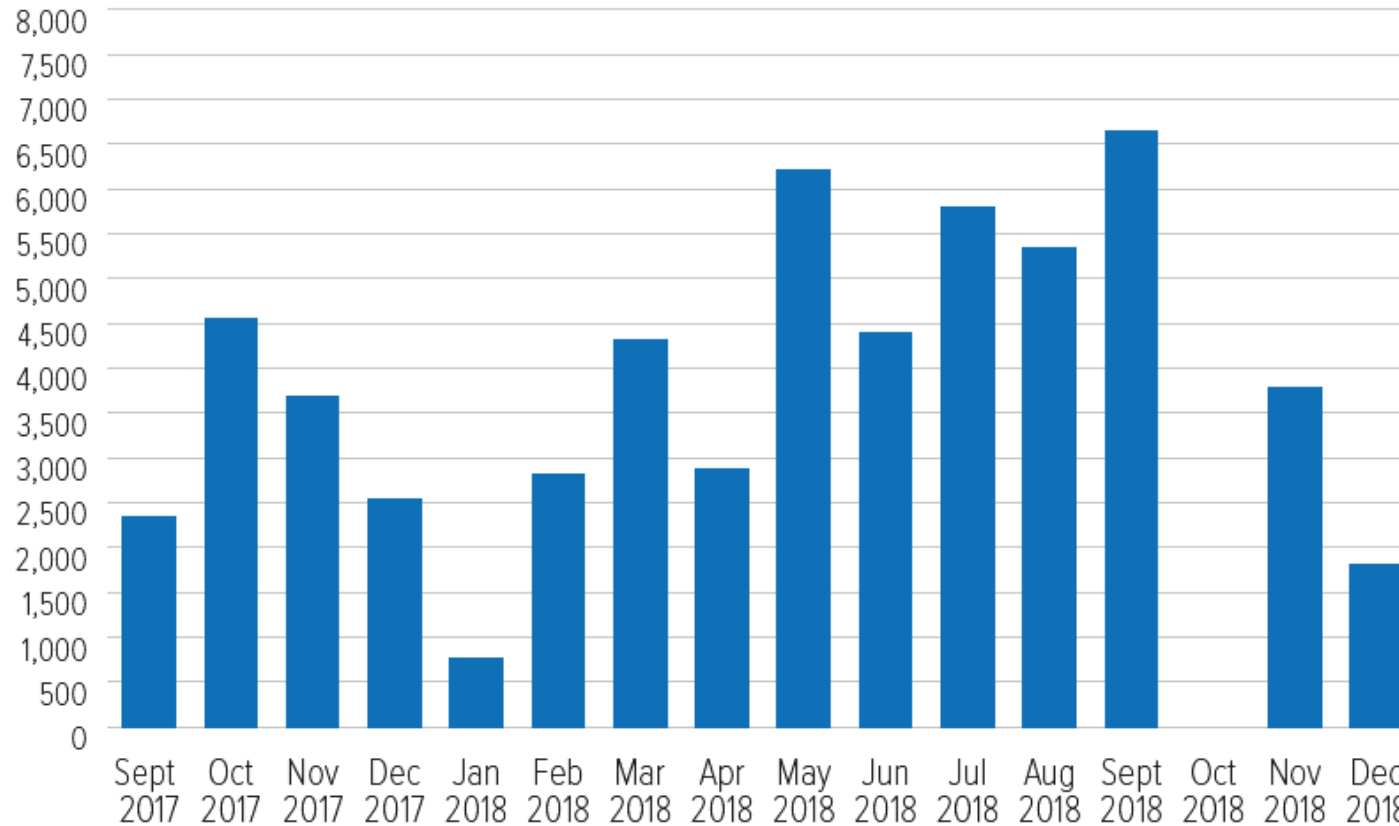


**49.4%**  
male

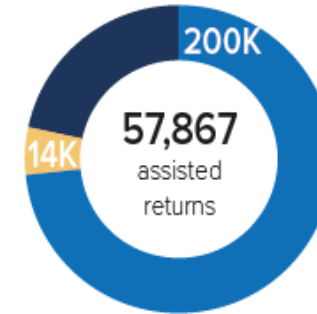


**50.6%**  
female

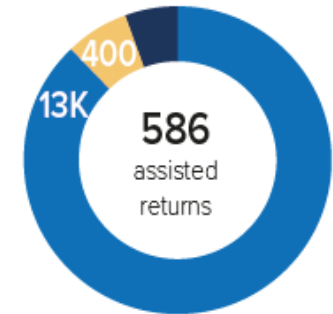
## RETURN TRENDS BY MONTH SINCE SEPTEMBER 2017



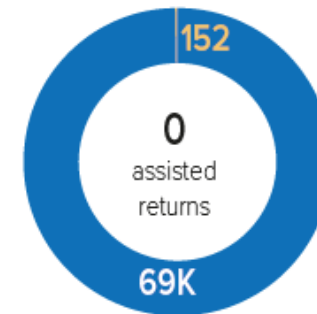
## RETURNS BY COUNTRY OF ASYLUM



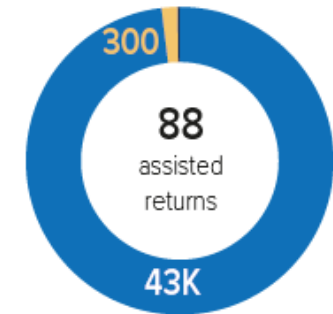
Tanzania



Kenya



Rwanda



DRC

■ # of registered Burundian refugees

■ # of assisted returns since September 2017

■ # of Burundian refugees pre-registered for VolRep

## Durable Solutions Prospects (Cont'd)

### Reintegration of returnees in Burundi

- Returnees receive a modest return package.
- Returnees are going back to communities that are facing challenging socio-economic conditions.
- Joint Refugee Return and Reintegration Plan to strengthen the resilience of return areas is being finalized, in line with:
  - National Strategy for the Reintegration of Disaster Affected People
  - National Development Plan
- Improvements to returnee monitoring are needed.



# Durable Solutions Prospects (Cont'd)

## Local Integration

### ■ In Tanzania:

- Tanzania naturalized 162,000 Burundian refugees who arrived in 1972:
  - Tanzania Comprehensive Solutions Strategy (TANCOSS) developed in 2007
  - Tanzania Strategic Plan for Local Integration of New Citizens (TANSPLI)
- In 2018 an additional 40,455 individuals were verified as members of the 1972 Burundian refugee population.

### ■ In Rwanda:

- The legal framework makes generous provision for the acquisition of Rwandan nationality by various groups of applicants.
- Government has indicated openness to local integration for some refugees.
- Strategic Plan for Refugees Inclusion (education, livelihoods, urban refugees' access to health insurance, and documentation)
- Joint Government of Rwanda-UNHCR Strategy for Economic Inclusion of Refugees

# Durable Solutions Prospects (Cont'd)

## Local Integration

### ■ In DRC:

- Current emphasis is on socio-economic integration through investment in host communities and strengthening of self-reliance programmes.
- Progressive implementation of the “alternative to camps” policy, building on the freedoms and rights established by law.
- Health and education services are integrated into the national system; Joint agriculture initiatives.
- Local integration in a permanent legal sense may be an option in the future.

### ■ In Uganda:

- Refugees who have remained in Uganda for long periods may qualify for local integration – legal provisions for naturalization provided for in the 2006 Refugee Act and the Citizenship and Immigration control Act.
- Ugandan authorities also considering the possibility of offering alternative legal options, i.e. issuance of special residential permits for refugees with long periods of residence.

# Durable Solutions Prospects (Cont'd)

## Resettlement and Complementary Pathways – extremely limited

- **In Tanzania:**
  - No Burundian refugee recommended yet for resettlement. Will be considered on an exceptional basis for those with protection concerns (women/girls at risk, persons with albinism, medical cases, etc).
- **In Rwanda:**
  - No resettlement yet envisioned for Burundian refugees.
- **In DRC**
  - No cases submitted in 2018 for resettlement but the identification process is underway. There is also one case in the pipeline since 2015.
- **In Uganda:**
  - A few cases have been assessed for resettlement.
- **In Kenya:**
  - During the last five years, 237 Burundians were resettled; 121 refugees were submitted in 2018. Kakuma intends to submit 50 individuals to the US in 2019.

# Concluding Remarks

- The multi-agency response for Burundi refugees is acutely underfunded.
- The UN is working with Governments in the region in line with SDGs (*leaving no one behind*) & the Global Compact on Refugees to mobilize more humanitarian *and* development resources for more equitable burden and responsibility sharing to support the countries hosting Burundian refugees.
- More investment is needed to support the resilience, skills & talents of Burundian refugees:
  - 1) Economically - as producers, consumers, employees or potential employers – to foster self-reliance.
  - 2) Education – not just primary, but secondary and tertiary including distance learning and scholarships.
- UNHCR stands ready to support countries to implement their existing pledges (from the 2011 Ministerial Intergovernmental Event on Refugees and Stateless Persons & 2016 Leaders' Summit on Refugees).
- Prospects for durable solutions should be considered in the preparation of commitments and pledges prepared for the 1<sup>st</sup> Global Refugee Forum in December 2019.

**THANK YOU**