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Programme

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WFP Burundi Country Brief

December 2025



Operational Context

Since 5 December 2025, Burundi has witnessed a significant refugee influx, with more than 101,000 people—mostly women and children—fleeing insecurity in eastern DRC and crossing the border in search of safety. This sudden arrival has placed additional strain on already limited resources. Food rations have been reduced to 75 percent, effectively covering only half of minimum food needs, underscoring the urgency of scaling up assistance.

Beyond the refugee crisis, the humanitarian situation in Burundi remains of high concern. Large numbers of vulnerable households continue to suffer the effects of multiple and concurrent socio-economic and climate shocks. Weak institutional capacity to manage climatic events, persistently high levels of chronic and acute malnutrition, and inadequate social safety nets compound these vulnerabilities. The prevalence of chronic malnutrition among children aged 6–59 months stands at 52.8 percent—the highest in the world.

The economic environment remains strained, marked by recurrent fuel shortages and inflationary pressures. Encouragingly, inflation has eased, with the year-on-year rate declining to 15.2 percent in December 2025 from 36.4 percent a year earlier ([Consumer Price Index](#) statistics). This relative stabilization offers some relief compared to the previous year, though inflation remains high enough to continue eroding household purchasing power and affecting market dynamics.

WFP has been present in Burundi since 1968, supporting food security, nutrition, and resilience efforts across the country.



2023 Human Development Index:
187 out of 193

Chronic malnutrition: **52.8 percent of children between 6–59 months**

63 percent of the population live on less than USD 2.50 a day

Population: **12.3 million**

In Numbers



957,048 people assisted in December 2025

USD 2,876,919 cash-based transfers (CBT) distributed

307 mt of food assistance distributed

USD 55.91 million six months net funding requirements (January - June 2026)

Strategic updates

- During the High-Level Dialogue on Nutrition and Human Capital Development held on 16 December 2025 under the patronage of the Prime Minister, key recommendations relevant to WFP included finalizing the National Multisectoral Food Security and Nutrition Policy, strengthening digitalized information systems, promoting the production of nutritious foods for young children, increasing budget allocations for nutrition across ministries, raising community awareness during the first 1,000 days, supporting the private sector to produce safe and affordable locally made foods, and encouraging applied research to inform programming and advocacy.
- Escalating Funding Needs:** WFP's net funding requirements for next 6 months (January-June) surged from USD 36.68 million in November to USD 55.91 million in December, a dramatic 52 percent increase in just one month due to the scale of the emergency.

Operational Updates

Crisis Response

- Refugees:** In December, WFP supported 126,449 Congolese refugees with hybrid assistance, delivering USD 1,357,377 million in cash transfers and 167 mt of food. The caseload jumped from 75,800 in November due to the sudden influx triggered by intensified conflict in eastern DRC. Funding gaps forced ration cuts to 75 percent of daily needs, leaving households exposed and driving many to adopt negative coping strategies such as debt, asset sales, and heightened protection risks for women and girls. WFP is urging sustained donor support to stabilize assistance and safeguard refugees' basic food needs.
- Returnees:** WFP supported 3,965 Burundian returnees from Tanzania, including 1,070 children, with 6 mt of food and USD 193,645 in cash transfers, providing hot meals at transit centers and a hybrid three-month return package to ease reintegration. The caseload rose steadily from 1,860 in October to 2,717 in November and 3,965 in December, reflecting the gradual resumption of repatriation flows after earlier disruptions. Meanwhile, the humanitarian community, in collaboration with the Government, is preparing for a large-scale refugee return. Between January and March 2026, an estimated 36,000 individuals are expected to arrive, followed by another 57,000 between April and June, bringing the total to 93,000 returnees in the first half of 2026. WFP Burundi has the capacity to assist up to 59,000 returnees with a full through June 2026.
- Assistance to food-insecure people affected by shocks:** In December, WFP was unable to provide support to this vulnerable group due to funding shortfalls, leaving them without urgently needed assistance.

Resilience Building

- Home-grown school feeding programme:** WFP provided school meals to 800,907 children through USD 1.2 million in CBT and 132 mt of in-kind food. Cash-based transfers allowed schools to buy directly from local farmers, strengthening markets and supporting nutrition. Of the total, 704,649 children were reached via decentralized procurement, while 96,258 received in-kind food in 119 schools serving as the World Bank's control group for the ongoing impact evaluation.
- Cash-based transfers halved in December to USD 1.21 million, while in-kind food dropped from 211 mt to 132 mt. The decline reflects that schoolchildren received assistance only during the first half of December before leaving for Christmas break.

WFP Country Strategy



* resources required to fully implement all WFP activities in upcoming 6 months

Total Requirement (in USD)	Allocated Contributions (in USD)	Six Month Net Funding Requirements (in USD) *
257.96 m	3.7 m	55.91 m

Strategic Result 1: Access to food

Country Strategic Plan Outcome 1: Shock-affected populations in targeted areas, Burundi returnees, internally displaced persons and refugees in camps can meet their basic food and nutrition needs all year round.

Focus area: Crisis Response

- Activity 1:** Provide unconditional food and/or cash-based assistance to refugees in camps and transit centres.
- Activity 2:** Provide unconditional food and/or cash-based assistance to acutely food-insecure households, including shock-affected households, internally displaced persons and Burundi returnees.
- Activity 3:** Provide adequate and timely nutrition-dense food along with gender-transformative social and behaviour change communication to supplement the diets of acutely malnourished boys and girls aged 6–59 months, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, people living with HIV and people undergoing treatment for tuberculosis in refugee camps and targeted areas

Strategic Result 2: End malnutrition

Country Strategic Plan Outcome 2: People in Burundi have improved nutrition, health and education outcomes that contribute to human capital throughout the year.

Focus area: Resilience Building

- Activity 4:** Provide integrated nutrition interventions that contribute to the prevention of malnutrition among children aged 6–23 months, adolescent girls, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls and people living with HIV and tuberculosis.
- Activity 5:** Promote safe and nutritious school meals to pre-primary and primary school-aged children in targeted areas

Strategic Result 3: Sustainable Food Systems

Country Strategic Plan Outcome 3: Food-insecure and risk-prone populations in targeted areas, especially women and young people, smallholder farmers, farmer-based organizations and value chain actors, have improved and more sustainable livelihoods all year round through resilient, efficient and inclusive food systems.

Focus area: Resilience Building

- Activity 6:** Provide an integrated package of assistance for smallholder farmers and value chain actors that enables them to equitably access and utilize appropriate technology, innovation, skills, inputs and services to improve their productivity and incomes and increase their access to markets.
- Activity 7:** Provide an integrated package of assistance to food-insecure, risk-prone populations including refugees and support access to nutrition-sensitive, gender-transformative, climate-resilient livelihood interventions

Strategic Result 4: Capacity Strengthening

Country Strategic Plan Outcome 4: Government and national actors in Burundi have strengthened capacities, systems and services to plan, design, implement and monitor food and nutrition assistance, food systems, school meals and social protection policies and strategies, by 2027.

Focus area: Resilience Building

- Activity 8:** Provide systems strengthening support on the co-creation, design and implementation of effective food and nutrition assistance programmes, including for supply chains, social protection, school meals, sustainable food systems and early warning and emergency preparedness systems

Strategic Result 8: Enhance global partnership

Country Strategic Plan Outcome 5: The Government and humanitarian and development partners have access to reliable common services and expertise that enables them to reach vulnerable people and respond to needs and emergencies throughout the year.

Focus area : Crisis Response

- Activity 9:** Provide on-demand supply chain and emergency telecommunications and information technology services to government, development and humanitarian partners

Photo: Food distribution to Congolese refugees at Busuma refugee site. © WFP/Bede Baregensabe

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- Nutrition:** WFP distributed 2 mt of specialized nutritious food to 639 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls and 2,413 children aged 6–23 months across 4 provinces - Butanyerera (Kirundo district), Gitega (Karusi district), Buhumuza (Ruyigi district), and Burunga (Rutana district) for the prevention of stunting.
- Durable impact for refugees:** In December 2025, under the *Merankabandi* project, WFP provided USD 110,807 in cash-based transfers to 22,675 refugees, complemented by training in social behaviour change and entrepreneurship to foster income-generating activities and strengthen financial autonomy.
- Adaptive Modality Shifts in Q4 2025:** In late 2025, WFP's assistance modalities reflected both pipeline strain and flexibility. Across the overall portfolio, cash-based transfers and in-kind food declined steadily month-on-month. Within refugee and returnee operations, however, CBT rose in December while in-kind support dropped sharply. This pivot was driven by reduced food availability and the need for faster, market-based delivery. By increasing cash where feasible, WFP safeguarded coverage despite pipeline constraints.

Assessment and Monitoring

- Market price monitoring:** December marks the end of the lean season in Burundi, when reserves are low and prices peak before the first harvests. Compared to November 2025, staple food prices rose modestly—beans by 1 percent and cereals/tubers by 2 percent—but increases were sharper in some regions: vegetables up 6–12 percent in the North and Center-East, cereals 6–9 percent in the East, and tubers in Ruyigi-Karusi and the Northwest. In eastern Burundi, the arrival of around 90,000 Congolese refugees since December 2025 has driven sharper rises in Ruyigi (vegetables +12 percent, cereals +9 percent, tubers +6 percent). The situation is likely to worsen with the expected return of 93,000 Burundians from Tanzania by May 2026 to areas already hosting 130,000 Congolese refugees.
- Rapid assessment of drought impact in Busoni and Kirundo:** A joint Government/partners assessment in Kirundo and Busoni (Dec 2025) found 532,425 people affected by severe water deficit, with 240,000 in urgent need. Crop losses were devastating—beans up to 100 percent, maize up to 100 percent, and sorghum up to 60 percent—forcing households into asset sales, migration, and reduced meals. Consequences include rising malnutrition, school dropouts, child labor, and protection risks. The mission called for immediate food assistance, support for the 2026B agricultural season, urgent water access measures, and medium-term resilience investments such as irrigation, reforestation, and livelihood diversification.
- Impact of the Closure of the Burundi–RDC Border on Trade, Markets, and Food Security:** The closure of the Burundi–DRC border has had severe socio-economic repercussions. It has paralyzed cross-border trade, cutting off nearly 30 percent of Burundi's total exports and over half of its exports to Africa, leading to shortages of basic goods. Fuel supply has worsened as the informal market that once stabilized prices collapsed, causing costs to double and reducing foreign currency inflows from Congolese transactions. Additionally, labor mobility has been disrupted, leaving many Burundian seasonal workers—vital to agriculture and construction in the Kivu region—without access to jobs and their main source of income.

Funding Shortfalls

- Food assistance for refugees:** In December 2025, WFP continued to provide 75 percent of the standard food ration to refugees in Burundi due to ongoing funding shortages. Despite rations being reduced to 75 percent, WFP will face a pipeline break at the end of April if no new contributions are made available. WFP requires **USD 4 million each month** to support the food and nutrition needs of the entire refugee caseload, including **USD 2 million monthly** for the newly arrived refugees.
- Nutrition:** Funding shortfalls forced the suspension of MAM supplementation in November and the complete halt of stunting prevention activities in December, leaving vulnerable women and children without critical nutrition support. Sustained donor investment is urgently needed to keep these life-saving interventions running.
- School feeding programme:** To sustain its school feeding programme throughout the ongoing 2025–2026 academic year (September 2025 to June 2026), WFP requires **USD 16.8 million**. Without additional funding, the number of meals provided to children will be reduced, negatively impacting both school attendance and nutritional outcomes.

Donors (in alphabetical order): Belgium, Burundi, China, European Union, Finland, France, Germany, Global Partnership for Education, Japan, Kerry Group, Mastercard Foundation, Monaco, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, United States of America, UNICEF, World Bank.