



World Food Programme

SAVING LIVES  
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# WFP Burundi

## COUNTRY BRIEF

March 2026

### KEY HIGHLIGHTS

[Burundi | World Food Programme](#)

- In February 2026, WFP assisted 822,000 people, delivering 121 mt of food and USD 3.8 million in cash transfers.
- WFP reached a total of 160,994 refugees, including 82,000 from the newly arrived caseload. Due to funding shortfalls, distributions were limited to reduced rations (75%), covering only half of daily food needs.
- The pace of refugee repatriation from Tanzania accelerated, with over 24,000 Burundians returning in February, compared to 12,300 in January.
- WFP delivered school-feeding to 613,000 children in February, a decrease from 880,000 in January due to funding constraints.
- WFP requires USD 49.30 million for the period March–August 2026 to expand assistance, pre-position supplies, and support reintegration efforts.



**822,000 people** assisted in February 2026



**49.4%**  
Male



**50.6%**  
Female



**121 mt** food distributed



**USD 3.8 M** cash transferred



**USD 47.6M** (March – Aug 2026) net funding requirements

**Photo:** Furaha Neema, 33, poses for a photograph with her children outside their tent at Musenyi refugee site. © WFP/Arete/Kibuuka Mukisa

### SITUATION OVERVIEW

- Burundi experienced a massive influx of over 100,000 new refugees ([UNHCR Dec 2025](#); [UNICEF Dec 2025](#), ONPRA) – predominantly women and children – fleeing insecurity in eastern DRC since December 2025, placing significant pressure on local markets and public services. The majority have been registered in Busuma settlement, overwhelming already fragile local markets, public services, and humanitarian response capacity. Lifesaving assistance has borne the brunt of this pressure, with food rations reduced to 75 percent of standard entitlements as resources are stretched beyond capacity. The scale and speed of arrivals underscore the urgent need to rapidly scale up humanitarian funding, pre-position critical supplies, and strengthen protection and essential services to avert further deterioration in living conditions.
- Although the border with the DRC officially reopened on 23 February 2026 after a two-month closure, economic activity has been slow to recover, with only limited volumes observed to date and direct repercussions for market supply and the food security of border communities
- At the same time, the ongoing agricultural season has been adversely affected by climatic shocks, including hydric deficits in the northern provinces that impacted nearly 500,000 people (around 100,000 households), according to the joint January 2026 rapid multisectoral assessment. In addition, widespread excessive rainfall reported by IOM's displacement tracking matrix in early 2026 affected more than 120,000 people—22 percent of whom were displaced—in the northern, western, and eastern regions of Burundi. These regions were the most affected by recent climatic shocks, with conditions in the East further aggravated by the influx of returning Burundians and Congolese refugees, adding additional pressure to already fragile local food systems.
- Prices remain well above the five-year seasonal average, especially for beans, maize, and cassava flour and while some stabilization is observed, real-time monitoring shows costs remain significantly higher than last year, continuing to erode household purchasing power.

## OPERATIONAL UPDATES

### Crisis Response

#### Refugees

- In February, WFP delivered hybrid assistance, combining cash-based transfers and hot meals, to 160,994 Congolese refugees, including 82,000 newly arrived individuals, across seven sites and two transit centres. WFP provided USD 2.39 million in cash assistance and distributed 21 metric tons of food.
- The Busuma refugee site alone now hosts 66,636 individuals, including more than 39,000 children. Despite rapid multisectoral deployment, critical gaps persist; 64 percent of households remain inadequately sheltered, water supply is insufficient, and education and health services are operating beyond capacity.
- Protection needs are acute, with over 1,100 unaccompanied or separated children, limited access to legal assistance, and case management systems under strain. Recent interventions, including the establishment of child-friendly spaces, temporary learning facilities, expanded WASH infrastructure, and health services have provided immediate relief. However, the scale of needs continues to outpace available resources, underscoring the urgent requirement for reinforced support to sustain life saving assistance and strengthen resilience.

#### Returnees

- In February, the pace of repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania surged well beyond the levels anticipated under the tripartite agreement, with over 24,000 individuals returning compared to 12,300 in January. The magnitude of these returns is placing considerable strain on Burundi's already fragile social services. Considering the sudden increase and limited resources, WFP will reduce returnee rations to 50 percent of standard entitlements starting March, underscoring the urgent need for additional donor support to sustain reintegration and safeguard food security.

#### Climatic shocks response

- Planned interventions to address climatic shocks could not be implemented in February due to the absence of dedicated funding. Although the response framework is in place, the lack of resources has prevented timely action, leaving vulnerable communities exposed to heightened risks of food insecurity and livelihood losses.

#### Nutrition

- In February, a mass screening of malnutrition was conducted among the refugee population in Busuma site to inform the scale of needs. Even before the screening results were available, other partners had already initiated nutrition activities on the ground. Screening identified 1,523 children and 519 pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBWG) with moderate acute malnutrition requiring supplementation, while 6,673 children and 3,336 PBWG will receive preventive support. With nutrition commodities

now in place, WFP is positioned to complement ongoing efforts and directly respond to the needs identified.

- In February 2026, the nutrition prevention initiative funded by France continued in and around Musenyi refugee site, reaching 7,250 beneficiaries (5,250 refugees and 2,000 host community members). The intervention prioritizes pregnant and breastfeeding women and children aged 6–23 months, aiming to strengthen food security and nutrition among vulnerable cohorts.

#### School-Based Assistance

- In February 2026, WFP provided school meals to 613,000 children despite severe funding constraints. Operations were disrupted by temporary pipeline breaks and a pause in Muyinga commune, where the school feeding funding agreement has yet to be signed. As a result, beneficiary numbers declined from 880,000 to 613,000 across both commodity voucher and in-kind modalities. Contract amendments between smallholder cooperatives and provincial education directorates are expected to be finalized in March, allowing distributions to resume, although Muyinga will remain excluded until its funding agreement is secured. Even after distributions restart, reduced feeding days and smaller rations are expected to persist due to the ongoing funding shortfall, underscoring the need for sustained donor support.

#### Social protection

- Under the *Merankabandi* social protection project, WFP provided USD 112,874 in cash transfers to 22,775 refugees, complemented by training in social behavior change and entrepreneurship to foster income-generating activities and strengthen financial autonomy. In Bwagiriza and Nyankanda camps, the fourth phase of start-up capital transfers was completed, benefiting refugee households engaged primarily in agriculture, livestock, and small trade. In Kavumu, Kinama, and Musasa camps, the seventh transfer was carried out, alongside training sessions that enabled beneficiaries to establish Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs), further reinforcing financial inclusion and resilience. These combined efforts are designed to promote sustainable livelihoods and reduce dependency on humanitarian assistance.

#### Resilience and Livelihood Support

- In February, 14,146 members of 80 smallholder cooperatives received targeted technical guidance on post-harvest management, complemented by access to improved storage solutions such as silos and tarpaulins. These measures contribute to reducing post-harvest losses and strengthening household food security. At the community level, 1,500 vulnerable households participated in the maintenance of productive assets, including the construction of soil conservation structures across eight hills. To reinforce these efforts, 15,000 Bana grass cuttings were distributed and planted to stabilize soils, mitigate erosion, and enhance agricultural productivity. In February, households actively engaged in these activities, and they are scheduled to receive conditional cash transfers linked to community asset development in April and May.

## Cross- Cutting Issues

### Logistics

- Supply chain activities continued without major constraints in February. Dispatches to cooperating partners and distribution points proceeded as planned, supported by effective coordination between logistics teams and transporters.
- Beyond WFP's own supply chain operations, the organization also continued to play a critical enabling role for partners. During the month of February, a total of 21,415 litres of fuel was distributed to UN and other partners, while 306 cubic meters of non-food items were stored in WFP warehouses on behalf of an international NGO. These services continue to reinforce WFP's role in enabling the broader humanitarian community's operations in Burundi.

### Monitoring and Assessment

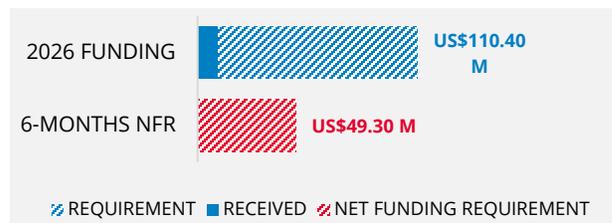
- WFP supported evidence-based decision making through the nationwide Market Functionality Index (MFI) assessment, conducted in February, in collaboration with the Government. Preliminary results of the assessment confirmed that markets across Burundi are generally functional and well-integrated, while highlighting the need for closer attention to prices, quality, and service. It also underscored the importance of monitoring seasonality, particularly during the lean season, given its direct impact on availability, assortment, and prices. Complementing this, WFP in cooperation with the Government, carried out a rapid livelihood profiling in the newly established Busuma refugee camp to inform resource mobilization and guide activities aimed at progressively strengthening refugee self-reliance in a constrained funding environment. The report is currently being finalized.
- **Market monitoring:** February typically coincides with the first harvest season, leading to improved household food availability and gradual restocking by traders. In February 2026, market stocks followed seasonal trends, with supplies increasing compared to January; however, prices remained largely stable rather than declining by the typical 20–30 percent. Average prices rose slightly, with beans up 5 percent and cereals/tubers up 1 percent. Two areas warrant close monitoring: in Kirundo (North), water deficits caused crop losses for over 100,000 households, pushing prices sharply higher (+14 percent for pulses, +13 percent for tubers); while in Ruyigi (East), which has received more than 66,000 refugees since December 2025, prices declined for pulses (-14 percent) and tubers (-7 percent), even as cereal prices increased (+7 percent). The expected maize harvest in March may help stabilize cereal prices.

## FUNDING OVERVIEW

- In February 2026, WFP Burundi faced acute funding constraints, with a six-month net requirement of USD 49.30 million. These shortfalls compelled a reduction of refugee rations to 75 percent and halted planned crisis-response assistance for food-insecure Burundian households. Critical nutrition programmes were also disrupted, with

management for moderate acute malnutrition among children and pregnant/breastfeeding women suspended, alongside broader prevention activities, except in Musenyi where support continued. School feeding was maintained only at reduced scale, reaching a smaller number of schoolchildren. Beyond the decline in coverage, the number of feeding days and the size of rations were also curtailed due to funding shortfalls. Furthermore, the returnee ration will be halved starting March if no new resources are received.

*Burundi country strategic plan (2024–2027) | World Food Programme*



### Donors:

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