



BURUNDI

COUNTRY BRIEF

May 2026



974,386 people assisted in April 2026
(50.6% female)



181 mt food distributed in April 2026



USD 3.1 M cash transferred in April 2026



USD 55.6 M required in the next six months
(May – October 2026)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

- **Food assistance distribution:** In April 2026, WFP successfully assisted close to 1 million people, distributing 181 mt of food and USD 3.1 million in cash transfers.
- **Fragile humanitarian situation during lean season:** In April 2026, Burundi faced the lean season with reduced food supplies, rising bean prices, and added pressures from refugee movements and climate shocks—highlighting a fragile humanitarian situation and the urgent need for sustained humanitarian support and stronger social protection systems.
- **Congolese refugees voluntary return:** On 23 April 2026, UNHCR and the Government of Burundi launched voluntary returns of Congolese refugees under the Tripartite Framework. However, the scale of repatriation during April remained limited, with minimal effect on the overall refugee situation.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- In April, Burundi entered the lean season marked by reduced food availability, sharp increase in bean prices, and worsening trade conditions. Refugee inflows and return movements continued to strain markets and services, while fuel and electricity shortages exacerbated inflationary pressures.
- Since December 2025, the country has received over 101,000 Congolese refugees—mostly women and children—alongside the return of about 75,000 Burundians from Tanzania since the beginning of the year, with around 40,000 expected to return by July 2026; climate shocks further eroded livelihoods, with hydric deficit affecting nearly 500,000 people in the north and floods in Gatumba displacing 22,000 individuals.
- Early warnings also point to a high likelihood of El Niño later in 2026, increasing risks of flooding and agricultural losses during the 2027A season.
- These dynamics underscore the fragility of current humanitarian situation and highlight the urgent need to sustain humanitarian support and strengthen resilience and social protection system.
- WFP's interventions, from refugee assistance and school meals to nutrition, resilience building and social protection systems, remain critical to meeting basic needs, improving nutrition and education, and supporting inclusive government systems.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Overall Trends

- WFP assistance fluctuated from 922,333 people in January to 853,169 in February, dropping to 551,713 in March due to temporary supply delays, before

Photo Caption & Credit: Learners walk to class after being served nutritious meals provided daily by WFP at Bwica Primary School. WFP/Arete/Fredrik Lerneryd

rising again to 974,386 in April. The April increase reflects scaled-up distributions, particularly through school feeding. March figures reflect an exceptional pipeline constraint period, with April showing a recovery following resumed distributions.

- In April, part of the refugee cash ration was replaced with in-kind food, resulting in higher food tonnage (181 mt, up from 90–129 mt earlier in the year) and lower cash transfers (USD 3.1 million, down from USD 3.5–3.8 million in previous months). This adjustment helped stabilize rations under funding constraints while maintaining coverage.

Crisis Response

- In April 2026, WFP provided hybrid assistance—combining cash-based transfers and hot meals—to 151,000 Congolese refugees across seven sites and two transit centers, delivering USD 1,771,742 in cash and 48.6 metric tons of food. Compared to March, the number of assisted refugees increased slightly, while the composition of assistance shifted: part of the cash ration was replaced with in-kind food, resulting in higher food tonnage and lower cash transfers.
- On 23 April 2026, UNHCR, together with the Government of Burundi, launched the voluntary assisted return of Congolese refugees from Busuma site in Buhumuza Province to the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Refugees are transferred to the Kavimvira transit centre in DRC before continuing to their areas of origin. UNHCR provides financial support for transport and reintegration, along with specific protection services adapted to individual needs, while WFP provides cash at departure to cover travel rations. Although the Tripartite Framework became operational on 23 April, voluntary returns remained limited during the reporting period.
- In April 2026, the pace of repatriation of Burundian refugees from Tanzania slowed, with 11,397 individuals returning and assisted by WFP, compared to 26,194 in March and 24,944 in February. The March peak reflected the Government of Tanzania's focus on the closure of Nduta camp, which accelerated returns, while the April decrease corresponds to the repatriation of the remaining caseload. All arrivals from Tanzania continue to take place directly at commune level. While this progress reflects the implementation of the Tripartite Agreement, the large-scale returns exert substantial pressure on Burundi's already fragile social services. Due to funding constraints, assistance has been reduced since March to 50 percent of the standard

ration, underscoring strained resources and heightened vulnerability, especially among women, children, and older persons. Sustained donor support remains critical to ensure continuity of assistance, safeguard nutrition, and facilitate safe reintegration without further erosion of coping capacity.

- In northern Burundi, WFP initiated preparations for the distribution of food assistance to households affected by severe hydric deficit. This intervention, designed to mitigate the impact of recurrent climate shocks, targets 5,000 households, approximately 25,000 people—identified as the most vulnerable in the communes of Kirundo and Bugabira, within Butanyerera Province. Distribution is scheduled to begin in May.

Nutrition

- In April, nutrition assistance at Busuma—the largest refugee site—focused on malnutrition prevention and treatment of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM). Preventive distributions of specialized nutritious foods reached 9,105 beneficiaries (6,565 children aged 6–23 months and 2,540 pregnant and breastfeeding women), against a target of 9,500. The difference reflects gradual enrolment of beneficiaries, with full coverage expected from May.
- In parallel, 914 individuals were admitted to the MAM programme, of whom 231 were discharged as cured. A small number (15) who returned to their areas of origin before completing treatment received reintegration kits consisting of specialized nutritious foods tailored to their remaining needs, ensuring continuity of care. Two relapse cases were also recorded, highlighting the importance of strengthened post-recovery follow-up. These interventions continue to safeguard nutritional status and promote improved practices among refugees in Busuma.

School-Based Assistance

- In April 2026, WFP's school meals programme reached 768,711 children, a significant scale-up compared to March. A total of 115.5 metric tons of food and USD 970,754 were distributed, up from 50.3 mt of food and USD 170,617 the previous month. This expansion reflects improved pipeline performance and strengthened delivery under both the commodity voucher and in-kind modalities, enabling more consistent coverage across targeted communes. However, the funding agreement for school meals in Muyinga commune remained unsigned, leaving that area excluded. Sustained

donor support remains critical to consolidate these gains and ensure full, reliable school feeding nationwide.

- In parallel, WFP supported the Government of Burundi—through the School Meals Coalition, the Sustainable Financing Initiative, and the Ministry of Education—to validate the revised national school meals policy and financing strategy with key institutions and stakeholders. Under the leadership of the First Lady, Burundi also marked the African Day of School Feeding, reaffirming high-level political commitment.
- Building on this momentum, WFP conducted commune-level orientation sessions to support the decentralization of Home-Grown School Feeding (HGSF), equipping new communal authorities with the tools to plan, budget, and implement ahead of the 2026–2027 school year. These efforts strengthen political ownership and lay the foundation for a sustainable, nationally led HGSF system that advances education, nutrition, and local development.

Social Protection

- In April 2026, WFP and partners held local coordination meetings in Ruyigi to strengthen collaboration and ensure smooth progress of the Merankabandi programme. In the Phase 1 camps (Bwagiriza and Nyankanda), work is underway to finalize seed capital payments and address outstanding issues from earlier transfers. For the Phase 2 camps (Kinama, Musasa, Kavumu), the eighth round of cash assistance was completed, while preparations continue for seed capital disbursements. At the same time, an exit plan is being developed to preserve achievements and ensure a smooth transition to longer-term solutions. Finally, under the ONPRA–WFP partnership, preparations are advancing for a study visit to Cameroon on refugee integration, scheduled for the third week of June 2026.

Resilience and Livelihood Support

- In April, resilience interventions centered on conditional cash transfers linked to community asset creation, with USD 34,965 distributed to 1,476 households, reaching over 7,300 individuals in Giteranyi and Muyinga (Buhumuza province). These efforts supported the rehabilitation of nearly 31 km of community roads.
- Complementary initiatives to strengthen economic inclusion were also launched, connecting 73 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to the local financial institution UCODE. This aims to expand access

to financial services, enhance household resilience, and promote sustainable livelihoods

Cross-Cutting Issues

Logistics

- In April, no new pipeline deliveries were undertaken as distributions relied on pre-positioned stocks from previous months. The Supply Chain focused instead on strengthening stock management and digitalization, with the logistics team introducing digital stock cards and beginning the rollout of the Cooperating Partner Stock Management Solution in camps, to be expanded in May.
- WFP currently has adequate fuel stocks to support its planned operations over the coming months. At this stage, partner allocations under the on-demand service scheme will be managed within existing confirmed capacity. Discussions are ongoing to explore additional supply options and strengthen continuity measures at both country and global levels.

Monitoring and Assessment

- A rapid multisectoral assessment on 2 April 2026 in Gatumba found over 22,000 people (4,455 households) affected by severe flooding, including 502 households (2,326 people) most vulnerable and in urgent need of evacuation. The worst-affected areas were Cuhiro, Gaharawe, Mushasha, Rusizi, and Murinzi, with women and children most impacted. Priority actions include urgent food assistance to stabilize households and prevent negative coping, alongside agricultural support (seeds, tools, technical assistance) to restore livelihoods and reduce aid dependence.
- In April 2026, Burundi entered the lean season with reduced food availability and rising prices: beans increased by 38 percent month on month (+39 percent year on year), rice by 19 percent year on year, while maize fell slightly (-6 percent) with harvests but remained below official bands; most staples stayed over 50 percent above five-year averages.
- Household purchasing power weakened, with one day of agricultural labor buying 1.9 kg of beans, down from 2.7 kg in March. Fuel shortages, electricity deficits, and land conflicts intensified market pressure, while refugee inflows and return movements drove localized price spikes.

Protection and accountability to affected people

- In April 2026, WFP and partners recorded 252 feedback cases, down from 283 in March. Most concerned cash transfers for returnees and Merankabandi social protection, particularly

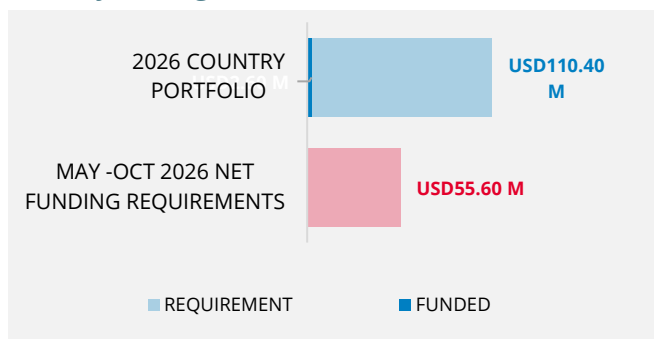
non-payment issues and difficulties with withdrawals. Other issues included SCOPE data errors, beneficiary inclusion requests, and priority assistance linked to vulnerability. Women represented 55 percent of users, with listening tables as the main channel. Overall, 64 percent of cases were resolved, while the remainder largely cash and documentation complaints—are under review, alongside a few sensitive cases such as misconduct and poor treatment, which were addressed through established accountability mechanisms.

IMPACT OF SHORTFALLS

- WFP Burundi is facing critical funding gaps across programmes, already affecting food assistance and nutrition outcomes for vulnerable populations. Severe funding shortfalls are forcing reductions in food and nutrition support for refugees, with rations for Congolese refugees already at 75 percent of daily needs and set to decline to 50 percent from August; without new funding, a full pipeline break is expected in September, putting more than 140,000 refugees at risk, as WFP urgently requires USD 23.5 million to sustain distributions and restore full rations over the next six months. At the same time, WFP can support up to 40,000 Burundian returnees only with half rations through July 2026, leaving many households without adequate resources for reintegration, while no dedicated funding for the March to May lean season has left households in IPC Phase 3 or worse without assistance. Concurrently, shortages of specialized foods threaten treatment for 38,500 moderately malnourished children and 10,000 pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls targeted in 2026.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2027)



Donors

Belgium, Burundi, Canada, France, Germany, Global Partnership for Education, Japan, Monaco, Netherlands, Russia, Switzerland, United Kingdom, United States of America, World Bank.

