



BURUNDI

COUNTRY BRIEF

October 2026



199,786 people assisted in September 2026
(50.6% female)



149 MT food distributed in September 2026



USD 2.2 M cash transferred in September 2026



USD 60.6 M required in the next six months
(October 2026 – March 2027)

KEY HIGHLIGHTS

[Burundi | World Food Programme](#)

- WFP requires USD 60.6 million from October 2026 to March 2027. Although refugee assistance is secured through December 2026, USD 40 million is needed from January 2027 to restore full food rations for nearly 125,000 refugees through September 2027.
- El Niño threatens more than one million people: A strong El Niño event is expected to increase food insecurity, flooding, landslides, crop losses, disease outbreaks, and market disruptions during the high-risk October–January period. WFP requires USD 26 million over the next nine months, USD 6.3 million for anticipatory action and USD 19.7 million for emergency response.
- In September 2026, WFP assisted 199,786 people, including 118,874 Congolese refugees, while distributing 149 metric tons of food and transferring USD 2.2 million in cash. Greater reliance on cash-based transfers and livelihoods and social protection interventions enabled comparable beneficiary coverage with substantially lower food tonnage than in August.

SITUATION OVERVIEW

- As the lean season approaches, declining household food stocks and food prices that remain above their five-year average are increasing pressure on vulnerable households and further weakening purchasing power. Persistent inflation, fuel shortages, and electricity disruptions continue to affect transport, markets, and service delivery, while refugee and returnee movements place additional strain on already limited resources. The revised Food and Non-Food Minimum Expenditure Basket (MEB) indicates that the cost of meeting basic household needs has nearly doubled over the past two years. Looking ahead, the forecast El Niño event later in 2026 could further exacerbate vulnerabilities through increased flooding and crop-loss risks during the 2027A season. Against this backdrop, sustained humanitarian assistance and investment in social protection systems remain critical to addressing immediate needs and strengthening resilience.
- Burundi is entering a high-risk October–January period as a strong El Niño event is expected to intensify food insecurity and expose more than one million vulnerable people to flooding, landslides, crop damage, disease outbreaks, and disruptions to markets and supply chains. To mitigate these impacts, WFP requires USD 26 million over the next nine months, including USD 6.3 million for anticipatory actions such as early warning and cash assistance, and USD 19.7 million for emergency response activities, including food assistance and school meals. WFP continues to work with the Government and partners to strengthen disaster preparedness, school feeding, and social protection systems.
- **Strategic engagement:** From 8 to 10 October, Marco Cavalcante, WFP Director of Programme, visited Burundi for strategic consultations with the Government, UN partners, international financial institutions and the Country Office, complemented by field visits to the

Reporting Period: September 2026

Photo Caption & Credit: Cash distribution to refugee households in Busuma site, eastern Burundi. @WFP/Irene NDUWAYEZU

school meals programme and Cishemere Refugee Transit Centre. The mission helped shape the strategic direction for WFP Burundi's next Country Strategic Plan, expected to reach the Executive Board in November 2027.

OPERATIONAL UPDATES

Food and cash assistance

- Food and cash assistance trends reflected WFP's continued flexibility in adapting transfer modalities to resource availability and operational priorities. While the number of beneficiaries reached remained broadly stable between August and September, the volume of food distributed declined significantly following the temporary scale-up of in-kind food assistance in August. This reduction was primarily due to a greater reliance on cash-based transfers and a higher proportion of beneficiaries supported through livelihoods and social protection interventions in September, which typically do not require in-kind food assistance. As a result, WFP was able to maintain comparable beneficiary coverage while delivering substantially lower food tonnage.

Crisis Response

- Refugees: In September 2026, WFP provided hybrid assistance, combining cash-based transfers and hot meals, to 118,874 Congolese refugees across seven sites and two transit centres, delivering USD 1,459,162 in cash and 102 metric tons of food. The number of refugees assisted remained below the planned caseload of 125,000, primarily due to organized voluntary repatriations to the Democratic Republic of the Congo and continued spontaneous returns outside official repatriation arrangements.
- Burundian returnees: In September 2026, WFP supported 1,688 Burundian returnees, most of whom arrived from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC), Uganda, and Kenya. Among them, 407 returned from Kenya, contributing to increased arrival flows following changes in Kenya's policy affecting undocumented foreign nationals. WFP and its cooperating partner Caritas provided cooked meals to returnees upon arrival at transit centres, distributing 0.9 metric tons of food, and supported reintegration through cash-based return packages totaling USD 24,562 for returnees travelling to their areas of origin.
- Congolese refugees voluntary return: In September, 6,804 Congolese refugees departed Busuma camp for the Democratic Republic of Congo through the voluntary repatriation programme implemented under the Tripartite Framework by UNHCR and partners. This brings the total number of refugees who have returned since the programme began in April 2026 to 22,999 individuals or 5,313 households.

Nutrition

- In September, nutrition interventions across six health centres in Giharo and Ruyigi districts reached 21,591 children and 7,497 pregnant and breastfeeding women (PBWGs) through preventive assistance, while MAM treatment supported 943 children and 247 women. In Busuma and Musenyi refugee sites, preventive assistance reached 8,366 children and 1,800 women, and 598 children and women received MAM management. However, in Busuma, preventive assistance was limited to children due to shortages of specialised nutritious foods (SNFs), with current stocks expected to be exhausted by October 2026. Despite these constraints, a mass nutrition screening conducted in September at Busuma found low levels of acute malnutrition, with a GAM prevalence of 1.28 percent among children aged 6–59 months and 2.96 percent among PBWGs, marking a substantial improvement compared to February and May 2026 and highlighting the importance of sustaining nutrition support to preserve these gains.

School-Based Assistance

- Schools reopened in late September following the summer break; however, no school meal distributions took place during the month as preparations for the 2026/27 school year were still underway. The programme is expected to reach approximately 850,000 children during the school year. To support the decentralization of local food procurement responsibilities from Provincial Education Directorates to Communal Education Directorates, WFP conducted capacity strengthening and training activities for newly designated officials, which required additional preparation time ahead of the programme's launch in October.

Social Protection

- Under the Merankabandi Project, 3,371 households (74 percent of the target) in Kinama, Musasa and Kavumu refugee camps received seed capital, prioritizing agricultural livelihoods ahead of Season A to strengthen self-reliance and reduce dependence on humanitarian assistance. Complementing these efforts, WFP and UNICEF supported Burundi's social protection system through the TRANSFORM-AFRICA training, strengthening institutional capacity and coordination. Progress toward operationalizing the Unified Social Registry (RSU), including establishment of a Steering Committee and validation of key technical deliverables, further advanced a nationally owned and shock-responsive social protection system.

Resilience and Livelihood Support

- In September, 4,405 vulnerable households in Buhumuza and Butanyerera provinces received USD 102,460 through conditional cash transfers to support livelihoods and income-generating activities while contributing to the creation and rehabilitation of community assets, including erosion control structures, agroforestry nurseries, community roads, and vegetable production initiatives. In addition, cooperating partners distributed 9.2 mt of maize seed to vulnerable households and members of 137 Village Savings and Loan Associations (VSLAs) to support preparations for the upcoming agricultural season.

Cross- Cutting Issues

Logistics

- In September, WFP Burundi’s Supply Chain delivered 222 metric tons of food (100 percent of requirements) to support refugee, nutrition, and school meals programmes. Despite ongoing national fuel shortages, WFP provided 38,500 litres of diesel to 32 partners through its On-Demand Services. WFP also received 2,913 silo components from Uganda to strengthen post-harvest storage for smallholder farmers and continued investing in Ebola preparedness through the procurement of additional fuel storage capacity.

Monitoring and Assessment

- **Market monitoring:** In September 2026, average food prices continued to increase compared with August, rising by 28 percent for pulses, 7 percent for cereals, and 1 percent for tubers. Beans, a staple food, cost 36 percent more than in September 2025. At the community level, 80 percent of key informants reported a reduction in food stocks since August. This trend is partly linked to the approaching lean season, during which household food stocks gradually decline. In this context, high food prices, coupled with weak purchasing power, continue to constrain households’ access to adequate food.
- An evaluation of national capacities for shock-responsive social protection carried out in August 2026 found that Burundi has established key foundations, including the Merankabandi programme, the emerging Unified Social Registry, disaster risk management systems, and the National School Feeding Programme. However, weak linkages between these systems limit their ability to respond effectively to shocks. The assessment recommends strengthening coordination, operational procedures, early warning linkages, and sustainable financing mechanisms to enable a more timely, predictable, and scalable response to crises.
- **Gender and accountability to affected populations:** In September 2026, WFP strengthened protection, accountability and inclusion by ensuring affected populations had access to safe and confidential

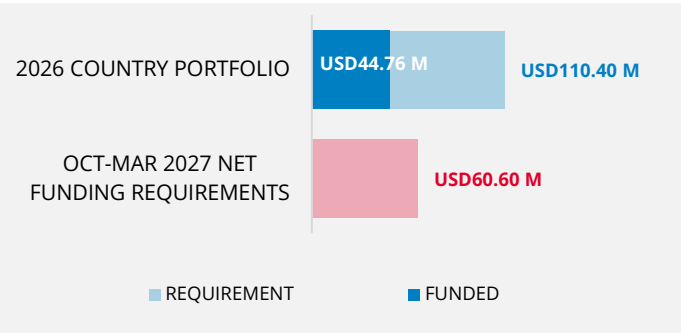
feedback channels and continued raising awareness on Protection from Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (PSEA). The Community Feedback Mechanism recorded 232 cases, predominantly from women (61 percent), with most concerns related to identification and SCOPE documentation, cash entitlements, and beneficiary eligibility. These issues informed corrective actions to improve equitable and safe access to assistance, while 65 percent of reported cases were resolved and the remainder remained under active follow-up.

IMPACT OF SHORTFALLS

- WFP Burundi is experiencing critical funding gaps across multiple programmes, which are already affecting food assistance and nutrition outcomes for vulnerable populations.
- WFP requires sustained funding to protect essential assistance for refugees, schoolchildren, women and children. While recent contributions have secured refugee food assistance through December 2026, USD40 million is needed from January 2027 to increase support for nearly 125,000 refugees from 45 to 100 percent of minimum food needs through September 2027, plus USD 1 million for refugee school feeding. A further USD 16 million is required to provide daily meals to approximately 850,000 pupils across 982 schools in 2026–2027. Nutrition funding gaps also remain severe, with moderate acute malnutrition treatment reaching only 3 percent of planned beneficiaries and stunting prevention heavily constrained, leaving vulnerable women and children without adequate support. WFP continues to advocate for funding alongside longer-term solutions that strengthen self-reliance, livelihoods, education and socioeconomic integration.

FUNDING OVERVIEW

Country Strategic Plan (2024-2027)



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