# VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

UPDATE AS OF 31 MARCH 2019

UNHCR and partners began to assist the voluntary repatriation of Burundian refugees in August 2017 as a durable solution for those refugees who indicate a desire to return home. The vast majority of returns have been from Tanzania, with smaller numbers assisted to return from Kenya and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). Almost all returns from Rwanda and Uganda have so far been self-organized.

## KEY FIGURES – ASSISTED REPATRIATION

**63,828*** individuals

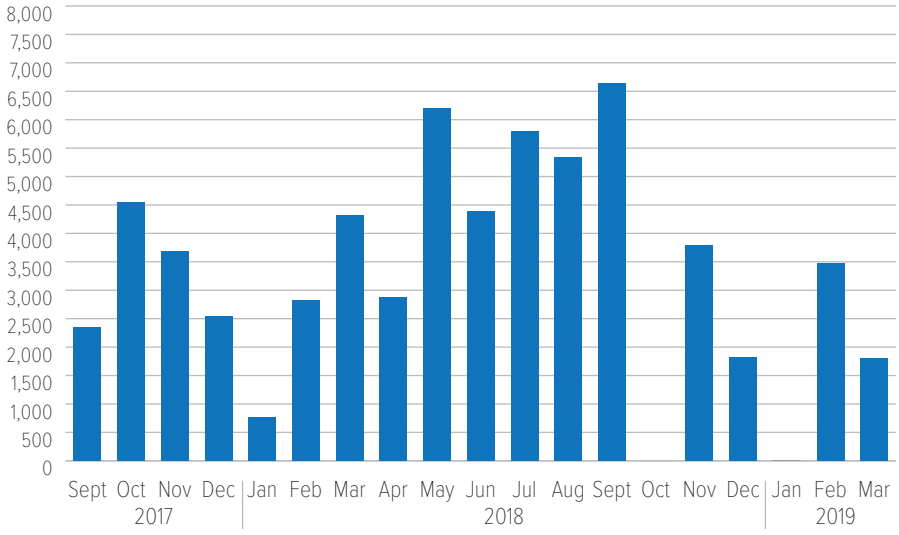
**21,046** households

**114** convoys

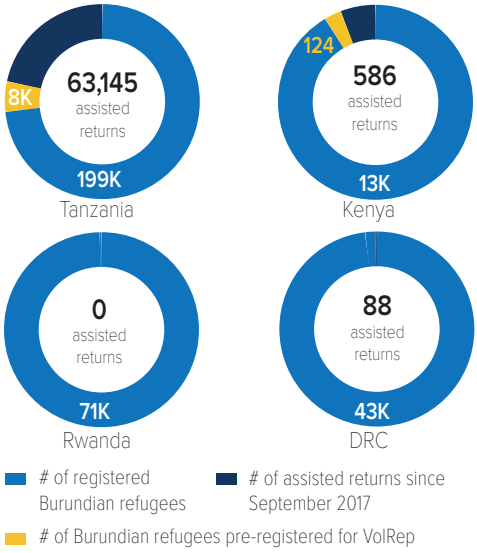
**48.6%** male

**51.4%** female

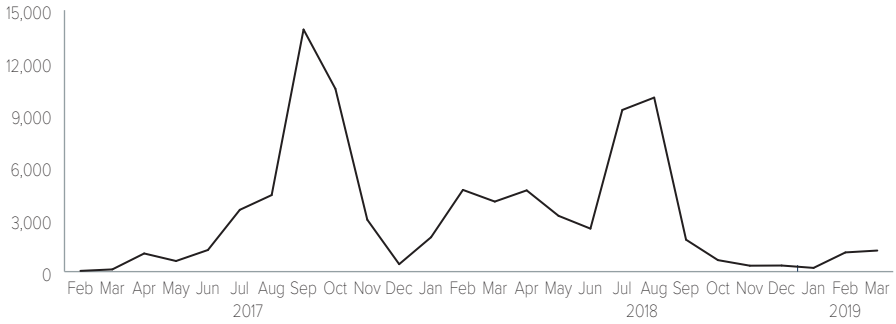
## RETURN TRENDS BY MONTH SINCE SEPTEMBER 2017




## RETURNS BY COUNTRY OF ASYLUM



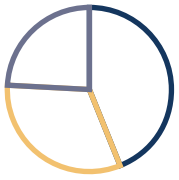

## REGISTRATION FOR VOLREP IN TANZANIA 2017-2019




## POPULATION PROFILE AT A GLANCE

**1,219** returnees are unaccompanied and separated children

**57%** are children

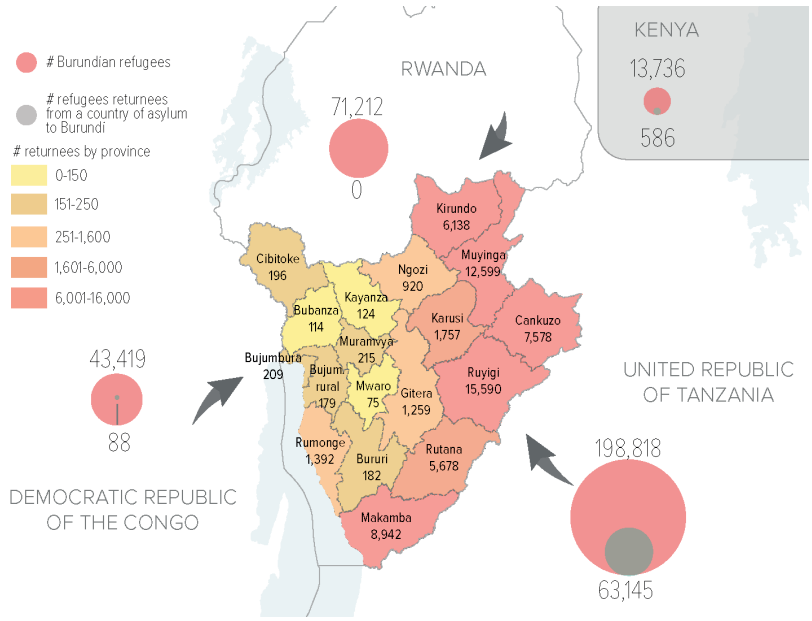


**18%** of Burundian returnees had sought asylum in 2015

**52%** of Burundian returnees had sought asylum in 2016

**30%** of Burundian returnees had sought asylum in 2017

## AREAS OF RETURN




## KEY MESSAGES

**1.** UNHCR and partners are providing assistance to refugees who have decided to return to Burundi so that they may do so in safety and dignity, and to support social cohesion and sustainable return at the community level.

**2.** Funding is needed to address critical staffing shortages, increase the capacity of transit centers, continue to hire safe transportation, enhance the initial return package, expand and improve the returnee monitoring framework, and support sustainable reintegration.

**3.** The voluntary return operation from Tanzania to Burundi is taking place under the framework of a Tripartite agreement between the two governments and UNHCR in which all parties have agreed to ensure the voluntariness of return, as well as the need to continue to provide international protection to Burundians who have well-founded reasons for not returning at the present time.

**4.** While the governments of Burundi and Tanzania have undertaken to promote refugee return, neither UNHCR nor other governments are doing so at this time. All have acknowledged the importance of refugees having the opportunity to make a free and informed choice about repatriation.

**5.** While returnees are generally being welcomed back by the Government of Burundi and their communities of origin without incident, returnee monitoring indicates many do face a number of challenges to re-establish their lives and livelihoods in Burundi.

* - Includes assisted returns from Tanzania (63,145), Kenya (586), DRC (88), Zambia (4), Uganda (2), Gabon (1), Cameroon (1) and Burkina Faso (1).

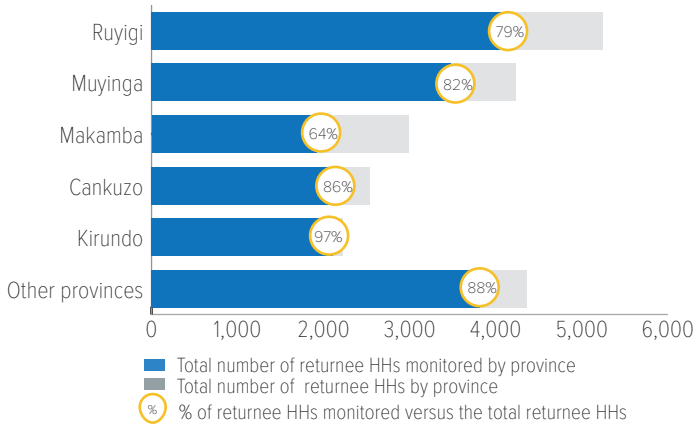
# RETURN MONITORING IN BURUNDI

## METHODOLOGY

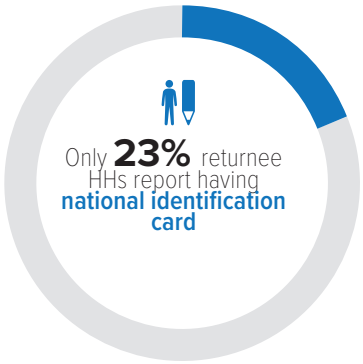
Returnee monitoring aims primarily to understand the reintegration situation of assisted returnees including: access to basic support services and relevant rights and entitlements (housing, land, health, education, documentation, water and sanitation, nutrition), living conditions, and impact of the assistance provided upon arrival. In 2019, the methodology is being improved, to look at the changes over time (trend analysis) and asses the level of vulnerability of this population vs other vulnerable groups (host communities, spontaneous returnees etc.) and inform the different actors involved in the refugee return and reintegration process. A pilot of the revised methodology is ongoing and will inform a comprehensive revision that will be implemented across the country during the second half of 2019.

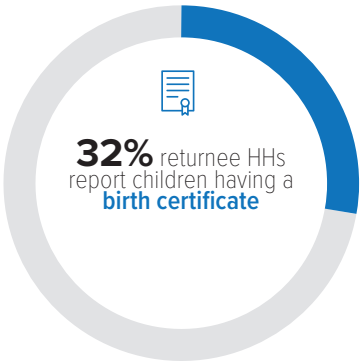
## MONITORING PROGRESS

By 31 March 2019, **17,768** families have been monitored (out of 21,046), which represents **84%** of those assisted to return.

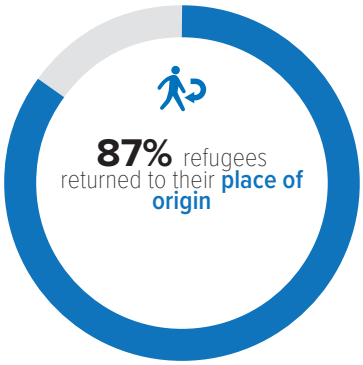



## CIVIL DOCUMENTATION

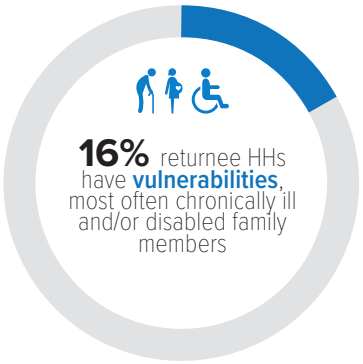


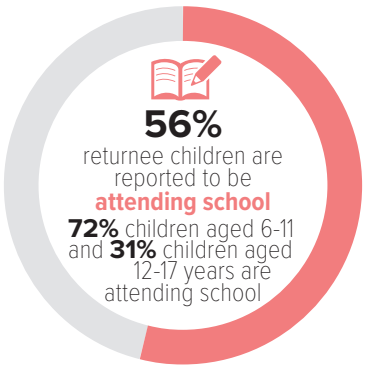

## DISPLACEMENT



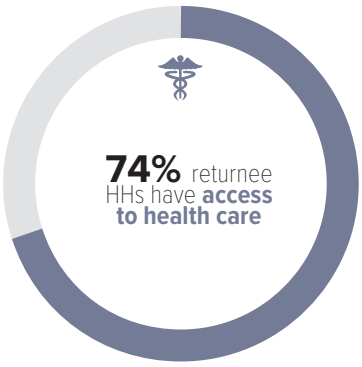

## VULNERABILITY



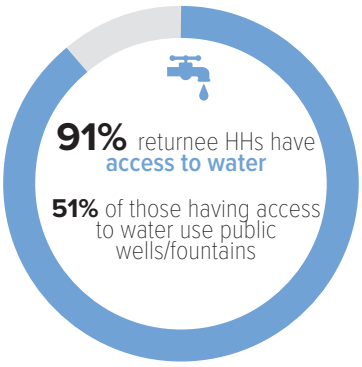

## EDUCATION



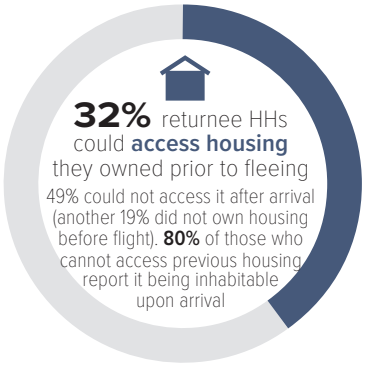

## HEALTH CARE



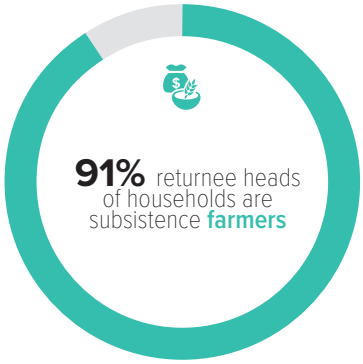

## WATER



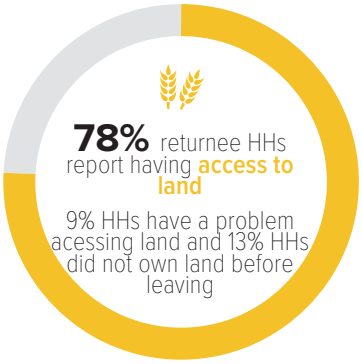

## ACCESS TO HOUSING




## LIVELIHOODS




## ACCESS TO LAND




## TOP 3 PRIORITIES IN THE USE OF ASSISTANCE

All refugees who have returned with the assistance of UNHCR receive an initial return package in Burundi consisting of a financial grant, basic household supplies, and food items. Returnees report the cash grant was used for the following top priority expenses:

1. **Household items** (51%)
2. **Land rental** (28%)
3. **Shelter** (19%)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