



P3-4 HIGH-LEVEL VISIT OF THE WHO REGIONAL DIRECTOR FOR AFRICA STRENGTHENS WHO AND BURUNDI COOPERATION



P8 Busuma : WHO strengthens access to -9 healthcare for Congolese refugees and host communities

INTRODUCTION OF THE HPV VACCINE: A major milestone for the health of girls and women **P7**



Editorial



Dear Readers,

The first quarter of 2026 was marked by significant progress in public health in Burundi, underscoring the strength of national leadership and the value of strong strategic partnerships. From high-level visits to field interventions, collective efforts have translated into concrete results that directly benefit communities.

The visit of the WHO Regional Director for Africa provided an important opportunity to deepen strategic dialogue with Burundian authorities on universal health coverage and emergency preparedness. Likewise, the visit of a Gavi delegation further strengthened collaboration toward achieving immunization goals. On the ground, WHO's support contributed to addressing urgent humanitarian challenges, particularly in Busuma, where more than 65,000 Congolese refugees accessed essential healthcare services through a health post delivering an average of 350 consultations per day.

This quarter also witnessed landmark achievements, including the validation of the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem and the introduction of the HPV vaccine, both of which open new horizons for improving the health of the population. At the same time, ongoing efforts to strengthen health workforce planning, notably through workload assessment, are laying the groundwork for a more equitable and efficient health system.

In a context marked by recurring emergencies, epidemics, and evolving community needs, these accomplishments highlight a fundamental truth: investing in health is an investment in resilience, dignity, and the future of the nation.

WHO remains fully committed to supporting Burundi in consolidating these gains and addressing future challenges together.

Happy reading,

Dr Guylain Kaya Mutenda Sheria

WHO Burundi Officer-in-Charge

IN THIS EDITION

P6 Gavi visit to Burundi: Strengthened partnership for immunization

P5 Emergency : Health authorities and WHO investigate an unknown disease in Mpanda



P10 Vaccination & Humanitarian Emergency: Launch of measles vaccination campaign in Congolese refugee camps in Burundi

P12 Burundi validates elimination of trachoma as a public health problem

P11 A community walk to promote well-being through physical activity

P8 Strengthening health workforce planning: Training of the national workload assessment team

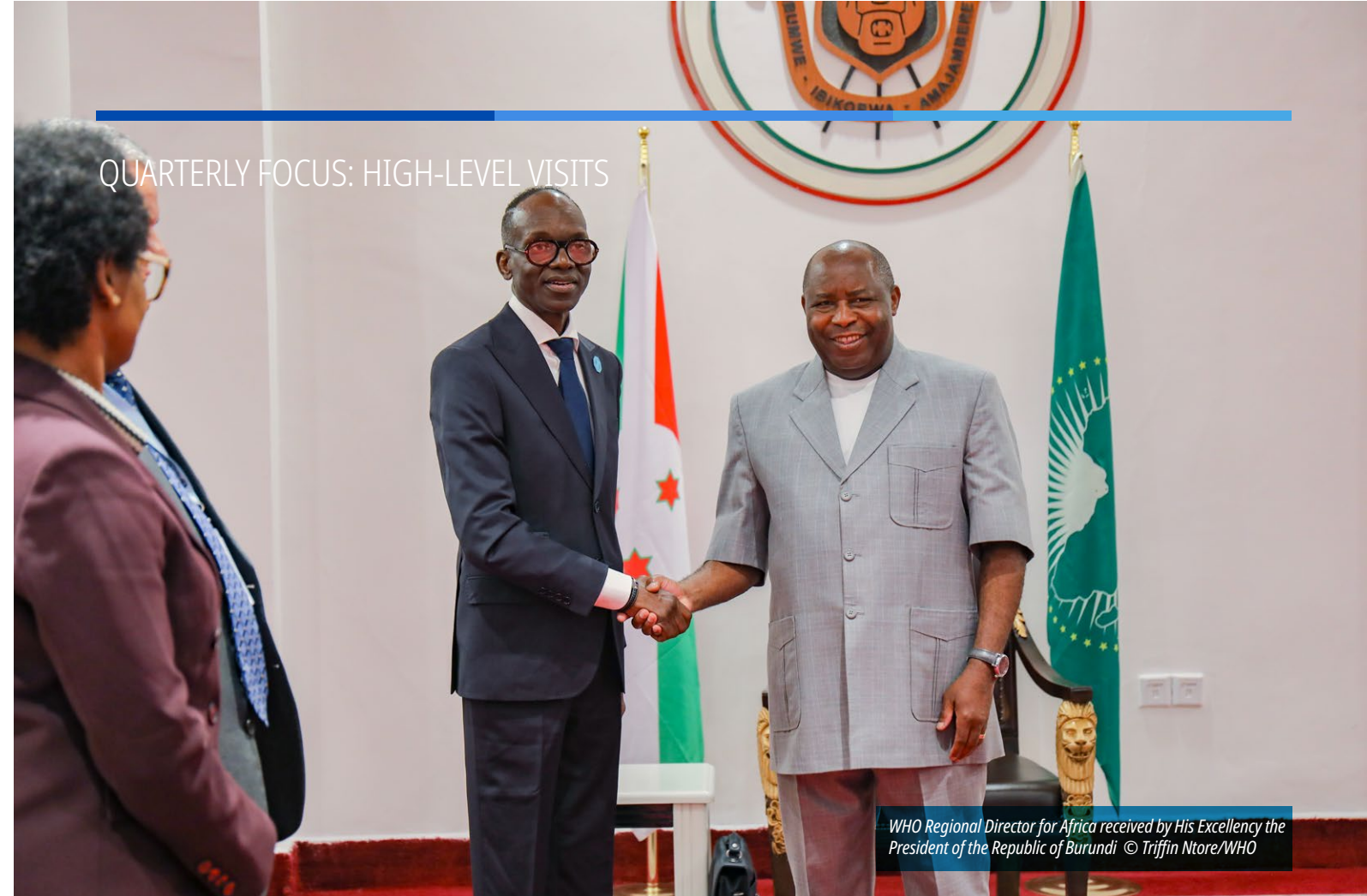


P12 End of tenure of the WHO representative in Burundi: Leadership recognized at the highest level of the state

Publication Director
Dr Guylain Kaya Mutenda Sheria,
Officer-in-Charge, WHO Burundi

Editor-in-Chief & Graphic Design
Triffin NTORE

QUARTERLY FOCUS: HIGH-LEVEL VISITS



WHO Regional Director for Africa received by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi © Triffin Ntore/WHO

High-Level visit of the WHO Regional Director for Africa strengthens WHO and Burundi Cooperation

From 5 to 7 March, Burundi hosted Dr Mohamed Janabi, WHO Regional Director for Africa, for a high-level visit aimed at strengthening cooperation between WHO and the Government of Burundi.

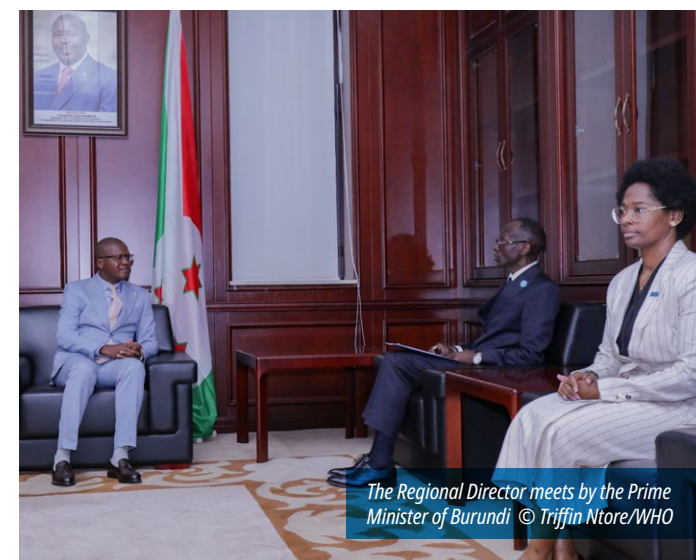
Upon arrival, the Regional Director was received by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi. Discussions focused on national health priorities, progress toward universal health coverage, and WHO's support to health system reforms. He subsequently met with the Minister of Public Health, to whom he handed over 24 tons of

medicines for cholera response, along with three vehicles to support emergency health interventions.

Dr Janabi also held discussions with His Excellency the Prime Minister of the Republic on preparedness and response to health and humanitarian emergencies, as well as on multisectoral integration through the One Health approach.



The Regional Director delivers 24 tons of medicines to the Ministry of Public Health ©Triffin Ntore/WHO



The Regional Director meets by the Prime Minister of Burundi © Triffin Ntore/WHO



The Regional Director visits the Mpox treatment Center in Kamenge © GDCB

During his mission, he visited the WHO-constructed mpox treatment center, where 4,654 patients (as of March 5) had been treated, with an exceptionally low case fatality rate of 0.05%, reflecting the impact of WHO's technical support.

On the second day of the visit, accompanied by the Minister of Health, the WHO AFRO Director for Emergencies, and WHO representatives from Burundi and Democratic Republic of the Congo, the Regional Director visited the Busuma refugee site. There, WHO has established a health post with

mobile clinic activities. At the time of the visit, the health post had already provided 16,437 curative consultations, 78 deliveries, vaccinated 28,550 children against measles, supported 402 individuals with mental health services, and screened 2,565 cases of malnutrition.



RD visits the medicine warehouse at the Busuma Mobile Clinic ©GDCB



Visit of the Regional Director to the mobile clinic at the Busuma refugee site © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Dr Janabi was later received by Her Excellency the First Lady of Burundi to discuss collaboration between the Office of the First Lady and WHO, particularly in maternal, neonatal, and child health. Together, they visited a polyclinic dedicated to mother and childcare, before taking part in a school-based awareness session led by the First Lady.



WHO Regional Director visits the Umugiraneza Polyclinic run by the First Lady of Burundi © OPDD

Emergency : Health authorities and WHO investigate an unknown disease in Mpanda



Joint Visit by WHO, the Ministry of Public Health, and Partners to Mpanda Hospital © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Burundian health authorities, with support from WHO and its partners, conducted investigations to identify the cause of an undiagnosed illness that has resulted in five deaths and affected 35 people in Mpanda district. The cases, reported on March 31, 2026, primarily involve members of the same household and their close contacts.

Laboratory analyses have tested negative for Ebola, Marburg, yellow fever, Rift Valley fever, and Crimean-Congo hemorrhagic fever. Affected individuals have presented symptoms including fever, vomiting, diarrhea, abdominal pain, and in severe cases, jaundice and anemia.

The Ministry of Public Health, supported by WHO, has deployed response teams to strengthen investigations, surveillance, and case management. Additional laboratory analyses conducted out of Burundi have also returned negative results. Investigations are ongoing to identify the causative agent and prevent any further spread.



WHO staff visits patients suffering from the disease of unknown origin ©Triffin Ntore/WHO



The Gavi delegation visits the vaccine storage unit at the Busuma health post © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Gavi Visit to Burundi: Strengthened Partnership for Immunization

The official Gavi mission to Burundi, conducted from 21 to 30 April, reinforced strategic collaboration between the Ministry of Public Health (MoH), WHO, UNICEF, and IOM, with the aim of sustainably improving immunization coverage and strengthening health system resilience.

Field visits, particularly to the Ndava health center, provided an opportunity to assess the integration of the malaria vaccine into routine immunization services. At the Gatumba border post, partners observed Expanded Programme on Immunization (EPI) activities designed to protect mobile populations and prevent cross-border transmission risks.

The mission also included high-level dialogue with Burundian authorities. The Prime Minister, His Excellency Nestor Ntahontuye, along with the Minister of Public Health, reaffirmed—together with Gavi and partners—their commitment to consolidating achievements and preparing for the upcoming Gavi 6.0 funding cycle.



The Gavi delegation and partners received by the Prime Minister of Burundi © Prime Minister's Office

In Busuma, the delegation visited health services supported by WHO and UNICEF, illustrating the complementarity of interventions in primary healthcare, immunization, and mental health.

A major highlight of the mission was the official introduction of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into routine immunization in Burundi, under the high patronage of Her Excellency Angeline Ndayishimiye, First Lady of Burundi. This milestone marks a decisive step in preventing cervical cancer among young girls.

Overall, the visit demonstrated that coordinated action between Gavi, the Government, and technical and financial partners remains essential to protect populations and build a healthier future for Burundi.



Gavi delegation conducts field visit to Ndava health center © WHO



Launch of the introduction of the HPV vaccine into routine immunization © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Introduction of the HPV vaccine: A major milestone for the health of girls and women

The official introduction of the human papillomavirus (HPV) vaccine into the routine Expanded Programme on Immunization was held under the high patronage of Her Excellency Mrs. Angeline Ndayishimiye, First Lady of the Republic of Burundi, in Gitega Province.

This vaccine, targeting girls aged 9 to 14, represents a major breakthrough in the prevention of cervical cancer—one of the most common and deadliest cancers among women—despite being largely preventable through vaccination and early screening.

As part of this introduction, a total of 1,051,220 girls were targeted nationwide. Among them, 887,391 were vaccinated, representing a coverage rate of 84.4%. These results reflect the strong commitment of the Government of Burundi to improving

population health, particularly that of girls and women.



Speech by the First Lady during the introduction of the HPV Vaccine © Triffin Ntore/WHO

The results also demonstrate the engagement and mobilization of communities, as well as the crucial support of technical and financial partners, notably Gavi, WHO, IOM and UNICEF. Together, these joint efforts are laying the groundwork for sustainable protection against cervical cancer while strengthening the health system.

The introduction of the HPV vaccine thus marks a decisive step toward a future where girls and women in Burundi can live free from this preventable disease, contributing to improved public health and the country's overall development.



Group photo during the introduction of the HPV vaccine © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Strengthening health workforce planning: Training of the national workload assessment team



Group exercises during the workload assessment training © WHO

As part of efforts to strengthen the health system, the Ministry of Public Health, with technical support from WHO, organized a training workshop for the national team responsible for assessing the workload of health workers. This activity is part of broader efforts to improve the planning, management, and performance of the health workforce in Burundi.

In partnership with the French Development Agency (AFD), WHO is assisting the Ministry in implementing a workload assessment of health professionals. This process will generate evidence-based data to inform the development of national norms and standards for workforce planning and human resource management in the health sector.

In the long term, the workload assessment will contribute to better structuring the country's needs in terms of training, recruitment, and retention of health personnel, while promoting more equitable and efficient allocation of human resources. This initiative demonstrates the commitment of the Government, with support from its partners, to sustainably strengthen the health system and ensure the delivery of quality services for the population.



Presiding panel at the workload assessment training © WHO



Mobile clinic at the Busuma refugee camp © GDCB

Humanitarian Emergency | Busuma: WHO strengthens access to healthcare for Congolese refugees and host communities

Following the relocation of more than 65,000 Congolese refugees to the Busuma site in Ruyigi Province at the beginning of 2026, WHO has been providing sustained support to the Ministry of Public Health of Burundi to ensure equitable access to primary healthcare for both refugees and host communities. This intervention is taking place in a humanitarian emergency context marked by significant pressure on local health services and growing needs for essential care.

To respond to this demand, WHO has supported the Ministry in establishing a health post to provide medical care and emergency primary healthcare services. Implemented in collaboration with Global Development Community Burundi, this facility offers

curative consultations, disease prevention, early case detection, and referrals for patients requiring specialized care. The mobile clinic delivers an average of 350 consultations per day, thereby contributing to continuity of care and reducing health risks at the site.

As part of efforts to continuously improve service quality, the Ministry of Public Health, with WHO's technical support, conducted a joint supervision visit to the Busuma health post in February.



Joint WHO and Ministry of Public Health team visits the Busuma mobile clinic © Triffin Ntore/WHO

This activity aimed to strengthen epidemiological surveillance, case management, as well as infection prevention and control measures, to prevent disease outbreaks and ensure care standards adapted to the humanitarian context.

These actions reflect the ongoing commitment of the Government of Burundi, WHO, and their partners to protect the health of populations affected by emergencies, while strengthening the resilience of the health system to withstand humanitarian shocks.



A Patient Receives Care at the Busuma Mobile Clinic © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Vaccination & Humanitarian Emergency : Launch of measles vaccination campaign in Congolese refugee camps in Burundi



Vaccination campaign at the Busuma refugee site mobile clinic © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Following the emergence of measles cases in refugee camps at the beginning of 2026, Burundi officially launched a vaccination campaign in camps hosting Congolese refugees. This major initiative aimed to strengthen health protection for the most vulnerable populations living in humanitarian settings.

The launch ceremony was presided over by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Public Health, in the presence of representatives from WHO, UNICEF, and several technical and operational partners involved in the humanitarian health response.

The primary objective of the campaign was to enhance immunity among children living in the camps and

to prevent measles outbreaks—a highly contagious and potentially deadly disease. The campaign focused on measles vaccination, as well as catch-up immunization for “zero-dose” children who had never received any vaccines, thereby reducing health risks and addressing gaps in vaccination coverage.

Through this initiative, the Government of Burundi and its partners reaffirmed their commitment to ensuring equitable access to vaccination services and preventing vaccine-preventable diseases, even in humanitarian contexts. This effort is part of a broader strategy to strengthen the health system and protect children, contributing to the resilience of both refugee and host communities.



The Permanent Secretary of the MoH launches the vaccination campaign at the Busuma Mobile Clinic © Triffin Ntore/WHO



The WHO Representative attends the launch of the vaccination campaign in Busuma © Triffin Ntore/WHO

A community walk to promote well-being through physical activity



WHO team participates in a community walk alongside the First Lady © Triffin Ntore/WHO

On Tuesday, 10 February, the WHO Representative in Burundi and WHO staff joined Her Excellency the First Lady of the Republic of Burundi, along with residents of Bujumbura Province, for a community sports walk dedicated to promoting well-being and health for all.

This activity provided an excellent opportunity to strengthen partnerships between institutions, communities, and health stakeholders, while also highlighting the importance of regular physical activity as a key pillar of a healthy lifestyle. By walking together, participants demonstrated their shared commitment to disease prevention and the promotion of healthy behaviors.

On this occasion, Dr Xavier Crespin, WHO Representative in Burundi, commended the First Lady's ongoing commitment to promoting health and well-being within communities. He emphasized that WHO recommends regular physical activity to prevent many noncommunicable diseases, such as cardiovascular diseases, diabetes, and certain types of cancer, while also contributing to mental and social well-being.

Through such community initiatives, WHO and its partners reaffirm their commitment to placing well-being at the heart of public health action by encouraging simple, accessible actions that are essential for building a healthier population.



Community walk led by the First Lady of Burundi © Triffin Ntore/WHO



WHO Representative presents the letter confirming the elimination of trachoma to the First Lady of Burundi © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Burundi validates elimination of trachoma as a public health problem

Burundi has reached a major milestone in the fight against neglected tropical diseases with the official validation of the elimination of trachoma as a public health problem. On behalf of WHO Director-General Dr Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus and the WHO Regional Director for Africa, the WHO Representative in Burundi presented the confirmation letter to Her Excellency the First Lady, marking the culmination of several years of sustained efforts.

On this occasion, Dr Xavier Crespin commended the strong collaboration between the Government, the First Lady, communities, technical and financial partners, and field actors. He emphasized that this achievement reflects collective commitment, national leadership, and sustained dedication to improving the health of populations, particularly the most vulnerable.

While celebrating this remarkable public health success, Dr Crespin encouraged the Government of Burundi to continue and intensify its efforts toward the elimination of other neglected tropical diseases. WHO reaffirmed its commitment to supporting the country in consolidating these gains and advancing toward more resilient, equitable, and inclusive health systems that serve all.

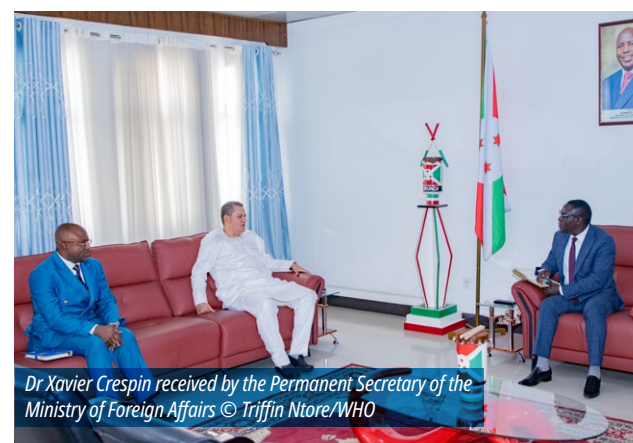


Dr Xavier Crespin Received by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi © Triffin Ntore/WHO

End of tenure of the WHO representative in Burundi: Leadership recognized at the highest level of the state

At the end of his tenure in Burundi, the WHO Representative, Dr Xavier Crespin, was received in audience by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Burundi. This meeting provided an opportunity for him to present the results of his mandate and express his gratitude for the Head of State's continuous support for WHO's public health actions. In recognition of his service, the President presented him with a traditional drum, a symbol of Burundian cultural heritage.

In the same context, Dr Crespin was also received by the Permanent Secretary in charge of foreign affairs and development cooperation, to whom he presented the 2025 activity report as well as his end-of-mission note.



Dr Xavier Crespin received by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs © Triffin Ntore/WHO

On March 30, he was received by Her Excellency Mrs. Angéline Ndayishimiye, First Lady of Burundi. Discussions highlighted the strong collaboration with WHO, particularly in community health, epidemic prevention, and family well-being. Dr Crespin commended her commitment

to prevention, strengthening the health system, and education, while also delivering a message of appreciation from the WHO Regional Director for Africa.



Dr. Xavier Crespin bids farewell to the First Lady of Burundi © Triffin Ntore/WHO

On this occasion, the UN Resident Coordinator and Heads of UN agencies paid tribute to Dr Xavier Crespin for his leadership and dedication.

WHO Burundi reaffirms its commitment to building on and consolidating the achievements of Dr Xavier Crespin in the service of the health and well-being of the people of Burundi.



UN Resident Coordinator thanks Dr Xavier Crespin at the end of his mandate © Triffin Ntore/WHO

Publications



Burundi investigates illness that has caused five deaths

The health authorities in Burundi, with support from the World Health Organization (WHO) and partners, are deepening investigations to determine the cause of an illness that has led to five deaths and sickened 35 people in Mpanda district in the north of the country.

[Read the article](#)



The Government of Burundi introduces the HPV vaccine to protect girls and prevent cervical cancer

Sous le leadership du ministère de la Santé publique et avec le soutien de Gavi, l'Alliance du Vaccin, de l'UNICEF et de l'IOMS, le Burundi introduit, ce 29 avril 2026, le vaccin contre le virus du papillome humain (VPH), principal agent responsable du cancer du col de l'utérus.

[Read the article](#)



WHO supports Burundi to deliver lifesaving emergency health assistance

Burundi is facing a growing humanitarian emergency as thousands of people fleeing violence in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo continue to cross the border, placing increasing strain on health services and infrastructure in refugee-hosting communities.

[Read the article](#)

Partners

We extend our sincere gratitude to our partners and donors whose funding enables us to address the country's health and well-being needs. Their financial support represents a vital contribution to ongoing efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), particularly Universal Health Coverage (UHC).



Contact

World Health Organization

WHO Country Office in Burundi
Intahe House, Rohero I, Avenue Muramvya No. 4
Mukaza Commune, Bujumbura City
P.O. Box 1450, Bujumbura, Burundi
Tel: +257 22 53 34 00
afwcobiallomsburundi@who.int



**Organisation
mondiale de la Santé
Burundi**