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NOTE VERBALE

The Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania presents its compliments to the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the ACP Diplomatic Missions and has the honour to present a short Statement on the state of play regarding Voluntary Repatriation of Burundian Refugees from refugee camps in Tanzania.

The Embassy of the United Republic of Tanzania avails itself of this opportunity to renew to the Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States and the ACP Diplomatic Missions the assurances of its highest consideration.

Brussels, 9th August 2018



Secretariat of the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group of States
and the ACP Diplomatic Missions
Brussels

SHORT STATEMENT ON VOLUNTARY REPATRIATION OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES

- i. The First Tripartite Commission Meeting was held in Dar es Salaam on 31st August 2017. At the time, **12,000** refugees had already registered for voluntarily repatriation to Burundi, as a result the meeting decided that those registered should be repatriated by 31st December 2017. Hence, by December 2017, **13,102** Burundian refugees were voluntarily repatriated.
- ii. The Second Tripartite Commission Meeting held in Bujumbura on 28th March 2018 decided that **72,000** refugees should be voluntarily repatriated by 31st December 2018.
- iii. As of 26th July 2018, about **39,555** refugees were voluntarily repatriated to Burundi out of the registered **69,010** refugees.
- iv. On **27th – 29th June, 2018**, the Ambassadors from the European Union countries while on a visit to inspect projects financed by the European Union in Kigoma region, they also visited Nduta Refugees Camp on 29th June, 2018.
- v. As of 27th July 2018, the number of Burundian refugees being hosted in refugee camps in Kigoma region was **240,694**. All these refugees are living in Nyarugusu, Nduta and Mtendeli Refugee Camps.
- vi. The exercise to repatriate refugees voluntarily is conducted in accordance to provision of human rights standards and observance of their security. Those repatriated were received and well treated by the Government of Burundi and were escorted to their respective home villages where they lived before becoming refugees.
- vii. During the third Tripartite Commission Meeting which was held in Bujumbura on 28th March 2018, the Government of Burundi informed that it had secured and maintained the refugees' properties and farms throughout their absence. Therefore, every returning refugee will find his/her house, farm, and live stocks properly kept, however some of the houses will require rehabilitation due to the fact that they were vacated for a prolong period of time.
- viii. There is no refugee who is forced to return, only voluntary repatriation is allowed, returning refugees are provide with bus transportation and their belongings are transported in trucks. They

are also provided with food provisions to cover the period of three (3) months. Basically, this is the portion given to each refugee in camps every three (3) months.

- ix. Since January 1st, 2018 there are no new recorded refugees from Burundi crossing into Tanzania and those who voluntarily repatriated have not come back to seek protection, this is a strong evidence that peace and security has returned in Burundi. All returnees were well received and are continuing to live well with their daily life.
- x. On 14th August 2017 Burundian refugees in Nduta Camp made violent protests to force authorities to returned them to Burundi to prepare their farms since the rain seasons were approaching. The rampage resulted in breaking a windshield of a vehicle belonging to the UNHCR, destruction of 3 solar power poles and taking hostage some workers of international organizations particularly those working with MSF who were later freed by the police forces who intervened to disperse the riots and bring the situation under order and peace.
- xi. The voluntary repatriation exercise is conducted in collaboration with UNHCR, IOM, WFP, and other international stakeholders, the participation of these international organizations is a strong evidence that the exercise is conducted in a transparent manner, and strictly observing international human rights standards. All the measures relating to voluntary repatriation of refugees are observed.
- xii. Recently on 18th May, 2018 Burundians conducted a referendum on the amendment of their Constitution, the exercise was conducted peacefully, the results of the referendum have not been contested by any group. This confirms that Burundians are united. Hence, Burundian refugees still living abroad should voluntarily return to Burundi and build their country.