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Civilian flee as fresh violence erupts in DR Congo

Fresh violence has erupted in Eastern DR Congo, which has displaced more than 1083 people to Nyakabande Transit Center between the periods from 31st March to 27th April 2015. Of the total displacement, 81% of the refugees crossed into Uganda through the Nteko border point and 19% through the Bunagana border point.

A team of HIJRA staff visited Bunagana border point, and held a discussion with the border authorities. It's not yet clear why majority of the refugees are crossing through Nteko border point, however according to some refugees we met, it is likely that the Bunagana border authorities in DR Congo are preventing fleeing refugees from crossing the border into Uganda, with the impression that DR Congo is peaceful, and there is no renewed fighting in the country. Moreover the some of the refugees trekked through long kilometers to reach Nteko border point where the authorities allowed refugees to cross into Uganda. UNHCR is providing support to transporting the refugees from Nteko border point to Nyakabande transit center.

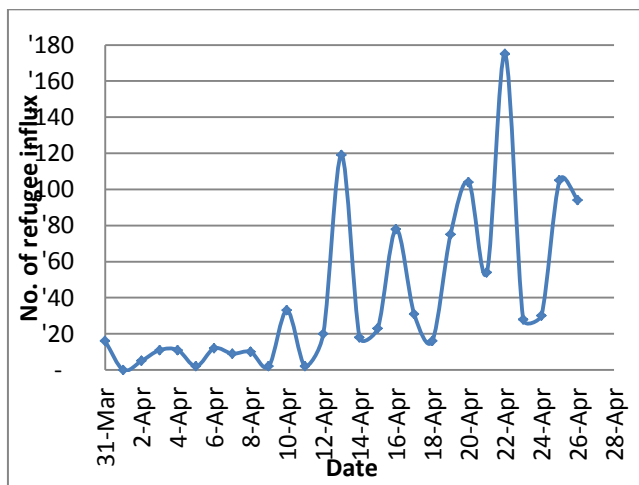


Figure 1: Daily influx of refugees registered at Nyakabande Transit Center

The OPM is conducting the registration of the new arrival of refugees at the transit center; and 146 refugees have since been transferred to Rwamwanja settlement. With an average weekly arrival to the transit center of over 270 refugees in

the past month, or 590 refugees arrival between the period of 20th to 27th April, there is need to fast-track the registration process and transfer of refugees to settlements.

Majority of the new arrivals are from the areas of South Kivu, Rutchuru, Binza, Kinyandonyi, Masisi, Bunyanyaro, Goma, Mugunga and Burambo in DR Congo. As of 25th April 2015, the total population at Nyakabande Transit Center reached 920 refugees with 390 households. Of the total population, 58% are of the age below 17 and 22% between the ages of 0-4 years.



Figure 2: Community sensitization for new arrivals

HIJRA's intervention to the increasing number of refugees in Nyakabande transit center

With the increasing number of refugees in Nyakabande transit center, is likely to stretch the existing shelters and sanitation facilities and basic supply such as food and water. As part of the overall response, HIJRA with support from UNHCR is responding through construction of additional shelters, water supply, improving existing sanitation facilities, preparation of meals and support to community services and protection activities.

The existing three communal shelters can accommodate up to a maximum of 800 refugees. Moreover with the construction of one additional communal shelter with a capacity of 350 refugees completed, it still falls short of the target for 2,000 refugees. The shelters and compound are complete with electrical lighting installations.

With support from WFP, HIJRA is managing food supply to the transit center. Food is prepared by refugees in close supervision by a team of HIJRA volunteers.

HIJRA's WASH activities undertaken include the following:

- Water supply through National Water and Sewage Cooperation water pipe lines – 8 existing water tanks, each of 10,000 liter capacity
- Improvement of sanitation facilities

- Waste collection and disposal
- Community mobilization and sensitization
- Hygiene promotion and NFI distribution

Between the period of 31st March to 27th April 2015, 7 SGBV cases have been handled by a team of protection volunteers. A total of 24 separated children have been recorded during the same period, and 18 unaccompanied minors. 26 persons with special needs were supported with non-food items.



Figure 3: Refugees line up ready to receive meals

With the increasing numbers at Nyakabande transit center, the following gaps still need to be addressed:

- Construction of 3 additional communal shelters, 30 stances of bath shelter and 24 latrine stances. The existing drainable latrine will require frequent emptying.
- Food supply, improvement in kitchen facilities and additional storage space.
- Strengthening the protection sector.
- Rehabilitation of the water supply systems, including drainage and soak away pits.

Women with special needs in Oruchinga uplift their livelihoods

With the prolonged drought in Oruchinga settlement throughout the period of 2013 and 2014, women with special needs, some of whom predominantly depended on Agriculture, were unable to sustain their livelihood. This led some of the women into risky ventures, including sex for material needs, as a means for survival.

HIJRA, through data collection and analysis, and through the members of the sex workers who identified themselves, were able to identify more members. Through a consultative meeting and focus group discussion with the groups (this was done in confidentiality), majority of the members expressed their willingness to participate in alternative income generating activities. And yet, members of the

groups still expressed a number of challenges including, social segregation and stigmatization, poverty, exploitation, unplanned and unwanted pregnancies and exposure to STIs.

HIJRA initially initiated and conducted a confidential one on one meeting with the sex worker group members – referred some to health center facilities for medical checkup and family planning advises; and proposed income generating activities search as selling of: second hand clothes, maize flour, goats and jewelry. HIJRA also initiated routine psychosocial counselling and guidance, home visit sensitization and have monitored progress of the women group income generating activities.

Through an integrated activity implementation, the livelihood and the protection sector trained 08 members of the women group on the skills of managing small business, simple stock taking, record keeping and farming. The sex worker group is mobilized through its leaders, who have been selected by the group members themselves.

The following positive changes have been observed on some members of the group:

- 2 beneficiaries of the initiative have enrolled their children to private primary school.
- Members of the group initiated a goat rearing project within the community; and in order to construct a shelter for the goats, the members contributed a total of 60,000 UGX towards the procurement of roofing iron sheets. HIJRA, with support from UNHCR protection sector supported the group to procure and deliver the iron sheets to site. To-date, group members are rearing 28 goats.
- Some members of the group have ventured into selling of jewelry as an income generating activity.
- From the saving realized from income generating activities, one of the women purchased and is now keeping 14 ducks in her household.



Figure 4: Some of the jewelry displayed for sale