

BURUNDI

Floods

Crisis Impact Overview

Heavy rains, winds, landslides and consequent flooding occurred in the west of Burundi from April 13-20 in Cibitoke, Bubanza, Rumonge, Bujumbura Mairie, and Bujumbura Rural provinces (OCHA 21/04/2020), following on from heavy rains in mid-March; no deaths were reported. In Rumonge and Bubanza provinces, between 700-800 people were affected by the storms and landslides, with up to 700 of those displaced (IOM 22/04/2020) (OCHA 21/04/2020). In Bujumbura city in Bujumbura Mairie, riverine flooding displaced 27,000 people (ECHO 22/04/2020).

In Bujumbura Rural, the Ruzizi River burst its banks, leading to the flooding of up to 7,600 homes (IOM 22/04/2020). In Mutimbuzi commune, in Bujumbura Rural province, the river flooded six districts of Gatumba city including Kinyinya 1&2, Muyange 2, Mushasha 1&2, and Gaharawe, displacing up to 40,000 people according to available estimates (IOM 22/04/2020). Current responses have relocated 100 displaced households to temporary relocation sites, and aim to relocate 100 households per week. Over 400 hectares of crop were lost in the flooding, straining local food options (OCHA 21/04/2020). The government had previously closed the border with the DRC and restricted movement with Rwanda and Tanzania to contain COVID-19 (OCHA 21/04/2020) potentially restricting food availability and trading livelihoods. Additionally, stagnant and potentially contaminated flood water poses a health risk to populations. Since late 2019, rainfall has been abnormally high, resulting in recurrent flooding (FEWSNET 11/2019) (NWS CPC NOAA last accessed 28/04/2020). Flooding has already led to the internal displacement of thousands of people since the beginning of 2020; flooding may compound pre-existing poverty and/or public health issues.

Limitations: Assessments are ongoing, and figures are preliminary; vulnerable populations have not been identified and the location of many of the displaced remains unclear. There is a lack of clarity about the reporting of figures for different flooding episodes.

Key priorities



40,000

Estimated displaced people in Mutimbuzi



7,600

homes damaged/destroyed by floods in Mutimbuzi



High risk

of new cholera or malaria outbreaks

National response capacity

Burundi Government Civil Protection services, Ministry of Public Services and Disaster Management, Ministry of Human Rights, Social Affairs and Gender, Burundi Red Cross, local NGOs

International response capacity

UN agencies (UNICEF, IOM, WFP), INGOs

Anticipated scope and scale

In affected provinces, up to 160 homes were destroyed and 70 partially damaged, alongside 7,600 inundated in Mutimbuzi commune. Heavy and above-average rainfall is anticipated to continue until mid-May, potentially increasing displacement and testing coping capacity.

Capacity to provide aid may be restricted throughout the upcoming rains, particularly as elections in May may divert government attention and resources. If flood water is untreated and people cannot access safe water, cholera and malaria may further spread.

Humanitarian constraints



No flood-related constraints have been reported. Access may be hampered by damaged roads and debris reported some time ago (France24 22/04/2020).

Humanitarian activities are heavily regulated by the government in Burundi: organisations face administrative restrictions, bans, suspensions, and even staff arrests (Human Rights Watch 2019) (Amnesty International 27/02/2020).; the government also denies the extent of health issues such as malaria, hampering aid provision. COVID-19 physical distancing measures may need to be enforced at emergency shelters and aid distribution sites, slowing aid delivery (OCHA 21/04/2020)

Sectoral needs



Shelter and NFIs

Although there has been some responses, emergency shelter is needed for the displaced – a high number of displaced being from Mutimbuzi commune – who are living in schools, churches, host communities – crowded conditions that may encourage the spread of COVID-19 – or in the open, posing protection risks including GBV (IWCU 24/04/2020) (OCHA 21/04/2020). Affected people have lost NFIs including clothes, blankets, water containers, and cooking utensils (OCHA 21/04/2020).



WASH

Latrines have reportedly overflowed, contaminating flooded areas and drinking water sources (OCHA 21/04/2020). Limited fresh water may hamper COVID-19 responses. Aid distribution sites are reportedly difficult to access and are not connected to pipelines (OCHA 27/04/2020); despite ongoing distribution (OCHA 28/04/2020).



Health

Due to latrine overflowing, there have been reports of new infections emerging, including skin rashes, and parasites in drinking water (OCHA 21/04/2020). There is a fear that illnesses endemic to the region such as cholera and malaria may spread if flooded areas and drinking water sources are not treated (OCHA 21/04/2020). There have been calls for more mosquito nets (OCHA 21/04/2020). Women and girls have reported the need for sanitary supplies (OCHA 27/04/2020).



Food and livelihoods

Food stocks have been lost/damaged, including nearly 400 hectares of crop; affected populations need food and livelihood support, especially in a country with high rates of chronic malnutrition; in the flooded areas, between 24-57% of children under five are affected by stunting and 5% of children under five nation-wide are affected by wasting (Government of Burundi 2017) (WFP 28/04/2020) (OCHA 27/04/2020) (OCHA 21/04/2020).



Education

Three schools have been flooded in Mutimbuzi and others rendered non-functional. Across the affected areas over 10,000 children are out of school (OCHA 27/04/2020). Although some aid has been delivered in Mutimbuzi, children in other areas may also need school supplies (OCHA 21/04/2020).

Aggravating factors

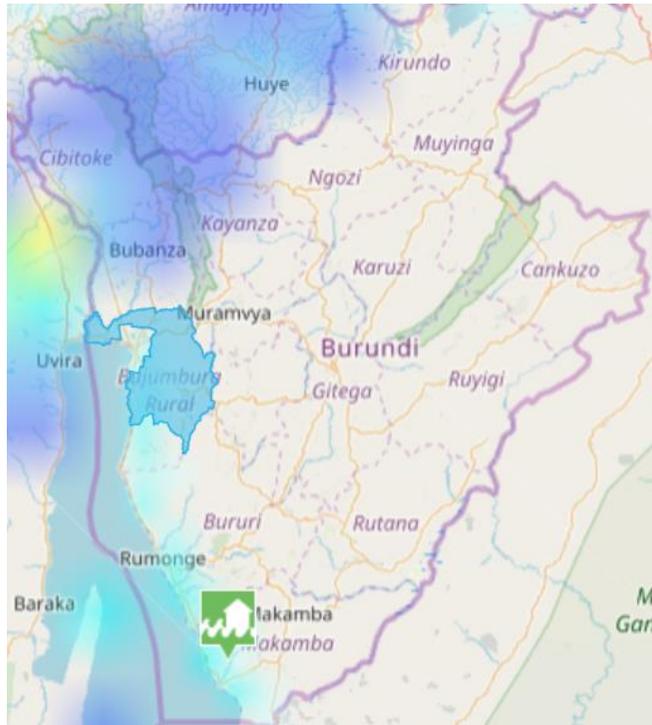
Upcoming elections: The security situation in Burundi remains tense as the country prepares for general elections due in May 2020. U.N. investigators warn that Burundi is at risk of a wave of atrocities as the election nears and there is a climate of intimidation against anyone who does not show support for the ruling party (UN 10/03/2020). Civil society is frequently targeted (Reuters16/01/2020): A lack of press freedom and restrictions on information may undermine response activities. Additionally, tensions connected to the upcoming elections may result in violence threatening civilian and crisis responders' safety, as well as diverting attention away from the flood response.

COVID-19 Pandemic: On 31 March, health officials in Burundi announced the first two confirmed cases of COVID-19. As of 25 April, a total of 15 cases have been reported (OCHA 28/04/2020); this may be an underestimation. Burundian President Nkurunziza's spokesperson claimed the country's religious spirit will save it from the outbreak, in practice denying the possibility of it spreading (AA 31/03/2020). Although there have been some containment measures, Burundian authorities have denied humanitarian organisations access to sites with potential COVID-19 cases (The New Humanitarian 02/04/2020). Populations affected by flooding may be more vulnerable to the spread of COVID-19 if they are sheltering in crowded places and do not have access to adequate WASH facilities. Agencies providing responses may also need to enforce physical distancing at emergency shelters and aid-distribution points, which may slow down aid delivery (OCHA 21/04/2020). Furthermore, the closing of borders with DRC as a COVID-19 containment measure has hampered local economies, particularly Gatumba city's marketplace. This is likely to lead to higher food prices, especially challenging to communities with limited or lost assets and lost livelihoods due to the flooding (OCHA 21/04/2020); increased taxes and forced involuntary contributions to the election may also strain household economies (UN COI 2018).

Malaria: 1.2 million people in Burundi were believed to be infected with malaria prior to the floods (OCHA Snapshot 01/04/2020), while some estimated that up to 8.5 million people in the country were infected last year. Authorities refused to announce an epidemic that may have received international funding to support infected populations (The New Humanitarian 02/04/2020). Although rates compared to the same time last year have declined, malaria is still prevalent across the country and risks spreading if standing water from the flooding is not treated (WHO last accessed 28/04/20).

Extent of flooding in Burundi as of 18 April

Source: GDACS 18/04/2020

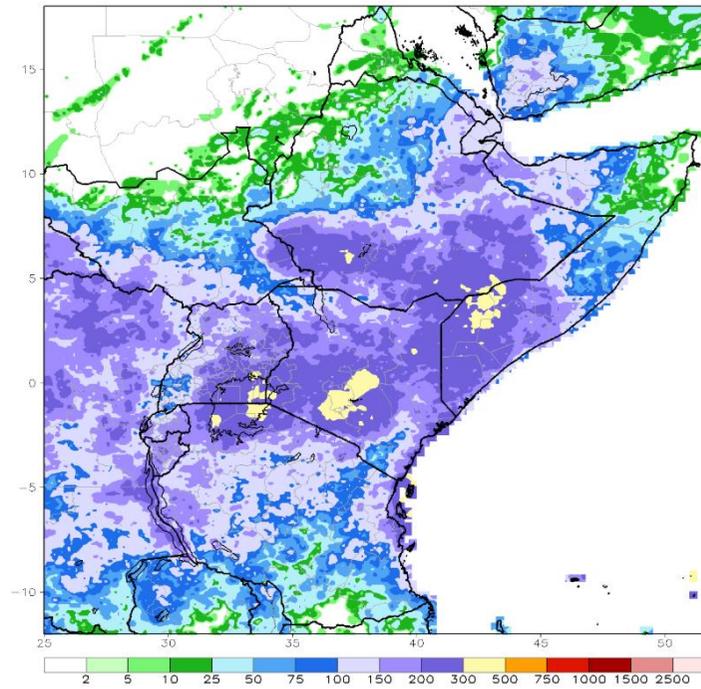


Rainfall and long-term totals anomaly in mm, from 28 March to 26 April

Source: NWS CPC NOAA last accessed 28 April 2020

ARC2 30-Day Total Rainfall (mm)

Period: 28Mar2020 - 26Apr2020



ARC2 30-Day Total Rainfall Anomaly (mm)

Period: 28Mar2020 - 26Apr2020

