

The 6th May 2010

Mt Roskill,

Auckland , New Zealand

TO: UNHCR Tanzania (Protection Unit)

18 kalenga Street,Upanga

Po Box 2666 Dar-es-Salam

Tanzania , Africa

Cc: UNHCR Australia / Kenya / Geneva

Immigration New Zealand /Refugee Quota Branch

Burundian Community in New Zealand Inc.

United Nations Association of New Zealand Inc.

US Committee for Refugees (USCR)

Refugee Space (USA)

To whomever it may concern

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Burundian Refugees in Kanembwa/Mtabila refugee Camps

I am writing to you regarding the current hardship facing Burundian refugees in Mtabila and Kanembwa refugee camps.

You may perhaps remember writing to you three years ago with regard to the caseload of resettlement cases that had been pending for a long time.

Unfortunately it is known that these refugees' basic rights have been violated.

The denial of basic services in refugee camps such as education is the violation of July 1951 United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and Protection and OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa ;Article VIII of 10th September 1969.

Schools for little children should not be closed in camps under the pretext of pushing refugees to repatriate. The Article 26 of The Universal of Human rights clarifies that “Everyone has the right to education. Education shall be free, at least in the elementary and fundamental stages”

It is known that UNHCR has three durable solutions: Voluntary repatriation, local integration and resettlement. We also acknowledge the kindness of the Tanzanian Government to integrate Burundians as well as the effort of UNHCR to repatriate refugees to their country of origin.

A few months ago, UNHCR Tanzania relocated some Burundian resettlement cases to Kanembwa refugee camp while waiting for their cases to be finalized. Some refugees expected to be interviewed by Immigration officers from the country to which their cases were referred. Instead of finalizing their cases, UNHCR Tanzania started warehousing those refugees and now is planning to return them to the camp (Mtabila) where some report she has been abused .These vulnerable refugees are left in limbo suffering trauma and stress.
Example **Refer case: UNHCR ref: UN877-97H36393,**

UNHCR Ration Token: No: 049868

This traumatized woman was raped and now has been taken to Kanembwa camp. More than 12 months later she experienced difficulty in contacting you and has not received any follow-up to her case. Her daughter who is this file has been refused to be reunited with her child and husband. Please your reference: **UN 877-94H18030, UNHCR Ration Token no: 096051.**

There are other cases that need to be investigated and I am happy to provide other documentation.

It is inhumane to allow this status quo to continue. It would also be shameful for these families to return to the places where they faced such horrible incidences.

We have found great difficult trying to ascertain what actions have been taken with regard to this case.

It is vital that the husband is reunited with his wife and child. Clearly there has been at least the possibility that injustice and abuse of power has occurred and serious risk to these refugees is likely.

Unless some decisive action is taken the present state of uncertainty will continue indefinitely.

Protecting refugees with dignity is the responsibility of UNHCR’s core mandate.

Those refugees are not criminals; they are human beings, innocent and victims who fled from brutal war. Therefore they need clear communication, support and understanding. Refugee's rights should not be violated nor should they suffer through ignorance of their rights, or through an inability to express their needs effectively.

Rather than keeping refugee endless limbo, we request UNHCR Tanzania to:

- Finding appropriate durable solutions to the refugee cases above that are still pending
- Protect with dignity those refugees who have been forgotten in Kanembwa camp
- Reopen the refugees' basic education classes in Mtabila refugee camp

We also request the New Zealand, USA, Canada and the European countries that have shown kindness to refugees, continue their programmes of resettlement of Burundian and other refugees who are struggling to survive.

We hope you will seriously look at the cases in the Kanembwa/ Mtabila camps as I know that they will be glad to hear from you.

Kindest regards,

Jean-Paul Bizozwa

Burundian Refugees Advocate

Burundian Commission of Control: Burundian Community in New Zealand Inc

Humanitarian Affairs officer: United Nations Association of New Zealand Inc
Auckland Northern Region Branch