Beat: News

Burundi refugees

EU increases humanitarian aid

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USPA NEWS - The European Commission is releasing €4.5 million in humanitarian assistance to help the increasing number of refugees from Burundi that have fled to neighbouring countries. More than 175 000 people, the majority of them women and children, are estimated to have already left the country.

"We cannot overlook the deteriorating humanitarian situation affecting Burundi. Refugee numbers are up in the last three months which is a serious cause of concern in an already fragile region. This additional EU humanitarian funding will help neighbouring countries accommodate refugees and meet their most urgent needs. It is a strong signal of the EU's solidarity with the most vulnerable people caught in a difficult situation beyond their control," said EU Commissioner for Humanitarian Aid and Crisis Management Christos Stylianides, underlining "the generous hospitality of the countries in the region who have welcomed their Burundian neighbours."

This funding increase brings the total humanitarian aid for the Great Lakes region for 2015 to €56.5 million. The aid released mainly for Burundi refugees amounts to €9 million since the end of April, when their numbers started growing. Certain refugee camps have become overpopulated and health risks have continuously worsened.

Background:
Rwanda, Tanzania, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Uganda have been experiencing flows of refugees from Burundi since April. Those arriving cite intimidation, threats and fear of violence as reasons for leaving the country.

Tanzania is so far the main hosting country with nearly 80 000 Burundi refugees having arrived, followed by Rwanda (71,158), the Democratic Republic of Congo (13,368), and Uganda (11,165).
The most urgent humanitarian needs to address are shelter, water and sanitation, as well as health assistance to stop the possible surge of diseases and epidemics, notably cholera. A key concern ahead of the rainy season is the overpopulation of certain refugee camps.
Following the announcement on 25 April 2015 that President Pierre Nkurunziza would seek a third mandate, provoking serious political division, Burundi has undergone a sustained political and security crisis - this crisis brought with it a surge in the number of refugees.

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