



## **The Government of Japan and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees join efforts to provide assistance to Burundians Refugees located in Rwanda**

Joint press release UNHCR/Embassy of Japan  
February 18, 2016

**KIGALI-** The Embassy of Japan announce on February 18 a USD 2.5 million contribution by the Government of Japan to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) for the 2016 emergency response in support of Burundian refugees in Rwanda. The contribution by Japan is the first contribution received by UNHCR Rwanda in 2016.

Since late March 2015, over 77,000 refugees have fled to Rwanda from Burundi as a result of tension and violence linked to the elections in the country. The Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) and UNHCR are jointly leading the response to the emergency, which involves several UN agencies as well as Rwandan and international NGOs. A new refugee camp, Mahama, was opened in April 2015 to accommodate the Burundian refugees, and over 47,000 refugees are currently living there. The remaining refugees are living in urban areas such as Kigali and Huye.

“I would like to express tremendous thanks to the Government of Japan, on behalf of the entire refugee response, for this most timely support. Not only is it the first contribution we have received in 2016, but USD 2.5 million is a very generous grant that will enable UNHCR to deliver critical services to Burundian refugees,” said Saber Azam, UNHCR Representative in Rwanda.

The contribution from Japan in support of UNHCR’s operation will support interventions in numerous sectors including ensuring Burundian refugees have access to health care, more durable shelters, as well as improved self-reliance through skills training and other income-generating activities. UNHCR will also be able to improve the protection and living conditions of children in Mahama camp, and provide them with improved access to education thanks to the critical support from Japan.

### **About Government of Japan**

Japan is one of the largest bilateral donors in Rwanda, ranked fourth, with worth 44.1million, behind USA, UK, and Belgium (FY2013-2014). Since 2004, the Annual Bilateral Policy Dialogue has been held to discuss Economic Cooperation between the two countries as to align the courses of this cooperation with the Rwandan development goals of Economic Development and Poverty Reduction Strategy (EDPRS) as well as Vision 2020. For the efficient and effective delivery of aid, Japan, through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) has been supporting Rwanda in three sectors Education, Agriculture and Water and Sanitation as an active donor, besides the two sectors of Energy, ICT and Infrastructure as a silent donor by way of grant assistance and technical cooperation. Not only the bilateral support, but also multilateral cooperation through international organizations, Grass-roots activities through local NGOs, constitutes an important part of the Japanese contribution.

### **About the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)**

UNHCR is the UN Refugee Agency, mandated to ensure protection and assistance for refugees around the world. In Rwanda, UNHCR supports the Government of Rwanda in protecting and assisting nearly 150,000 refugees who are living in six refugee camps, three transit centers, as well as in urban areas, including 74,000 Congolese refugees. UNHCR also supports the Government in helping Rwandan returnees to rebuild their lives in Rwanda after years living abroad. UNHCR co-leads the multisectoral refugee response with the Government Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR) which includes a number of UN and NGO

actors. For more information on the interagency response to the Burundian refugee emergency in Rwanda please see the Refugee Response Plan, available at <http://www.unhcr.org/555f1dfe9.html>.

---

For more information please contact:

Martina Pomeroy  
External Relations Officer  
UNHCR Rwanda  
[pomeroy@unhcr.org](mailto:pomeroy@unhcr.org)  
+250 (0) 78-830-2769

Saori KISHI  
Political and Economic Officer  
Embassy of Japan  
[Saori.kishi@mofa.go.jp](mailto:Saori.kishi@mofa.go.jp)  
+250 (0)78-838-5403