

Land urgently needed to avert 'drastic deterioration' in Burundian refugee camps in neighbouring countries

7 February 2017 – Stalled peace talks in Burundi are forcing hundreds to flee every day seeking refuge in neighbouring countries, the United Nations refugee agency warned today, appealing for more support, particularly land to shelter for new arrivals and to ensure protection of children and prevention of sexual and gender-based violence.

According to the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), since April 2015, more than 384,000 Burundian refugees have fled to Tanzania (222,271), Rwanda (84,866), Uganda (about 44,000) and the Democratic Republic of the Congo (32,650) and its projections indicate that numbers will cross half-a-million by the end of the year.

“Without allocation of new land to extend capacity in existing camps or build new ones, these countries will struggle to provide sufficient shelter and life-saving services in the camp sites,” William Spindler, a UNHCR spokesperson, told the media at the regular bi-weekly press briefing in Geneva today.

“Camp facilities also need to be upgraded, including construction of more homes, schools, health centres and better drainage systems to lessen the risk of disease,” he added, noting that host countries have been generous with their support but more action is needed to avert a dangerous slide in standards and conditions.

UNHCR also appealed to donor nations to step up their assistance and funding.

Last year, the UN agency received a \$96.1 million in contributions for the Burundi situation, however, it was 53 per cent of the amount needed.

Relief organizations struggling to meet needs

The pressure is most intense in Tanzania, where average arrivals in January reached almost 600 persons daily.



A girl walks past a pile of firewood in Mahama refugee camp, Eastern Province, Rwanda, which is hosting thousands of refugees from Burundi. Photo: UNICEF/Mike Pflanz

Of the three camps hosting refugees, only Nduta – that recently passed its current capacity of 100,000 persons – is taking new arrivals.

According to Mr. Spindler, humanitarian agencies are struggling to provide

minimal basic services and fear outbreaks of health emergencies if the crowding gets worse and facilities fail to keep pace.

Similarly, land shortages are also hitting the Lusenda camp in the Democratic Republic of the Congo where risk of fire is rising as shelters are getting closer due to paucity of land.

In Rwanda's Mahama camp (hosting more than 53,000 against its capacity of 50,000), many are living under plastic sheeting in overcrowded communal hangars, waiting to move to a family shelter. In addition to poor hygiene, living conditions present serious protection risks due to lack of privacy.

Even a 'progressive settlement approach' is struggling to cope

Uganda, which presently hosts 44,000 Burundian refugees in total, according to the UN agency runs a "progressive settlement approach" to refugee management and protection.

The country provides refugees with plots of land to build new homes and grow crops, and live among the Ugandan host communities.

However, Mr. Spindler added that significant investments are needed in local infrastructure to ensure that refugees are able to access key basic services.

MEP warns of 'toxic' legacy for UK if government signs EU-Canada trade deal



7 February 2017

As MEPs prepare to vote on whether or not to ratify a controversial trade deal next week, Molly Scott Cato, Green MEP for the South West, has warned the UK could find itself in the 'worst of all possible worlds' if the UK sign up to the deal.

The Comprehensive Economic Trade Agreement (CETA) [1] between Canada and the EU has always been opposed by Greens as it seeks to give more power to corporations while putting public services and workers' and consumer rights at risk and threaten environmental regulations.

But now Dr Scott Cato says that a new House of Commons briefing [2] confirms that when the UK leaves the EU, it could be forced to renegotiate its trade agreements with Canada yet still be bound by the treaty for 20 years. She said:

"One of the key reasons Greens have opposed CETA is because of the power this treaty gives to corporations to sue governments over legislation that

threatens their profits. If CETA is ratified before the UK exits the EU, we will need to renegotiate our trade agreements with Canada but still be bound by the investor protection provision aspect of this treaty for 20 years. This would mean foreign investors would still have the right to sue the UK government if they feel their businesses have been impacted by new laws or regulations.

“Signing up to CETA is the worst of all possible worlds for the UK. It will take us back to square one on trade negotiations with Canada but trap us in a most toxic element of this treaty. With Brexit looming it is even more critical that all British MEPs vote this dodgy deal down next week in the European Parliament.”

[1]

<http://ttip2017.eu/blog/id-12-reasons-the-greenefa-group-are-opposed-to-ceta.html>

[2] <http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7492>

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[Press release: Gloucestershire Man ordered to pay £675 for illegally fishing for elvers.](#)

Yesterday (6 February 2017) Paul Ridler, of Betjeman Close, Gloucester pleaded guilty at Gloucestershire Magistrates' Court to one charge of fishing for elvers without the appropriate authorisation.

Mr Ridler was fined £250 and ordered to pay £400 in costs, along with a £25 victim surcharge.

The charge was brought by the Environment Agency contrary to section 27B (1) of the Salmon and Freshwater Fisheries Act 1975.

On April 7 2016, Environment Agency officers were patrolling the River Severn at Ashleworth. Officers spoke to two males, Mr Anthony Ridler and Mr Paul Ridler. Anthony Ridler confirmed he had the required authorisation to fish for elvers but Mr Paul Ridler did not have authorisation and would not be fishing.

Later that evening officers returned to find Paul Ridler in wet, muddy

waterproofs and gloves with an elver net and empty bucket. Paul Ridler stated he was looking after the net for his brother who was further downstream, and this was the only net they had with them.

Officers located Anthony Ridler who was in the river further downstream with a dip net immersed in water, and confirmed he was fishing alone and indicated he was not aware his brother was using the spare net.

Paul Ridler stated to one of the officers that he was not elvering and it was a "silly mistake, which would not happen again."

Speaking after the case, Carl Salisbury, the Environment Agency officer in charge of the investigation, said:

We will continue to target those who decide to fish illegally without a licence or the correct authorisation and will work with other enforcement bodies to deal with the theft of fish.

Anyone witnessing illegal fishing incidents in progress can report it directly to the Environment Agency hotline, 0800 80 70 60. Information on illegal fishing and environmental crime can also be reported anonymously to Crime stoppers on 0800 555 111.

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