

A CHILD'S NIGHTMARE BURUNDIAN CHILDREN AT RISK

*A field report assessing the protection and assistance needs
of Burundian children and adolescents*

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Executive Summary

There is a character in Central African folk tales known as *igihume*, similar to a monster or bogeyman. In the refugee camps along Tanzania's border with Burundi, children speak often of *igihume* haunting their lives. But in their nightmares, the *igihume* is often not the traditional frog, deformed person or night creature lurking in forests-it is instead the powerful soldier.

The *igihume's* re-creation as an omnipresent children's nightmare underscores how fear and uncertainty haunt Burundian child and adolescent realities. Even though the refugee camps in Tanzania are relatively established and fairly secure, and the number of Burundians fleeing their country has diminished, the ebb and flow of violence in Burundi, the backdrop of decades-long repression within the country, and the distanced relationship between refugees and their providers, continue to seriously impact Burundian children.

This report identifies key areas of concern for children and adolescents affected by the armed conflict in Burundi, particularly those currently in refugee camps. After providing some context on the situation of Burundian children both within their home country and in refugee camps outside Burundi, the report will consider why the needs of children (defined as newborns to 17-year-olds) remain significant despite years of service provision to Burundian refugees since the outbreak of war in October, 1993. It will conclude with concrete suggestions as to how the international community can help strengthen the capacity of families, care givers, community groups, and governments to address these concerns and assist Burundi's refugee children and youth. The report is based on a three-week visit to the region (February 2 - 25, 1998), and will focus on the situation of Burundian children currently living in refugee camps in Tanzania.

Fear and Isolation: A Background on Burundi

This section will briefly review the ongoing violence that has created high levels of fear and isolation among Burundians-a theme that informs the report's subsequent analysis of Burundian child and adolescent concerns.

Although Burundian children have suffered through years of extreme hardship and violence, the problems they face are not well understood. Assessments in the countryside remain difficult to carry out, and travel within Burundi and between refugee camps has made the situation of Burundian children increasingly difficult to evaluate.

The Crisis

The country is largely at peace.

-- Luc Rukingama, Current Foreign Minister of Burundi

We are almost everywhere.

-- Léonard Nyangoma, recent leader of the Council for the Defense of Democracy (CNDD), a Burundian opposition group

Although bitter opponents in Burundi's civil war, the comments of Luc Rukingama and Léonard Nyangoma are both, in a sense, correct. On any given day, as Minister Rukingama states, much of Burundi is at peace. At the same time, as Mr. Nyangoma suggests, uncertainty reigns, and Burundians and humanitarian officials alike have noted that violence might erupt almost anywhere. One veteran humanitarian agency official observed that, strangely, Bujumbura seems more secure when one can hear gun fighting somewhere in the surrounding hills. The absence of gunshots in the distance makes people tense, because everyone has to wait to discover where the next battle will take place. Subconsciously, he said, everyone is afraid that the next fight might ignite in their neighborhood.

The cause of Burundi's current plague of violence dates back to October 20, 1993, when Melchior Ndadaye, Burundi's only democratically-elected president, was assassinated. Fear quickly overtook the nation. Hearing news of their fallen

leader, villagers felled trees and laid them across roadways to prevent attackers from entering. As fear turned to terror, violence between ethnic Hutu and Tutsi neighbors ensued. People began to sleep in the woods in attempts at self-protection. Massacres swept across the nation, leaving tens of thousands of victims of ethnic warfare in their wake. By the end of December, after only two months of desperate violence, it was estimated that more than a quarter of Burundi's population had been either killed or displaced.²

Despite the war's essential unpredictability, one constant in the five-and-a-half year war persists: civilians, not soldiers, are the central target of war. Human Rights Watch's recent Burundi report comments that "relatively few direct confrontations between government troops and rebel forces have taken place. Instead ... both sides have carried out indiscriminate attacks against unarmed civilians and have engaged in rape, torture, and extrajudicial executions (including assassinations). The civil war has above all else been a war against civilians."³ Human Rights Watch's findings are supported by others as well, including the Economist Intelligence Unit (EIU), which commented that "A persistent feature of [the Burundian army's] campaigns is the massacre of civilians, so that it may be considered to be at war with substantial elements of the civilian population."⁴

A component of the Burundian Government's war strategy has been an effort called "regroupment." This initiative, now fast declining (largely due to international pressure), shifted as many as 800,000 villagers into huge, makeshift, tightly controlled internment camps.⁵ While strategically effective in military terms, the regroupment camps have caused massive hardship and death.⁶

Burundi Overlooked

In late 1993, soon after the explosion of violence in Burundi, many in the international media estimated that 150,000 Burundians had been killed.⁷ Today, after more than five years of subsequent violence, that same figure-150,000 killed since 1993-continues to appear in press reports.⁸ In fact, estimates are now as high as 200,000.

The persistent use of "150,000" by international observers is symbolic of how Burundi's civil war is being overlooked even as it is being monitored. For rarely is Burundi's crisis the focus of Western attention for long. Lacking the drama of Rwanda's genocide or Mobutu's collapse in the former Zaire, Burundi's ongoing crisis, despite its severity, has been unable to command the world's attention. Indeed, Burundi, as Paulo Pinheiro, the United Nations' Special Human Rights Envoy to Burundi observed, is undergoing "genocide by drip feed"-a drip feed that has allowed the patient, more often than not, to be ignored.⁹

Burundi's current crisis is not the first to be largely overlooked by the international community. In 1972, the Government's repression of a local revolt in southern Burundi quickly grew into what has been characterized as "planned annihilation"¹⁰ and "selective genocide,"¹¹ when there was a "systematic massacre of the Hutu elites."¹² During the massacres, as many as 250,000 civilians,¹³ most of them considered ethnic Hutu "intellectuals"-locally defined as anyone with at least one year of secondary education-were killed. Another 150,000 Burundians became refugees in Tanzania, where most of them, together with their descendants, remain. Given the ferocity of the 1972 massacres, several Western observers noted that the international humanitarian and political response was unacceptably slight. One of them was Central Africa expert Warren Weinstein, who noted, late in 1972, that "aside from a few newspaper reports that emphasized the sensational aspects of the 1972 revolt and its aftermath, little more was said," and that "this silence has not been broken by the small community of Burundi scholars" either.¹⁴

Both Weinstein and Lemarchand highlight the role that fear has played in modern Burundian history. Weinstein noted that "Burundi politics have never been able to escape the possibility that what happened in Rwanda was fated to happen in Burundi." In the years following the massacres of Rwandan Tutsi in 1959-64, "the Burundian Tutsi ... began more and more to fear their Hutu neighbors."¹⁵ Indeed, the violence in both countries had led many Burundians to believe that "violence, not reform, [was] the keystone of local politics."¹⁶ This growing fear of violence, moreover, was fed by Burundian ethnic leaders' "refus[al] to face reality," and their preference for "what is best described as a plot theory of history."¹⁷

Lemarchand's analysis generally agrees with Weinstein's. Lemarchand argues how, by 1972, many in the Burundian Tutsi minority were afraid of "an impending Hutu-instigated slaughter of all Tutsi men, women and children-intensified by lingering memories of what happened in Rwanda in 1959-62." From this perspective, the massive government response to the Hutu-led peasant revolt was justified by some Tutsi as a matter of survival. Yet "by striking at all Hutu elites, students and schoolchildren indiscriminately," Lemarchand notes, "[Tutsi organizers] aimed not only to decapitate a potential counterelite but to spread terror throughout the entire Hutu community and thus create an enduring sense of fear and submission among the living and the unborn-in short, to teach a lesson that would be remembered by generations to come."¹⁸

Although Weinstein and Lemarchand are commenting on the situation in Burundi following the 1972 massacres, their depictions of fear and violence in Burundi are equally applicable to the current situation in present-day Central Africa. Indeed, over time, and across the ethnic populations of both Rwanda and Burundi, the combination of terror and

violence has infused deeply-set fears into the socialization of Burundian (as well as Rwandan) children. And their effects, as we shall soon learn, have been lasting.

Burundian Refugees in Tanzania

In early 1998, the isolation surrounding Burundian refugees was greatly exacerbated by the worst rains Tanzania had experienced in a quarter century. Almost entirely cut off from the rest of the country, the 270,000 Burundian refugees living in six camps along Tanzania's border with Burundi faced increasingly serious shortfalls in food and medicine. Gasoline supplies were extremely limited, and the roads between the Burundian refugee camps were nearly impassable.

Before examining six key areas of concern for children and adolescents in Burundian refugee camps, the report will briefly review a commonly-held but misleading assumption about similarities between Rwandans and Burundians.

Challenging an Assumption

These [Burundian] refugees are good.

-- Tanzanian Government official, comparing Burundian refugees with Rwandan refugees

The Rwandan [refugees] were so enterprising, they just went and did things. But these Burundian [refugees] here, you find that something is not right. They just look at you with a blank stare. I think they've been depressed for a long time.

-- Humanitarian agency official

Burundian and Rwandan refugees both fled into Tanzania in large numbers. The Rwandan influx was larger and more dramatic than the Burundian influx has been—a quarter of a million Rwandans entered Tanzania in just one day in April, 1994.

Those who came from both countries were mostly ethnic Hutus. This shared characteristic has inspired assumptions about the similarities between the two refugee populations. Yet those who have worked with both populations, as the Women's Commission learned, describe important differences between Rwandans and Burundians.

Both Rwanda and Burundi are comprised of approximately 85 percent Hutu and fourteen percent Tutsi people. (The remaining one percent is made up of ethnic Twa). Both had feudal systems of pre-colonial government before they became a colonial pair, Rwanda-Urundi, when first the Germans and then the Belgians ruled over them. Across both colonies, colonialism brought legislated ethnic favoritism and Catholic domination. And since the dawn of their independence period both have suffered extreme ethnic violence, starting in Rwanda in 1959 and 1964, and followed by major outbreaks in Burundi in 1972 and 1988.

Such similarities have inspired many observers to assume that today's Burundian refugee population behaves much like the two million Rwandans who entered refugee camps in Tanzania and the former Zaire in 1994. Burundi's independence period, however, is separated from Rwanda's by one critical fact: with the exception of four short months in 1993, Burundian governments have been dominated by ethnic Tutsi, while Rwanda's 32-year run of Hutu-dominated governments ended only with the 1990-92 civil war and the genocide of 1994.

The dominance of different ethnic groups over the countries' respective governments led to policies of ethnic favoritism and repression in both countries: the Hutu-led regimes of Rwanda sought to favor Hutu and repress Tutsi, while the Tutsi-led governments of Burundi did the opposite. This has created tragic but usually overlooked similarities between the two oppressed populations. An example of this is the passive attitude with which many Burundian Hutu met their deaths during Burundi's "selective" genocide in 1972, which was mirrored by the way many Rwandan Tutsi faced death during the 1994 genocide.¹⁹

Given the different directions of governance and repression in each country, the Rwandan and Burundian refugees' shared ethnicity has not resulted in similar behavior patterns. On the heels of witnessing, and, in some cases, participating in, massive slaughter in Rwanda, international agency and host nation officials described Rwandan refugees as often aggressive, combative and remarkably resourceful. But they described the dispositions of most Burundian refugees in distinctly different terms: largely passive, unresponsive and distant.

In addition to differences between the two refugee populations, recent reports from Burundi underscore differences between the nature of Burundi's and Rwanda's recent crises. The Rwandan genocide in 1994 led to the deaths of at least 500,000 people, and created unprecedented numbers of refugees in Tanzania and the former Zaire. If refugee levels are taken as an indicator of the severity of a humanitarian crisis, Burundi may not be considered particularly severe.

Yet veteran observers of the Burundian situation report that many Burundians displaced by armed conflict never leave the country. "It is as if there's a fence around Burundi," one veteran official observed. "Burundi's IDPs [internally

displaced persons] are not only in camps in Burundi," another explained. "We suspect that they are also hiding in forests and swamps. But nobody knows how many may be there." Indications that the numbers could be high is evident in a recent report from Caritas, an international non-governmental organization (NGO) working in Murago town, in Burundi's Bururi Province. "The situation in the town is ... dramatic, with an average of 100 to 300 people arriving each day in a deplorable state, after wandering for months in forests and marshes."²⁰ While the size of the mounting death toll remains unknown, there have also been warnings of a spreading famine. A Food and Agricultural Organization (FAO) representative in Bujumbura recently announced that "Famine is here ... possibly here to stay."²¹ And a recent nutritional survey conducted by the NGO Children's Aid Direct in Bubanza Province recorded an overall malnutrition rate of 17.2 percent for children aged 6-59 months, with severe malnutrition rate of 4.5 percent.²²

The threat to Burundi's children is expanding. Reflecting on the many humanitarian emergencies in Africa that he has been involved in, one veteran humanitarian agency official remarked that "the state of children in Burundi is the worst I've seen." The official later added that "the only angels in Burundi are the children, and they're dying."

While conditions for Burundian refugee children and adolescents in camps in Tanzania are difficult, they are undoubtedly better than for those hiding in forests and swamps inside Burundi. However, forced repatriation from Tanzania is always a possibility-and is, in fact, something that is being talked about on both sides of the border-and if refugees return to Burundi, they may face conditions similar to those of the IDPs.

Three Children's Concerns

The following section will focus on problems facing three groups of refugee children that were found to be particularly at risk: primary school-age children not enrolled in school; adolescent boys and girls not in youth programs; and adolescent girls victimized by sexual violence.

1. Fear and the Power of Education

All the children are thinking of killings, hatred and nothing else.

-- Humanitarian agency official, Burundian refugee camps

How do you get to people who are so shrouded by fear?

-- Humanitarian agency official

[Some] children don't go to school for lack of clothes.

-- Refugee schoolteacher

Although refugee education officials could not place exact figures on the ratio of refugee camp children in primary school (reports ranged from 50 to 80 percent of the primary school-age population), it is probable that a far higher proportion of Burundian children are attending school in the refugee camps than in Burundi itself. While significant problems remain-such as the drop-off in enrollment after the first two years of schooling, and the small number of girls in classes-the refugee primary schools have been successfully developed.

One of the keys to the schools' success was that they were initiated soon after many refugee camps were established. Under the leadership of UNICEF, teachers from within the refugee population were recruited, and curriculums were initially developed by recording the curriculum from the teachers' memories. School supplies were purchased locally, and, with successful inter-agency coordination and support (particularly between UNHCR and UNICEF), the schools got off to a good start.

Creating schools for so many children in refugee camps is a formidable task, and it should be noted here that the Tanzanian Government initially created impediments to their development. Until recently, Tanzanian authorities banned schooling in refugee camps altogether. Humanitarian agencies responded by creating Children Activity Centers (CACs), which were essentially schools operating under a different name. The Tanzanians also pressured agency officials to teach Burundian refugees with a Tanzanian curriculum. The Tanzanian authorities eventually relented on this issue, as well, and children are taught in Kirundi, the national language of Burundi.

The importance of education for Burundian refugee children was starkly revealed by assessing the situation of refugee children not in primary school. The most frequently cited impediment to children's attendance in Burundian refugee primary schools was that the children did not have appropriate clothes to wear. "Children don't go to school for lack of clothes," a refugee teacher commented-an issue also highlighted by refugee women's group members, parents and

refugee officials known as Zone Leaders. This perspective was supported by a variety of officials who work with Burundian refugees. "There aren't enough clothes or blankets for the children," a Tanzanian official related. "Some kids are in torn rags," a UNHCR official explained. "A girl [dressed] like that won't go to school. She's too embarrassed." The official also described that this problem was due not only to low supplies, but because, regardless of who received the clothes and blankets, refugee men would often end up with them. It appears that some men are taking clothes and blankets from children because they are valuable and easy to confiscate, but also because men seem to feel disempowered in the camps, and so assert themselves in unfortunate ways.

Children are not able to attend school because of a series of domestic demands. Collecting firewood, water and food, and caring for siblings are among the immediate needs facing refugee families. This is particularly true for girls, who are the most underrepresented in refugee schools. In two Burundian refugee camps sampled (Mtabila and Muyovosi), girls comprised 43 percent of primary school enrollment, with their numbers descending from 45-47 percent in Grade 1 to only 32-34 percent in Grade 6. In addition, girls living in fragmented family situations, such as families with one parent, or when they serve as the household head, will not have an opportunity to attend school. Finally, a humanitarian agency official noted how "[Refugee] men and teachers say, 'why should girls go to school? They don't go to school in Burundi, so why should they go [in the camps]?' "

A source of great frustration for agency officials and refugee educators alike is that since so many Burundian adults never attended school, it is difficult to convince many parents that their children should attend. Refugee teachers also noted that few schools were in operation in the areas where most of the Burundian refugees come from. Finally, there is the legacy of Burundian violence itself. After the 1972 massacres decimated Burundi's population of educated Hutus, many Burundian parents pulled their children out of schools. As one teacher explained, "[Refugee] parents will say, 'Those who go to school will be killed. It must happen!' They just don't know when."

What these parents may not realize is the curative effect of school attendance for their children. The fear expressed by Burundian parents is also felt by Burundian children. This was movingly demonstrated during a drawing exercise, and in subsequent conversations, undertaken with primary school-age refugee children. Perhaps not surprisingly, schoolchildren drew with a measure of confidence and precision that was not matched by children who were not in school. Many of the children wanted to draw pictures of combatants in Burundi, but this had to be discouraged out of concern for the responses of authorities.

One image that was drawn by the majority of refugee children not in school was *igihume*. This character arises from Burundian folk tales. It may take many forms, but all of these forms are based on the idea that the *igihume* has no knowledge, cannot be reasoned with, and is dangerous.

Igihume is also a curse that brings bad luck. Children and adults variously characterized an *igihume* as a frog, a crazy person or a creature hiding out in forests. Adults mentioned the idea that an *igihume* can also be a deformed person. If a pregnant woman exhibits "bad behavior to others" and offends the community's code, the result might be a deformed, and cursed, child—an *igihume*.

The children depicting *igihume* in drawings expressed a high level of fear of them. A common characterization of them was as a half-man/half-animal creature who hid in the forests by day and lurked about their houses by night. These *igihume*, they said, had followed them to the refugee camps from Burundi. Some of the children's parents related how their children had frequent nightmares about *igihume*. Some had also connected their images to memories from their own past—the soldiers from Burundi who chased them from their homes.

2. Adolescent Activities

There is still little support for adolescent services.

-- UNHCR official

Now that the emergency phase is over there is a danger of young people becoming bored, disaffected and deviant.

-- NGO youth document

Our boys are doing nothing in this camp.

-- Refugee women's group leaders

The Burundian refugee camps offer an impressive range of services for refugee youth. Agencies have organized youth apprenticeships, skills trainings, peace education, reproductive health projects, sports clubs, distance education for learning English, and youth environment groups. The Tanzanian authorities have banned refugee secondary schools, but relatively few refugees would have qualified for entrance. UNHCR is seeking an expansion of youth development activities that would be initiated and supervised by NGOs already working in the refugee camps.

Despite the presence of so many youth activities, it is generally acknowledged that very few refugee youth are being reached. The case of Muyovosi refugee camp underscores the challenges, and the fundamental significance, of delivering appropriate opportunities to more young people. In a proposal to UNHCR for developing youth activities in Muyovosi, the international NGO responsible for community services in the camp observed that 68 percent of the camp population is comprised of "young people," adding that about 10,000 of the camp's 28,000 refugees (or 36 percent) are male youth between the ages of 13 and 25.

The NGO responsible for community services reports that 1,000 refugee youths in Muyovosi are involved in structured "recreational activities," while another 200 are engaged in their youth apprenticeship program. Another 7,000 are said to participate in primary and post-primary education, but, like all the other refugee camps for Burundians, nearly all of the formal educational opportunities-in Muyovosi's case, perhaps 98 percent-are in the camp's primary schools, which contain relatively few adolescent-aged students.

Faced with considerable constraints on available resources, the NGO's proposal is modest. The NGO canvassed refugee youths before proposing their response, and found that youths sought both skill training opportunities for income generation and "anything that would reduce their feeling of isolation" in the camps. The subsequent proposal focused on three community-supported Youth and Community Centers which promise to supply non-formal education, television and video access, courses in management and marketing, and journals and newspapers.

While the NGO's proposal represents a hopeful start (UNHCR, which had solicited youth program proposals, was considering proposal requests during the field research period), funding earmarked for youth programs is limited.²³ A UNHCR official for Lukole, the largest Burundian refugee camp with more than 108,000 refugees, admitted that "we're reaching only a few hundred boys and girls"-most of whom are boys. In addition, youth programs appear to be consistently reaching the most educated youths in each refugee camp. "All [youth] activities are always benefiting the same refugees," another UNHCR official remarked. "You have your 'good refugees.' They want to be helpful. They speak French." Owing to this ability to communicate with international humanitarian agency officials, these refugee youths receive a disproportionate level of access to programs. Indeed, from refugee leaders to agency officials to refugee youths themselves, frustration over the present inability to provide appropriate youth activities is widely shared. A group of refugee youths put it succinctly: "Our trouble is we have no work."

Partly in response to the humanitarian agencies' inability to provide programs for more than a small proportion of youths, adolescent boys and girls are becoming engaged elsewhere. A main task for girls and women alike is to fetch firewood, which women's groups report puts them at risk of being raped. A small number of girls, but primarily boys, are joining older men in working for Tanzanians as wage laborers. And although refugee agency officials report that relatively few boys are involved, there has nonetheless been mounting concern that boys are also being recruited into camp militias. This has recently resulted in the arrest of 30 Burundian refugee boys by Tanzanian authorities for their alleged participation in military training.²⁴ One NGO reported that many refugee teens are getting married. Finally, some refugee families are reportedly sending boys back into Burundi to check on the family's house and land holdings, and evaluate the general security situation in their home villages.

For the most part, however, adolescent refugee boys have nothing to do. "If the boys don't have work," a group of refugee mothers commented, "they go to bars.... If they have a ball or some cards, they play. If not, they stay at home." And this pathway to bars and drinking may be directly connected to the sexually abusive activities that will be examined below.

3. Sexual Violence: Officials' Lack of Connection to Refugees Causes Problems

We use Zone Leaders as a form of communication.

-- NGO official

We have never heard of child protection issues for Burundian refugees.

-- UNHCR official

In most respects, relations between Burundian refugees and international humanitarian agency officials could be characterized as distant. With considerable bitterness, refugee leaders described how they lacked opportunities to have substantive discussions with agency officials about the communities they represent. "UNHCR officials learn about us from a distance," a refugee teacher explained. "And when they come [to refugee schools], the NGO and UNHCR [officials] just hear our children sing and then, 'bye-bye!'" A meeting with Zone Leaders (refugees representing different regional zones in the camps) elicited a similar response. Most officials "only come to do work, not to talk with

us," one leader remarked. The leaders explained that, in most cases, agency officials or Tanzanian Government authorities simply give them orders to carry out-even if those orders are bound to be unpopular with refugees. This sentiment is reflected in the comment from an international agency official: "When we reduce the level of food [for refugees], we tell [the Zone Leaders] to tell their people."

Although refugees may describe agency officials as distant, several UNHCR and NGO officials spoke in depth about Burundian culture. Most of the descriptions about culture, however, arose in discussions about sexual violence among Burundian refugees, and appeared to be largely informed by rumors and stereotypes about Burundian refugee behavior. Some of these comments arose during discussions about a recent International Rescue Committee (IRC) report, entitled *Pain Too Deep for Tears*, which describes a high incidence of sexual and gender violence among Burundian refugees in Tanzania.

The findings in *Pain Too Deep for Tears* are startling. They are also directly relevant to this report because of the finding that adolescent girls "between the ages of 12-18 reported the most cases of abuse, including forced marriages" (page 15). The report found that 27 percent of those surveyed "experienced sexual violence since becoming a refugee" (page 1). If this is true, a serious refugee protection issue exists for Burundian refugees, and for adolescent girls in particular.

"In the first three months of the IRC project, 55 females aged 12-49 out of a population of 3,500 came forward to report sexual violence," says Lorelei Goodyear, IRC's reproductive health coordinator. "This is a remarkable number for the first three months of a new sexual and gender-based violence program."

The incidents were reported to IRC following community meetings of IRC, refugee women representatives and refugee women. In three months, three girls under 12 and ten boys reported incidents of sexual violence, in addition to the 55 women mentioned above.

The results of this report have become contentious. Although UNHCR officials agree that girls aged 12 to 18 are particularly vulnerable, they strongly challenged the findings about the high levels of sexual violence against Burundian females. A UNHCR official summed up the numbers dispute in the following way: "IRC said it was 25% [of Burundian women and girls] who were raped. But we found it to be only 1.4 to 2.5 percent."

However, IRC and UNHCR are relying on different methods of collecting data. Whereas UNHCR bases its figures on women and girls who report incidents of sexual violence to Zone Leaders or others in positions of authority over the course of one year, the IRC initially established safe areas where women could go and report, confidentially, to respected and trusted women in the community. The interviews revealed cases of domestic abuse, sexual harassment, withholding of ration cards from estranged wives and a wide variety of gynecological concerns. In order to determine the actual prevalence of sexual and gender-based violence, IRC conducted a community-based survey. More than 10 percent of the population of 12- to 49-year-old women were randomly selected and asked to participate in the survey. Eighty-five percent (339 women) agreed to take part in the survey. Twenty-seven percent of these women reported having experienced sexual violence, including vaginal penetration, since the conflict erupted in Burundi.

Pain Too Deep for Tears has put many at UNHCR in Kigoma Region on the defensive. "The IRC report painted the Burundian camps as rape capitals of the '90s," a UNHCR Protection Officer stated, "but it's not the case." To be sure, nothing arising from UNHCR's own statistics on sexual violence among Burundian refugees were considered alarming. One UNHCR official reported that "less than 10 rapes" were reported in 1997. They are usually reported to Zone Leaders in the refugee camps, but UNHCR is seeking to "channel" these cases into the Tanzanian law courts. This may not inspire victims to come forward-the IRC report and UNHCR officials both indicated that the act of coming forward may target refugee women and girls for more sexual abuse.

Discussions with UNHCR officials often extended into descriptions of the cultural context of rape in Burundian refugee society itself. The officials cited drunkenness and child marriages as two of the most prominent causes of rape. "In most camps, rape is tied to alcohol abuse. In bars, children, women and men are all drinking." To limit sexual abuses by drunken men, UNHCR has moved to limit the drinking hours of refugee camp bars to 2:00 to 6:00 p.m. daily, "instead of all day and night."

In cases allegedly not related to drunkenness, some UNHCR officials questioned whether the rape of young girls could actually be considered rape at all. To illustrate the problem of definition, a UNHCR official offered the following example: "There may be a quarrel between a boy and girl refugee, [but] would that be rape if the man forced her to have sex?" A Protection Officer went still further: "Maybe a [girl] is raped to reduce her bride price, so a man can [afford to] marry her." The officer stated that most "rapes" of young girls should be considered "date rape/bride price rapes," and concluded that, actually, "the rape that's happening in Burundian refugee camps [is] average. It's [mostly] between families or [it's] incest."

These definitions of rape as "not really rape" due to cultural or societal norms are highly dubious, and bring to question

the sensitivity of UNHCR staff in the region to human rights issues affecting women. Rape is not acceptable or excusable under any circumstances, and UNHCR must make this clear to all its field staff.

Subsequent to the release of the IRC report, *Pain Too Deep for Tears*, UNHCR sent out a sexual violence consultant to Tanzania and conducted sexual violence training there. It brought in a new protection assistant and is recruiting a female junior protection officer to look at protection issues for women and sexual violence in Kibondo. It has also put a female protection officer in Kigoma.

Three Institutional Concerns

Three issues arising from concerns over humanitarian agencies' capacities to coordinate and respond to the needs of Burundian refugee children will now be addressed: agencies' reactions to Tanzania's rounding up of Burundians living outside refugee camps; the different ways that agencies identify and address children's needs; and provisions for addressing and resolving the problems of unaccompanied Burundian minors.

1. The "Round-Up"

In December 1996, the Tanzanian national army rounded up and forcibly repatriated more than half a million Rwandan refugees to Rwanda. During the process, they closed off the humanitarian agencies' access to the refugees. Although protection issues were raised, UNHCR's overall response was muted. Lacking vigorous support from UNHCR, the Rwandan refugees initially attempted to flee deeper into Tanzania. After a short time, however, most of them realized they had no alternative, and simply went home to Rwanda.

A fairly similar interaction between the Tanzanian Government and UNHCR took place less than a year later. This time, the Tanzanian Government corralled an estimated 80,000 to 90,000 Burundian migrants and spontaneously-settled refugees. Much of this activity took place along the Burundi/Tanzania border. Twenty-thousand people were sent to Lukole Camp alone. The influx of 15,000 into a second camp, Nduta, doubled its population. Although specific statistical data on the rounded-up Burundians were not available, the sheer size of the Tanzanian exercise (given existing Burundian refugee ratios, approximately 45,000 to 50,000 of the rounded-up were children) indicates that a significant increase in demand for children's services and protection concerns took place.

A UNHCR protection officer, however, reported that UNHCR's country office in Dar-es-Salaam protested to the Tanzanian Government, adding that there was little else that could have been done. Moreover, since most of the Burundians who were "rounded up" were either economic migrants or refugees from the 1972 massacres (actually, local UNHCR officials explained that all Burundian refugees who came before 1995 are termed "old caseload" refugees), UNHCR was not responsible for protecting them. UNHCR officials generally recognized that the Tanzanian Government was taking this action as a security measure. One official further explained that the Burundians who came to Tanzania in the 1970s or 1980s "are not our responsibility ... UNHCR will only look after newcomers."

The views privately shared by officials from other humanitarian agencies were generally critical of UNHCR's handling of the situation. "UNHCR backed down on this round-up," one commented. "They don't want to talk about it." "UNHCR didn't raise a stink," another remarked, adding that the Tanzanian Government "got UNHCR to do a lot of their work" by transporting and caring for the tens of thousands of rounded up Burundians.

Several sources reported that the Burundians who were rounded up were denied due process. Local government authorities, as well as Tanzanian civilians, assisted Tanzanian troops in identifying and arresting the Burundians. The round-up also broke up hundreds if not thousands of families, as many Burundians and Tanzanians have intermarried over the years. This group was largely comprised of Burundian migrants, who now consider themselves Tanzanian citizens but lacked the appropriate papers that might have prevented their arrest. Many of the children from these mixed marriages have entered the camps lacking the ability to speak Kirundi, Burundi's national language, as they had spent their entire lives in Tanzania. Some of these children entered alone, expanding the number of unaccompanied minors in the refugee camps (98 of those rounded-up and sent to Lukole Camp, for example, have been identified as unaccompanied minors), and other children were left alone with their mothers as their fathers were put into camps. By combining migrants and economically self-sufficient refugees with refugees from the most recent influx, the Burundian refugee camps have become a combination of holding center as well as refuge from persecution.

2. Addressing Vulnerabilities

We focus on "the vulnerables."

-- UNHCR official

Identifying "vulnerables" is damaging because you divide people up.

-- International NGO official

Many of UNHCR's community service programs focus on what are known as "vulnerables." The categories are clearly marked, and they appear to be based on pre-conceived notions of vulnerability. An NGO responsible for "vulnerables" in one Burundian refugee camp listed ten groups they are responsible for: unaccompanied minors (UAMs), attached minors (AMs), physically handicapped, mentally handicapped, chronically ill, victims of violence, single-parent families (male), single-parent families (female), single (adult) females and unaccompanied elders. Those who belong to these particular groupings are eligible to receive special attention from nongovernmental organizations (NGOs) working in refugee camps on UNHCR's behalf.

Since UNHCR has placed a high value on supporting specific groups of vulnerable refugees, a look at some of their guiding concepts and program activities is instructive. First, in camps where appropriate statistical breakdowns exist (see box next page), 56.3 percent of the Burundian refugee population is made up of children, yet eight of the ten categories of "vulnerables" listed above (all excepting UAMs and AMs) are either primarily or entirely comprised of adults.

Second, many groups of particularly vulnerable refugees do not seem to be recognized as such. "Vulnerable" categories do not exist, for example, for children suffering from extreme deprivation or high levels of physical or psychological abuse. Nor is there a category for a particularly vulnerable group of refugees-adolescent girls.

The lack of more categories for children in peril suggests that agencies may not be on the lookout for the varieties of potential difficulties that the Burundian refugee majority-children-are facing. Moreover, the application of "vulnerable" categories is uneven. Even though UNHCR's Community Services offices have specific categories of refugee vulnerability (and compile monthly reports on activities involving vulnerables), different NGOs have different understandings of what UNHCR's "vulnerables" are. A UNHCR Community Services officer listed victims of sexual violence as a category of "vulnerables," yet this category never arose when NGO officials working in one Burundian refugee camp described the "vulnerable" refugees they were responsible for. Indeed, a review of UNHCR reports indicated that victims of sexual violence were not reported as a vulnerable category by some of the NGOs working in Burundian refugee camps.

Refugee Statistics in Kigoma Region*