

SAVE LIFE MAKE DIFFERENCE

Bujumbura Burundi

savelifemakedifference@gmail.com

Project report

Burundi is currently grappling with a severe humanitarian crisis as over 200,000 people have been displaced or affected by catastrophic flooding triggered by El Niño and the rising waters of Lake Tanganyika.

Scope and Impact

Displacement: As of late 2024 and into early 2025, an estimated 100,000 to 200,000 people have been forced from their homes.

Affected Regions: The most devastated areas include the economic capital, Bujumbura, and the western district of Gatumba, where entire neighborhoods and schools have been submerged.

Infrastructure Damage: More than 19,000 homes and 200+ classrooms were destroyed during the peak of the 2023–2024 floods.

Livelihood Loss: Floods have decimated crops (mainly coffee and subsistence farming), destroyed bridges, and forced hospitals to be abandoned.

Lake Tanganyika: In April 2024, the lake reached 77.04 meters, its highest level since 1964, flooding coastal towns.

Climate Vulnerability: Burundi is ranked among the top 20 countries globally most vulnerable to climate change.

Poor Land Use: Experts note that the lack of adequate land-use planning in high-risk zones has exacerbated the impact of the rising waters.

Humanitarian Response

Resettlement: New "integrated villages" like Gateri are being built with support from the UNHCR and the UN Global Emergency Fund (CERF) to house thousands of families.

Emergency Aid: Agencies like IOM and Tearfund are providing cash assistance, clean water, and non-food items (blankets, hygiene kits).

Funding Gap: The UN has called for \$61.1 million in urgent funding to address the ongoing needs of displaced populations.

Thousands in Burundi Affected by the Rising Waters of Lake Tanganyika



Bujumbura – More than 30,000 people have been affected by flooding across Burundi’s coast due to the rising waters of Lake Tanganyika. An assessment by the International Organization for Migration (IOM) Displacement Tracking Matrix (DTM) reveals that local villages on the shores of Rukaramu and Gatumba zones, in Mutimbuzi commune (Bujumbura Rural province) are among the hardest hit.

Thousands of families have been forced to leave their flooded homes in the last week. Most of the 6,239 households, including 5,208 from Gatumba and 1,121 from Rukaramu, are being sheltered either by host families or in houses under construction and at collective centres. Some families remain in their homes despite being partially submerged.

“They don’t know where to go. Some try to get the water out using bowls and pans, whatever they have. People have spread out in the area so it can be very difficult to collect data quickly,” said Innocent Kwizera, IOM’s DTM focal point from the Burundian Red Cross.

The situation is likely to worsen as the number of affected people continues to grow along with the lake’s water level which began to rise gradually over a year ago and reached a tipping point for many coastal villages over the last week. IOM in collaboration with the local administration, have deployed a team made up of mainly

Red Cross Volunteers throughout the area to collect data to find out how many are affected and some of the most urgent needs.

Host families whose resources are already strained run the risk of falling into the vulnerable category, thereby increasing critical humanitarian needs. Most of Gatumba and Rukaramu's affected inhabitants are farmers or fishers who have lost their food stocks for the year and whose essential field crops are now destroyed.

According to the Geographic Institute of Burundi, the cause of Lake Tanganyika rising is two-fold; unseasonal heavy rainfall across the sub-region in countries bordering the Lake (such as Rwanda, the United Republic of Tanzania and the Democratic Republic of the Congo), and the Lukuga river that is overflowing - a tributary of the Lualaba River in the DRC that is normally an outlet for the Lake. According to meteorological projections, the rains are expected to continue until mid-May.

Gatumba is already under considerable strain. Around the same time last year, torrential rains caused the banks of the Rusizi river to overflow, causing a similar flooding emergency that affected roughly 50,000 people. Nearly 20,000 of the most vulnerable displaced persons were given shelter in four displacement sites in the area. Although these camps are currently being decommissioned by the Government of Burundi with help from partners, IOM anticipates additional localized emergencies – further to last week's – which will perpetuate urgent needs.

“This emergency is unprecedented for Burundi. We must act now to urgently respond to the most basic needs of the most vulnerable people – such as safe shelter, clean water and protection,” says

SAVE LIFE MAKE DIFFERENCE since we start our project **\$601** raised of \$100,000 goal

SAVE LIFE MAKE DIFFERENCE

Bujumbura Burundi 24/02/2026

savelifemakedifference@gmail.com