



## EUROPEAN UNION

### PRESS RELEASE

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#### EU BOOSTS HUMANITARIAN AID AMID WORSENING BURUNDI REFUGEE CRISIS

**Wednesday, 29 July 2015, Bruxelles:** The European Commission is releasing €4.5 million to meet the needs for assistance of the increasing number of Burundi refugees in neighbouring countries.

*"The wave of refugees fleeing Burundi has been steadily increasing in the last three months. The situation is extremely worrying and a cause of serious concern in an already fragile region. This additional humanitarian funding will help improve the hosting capacities in neighbouring countries to accommodate the refugees, and to meet their most urgent needs. It is a strong signal of 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 boost in funding brings the total humanitarian aid foreseen 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.

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## **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, or fear of violence as reasons for fleeing. More than 175 000 people, the majority of whom women and children, are estimated to have fled already, with more feared to follow.

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.

The surge in numbers of refugees started after the announcement of President Nkurunziza's decision to run for a third term in office, which was followed by clashes between police and opposition to the President. A coup d'état took place on 13 May 2015, that was rapidly defeated, but led to a deterioration of the security situation in the country.

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