



## COALITION POUR LA DÉFENSE DES DROITS HUMAINS/ VIVANT DANS LES CAMPS DES RÉFUGIÉS (CDH/VICAR)

*Compassion-Dignité-Humanité*

### **CDH/VICAR STATEMENT ON THE OCCASION OF WORLD REFUGEE DAY 2026**

On the occasion of World Refugee Day, the Coalition for the Defense of Human Rights Living in Refugee Camps (CDH/VICAR) expresses its solidarity with all Burundian refugees, asylum seekers, and returnees who continue to face numerous challenges related to exile, protection, and reintegration.

This day provides an opportunity to pay tribute to the courage, resilience, and dignity of millions of people around the world who have been forced to flee their homes to escape conflict, persecution, human rights violations, or insecurity. It also serves as a reminder of the collective responsibility to protect displaced persons and uphold their fundamental rights.

For Burundian refugees, the past year has been marked by particularly troubling developments. In Tanzania, many refugees have faced the demolition of their homes, increasing pressure to return, and various human rights violations. At the same time, across the East African region, many refugees living in camps endure extreme poverty and undignified living conditions, as well as insufficient access to water, healthcare, education, and livelihoods, which further increase their vulnerability and undermine their protection.

CDH/VICAR has also continued to document allegations of enforced disappearances, arbitrary arrests, acts of intimidation, and other forms of violence against Burundian refugees in certain refugee camps.

CDH/VICAR remains deeply concerned about the situation of refugees who left the camps following these events and who are now living in different countries across the region without adequate protection documents, without sufficient access to humanitarian assistance services, and under conditions of extreme vulnerability.

The situation of Burundian asylum seekers is also a matter of serious concern. In some host countries, declining refugee status recognition rates and the risk of refoulement continue to weaken access to international protection for individuals who fear returning to their country of origin.

CDH/VICAR is equally concerned about the difficulties faced by some returnees after returning to Burundi. Information collected points to challenges related to socio-economic reintegration, access to land, land disputes, intimidation, surveillance, and, in some cases, arbitrary arrests. These difficulties are driving some individuals to flee into exile once again, demonstrating that the sustainability of return remains a major challenge.

CDH/VICAR recalls that the right to seek and enjoy asylum is a fundamental right recognized by the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, the 1951 Geneva Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, and the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa.

CDH/VICAR also recalls that the principle of non-refoulement prohibits the forced return of any person to a country where they risk persecution, torture, or other serious human rights violations. Respect for this principle remains essential to ensuring effective protection for refugees and asylum seekers.

On the occasion of this World Refugee Day, CDH/VICAR calls upon:

- The States of the region to fully comply with their international obligations regarding the protection of refugees and asylum seekers;
- The Government of Tanzania to guarantee the protection of refugees still present on its territory and to ensure that any repatriation remains voluntary, safe, and dignified;
- The Government of Burundi to guarantee the safety of returnees and to prevent intimidation, arbitrary arrests, and all other forms of human rights violations;
- The Government of Uganda, which has received many refugees fleeing once again, to maintain accessible, fair, and internationally compliant asylum procedures;
- The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) to strengthen its protection role for refugees, asylum seekers, and returnees;
- The African Union, the United Nations, and international partners to continue their efforts to ensure durable solutions based on protection, dignity, and respect for fundamental rights.

On this World Refugee Day, CDH/VICAR reaffirms its commitment to defending the rights of Burundian refugees, asylum seekers, and returnees. CDH/VICAR will continue to document human rights violations, amplify the voices of those concerned before national, regional, and international mechanisms, and promote durable solutions consistent with international law.

Protecting refugees is not only a legal obligation; it is also a duty of solidarity and humanity. No refugee should be forgotten. No refugee should be forced to choose between exile and insecurity.

Done on 20 Jun 2026

For CDH/VICAR

Leopold Sharangabo

President

