STATEMENT No. 009/CDH-VICAR/2026

STATEMENT ON REPORTED IRREGULARITIES IN THE REVIEW OF REFUGEE CASES AND THE RISK OF FORCED RETURN OF BURUNDIAN REFUGEES IN TANZANIA

CDH/VICAR expresses its deep concern over the posting, by UNHCR and the Tanzanian authorities, of a new list at Nyarugusu camp identifying Burundian refugees designated for return to Burundi.

According to testimonies collected by our organization, those concerned include refugees transferred from Nduta camp to Nyarugusu, as well as refugees who were already living in Nyarugusu. These individuals had been brought together for a review of their cases, presented as a process intended to determine the next steps regarding their situation, including return to Burundi or possible resettlement in a third country.

Repeated warnings about irregularities

CDH/VICAR recalls that it has repeatedly raised concerns about reported irregularities in this process and the lack of transparency surrounding case reviews.

According to information received, individuals with close ties to certain local UNHCR staff members or Tanzanian local authorities allegedly receive preferential treatment. Refugees accused by other refugees of mistreatment and political intimidation in support of the Burundian government are also reportedly among those receiving preferential access to certain assistance or protection measures.

These allegations require an independent and impartial investigation. Decisions concerning refugee protection must be based on individual needs, the risks faced and transparent criteria, without favoritism or personal influence.

People still in need of protection reportedly designated for return

CDH/VICAR recalls that, during the initial selection process, some refugees whose fears of return persisted had already left Tanzania to seek refuge in other countries after seeing their names on lists of people designated for return to Burundi.

Our organization fears that those appearing on the new list may face the same fate. According to information received, some cannot safely return to Burundi, given their personal circumstances, their profiles and the grounds on which they were granted protection.

The case review process must not become a mechanism that forces people still in need of protection to choose between a dangerous return and fleeing once again to another country.

CDH/VICAR recalls that UNHCR describes voluntary repatriation as a decision based on a free and informed choice, allowing refugees to return in safety and dignity.

In light of this situation, CDH/VICAR calls on:

1. **The Tanzanian government and UNHCR** to suspend any contested return measures affecting individuals on this list, pending an individual, impartial and thorough assessment of their protection needs.

2. **UNHCR** to clarify the objectives of the review, the criteria applied and the consequences of the decisions taken, clearly distinguishing between international protection, voluntary repatriation and assessment for possible resettlement.

3. **The relevant UNHCR bodies and the Tanzanian authorities** to launch an independent investigation into allegations of favoritism, conflicts of interest and abuse, while protecting complainants and witnesses against retaliation.

4. **The Tanzanian authorities** to guarantee the safety of, and access to assistance for, refugees who contest their inclusion on the lists, without intimidation or pressure intended to secure their departure.

5. **The international community and resettlement countries** to expand protection opportunities and durable solutions for people who cannot return safely, based on their needs and without discrimination.

CDH/VICAR calls on UNHCR and the Tanzanian government to respond transparently to the concerns raised and to place the protection of individuals at the center of every decision.

No administrative list should replace an individual assessment of risks or be used to force the return of anyone whose need for protection persists.

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Pour la CDH/VICAR
Léopold Sharangabo
Président

