

## **Policy Statement**

# **REGROUPEMENT IN BURUNDI**

## **Humanitarian Assistance to Forcibly Relocated Communities in Burundi**

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January 2000

Endorsed by IASC Principals

## **IASC Policy Statement on Regroupment in Burundi**

*Statement on humanitarian assistance to forcibly relocated communities in Burundi*

19 January 2000

### **I Statement**

The IASC Principals issued the following assessment of humanitarian assistance to forcibly relocated communities in Burundi:

Since 20 September 1999 some 330,000 people, living mainly in the Province of Bujumbura Rural, have been forcibly relocated by the Government into 53 sites. The impact of this action on the affected populations has been disastrous as the Government failed to prepare the sites or to make provision for food, water and shelter for those relocated. Most of those relocated have lost their homes and possessions and are being denied access to their fields.

The IASC expresses its strong opposition to forced relocation in Burundi. In the view of the IASC this policy cannot be justified and is being implemented without regard for the rights and well-being of those affected. The IASC holds the Government responsible for the humanitarian consequences of this action.

The IASC calls upon the Government of Burundi to halt the forced relocation ("regroupement") of civilians, and to engage in a dialogue with the UN Resident Coordinator and the UN Country Team with a view to progressively dismantling forced relocation sites and encouraging the development of durable solutions for those affected.

In response to the Government's commitment to work towards an end to forced relocation, the agencies of the IASC agree to seek resources from the international community for emergency humanitarian aid to those affected by forced relocation. Humanitarian aid will be subject to the modalities and conditions spelled out in the IASC Common Policy on humanitarian assistance to forcibly relocated communities in Burundi. This assistance will be limited to "life-sustaining" items, including food, water, shelter, health care, sanitation and agricultural inputs for those who have regular access to their land. To the extent possible, help will be given in support of existing community structures, such as health centres, and to help communities authorised to return to their homes. Access to the relocation sites for humanitarian workers and Human Rights observers is essential.