UNHCR Rwanda

DRC NEW INFLUX TO RWANDA: UPDATE # 13

04 May 2023

KEY STATISTICS

6,608 new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda from DRC between November 2022 and 4 May 2023

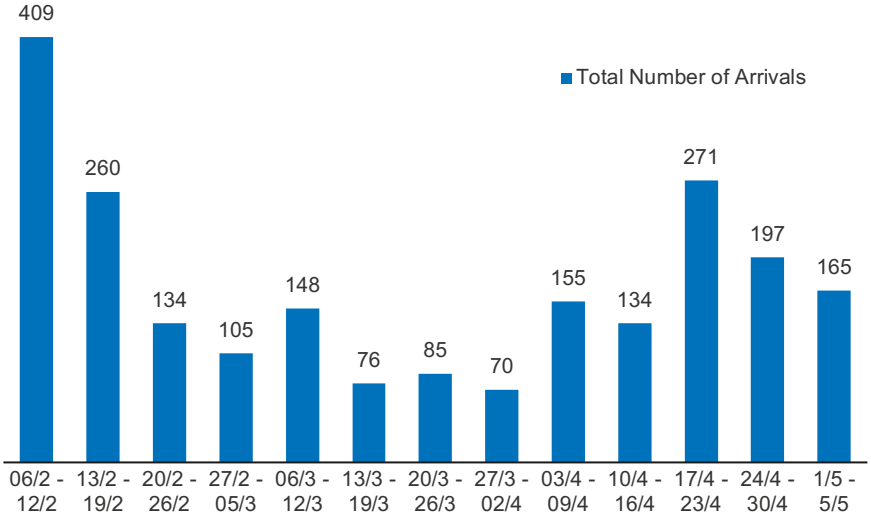
1,775 asylum seekers were relocated to Mahama camp up until 12th January

4,833 asylum seekers accommodated at Nkamira Transit Site

58% of the new arrivals in Rwanda are children below 18

Most of the new arrivals originate from North Kivu (Masisi and Rutshuru)

Number of New Arrivals from DRC to Rwanda



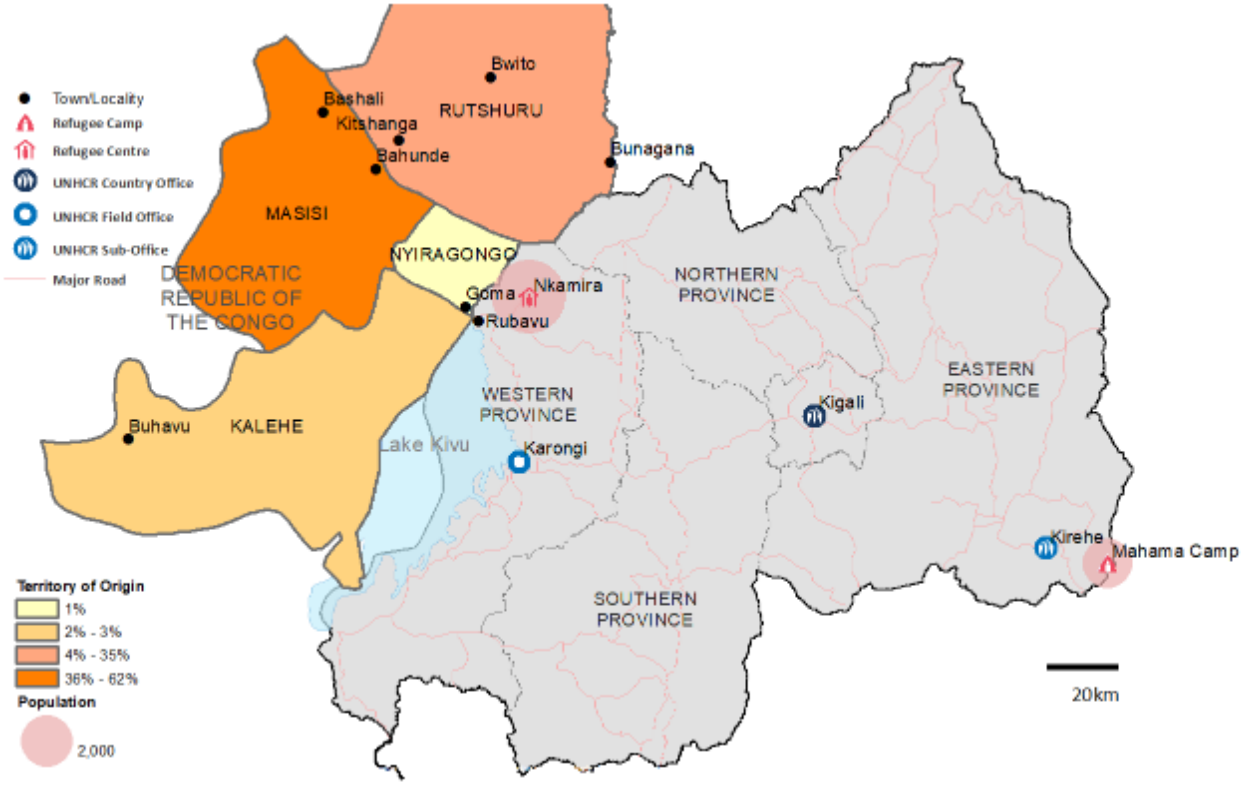
Source: © UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

OVERVIEW

The escalation in fighting within Eastern DRC is resulting in an increase of new asylum seekers arriving in Rwanda. As of mid-April, over 5,995 individuals have arrived in Rwanda since mid-November 2022.

Between the end of November and beginning of January, new arrivals were initially received at Kijote Transit Centre before being transferred to Mahama refugee camp. Due to the increasing numbers, however, and the fact that Mahama Camp has reached capacity, on 12 January 2023, the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) informed UNHCR of the decision of the Government of Rwanda to host asylum seekers close to the border at a new site - Nkamira.

On 8 February, Kijote Transit Centre was emptied, and all new arrivals are now directly transferred to Nkamira Transit Site. Although the numbers of new arrivals decreased in late February and March, UNHCR observed an increase in the flow of new arrivals in the latter part of April. Working alongside partners, UNHCR continues to build the capacity of Nkamira Transit Site and provide basic services to support the new arrivals.



Nkamira Site

Nkamira is located around 127 kilometres from Kigali, on the main high-way connecting Kigali-Rubavu and just five kilometres from Kijote Transit Centre and approximately 20km from the border. The site is a private property obtained by MINEMA covering **five hectares of land**. The same site was previously used in 2012-2013 as reception centre for Congolese refugees. The capacity of the site is **10,000 persons.**

Sector Response

MINEMA and UNHCR are co-leading the response at Nkamira alongside ADRA, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International, Prison Fellowship, Red Cross, WFP, and UNICEF. Other UN agencies such as UNFPA and IOM have also supported with technical expertise and in-kind materials. Weekly coordination meetings are happening at the field level and three high-level coordination meetings have also taken place in Kigali.

Protection

UNHCR protection staff continued to be present providing fundamental protection and assistance, alongside partners in Nkamira and Mahama departure centre. Child protection and Gender Based Violence (GBV) services are available through Plan International Rwanda (PIR) in Nkamira and Save the Children International (SCI) in Mahama, while legal assistance and community-based protection services, including assistance to people with specific needs, are provided by Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR). Due to resource and capacity limitations, comprehensive assistance for people living with disabilities, including provision of assistive devices have yet to be provided. One new GBV incident was reported over the last week bringing the total to 41 GBV cases reported to date. UNHCR and partners are providing approporiate services to survivors who experienced GBV incidents during flight and during their asylum.

372 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) have been identified. UNHCR and partners are conducting best interest assessments for them and other children at risk in both Nkamira and Mahama refugee camp. Five new children protection cases were reported over the past two weeks.

Community-based protection mechanisms continue to be strengthened at Nkamira and Mahama. There is, however, a gap in provision of psychosocial counselling as well as a communal spaces for the population especially women at risk and children. Over the previous week, 1,746 children attended various activities at the child friendly space (CFS) in Nkamira and 115 adolescents participated in targeted programs such as karate, football, knitting, painting, modern and traditional dances.

The Government of Rwanda (GoR) is leading the process of recording the new arrivals and conducting nationality assessments. Formal registration of the population has yet to take place with discussions ongoing as to how to register the status of the new arrivals if the population decides to remain in Rwanda.

Health

Primary health services for the new arrivals are provided at Nkamira and Mahama refugee camp in partnership with SCI. Over the previous week, a total of 1080 consultations were conducted for asylum seekers hosted in Nkamira, including 364 (33.7%) for children under 5 years of age. 27 individuals were subsequently referred to a higher level of care for more investigation and treatment. The main cause of consultation remains respiratory tract infections. They represented 44.72% of the consultation. The deliveries of eight new-born babies were also conducted.

Measles vaccination coverage among the new arrivals has now reached 98%. In addition, 395 children aged 09 months-15 years among new arrivals received Measles vaccination. 04 suspected cases of measles among new arrivals were properly managed and currently discharged from the facility. No new cases among existing asylum seekers were identified during the previous week and there are currently no active cases among the new asylum seekers in Nkamira. This is a result of a measles vaccination campaign conducted by Rwanda Biomedical Center, the district health authorities of Kirehe and Save The Children. In Mahama refugee camp, 20,126 children have been vaccinated (both new arrivals and the existing refugee population).

Shelter

Asylum seekers at Nkamira are currently being accommodated in 35 hangars which have been constructed since the site's opening. Men, women, and children are currently assigned separate living areas. Separate accommodation for older persons and women at risk has also been allocated. In order increase the accommodation capacity at Nkamira, an additional 5 hangers are under construction and 5 more are planned to be constructed. Solar lamps have been procured and were distributed by UNHCR to the families during the previous week to provide a source of light in the hangers during the night. The construction of 2 education blocks consisting of 10 temporary classrooms is complete and in use.

Food and Nutrition

WFP through its cooperating partner ADRA continued to distribute two hot meals per day to all asylum seekers. Since 1 May, nutritious morning porridge is only prepared for vulnerable groups due to lack of funding. The hot lunches and dinners include fresh vegetables. Given the recent floods and landslides in the wider Rubavu district, food is also being prepared at Nkamira site for distribution to affected Rwandan communities. Nutrition screening also continues for newly arrived children, as well as for identifying cases of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and severe acute malnutrition (SAM).

Ruth, 16, and her five young brothers and sisters fled their home in Kitshanga, North Kivu, DRC, when violence intensified. Having left their parents behind, Ruth takes care of her siblings in Nkamira.

"Militias were killing people and our properties were looted. We left home escaping the violence but my father and mother left behind with a baby. At first, we spent three months in Goma. Then, we crossed to Rwanda seeking safety.

"We are happy to be safe here, but taking care of my younger siblings is not easy. Sometimes they cry at night asking for food, beverages, and clothes – this makes me feel bad because I can't do anything about it. Sometimes I don't know what to do because I was not prepared for such huge responsibilities."

URGENT NEEDS

Supply and provision of non-food items, including mattresses and mats

Construction of additional communal kitchens (at least 4) and provision of LPG

Construction communal hangars, including need for plastic sheeting

Construction of latrines

School equipment

Education

The ongoing education in emergency program at Nkamira has been serving over 1,400 students where a total of 792 are enrolled at primary, 315 at secondary and some 383 in early childhood education (ECD). A total of 56 education facilitators are teaching students to get familiarized with the national education system. Similar education activities have also been introduced for the asylum-seekers from DRC hosted at the departure center Mahama camp. Children are being enrolled in the existing schools and getting orientation as preparation for placement examination for the expected integration into formal schools at the beginning of the new academic year starting in September 2023. In Mahama there are a total of 680 students are enrolled in school: 155 in ECD, 341 in primary and 184 in secondary respectively.

WASH

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene services for asylum seekers at Nkamira Site is ensured through the provision of a range of basic services and facilities. Currently 44 latrine stances remain, serving 109 persons per drop hole (over UNHCR's emergency standards of 50 persons per drop hole). The reconstruction of collapsed latrine block with 10 drop holes is 92 percent complete based on a new design. Increasing number of facilities and maintaining the existing WASH facilities at operational level is a priority for UNHCR to reach sanitation coverage thresholds.

Currently, there are 80 shower rooms serving 60 individuals per shower stance and 39 usable water taps within the site, serving 123 individuals per water tap. An average of 19.5 litres of potable water is provided per person per day, above the minimum emergency standards of 15 litres of water per person per day. Due to heavy rain that affected water production systems, Nkamira experienced a considerable reduction in water supply over the last four days. Water trucking is also serving as a backup to cover any interruptions in water services and access to enough water. The provision of additional water storage tanks of 50m3 is also in progress.

Regular disinfection is conducted throughout Nkamira to maintain appropriate standards. The community is supported to keep good sanitation conditions through disseminating the hygiene promotion messages and regular latrine emptying. UNHCR, UNICEF and World Vision continue providing hygiene items at the site and have put emphasis on redesigning the sanitation infrastructure and increasing sanitation coverage.

Interagency Budget Needs

$16.1 million is required to respond to the needs of the asylum seekers at Nkamira Transit Site and Mahama refugee camp over the next six months. The budget is calculated based on an estimate of 10,000 new arrivals and considers the needs of implementing NGO partners working with UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP and FAO. UNHCR has currently only received $1.5 million from the USA to support the response. As a result, UN agencies are currently repurposing funds from the existing refugee response to support the new arrivals.

	UNHCR	UNICEF	WFP	FAO	Total
Protection	300,000	200,000			500,000
Health	655,000	500,000			1,155,000
Shelter	1,074,000				1,074,000
WASH	320,000	1,000,000			1,320,000
Food Security and Nutrition		500,000	8,777,208	220,000	9,497,208
Education	400,000	340,000			740,000
NFIs & Energy	375,000				375,000
Energy	350,000				350,000
Camp Management	44,000				44,000
Refugee Coordination	635,000	388,500			1,023,500
TOTAL	4,153,000	2,928,500	8,598,815	220,000	**$ 16,078,708**