



DRC NEW INFLUX TO RWANDA: UPDATE # 16

15 June 2023

KEY STATISTICS

8,147 new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda from DRC between November 2022 and 15 June 2023

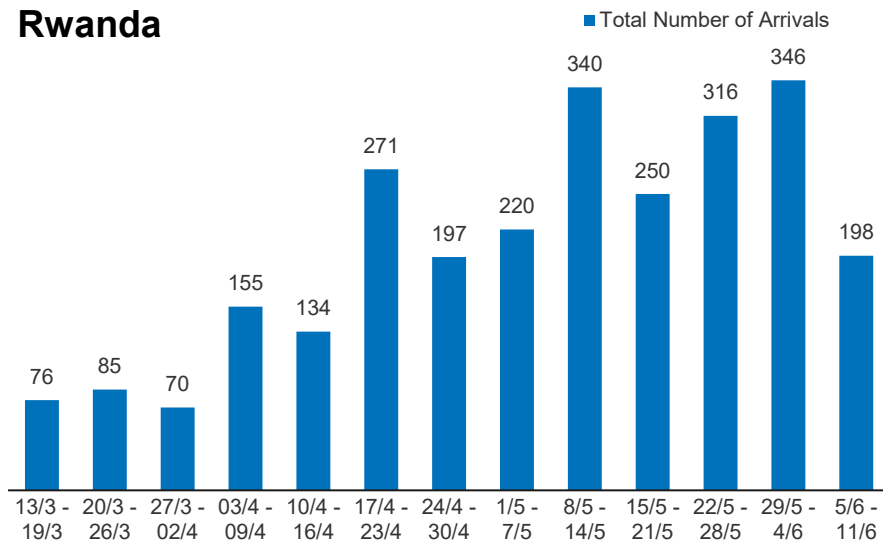
1,775 asylum seekers were relocated to Mahama camp up until 12th January

6,372 asylum seekers accommodated at Nkamira Transit Site

55% 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 continuous instability within Eastern DRC is resulting in an increase of new asylum seekers arriving in Rwanda. As of 15th of June, over 8,147 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. With the steady increase in new arrivals since April, as of 13th of June, the Nkamira Transit Site was declared to have reached its hosting capacity and thus new arrivals will again be hosted at Kijote Transit Centre until another viable facility is identified. Working alongside partners, UNHCR continues to provide basic services to support the new arrivals hosted in Nkamira, Mahama and the Kijote Transit Centre.



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.

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). GBV response services are provided to survivors who experienced GBV incidents during flight and during their asylum.

Up-to now, Best Interest Assessments have been carried out for 436 unaccompanied and separated children (UASC), and 272 Best Interest Assessments are being carried out for children who are in Nkamira Transit Centre and at Mahama Departure Centre. 28 UASC were also placed in individual supervised living care based on the child's best interests with agreed mechanism for regular supervision, mentoring and guidance. Currently, 35 children with disabilities are also supported, including four UASC. One of the gaps remains to be the continued requests from children and families for reunification with members of their family that are in different locations within Rwanda.

During this period, more than 2,268 children attended various structured activities conducted in a safe, child friendly, and stimulating environment at the child-friendly space (CFS) in Nkamira and Mahama. 777 adolescents also participated in programmes, including sports such as karate, football, knitting, painting, modern and traditional dances. Due to heavy rain, the open sports ground used for CFS activities at Nkamira has been damaged and continues to pose as a challenge for the delivery of programmes.

Community-based protection mechanisms are functioning and monitored by UNHCR partners in Nkamira and Mahama. Community-based protection structures are contributing to addressing the gap in the community by raising awareness on child protection and GBV prevention and mitigation. During the reporting period, 569 individuals were reached with messages on child's rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), and prevention of gender-based violence.

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. UNHCR has supported the birth registration of 51 new-borns who have been issued with a birth certificate

Health

UNHCR provides primary health services for the new arrivals at Nkamira and Mahama refugee camp in partnership with Save the Children International (SCI). Over the previous week, a total of 1,127 consultations were conducted for asylum seekers hosted in Nkamira, including 340 (30%) for children under 5 years of age. 52 individuals were subsequently referred to a higher level of care for more investigation and treatment. The main cause of consultation remains respiratory tract infections (30.4% of consultations). Health partners also supported the deliveries of 14 new-born babies and continue to help 123 pregnant women at both Mahama and Nkamira.

Measles vaccination coverage among the new arrivals has now reached 98,5%. In addition, 117 children aged 09 months-15 years among new arrivals received their measles vaccination over the last week. Booster doses for measles are also being provided in Mahama camp and the departure site where asylum seekers are hosted. Currently, more than 6,000 children including 207 in the departure site received the second dose and the campaign continues. No new cases of measles among existing asylum seekers were identified during the previous weeks and there are currently no suspected cases among the new arrivals. This is a result of a measles vaccination campaign conducted by Rwanda Biomedical Center, the district health authorities of Kirehe, Gisenyi in collaboration with Save The Children.

Shelter

Asylum seekers at Nkamira are currently being accommodated in 45 communal hangars which have been constructed since the site's opening. Each accommodation hanger is partitioned into 20 rooms and men and women are currently assigned separate living areas. Nkamira Transit Site is now considered full and there is no additional space for construction of hangars. Thanks to donations from SOLEKTRA and ALIGHT, solar lamps have been distributed to asylum seekers at Nkamira.

Given that Nkamira Transit Site has now reached maximum capacity, UNHCR is working with the Government of Rwanda and MINEMA who have indicated that additional space to host new arrivals has been identified in Mahama refugee camp. The construction of additional shelter in Mahama is critical to meet these needs. Based on a shelter assessment, it is estimated that an additional one million USD is required to construct 483 shelters to accommodate around 6,000 individuals who are expected to arrive over the coming months.

Food and Nutrition

WFP through its cooperating partner ADRA continued to distribute two hot meals per day to all asylum seekers. The hot lunches and dinners include fresh vegetables and alternate maize meal with rice. In addition, the most vulnerable groups also received nutritious morning porridge benefitting children under five, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, as well as persons with HIV or TB. Nutrition screening also continues for newly arrived children, as well as for 35 children with identified cases of moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and eight with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) at the Nkamira Transit Centre, and seven with MAM among children of asylum seekers accommodated at the Mahama departure centre.



URGENT NEEDS



New facility to host incoming asylum seekers



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



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



Construction of latrines



Enrolment into local school systems

Education

Following the roll out of the education in emergency on 17 April, a total of 1,769 students in Nkamira are reported to be attending in the school within at the site which operates in two shifts throughout the day. There are currently 10 classrooms in use at Nkamira Transit Site. Despite this, classrooms are substantially overcrowded and lack basic facilities such as latrines. On the 14th of June, the Rubavu District Mayor's Office convened a stakeholder meeting to review the roadmap for integration of Congolese new asylum-seekers into public schools in Rubavu district. As part of the recommendations, a school integration taskforce will be established composed of local District and Government agencies working in education, as well as UNHCR and World Vision, to conduct a joint assessment of the capacity of the public schools located within reasonable distance from Nkamira Transit Site. The meeting also agreed on the need for intensive language and curriculum orientation for students which will be organized from 20th July to 31st August 2023 at the nearest public school. Qualified national teachers will be selected by the taskforce to facilitate the orientation and then conduct placement examinations for students at the end of the orientation.

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 64 latrine stances are in use, serving 99 persons per drop hole (over UNHCR's emergency standards of 50 persons per drop hole). 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 100 shower rooms serving 64 individuals per shower stance and 52 usable water taps within the site, serving 123 individuals per water tap. An average of 20 litres of potable water is provided per person per day, above the minimum emergency standards of 15 litres of water per person per day, the centre also has four water storage tanks for emergency water storage supply. Regular disinfection at sanitation locations is conducted 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 for the first six months of the response in 2023. 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 funding from the USA, European Union Humanitarian Aid, and Japan to support the response. As a result, UN agencies are currently repurposing funds from the existing refugee response to support the new arrivals.

Given the current lack of funding, calculations are currently being made in terms of what is needed for the second half of 2023 as new arrivals continue to flee to Rwanda. In particular, additional funding will be needed for the expansion of shelter in Mahama refugee camp.