



## DRC NEW INFLUX TO RWANDA: UPDATE # 19

31 August 2023

### KEY STATISTICS

**11,503** new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda from DRC between November 2022 and 31 August 2023

**1,512** new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda in August

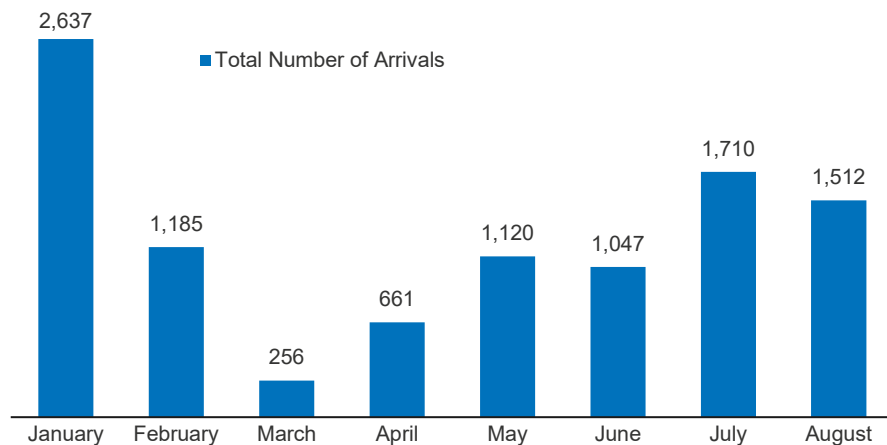
**5,923** asylum seekers accommodated at Nkamira Transit Centre, **50%** are children below 18

**3,808** asylum seekers were relocated and are accommodated in Mahama refugee camp

**1,022** asylum seekers were relocated and are accommodated in Kiziba refugee camp

**657** new asylum seekers were relocated and are accommodated in Nyabiheke refugee camp and **109** in Mugombwa and Kigeme refugee camps as part of family reunification

### Number of New Arrivals from DRC to Rwanda



Source: © UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

### OVERVIEW

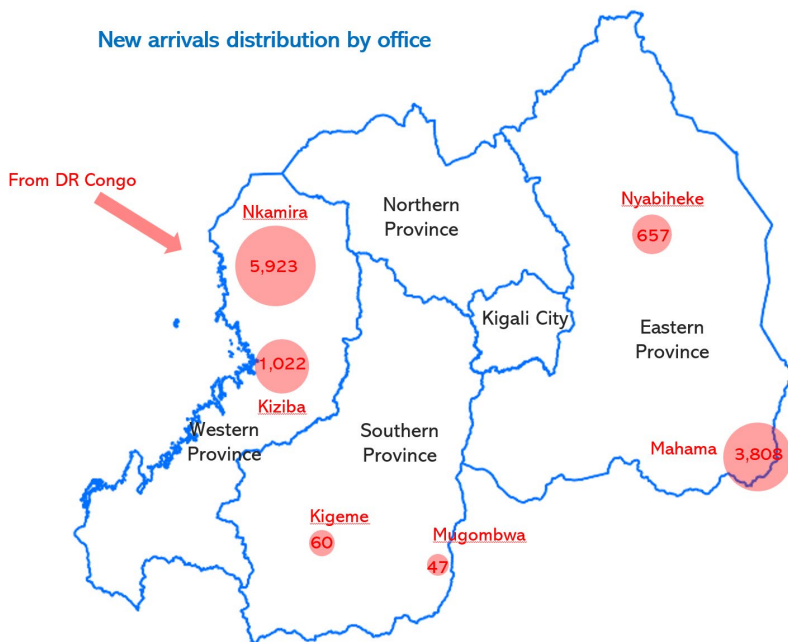
The continuous instability within Eastern DRC is resulting in an increase of new asylum seekers arriving in Rwanda. As of 31 of August, over 11,503<sup>1</sup> individuals have arrived in Rwanda since mid-November 2022.

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, 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.

Due to the increasing need for space to host the new arrivals, since July, UNHCR in coordination with MINEMA and partners has been transferring asylum seekers from Nkamira to existing refugee camps in Rwanda. Following transfers to Mahama refugee camp in July, on 22 August, UNHCR facilitated the transfer of 657 new asylum seekers to Nyabiheke refugee camp, and on 24 August, relocated 109 more asylum seekers to Mugombwa and Kigeme refugee camps to prevent overcrowding of Nkamira Transit Centre. Working alongside partners, UNHCR continues to provide basic services to support the new arrivals hosted in Nkamira, Mahama and other existing refugee camps in Rwanda.

<sup>1</sup> To note that this figure represents all new arrivals and not those officially registered. Registration is ongoing as of the end of July and so the number of officially registered asylum seekers will be updated in future months.

New arrivals distribution by office



## 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 20 km 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. As a result of UNHCR construction in the first half of 2023, Nkamira has the capacity to host 7,200 people.

## 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 continue to be present providing fundamental protection and assistance, alongside partners in Nkamira and Mahama refugee camp as well as other camps where new arrivals are accommodated. Child protection and Gender Based Violence (GBV) response 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.

UNHCR through its NGO partner Plan International, has received and managed four new GBV cases in August. In addition, throughout the month 12 community engagement sessions to prevent and respond to GBV and child protection incidents were organized including parent evening dialogue sessions, male engagement sessions, and different group discussions on GBV-related topics. The sessions aim at breaking the culture of silence to report GBV issues, emphasizing the importance of dialogue within the family to prevent sexual abuse. The number of incidents reported to police remain low.

At the end of August, in Nkamira Transit Centre, there were 71 unaccompanied and 372 separated children (UASC), In Mahama refugee camp, there are also 151 UASCs who are being supported by SCI. Most have now been registered as asylum seekers and settled with foster families in the communities. Six children were reunified with their families during the registration process.

Community-based protection mechanisms are functioning and monitored in Nkamira and Kijote by UNHCR partners. Community-based protection structures are contributing to addressing the gap in the community by raising awareness on child protection and GBV prevention and mitigation. In this period, 1,498 individuals were reached with messages on child's rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), and prevention of gender-based violence.

In August, PFR organized 31 sessions of community-based socio-therapy in Nkamira Transit Centre that were attended by 105 individuals. PFR also conducted 24 home visits and followed up on 24 individual cases. They also created and managed seven socio-therapy groups and assisted 13 people with individual psychosocial support.

Since July, UNHCR has been registering new arrivals who have been cleared by MINEMA and DGIE. In August, 3,799 asylum seekers were officially registered. UNHCR has also supported the birth registration of 123 new-borns among the new arrivals who have been issued with a birth certificate in Nkamira Transit Centre during August.

## Health

UNHCR provides primary health services for the new arrivals at Nkamira Transit Centre in partnership with Save the Children International (SCI). From November 2022 to 2 September 2023, a total of 21,897 health consultations were conducted for asylum seekers, while 421 individuals were subsequently referred to a higher level of care for more investigation and treatment. In August, over 3,620 primary health care consultations were carried out in Nkamira in partnership with SCI and UNICEF. Asylum seekers who are living in other existing refugee camps continue to receive health services through the established health centres. Sessions on sexual and reproductive health and family planning are also regularly conducted by SCI and UNFPA at Nkamira Transit Centre.

## Shelter

Asylum seekers at Nkamira are currently being accommodated in 45 communal hangars which have been constructed since the site's opening. Each hangar is partitioned into 20 rooms where men and women are assigned separate living areas. Nkamira Transit Centre is now considered full and there is no additional space for construction of hangars. Thanks to donations from a private sector company SOLEKTRA and an NGO Alight, 36 solar security lights have been installed to illuminate the transit centre for ease of night movement. The asylum seekers use solar lamps distributed by UNHCR for lighting the hangars during the night.

In Mahama, the Congolese asylum seekers that were registered and cleared by the Government of Rwanda are provided with shelter and settled in communities with the other refugees. In total, over 2,000 asylum seekers have been provided with shelter throughout July and August. 535 asylum seekers continue to be accommodated in the departure centre in Mahama camp while nationality assessments are pending to finalize their registration. As a result, UNHCR and partners continue to provide them with in-kind assistance and hot meals.

## Education

School-age children who were transferred from Nkamira Transit Centre to other camps as well as those who remain in Nkamira continue to attend language and curriculum orientation programme to help facilitate their integration in public schools. The newly arrived children who do not possess school reports will sit for placement examination when the new academic year resumes at the end of September. In existing refugee camps, children aged 3 to 5 years old will be supported to attend camp based Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres, while primary and secondary students will be integrated in nearby public schools. In Nkamira Transit Centre, conversations are ongoing with the local district about the new arrivals attending local schools but the education in emergency curriculum continues in the meantime.

## Food and Nutrition

WFP through its cooperating partner ADRA distributed two hot meals per day to all asylum seekers hosted in Kiziba, Nyabiheke and Mahama refugee camps, the Nkamira transit site and the Kijote transit centre. 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 was conducted for newly arrived children as well as 50 children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 19 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among asylum seekers hosted in those locations.





## URGENT NEEDS



Additional shelters to host incoming asylum seekers



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



Construction of additional communal kitchens



Construction of latrines



Enrolment into local school systems

## 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. In Nkamira, currently 84 latrine stances are in use, serving 79 persons per drop hole (over UNHCR's emergency standards of 50 persons per drop hole). In addition, there are 100 shower rooms and 58 usable water taps within the site. The installation of one additional laundry slab (48 cubicles) was completed in August and it is now in use. In addition, there is ongoing construction of three blocks of latrines with 20 drop holes each, one bathing facility with 20 stances and three garbage collection facilities. Increasing number of facilities and maintaining the existing WASH facilities at operational level is a priority for UNHCR to reach sanitation coverage thresholds.

An average of 22 litres of potable water is provided per person per day at Nkamira, which is above the minimum emergency standards of 15 litres of water per person per day. In Mahama and other refugee camps where new arrivals are accommodated, asylum seekers are provided water and sanitation through the existing infrastructure.

Regular disinfection at sanitation locations is conducted to maintain appropriate standards. The communities of asylum seekers in Nkamira are supported to keep good sanitation conditions through disseminating the hygiene promotion messages.

## Interagency Budget Needs

**US\$16.1 million** is required to respond to the needs of the asylum seekers at Nkamira Transit Site and Mahama refugee camp for the response in 2023. The budget is calculated based on influx of 10,000 persons and considers the needs of implementing NGO partners working with UNHCR, UNICEF, and WFP. Additional funding is urgently needed for the expansion of shelter in Mahama refugee camp to accommodate the increasing number of new arrivals now that Nkamira transit centre is full.

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.