Kigeme Refugee Camp, Rwanda

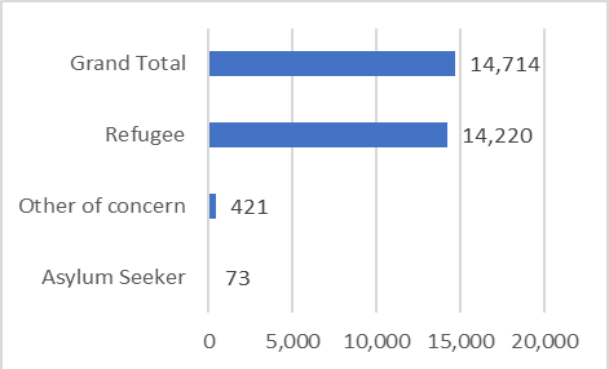
August 2023

14,714 refugees live in Kigeme refugee camp which is in Nyamagabe District in the Southern Province of Rwanda. All refugees are Congolese.

The camp was established in **2012. 34 hectares** of land were allocated to host refugees. The Government of Rwanda through MINEMA administers the camp and is responsible for security and protection of the refugees in coordination with UNHCR.

51.98% of the camp's population is younger than 18 years old.

POPULATION OF CONCERN



22 UNHCR STAFF BASED IN THE HUYE FIELD OFFICE COVER THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN MUGOMBWA REFUGEE CAMP

Refugee and Rwanda tailors who have received start-up grants from World Vision and the Poverty Alleviation Coalition (PAC) project participate an exhibition to market their services at the market next to Kigeme refugee camp.

Main Activities

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Kigeme refugee camp is managed by the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by Camp Manager, Deputy Camp Manager and supported by Directorate-General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) staff and Police. The camp is divided into seven quarters and each quartier consists of an average of three villages. In total, Kigeme camp consists of seven quarters and 19 villages.
- The camp has a refugee executive committee which consists of eight members (four male and four female) led by a Camp President and a Deputy President. The executive committee is elected by community members for two years. Many religions exist in Kigeme camp, but most of the population are Christian (Adventist).
- Each village has a village leader who is elected by the village members and each quartier has also a quartier leader elected by the community. Village and quartier leaders play an important role in communicating issues facing the refugee community with UNHCR and partners.
- UNHCR works with 12 implementing and operational partners in Kigeme camp including: Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR), Alight, Legal Aid Forum (LAF), Humanity Inclusion (HI), Plan International (PI), World Vision International (WVI), African Humanitarian Agency (AHA), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), GIZ, Give Directly, Inkomoko, World Food Program (WFP),
- Kigeme refugee camp is contending with environmental degradation, attributable to its distinct climatic and geophysical characteristics. Limited land hinders the construction of shelter and the installation of facilities designated for sports and recreational activities. The camp is particularly at risk of land/mudslides, which are increasing due to soil erosion and heightened rainfall intensity. Subsequently, there is a necessity to increase tree planting and develop a solid drainage network.
- UNHCR's office in Huye is part of the Nyamagabe Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) which ties in many aspects of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) to improve lives for both refugees and host communities (Rwanda). Jointly, UNHCR and Nyamagabe district have implemented several projects including in Mushishito marshland.

Protection

- UNHCR's office in Huye delivers protection assistance and humanitarian support to all Congolese refugees residing in Kigeme camp. UNHCR works with authorities and humanitarian actors to ensure the rights of refugees are upheld. This includes monitoring to identify protection risks and responding through organizing Continuous Registration Panel (CRP) sessions, home visits, providing legal assistance, advocating about prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), as well as raising awareness on child protection issues.
- In Kigeme camp, UNHCR and partners coordinate to ensure child protection prevention and response. UNHCR and PI have established a "Community Engagement Approach" building the capacity of refugee community mobilizers and strengthening existing community-based protection mechanisms to prevent and report the abuses, neglect, and exploitation of children.
- This community engagement approach also extends to prevention of gender-based violence (GBV). Through the establishment of GBV committees, girls' committees, and anti-GBV clubs, as well as the recruitment of community mobilizers, UNHCR is encouraging the refugee community to take responsibility for reporting and documenting GBV instances. The most prevalent types of GBV for adults include psychological abuse, physical assault, denial of resources and opportunities as well as rape. In partnership with PI, UNHCR refers GBV survivors to health care, psychosocial support and legal counselling where required. Additional, PI ensure safe shelter for survivors if needed.

- UNHCR implements a complaint and feedback mechanisms through a community-based protection partner (PFR) to ensure accountability to refugees in Kigeme camp. UNHCR also runs a regular protection desk, individual counselling, hotlines, home visits, and mass meeting to receive complaints and provide timely feedback.
- In partnership with HI, UNHCR provides support to people with specific needs through community-based rehabilitation services for children with disabilities, supplementary feeding (SOSOMA) and occupational therapy to encourage functional independence.
- Since May 2021, WFP has distributed food assistance through cash based on a targeted criterion. To support this, UNHCR operates a dedicated helpline in Kigeme camp to receive refugee appeals for (re)inclusion in food assistance and ensure that refugees fulfilling the eligibility criteria are not erroneously excluded. Currently, there are 13,655 individuals considered highly vulnerable (84.74% of the camp population), 650 individuals are considered moderately vulnerable (5.83% of the camp population) while 406 individuals are considered least vulnerable (9.43% of the population) and do not receive any targeted assistance.

Registration and Documentation

- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugee residing in Kigeme refugee camp through regular registration of individuals and groups. Refugees are registered individually and by household (biometric registration) and given a “Proof of Registration” by UNHCR which subsequently supports refugees to access national identity documents. As of 31 August 2023, refugee population stands at 14,714 individuals.
- UNHCR also works closely with the Rwandan Government through MINEMA and National Identification Agency (NIDA) to facilitate the issuance of new refugee ID cards to individuals aged 16 years old and above living in Kigeme camp. Periodic campaigns take place to distribute new ID cards and replace the expired ones.

Education

- In Kigeme refugee camp, most refugee children are enrolled and integrated within Rwandan national schools located nearby the camp. 616 children (311 female and 305 male) currently attend the Early Childhood Development (ECD) programme (nursery), 2,528 students (1,269 female and 1,259 male) currently attend primary school and 1,530 (781 female and 749 male) are enrolled in secondary education. Some students, especially high performers, are sent to schools of excellence (boarding) and UNHCR supports the attendance of 13 children with disabilities to specialized schools. UNHCR supports education for refugees Kigeme refugee camp in partnership with World Vision Rwanda.
- UNHCR’s support to refugee education includes paying tuition fees for students in schools of excellence and special needs education, providing scholastic supplies, didactic materials, school uniforms, school feeding fees (hot meals for secondary school students and porridge for ECD children), psychosocial support to refugee children as well as registration fees to national exams.

Health and Nutrition

- One health centre is present in Kigeme refugee camp and is managed by UNHCR and SCI. The health centre provides a range of primary health care services that include laboratory tests, antenatal and post-natal care and sexual and reproductive health care. The Ministry of Health also supports the health centre with medical equipment.
- UNHCR and SCI facilitate the referral of refugees in need of advanced secondary health care to Kigeme Hospital and tertiary referrals to other specialized hospitals, such as University Teaching Hospital of Butare (CHUB), University Teaching Hospital of Kigali and others. A referral committee is in place to make these decisions based on the available budget to support lifesaving and emergency healthcare.

- Vaccination of children under 5 years old including measles and other mandatory child vaccinations are provided by SCI in Kigeme refugee camp. From January to August 2023, 392 children under 5 years old were vaccinated against measles and rubella.
- As part of its public health services, UNHCR and SCI work with 34 community health workers who disseminate information and conduct health education activities in Kigeme refugee camp.
- To ensure the health and wellbeing of the refugee population, UNHCR alongside WFP provides a variety of nutrition interventions in Kigeme camp. These include supplementary feeding, outpatient program for severe malnutrition, anaemia reduction, HIV and TB treatment, nutrition support for pregnant and lactating women, and children from 6 to 23 months. Overall, 270 individuals have had access to nutrition programme by end of August 2023.

Food Security

- Since September 2017, WFP has used cash-based transfers for food assistance in Kigeme refugee camp. To facilitate the cash assistance distribution UNHCR helps refugee households to establish a bank account. Food assistance is subsequently distributed on targeted basis where the highly vulnerable households (84.13 percent) receive 100 percent of the food assistance value currently 10,000RWF, moderately vulnerable (6 percent) receive 50 percent of the food assistance, and least vulnerable (9,79%) receive do not receive any food assistance.
- Since October 2022, refugees' children attending primary and secondary schools nearby Kigeme camp are integrated within the national school feeding program. In this regard, WFP tops up the Rwandan Government's contribution for refugee children's food in school. The Government is providing 90% and WFP tops up 10% for refugee students.

Water and Sanitation

- Kigeme refugee camp is entirely reliant on water supplied by the national system via through Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC), a governmental institution in charge of water distribution. Currently, the average water use in the camp is 14.6 litres per person per day.
- In terms of of water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) facilities, Kigeme camp has 34 water points with 182 water taps, 38 latrine blocks with 434 drop holes (30 of which are friendly to PWD), 37 shower blocks with 336 functional shower stances, and 6 garbage collection points.
- In terms of hygiene promotion, UNHCR works with 18 refugee hygiene promoters in Kigeme camp to deliver messages about best hygiene practices. Each promoter contacts an average of 820 people per month. In addition, an average of 309 liters of liquid soap are provided and utilized each month for handwashing and general cleaning of sanitation facilities.
- In Kigeme refugee camp, each month, an average of 98 m^3 of solid waste is delivered to a dumping site, while an average of 182.5 m^3 of liquid waste is dislodged from dischargeable latrines.

Shelter and NFIs

- Since the establishment of Kigeme refugee camp in 2012, UNHCR has constructed 1,529 semi-permanent shelters across seven quarters subdivided into 19 villages. Over time, more than 1,000 shelters in high-risk zones have also been demolished and refugees have been relocated to Mahama refugee camp due to environmental degradation.
- From January to August, a total of 37 terraces have been constructed to protect shelters in Mugombwa camp as mitigation measure for environmental degradation.

- In Kigeme camp, initially shelter surface was 12 m² although some shelters have since been extended to take into consideration differing needs of refugee families giving the average of 21 m² per shelter. Between January and August 2023, UNHCR has rehabilitated/repaired 71 shelters and constructed 9 new shelters in Kigeme camp.
- A quarterly coordination meeting for shelter committee is conducted by UNHCR, MINEMA, refugee committee, ADRA and other partners as per needs to discuss and find solutions to present problems.
- To help refugees purchase non-food items, UNHCR distributes cash assistance to refugees living in Kiziba refugee camp on a regular basis. To facilitate this process, UNHCR works with Equity Bank who provide bank accounts for refugees in the camp through which they receive cash assistance from UNHCR, WFP and other partners. Due to a lack of funding, however, no cash assistance for NFI's has been distributed since March 2023.

Energy and Environment

- In Kigeme refugee camp, all refugee households receive cash for cooking energy from UNHCR monthly. The amount of assistance is calculated based on family size and the firewood quantity consumption at a cost of 1 kg for 200 RWF. On average, UNHCR disburses 19,419,983.33 RWF per month for cooking energy in Kigeme camp.
- To support the use of sustainable sources of energy and reduce deforestation, UNHCR and partners, Practical Action, URUMURI Energy Group and EcoGreen Solutions, have provided refugees in Kigeme camp with cooking stoves and pellets. As of August 2023, 1,245 households in the camp now use improved cooking stoves.
- To reduce deforestation, UNHCR provided fuel briquettes, an alternative to firewood, for cooking food at ECD schools. 125 kg of briquettes are used daily. The process is managed by WVI.
- In Kigeme refugee camp, 1,089 households have access to solar home systems for lighting that were installed by UNHCR and its partners. The communal facilities and offices in the camp are lit by 55 streetlights and powered by other renewable energy sources and electricity from the national grid.
- An environmental club of 20 members (14 refugees and 6 from host community) is functional in Kigeme refugee camp. As of August 2023, 37,438 trees were planted in Kigeme refugee camp in partnership with WVI and the refugee environmental club.

Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

- Since 2021, with the support from the Danish government, UNHCR, MINEMA and Nyamagabe District are jointly implementing a climate-smart agriculture project to enhance livelihoods of refugees and their host communities. 59 ha of land were availed by Nyamagabe District in Mushishito Marshland and allocated to 500 refugees and 1,069 Rwandans. UNHCR supports refugee and Rwandan farmers in their agricultural endeavours on the marshland through providing seeds, fertilizers, and other agricultural inputs. Regular harvests enable farmers to make an income and improve their household food security.
- In Kigeme refugee camp, since November 2021, UNHCR works with World Vision International through Poverty Alleviation Project (PAC) to support refugee livelihoods. In total, 303 refugees have been supported by the project. This includes 266 refugees who received a cash grant of approximately $800 per person for businesses (agriculture and non-agriculture businesses) and 37 refugee youth who received a start-up grant after the completion nine months technical and vocational education and training (TVET).
- To support refugee livelihoods, Indego Africa with UNHCR's support trained 44 refugee women to weave handmade baskets and facilitated their access to national and international markets to sell their products. These women now form basket-weaving cooperatives where they earn an income to support their families.

Durable Solutions

- UNHCR continues to identify and process cases from Mugombwa camp for resettlement mainly due to medical reasons. Legal and policy provisions exist to facilitate the local integration of refugees throughout Rwanda, including in Kigeme camp. Despite this, requests to locally integrate are few and the majority occur due to marriage between refugees and Rwandan nationals. UNHCR remains available to support refugees pursue naturalisation through legal pathways.
- Refugees in Kigeme camp primarily originate from Eastern DRC. Due to ongoing security concerns in their area of origin, UNHCR is neither promoting nor facilitating voluntary repatriation now.

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