Mugombwa Refugee Camp, Rwanda

August 2023

11,665 refugees from DRC live in Mugombwa refugee camp which is in Gisagara District in Southern Province of Rwanda.

The camp was established in **2014 on 28 hectares of land.** The Government of Rwanda through MINEMA administer the camp and is responsible for security and protection of the refugees in coordination with UNHCR.

Around **53 per cent** of the camp's population is under 18 years old.

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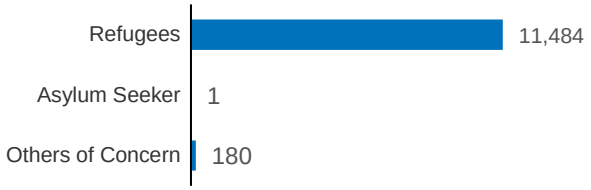

Mugombwa Camp - Map

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

"Before I started playing sitball, I felt worthless, but now I'm fully integrated into society. I even play for clubs outside the camp and get paid for it!" – Uwase, 22, a refugee in Mugombwa camp, shares how sports restore hope for refugees with disabilities.

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Main Activities

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Mugombwa refugee camp is managed by the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by Camp Manager, Deputy Camp manager and supported by the Directorate-General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) staff and Police. The camp is divided into eight quarters and each quartier consists of an average of five villages. In total there are 28 villages.
- The refugee camp has an executive committee which consists of eight members (four male and four female) led by a Camp President and Deputy-President. The executive committees are elected by community members for two years. Many religions exist in the Mugombwa camp, but majority of the population are Christian (Adventist).
- Each village has a village leader, elected by the village members and each quartier has also a quartier leader elected by the population residing in the respective quartiers. Village and quartier leaders play an important role in communicating issues facing the refugee community with UNHCR and partners.
- In Mugombwa refugee camp, UNHCR works with 6 implementing and 10 operational partners: Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR), Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Plan International (PI), World Vision International (WVI), Save the children International (SCI), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Inkomoko, CARE International/ FREE Project, WVI/ PAC Project, GIZ/ Ecoref Project, Hope Impact, Practical Action, OffGridBox, Good People International, Alight and World Food Programme (WFP). Monthly operational and camp coordination meetings among UNHCR, partners and refugees' leaders take place to inform and advise for future programming and planning.
- Mugombwa refugee camp faces extreme environmental degradation due to its topographical nature. Land availability remains a major constraint, hampering the construction of shelter as well as sports and recreational facilities. Due to limited budget for rehabilitation and construction, there is a risk of land/mudslides due to steep slopes and intensity of rainfall. There is a need to plant more trees and establish strong drainage systems as well as having permanent shower rooms, retaining walls and stairs for sanitation facilities.
- UNHCR's office in Huye is part of the Gisagara Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) which ties in many aspects of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) to improve lives for both refugees and hosting communities (Rwanda). Jointly, UNHCR and Gisagara district have implemented several projects including smart agricultural in Misizi marshland.

Protection

- UNHCR's office in Huye delivers protection assistance and humanitarian support for Congolese refugees residing in Mugombwa 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 various means such as Continuous Registration Panel (CRP) sessions, home visits and providing legal assistance, advocacy aimed at prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), as well as raising awareness on child protection issues.
- In Mugombwa refugee camp, UNHCR and partners implement coordination mechanisms 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 SGBV for adults include psychological abuse, physical assault, denial of resources and opportunities, as well as rape.
- UNHCR implements complaint and feedback mechanism through community-based protection partner (PFR) to ensure accountability to refugees in Mugombwa. UNHCR also runs a regular protection desk, individual counselling, hotlines, home visits, and mass meetings with the refugee community to receive complaint 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. On average, 96 people with specific needs are supported every month.
- Since May 2021, UNHCR and WFP, in consultation with MINEMA, have distributed food assistance through cash based on a targeted criterion. To support this, UNHCR operates a dedicated helpline in Mugombwa 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 11,004 individuals who are considered highly vulnerable (around 94 per cent of the camp population), 377 individuals are considered moderately vulnerable (around 3 per cent of the camp population) while 247 individuals are considered least vulnerable (around 2 per cent of the population) and do not receive any targeted assistance.
- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugees residing in Mugombwa refugee through regular registration of individuals and groups. Refugees are registered individually and by household (biometric registration) and given a "Proof of Registration" by UNHCR. UNHCR also works closely with the Rwandan Government through MINEMA and National Identification Agency (NIDA) to facilitate the issuance of new refugee identities to individuals of 16 years old living in Mugombwa camp. Periodic campaigns take place to distribute new ID cards and replace the expired ones.

Education

- In Mugombwa refugee camp, most refugee children are enrolled and integrated within national schools located nearby to the camp. 758 students (389 female and 369 male) currently attend Early Childhood Development (ECD) Programme (nursery), 2,139 students (1,063 female and 1,076 male) attend primary school and 1,999 (998 female and 1,001 male) attend secondary education. Small number of students, especially high performers, are sent to schools of excellence (boarding) and UNHCR supports the attendance of 18 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, covering school feeding fees (hot meals for secondary education students and porridge for ECD children), providing psychosocial support to refugee children as well as covering registration fees to national exams.
- In Mugombwa camp, UNHCR also focuses on integrating digital education within the national schools in partnership with ProFuturo. Through the project, tablets have been distributed to upper primary school students to help to improve quality education for both refugee and Rwandan children.

Health

- One health centre is present in Mugombwa 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 support the health centre with medical equipment.
- UNHCR and SCI facilitate the referrals of refugees in need of advanced secondary health care to the Kibilizi District Hospital and tertiary referrals to other specialized hospitals, such as the University Teaching Hospital of Butare (CHUB). A referral committee is in place to make these decisions based on the available budget to support lifesaving and emergency healthcare.
- Routine vaccination of children under 5 years old including measles and other mandatory child vaccinations are provided by SCI in Mugombwa refugee camp. From January to August 2023, 952 children under 5 years old were vaccinated against measles and rubella.
- As part of its public health services, UNHCR and SCI work with 23 community health workers who disseminate information on health-related topics and conduct health education activities in Mugombwa refugee camp.
- To ensure the health and wellbeing of the refugee population, UNHCR alongside WFP provides a variety of nutrition interventions in Mugombwa 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, 358 individuals have had access to nutrition programme by end August2023.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Since September 2017, WFP has used a Smartcard enabling refugees to access cash-based transfers for food assistance. The Smartcard is linked to each individual household's bank account. In 2022, food assistance is distributed through this methodology based on targeting criteria where the highly vulnerable receive 100 per cent, moderately vulnerable receive 50 per cent, and least vulnerable receive 0 per cent of monthly cash assistance value.
- Through its school feeding program, WFP has been providing hot meals to refugees and Rwandans enrolled in the local schools. Since October 2022, however, this provision has been integrated within the national system whereby WFP is toping-up the Rwandan Governments contribution for refugee children's food in school. The Government is providing 90 per cent and WFP tops up 10 per cent for refugee students.

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- Drinking water in Mugombwa is supplied from three protected springs in Musave Valley with a total discharge of 4.04 litres/sec. Water is pumped into the camp using electric pumps (diesel pumps are utilized when electricity is off), with an average daily consumption of 23 litres per capita.
- In terms of WASH facilities, Mugombwa refugee camp has 27 water points with 158 functional water taps, 47 blocks of dischargeable permanent latrines (with 470 drop holes including 94 drop holes with flush modern seat latrines that are friendly to people with disabilities), 32 blocks with 316 stances of permanent showers, 13 garbage collection points, and 1 dumping site.
- In Mugombwa camp, UNHCR works with 16 refugee hygiene promoters to spread messages about best hygiene practices, on average each hygiene promoter contacts 1074 people every month. In addition, 229 litres of liquid soap are provided monthly for hand washing and general cleaning of sanitation facilities.

- Each month, an average of 98 m^3 of solid waste is transported to the dumping site, while 238 m^3 of liquid waste is dislodged from dischargeable latrines.

Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- Since the creation of Mugombwa refugee camp in 2014, UNHCR has constructed 1,702 semi-permanent shelters across eight quarters subdivided into 28 villages.
- Initially shelter surface was 15 m^2 in Mugombwa camp although some shelters have been extended to take into consideration differing needs of refugee families giving the average of 25 m^2 per shelter. Since January 2023, UNHCR through direct implementation have rehabilitated/repaired 77 shelters in Mugombwa camp.
- From January to August, a total of 38 terraces have been constructed to protect shelters in Mugombwa camp as mitigation measure for environmental degradation.
- 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 solution of present problems.

Energy and Environment

- UNHCR works with Good People International who are providing LPG gas to all households in Mugombwa refugee camp in 2023. From May 2021 to 31 August 2023, 77,454 cylinders/ 464,724 kg of LPG were distributed.
- In Mugombwa camp, 798 refugee households have access to solar home systems for lighting. The health centre and offices within the camp are connected to the national grid, while the community centre is connected to solar energy.
- 70 Solar Street lights (60 in the camp and 10 in the host community) have been installed in and around Mugombwa Refugee Camp.
- Tree Planting activities are implemented by refugees and Rwandan communities, UNHCR and World Vision. As of 31 August 2023, 13,646 trees were planted in Mugombwa refugee camp and 2,327 trees were planted in the host community.
- Environmental protection awareness raising activities are regularly conducted within community. UNHCR and WVI work with five environmental protection promoters through mass community mobilizations and maintenance of planted trees in Mugombwa refugee camp.
- As of 31 August 2023, UNHCR and WVI have rehabilitated/ maintained more than 667 m of damaged access roads across different quarters of the camp, 629 m of water drainage systems and 525.5 m of retaining walls.

Livelihoods and Economic Inclusion

- In 2018, UNHCR and partners (including WFP and FAO) started work on the Misizi Marshland near Mugombwa refugee camp in close cooperation with the local Gisagara District and Government of Rwanda (MINEMA) with financial support from the IKEA Foundation. In line with the Global Compact for Refugees, the project aims at increasing agricultural production while supporting peaceful coexistence between refugees and the Rwandan host community. In total, 60 hectares of land was provided by the district for farming. This has supported 1,427 households (1,127 Rwandan and 300 refugee) to farm and formed the Icyerekezo Misizi Cooperative. During Season A 2023 35,435 kg of maize were sold and 182,082 kg were consumed.
- UNHCR supports refugees and Rwandan farmers working on Misizi Marshland to develop the marshland and provides agricultural tools and products. In addition, four drying facilities and two warehouses have been constructed.
- In addition, UNHCR has supported the construction of five poultry and five piggery sheds in the Misizi Marshlands. The diversification of income through animal

husbandry has involved 46 refugee households and 104 Rwandans (households) from the local community.

- In coordination with partners in the livelihood sector (GIZ, Inkomoko, Give Directly, WVI, Plan International, HI), UNHCR also supports refugee entrepreneurs and businesses through start-up loans, seed funding, business/entrepreneurial development, financial literacy training, and access to vocational trainings to increase refugee self-reliance.
- In Mugombwa refugee camp, UNHCR and WVI support refugees through the process of 'graduating' from poverty and becoming less dependent on humanitarian aid. Since November 2021, 350 refugees received cash grants of approximately $800 per person for their business activities and 13 youth received cash grant for start-up tool kits of approximatively $ 800. In addition, 15 youth were enrolled in 9 months technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and were supported with $ 800 for start-up tool kits. With the support from WVI, 165 households of 929 members received cash transfer for consumption. In total, RWF 9,149,900 was distributed where each member of a household was entitled RWF 29,900.
- UNHCR is working with CARE International through African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) Rwanda to support 31 refugees (9 male and 22 female) through TVET training. Nineteen refugees (6 male and 13 female) were supported to become mobile agents where each one has received RWF 300,000 grant to run their business.

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 Mugombwa 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 Mugombwa camp primarily originate from Eastern DRC. Due to ongoing security concerns in their area of origin, UNHCR is neither promoting nor facilitating voluntary repatriation at the time being.