

Kiziba Refugee Camp, Rwanda

February 2023

Kiziba is the oldest refugee camp in Rwanda and was established in 1996. It is currently host to **15,955** refugees.

Kiziba is located about 15 km outside Karongi town, in Karongi District, Western Province.

UNHCR's office in Karongi covers Kiziba refugee camp as well as the Kijote Transit Centre in Nyabihu District, and the Nyarushishi Transit Centre in Rusizi. Both transit centres are **26 kms** and **22 kms** away from the DRC border respectively and are used to support Rwandan refugee returns.

In the beginning of the establishment of the camp, it covered an area of **28** hectares of land. Currently, after some expansion, the camp now covers **44** hectares. **60%** of the population in the camp are under the age of **24 years old**. The camp is divided into ten community administrative units (quartiers).

POPULATION OF CONCERN

33 UNHCR STAFF BASED IN KARONGI OFFICE COVER THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN KIZIBA REFUGEE CAMP AND THE TRANSIT CENTERS



Pharmacist working at the health centre in Kiziba camp distributes medicines and prescriptions to refugees from DRC.

Main Activities

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Kiziba refugee camp is managed by the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by camp manager, deputy camp manager and supported by immigration (DGIE) staff and Rwanda National Police (RNP). Camp coordination is undertaken by MINEMA and UNHCR through coordination meetings and multi-functional monitoring conducted on a quarterly basis.
- Refugees in Kiziba are highly dependent on humanitarian assistance, and very few individuals have access to employment opportunities. Where work opportunities are available, this is mostly in agriculture, construction, or domestic work sectors. Food is provided by World Food Programme. Since 2020, WFP stopped blanket assistance for food due to budget shortfalls, and only the most vulnerable now receives food assistance.
- UNHCR works with 12 different partners, both implementing and operational, across a variety of sectors in Kiziba refugee camp and Karongi district. These include WFP (Food and Nutrition), Save the children (Health and Nutrition), ADRA (Logistics), Humanity and Inclusion (People with special needs and disabilities), Plan International (Child Protection and SGBV), World Vision International (Education and WASH), Caritas (Livelihood), Prison Fellowship Rwanda (Legal assistance, CBP and Birth registration), Inkomoko (Livelihood), Kepler (Education) and Red Cross (NFIs, Livelihood, first Aid, Shelter support), Practical Action (Energy and Environment), Impact Hope (Education), and ALIGHT (SGBV).

Protection

- UNHCR operates a protection desk in Kiziba refugee camp three days a week to ensure the identification of vulnerable refugees and protection cases, provide counselling, and refer refugees to services to respond to their needs. Common support and information sought by refugees through the protection desk pertain to resettlement queries, health services, request changes to their family composition (registering of births, deaths, and marriages) and report protection concerns. In February, UNHCR received 38 cases at the protection desk, each of which received counselling and were followed up on an individual basis.
- To ensure accountability to the refugee community, UNHCR and partners also operate a range of complaint and feedback mechanisms, including complaint boxes, protection hotline, protection email, and the protection desk in Kiziba refugee camp. On average 90 percent of the complaints received relate to queries on resettlement.
- In Kiziba camp, community-based child protection mechanisms are utilized to strengthen child protection throughout the camp. UNHCR staff and partners work to manage individual child protection cases providing counselling and solutions to the issues that they face. In February, UNHCR managed seven individual cases of children at risk, through Best Interest Determination (BID) panel meeting. While 27 Best Interest Assessments were conducted during the same period. The biggest challenge observed regarding child protection in the camp is child neglect by parents and other caretakers.
- UNHCR protection staff and partners in Kiziba work to identify and support victims of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and provide psycho-social support and medical referrals. The common forms of SGBV cases reported include sexual assault, physical assault, psychological abuse, and denial of resources. There are 27 open cases of SGBV under case management as of end of February 2023 in Kiziba. Challenges in preventing and responding to GBV in the camp include a culture of silence, delays in legal procedures which encourage impunity among GBV perpetrators, and lack of sufficient funds to implement income generating activities for the socio-economic empowerment of women and girls. Refugees have also reported the impact of targeted assistance as one of the causes on increase in SGBV.
- UNHCR's partner, Humanity, and Inclusion (HI) supports people with disabilities in Kiziba refugee camp by providing supportive devices and promotes inclusive programming to ensure they are integrated into various sectors in the camp. Supplementary feeding for people with disabilities is also provided where needed. In February, UNHCR and HI supported 21 people with visual impairments to access ophthalmology services at Kabgayi eye unit.

- During the reporting period, Nkamira Transit Site hosts 3,726 asylum seekers from DRC. The current figure for Nkamira as of 13th March 2023 is 3,912 individuals.

Registration and Documentation

- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugees living in the camp through regular registration of individuals and groups. This is ensured through the continuous registration panel operated by UNHCR, MINEMA and DGIE. In February, 17 cases were assessed by the panel and provided feedback related to family reunion, reactivation of records, closure of records due to death, change of marital status, and correction of names due to capturing error.
- In 2021, UNHCR and the Government of Rwanda began an initiative to ensure all registered refugee children have birth certificates according to the individual right to documentation. In February, UNHCR supported the birth registration of 344 children (including 305 children in late birth registration procedures) at Rwankuba sector office.

Education

- Refugee children in Kiziba camp are integrated into the national education system. Schools in the camp has enrolment as follows: 743 children in ECD, 3,018 pupils in primary and 1,377 in secondary school. Attendance was at 96% in February 2023.
- In 2015, UNHCR and Kepler, launched the Kepler University Campus in Kiziba refugee camp to improve access for refugees to tertiary education. Since its opening 299 students have graduated with a degree. Currently, 157 refugee students are enrolled in its blended learning program.
- Impact Hope in collaboration with UNHCR provides scholarships for 25 refugee students to attend Upper Secondary schools. This scholarship is awarded to students who performed well in the national exams, and they get scholarship to study in bordering schools outside the camp.
- In partnership with World Vision International, UNHCR is supporting 56 students who performed well in national exams to attend boarding schools for high achievers across Rwanda.

Health

- Primary health care and medical screenings are provided by UNHCR and Save the Children International (SCI) in Kiziba camp. There is one health centre found in the camp, which also serves Rwandan host communities living in the surrounding areas. Refugee patients in need of further or specialized treatment are referred to district and national hospitals. The camp health centre includes a maternity ward, laboratory, consultation rooms, pharmacy, and in-patient wards with one doctor, 14 nurses, and 14 refugee assistant nurses. In February, 3,785 individuals received medical and health services in the camp, 69 percent of which were related to upper respiratory tract infections.
- Mental health challenges such as post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) and depression also continue to affect the refugee population in Kiziba camp. In February, UNHCR supported 206 individuals with mental health issues through counselling and psychosocial support services in coordination with Humanity and Inclusion. 78 individuals with disabilities also received basic functional rehabilitation services.

Food Security and Nutrition

- WFP provides support to refugees through cash assistance for food, which is transferred to refugees monthly via bank cards, and sometimes via cash agents in the camp in cases where bank cards have errors. This assistance is targeted based on three vulnerability categories. The most vulnerable receive the full ration of 10,000 RWF, moderately vulnerable a partial ration of 5,000 RWF per person per month, while the least vulnerable don't receive any food assistance.

Water and Sanitation (WASH)

- Water is distributed to the refugees through several water points and water stands located within the camp. The available water supply is 27.4 litres per person per day which is well above the recommended minimum standard of 20 litres per person per day.
- Kiziba camp has 744 drop holes of latrines which equates to 23 persons per drop hole (against the standard of 20 persons) and 338 shower rooms equating to 52 persons per shower room (against the standard of 50 persons); 92 hand washing stands have been built by refugee community to promote hygiene in the camp. Two trucks to dislodge latrines and empty garbage are available in Kiziba camp.
- Hygiene promotion sessions are regularly conducted throughout the camp by a group of 56 refugee volunteers and casual workers. Through these activities, refugee communities are encouraged to adopt more hygienic practices.

Shelter and NFIs

- Kiziba refugee camp covers 44 hectares of land and has a total of 3,522 shelters which accommodate the camp population. In coordination with the shelter committee, UNHCR allocates vacant shelters to refugees based on the needs. Unfortunately, the standard for shelter size (3m x 4m = 12m²) and the number of persons per shelter (five maximum) is not respected due to lack of adequate space and shelters within Kiziba camp. Approximately 32 percent of all households do not live in adequate dwellings.
- UNHCR distributes shelter repair material to refugees to help them repair their own homes and create a sense of ownership. Where needed, UNHCR directly supports more vulnerable refugee populations in undertaking the construction and maintenance. In 2022, UNHCR completed the construction of 24 new classrooms, one community centre, eight ECD classrooms, an IT smart classroom, modern butchery, rehabilitation of public market, as well as repair and maintenance at Kijote Transit Centre. In 2023, current projects in the pipeline include: 180 shelter rehabilitation and construction of UNHCR office in Kiziba camp.

Energy & Environment

- Due to its location on hilly terrain, Kiziba is susceptible to environmental degradation such as soil erosion, rainwater runoff and creation of gullies. Tree planting exercises are carried out by UNHCR, refugees and members of the host community through Umuganda (community work) organized once a month to maintain the environment. Since February 2022, 11,923 seedlings were planted in Kiziba camp.
- In 2018, the Government of Rwanda banned the use of firewood. As a result, briquettes were deemed as alternative for cooking energy in refugee camps including Kiziba camp and UNHCR distributes cash assistance to support refugee energy needs on a monthly basis. Challenges remain, however, in utilizing this option as access to appropriate stoves to use briquettes remains limited among the refugee population.
- The health centre in Kiziba camp is connected to the national grid provided by the Rwanda Electricity Sector Strengthening Project, and it is funded by the World Bank. Other communal facilities in the camp do not currently have access to electricity.

Livelihoods and economic inclusion

- Increasing the self-reliance of refugees in Kiziba camp is one of the main priorities of UNHCR. Since 2020, UNHCR in partnership with Caritas has funded livelihood projects to support refugees to 'graduate' from humanitarian assistance through providing financial trainings and grants to start businesses. In total 540 refugees and 140 Rwandans from the host community have so far benefitted from this project.
- UNHCR has also ensured the enrolment of 500 refugees and 200 members of the host community in the Poverty Alleviation Coalition (PAC) project, under U.S. Department of State. Bureau Of Population, Refugees, And Migration (BPRM).

- In collaboration with Inkomoko, 1,996 refugees and 586 members of the host community have benefited from various livelihood projects, including business training, as well as obtaining loans for their businesses.
- To assess the impact of TVET programmes in Kiziba camp, UNHCR and partners surveyed 233 individuals (205 adults and 28 young) who had graduated from such programmes. Among them 204 (87.5%) are reportedly doing well, 13 (5.6%) are performing averagely as most of the grants were not invested in their businesses, 11 (3%) reportedly failed as they misused their grants, three (1.3%) were resettled (1.2%), and two TVET beneficiaries are yet to start their businesses (one for automobile mechanic and one for hair dressing). The sectors with which the refugees graduated in are, Agriculture: 47, Livestock: 27, Trade: 100, Services: 17, and Vocational activities: 42. The identification of 295 refugees for the new cohort of training of 2023 is ongoing.

Durable Solutions

- Resettlement is currently the primary durable solution for refugees in Kiziba camp. In 2023, there are 1,223 resettlement slots (1,000 for USA, and the remaining numbers for Norway, Canada, and France) for Karongi district. As of the end of February, UNHCR has submitted 348 refugees from Kiziba refugee camp to resettlement countries for consideration. In addition, 290 refugees departed for resettlement to third countries in 2023.
- To mitigate fraud and manage resettlement expectations, UNHCR continues to conduct counselling twice a week for the refugee community. UNHCR staff hold town hall meetings on monthly basis to provide refugees with structured messages about resettlement, and answer queries raised by the community.
- Return and reintegration of Rwandans from DRC are facilitated by UNHCR's Karongi Field Office through reception, screening and registration, provision of cash assistance as part of the returnee package, as well as transportation of all the returnees to their areas of origin. Since 2019, UNHCR has received 5,910 returnees in Nyarushishi and Kijote Transit Centres.
- Legal and policy provisions exist to facilitate the local integration of refugees throughout Rwanda, including in Kiziba 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 who pursue naturalisation through legal pathways.

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