

# Mugombwa Refugee Camp, Rwanda

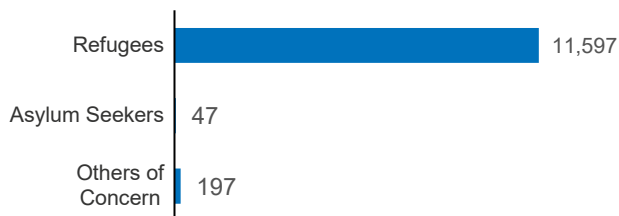
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**11,841** refugees and asylum seekers from DRC live in Mugombwa refugee camp which is in Gisagara District in Southern Province of Rwanda.

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

Around **51.65 per cent** of the camp's population is under 18 years old.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN



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



Refugee and Rwandan students in a computer lab at GS Mugombwa

## CONTACTS

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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 9 operational partners. Implementing partners include 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), while operational partners include Inkomoko, CARE International/FREE Project, WVI/ PAC Project, GIZ/ Ecoref Project, Hope Impact, Practical Action, OffGridBox, 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.
- UNHCR and Plan International Rwanda 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 cases. The most prevalent types of SGBV for adults include psychological abuse, physical assault and denial of resources and opportunities. In partnership with Plan International, UNHCR refers GBV survivors to health care, psychosocial support and legal counselling where needed. Additionally, Plan International ensures safe shelter for survivors if needed.
- 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.
- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugees residing in Mugombwa refugee through regular registration of individuals and groups. In March, for example, data on 26 refugee families in Mugombwa was updated such as changing date and place of birth.
- 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.

## Education

- In Mugombwa refugee camp, most refugee children are enrolled and integrated within national schools located nearby to the camp. In Mugombwa, 780 children currently attend the Early Childhood Development Programme (ECD) programme (nursery), 2,089 students attend primary school, and 1,667 students are enrolled in secondary education.
- Some students, especially high performers, are sent to schools of excellence (boarding) and UNHCR supports the attendance of 16 children with disabilities from Mugombwa to specialized schools. UNHCR in partnership with WVI Rwanda support education for refugees from Mugombwa Refugee Camp.
- 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, and other types of school requirement fees such as 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 improving quality education for both refugee and Rwandan children.

## Health and Nutrition

- One health centre is present in Mugombwa refugee camp and is managed by UNHCR implementing partner Save the Children International (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 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 in Kigali 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. In March, 118 refugee children under 5 years were vaccinated. This brings the total vaccinated to 298 children in the camp so far in 2024.
- As part of its public health services, 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, 561 individuals have had access to nutrition programme by end of March 2024.

### Food Security

- Since September 2017, WFP has used cash-based transfers for food assistance in Mugombwa refugee camp. To ease the cash assistance distribution, UNHCR helps refugee households to set up a bank account. Cash assistance for food is distributed on targeted basis whereby as of March 2024, 11,162 refugees (94.40%) are placed in the highly vulnerable category and receive 100 per cent of the food assistance value currently RWF 8,500; 420 refugees (3.55%) are classified as moderately vulnerable and receive 50 per cent of the food assistance value currently RWF 4,250; and 242 refugees (2.05%) are in the least vulnerable group and do not receive any food assistance.
- Through its school feeding program, WFP has been providing hot meals to refugees and Rwandans enrolled in the local schools. Since October 2022, this provision has been integrated within the national system whereby WFP is topping-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 21 litres per capita.
- In terms of WASH facilities, Mugombwa refugee camp has 27 water points with 158 functional water taps, 46 blocks of dischargeable permanent latrines (with 460 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's implementing partner WVI works with 14 refugee hygiene promoters to spread messages about best hygiene practices. On average, each hygiene promoter contacts 10,144 people every month. In addition, 215 litres of liquid soap are provided monthly for hand washing and general cleaning of sanitation facilities.
- Each month, an average of 195 m<sup>3</sup> of solid waste is transported to the dumping site, while 200 m<sup>3</sup> 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<sup>2</sup> in Mugombwa camp although some shelters have been extended to take into consideration differing needs of refugee families giving the average of 25 m<sup>2</sup> per shelter.
- Since January 2024, UNHCR has rehabilitated/repared 33 shelters in Mugombwa camp, with 11 shelters rehabilitated in March. In addition, a total of 25 terraces have been constructed to protect shelters in Mugombwa so far in 2024, including 6 terraces in March.

### Energy and Environment

- Since May 2021, UNHCR distributed LPG gas in Mugombwa refugee camp to help refugee families to meet their energy and cooking needs. So far in 2024, UNHCR has distributed 8,726 LPG cylinders/ 52,356 kgs including 2,689 LPG cylinders/ 16,134 kgs in March.
- 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 Streetlights (60 in the camp and 10 in the host community) have been installed in and around Mugombwa Refugee Camp by UNHCR and partners.
- Tree planting activities are implemented by refugees and Rwandan communities, UNHCR and World Vision. So far in 2024, 14,488 trees were planted in Mugombwa refugee camp, in addition to 2,327 trees in the nearby 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.

### 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 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. UNHCR supports refugees and Rwandan farmers working on Misizi Marshland to develop the marshland and provided agricultural tools and products. UNHCR also constructed four maize drying facilities and two warehouses during the initial phases of the project to enhance production. In 2024, UNHCR continues to support the cooperative to increase their self-reliance and household income through farming.
- 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/ income generating activities. Among them are 13 youth who received cash grant for start-up tool kits of approximately \$800 and 15 youth who were enrolled in 9 months technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and were supported with \$800 for start-up tool kits.
- UNHCR works closely with CARE International and African Evangelistic Enterprise (AEE) Rwanda in Mugombwa refugee camp and has supported 31 refugees (9 male and 22 female) through TVET training after which they were provided with start-up tool kits and cash grants to run their own businesses.

### **Durable Solutions**

- UNHCR continues to identify and process cases from Mugombwa camp for resettlement mainly due to medical reasons.
- 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.
- Legal and policy provisions exist to ease 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 is still available to support refugees pursue naturalisation through legal pathways.