

# Nyabiheke Refugee Camp, Rwanda

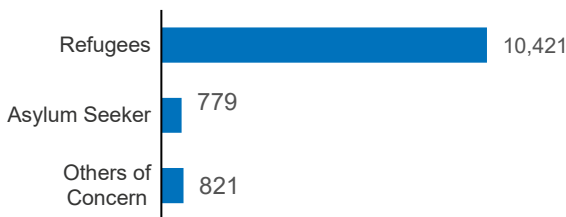
March 2024

Nyabiheke refugee camp is located in Gatsibo District in the Eastern Province of Rwanda. As of 31 March 2024, it is host to **12,021 refugees and asylum seekers**.

The camp was **established in 2005** mainly to reduce the overcrowding in Gihembe (Northern Province) and Kiziba (Western Province) camps.

Around **49 per cent** of the camp's population are children below 18 years old.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN



**UNHCR STAFF BASED IN THE KABARORE FIELD OFFICE COVER THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN NYABIHEKE REFUGEE CAMP**



Maize harvest in Nyabicwamba marshland near Nyabiheke refugee camp during Crop Season A (from September 2023 to February 2024) resulted in 30 tons sold to African Improved food at 311 RWF per kg of maize and 60 tons of maize taken by farmers for home consumption.

## CONTACTS

**Ms. Evalyn Maseno**, Resettlement and Complementary Pathways Officer (OIC),  
[maseno@unhcr.org](mailto:maseno@unhcr.org), Cell +250 788 384150, Kabarore Field Office.

# Main Activities

## Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Nyabiheke refugee camp is managed by the Rwandan Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by the Camp Manager, Social Affairs Officer (Deputy Camp Manager) and supported by the Directorate-General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) staff and Police. The camp is divided into eight quartiers and each quartier consists of an average of four villages. In total, there are 29 villages.
- Each village elects eight Village Leaders, and each quartier elects eight Quartier Leaders. Among these leaders, the Executive Camp Committee is selected. Many religions are present in the camp, but majority of population are Christians (Adventists).
- UNHCR works with 12 implementing and operational partners in Nyabiheke camp: Alight, Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Caritas Rwanda, Humanity & Inclusion (HI), Inkomoko, Plan International, Practical Action, Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR), Rwanda Red Cross, Save the Children International (SCI) and World Vision International (WVI) and Impact Hope.
- UNHCR's office in Kigali is part of the Gatsibo Joint Action Development Forum (JADF) which ties in many aspects of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) to improve lives for both refugees and Rwandans.

## Protection

- UNHCR and partners in Nyabiheke camp provide a range of protection services to refugees and the Rwandan host community. These include individual case management, supporting survivors of violence, abuse and exploitation and preventing its occurrence, birth registration, issuance of birth certificates, ID documents and other civil status documents, legal counselling, assistance/representation in the court if necessary, and providing psychosocial support. From January to March 2024, a total of 149 refugees (89% women) were received at the protection desk with different issues related to biodata correction, registration, access to asylum, resettlement and other protection concerns.
- In Nyabiheke refugee camp, UNHCR works with PFR to provide legal assistance and community-based protection to the refugee population. In the first quarter of 2024, a total of 112 refugees (57 females and 55 males) from Nyabiheke camp were provided with legal services on matters mainly related to access to documentation and correction of marital status.
- UNHCR also works with Plan International to implement Child protection and GBV programs. By the end of the first quarter 2024, 14 Best Interest Assessments (BIAs) and 05 Best Interest Determination (BID) were conducted to the unaccompanied and separated children as part of child protection case management. The predominant Gender Based Violence cases are denial of resources/opportunities, physical assault, psychological abuse, and child defilement. Plan International also managed 08 GBV cases during the reporting period.
- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugees living in Nyabiheke camp through regular registration of individuals and groups. UNHCR also works with Government authorities of MINEMA, DGIE and NIDA to ensure that refugees above 16 years old in the camp have refugee ID cards. Between January and March, 236 refugee IDs were issued mainly to children who have turned 16 years old and adult refugees whose IDs had expired.

## Education

- Refugee children in Nyabiheke camp are integrated into the national education system. A primary school (satellite school of Groupe Scolaire (G.S) Nyabicwamba) is based in the camp and follows the curriculum of the Rwandan Ministry of Education. It is open to both refugee and Rwandan children who live in the surrounding area. In the first quarter of 2024, the average school attendance was 92.4% among the 461 children enrolled in ECD, 94% among 2,202 primary students and 91.8% for 1,212 for students of both lower and upper secondary levels.
- Since September 2023, the Early Childhood Development Centre (ECD) in Nyabiheke camp has been integrated into the national education system to provide children aged 3-5 with pre-primary education opportunities. UNHCR also supports a special education program for 11 children with hearing/speaking disabilities.
- Tertiary level education opportunities remain limited and only 18 students from Nyabiheke camp are supported at the University level by the end of March 2024. The majority are sponsored through UNHCR's DAFI university scholarship programme.

### Health and Nutrition

- Nyabiheke camp has a health center run by UNHCR and Save the Children International (SCI). The health center is also supported by the Rwandan Ministry of Health through providing medical equipment. The centre mainly provides primary health care services, including laboratory tests, dental care, sexual and reproductive health care, HIV services, family planning services and post-natal care. In addition, the prevention of mother-to-child HIV+ transmission program (PMTCT) has been successful with zero transmission among infants born from HIV+ mothers for the past three years. Refugees and Rwandans from the local host community have access to the health centre. In the first quarter of 2024, 10,449 individuals (6,187 females and 4,268 males) were provided with primary health care services including 612 patients were from the host community (360 females, 252 males) representing 5.7% of consultations.
- UNHCR and SCI also support and cover the cost of refugee referrals to secondary and tertiary healthcare at nearby hospitals. Currently due to limited funds, hospital referrals are limited to life-saving cases only. In the first quarter of 2024, 277 patients (182 females and 95 males) were supported to access hospital health care at the secondary level and 28 patients at tertiary level.
- In Nyabiheke refugee camp, nutrition services are provided by ALIGHT with support from WFP. This includes blanket feeding programme to children aged between 6-23 months, pregnant women, lactating mothers, and people living with HIV/AIDS. By the end of March, a total of 908 persons were supported through this programme. In the camp, the prevalence of global acute malnutrition (6-59 months) and severe acute malnutrition (6-59 months) are recorded at 1%.

### Food Security

- The World Food Programme (WFP) provides support to refugees through cash for food, which is transferred to refugees monthly. Refugees are divided into three vulnerability categories, whereby the highly and moderately vulnerable groups receive food assistance of RWF 8,500 and RWF 4,200 respectively. Currently 905 individuals (2,242 households) in Nyabiheke refugee camp receive cash assistance for food.

### Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNHCR and WVI support refugees in WASH sector and water is provided to refugees through 3 boreholes installed in the nearby host community and water from national grid managed by Rwandan Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC). Nyabiheke camp is the only camp in Rwanda that uses boreholes to supply water. On average, the camp's

residents received 13.9 litres of water per person per day, which is below the minimum water supply of 20 litres per person per day.

- In total, there are 27 water points in the camp, 60 latrine blocks, 18 garbage collection blocks, 42 shower blocks, 14 washing stands and 75 handwashing facilities in the camp. Solid wastes are collected, and faecal sludges are dislodged and disposed at their respective dumping sites regularly.

### Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

- Nyabiheke refugee camp covers 35 hectares of land and has a total of 2,097 shelters occupied by refugees. On average, five people live in every shelter.
- UNHCR provides shelter assistance to all refugees living in Nyabiheke camp. Activities include reconstruction, rehabilitation and upgrading of shelters, replacing plastic sheeting with corrugated iron sheets on roofs and maintenance of communal facilities. Between January and March 2024, 69 shelters were rehabilitated. Shelters are reconstructed or rehabilitated by own means of refugees and/ or through community work.

### Energy and Environment

- UNHCR works with Practical Action in Nyabiheke camp through their Renewable Energy for Refugees (RE4R) project to provide environmentally friendly solutions to refugee communities. In total, 1,297 households use solar home systems in the camp and 521 households use clean cooking energy (pellets, briquettes etc.). 110 solar streetlights have also been installed across the camp and neighbouring areas.
- Nyabiheke refugee camp faces extreme environmental degradation due to its weather pattern and topographical nature. The absence of a well-planned drainage system coupled with the frequent rains of this area has resulted in the creation of life-threatening gullies and ravines within and around the camp. Dealing with deforestation, caused by human activity, has also posed a serious challenge. To prevent further environmental degradation, UNHCR partners with WVI and the refugee community to conduct a variety of environment related projects.
- In Nyabiheke refugee camp, all refugee households receive cash assistance to help them purchase cooking energy from UNHCR monthly. Between June 2023 and April 2024 the distribution of cash for energy has been put on hold due to a lack of funds but is due to resume in May 2024 on a targeted basis.

### Livelihood and Economic Inclusion

- UNHCR, MINEMA and Gatsibo District have partnered to support 232 refugees and 234 Rwandan host community members (in total 466 households) since April 2021, to implement agricultural project on 24 net hectares of land in Nyabicwamba marshland through funding from Denmark. UNHCR supports refugee and Rwandan farmers in their agricultural endeavours on the marshland through providing seeds, fertilizers, and other inputs each agricultural season. A drying shed to support optimal production in the marshland was also constructed. Regular harvests enable farmers to make an income and improve their household food security.
- Crop Season A 2024 (from September 2023 to February 2024) was characterized by farming of maize whereby farmers succeeded with a high production. Out of the maize harvested, 30 tons were sold to African Improved food at 311 RWF per kg of maize while 60 tons of maize were taken by farmers for home consumption.
- Crop Season B 2024 (From March 2024 to July 2024) in Nyabicwamba marshland started by cultivating soyabeans. Farmers were able to buy seeds and fertilizers by their own means and all 466 farmers have completed sowing soyabeans. Farmers bought the

seeds and fertilizers through an agro-dealership scheme which was selected by the cooperative committee.

- To promote business and job creation in the camp, UNHCR has constructed two business centres within which 13 rooms have been allocated to refugee business owners. In addition, the market constructed by UNHCR supports 64 refugee businesses. An additional business centre was constructed by Practical Action and is being used by 35 refugee business owners. All businesses are connected to the national electricity grid.

### **Durable Solutions**

- In the first quarter of 2024, 74 cases of 265 individuals were submitted for resettlement: 14 to Belgium, 09 to Canada, 01 to Denmark, 05 to Finland, 01 to France and 44 to United States of America.
- Between January and March 2024, 610 persons departed from Nyabiheke for resettlement as follows: 24 to Norway, 95 to Canada and 491 to the USA.
- Refugees in Nyabiheke camp primarily originate from Eastern DRC. Due to ongoing security concerns in their area of origin, UNHCR is currently neither promoting nor facilitating voluntary repatriation to the DRC.