



# Shelter Factsheet

June 2024

Shelters in Mahama refugee camp. © UNHCR

## KEY FIGURES

**158** shelters were transformed as of June 2024

**56** new semi-permanent shelter constructed as of June 2024

**568** shelters were rehabilitated as of June 2024

**215** terraces were constructed as of June 2024

## OVERVIEW

UNHCR provides and maintains shelter and communal infrastructures for all refugees living in camps in Rwanda. UNHCR also ensures that camps are well-planned with access roads, drainage systems, and communal spaces such as markets and community centers to support protection, basic needs services, and environmental protection.

The majority of shelters in refugee camps in Rwanda are classified as semi-permanent houses made out of mud-brick walling with iron sheet roofing. UNHCR undertakes continuous rehabilitation, repair, or reconstruction of old shelters in the camp to maintain good living conditions for the refugee population. Due to constant environmental degradation, including landslides and giant ravines caused by soil erosion and lack of proper water channels in the camps, some refugee families in high-risk zones have been relocated into new shelters or other camps to ensure their safety.

## SHELTER ACTIVITIES

UNHCR constructs, transforms, and rehabilitates shelters in five refugee camps in Rwanda. The standard shelter size is 5 m x 3 m (15 m<sup>2</sup>), accommodating a maximum of five people. However, due to space constraints, the shelter sizes vary across the camps.

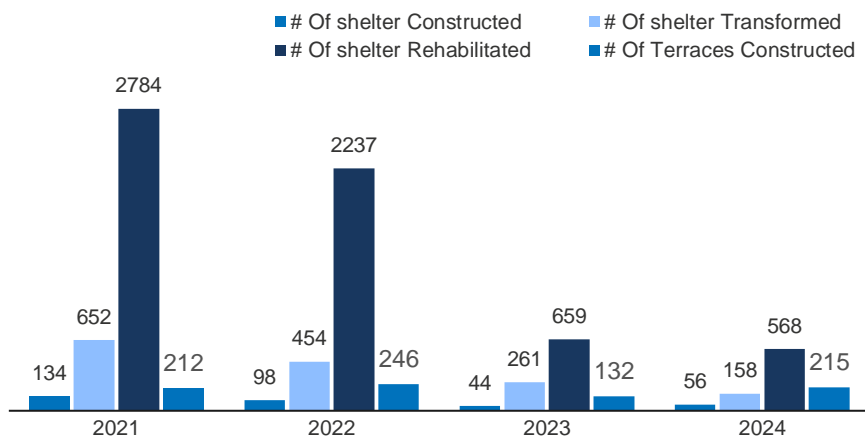
The shelter interventions undertaken by UNHCR are divided into three categories:

1. **Shelters construction:** This involves building new semi-permanent shelters in available spaces within the camps to accommodate families without adequate housing, or demolishing and reconstructing critically old semi-permanent shelters to provide decent dwellings for occupants.
2. **Transformation of shelters:** This includes upgrading shelters by replacing temporary plastic sheet roofing with more durable iron sheet roofing or replacing old, leaking iron sheets with new ones.
3. **Shelter Rehabilitation/Repair:** This involves repairing shelters that are still habitable but require specific sections to be worked on, such as rehabilitating walls, roofs, or replacing doors and windows.

Since mid-November 2022, continuous instability in Eastern DRC has resulted in a steady influx of asylum seekers to Rwanda. One of the ways UNHCR supports these new arrivals is through providing shelter. They are initially received at Nkamira Transit Centre, where 45 communal hangars have been constructed

since the site's opening in January 2023. Each hangar is partitioned into 20 rooms with separate living areas for men and women. As part of the relocation process of asylum seekers from the Nkamira Transit Centre to existing refugee camps across Rwanda, UNHCR identifies empty shelters within the camps and allocates them to asylum seekers to help them integrate into the community.

### Shelter Interventions | 2021 - 2024



### CAMP INFRASTRUCTURE

UNHCR builds and maintains camp infrastructures, such as community centers, child-friendly spaces, youth centers, women's opportunity centers, playgrounds, markets, access roads, and drainage networks.

### BUILDING FOR ENVIRONMENT

As most refugee camps in Rwanda are in hilly areas, shelters are increasingly impacted by increased rainfall caused by climate change

leading to soil erosion and the formation of gullies. Consequently, UNHCR undertakes the construction of terraces made of timber beams placed horizontally and vertically and supported on the ground to stabilize the sloping sides of shelters in high-risk zones. Some timber terraces are complimented with sandbags and planting of grass cover to reduce soil erosion.

### ESSENTIAL SERVICES PROVIDED AT A NEWLY CONSTRUCTED COMMUNITY CENTRE IN ETM



In September 2023, UNHCR opened a community centre of the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Gashora Sector, Bugesera District, to support up to 700 refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya at any given time. Here, asylum seekers and refugees have access to essential services, such as life skills training, computer classes and protection services.

The building has various rooms designed as offices, indoor games area (board games), business & exhibition centre, multipurpose hall, counselling & psychosocial support rooms, woman opportunity centre, training rooms, library, kitchen facility, general stores, and washrooms.



### WORKING WITH SHELTER PARTNERS

UNHCR in Rwanda directly implements shelter activities and collaborates with partners such as ADRA Rwanda. UNHCR is responsible for procuring shelter materials, while ADRA handles the distribution of these materials and constructs communal facilities at the Nkamira transit centre for new arrivals. UNHCR coordinates the entire shelter implementation process, including beneficiary identification, material procurement and distribution, and shelter construction and rehabilitation. UNHCR and ADRA also work closely with the refugee communities themselves who often provide labour during construction work.