

# Kigeme Refugee Camp, Rwanda

31 October 2022

**14,532** refugees live in Kigeme refugee camp which is located in Nyamagabe District in the Southern Province of Rwanda. All refugees are Congolese.

The camp was established in **2012**. **34 hectares** of land were allocated to host refugees. MINEMA administers the camp and is responsible for security and protection of the refugees in coordination with UNHCR.

**53%** of the camp's population is younger than 18 years old.

## POPULATION OF CONCERN



Source: © UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

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



*The installation of solar energy in Kigeme refugee camp has enabled some of the refugees to work longer hours in the night.*

## Main Activities

### Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Kigeme refugee camp is managed by the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by camp manager, deputy camp manager and supported by immigration staff and Police. The camp is divided into seven quarters and each quartier consists of an average of 3 villages. In total, Kigeme camp consists of 7 quartiers and 19 villages.
- The camp has One refugee executive committee consisting of eight members (4 male & 4 female) led by a camp president and a Deputy-president. The executive committees are elected by community members for two years. Many religions exist in the Kigeme camp, but a majority of the population are Christian (Adventist).
- Each village has a village leader who is elected by village members and each quartier has also a quartier leader elected by the community. Village and quartier leaders play an important role in communicating issues facing the refugee community with UNHCR and partners
- UNHCR works with 14 implementing and operational partners in Kigeme camp including: Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR), ALIGHT, Legal Aid Forum (LAF), Humanity Inclusion (HI), Plan International (PI), World Vision International (WVI), African Humanitarian Agency (AHA), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), GIZ, Give Directly, INKOMOKO, World Food Program (WFP),
- Kigeme refugee camp faces extreme environmental degradation due to its weather pattern and topographical nature. Land availability remains a major constraint, hampering the construction of shelter as well as sports and recreational facilities. Due to a limited budget for shelter rehabilitation and construction, there is a risk of land/mudslides due to steep slopes and intensity of rainfall. As a result, there is a need to plant more trees and construct a strong drainage system as well as need for permanent shower rooms, retaining walls and stairs for sanitation facilities.
- UNHCR HUYE Field Office is part of the NYAMAGABE joint Action Development Forum (JADF) which ties in many aspects of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) to improve lives for both refugees and host communities (Rwanda). Jointly, UNHCR and NYAMAGABE district has implemented several projects including Smart agricultural in Mushishito marchland.

### Protection

- UNHCR Huye delivers protection assistance and humanitarian support to all Congolese refugees residing in Kigeme camp. UNHCR works with authorities and humanitarian actors to ensure the rights of refugees are upheld. This includes monitoring to identify protection risks and conducting the needed response., through conducting protection reception, 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.
- In Kigeme camp, UNHCR and partners implement coordination mechanisms to ensure child protection prevention and response. UNHCR and Plan International 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 SGBV. Through the establishment of SGBV 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 SGBV instances. The most prevalent types of SGBV for adults include psychological abuse, physical assault, denial of resources and opportunities as well as rape. Through UNHCR SGBV partners ALIGHT, all SGBV survivors are assisted and documented in ALIGHT’s SGBV database.

- In line with community-based protection approaches and accountability to the affected population, UNHCR implements a complaint and feedback mechanisms through a community-based protection partner (PFR) to ensure accountability to refugees. UNHCR also runs a regular protection desk, individual counselling, hotlines, home visits, and mass meeting to receive complaints and provide timely feedback.
- Monthly operational and camp coordination meetings among UNHCR, partners and refugees' leaders take place to inform and advise future programming.
- In partnership with Humanity Inclusion (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.
- 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 Kigeme 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 **13,314 individuals** considered as highly vulnerable (91.61% of the camp population), **727 individuals** as moderately vulnerable (5% of the camp population) while **493 individuals** are considered least vulnerable (3% of the population) and do not receive any assistance.

### Registration and Documentation

- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugee residing in Kigeme refugee camp through regular registration of individuals and groups. Refugees are registered individually and by household (biometric registration) and given a "Proof of Registration" by UNHCR. As of October 2022, refugee population stands at 14,532 (Female: 7,872 & Male: 6,660).
- UNHCR also works closely with the Rwandan Government through MINEMA and NIDA to facilitate the issuance of new refugee ID cards to individuals aged 16 years and above living in Kigeme. Periodic campaigns take place to distribute new ID cards and replacement of the expired ones.

### Education

- In Kigeme refugee camp, the majority of refugee children are enrolled and integrated within Rwandan national schools located nearby the camp. **587 children** (Female:308 & Male:279) currently attend Early Childhood Development (Nursery), **2571 students** (Female: 1291& Male:1280) currently attend primary school and 1597 (Female:810& Male:787) secondary education. In addition, a small number of students (especially high performers) are sent to schools of excellence (boarding) and specialized schools for 06 children with disability in different districts of the country. UNHCR supports education for refugees Kigeme refugee camp in partnership with World Vision Rwanda.
- UNHCR 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, school feeding fees (hot meals for secondary school students and porridge for ECD students), psychosocial support to refugee children as well as registration fees to national exams for grade 6, grade 9 and grade 12.

### Health

- Kigeme refugee camp is host to one health centre which UNHCR operates in partnership with African Humanitarian Agency (AHA). Through the health clinic primary health care services are provided free of charge to the refugee population including laboratory tests, anti-natal and post-natal care, and sexual and reproductive health care. The Ministry of Health also support the health centre with medical equipment.

- UNHCR and AHA facilitate the referral of refugees in need of advanced secondary health care to districts hospitals (Kigeme Hospital), and tertiary referrals to other specialized hospitals (CHUB, CHUK and others in Kigali). A referral committees' is in place to make these decisions based on the budget available to support lifesaving and emergency healthcare.
- Routine vaccination of children under five including measles and other mandatory child vaccinations as well as COVID-19 vaccination are provided by UNHCR and AHA in Kigeme refugee camp.
- As part of its public health services, UNHCR and AHA work with 38 community health workers who disseminate information and conduct health education within the community in Kigeme refugee camp.
- In order to ensure the health and wellbeing of the refugee population, UNHCR alongside WFP provides a variety of nutrition interventions in Kigeme. 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.

### Food Security and Nutrition

- In 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 (91%) receives 100%, moderately vulnerable (5%) receives 50%, and least vulnerable (3%) receives 0% 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. In October, however, this provision has been integrated within the national system whereby WFP will be topping-up the Rwandan Governments contribution for refugee children's food in school. For Rwandan students, the government has been providing 37.3% (56 RWF per day/child) and parent tops-up 62.6 % (94 RWF per day/child). With the new policy, the Government will be providing 90% and WFP tops up 10% for refugee students.

### Water and Sanitation (WASH)

- Kigeme refugee camp depends fully on water supplied by the national system through WASAC<sup>1</sup>. Currently the average water consumption in the camp is **16 litres per person per day**.
- In terms of WASH facilities, Kigeme RC has 34 water points with 182 water taps, 38 latrine blocks with 434 drop holes (30 drop holes which are friendly to PWD), 38 shower blocks with 344 functional shower stances, and 6 garbage collection points.
- In terms of hygiene promotion, in Kigeme camp UNHCR works with 22 refugee hygiene promoters to spread messages about best practices, on average each promoter is in contact with around an average of 764 people. In addition, 1090 litres of liquid soap are provided and used each month for handwashing, best practice, and general cleaning of sanitation facilities.

### Shelter and NFIs

- Since the creation of Kigeme refugee camp in 2012, UNHCR has constructed **1,516 semi-permanent shelters** across 7 quarters subdivided into 19 Villages, where refugees live. Over the time-span of the camp over 1,000 shelters in high-risk zones have also been demolished with refugees relocated to Mahama refugee camp.

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<sup>1</sup> WASAC is government institution in charge of water distribution



- Initially shelter surface was 12 Sqm although some shelters have been extended to take into consideration differing needs of refugee families giving the average of 21Sqm per shelter. Since January 2022, UNHCR through direct implementation have rehabilitated/repared a total of **339 shelters**.
- As of September 2022, UNHCR has constructed a total of **98 terraces** to protect shelters in Kigeme refugee camp as mitigation measure for environmental degradation.
- UNHCR provides the cash equivalent for non-food items such as sanitary pads, soaps, jerricans, kitchen sets to all refugees living in the camp. Distributions happen on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis.

## Energy & Environment

- In Kigeme refugee camp, all active refugee households receive cash for cooking energy on monthly basis<sup>2</sup> from UNHCR.
- Within the camp, UNHCR and partners have also provided refugees in Kigeme have with improved cooking tools (cooking stoves and pellets) to support the use of sustainable sources of energy and reduce deforestation. In addition, briquettes are used as alternatives to firewood in school feeding program to reduce deforestation and associated impacts. An average of **1250 Kgs** is counted as consumption on monthly basis as UNHCR is only providing briquettes for ECDs.
- Over 1,231 households in Kigeme camp also have access to home lighting through the installation of solar home systems (SHS) carried out by UNHCR and partners. Other renewable energy sources and electricity from the national grid is used to power communal facilities and offices in the camp.
- For the environmental protection in and around Kigeme refugee camp, more than **60,000 trees** have been planted by refugees since October 2021. A nursery bed was established mainly for eucalyptus and alnus species. Currently **25,00 tree seedlings** are ready to be planted during the coming tree planting season in November 2022.

## Livelihoods and economic inclusion

- Since 2021, UNHCR, MINEMA and NYAMAGABE District, with the financial support from Danish government are jointly implementing climate-smart agriculture project to enhance livelihoods of refugees and their host communities in Rwanda. **59 Ha of land** were availed by Nyamagabe District at the Mushishito Marshland and allocated to **500 refugees and 1,048 Rwandans** in the host community. So far, maize harvests have taken place for Season B (March-September 2022). UNHCR has supported both refugees and Rwandans develop the marshland by rehabilitating irrigation network (canals), distributing agricultural tools and constructing two drying sheds as well as building the capacity of beneficiaries. 1,427 farmers were supported with agriculture inputs for season B 2022
- Within Kigeme refugee camp, UNHCR and partners support various training programs for refugees. In 2022, Impact Hope has enrolled 20 youth in a nine-month TVET program and GIZ in partnership with Digital Opportunity Trust Rwanda (Dot Rwanda) started a project on career guidance and digital literacy for businesses for 21 individuals.
- In Kigeme refugee camp, as in the rest of Rwanda, UNHCR and partners support refugees through the process of 'graduating' from poverty and becoming less dependent on humanitarian

<sup>2</sup> Cash assistance for cooking energy calculation is based on family size and the firewood quantity consumption at a cost of 1 KG for 200 RWF. On average it is about 19,419,983.33 RWF per month that UNHCR disburses for cooking energy in Kigeme camp.

aid. In partnership with World Vision, since November 2021, 33 refugees received cash grants of approximately \$800 per person for their businesses, while each one of 38 beneficiaries have received 1<sup>st</sup> instalment equal to 400 \$ out of \$ 800 to be received to run their non agriculture businesses. In agriculture, 98 individuals have received cash grant for their agriculture activities whereby 20 have received \$ 800 per person while 78 have received 1<sup>st</sup> instalment of \$ 500 per person. 10 youth received start-up tool kits worth \$ 800 for each youth. In addition, 38 youth were enrolled in a 9 months TVET training. In total the project is supporting 350 refugees from Kigeme camp.

- To support refugee livelihoods, Indego Africa with UNHCR support also has trained 44 refugee women to weave handmade baskets and facilitated their access to different national and international markets to sell their products.

### Durable Solutions

- In 2022, UNHCR has processed **38 resettlement cases comprised of 134 individuals** from Kigeme Camp. Mostly resettlement cases have been presented due to medical reasons.
- Legal and policy provisions exist to facilitate 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 remains available to support refugees pursue naturalisation through legal pathways.
- Refugees in Kigeme 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.

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