



## DRC NEW INFLUX TO RWANDA: UPDATE # 18

31 July 2023

### KEY STATISTICS

**10,556** new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda from DRC between November 2022 and 27 July 2023

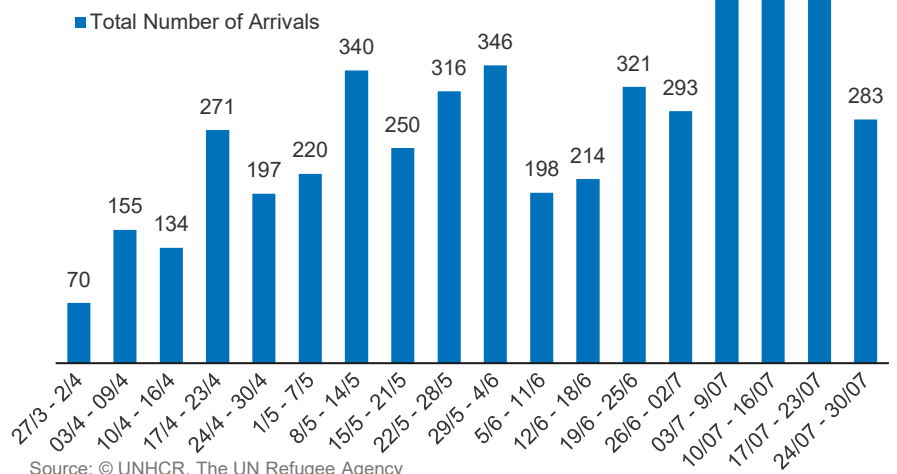
**3,170** asylum seekers are accommodated in Mahama camp

**7,386** asylum seekers accommodated at Nkamira and Kijote Transit Centres

**56%** of the new arrivals in Rwanda are children below 18

**Most** of the new arrivals originate from North Kivu (Masisi and Rutshuru)

### Number of New Arrivals from DRC to Rwanda



### OVERVIEW

The continuous instability within Eastern DRC is resulting in an increase of new asylum seekers arriving in Rwanda. As of 31 of July, over 10,500<sup>1</sup> individuals have arrived in Rwanda since mid-November 2022.

Between the end of November and beginning of January, new arrivals were initially received at Kijote Transit Centre before being transferred to Mahama refugee camp. Due to the increasing numbers, however, and the fact that Mahama Camp has reached capacity, on 12 January 2023, the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) informed UNHCR of the decision of the Government of Rwanda to host asylum seekers close to the border at a new site - Nkamira.

With the steady flow of new arrivals in the first half of 2023, in June, the Nkamira Transit Site was declared to have reached its hosting capacity and new arrivals are again being hosted at Kijote Transit Centre. On 24 and 26 July, UNHCR facilitated the transfer of 1,395 asylum seekers from Nkamira to Mahama refugee camp to prevent overcrowding. Working alongside partners, UNHCR continues to provide basic services to support the new arrivals hosted in Nkamira, Mahama and the Kijote Transit Centre.

<sup>1</sup> To note that this figure represents all new arrivals and not those officially registered. Registration is ongoing as of the end of July and so the number of asylum seekers will be updated in future months.



## Nkamira Site

Nkamira is located around 127 kilometres from Kigali, on the main high-way connecting Kigali-Rubavu and just five kilometres from Kijote Transit Centre and approximately 20km from the border. The site is a private property obtained by MINEMA covering **five hectares of land**. The same site was previously used in 2012-2013 as reception centre for Congolese refugees. As a result of UNHCR construction in the first half of 2023, Nkamira has the capacity to host 7,200 people.

## Sector Response

MINEMA and UNHCR are co-leading the response at Nkamira alongside ADRA, World Vision, Save the Children, Plan International, Prison Fellowship, Red Cross, WFP, and UNICEF. Other UN agencies such as UNFPA and IOM have also supported with technical expertise and in-kind materials. Weekly coordination meetings are happening at the field level and three high-level coordination meetings have also taken place in Kigali.

## Protection

UNHCR protection staff continue to be present providing fundamental protection and assistance, alongside partners in Nkamira and Mahama refugee camp. Child protection and Gender Based Violence (GBV) response services are available through Plan International Rwanda (PIR) in Nkamira and Save the Children International (SCI) in Mahama, while legal assistance and community-based protection services, including assistance to people with specific needs, are provided by Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR). GBV response services are provided to survivors who experienced GBV incidents during flight and during their asylum.

178 Best Interest Assessments have been carried out for unaccompanied children and separated children (UASC) in Nkamira by UNHCR and PIR. From 6 to 21 July 2023, 2 children with disability were identified in family-based care. The current number of children with disability is 39, including four UASC and 35 who live in family-based care.

Between 13 -27 July, over 2,017 children participated in child-friendly spaces (CFS) programs, where activities like drawing, painting, drama, modern dance, traditional dances, football and volleyball were on offer. However, in some earlier constructed CFS facilities in Mahama and Nkamira there is a lack of space for more physical activities., In Nkamira CFS boys and girls use the same latrines blocks which may pose a risk of GBV.

Community-based protection mechanisms are functioning and monitored in Nkamira and Kijote by UNHCR partners. Community-based protection structures are contributing to addressing the gap in the community by raising awareness on child protection and GBV prevention and mitigation. In this period, 1,510 individuals were reached with messages on child's rights, Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights (SRHR), and prevention of gender-based violence.

In July, the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA), the National Identification Agency (NIDA) and Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) completed verification of the new arrivals prior to UNHCR starting registration. Registration of the new arrivals cleared by MINEMA and DGIE has begun in late July and will continue into August. UNHCR has also supported the birth registration of 100 new-borns among the new arrivals who have been issued with a birth certificate.

## Health

UNHCR provides primary health services for the new arrivals at Nkamira and Mahama refugee camp in partnership with Save the Children International (SCI). Between 17-30 July, a total of 2,090 consultations were conducted for asylum seekers hosted in Nkamira, including 529 (around 25%) for children under 5 years of age. 41 individuals were subsequently referred to a higher level of care for more investigation and treatment. The main cause of consultation remains respiratory tract infections (around 40% of consultations). Health partners also supported the deliveries of eight new-born babies and continue to help 153 pregnant women at both Mahama and Nkamira.

The Rwanda Biomedical Centre together with district health authorities of Kirehe, Gisenyi and in collaboration with SCI conducted the measles vaccination campaign. The vaccination coverage among the new arrivals has now reached 98,5%. Booster doses for measles were also provided in Mahama camp and the departure site where asylum seekers are hosted. Currently, more than 90% (18,289 of the 20,209 targeted) children received the second dose. No new cases of measles among existing asylum seekers were identified during the previous weeks and there are currently no suspected cases among the new arrivals.

## Shelter

Asylum seekers at Nkamira are currently being accommodated in 45 communal hangars which have been constructed since the site's opening. The capacity of each accommodation hanger is 100 people but is now accommodating 160 people due to space limitations. Each hangar is partitioned into 20 rooms where men and women are assigned separate living areas. Nkamira Transit Site is now considered full and there is no additional space for construction of hangars. Thanks to donations from a private sector company SOLEKTRA and an NGO Alight, 20 solar security lights have been installed to illuminate the transit centre for ease of night movement.

Given that Nkamira Transit Site has now reached maximum capacity, UNHCR is working with the Government of Rwanda and MINEMA who have indicated that additional space to host new arrivals has been identified in Mahama refugee camp. On 24 and 26 July, following the transfer of asylum seekers from Nkamira to Mahama refugee camp, UNHCR identified 667 empty shelters in the camp to house the new arrivals. If further transfers will be needed from Nkamira to Mahama then the construction of additional shelter will be critical to meet needs. Based on a shelter assessment, it is estimated that an additional US\$ 1 million is required to construct 463 duplex shelters and associated WASH facilities to accommodate around 3,700 individuals to be transferred from Nkamira site to provide space for more arrivals over the coming months.

## Food and Nutrition

WFP through its cooperating partner ADRA continued to distribute two hot meals per day to all asylum seekers, now also at the Kijote transit centre since the Nkamira transit site reached its maximum capacity. The hot lunches and dinners include fresh vegetables and alternate maize meal with rice. In addition, the most vulnerable groups also received nutritious morning porridge benefitting children under 5, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, as well as persons with HIV or TB. Nutrition screening also continues for newly arrived children, as well as for children with identified cases of acute malnutrition. Their numbers increase along with the trend of new arrivals arriving to Rwanda through challenging journeys. Currently, there are 46 children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM), and 10 children and four adults with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) at the Nkamira transit site, and one child with MAM and one child with SAM among asylum seekers accommodated at the Mahama departure centre.



## URGENT NEEDS



Additional shelters to host incoming asylum seekers



Supply and provision of non-food items, including mattresses and mats



Construction of additional communal kitchens



Construction of latrines



Enrolment into local school systems

## Education

The education in emergency program is being rolled out, a total of 1,380 students (645 boys 645 and 735 girls) are attending the school within the site which operates in two shifts throughout the day. There are currently 10 temporary classrooms in use at Nkamira Transit Site equipped with benches provided by UNHCR. Additionally, a block of latrines with 20 stances was constructed near the temporary classrooms.

738 school age children were relocated from Nkamira to Mahama, where there are 1,418 students now. The newly arrived students immediately join the ongoing intensive language and curriculum orientation program at Paysanat LD school. The qualified selected teachers facilitate this orientation program and will conduct placement examinations for students at the end of the orientation.

## WASH

Water, Sanitation and Hygiene services for asylum seekers at Nkamira and Kijote sites is ensured through the provision of a range of basic services and facilities. In Nkamira, currently 84 latrine stances are in use, serving 93 persons per drop hole (over UNHCR's

emergency standards of 50 persons per drop hole). In addition, there are 100 shower rooms serving 79 individuals per shower stance and 52 usable water taps within the site, serving 151 individuals per water tap. The installation of one laundry slab (48 cubicles) was completed. There is an ongoing construction of one more additional laundry slab (48 cubicles), one bathing facility (20 stances) and three garbage collection facilities. There is an ongoing construction of 20 additional latrines. Increasing number of facilities and maintaining the existing WASH facilities at operational level is a priority for UNHCR to reach sanitation coverage thresholds.

An average of 22 litres of potable water is provided per person per day at Nkamira, which is above the minimum emergency standards of 15 litres of water per person per day. The centre's emergency water storage supply was increased, it has now six water storage facilities with a total capacity of 150 cubic meters of water. The water quality there is being monitored and tested to ensure safe drinking water delivery. In Mahama refugee camp, the new arrivals are provided water and sanitation through the existing water treatment plant and services in the camp.

Regular disinfection at sanitation locations is conducted to maintain appropriate standards. The communities of asylum seekers in both Nkamira, Kijote and Mahama are supported to keep good sanitation conditions through disseminating the hygiene promotion messages and regular latrine emptying. UNHCR, UNICEF and World Vision continue providing hygiene items at the site and have put emphasis on upgrading the water supply system, redesigning the sanitation infrastructure, and increasing sanitation coverage.

## Interagency Budget Needs

**US\$16.1 million** is required to respond to the needs of the asylum seekers at Nkamira Transit Site and Mahama refugee camp for the response in 2023. The budget is calculated based on an estimate of 10,000 persons and considers the needs of implementing NGO partners working with UNHCR, UNICEF, WFP, and FAO. Additional funding is urgently needed for the expansion of shelter in Mahama refugee camp to accommodate the increasing number of new arrivals now that Nkamira transit centre is full.

UNHCR has currently only received funding from the USA, European Union Humanitarian Aid, and Japan to support the response. As a result, UN agencies are currently repurposing funds from the existing refugee response to support the new arrivals.