



## DRC NEW INFLUX TO RWANDA: UPDATE # 20

30 September 2023

### KEY STATISTICS

**12,684** new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda from DRC between November 2022 and 30 September 2023

**1,090** new asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda in September

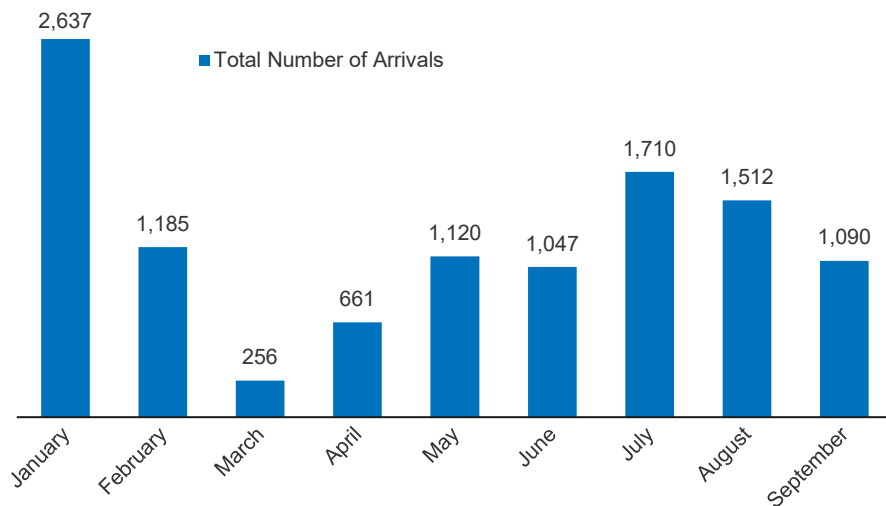
**5,869** asylum seekers accommodated at Nkamira Transit Centre, **52%** are children below 18

**4,987** asylum seekers were relocated and are accommodated in Mahama refugee camp

**1,029** asylum seekers were relocated and are accommodated in Kiziba refugee camp

**690** new asylum seekers were relocated and are accommodated in Nyabiheke refugee camp and **109** in Mugombwa and Kigeme refugee camps as part of family reunification

### Number of New Arrivals from DRC to Rwanda



Source: © UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

### OVERVIEW

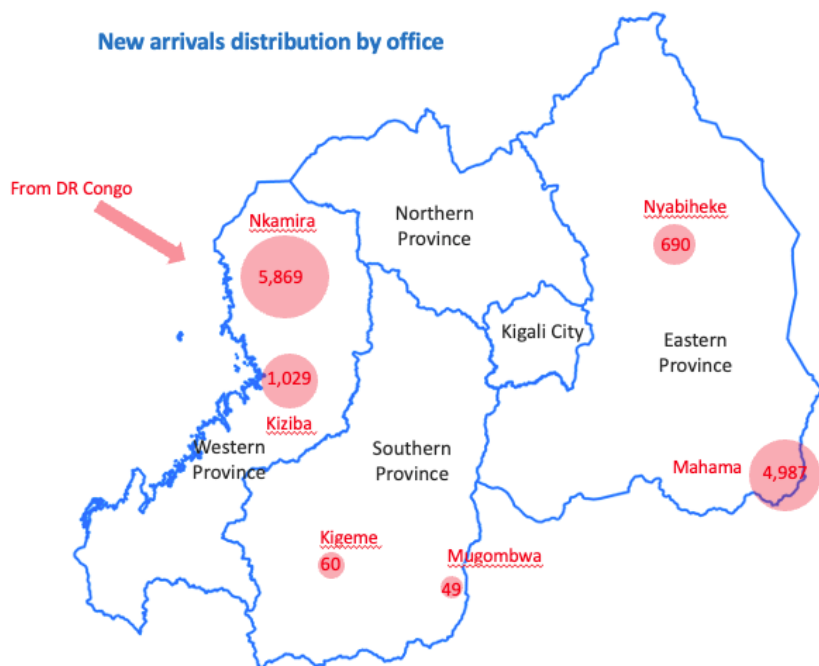
The continuous instability within Eastern DRC is resulting in an increase of new asylum seekers arriving in Rwanda. As of 30 of September, over 12,684<sup>1</sup> individuals have arrived in Rwanda since mid-November 2022.

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, 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.

Due to the increasing need for space to host the new arrivals, since July, UNHCR in coordination with MINEMA and partners has been transferring asylum seekers from Nkamira to existing refugee camps in Rwanda. From July to the end of September UNHCR facilitated the transfer of 5,040 asylum seekers in seven convoys from Nkamira Transit Centre to Kigeme, Kiziba, Mahama, Mugombwa and Nyabiheke refugee camps. This number also includes a convoy on 7 September which transferred 1,059 Congolese asylum seekers to Mahama refugee camp, making it the fourth relocation convoy to Mahama since the beginning of the emergency.

<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 officially registered asylum seekers will be updated in future months.

### New arrivals distribution by office



### Nkamira Centre

Nkamira is located around 127 kilometres from Kigali, on the main high-way connecting Kigali-Rubavu and just 5 kilometres from Kijote Transit Centre and approximately 20 km 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 International (WVI), Save the Children International (SCI), 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. The influx of asylum seekers from DRC is also discussed during the Refugee Coordination Meetings held in Kigali on a quarterly basis.

## Protection

UNHCR protection staff continue to be present providing fundamental protection and assistance, alongside partners in Nkamira and Mahama refugee camp as well as other camps where new arrivals are accommodated. Child protection and gender-based violence (GBV) response services are available through Plan International Rwanda (PIR) in Nkamira and 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. UNHCR through its NGO partner Plan International, has received and managed nine new GBV cases in September.

At the end of September, in Nkamira Transit Centre, there were 122 unaccompanied and 393 separated children (UASC). In addition, 144 children at risk were identified during the reporting period and were assisted accordingly. During the month, 983 adolescents participated in targeted youth programs.

Community-based protection mechanisms are functioning and monitored in Nkamira 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, 1,180 individuals (659 men and 521 women and girls) participated in targeted empowerment activities on GBV prevention. In September 2,094 people (320 boys, 315 girls, 912 men and 547 women) were also reached during child protection prevention activities, including parental evenings.

In September, 1,653 (835 boys and 818 girls) children participated in child-friendly spaces programs, where activities like drawing, painting, drama, modern and traditional dances, football, and volleyball were organized. In addition, 28 asylum seekers were trained on child protection programs and children's rights.

Since July, UNHCR has been registering new arrivals who have been cleared by MINEMA and the Directorate-General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE). As of September, out of 12,684 people, 45.8 per cent were officially registered by UNHCR and 54.2 percent are pending registration. UNHCR has also supported the birth registration of 146 newborns among the new arrivals who have been issued with a birth certificate in Nkamira Transit Centre during August.

## Health

UNHCR provides primary health services for the new arrivals at Nkamira Transit Centre in partnership with SCI. During September, a total of 3,353 health consultations were conducted for asylum seekers, while 69 individuals were subsequently referred to a higher level of care for more investigation and treatment. Asylum seekers who are living in other existing refugee camps continue to receive health services through the established health centres. Sessions on sexual and reproductive health and family planning are also regularly conducted by SCI under UNFPA support at Nkamira Transit Centre.

Measles vaccination coverage among the new arrivals has now reached 99.5 per cent. 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. This is a result of a measles vaccination campaign conducted by Rwanda Biomedical Center, the district health authorities of Gisenyi in collaboration with SCI.

## Shelter and Non-Food Items (NFIs)

Asylum seekers at Nkamira are currently being accommodated in 45 communal hangars which have been constructed since the site's opening. Each hangar is partitioned into 20 rooms where men and women are assigned separate living areas. Nkamira Transit Centre 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, 36 solar security lights have been installed to illuminate the transit centre for ease of night movement. The asylum seekers use solar lamps distributed by UNHCR for lighting the hangars during the night.

In Mahama, the Congolese asylum seekers that were registered and cleared by the Government of Rwanda are provided with shelter and settled in communities with the other refugees. In total, over 3,000 asylum seekers have been provided with shelter throughout July to September, including 1,082 new arrivals who were provided shelters in September. 586 asylum seekers continue to be accommodated in the departure centre in Mahama camp while nationality assessments are pending to finalize their registration. As a result, UNHCR and partners continue to provide them with in-kind assistance and hot meals.

In Nkamira, the construction of a system to harvest rainwater from roofs of accommodation hangars, and the construction of drainages within the compound are ongoing. In addition, the construction of masonry stands for supporting 20 water tanks was completed, and the maintenance of roof gutters on accommodation blocks is ongoing.

In September, the distribution of NFIs to the Congolese asylum seekers continued, with 114 households of 374 individuals receiving food in-kind, 111 households of 368 individuals receiving kitchen sets and jerry cans. In addition, 128 gas cylinders were also distributed among the newly arrived.

During the month, UNHCR distributed clothes to the asylum seekers hosted in Nkamira transit centre and Kiziba refugee camp. In total, 997 asylum seekers received clothes in Kiziba and 5,879 in Nkamira. UNHCR will continue with clothes distribution in Mahama in October.

## Food and Nutrition

WFP through its cooperating partner ADRA distributed two hot meals per day to all asylum seekers hosted in communal facilities (pending their transfer to their individual shelter) in Kigeme, Kiziba, Mahama, Mugombwa and Nyabiheke refugee camps, and the Nkamira transit centre. The hot lunches and dinners include fresh vegetables and alternate maize meal with rice. Asylum seekers transferred to individual family shelter are included in WFP cash for food distribution list. In addition, the most vulnerable groups also received nutritious morning porridge benefitting children under 5 years old, pregnant and breastfeeding women and girls, as well as persons with HIV or TB. Nutrition screening was conducted for newly arrived children as well as 35 children with moderate acute malnutrition (MAM) and 15 children with severe acute malnutrition (SAM) among asylum seekers hosted in those locations.



## 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

UNHCR and partners continue to support the education of school-age children in Nkamira Transit Centre and existing refugee camps. With the start of the new school year, 2,645 school-age children who were relocated to refugee camps across Rwanda were integrated in national public schools next to the camps where they live. Children aged 3 to 5 years old were integrated in the camp-based Early Childhood Development (ECD) centres. All of them received uniforms and scholastic materials.

In Nkamira transit centre, a total of 1,190 students (612 male and 578 female) are attending curriculum and language orientation program. Pending relocations to different camps, UNHCR is exploring ways of supporting the Nkamira school-aged children to continue their learning through appropriate linkage to formal education system. A blended learning approach which combines online educational materials and opportunities for interaction with trained and qualified refugee teachers could be implemented pending the decision to integrate the students into the local public schools. UNHCR, along with WVI, would facilitate access to online education resources which require ICT equipment such as computers/tablets, and reliable electric power.

## Water, Sanitation and Hygiene (WASH)

The WASH services for asylum seekers at Nkamira transit centre are ensured through the provision of a range of basic services and facilities. In Nkamira, currently 74 latrine stances are in use, serving 88 persons per drop hole (over UNHCR's emergency standards of 50 persons per drop hole). In addition, there are 100 shower rooms and 54 usable water taps within the site. In addition, the construction of 20 latrine drop holes and 20 shower stances was completed in September and will be commissioned in the upcoming weeks. There is also an ongoing construction of two blocks of latrines with 20 drop holes each. 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 water quality is regularly monitored and tested to ensure safe drinking water delivery. In Mahama and other refugee camps where new arrivals are accommodated, asylum seekers are provided water and sanitation through the existing infrastructure.

Regular disinfection at sanitation locations, latrine emptying, and garbage collection is conducted to maintain appropriate standards. The communities of asylum seekers in Nkamira are supported to keep good sanitation conditions through disseminating the hygiene promotion messages. To break the transmission chain of diseases related to poor sanitation and hygiene conditions, 464 litres of liquid soap were used for handwashing and cleaning of sanitary spaces in Nkamira site in September.

## Budget Needs

**Urgent funding is** required to respond to the needs of the asylum seekers at Nkamira Transit centre and existing refugee camps in Rwanda. In particular, 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, UNHCR and other UN agencies are currently repurposing funds from the existing refugee response to support the new arrivals.