

Rwanda

October 2023

In October, **388 Rwandan refugees** returned back home, bringing the total to 1,571 returnees so far in 2023. UNHCR provides cash assistance to Rwandan returnees to support their reintegration in their local communities of origin.

40 refugee students were awarded UNHCR's DAFI Scholarship in October and started university during the month. This brings the total to 106 refugee students studying at university in Rwanda through the DAFI scholarship.

UNHCR paid for the referral of **756 refugees** to receive medical treatment in hospitals throughout the month. Despite this, referrals to hospitals remain limited to life-saving cases only due to a lack of funding.

KEY STATISTICS

134,749 refugees and asylum seekers are in Rwanda as of 31 October 2023. Mainly including people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (62.2%) and Burundi (37.3%).

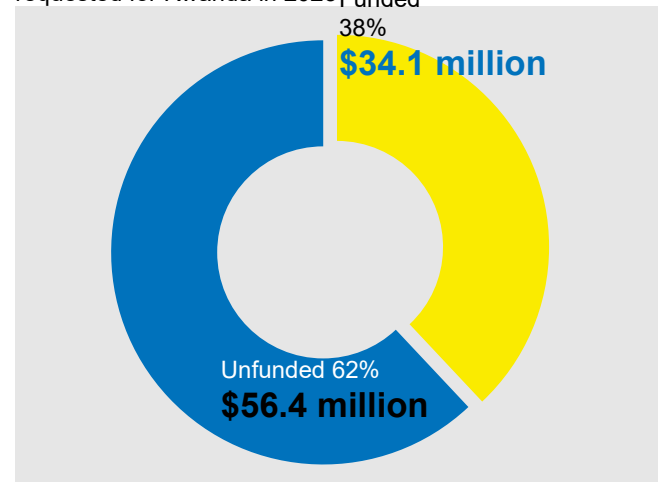
792 asylum seekers from DRC arrived in Rwanda in October

5,965 refugees have been submitted for resettlement in 2023

FUNDING (AS OF 31 OCTOBER)

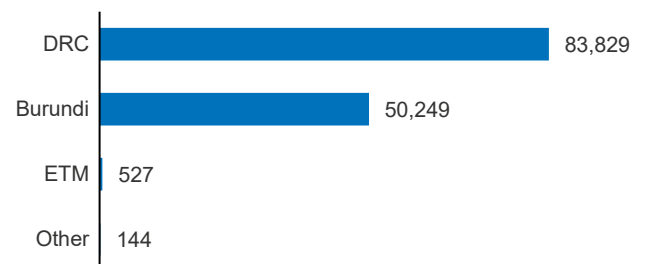
USD 90.5 million

requested for Rwanda in 2023



Asylum seekers in Nkamira Transit Centre queue up to receive non-food items of soap and hygiene materials.

CURRENT POPULATION



Source: © UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

Operational Context & Partners

The Government of Rwanda (GoR), through the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA), leads the refugee response in Rwanda in coordination with UNHCR. In addition, a range of UN Agencies, NGOs, operational and development partners participate in sector working groups at both country and district levels. In 2023, UNHCR works directly with seven NGO partners in implementing key activities to assist both the refugee population and Rwandan host communities. To further strengthen the implementation of the Global Compact on Refugees, UNHCR maintains close collaboration with key government institutions, ministries, operational partners, and the private sector working with refugees in Rwanda.



PROTECTION

- In October, 762 new asylum seekers fled from DRC to Rwanda and were initially accommodated at Nkamira Transit centre. As of 01 November, Nkamira hosted 5,329 individuals, while 8,057 asylum seekers have been transferred to existing refugee camps in Rwanda, including a transfer of 1,242 asylum seekers from Nkamira to Mahama refugee camp on 01 November. UNHCR continues the registration of new asylum seekers to provide documentation to the 13,386 asylum seekers who have sought safety in Rwanda since November 2022.
- In October, UNHCR worked with the Government of Rwanda through the National Identification Agency (NIDA) and Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) to conduct a biometric enrolment exercise in Kigali to issue new refugee IDs and renew expired ones. In total, 356 refugees were assisted during the two-day exercise.
- 35 percent of the refugee population were born in Rwanda. The birth registration rate for refugee children below 5 years old currently stands at 96 percent, while refugee birth registration coverage irrespective of age stands at 92 percent. UNHCR continues to work with the Government of Rwanda and associated ministries to improve the birth registration rates as refugees are included within the national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system.
- In October, UNHCR informed refugee communities about the changes to assistance, including the cut of cash assistance for non-food items (NFIs) and energy, as well as the limitations of referrals to hospitals to life-saving cases only. Meetings with refugee executive committees and the wider refugee community were held in all camp locations.
- UNHCR works in partnership with Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) to provide legal counselling and assistance, including on access to asylum. In October, 23 individuals from Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia and Burundi received counselling on asylum procedures in Rwanda. In addition, 236 refugee cases received general legal assistance with 64 criminal cases and 9 civil cases being supported with pre-trial meetings and hearings before courts.
- To continue to fulfil its mandate, UNHCR has established various channels to facilitate communication with refugees such as help lines, SMS, WhatsApp, email, face-to-face counselling, and community meetings. In October, 119 refugees made inquiries in Kigali mainly around the topic of medical assistance and resettlement. In addition, 19 cases received counselling at the protection desk in Kiziba refugee camp.
- In Rwanda, UNHCR partners with Humanity and Inclusion (HI) to support people with specific needs. In total, 1,463 people with disabilities also received support and 1,800 individuals benefited from mental health and psychosocial support.

- UNHCR in Rwanda provides financial assistance to refugees living in urban areas in exceptional cases to help them meet their basic needs such as paying rent and buying food. In October, UNHCR provided such assistance to six refugee families to help them find emergency shelter and food.
- On 10 October, UNHCR celebrated World Mental Health Day in various refugee hosting locations across Rwanda. In Kigali, an event was held at Gikondo community centre in partnership with Humanity and Inclusion and a one-week awareness campaign on mental health was conducted at the ETM. Following the campaign, 17 refugees reached out to start receiving psychosocial support. In Nyabiheke refugee camp, 1,030 refugees participated in a community event held on Mental Health Day.
- UNHCR operates Child Friendly Spaces (CFS) across all refugee camps in Rwanda in partnership with SCI and Plan International where refugee youth and children can participate in recreational activities such as arts and crafts, reading, online digital platforms for learning, and sports such as football, basketball, and volleyball. In Mugombwa refugee camp, 702 refugees visited the community centre throughout the month where they participated in various activities from computer skills, to art and theatre.
- As of the end of October, 527 refugees and asylum seekers were accommodated at the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Rwanda. In October, 14 child protection cases and 29 unaccompanied children at the ETM continues to be provided with psychosocial counselling. In addition, there are 55 active GBV cases at the ETM who UNHCR and partners continue to support.



EDUCATION

- Following the start of the school year in September, UNHCR in partnership with World Vision has been consolidating data about refugee school enrolment data for this academic year. In total, 42,059 refugee students (20,971 males, 21,088 females) are enrolled in school for the current academic year 2023/2024. This represents an 86% enrolment ratio for all camp-based refugees.
- UNHCR's DAFI scholarship selection process concluded in October, with 40 refugee students chosen from 245 applicants to start university this year. Including the new intake, a total of 106 students are continuing their education with the support of DAFI scholarship in various universities across Rwanda.
- A total of 2,645 asylum seeker children who fled DRC this year and have been relocated from Nkamira Transit Centre to different refugee camps are enrolled into public schools in or nearby the camps. In addition, UNHCR continues to support asylum seeker children who remain in Nkamira through informal education and curriculum/language orientation programmes. There remains a lack of space at local schools in Rubavu district to integrate these children into the national education system.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- UNHCR is managing eight camp-based health care facilities in Rwanda in cooperation with Save the Children and Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA) at the ETM. The health centres and posts offer a broad range of primary health care services, including laboratory tests and vaccinations. In addition, some services including the provision of TB and HIV medications are provided through district government health centres. In October, 20,802 primary health care consultations took place at the camp-based facilities making the ratio 46 consultations per day, per clinician. The local Rwandan host community also have access to these health facilities.

- At the ETM, 898 primary health consultations took place at the clinic in October, an average of 26 persons per day. 18 refugees were referred to hospitals for treatment and one new baby was born. UNHCR and AHA also provided for supplementary nutrition for 26 children under two and 67 adults with special nutrition needs.
- Due to funding challenges, UNHCR is currently only able to support the referrals of refugees to secondary and tertiary healthcare in emergency or lifesaving cases. Other refugees in need of elective healthcare including routine or minor surgeries are having to be put on a waiting list. In October, 756 cases were referred to hospitals for further treatment.
- A surge in shigella dysentery cases was observed in Kiziba refugee camp in October. UNHCR is working with the Rwanda Biomedical Center in collaboration with Karongi District Hospital and Save the Children to identify the causes as the disease persists.
- In October 9,328 refugee women accessed family planning services through primary health facilities in refugee camps. In addition, UNHCR continues to support 1,152 (HIV) and 1,053 (AIDS) refugee patients living in camps.
- To support the nutrition of refugees and prevent malnutrition, UNHCR and partners conduct regular nutrition screenings and provide support for vulnerable refugees especially infants, children under the age of six, mothers and refugees with chronic diseases. 5,493 refugee children between 6-23 months and 2,842 pregnant/lactating refugee women are currently assisted through the supplementary feeding programme. In addition, 28 severely acute malnutrition and 190 moderately acute malnutrition refugee children are currently part of targeted therapeutic and supplementary feeding programs to improve their health and nutrition status.



FOOD SECURITY

- In support of the World Food Programme (WFP) cash assistance for food programme in refugee camps across Rwanda, UNHCR provided lists of refugees in the highly vulnerable and moderately vulnerable categories who are eligible to receive assistance. In total, 88 percent of refugees are classified as highly vulnerable and receive 10,000 RWF a month, while 6 percent of refugees are moderately vulnerable and receive 5,000 RWF a month. All new asylum seekers from DRC relocated to existing camps are enrolled in the highly vulnerable category for three months to enable them to receive the full food assistance value. Asylum seekers in Nkamira Transit Centre receive two meals a day from WFP.
- In support of school feeding programmes, UNHCR provides briquettes to ECD schools in refugee camps. For primary and secondary schools, the Government has the responsibility for school feeding and WFP also supports by contributing 90 percent of the cost of refugee school feeding directly to the Government of Rwanda.
- In October, UNHCR and WFP continued to provide three hot meals a day to refugees and asylum seekers accommodated at the ETM in Rwanda.



WATER AND SANITATION

- UNHCR, in partnership with World Vision, provides water to refugees living in all refugee camps, reception, and transit centres across Rwanda. In October, water supply averaged 20.8 litres per person per day throughout the refugee camps in Rwanda. Despite this, water supply remains a challenge in Nyabiheke and Kigeme.

- Minor maintenance activities were carried out to latrine blocks in Mahama camp in October including reinforcing doors, repairing floors and fixing roofs. Despite this, water facilities and infrastructure across refugee camp remain old and in urgent need of maintenance. Old latrine blocks require upgrading and wastewater drainage systems needs rehabilitating to meet basic standards. Furthermore, septic tanks are old, and most of them are filled with sediment. Roads to some areas of refugee camps also pose a challenge for desludging and sewage removal.
- In October, UNHCR, in partnership with World Vision, distributed 2,107 litres (L) of liquid soap for handwashing and other cleaning practices to stave off diarrheal diseases in all sites (Nyabiheke: 225L, Kiziba: 200L, Mahama: 415L, Mugombwa: 237.5L, Kigeme: 360L, Nkamira: 670L). Throughout the month, UNHCR also worked to remove sludge from septic tanks across the camps and dispose of garbage.
- In Nkamira, UNHCR is continuing the construction of latrines, showers and other WASH facilities to meet the needs of 7,200 asylum seekers hosted at the transit site. Currently there are 63 persons per latrine drop hole and 54 persons per shower stance. The ongoing construction of 2 blocks latrines with 20 drop holes each is at 98% of completion. In addition, the construction of new drains started in October in Nkamira to facilitate rainwater harvesting and wastewater disposal.



SHELTER AND NFIS

- In October, UNHCR and ADRA rehabilitated a total of 90 shelters across the camps, this includes: 65 shelters in Mahama camp, 15 shelters in Kiziba camp, 7 shelters in Mugombwa camp, and 3 shelters in Nyabiheke camp. This brings the total number of shelters rehabilitated across the camps since the beginning of the year to 538 shelters.
- During October, the roofing elements for 103 shelters in Kiziba camp were transformed from old iron sheets to new iron sheet roofing by UNHCR and ADRA, bringing the total number of shelters transformed in 2023 to 233 shelters. In addition, UNHCR and ADRA constructed 11 new semi-permanent shelters, this includes: 9 shelters in Kigeme camp and 2 shelters in Nyabiheke camp, bringing the total number of new shelters construed for the year to 26 shelters.
- In Kiziba refugee camp, UNHCR is conducting a mapping of shelters who will be affected by the upgrade of the Karongi-Kiziba road. In total 32 shelters will be affected, and the refugees have been relocated accordingly.
- UNHCR continued to conduct shelter allocations for the asylum seekers who have been relocated from Nkamira Transit centre to Mahama camp. In total, 223 asylum seekers were allocated shelters in October.
- In October, no cash assistance for NFI's was distributed to refugees living in camps due to a lack of funding. In 2023, UNHCR had aimed to provide cash-based assistance to refugees living in camps on a quarterly basis to help them buy items such as soap, blankets, menstrual hygiene products and other household items. Due to the cuts in programmes, UNHCR remains concerned about the deterioration of refugee wellbeing and increase of negative coping mechanisms. Despite this, UNHCR continues to provide monthly cash assistance to refugees accommodated at the ETM.
- UNHCR, alongside WFP and Equity Bank, continue to carry out bank registration activities for refugee communities across Rwanda. In October, in Kiziba refugee camp, 266 asylum seekers were supported with bank registration and subsequently received their bank cards.



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

- UNHCR has continued to provide gas for clean cooking / energy in kind for refugees in Mahama refugee camp in the form of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) and works with Good People International to provide the same in Mugombwa camp. LPG cookers emit 50 times fewer pollutants than cooking stoves fuelled by biomass such as mud stoves. In total, the equivalent of 22,454 cylinders of LPG were distributed in Mahama and Mugombwa during October.
- UNHCR distributed cash assistance for energy to refugees in Kiziba, Nyabiheke and Kigeme refugee camps to ensure refugees have the financial resources to purchase gas for cooking and other energy needs. Despite this, due to a lack of funding, no cash for energy was distributed in October. As a result, refugees in Kiziba, Nyabiheke, and Kigeme camps continue to struggle to meet their energy needs.
- In Mahama refugee camp, in partnership with WVI, UNHCR worked with refugee communities on environmental conservation projects. In total, 329 bamboo and 1,403 sena trees were planted in the camp and surrounding environment. Preparation for future tree plantation also was underway through preparation of tree seedlings and manure.



Adeline is a Burundi refugee living in Mahama refugee camp who received a cash grant to start a business in June 2023. Her fabric store in the camp is currently making approximately 50,000 RWF profit every month.



LIVELIHOODS AND SELF RELIANCE

- Agriculture is one of the main sectors through which refugee self-reliance can be achieved in Rwanda. UNHCR is currently running three projects to develop refugee and Rwandan host community livelihoods and self-reliance through the Misizi (covering Mugombwa camp), Nyabicwamba (covering Nyabiheke Refugee Camp), and Mushishito (covering Kigeme Refugee Camp) marshlands. In October, refugee and Rwandan farmers continued to monitor the progress of their crops which were planted the previous month in all three marshland locations as some pests/diseases were noticed particularly for Irish potatoes in Mushishito marshland. Annual general assemblies for the Icyerekezo Misizi Cooperative working from Misizi Marshland and Koperative Duhuzimbaraga working from Mushishito Marshland also happened during the month to present plans for 2024.

- In October, a total of 100 refugees and 130 Rwandans participated in livelihoods trainings such as ICT, tailoring and hairdressing at the ETM. In addition, 82 refugees participated in language classes in English, French, and/or Kinyarwanda.
- In partnership with Caritas Rwanda, UNHCR continues to support refugee businesses and entrepreneurs who have received cash grants in 2022 and 2023. In October, in Mahama refugee camp, Caritas checked in on 956 businesses (669 refugee and 287 Rwandans) who have previously received support.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- In 2023, UNHCR Rwanda has received resettlement quota for 5,758 individuals. By the end of October 2023, 5,965 individuals have been submitted to resettlement countries. In addition, 6,247 refugees have departed for resettlement and 101 refugees departed through complementary pathways. Among them 60 refugees from the ETM left on resettlement to Canada, Norway and the USA.
- In October, Norway concluded their selection mission where they interviewed 202 refugees for resettlement.
- In total, 30,782 Burundian refugees have returned home from Rwanda since 2020 including 325 so far in 2023. In October, however, no Burundian returns happened. 204 Burundians, however, have expressed their intention to return home, including 189 refugees from Mahama camp.
- In October, 388 Rwandan refugees returned back home, bringing the total to 1,571 so far in 2023. UNHCR provides cash assistance to Rwandan refugees returning to Rwanda from abroad. The reintegration grant is 250 USD per adult and 150 USD per child. When returnees initially arrive in Rwanda, they will receive 20 percent of the cash assistance value from UNHCR through Equity Bank while they are hosted in UNHCR transit centres. Upon their return to their location of origin, and verification and provision of national identity cards by NIDA, returnees will receive the remaining 80 percent of the cash assistance. UNHCR in Rwanda is currently lacking funding to support additional Rwandan returns in 2023.



MISSIONS, DELEGATIONS AND EVENTS

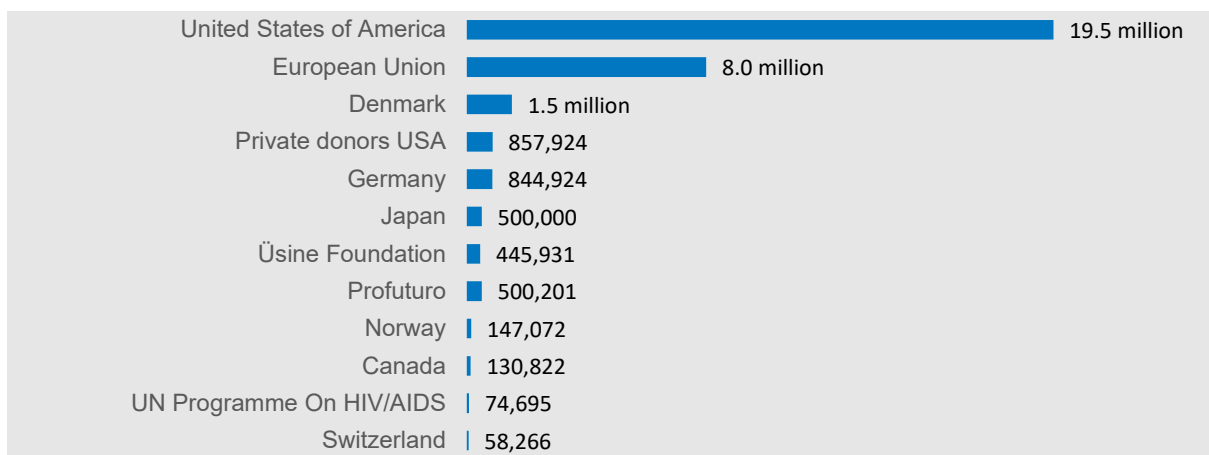
- On 18 and 19 October, UNHCR's Head of Innovation service visited Rwanda and participated in the Mobile World Congress event in Kigali. He also visited UNHCR's Gikondo community centre and met with refugee youth to discuss digital employment and innovation projects.
- Between 18 to 19 October, the Minister of MINEMA visited Kigeme and Mugombwa refugee camps accompanied by UNHCR's Deputy Representative in Rwanda.
- Between 22-24 October, UNHCR hosted a visit from "Sweden for UNHCR" to learn more about the refugee situation in Rwanda. The delegation visited Mahama refugee camp where they saw UNHCR's interventions in the health, livelihoods, and education sectors as well as meeting with the refugee executive committee.
- On 25 October, the Political and Economic Chief at the US Embassy in Kigali visited Nkamira Transit Centre to meet with asylum seekers who have recently fled DRC. During the visit, the delegation talked to new arrivals and toured the centre to see the impact of US funding on the emergency response.

- Between 31 October and 02 November, UNHCR organized a media mission for local Rwandan journalists to Kigeme and Mugombwa camps to see the impact of pledges made by the Government of Rwanda at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) ahead of the next GRF happening in December 2023.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for the critical support provided by donors who have contributed to the Rwanda operation as well as those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes regionally and globally with broadly earmarked and unearmarked funds.

EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS to UNHCR Rwanda in 2023 | USD



BROADLY EARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of broadly earmarked contributions which contribute to the response in Rwanda and the region

United States of America 51 million | Italy 8.8 million | Private donors Australia 6.9 million | Private donors Germany 6.1 million | Australia 3.9 million | Canada 3.9 million | Private donors USA 3.4 million | Finland 3.1 million | Private donors United Kingdom 2.8 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Sweden 69 million | Norway 63.1 million | Private donors Spain 61.9 million | United Kingdom 41 million | Private donors Japan 40.1 million | Netherlands 36.3 million | Denmark 35.6 million | France 26.7 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 23.5 million | Germany 22.1 million | Switzerland 18.9 million | Private donors Italy 13.7 million | Private donors Sweden 12 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Ireland 11.9 million | Private donors USA 10.8 million

CONTACTS

Lilly Carlisle, External Relations Officer, UNHCR Rwanda,
 carlisle@unhcr.org: +250 788 350 29