

Rwanda

April 2024

On 19 April, **Rwanda passed a new refugee law** n° 042/2024 Governing Refugees and Applicants for Refugee Status in Rwanda.

UNHCR is working together with partners and health authorities to address an **outbreak of viral conjunctivitis** which has increased among refugee communities during the month.

In April, UNHCR supported the return of **137 Rwandan refugees** from DRC and provided cash assistance to assist their reintegration.

KEY STATISTICS

135,397 refugees and asylum seekers are in

Rwanda as of 30 April 2024. Mainly including people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (62%) and Burundi (37%).

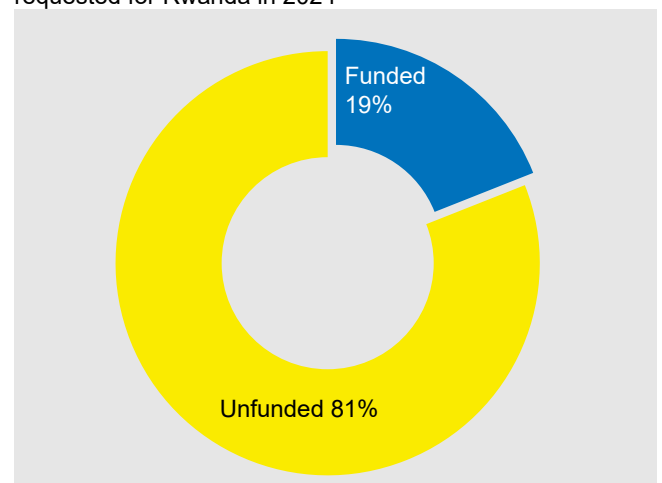
273 asylum seekers from DRC arrived in Rwanda in April 2024.

1,753 refugees were submitted for resettlement so far in 2024

FUNDING NEEDS

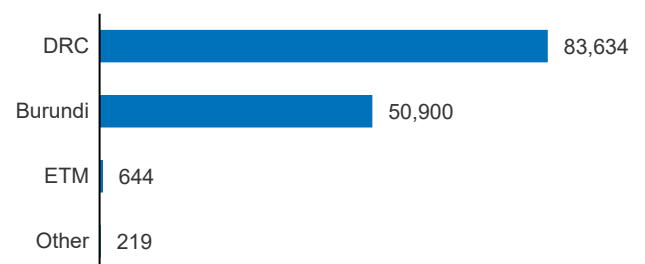
USD 91.7 million

requested for Rwanda in 2024



Refugees from Kiziba and Mahama camps take part in the national Rwandan Taekwondo championship held in Kigali 27-28 April.

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 2024, UNHCR works directly with eight 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

- UNHCR works closely with the Government of Rwanda, specifically Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration, to issue refugee ID cards to refugees over 16 years old. Currently the Refugee ID coverage stands at 86 percent.
- UNHCR works in partnership with Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) to provide legal counselling and assistance. In April, 41 criminal cases and civil cases were assisted before the courts. In addition, 38 asylum seekers from Burundi, Sudan, DRC, Eritrea, and Ethiopia were provided counselling about asylum procedures and supported to submit their asylum application to the Rwandan Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE).
- On 19 April, Rwanda passed the law n° 042/2024 Governing Refugees and Applicants for Refugee Status in Rwanda. Prior to the promulgation of the new law, UNHCR provided comments and analysis in line with the organization's mandate of upholding the international refugee convention. While UNHCR appreciated the opportunity to contribute to the process of revising and strengthening refugee legislation, and noted many positive aspects in the new law, there are several areas that require attention and adjustment to better align with international standards and ensure the effective protection and assistance of refugees and asylum seekers in Rwanda.
- In April, 273 new asylum seekers fled from DRC to Rwanda and were initially accommodated at Nkamira Transit centre. As of the end of the month, Nkamira hosted 6,279 individuals, while over 8,000 asylum seekers have been transferred to existing refugee camps in Rwanda.
- 34 percent of the refugee population were born in Rwanda. The birth registration rate among persons of concern born in Rwanda irrespective of age stands at 95.3%, for children below 5 years of age the coverage stands at 99.3%. 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 April, UNHCR assisted in the processing of 967 birth certificates for refugees in partnership with Prison Fellowship Rwanda.
- 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 April, 130 displaced persons made inquiries in Kigali with 23 percent of requests concerning health care and community-based health insurance (CBHI) enrolment.
- In April, UNHCR, in partnership with Prison Fellowship Rwanda, supported 7 Sudanese families, 6 Burundian families, and 1 DRC family to relocate to Mahama refugee camp as they were not able to sustain a living in urban areas (Kigali).
- In Rwanda, UNHCR partners with Humanity and Inclusion (HI) to support people with specific needs. In April, a range of mental health and psychosocial support services continued to be provided to

refugees with specific needs across all camp location. 830 elderly persons, for example, benefitted from mental health services through home visits.

- UNHCR in Rwanda provides urgent 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 2024, this assistance is directly provided by Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) as part of UNHCR's partnership agreement with them. During the month, three refugee families (Burundian and Congolese) were provided with such financial assistance to help them buy food and pay their rent.
- UNHCR continues to support refugee led organizations based in Rwanda and is conducting a series of workshops to aid their development. In April, workshops on resource mobilization and recruitment were organized for RLOs. In total, 15 RLOs are part of the RLO network in Rwanda and UNHCR continues to conduct outreach to identify and include additional organizations.
- In April, UNHCR in conjunction with partners Plan International and Save the Children continued to support unaccompanied and separated refugee children (UASC). In total 322 UASC are currently supported through alternative care arrangements.
- At the ETM, 149 refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya received orientation session and were provided information on GBV services available in ETM Gashora, national GBV Law, referrals pathways and guiding principles. They were also sensitized on UNHCR Zero Tolerance to Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and protection of survivors and witnesses.



EDUCATION

- For the 2023/24 academic year, the gross enrolment rate for refugee students currently stands at 91 percent. Among these students, on average 96 percent of students are attending school regularly.
- Over 100 refugee students were awarded scholarships to attend secondary schools of excellence by Impact Hope, a nation NGO, in April. This adds to over 850 refugee students who are attending schools of excellence during the 2023/24 academic year through support from different partners including UNHCR, World Vision and Impact Hope. Students across Rwanda get the opportunity to attend school of excellence after excelling in national exams (at senior 3 or grade 9) although many refugee students who meet the grade requirements often find it difficult to attend as their parents are unable to cover the cost of living, accommodation, and education fees without sponsorships.
- UNHCR in Rwanda continues to work with Education First (EF) to avail online English language courses to refugees. Out of 512 refugees who enrolled in the course in September, 57 have completed it as of April.



HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- UNHCR is managing eight camp-based health care facilities in Rwanda in cooperation with Save the Children (SCI) 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 in cooperation with district government health centres. In April, 21,974 primary health care consultations took place at the camp-based facilities making the ratio 49 consultations per day, per clinician. The local Rwandan host community also have access to these health facilities free of charge.

- 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 April, 551 cases were referred to hospitals for further treatment.
- At the ETM, 735 primary health consultations took place at the clinic in April, an average of 25 persons per clinician day. In addition, 43 refugees were referred to hospitals for treatment. 40 children under two and 83 adults with special nutritional needs also benefited from supplementary feeding programme. In addition, 8 refugees received psychosocial support through individual counselling sessions and 9 female refugees attended a healing group where they shared their experiences and discussed how to overcome the challenges they have faced.
- 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. In addition, 19 severely acute malnutrition and 70 moderately acute malnutrition refugee children were newly admitted into nutrition programmes for treatment in April.
- A high number of malnutrition cases have been reported in Nkamira transit centre, including 15 cases of severe malnutrition among children under 5, 54 cases of moderate malnutrition, and 4 cases among adults. As per analysis done by the nutritionist at Nkamira, malnutrition cases are increasing rapidly due to inadequate diets which fail to meet the nutritional needs of children under five and elderly individuals over 65. Additionally, new arrivals with poor nutrition also contribute to the rise in malnutrition cases.
- In April the Keratoconjunctivitis/EKC disease (eye condition) has been increasingly prevalent among refugee camps and communities in Rwanda and was one of the top five causes of refugees going to health clinics during the month. Together with partners, UNHCR and the host districts are trying to address the issue by raising awareness about preventative measures, conducting screenings at the community level, and supporting community health works to identify cases of the infection.
- World Malaria Day was marked in refugee camp locations across Rwanda on 25 April under the national theme of 'Zero Malaria Starts with Me'. During the day, various activities including distributing mosquito nets were undertaken in camps. Rwanda has made tremendous progress in reducing severe malaria cases from 7,054 in 2018 to 1,831 in 2022.
- Malnutrition screenings for children, pregnant and lactating women was carried out in Nkamira and Kijote transit centres by Save the Children. Around 117 people, including Rwandan returnees and asylum seekers from DRC were detected as having various forms of malnutrition. During the screening sessions, children were provided with Vitamin A and deworming tablets to boost their immune systems and ensure they can absorb vital nutrients.
- A total of 484 women aged 30 to 49 participated in the cervical and breast cancer screening organized in Nyabiheke refugee camp. During the screenings, 12 cases of suspected cervical cancer and 10 cases of suspected breast cancer were identified and referred to the district hospital for investigation and follow-up. To ensure comprehensive coverage, the screening program will continue over the next two months, to reach women who were not screened in April.
- Health providers in Kigeme Refugee Camp participated in the training on Neglected Tropical Diseases (NTDs) organized by Nyamagabe District in collaboration with Kigeme District Hospital. This training aimed at enhancing awareness of the Neglected Tropical Diseases, which include several parasitic viral, bacterial, and non-communicable diseases that cause illness for many people across the country and globally.

**FOOD SECURITY**

- In support of the World Food Programme (WFP) cash assistance for food programme in refugee camps across Rwanda, UNHCR provides 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, while 6 percent of refugees are moderately vulnerable. As part of the cash transfers for food assistance distributed by WFP refugees in the highly vulnerable category receive 8,500 RWF a month while moderately vulnerable receive 4,250 RWF. In addition, asylum seekers in Nkamira Transit Centre receive two meals a day from WFP.
- In support of school feeding programmes, UNHCR provides briquettes to Early Childhood Development (nursery) centres 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 April, UNHCR 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 April, water supply averaged 20.6 litres per person per day throughout the refugee camps in Rwanda. Despite this, water supply remains a challenge in Nyabiheke and Kigeme.
- In April, UNHCR in partnership with World Vision, distributed 2,572 litres of liquid soap for handwashing and other cleaning practices to stave off diarrheal diseases in all sites. Throughout the month, UNHCR also worked to remove sludge from septic tanks across the camps and dispose of garbage.
- In Nkamira transit centre, UNHCR ensured the provision of basic WASH services to 6,636 asylum seekers in Nkamira with access to average of 21.0 litres of clean water person per day. Currently there are also 44 persons per latrine drop hole and 48 persons per shower stance.

**SHELTER AND NFIS**

- During the month of April 2024, UNHCR rehabilitated a total of 45 shelters across the camps, this includes: 13 shelters in Kiziba camp, 13 shelters in Mugombwa camp, 12 shelters in Kigeme camp and 7 shelters in Nyabiheke camp. This brings the total number of shelters rehabilitated across the camps for the year 2024 to 254 shelters.
- In April, UNHCR re-constructed 5 critically old semi-permanent shelter in Nyabiheke camp and 3 in Kigeme camp, bringing the total number of new semi-permanent shelters constructed for the year to 13 shelters.
- In April, UNHCR provided monthly cash assistance to refugees accommodated at the ETM. In addition, bank registration processes for refugees and asylum seekers who were evacuated to the ETM Rwanda recently were completed.



ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

- UNHCR provides gas for clean cooking / energy in kind for refugees in Mahama and Mugombwa refugee camps in the form of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). LPG cookers emit 50 times fewer pollutants than cooking stoves fuelled by biomass such as mud stoves. In total, 106,730 LPG cylinders were distributed in April across both camps.
- UNHCR distributes 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. In 2024, UNHCR will provide cash assistance for energy on a quarterly basis starting in May.
- In April, over 8,000 tree seedlings were planted in Mahama, Kigeme and Mugombwa camps and their neighbouring environments to prevent soil erosion. In addition, a tree planting exercise in Nkamira transit centre started in April with 508 trees planted to improve the environment.



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 enhance 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 April, crop season B for 2024 continued, with farmers in Nyabicwamba marshland sowing soyabean seeds for cultivation. Refugee farmers bought the seeds and fertilizers by their own means through a local agro-dealership scheme.
- In April, 262 refugees and asylum seekers and 48 members of the host community benefitted in various vocational and skills training activities such as hairdressing, tailoring and ICT/computer literacy. An additional 162 refugees attended language classes (English, Kinyarwanda, and French) to facilitate their integration in the country of asylum and future places of residence.
- On 5 April, the cross-border livelihood working group including UNHCR operations in Rwanda, Tanzania and Burundi was held to discuss supporting refugee and returnee livelihood opportunities across the region.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- In 2024, UNHCR Rwanda received submission resettlement quota of 7,037 individuals. By the end of April 2024, 1,753 individuals are submitted to resettlement countries. 2,588 refugees have departed for resettlement and 16 refugees departed through complementary pathways.
- From Tuesday 16 - 23 April 2024, Belgium conducted an in-person selection mission to interview 229 individuals (including 50 from the ETM). The cases accepted are now going through cultural orientation in Kigali.
- So far in 2024, UNHCR has supported 95 Burundian refugees to repatriate home from Rwanda. This brings the total to 30,877 Burundian refugees who have returned home from Rwanda since 2020. An additional 199 Burundian refugees have expressed their intention to repatriate over the coming months.
- In April, UNHCR supported the return of 137 Rwandan refugees from DRC and provided cash assistance to assist their reintegration. In total, UNHCR has supported 270 Rwandan refugees to return home in 2024. During April, 104 Rwanda returnees who returned in March departed Kijote transit centre and UNHCR supported them to return to their areas of origin.



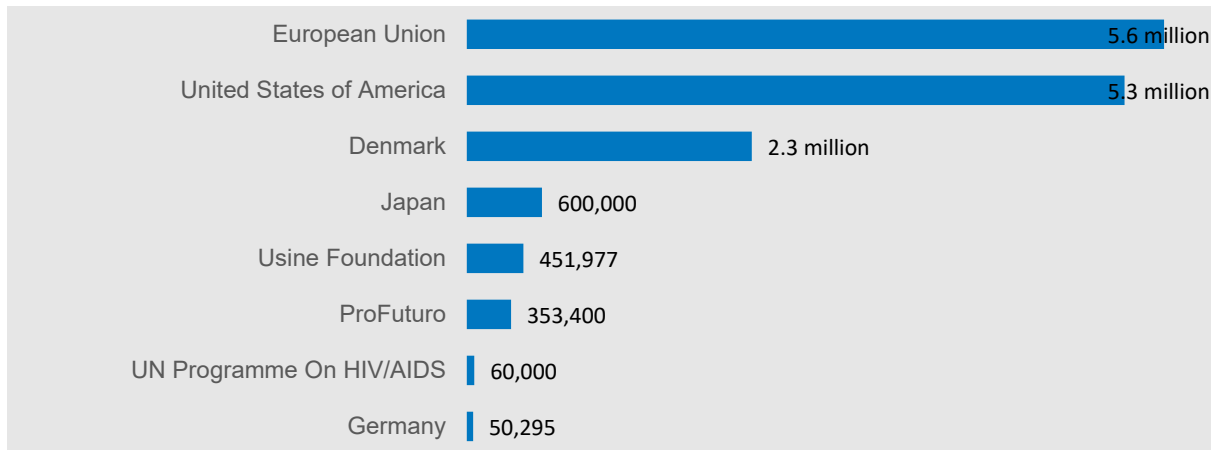
MISSIONS, DELEGATIONS AND EVENTS

- Refugee youth from Kiziba and Mahama refugee camps participated in a taekwondo competition held in Kigali from 27th to 28th April. Refugees from the Kiziba team managed to collect 7 medals, including 2 golds, 2 silvers, and 3 bronzes.
- On 23 April, UNHCR Rwanda held commemoration event at the Kigali Genocide memorial for Kwibuka30.
- On 24 April, a Belgian Delegation mission was conducted to ETM. During the missions, briefings were provided by UNHCR and MINEMA about the ETM, the visitors also interacted with refugees, and visited various interventions, including the refugees' cafeteria, community center, clinic, and Child-Friendly Space (CFS) at ETM Gashora.
- On 30 April, the US Ambassador to Rwanda visited Kigeme refugee camp. During the mission, he met with the refugee camp executive committee, visited the health centre, refugee businesses and environmental protection projects.

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 2024 | USD



UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of other softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions.

SOFTLY EARMARKED

United States of America 8.6 million | Norway 2.8 million

UNEARMARKED

Sweden 90.6 million | Norway 58.9 million | Netherlands 36.3 million | Denmark 35.6 million | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 28.5 million | Switzerland 19.2 million | Republic of Korea 17.9 million | Ireland 13.6 million | Belgium 11 million | Australia 10.7 million

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