

Rwanda

August 2021

HIGHLIGHTS

A. Rwanda hosted a total of 17,382 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of August 2021. The population of concern included mainly persons from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (61%) and Burundi (38.6%).

B. 28,936 Burundian refugees in Rwanda **voluntarily repatriated** to Burundi since August 2020. Most of the returnees are from Mahama camp (28,378) compared to a small number of urban refugees (558).

C. 133 vulnerable asylum seekers arrived in Rwanda on 16 July 2021 through the ETM Rwanda. It is the first humanitarian evacuation flight from Libya to Rwanda this year. The evacuees originate from Eritrea, Somalia, South Sudan, and Sudan.

KEY INDICATORS

1,269

Refugees departed for resettlement and complementary pathways since January 2021.

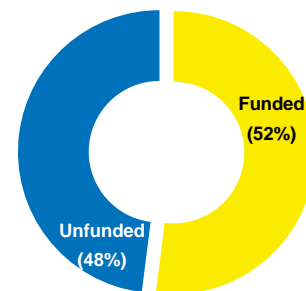
1,465

Cases of COVID-19 had been identified among refugees in Rwanda since the start of the pandemic. Of the cases, 58 were still active in August 2021 and nine deaths had been recorded.

FUNDING (AS OF AUGUST 2021)

USD 87 million

are requested for Burundi, DR Congo, Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) and COVID-19 emergency in Rwanda.



UNHCR PRESENCE

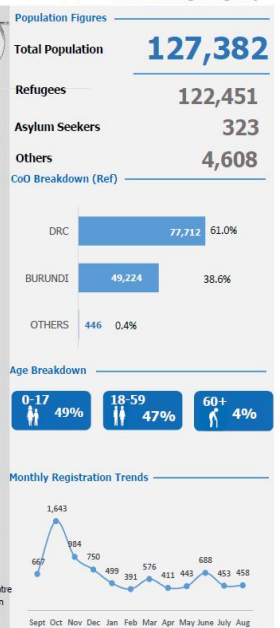
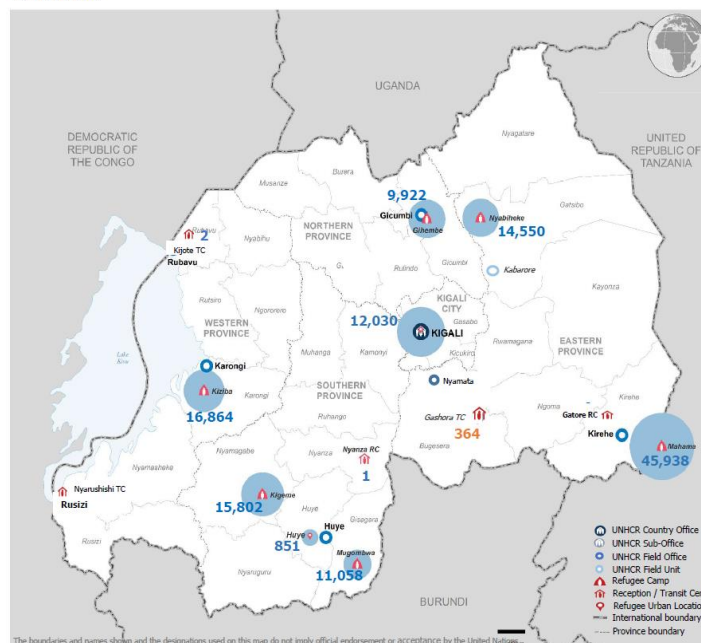
Personnels: 340 Total

- 151 National Staff
- 60 International Staff
- 129 Affiliate (UNV, UNOPS, Refugee Point, and ICMC) Staff.

Offices:

- Representation Office in Kigali
- Sub Office in Kirehe District
- Field Offices in Huye, Karongi, Gicumbi, and Bugesera Districts.
- Field Unit in Gatsibo District.

Rwanda
Population of Concern to UNHCR
as of 31 August 2021



Working with Partners

- The Government of Rwanda (GoR), through MINEMA, leads the refugee response in the country with UNHCR. With the support of partners, UNHCR provides direct operational support, capacity development, and technical advice to the local authorities regarding refugee protection and durable solutions. The Directorate of Immigration/Emigration (DGIE), the National Identification Agency (NIDA), and the National Refugee Committee are also involved in the refugee response.
- Rwanda is among eight countries that have piloted the UN Delivering as One approach. UN system agencies work to capitalize on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of the UN family. UNHCR coordinates the refugee response, ensuring overall protection and multi-sectoral assistance for all refugees, and leads the One UN programme for the return and reintegration of Rwandan returnees.
- Rwanda became a pilot country for the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in February 2018, participated in the first Global Refugee Forum in 2019, and made nine pledges focusing on education, livelihoods, protection, environmental protection, energy, and health. Eight commitments made earlier at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness bring it a total of 17. This is the highest in the East, Horn of Africa, and Great Lakes (EHAGL) region. All pledges have ongoing activities, some more advanced than others. All operational responses are in line with this inclusive protection and solutions approach.

Main Activities

Protection

- Rwanda has been welcoming refugees for over two decades. Rwanda generally provides a favorable protection environment. Rwanda has a National Asylum Law that mainly complies with international standards. Refugees are included in the national birth registration system, decreasing statelessness risks. A new civil registration system launched in 2020 provides for decentralized birth registration at the health center level.
- Since the signature of the Tripartite agreement GoR/AU/UNHCR in September 2019, 648 refugees and asylum seekers have been evacuated from Libya through six evacuation flights to the ETM Rwanda. A total of 350 refugees found a durable solution through resettlement.
- The Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) plans to ensure that by 1 January 2022, all refugees in Rwanda are in possession of valid refugee IDs. The initiative is linked to refugees' legal stay in the country and access to assistance and services by possessing valid ID cards. All individuals in Rwanda aged 16 and above are issued ID cards to access public and private services at the national level. The Government intends to apply the same for refugees.
- Following the eruption of the Nyiragongo volcano in Eastern DRC, thousands of people fled their homes into Rwanda seeking refuge. Estimates of up to 6,500 persons in need of assistance on the evening of the 23 May, with many returning home on 24 May. UNHCR counted 1,313 Congolese in Rwanda, in Busasamana Site, Rubavu District, seeking humanitarian assistance. 906 were registered in the UNHCR database (level 1). All of them returned home by the end of June.

Education

- The Government of Rwanda supports refugee students' integration into the national education system. UNHCR supports the initiative by building classrooms, science laboratories, and libraries and contributing to teachers' salaries in national schools near the camps attended by refugee children and youth. Over 90% of the refugee students in Rwanda are integrated into national schools.

- UNHCR and partners are implementing a Connected Learning Program targeting about 17,952 students, refugees, and nationals from Grade 4-6 in 14 public schools in refugee-hosting areas. The program's objective is to strengthen the quality of primary education, improve teacher ability to manage classrooms, teach using digital tools and online platforms, encourage student participation, generate enthusiasm in classrooms, and improve student enrollment and retention.

Health

- UNHCR Rwanda ensures that all refugees have access to life-saving and essential health care, reproductive health care, HIV/AIDs prevention and treatment, and nutritional well-being through the national Community-Based Health Insurance and camp-based health facilities.
- For the third year running, MINEMA, the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB), and UNHCR signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) in July 2021 to include urban refugees and refugee students studying in urban areas in the national Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) plan. In 2020-2021 (July to June), 85% of eligible urban refugees were enrolled in the CBHI; current enrollment for 2021-2022 is at 84%.
- Thanks to the Government of Rwanda, refugees in Rwanda were included in the COVID-19 prevention and response plan, including the vaccination campaign. 2,104 refugees in the camps and ETM Gashora Transit Center have been vaccinated, at least one shot so far.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Refugees in all camps receive cash for food from the World Food Program (WFP). For the ETM Rwanda, UNHCR provides hot meals daily to the refugees and asylum seekers in the ETM Gashora Transit Center.
- WFP and UNHCR started the Targeting Food Assistance program in May 2021. It is a consequence of the shortfall in funding, mainly due to the protracted refugee situation in Rwanda and the aggravating factors of Covid-19. The program targets the most vulnerable refugees in camps by categories, high vulnerable (82%) receive 100%, moderate vulnerable (9%) receive 50%, and least vulnerable (9%) receive 0% of the monthly cash for food assistance.

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

- WASH objectives are to maintain and increase the level of potable water supply in all the camps by increasing the capacity of water boreholes and water intake from the public Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC), develop backup systems, repairing the old water grids in the camps to minimize leakages, building water kiosks to protect the infrastructures from vandalism and conducting daily bacteriological sampling to ensure refugees access potable water. Furthermore, the need to verify the provision of potable water through comprehensive and systematic water quality monitoring and analysis is core to WASH objectives.
- The adequate water quantity, 20 liters per person per day standard, is met in Mugombwa, Kiziba, Gihembe, Mahama camps, and reception and transit centers. Water shortage remains a problem in Nyabiheke camp (11 liters/person/day) due to the limited capacity of the water borehole and in Kigeme camp (16 liters/person/day) due to the limited supply capacity from the national water grid.
- As part of the COVID-19 prevention and response activities in camps, 2,314 handwashing facilities were established across all the camps and schools to ensure that refugees could access adequate water and soaps to meet the sanitation requirement. A gap of 680 handwashing facilities for communities and schools still exists.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

- UNHCR provides shelter and communal infrastructures as a core life-saving activity to all refugees living in camps in Rwanda. UNHCR's shelter and infrastructure strategy in Rwanda consist of providing semi-permanent houses. UNHCR also ensures that camps are well-

planned with access roads, drainage systems, and communal spaces such as markets and community halls to support protection, basic needs services, and environmental protection.

- Shelters in Congolese camps are old and require ongoing rehabilitation. In 2021, 1,273 old shelters were rehabilitated, 374 temporary shelters were upgraded to semi-permanent shelters, and 167 new shelters were constructed in the camps. Due to constant environmental degradation, including landslides and giant ravines caused by soil erosion and lack of proper water channels in the camps, families in high-risk zones are relocated into new shelters or other camps, like Mahama empty shelters left by repatriated refugees.
- On 20 September, UNHCR and MINEMA resumed the relocation of all refugees from Gihembe camp, majority Congolese, to Mahama camp. It is a life-saving decision taken by the GoR in response to the risks posed by environmental degradation (i.e., landslides and ravines) to individuals and families in the camp. Depending on the availability of shelters and space in the Mahama camp, the relocation will continue with the Kigeme camp, accommodating Congolese refugees whose shelters are at risk.
- In terms of non-food items assistance, UNHCR provides all the essential items (soaps, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sanitary pads, sleeping items, etc.) to all refugees through cash program, except for specific targeted groups, including new arrivals who are still receiving in-kind assistance while waiting for bank registration or according to specific and immediate needs.

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- The Government of Rwanda, through MINEMA, and UNHCR co-lead the Camp Coordination and Camp Management mechanisms in Rwanda and ensure that services are delivered efficiently and that refugees are appropriately protected in the different camps.

Access to Energy

- UNHCR ensures that all refugee households in camps have access to cooking energy through the cash assistance program in Kigeme, Kiziba, Gihembe, and Nyabiheke camps and cooking gas to refugees in Mahama and Mugombwa camps, as well as all transit and reception centers, and selected schools to support the school feeding program.
- UNHCR and partners' offices in camps, water treatment plants, health centers, and community centers, including public lights, access electricity through on and off-grid solutions.
- Through the Renewable Energy for Refugees project, with a market-based approach, refugee households in Kigeme, Gihembe, and Nyabiheke camps were supported to access clean and renewable electrical energy for their homes and businesses. 3,771 households and businesses had Solar Home Systems equaling 48% of the camps' total population. A total of 185 streetlights were installed in the camps, which increased the safety and security in the camps, improved the refugees' socio-wellbeing and business opportunities.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- UNHCR and partners are working on activating the community centers in all the locations, camps, and urban settings, to strengthen community engagement, including promoting effective communication with the refugees. The focus of the community engagement is currently on youth engagement, taking the lead in community activities. New community centers in Kigeme and Kiziba camps were constructed, and others were rehabilitated in other camps to host different activities, such libraries, Information Communication and Technology (ICT) classes, different youth clubs meeting and information sharing sessions, access to the internet, etc.
- Following the COVID-19 prevention and response measures, all community gatherings, including meetings and class sessions organized in community centers, were halted but slowly reopened with the current ease on the COVID-19 preventive restrictions. However, UNHCR and partners continued to reach out to the refugee communities through

megaphones with pre-recorded messages, bulk messages on SMS and WhatsApp, hotlines, etc.

- In Rwanda, land scarcity remains a challenge to promote agri-business livelihood activities. While refugees enjoy a generally favorable protection environment, the refugee camps' poor situation and lack of livelihood opportunities mean that most refugees are still highly dependent on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs like shelter, food, health, education, nutrition, and cooking energy.
- The Government of Rwanda, UNHCR, and partners are collaborating to implement refugees' socio-economic inclusion in national systems. Agriculture is one of the sectors proven to be adequate considering the Misizi marshland project's success in the Mugombwa camp. The project is replicated in two other locations, Nyabiheke and Kigeme camps, and the host communities. The projects are part of the Government's pledge on Livelihoods to promote joint agricultural projects between refugees and host community households.
- Following the COVID-19 lockdown, refugees in urban settings were among the most affected due to the loss of jobs and closure of some businesses that provided them with income to sustain them in urban settings. UNHCR supported 8,136 most vulnerable refugees in urban areas, mainly Kigali and Huye, with one-time cash assistance. Others sought to be relocated from urban areas to camps.

Durable Solutions

- UNHCR and partners continue to support the repatriation of Burundian refugees. 28,378 Burundian refugees, 98% from Mahama camp, voluntarily repatriated to Burundi in safety and dignity. A slower pace of refugees' willingness to return has been reported since June 2021 and is much linked to the situation in Burundi, especially difficulty in reintegration. UNHCR is monitoring the protection situation of returnees in Burundi and does not promote but assist refugees who have expressed the willingness to go home.
- Given the volatile political and security situation, promoted voluntary repatriation is not envisaged for Congolese refugees. However, UNHCR has proposed to the GoR that UNHCR may support those who wish to voluntarily return to ensure that they benefit from a return package and be included in the repatriation monitoring plan. This proposal is under discussion for a potential tripartite framework to be developed with the DRC in 2021.
- Rwanda adopted the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), which emphasizes refugees' social and economic inclusion in national systems. Nevertheless, the resettlement of Congolese refugees to third countries from Rwanda, mostly from the oldest camps – Kiziba, Gihembe, and Nyabiheke – is considered the durable solution for the majority of this population.
- In 2021, UNHCR Rwanda has a submission resettlement quota of 5,280 individuals. So far, 1,478 individual cases have been submitted to resettlement countries. 1,269 refugees, including 30 Burundians, 147 from ETM Rwanda, and 1,092 Congolese, have departed for resettlement and complementary pathways.
- UNHCR and partners, including WFP, continue to support Rwandans returning to the country from different locations, the majority from DR Congo. In 2021, 966 Rwandans returned to Rwanda and joined their previous place of origin in collaboration with MINEMA. The assistance provided includes reintegration cash grants, three months food package, health insurance, and documentation.

Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)

- The Socio-Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda Project - also known as the Jya Mbere Project - is an ambitious USD 60 million through the World Bank's International Development Association devoted to improving access for over 450,000 Rwandans and refugees to basic services, environmental support management and bolster economic opportunities for refugees and host communities in all six hosting districts. In June, an additional USD 20 million was made available to directly address the effects of the

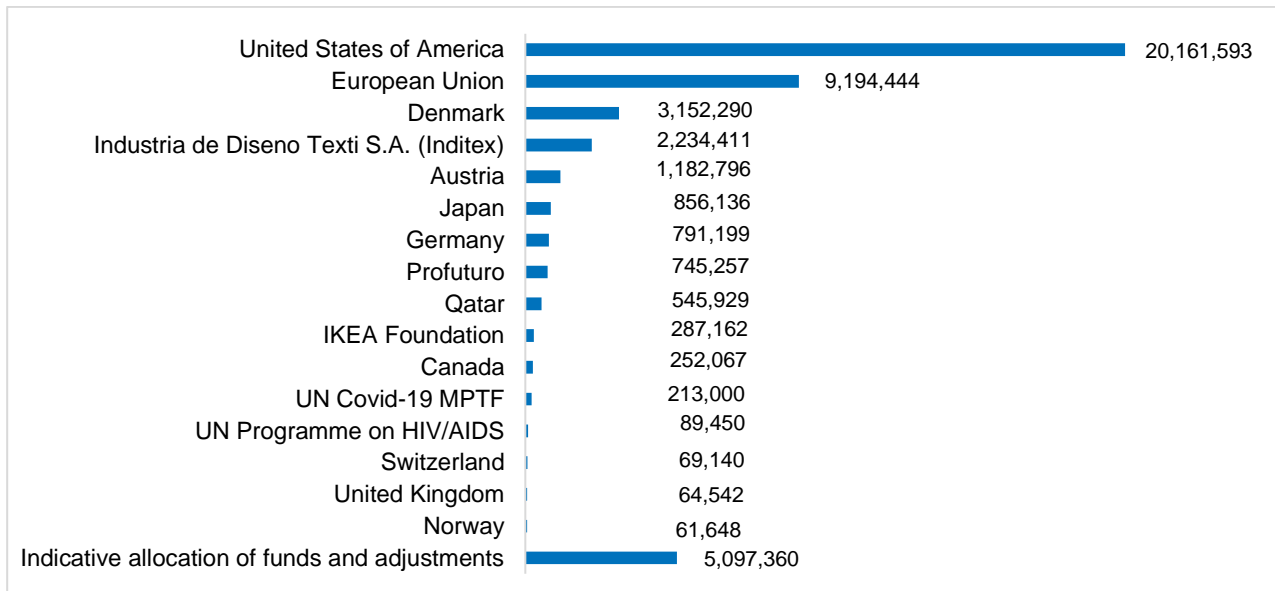
COVID-19 pandemic on refugees and their hosts through improved patient care in hospitals, rehabilitating health centers, schools, and water systems, and providing financing training for businesses in urban areas.

- Technical committees focused on the pledges made at the Global Refugee Forum (GRF) have been held for the Education and Health Sectors; the meetings take stock of progress made on the pledges, identify gaps and challenges. These are small, focused meetings, led by MINEMA, and include relevant ministries and agencies with activities that support implementing the pledges. Technical committee meetings were detailed in the Jt. Concept Note/Road Map on the Implementation of GRF Pledges in Rwanda that MINEMA endorsed in October 2020 - This is an important step towards meeting commitments made in all sectors for all pledges.
- Joint action plans for each of nine GRF pledges were developed earlier with sector experts and shared with other operations as a "best practice." The plans help steer deliberations at the technical committee meetings.
- An ambitious Stakeholder's Mapping project, endorsed by MINEMA for the six refugee camp hosting districts, Bugesera (where the ETM is located) and urban areas where refugees live, has been completed, except for two districts in Kigali. Key information from all agencies, development, humanitarian, national, international, private sectors working in these districts is analyzed. Linkages to the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and the pledges made at the GRF are presented.
- Consultation meetings –sharing the findings of the mapping project with local Government and agencies in the field, have been held in Nyamagabe, Bugesera, Huye (urban), and Karongi districts—some virtual, some in-person depending on the Covid-19 protocols issued at the time. These consultations are hosted by district authorities, with the mayor, where possible, chairing the meetings and MINEMA presenting the GRF pledges. A short introduction to the GCR/CRRF/GRF by UNHCR sets the context for these consultations. The consultations are interactive, and feedback from participants has been constructive.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for donors' critical support to this operation and those who have contributed to UNHCR programmes with unearmarked and broadly earmarked funds.

Funding received is USD 44,933,881



Other softly earmarked contributions | USD

United States of America 33 million | **Germany** 14.5 million | **Private donors Australia** 6.2 million | **Canada** 5.6 million | **Private donors Germany** 5.6 million | **France** 2.2 million

Japan | Luxembourg | Malta | Norway | Spain | Private donors

Unearmarked contributions | USD

Norway 80 million | **Sweden** 66.9 million | **Private donors Spain** 49.7 million | **Netherlands** 36.1 million | **Denmark** 34.6 million | **The United Kingdom** 28.4 million | **Germany** 26 million | **Private donors Republic of Korea** 25 million | **Japan** 23.4 million | **Private donors Japan** 20.7 million | **France** 20.2 million | **Switzerland** 16.4 million | **Ireland** 12.5 million | **Private donors Italy** 12.3 million | **Belgium** 11.9 million | **Private donors Sweden** 11.9 million | **Italy** 10.7 million

Algeria | Armenia | Australia | Austria | Bulgaria | Canada | Costa Rica | Cyprus | Estonia | Finland | Holy See | Iceland | Liechtenstein | Luxembourg | Malta | Monaco | Montenegro | Morocco | New Zealand | Peru | Philippines | Portugal | Republic of Korea | Russian Federation | Saudi Arabia | Singapore | South Africa | Thailand | Turkey | Uruguay | Private donors

For more information: <http://reporting.unhcr.org>

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Data Portal: <https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/rwa> | **UNHCR Rwanda website:** www.unhcr.org/rw | **Twitter:** @RefugeesRwanda
Instagram: refugees_rwanda