Rwanda

December 2023

HIGHLIGHTS

A. Rwanda hosted a total of 126,126 refugees and asylum seekers as of 31st of December 2022. The population of concern mainly includes people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (59.86%) and Burundi (39.58%).

B. 49% of refugees in Rwanda are school-aged children. As of the beginning of the academic year, 55%, 94% and 43% of refugee children are enrolled in pre-primary, primary and secondary education.

C. 1,453 persons of concern have been evacuated from Libya through 11 evacuation flights to the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Rwanda. Since its inception in September 2019, 885 of the refugees from the ETM have been resettled to third countries.

KEY INDICATORS

3,808 Refugees departed on resettlement and complementary pathways in 2022.

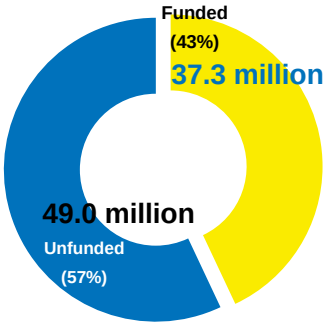
30,457 Burundian refugees have voluntarily returned to Burundi with UNHCR's support since August 2020

5 Refugee Camps exist in Rwanda hosting both Congolese and Burundian refugees.

FUNDING (AS OF 29 DECEMBER 2022)

USD 86.8 million

are needed for Burundi, DR Congo, and Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) situations in Rwanda.



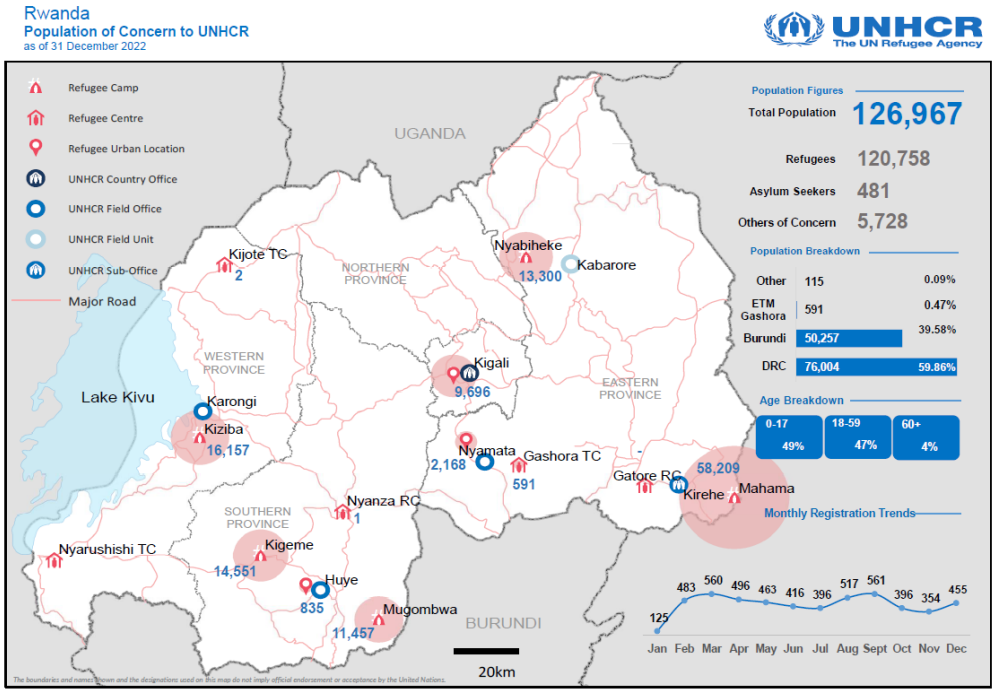
UNHCR PRESENCE

Personnel: 396 Total

- 205 National Staff
- 91 International Staff

Offices:

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



Working with Partners

- The Government of Rwanda (GoR), through the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA), leads the refugee response in Rwanda alongside UNHCR. With the support of partners, UNHCR works closely with a range of different Ministries and 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 key entities involved in the refugee response.

- The Refugee Coordination Model in Rwanda is co-coordinated by MINEMA and UNHCR. UNHCR also leads sector working groups at both country and district levels and coordinates the preparation of refugee response plans and appeals to ensure complementarity and avoid duplication. Around 17 partners are involved in planning of the refugee response and contribute to interagency assessments.

- A key focus in Rwanda is the implementation of commitments and pledges made by the Government as part of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and Global Refugee Forum (GRF). In total, nine pledges focusing on education, livelihoods, protection, environmental protection, energy, and health were made at the GRF. This is in addition to eight commitments made at the High-Level Segment on Statelessness.

- UNHCR plays an active role within the One UN System in Rwanda to capitalize on the strengths and comparative advantages of the different members of different UN agencies.

- Rwanda is a pilot country for the UNHCR-UNICEF Joint Blueprint For Action For Refugee Children, among ten other selected countries globally. It is a commitment to accelerate joint efforts under a transformational agenda in line with the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR), and is focused on three key areas: education, WASH, and child protection. Rwanda joined as a pilot country in mid-2021 and will continue until the end of the pilot phase in 2022.

- UNHCR and MINEMA co-lead the camp coordination and camp management mechanisms across the five different refugee camps in Rwanda (Mahama, Mugombwa, Kiziba, Nyabiheke and Kigeme), in order to ensure that services are delivered efficiently and that refugees are appropriately protected.

Main Activities

Protection

- Rwanda has been welcoming refugees for over two decades, is a signature to the 1951 Refugee Convention and has a National Asylum Law that mainly complies with international standards. Refugees are included in many national systems including the birth registration system, decreasing statelessness risks.

- Since the signing of a tripartite agreement between the Government of Rwanda, UNHCR and the African Union in September 2019, 1,453 refugees and asylum seekers, originating from Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Chad, South Sudan, Nigeria, and Cameroon, have been evacuated from Libya to Rwanda. UNHCR has supported a total of 12 evacuation flights bringing vulnerable refugees and asylum seekers to the ETM in Rwanda for further processing. As of December 2022, 591 refugees remain in the ETM while 885 refugees have been resettled to third countries.

- The escalation in fighting within Eastern DRC in late 2022 has also resulted in an increase of new asylum seekers arriving in Rwanda. Between mid November and January 2023, over 3,348 individuals have arrived in Rwanda and to the Kijote Transit Centre (TC). Currently, 1,774 of the asylum seekers have been relocated from Kijote TC to Mahama Departure Centre in Mahama camp, while 319 asylum seekers are accommodated at Kijote TC, and

1,255 asylum seekers are accommodated at Nkamira Transit Site. All new asylum seekers fleeing to Rwanda being received in Kijote will now be moved directly to Nkarima. Kijote TC receives an average of of 50 new arrivals per day, out of which, 99% of the arrivals originate from North Kivu specifically Masisi and Rutchuru.UNHCR protection staff are on the ground providing support and counselling to the new arrivals alongside Plan International, Save the Children, and Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR). Food, health care, WASH and shelter services are provided, as well as essential non-food items are also provided to the asylum seekers hosted in Nkamira. The Government of Rwanda is leading the process of registering the new arrivals and conducting nationality assessments in coordination with UNHCR registration staff. For the time being refugee status determination continues to be done on an individual basis by the Government of Rwanda.

- In 2022, MINEMA plans to ensure that all refugees aged 16 years and above in Rwanda are in possession of valid refugee IDs. The initiative is linked to refugees' legal stay in the country and holding a refugee ID card facilitates access to assistance and services. Between July and September 2022, the National Identification Agency (NIDA) alongside government counterparts DGIE, MINEMA and UNHCR, undertook a biometric capturing exercise to support the issuance of refugee IDs. As of the end of 2022, 82% of refugees in Rwanda have ID cards.

- Together with partners, UNHCR provides targeted support to unaccompanied and separated children (UASC) and other children at risk, such those who have experienced neglect, violence, child labour or child marriage. Where needed, Best Interest Determination assessments are completed and alternative care mechanisms, including foster, kinship, and emergency placement are put in place. UNHCR also conducts trainings to increase the capacity and skillset of child protection caseworkers.

- UNHCR works closely with refugee leaders and refugee community groups to conduct regular protection monitoring through focus group discussion and household visits to ensure that humanitarian assistance is planned and delivered safely, accessible, accountable, and participatory.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- In Rwanda, UNHCR and the Government collaborate to enhance refugees' inclusion in national systems. Laws and policy in Rwanda allow refugees the right to access national services such as education, health, finance, and employment. As a result of the protracted refugee situations and building on commitments made by the Government of Rwanda as part of the 2016 CRRF and 2019 GRF, UNHCR's program has expanded beyond just humanitarian aid to focus on development, with emphasis on finding sustainable livelihoods and social cohesion for refugees and their host communities.

- As such, a large part of UNHCR's programming focuses on helping refugees graduate out of poverty and become self-reliant. Key components of this 'graduation approach' include 1) enhancing socio-economic data about the refugee population in Rwanda in order to identify the most vulnerable households and those which have the potential to become self-sufficient; 2) boosting technical and entrepreneurial skills through livelihood training and development of business plans; 3) providing regular and time-bound consumption support to enable them to meet their basic needs; 4) providing lumpsum cash grants for employment start-ups; 5) developing refugees' ability to save money as a tool to access finance and build resilience; 6) ensuring the close mentorship and coaching of all beneficiary populations on life skills in a way that develop their self-confidence.

- Agriculture is one of the main sectors through which refugee self-reliance can be achieved. UNHCR Rwanda is currently running three projects to develop refugee and Rwandan livelihoods and self-reliance through the Misizi (covering Mugombwa camp), Nyabicwamba (covering Nyabiheke Refugee Camp), and Mushishito (covering Kigeme Refugee Camp) marshlands. Following agreements between partners, local districts, refugee & Rwandan communities, planting, and harvesting have been implemented in 2022.

- Efforts are also deployed to create self-employment in non-farming sectors through livelihood programs that take a comprehensive approach and focus on business skills development, vocational/technical trainings, coaching services, cash grants and financial services for improved self-reliance. UNHCR's livelihoods programs also target the large refugee youth population in providing technical and vocational skills training. This will ensure that no one is left behind amid Rwanda's ongoing development.

- UNHCR Rwanda focuses on strengthening community-based structures and expanding the capacity of community volunteers, mobilizers, and youth groups, to help empower refugees at a personal and community level, as well as put in place mechanisms to identify vulnerable individuals who need further support. Community centers in refugee camps are regularly maintained and upgraded, and offer a wide range of activities such as such libraries, ICT classes, youth clubs, information sharing sessions, access to the internet, etc.

Education

- Basic education is accessible to refugee children through the support of the Government of Rwanda who have committed to refugee inclusion in primary and secondary school. UNHCR supports the initiative by building classrooms, science laboratories, libraries and contributing to teachers' salaries in national schools which are attended by refugee children near the camps. 94% of school-aged refugee children are enrolled in primary school, 43% in secondary school and 3.4% of refugees in higher education respectively. In addition, over 2,500 children and youths from refugee camps are enrolled in various schools of excellence and learning institution across the country.

- Digital education is a key focus of UNHCR and partners. The Connected Learning Program targets over 15,000 students, refugees, and nationals from Grade 4-6 in 15 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.

- UNHCR works closely with partners to expand access to tertiary education for eligible refugees in Rwanda, including in Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET). Since 2010 approximately 500 students have been supported by the DAFI scholarship program in Rwanda. In 2022, 178 refugee students (including 90 female) are supported under DAFI scholarship programme in Rwanda. Among them 24 graduated in June, while 94 are continuing students, and 60 students started their first year in the second and third quarter of 2022. Female scholars now make up half of the refugees being supported by DAFI this year.

Health

- UNHCR Rwanda ensures that all refugees have access to life-saving and essential health care, reproductive health care, HIV/AIDs prevention and treatment, as well as nutritional well-being through the national Community-Based Health Insurance and camp-based health facilities. Across the five refugee camps and ETM, UNHCR and partners operate seven health care facilities (four health centres and three health posts) with the medicalization of the Mahama II health center currently taking place. An average of 24,000 primary health consultations take place every month.

- 97% of urban refugees and refugee students attending boarding schools are enrolled in the Rwandan Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) plan. This follows an agreement between UNHCR, MINEMA and the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB) in July 2021 and the 2016 pledge made by the Government of Rwanda.

- As of October 2022, 68.6% of the refugee population in Rwanda have received at least two doses of the COVID-19 vaccination, while 29,8% received booster dose.

Food Security and Nutrition

- Refugees in all camps receive cash for food from the World Food Program (WFP). Food assistance is provided through a targeting criterion set out in May 2021. The program targets refugees in camps based on vulnerability categories. The most vulnerable (88% of refugees) receive the full amount of food assistance. Individuals in the moderately vulnerable category (6% of refugees) receive 50% of the food assistance value, and least vulnerable (6% of refugees) do not receive any food assistance. For the ETM Rwanda, UNHCR provides three meals a day to the refugees and asylum seekers accommodated at the center.

- Based on the Standardized Expanded Nutrition Survey (SENS) conducted in September 2021, prevalence of wasting among refugee children under-5 years of age is 2.6% which is of public health significance according to WHO classification. Stunting and anemia prevalence were respectively 20.8% and 22.5% (medium public health significance).

Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH)

- UNHCR provides water and sanitation for all refugees living in camps. This includes ensuring the drinkable water supply by expanding the capacity of water boreholes and water intake from the public Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC). In addition, UNHCR is developing backup systems, repairing the old systems to minimize leakages, and conducting daily bacteriological sampling to ensure refugee access drinkable water.

- Water supply currently averages 22 litres per person per day across the five refugee camps. Although, challenges remain in some camps such as Nyabiheke and Kigeme in meeting the minimum requirement of 20 litres per person per day. Latrine coverage averages 23 people per drop hole with space limitations dictating the latrine situation in camps.

- UNHCR has adopted the Community Based Environmental Health Promotion Program (CBEHPP) - a Rwandan national approach to hygiene promotion - to enhance local ownership of hygiene facilities. Tailored to refugee context this approach enlists refugee feedback on services offered in camps and promotes behavioral change over time. It is hoped that this will also reduce the vandalism to communal facilities.

Shelter and Non-Food Items

- UNHCR provides and maintains shelter and communal infrastructures for all refugees living in camps in Rwanda. 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 the camps are old, semi-permanent and require ongoing rehabilitation. In 2022, 2,162 old shelters were rehabilitated, 454 temporary shelters were upgraded to semi-permanent shelters, 75 shelter for persons with disability have their access path improved and 98 new semi-permanent shelters were constructed in the camps. Due to constant environmental degradations, including landslides and giant ravines caused by soil erosion and lack of proper water channels in the camps, families in high-risk zones were relocated into new shelters and 246 terraces were constructed to protect shelters located in high-risk areas.

- In terms of non-food items assistance, UNHCR provides the cash equivalent of essential items such as soaps, blankets, jerry cans, kitchen sets, sanitary pads, sleeping items on a quarterly basis. The amount of money individual families receive depends on the targeting criteria also used for food assistance.

Energy and Environment

- Refugee communities in Rwanda lack sufficient access to clean, sustainable, and affordable energy. Many refugee households in Kigeme and Nyabiheke camps for example, report little or no access to energy for lighting. As a result, UNHCR is supporting access to solar energy for electricity. As part of efforts made by UNHCR to promote and enhance energy access to power refugees' homes, businesses, and communities, as of the end of 2022, over 4,279

refugee households procured (through a payment scheme in 36 months period) solar home systems for lighting and small business, covering 58% of the targeted populations in Kigeme and Nyabiheke camps. In addition, streetlights were installed in camps which increased the safety and security in the camps, improved the refugees' socio-wellbeing and business opportunities. This means shops stay open longer, children can play and study, and residents feel safer moving around the camps after nightfall.

- UNHCR ensures that all refugee households in camps have access to cooking energy by providing cash assistance to buy gas in Kigeme, Kiziba, Mugombwa and Nyabiheke camps. Ensuring access to sources of energy for cooking is important to prevent refugee communities resorting to wood for fuel and contributing to deforestation in line with the Government of Rwanda's ban on firewood for cooking since 2018. This initiative has been supported by the Renewable Energy for Refugees (RE4R) project. As a result, 69,666 refugees in Mahama and Mugombwa camps have access to LPG & pellets for cooking, while 100% of refugees in the remaining camps receive cash for energy.

- In addition, UNHCR has provided stoves facilitating gas-powered clean cooking for about 18,000 households (50% of the refugees) in Mahama and Mugombwa camps, as well as all transit and reception centers, and selected schools to support the school feeding program. The implementation of gas-powered stoves is estimated to reduce household air pollution by 90%.

- UNHCR actively implements 'Greening the Blue' initiatives throughout Rwanda. In 2021, the operation installed Green Boxes in all its offices to measure timely energy usage. In addition, UNHCR Rwanda collected data from all offices to facilitate the change from generators to solar panels. A technical feasibility analysis is ongoing to map out the possibility of this shift. Throughout refugee camps and field locations, UNHCR also provides energy for water treatment plants, health centers, and community centers, including public lights, access electricity through on and off-grid solutions.

- UNHCR Rwanda is also part of the Refugee Environmental Protection (REP) Fund which invests in impactful reforestation and clean cooking programs in refugee situations around the world. As part of this, reforestation programs are planned in Mahama, Kigeme and Mugombwa refugee camps.

Durable Solutions

- UNHCR and partners continue to support the repatriation of Burundian refugees. 30,457 Burundian refugees, 96.4% from Mahama camp, have voluntarily repatriated to Burundi in safety and dignity since 2019. Since June 2021, the pace of return has slowed due to ongoing political tensions and reintegration concerns; 932 Burundian refugees have repatriated from Rwanda in 2022. Given the volatile security situation in DRC, especially in the East and South Kivu Provinces, large numbers of return are not envisaged for Congolese refugees.

- In 2022, UNHCR Rwanda has a quota of just over 5,900 places for refugee resettlement to third countries. As of October, 6,314 refugees have been submitted for resettlement with 3,677 having already departed. In addition, 131 refugees have departed in 2022 through complementary pathways to resettlement such as labour mobility, educational scholarships, private and community sponsorships and family reunification. On the 15th of December 2022, UNHCR and Save the Children successfully introduced the Canada Economic Labor Mobility Pathways Project (EMPP) to refugees in Mahama refugee camp. This project aims to provide refugees with access to existing economic immigration opportunities in Canada. The project will be rolled out in the other refugee camps and other urban refugee hosting locations in 2023.

- UNHCR also continues to support Rwandan refugees returning home from different areas of the world, such as from DR Congo. In 2022, 2,456 Rwandans returned to Rwanda and began the process of reintegrating in their place of origin. UNHCR collaborates with MINEMA in facilitating this process and provides assistance to Rwandan returnees in the form of reintegration cash grants, three months food package, health insurance, and documentation.

Global Compact on Refugees (GCR)

- As a result of the Global Refugee Forum in 2019, the Government of Rwanda made nine pledges focusing on education, livelihoods, protection, environmental protection, energy, and health. This was the highest in the East Horn of Africa and Great Lakes Region and built on previous commitments in 2016. UNHCR, therefore, supports the Government in realizing these pledges in a variety of ways.

- Technical meetings involving MINEMA and different sector partners relevant to the pledges are held on a regular basis. The meetings take stock of progress made on the pledges, identify gaps and challenges, and propose collective solutions. In addition, a stakeholder mapping project has been completed in all refugee hosting districts to identify different entities who should be engaged in implementing the GCR. Local district authorities hosted these consultations through which MINEMA also presented the GRF pledges.

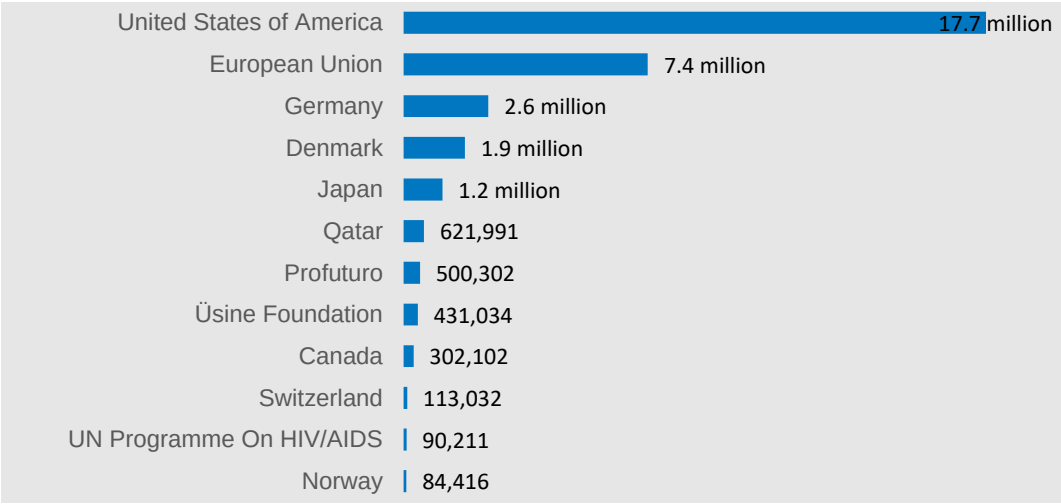
- UNHCR also participates in open days and planning meetings held on a district level to further the aims of the GCR especially refugee inclusion. In 2022, open days were held in Gasabo (Kigali), Gatsibo, Kirehe, Kicukiro (Kigali) and Huye districts for different partners to showcase their work and also for refugee and Rwandan communities to promote their businesses and products. The Open Days are visited by the general public and provide a platform for information sharing and advocacy

- 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 project implemented by the World Bank's International Development Association (IDA) to improve 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 refugee hosting districts. In June 2022, an additional USD 20 million was made available through the project. UNHCR plays an advisory role within this to ensure progress for refugees is achieved.

External/Donor Relations

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 2022 | 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 29.3 million | Private donors Germany 19 million | Private donors Australia 12.2 million | Canada 7.8 million | Private donors USA 7.4 million | Private donors Spain 2.7 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 2.2 million | France | Japan | Malta | Norway | Private donors

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Sweden 99.3 million | Norway 72.5 million | Private donors Spain 72.1 million | Private donors Japan 59.1 million | United Kingdom 40.1 million | Netherlands 37.2 million | Denmark 35.6 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 31.4 million | Private donors USA 29.9 million | Germany 24.4 million | Japan 21.7 million | France 18.5 million | Switzerland 18.4 million | Private donors Canada 13.6 million | Private donors Sweden 13.3 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Ireland 11.8 million | Italy 10 million

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