

Kigeme Refugee Camp, Rwanda

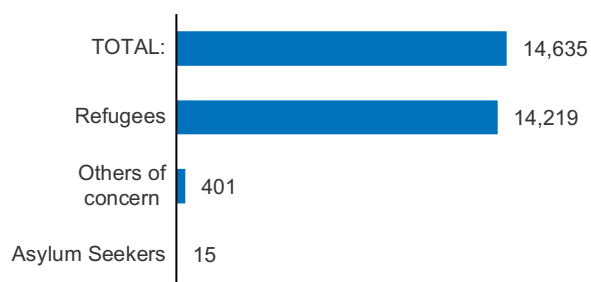
February 2023

14,635 refugees live in Kigeme refugee camp which is in Nyamagabe District in the Southern Province of Rwanda. All refugees are Congolese.

The camp was established in **2012**. **34 hectares** of land were allocated to host refugees. MINEMA administers the camp and is responsible for security and protection of the refugees in coordination with UNHCR.

51.57% of the camp's population is younger than 18 years old.

POPULATION OF CONCERN



35 UNHCR STAFF BASED IN THE HUYE FIELD OFFICE COVER THE NEEDS OF REFUGEES IN KIGEME REFUGEE CAMP



Solange (R) earned her nursing diploma in DRC but had to flee to safety in Rwanda. Now living in Kigeme refugee camp, she volunteers alongside Head Nurse Viateur to support refugees. "If one day the situation is better, I also want to help people back home," she says.

Main Activities

Camp Coordination and Camp Management

- Kigeme refugee camp is managed by the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) represented by camp manager, deputy camp manager and supported by immigration staff and Police. The camp is divided into seven quarters and each quartier consists of an average of three villages. In total, Kigeme camp consists of seven quartiers and 19 villages.
- The camp has one refugee executive committee consisting of eight members (four male and four female) led by a camp president and a deputy-president. The executive committees are elected by community members for two years. Many religions exist in the Kigeme camp, however, most of the population are Christian (Adventist).
- Each village has a village leader who is elected by village members and each quartier has also a quartier leader elected by the community. Village and quartier leaders play an important role in communicating issues facing the refugee community with UNHCR and partners.
- UNHCR works with six implementing and nine operational partners in Kigeme camp including: Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR), Humanity Inclusion (HI), Plan International (PI), World Vision International (WVI), Save the Children International (SCI), Adventist Development and Relief Agency (ADRA), Inkomoko, Indego Africa, CARE International/ FREE Project, WVI/ PAC Project, GIZ/ ECOREF Project, Hope Impact, Practical Action, Off grid Box, and World Food Programme (WFP).
- Kigeme refugee camp faces extreme environmental degradation due to its weather pattern and topographical nature. Land availability remains a major constraint, hampering the construction of shelter as well as sports and recreational facilities. Due to a limited budget for shelter rehabilitation and construction, there is a risk of land/mudslides due to steep slopes and intensity of rainfall. As a result, there is a need to plant more trees and construct a strong drainage system as well as need for permanent shower rooms, retaining walls and stairs for sanitation facilities.
- UNHCR Huye Field Office is part of the Nyamagabe joint Action Development Forum (JADF) which ties in many aspects of the Global Compact for Refugees (GCR) to improve lives for both refugees and host communities (Rwanda). Jointly, UNHCR and Nyamagabe district has implemented several projects including smart agricultural in Mushishito marchland.

Protection

- UNHCR's office in Huye delivers protection assistance and humanitarian support to all Congolese refugees residing in Kigeme camp. UNHCR works with authorities and humanitarian actors to ensure the rights of refugees are upheld. This includes monitoring to identify protection risks and conducting the needed response such as continuous registration, home visits, legal assistance, advocacy aimed at prevention and response to gender-based violence (GBV), and raising awareness on child protection issues.
- In Kigeme camp, UNHCR and partners implement coordination mechanisms to ensure child protection prevention and response. UNHCR and Plan International have established a "Community Engagement Approach" building the capacity of refugee community mobilizers and strengthening existing community-based protection mechanisms to prevent and report the abuses, neglect, and exploitation of children.
- This community engagement approach also extends to prevention of SGBV. Through the establishment of SGBV committees, girls' committees, and anti-GBV clubs, as well as the recruitment of community mobilizers, UNHCR is encouraging the refugee community to take responsibility for reporting and documenting SGBV instances. The most prevalent types of

SGBV for adults include psychological abuse, physical assault, denial of resources and opportunities as well as rape.

- In line with community-based protection approaches and accountability to the affected population, UNHCR implements complaint and feedback mechanisms through a community-based protection partner (PFR) to ensure accountability to refugees. UNHCR also runs a regular protection desk, individual counselling, hotlines, home visits, and mass meetings to receive complaints and provide timely feedback to the community.
- Monthly operational and camp coordination meetings among UNHCR, partners and refugees' leaders take place to inform and advise future programming.
- In partnership with Humanity Inclusion (HI), UNHCR provides support to people with specific needs through community-based rehabilitation services for children with disabilities, supplementary feeding (SOSOMA) and occupational therapy to encourage functional independence.

Registration and Documentation

- UNHCR maintains accurate data of refugee residing in Kigeme refugee camp through regular registration of individuals and groups. Refugees are registered individually and by household (biometric registration) and given a "Proof of Registration" by UNHCR. As of March 2023, the refugee population stands at 14,635 (7,947 female and 6,688 male).
- UNHCR also works closely with the Rwandan Government through MINEMA and National ID Agency (NIDA) to facilitate the issuance of new refugee ID cards to individuals aged 16 years and above living in Kigeme. Periodic campaigns take place to distribute new ID cards and replacement of the expired ones.

Education

- In Kigeme refugee camp, most refugee children are enrolled and integrated within Rwandan national schools located nearby the camp. 616 children (31 female and 305 male) currently attend Early Childhood Development (ECD) / Nursery, 2,528 students (1,269 female and 1,259 male) currently attend primary school and 1,530 (781 female and 749 male) secondary education. In addition, a small number of students (especially high performers) are sent to schools of excellence (boarding) and 13 children with disabilities are supported to attend specialized schools in different districts of the country. UNHCR supports education for refugees in Kigeme refugee camp in partnership with World Vision Rwanda.
- UNHCR support to refugee education includes paying tuition fees for students in schools of excellence and special needs education, providing scholastic supplies, didactic materials, school uniforms, school feeding fees (hot meals for secondary school students and porridge for ECD students), psychosocial support to refugee children as well as registration fees to national exams for grade six, grade nine and grade 12.

Health

- Kigeme refugee camp is host to one health centre which UNHCR operates in partnership with Save The Children (SCI). Through the health clinic, primary health care services are provided free of charge to the refugee population including laboratory tests, anti-natal and post-natal care, and sexual and reproductive health care. The Ministry of Health also support the health centre with medical equipment.
- UNHCR and SCI facilitate the referral of refugees in need of advanced secondary health care to districts hospitals (Kigeme Hospital), and tertiary referrals to other specialized hospitals

(CHUB, CHUK and others in Kigali). A referral committee is in place to make these decisions based on the budget available to support lifesaving and emergency healthcare.

- Vaccination of children under five years including measles and other mandatory child vaccinations are provided by Save the Children in Kigeme refugee camp. The cumulative figure of children under five years vaccinated against Measles and Rubella between January and March 2023 is 118. As part of its public health services, UNHCR and SCI work with 35 community health workers who disseminate the message across Kigeme refugee camp.
- To ensure the health and wellbeing of the refugee population, UNHCR alongside WFP provides a variety of nutrition interventions in Kigeme. These include supplementary feeding, outpatient program for severe malnutrition, anaemia reduction, HIV and TB treatment, nutrition support for pregnant and lactating women, and children from six to 23 months. Overall, 657 individuals were enrolled in supplementary feeding programme by end March 2023.

Food Security

- Since September 2017, WFP has used a Smartcard enabling refugees to access cash-based transfers for food assistance. The Smartcard is linked to each individual household's bank account. Since 2021, food assistance is distributed through this methodology based on targeting criteria where the highly vulnerable receives 100%, moderately vulnerable receives 50%, and least vulnerable receives 0% of monthly cash assistance value. Currently, there are 13,380 individuals considered as highly vulnerable (91.76% of the camp population), 726 individuals as moderately vulnerable (4.98% of the camp population) while 475 individuals are considered least vulnerable (3.26% of the population) and do not receive any assistance.
- To support the targeted food assistance, UNHCR operates a dedicated Helpline in Kigeme camp to receive refugee appeals for (re)inclusion in food assistance and ensure that refugees fulfilling the eligibility criteria are not erroneously excluded.

Water and Sanitation (WASH)

- Kigeme refugee camp depends fully on water supplied by the national system through Water and Sanitation Corporation (WASAC¹). Currently, the average water consumption in the camp is 15 litres per person per day.
- In terms of WASH facilities, Kigeme has 34 water points with 182 water taps, 38 latrine blocks with 434 drop holes (30 drop holes which are friendly to Persons with Specific Needs), 38 shower blocks with 344 functional shower stances, and 6 garbage collection points.
- In terms of hygiene promotion, in Kigeme camp UNHCR works with 18 refugee hygiene promoters to spread messages about best practices, on average each promoter is in contact with around an average of 812 people. In addition, 255 litres of liquid soap are provided and used each month for handwashing, best practice, and general cleaning of sanitation facilities.
- In Kigeme refugee camp, an average of 80 m³ of solid waste is transported to dumping site each month and 233 m³ of liquid waste are dislodged from camp to Nyamagabe DEFAST plant.

Shelter and NFIs

- Since the creation of Kigeme refugee camp in 2012, UNHCR has constructed 1,529 semi-permanent shelters across seven quarters subdivided into 19 Villages, where refugees live.

¹ WASAC is government institution in charge of water distribution

Over the timespan of the camp over 1,000 shelters in high-risk zones have also been demolished with refugees relocated to Mahama refugee camp.

- Initially shelter surface was 12 sqm although some shelters have been extended to take into consideration differing needs of refugee families giving the average of 21sqm per shelter. Since January 2023, UNHCR through direct implementation have rehabilitated/repared a total of 20 shelters. In addition, a total of six new shelters have been constructed in the camp so far this year.
- As of March 2023, UNHCR has constructed a total of eight terraces to protect shelters in Kigeme refugee camp as mitigation measure for environmental degradation.
- A quarterly coordination meeting for shelter committee is conducted by UNHCR, MINEMA, refugee committee, ADRA and other partners as per needs to discuss and find solution of present problems.
- UNHCR provides the cash equivalent for non-food items such as sanitary pads, soaps, jerricans, kitchen sets to all refugees living in the camp. Distributions happen on a monthly, quarterly, and yearly basis subject to the budget availability. In March 2023, multi-purposes cash assistance for Q1 2023 was distributed to all refugee households in Kigeme camp.

Energy & Environment

- In Kigeme refugee camp, all active refugee households receive cash for cooking energy on monthly basis² from UNHCR.
- Within the camp, UNHCR and partners have provided refugees in Kigeme with improved cooking tools (cooking stoves and pellets) to support the use of sustainable sources of energy and reduce deforestation.
- In addition, briquettes are provided to early childhood development facilities in partnership with World Vision as an alternative to firewood to support the school feeding program and reduce deforestation and associated impacts.
- Over 1,232 households in Kigeme camp also have access to home lighting through the installation of solar home systems (SHS) carried out by UNHCR and partners. Other renewable energy sources and electricity from the national grid is used to power communal facilities and offices in the camp.
- Environmental Protection Awareness is consistently conducted within community in the camp. UNHCR and World Vision work with 45 refugee environmental protection promoters through mass community mobilizations to spread awareness about the environment and maintain trees which have been planted in the camp.
- As of March 2023, 685 m of access roads are maintained, 619 m of drainage systems were constructed/rehabilitated and 553 m of retaining walls were built by UNHCR in the camp.
- As of the end of March 2023, 34,702 trees have been planted in Kigeme Refugee Camp including 15,250 eucalyptus, 8,842 alnus, 7,650 oranges, 150 citrus, 446 mangoes, 4,719 avocados and 489 bamboo trees. A tree nursery bed was also established to regularly produce tree seedlings which serve both Kigeme and Mugombwa Refugee Camps.

² Cash assistance for cooking energy calculation is based on family size and the firewood quantity consumption at a cost of 1 KG for 200 RWF. On average it is about 19,419,983.33 RWF per month that UNHCR disburses for cooking energy in Kigeme camp.

Livelihoods and economic inclusion

- Since 2021, with the support from Danish government, UNHCR, MINEMA and Nyamagabe District are jointly implementing climate-smart agriculture project to enhance livelihoods of refugees and their host communities in Rwanda. 59Ha of land were availed by Nyamagabe District at the Mushishito Marshland and allocated to 500 refugees and 1,048 Rwandans in the host community. So far, the development and rehabilitation of the marshland has been completed and agricultural tools were distributed for season B 2022. Furthermore, UNHCR has constructed two drying sheds and trained elected farmers agricultural best practices, climate smart agriculture, cooperative management, and agricultural entrepreneurship. In 2022, 1,427 farmers were supported with agriculture inputs, including seeds, limes, manure, insecticides, hoes and shovels, for season B 2022. As a result, good maize harvests were recorded for Season B (March-September 2022). In total, 102,314kg of maize was harvested where 53,800kg was taken home by farmers for their home consumption enhancing food security and 48,515kg was sold with total income of 29,593,870 RwF distributed to farmers. During the current 2023 season B, farmers who are part of the Mushishito Marshland project have invested their own resources to start planting.
- Within Kigeme refugee camp, UNHCR and partners support various training programs for refugees. Impact Hope has enrolled 20 youth in a nine-month TVET program and GIZ in partnership with Digital Opportunity Trust Rwanda (Dot Rwanda) started a project on career guidance and digital literacy for businesses for 21 individuals.
- In Kigeme refugee camp, as in the rest of Rwanda, UNHCR and partners support refugees through the process of 'graduating' from poverty and becoming less dependent on humanitarian aid. In partnership with World Vision through Poverty Alleviation Project (PAC), since November 2021, 350 refugees have been supported through cash grants and trainings. 276 beneficiaries, for example, have been trained on financial literacy and 50 participants on conflict resolution and peace building.
- To support refugee livelihoods, Indego Africa with UNHCR's support has trained 44 refugee women to weave handmade baskets and facilitated their access to different national and international markets to sell their products.

Durable Solutions

- UNHCR continues to identify and process cases from Kigeme refugee camp for resettlement mainly due to medical reasons.
- Legal and policy provisions exist to facilitate the local integration of refugees throughout Rwanda, including in Kigeme camp. Despite this, requests to locally integrate are few and the majority occur due to marriage between refugees and Rwandan nationals. UNHCR remains available to support refugees pursue naturalisation through legal pathways.
- Refugees in Kigeme camp primarily originate from Eastern DRC. Due to ongoing security concerns in their area of origin, UNHCR is neither promoting nor facilitating voluntary repatriation at the time being.

CONTACTS

Olivier Lompo, Head of Huye Field Office,
lompo@unhcr.org, Tel: +250-788-316-435

Ronnie Magoba, Associate Protection Officer,
magoba@unhcr.org, Tel: +250-788-308-015