Rwanda

August 2023

UNHCR relocated **2,410** asylum seekers from Nkamira Transit Centre to Mahama, Kiziba, Nyabiheke, Mugombwa and Kigeme refugee camps in August to prevent overcrowding.

In August, UNHCR announced the DAFI scholarship for the upcoming academic year. In total, UNHCR is able to support **40 refugee students** start their university education.

In collaboration with the Rwandan National Association of Deaf Women, in August, UNHCR started sign language classes for displaced people and their family members at Gikondo Community Centre.

KEY STATISTICS

134,519 refugees and asylum seekers are in Rwanda as of 31 August 2023. Mainly including people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (61.4%) and Burundi (38%). About 6,172 new asylum seekers from DRC are awaiting formal registration.

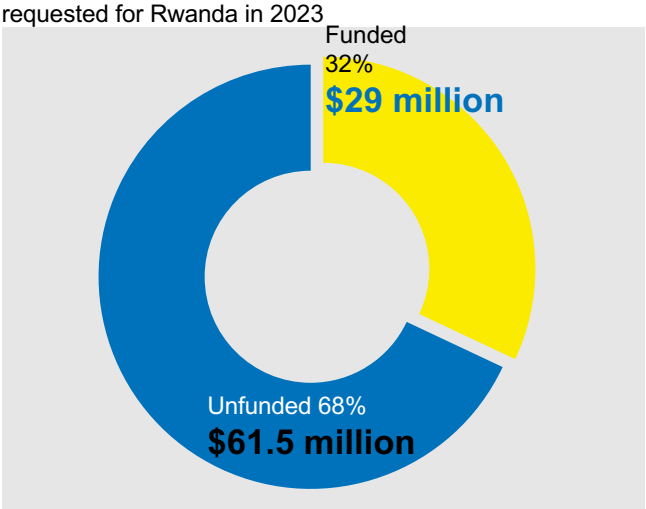
1,512 new asylum seekers from DRC arrived in Rwanda in August

5,066 refugees have departed for resettlement and **68** refugees on complementary pathways so far in 2023

FUNDING (AS OF 31 AUGUST)

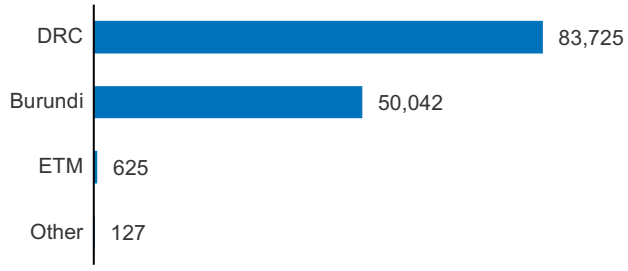
USD 90.5 million

requested for Rwanda in 2023



UNHCR Representative and the new Minister of MINEMA, Maj. Gen. Albert Murasira visit Nkamira Transit Centre. © UNHCR/Lilly Carlisle

CURRENT POPULATION



Source: © UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

Operational Context & Partners

The Government of Rwanda (GoR), through 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.

Achievements

PROTECTION

- In August, 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 Kiziba, Kigeme and Mugombwa camps. Through this process the biometrics of refugees were collected and refugee ID cards renewed, distributed or replaced. Refugee ID cards form an important means through which refugees can access national services in Rwanda. In September, the exercise will continue in remaining refugee camps in Rwanda.

- Registration of new asylum seekers from DRC continued in August in Mahama refugee camp and started in Kiziba, Nyabiheke, Mugombwa and Kigeme refugee camps following the transfer of asylum seekers from Nkamira Transit Centre. In August, 3,799 asylum seekers were officially registered. Registration will continue over the coming months to provide documentation to 11,512 asylum seekers who have sought safety in Rwanda since November 2022.

- UNHCR and partners work to ensure that children, adolescents, and youth are protected from harm and that their rights are upheld. In August 2023, throughout the country, 60 child protection cases were initiated, while 15 were closed. In addition, 28 GBV cases were opened and 15 cases were closed. During the month, Save the Children (SCI) also organized a workshop for child protection staff on mainstreaming child protection related principles across all sectors of work.

- In Rwanda, refugees can access the Isange One Stop Centres to receive support and services in cases of GBV. In August, UNHCR visited a One Stop Centre in collaboration with the Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB) to explore how to strengthen the approach in refugee hosting areas.

- UNHCR works in partnership with Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) to provide legal counselling and assistance. Throughout the month, PFR provided legal representation to refugees in 37 criminal cases and 5 civil cases. In addition, at Gikondo Community Centre in Kigali, 27 individuals from Burundi, Sudan, South Sudan and Cameroon were informed about the asylum process in Rwanda and directed to the Rwandan Government to initiate their asylum process.

- 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 August, 71 refugees made inquiries in Kigali around the themes of voluntary repatriation and de-registration.

- 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 August, UNHCR provided such assistance to 11 families in Kigali (9 Burundian and 2 Congolese) and supported some to relocate to Mahama camp from Kigali as they were unable to sustain a living in Kigali.

- In collaboration with the Rwandan National Association of Deaf Women, in August, UNHCR started sign language classes for displaced people and their family members at Gikondo Community Centre. A total of 15 individuals are enrolled in the course which is held every Saturday and Sunday and runs for the next three months.

- UNHCR works closely with the Government of Rwanda and its ministries to ensure the birth registration of all refugee children born in Rwanda. As of August 2023, the birth registration rate currently stands at 91.8 percent. Since the influx of new asylum seekers from DRC, all newborns in Nkamira Transit Centre have been issued with a birth certificate.

- 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 August, in Mahama camp for example, 7,420 children accessed CFS. Despite this, many of the CFS facilities remain old and in need of maintenance and upgrade to provide a safe and welcoming environment for the community.

- As of the end of August, 625 refugees and asylum seekers were accommodated at the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Rwanda. During the month 33 refugees departed the ETM through resettlement to third countries and 2 babies were born at the centre and issued with birth certificates. In addition, 329 individuals benefited from psychosocial counselling through UNHCR's partnership with HI.

EDUCATION

- UNHCR announced the opening of applications for the DAFI scholarship on 22 August. There are 40 new scholarships available for tertiary education courses starting in the upcoming academic year. This year, UNHCR is using an online platform to facilitate applications. UNHCR, along with WVI and MINEMA, will be reviewing all applications submitted online and conducting the selection process prior to announcing the decision to award the scholarship to best performing candidates in September.

- To support the newly arrived asylum seeker children, UNHCR has been conducting curriculum orientation sessions in refugee camps hosting new arrivals during the school holidays as well as in Nkamira Transit Centre. Once the new academic year resumes in September, asylum seeker children will be able to attend the national education system although discussions are still ongoing around the integration for children accommodated in Nkamira. In Mahama refugee camp 1,478 children (770 primary and 708 secondary) attended the orientation sessions.

- In partnership with Carnegie Mellon University Africa (CMU), UNHCR supported ICT training to 26 teachers in Mahama's Paysannat L school in August. In addition, 574 primary school teachers completed a month-long training in August on using the ProFuturo platform. The training covered the basic and advanced level of use of online and offline educational platforms with a focus on lesson plan preparation and delivery of teaching & learning using ICT devices.

- UNHCR is constructing 28 new classrooms at Paysannat L E School near Mahama refugee camp. Currently the construction is 54 percent complete with the classrooms expected to be finished in November 2023.

- As part of the ongoing preparation new academic year starting 25 September, UNHCR worked with World Vision to preposition scholastic materials in refugee camps across Rwanda. In addition, UNHCR commissioned refugee cooperatives to make school uniforms for primary school students while secondary school uniforms are made by a vender outside of the camp.

- Between 29 and 31 August, UNHCR, WVI, Profemme, Maison Shalom and SCI supported school clubs to organize a back-to-school campaign in Mahama refugee camp and the local Rwandan host community which included educational sketches, dance, awards, and speeches. The objective of the campaign was to remind parents and students the importance of education, and their respective responsibilities. Approximately 48,980 people participated.

- Training of Parent Teacher Associations (PTAs) took place in all locations during August. In Nyabiheke camp, for example, on 23 and 24 August, UNHCR and World Vision contributed to the organization of the School General Assembly Committees of five schools where refugee students living in Nyabiheke refugee camp are studying. In total, 51 refugees and Rwandans took part in the meetings where discussions took place on good school management and challenges to address ahead of the upcoming academic year.

Refugee students organized a back to school campaign in Mahama refugee camp in August. During the campaign, school clubs went door to door in the camp and the local host community to remind children of the importance of attending school.

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. On average, 22,000 primary health consultations take place every month at camp-based health centres The local Rwandan host community also have access to these health facilities. Challenges, however, remain regarding the provision of essential medicines as stocks are running low compared to the needs. At the ETM, 805 refugees received primary health care at the clinic in August, at a rate of 26 consultations per clinician per day.

- 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 August, 663 cases were referred to hospitals.

- 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. Over 6,000 refugee children between 6-23 months are currently assisted through the supplementary feeding programme.

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.

- In August, UNHCR continued to provide three hot meals a day to refugees and asylum seekers accommodated at the ETM in Rwanda. At the beginning of the month, the food menu at the ETM was redesigned and UNHCR conducted consultations with the community to advise them of the change.

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 August 2023, water supply averaged 22 litres per person per day throughout the refugee camps in Rwanda. Despite this, water facilities and infrastructure across refugee camp remains old and in urgent need of maintenance. In particular, old latrine blocks require upgrading and wastewater drainage systems needs rehabilitating to meet basic standards.

SHELTER AND NFIS

- In August, UNHCR and ADRA rehabilitated a total 64 shelters across all the camps including 33 shelters in Kigeme camp, 20 shelters in Mahama camp, 9 shelters in Mugombwa camp and 2 shelters in Kiziba camp. This brings the total number of shelters rehabilitated across the camps since the beginning of the year to 339 shelters.

- In support of the relocation of asylum seekers from Nkamira Transit Centre to Mahama camp, UNHCR identified empty shelters within the camp and allocated them to 637 asylum seekers to help them settle into the community. At Nkamira Transit Centre, asylum seekers are currently being accommodated in 45 communal hangars which have been constructed since the site's opening in January 2023. Each hangar is partitioned into 20 rooms where men and women are assigned separate living areas.

- During August, a total of 31 terraces were constructed by UNHCR and ADRA to protect shelters in high-risk areas, this includes: 16 terraces in Kigeme camp and 15 terraces in Mugombwa camp, which brings the total number of terraces constructed for the year to 80 terraces.

- In August, 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. In August, 634 refugees received monthly cash assistance of 50,000 RWF.

- From 28 August to 5 September, UNHCR worked with Equity Bank to conduct bank registration for refugees and asylum seekers in Mahama refugee camp in particular targeting the newly registered Congolese asylum seekers. In total, 891 households were issued with bank cards which will enable them to receive cash for food and NFI's instead of in-kind assistance in future months.

- In August, UNHCR distributed 442 kitchen sets to 942 refugees and asylum seekers in Mahama refugee camp. In addition, blankets, jerry cans and sleeping mats were provided to refugees who had been transferred from urban areas to Mahama refugee camp to help them settle into their new environment.

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 August, 14,061 gas cylinders were refilled and distributed in Mahama refugee camp, including 637 to newly arrived Congolese asylum seekers.

- In 2018, UNHCR introduced a cash assistance programme to ensure refugees receive monthly cash payments that enable them to have the financial resources to purchase gas for cooking and other

energy needs in Kiziba, Nyabiheke, and Kigeme camps. Despite this, due to a lack of funding no cash for energy was distributed in August. As a result, refugees in Kiziba, Nyabiheke, and Kigeme camps struggled to meet their energy needs.

- Ahead of the rainy season, UNHCR and World Vision started preparations for tree planting. In Mahama refugee camp over 70,000 tree seedings were prepared. In addition, together with partners, UNHCR conducted a community mobilization campaign around the protection of the environment through preventing cutting down trees.

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 livelihoods and self-reliance through the Misizi (covering Mugombwa camp), Nyabicwamba (covering Nyabiheke Refugee Camp), and Mushishito (covering Kigeme Refugee Camp) marshlands. Following harvests in July, in August, UNHCR supported refugee and Rwandan farmers to sell their produce at market. In Nyabicwamba marshland, the cooperative sold their soyabean harvest to African Improved Foods. In addition, preparations for planting for season A 2024 began with Irish Potatoes planted in Mushishito marshland and the acquisition of agricultural inputs, including purchase of maize seeds, completed in Nyabicwamba marshland.

- In August, a total of 131 refugees and 55 Rwandans participated in livelihoods trainings such as ICT, tailoring and hairdressing at the ETM. In addition, 91 refugees participated in language classes in English, French, and/or Kinyarwanda.

- On 29 August, a job fair organized by GIZ took place in Kirehe district which aimed at linking employers and job seekers. UNHCR supported refugees from Mahama refugee camp to take part in coordination with livelihood partners.

- In August, UNHCR supported the call for refugee youth to apply for the annual Youth Connect Business Competition and Award 2023. Around 670 applications were received in total. When the winners are announced, an estimated 100 refugee-owned businesses receive a grant of about RWF400,000 to scale up their businesses in and outside the camp while contributing to the development of their communities.

- UNHCR partnered with UNLEASH Innovation Lab in August to support refugees apply to take place in their Innovation Lab scheduled to take place in December 2023. Over 300 applications were received from refugee youth interest in the opportunity.

DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- For the year 2023, UNHCR Rwanda has received resettlement quota for 5,758 individuals to USA, Belgium, Norway, Canada, France, and Finland. By the end of August 2023, UNHCR has submitted

4,582 individuals are submitted to resettlement countries. 5,066 refugees have departed for resettlement and 68 refugees departed through complementary pathways.

- In total, 30,782 Burundian refugees have returned home from Rwanda since 2020 including 325 so far in 2023. In August, however, no return convoys were organized.

- On 9 August, in collaboration with UNHCR Zambia, the Rwanda operation facilitated the voluntary repatriation of two Rwanda refugee returnees from Zambia. In addition, 88 Rwandan refugees returned from DRC in August. By the end of the month, 50 individuals had returned to their areas of origin while 38 returnees were still being accommodated at Nyarushishi Transit Centre.

- 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. In August, UNHCR transferred the final cash grant to 178 Rwandan returnees.

MISSIONS, DELEGATIONS AND EVENTS

- On 02 August, a Government delegation comprised of officials from MINEMA, Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), Ministry of Local Government (MINALOC), Ministry of Interior (MININTER), Gender Monitoring Office (GMO), Rwanda Human Right Commission (RHRC), and National Child Development Commission (NCDC) visited the ETM to learn more about the situation of refugees and asylum seekers accommodated there.

- In August, UNHCR conducted field missions to Mahama, Kiziba, Kigeme and Nyabiheke refugee camps alongside counterparts from MINEMA to assess the impact of pledges made at the 2019 Global Refugee Forum (GRF) on refugee communities in Rwanda. Focus group discussions were held in each camp and the feedback will be considered during the upcoming 2023 GRF.

- From 06 August, UNHCR has been facilitating the mission of USCIS who are carrying out resettlement interviews to meet the US quota for 2023. During their mission which ends on 13 September, they intend to interview 1,115 refugees for resettlement. On 28 August, the USCIS team also visited the ETM to get a better understanding of the living conditions of refugees temporarily hosted there, some of whom are in the pipeline for US resettlement.

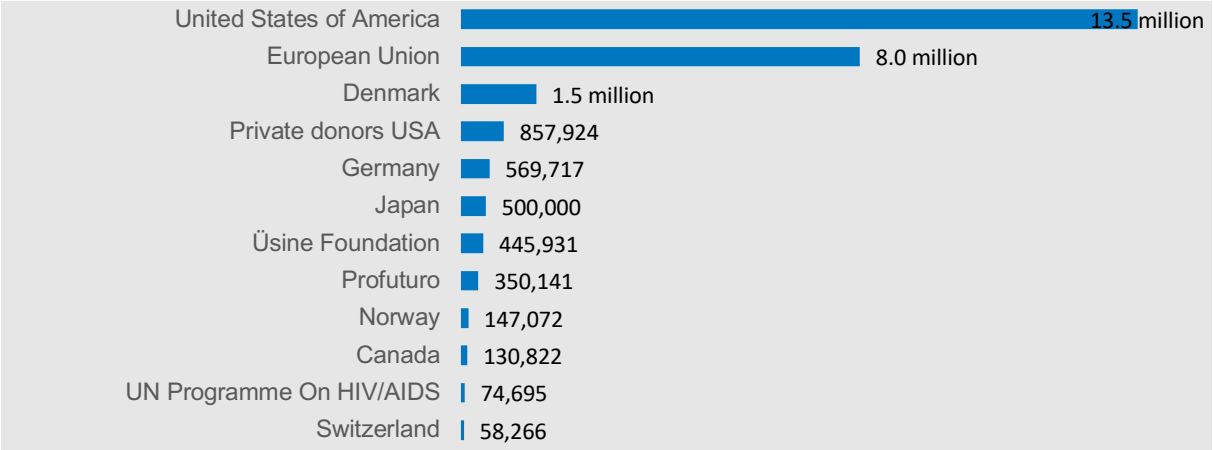
- Between 14 to 25 August, the Belgian federal agency for asylum seekers' reception (Fedasil) conducted cultural orientation training in Kigali. They provided information to 140 refugees from DRC who have been approved for resettlement in Belgium. The delegation also visited Nyabiheke refugee camp on 14 August to learn and understand more about the refugee situation in Rwanda.

- On 17 August, a team from the Rwandan Ministry of Health visited Mahama refugee camp to assess the capacity of the health facilities in the camp.
- On 24 August, UNHCR supported the visit of a Political Officer from the US Embassy in Kigai to Huye and Mugombwa refugee camp to learn more about the refugee situation in Rwanda and the impact of US funding to UNHCR.
- On 30 August, the new Minister of MINEMA, Maj. Gen. Albert Murasira visited Nkamira Transit Centre alongside UNHCR Representative.

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 35.6 million | Italy 8.8 million | Private donors Australia 6.9 million | Private donors Germany 4.4 million | Australia 3.9 million | Canada 3.9 million | Private donors USA 3.2 million | Finland 3.1 million | Private donors United Kingdom 2.4 million

UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of unearmarked contributions.

Sweden 69 million | Norway 63.1 million | Private donors Spain 43.2 million | Netherlands 36.3 million | Denmark 35.6 million | Private donors Japan 30 million | United Kingdom 28.9 million | France 26.7 million | Private donors Republic of Korea 23.5 million | Germany 23.1 million | Switzerland 18.9 million | Private donors Italy 13.7 million | Belgium 11.9 million | Ireland 11.9 million

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