UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

FACTSHEET

Emergency Transit Mechanism, Rwanda

November 2023

Since the inception of the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM), **1,906 people** were evacuated from Libya in **15 evacuation flights** to the ETM. They came from **10 countries,** including Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Chad, Cameroon, Guinea, and Mali.

While **609** people are still waiting at the ETM, **1,340** people have departed through resettlement to third countries including Norway, Sweden, Canada, France, Belgium, the Netherlands, Finland, and the USA.

On **November 16,** UNHCR organized the 15th evacuation flight from Libya to Rwanda. The ETM remains a life-saving mechanism to allow critical life-saving assistance and protection, as well as case processing for durable solutions.

ETM OVERVIEW

Libya is a major transit route for refugees hoping to reach Europe through the Mediterranean Sea. The unstable situation combined with periodic fighting has caused widespread suffering. Many refugees and asylum seekers in the country have been held under dire conditions, including detention, where abuse is rife and violence a potent threat. UNHCR has been at the forefront in efforts to assist the most vulnerable, including relocating the refugees and asylum seekers to safe and secure places outside Libya.

Through the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) signed in 2019, and valid to 31 December 2023, UNHCR in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda (GoR) and the African Union (AU) established an ETM Centre in Gashora Sector, Bugesera District, Rwanda. The ETM can currently support up to 700 refugees and asylum seekers at any given time. Its main aim is to temporarily host refugees and asylum seekers who have undertaken voluntary evacuation from Libya. While in the ETM, the asylum seekers go through refugee case processing undertaken by UNHCR to determine if they meet the requirements for durable solutions. Three durable solutions of return to their countries, integration within Rwanda and resettlement are on offer to refugees at the ETM. To date, all refugees have opted for resettlement from the ETM.

POPULATION FIGURES AND STATISTICS

Evacuated	Evacuation Flights
1,906	15
Present in Rwanda	**Countries of Origin**
609	10
Children	**Unaccompanied Children**
176	40
Departures from ETM	**Remaining Capacity**
1,340	91

The 15th evacuation from Libya to Rwanda was received in ETM Gashora on 16th November 2023 consisting of 169 asylum seekers. ©UNHCR

CONTACTS

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Partners and Coordination

UNHCR's Office in Nyamata oversees the ETM Operation with a workforce of 40 persons including 19 international and 21 national staff.

UNHCR and the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) coordinate together the refugee response operation in Rwanda, including at the ETM Centre in Gashora. At the ETM, UNHCR works in partnership with MINEMA and seven NGOs who deliver live-saving protection, basic assistance, and essential services to the refugees and asylum seekers. These include:

MINEMA: camp coordination, management, and security.

ADRA: food Security (catering), warehousing and distribution management of non-food items (NFIs).

World Vision International (WVI): water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH), as well as vocational/skills training.

African Humanitarian Action (AHA): healthcare services, reproductive health and HIV services as well as nutritional wellbeing**.**

Humanity & Inclusion (HI): support for persons with specific needs and psychosocial support.

Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR): legal assistance, and civil documentation/registration; and community-based protection.

Save the Children International (SCI): prevention of gender-based violence (GBV) and child protection (CP)

Rwanda Red Cross/International Committee of the Red Cross (ICRC): family reunification and first aid.

International Organization for Migration (IOM) is a UN Agency working in the field of migration. UNHCR cooperates with them around refugee resettlement.

Celebration of the World Children's Day in the ETM Gashora, on 20th November 20, 2023. ©SCI

Main Activities

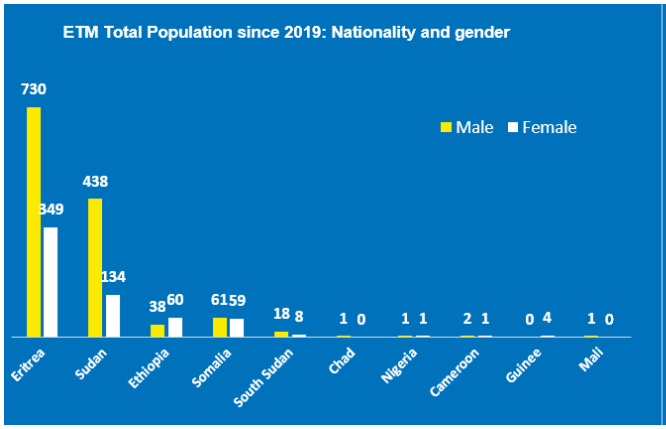
PROTECTION

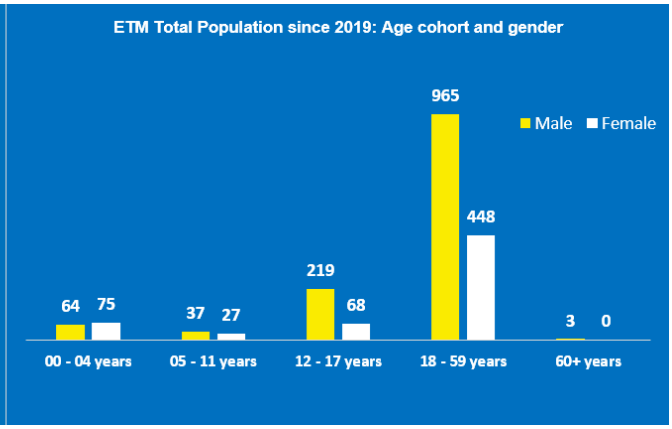
Protection Delivery: UNHCR mainstreams protection principles throughout all the humanitarian services it provides at the ETM. The key activities to ensure the protection of refugees and asylum seekers include registration, documentation, community engagement, psychosocial support (PSS), legal assistance, child protection (CP) case management, protection monitoring, youth inclusion, and activities to prevent the occurrence of Gender Based Violence (GBV).

Registration and documentation: Since the opening of the ETM in 2019, UNHCR has registered 1,906 people evacuated from Libya (see graphic below), and 47 babies born at the ETM. Upon arrival at the ETM, UNHCR conducts a verification exercise for all refugees and asylum seekers and assists them in obtaining proof of registration. These documents allow the refugee status determination process to subsequently begin. Refugees and asylum seekers who arrived during the 15th evacuation flight started going through this process at the end of November.

Gender-based violence (GBV): UNHCR and its partners ensure GBV prevention within the ETM and provide GBV response services for victims/survivors in a timely and sustained manner. In this regard, interagency standard operating procedures have been established to support partners to coordinate and implement safe and accessible GBV response, risk mitigation and prevention interventions. GBV incidents faced by individuals in the ETM include intimate partner violence, early child pregnancy, denial of resources and rape. Eighty per cent of incidents occurred while in Libya or country of origin. As a result, UNHCR and partners conduct regular GBV awareness campaigns, follow-up on case management, and examine GBV trends to inform advocacy and future programing on potential gaps. In November, UNHCR and partners working at the ETM also observed 16 days of activism against Gender Based Violence through celebrations and engagements with refugees and host communities.

Child Protection: Together with partners, UNHCR has ensured that Best Interest Assessment (BIA) and Best Interest Determination (BID) procedures are operational to identify the best course of action in child protection cases. In addition, UNHCR and partners ensure that children at risk, including those under foster care arrangements, are identified, supported, and assisted. All services offered are designed to create an enabling environment that respects the rights of children and ensures that child-centred programming is integrated in all sectors. In addition, a child friendly space is in operation at the ETM providing a safe space for children of all ages to learn, play and receive tailored support.



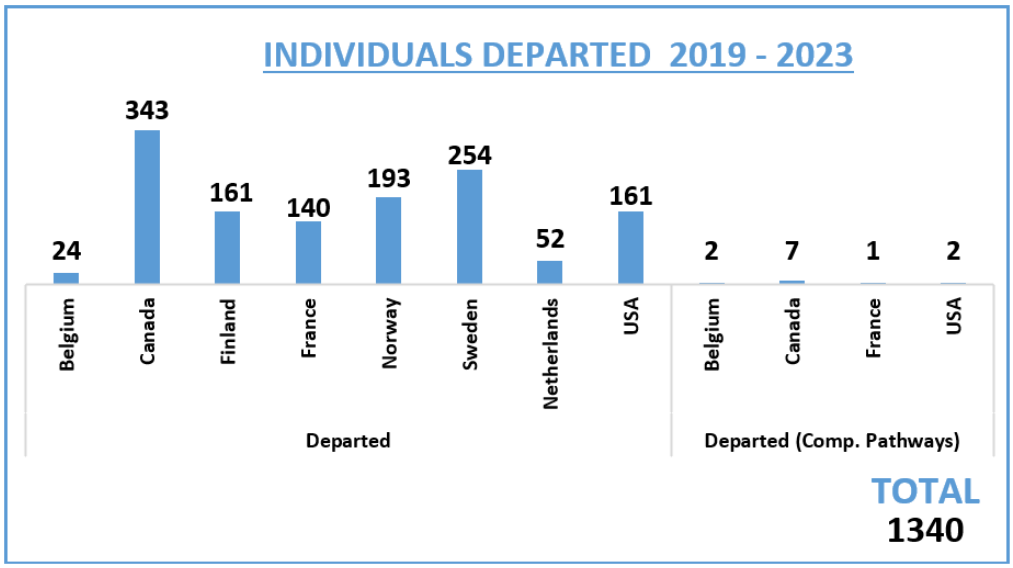


CASE PROCESSING FOR SOLUTIONS

Refugee Status Determination (RSD): All refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya undergo case processing for solutions starting with the RSD process. UNHCR determines whether they meet the refugee criteria in accordance with the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees. Granting of refugee status is an important mechanism to enable resettlement to third countries and prevent refoulment of refugees to their countries of origin. To date, RSD has been carried out for **1,744** individuals.

Country of Origin	Female	Male	Grand Total
Cameroon	3	0	**3**
Chad	0	1	**1**
Eritrea	336	677	**1013**
Ethiopia	52	33	**85**
Guinea	4	0	**4**
Mali	0	1	**1**
Nigeria	1	1	**2**
Somalia	52	57	**109**
South Sudan	7	11	**18**
Sudan	118	390	**508**
Grand Total	**573**	**1171**	**1,744**

Resettlement: Since the opening of the ETM in 2019, a total of 1,340 individuals departed through resettlement and complementary pathways to eight resettlement countries (Finland, Belgium, France, Norway, Canada, Sweden, Netherlands, and the USA). UNHCR continues to advocate for increased resettlement opportunities for the most vulnerable groups as resettlement remains the most viable durable solution for refugees evacuated from Libya to the ETM in Rwanda. In November, 1 case was interviewed for resettlement and 88 individuals departed from the ETM.



BASIC NEEDS AND ESSENTIAL SERVICES

- **Basic assistance** is provided to ETM refugees and asylum seekers, including shelter, bedding, food, electricity, clean water, hygiene essentials, and core relief items shortly after arrival in Rwanda. Following their registration and enrolment in the cash assistance systems, basic needs assistance is provided through cash-based interventions (CBI), where each refugee receives an RWF 100,000 ($95) arrival package, followed by a monthly RWF 50,000 (~$45) to meet their daily non-food basic needs.

- **Healthcare services including reproductive health, nutrition and HIV services** are accessible, free of charge on 24/7 basis for all refugees and asylum seekers at the health clinic run by AHA. Where individual may require secondary or tertiary healthcare services, UNHCR and the health partner (AHA) refer those cases to secondary and tertiary level hospitals. In November, 18 people referred to further treatment and one birth was assisted during the month. The health clinic also operates ambulance services for emergency cases and referrals cases. In addition, mental health services are provided. For nutrition, UNHCR and partners provide supplementary feeding to 26 children under two years old and 67 adults with special nutrition needs. Regular nutrient deficiency screenings are also conducted.

- For **food assistance:** refugees, and asylum seekers at the ETM receive three meals a day provided by UNHCR and ADRA. In November, 660 refugees and asylum seekers were fed through this programme. UNHCR also supports people with special needs through the provision of gas (LPG) and dry food to supplement their nutritional needs and enable cooking at home with dignity.

- **Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) services:**
  Water is supplied to the ETM from the main national water grid, through the government run Water and Sanitation Cooperation (WASAC). The average water consumption in November 2023 was 79 litres per person per day for both drinking and domestic use. Moreover, as the UNHCR's WASH partner, WVI conducts regular monitoring of water quality to ensure proper free chlorine levels prior distribution.
  - **Sanitation** services are regularly provided by WVI. The ETM counts 40 shower rooms and 30 modern bathrooms, as well as 68 drop-holes. Solid and liquid waste is also regularly collected and disposed.
  - **Hygiene promotion** activities take place regularly with hygiene promoters from the community encouraging their fellow refugees adopt best hygiene practices.

- **Infrastructure:** Since its opening, UNHCR has expanded the availability, accessibility and quality of accommodation provided at the ETM. The key infrastructure developments include a two-storey building (the *Ikaze Residence* Apartment) with the capacity to host 360 persons. There are also 30 accommodation houses that host 340 individuals. In addition, UNHCR constructed a health clinic and an office block in previous years that are all fully operational. Construction of a one-stop community multipurpose centre has also been completed and was inaugurated in September 2023: it currently hosts psychosocial support and learning services. To manage rainwater and prevent soil erosion/degradation, UNHCR previously constructed a drainage system for the whole of the ETM of 2,495 m. Repairs and maintenance of diverse offices, community spaces and accommodations are regularly conducted. These developments have been critical to enable safe shelter and a conducive environment to deliver services.

VOCATIONAL AND SKILLS TRAINING

- UNHCR and partners deliver a range of vocational and skills-based training at the ETM to empower the refugees and ensure that they gain useful skills which will also help them integrate when resettled or find durable solutions. Based on the proposal and feedback from the community, different trainings are delivered to both the refugees and the host community. Activities aim to boost resilience as well as encourage peaceful coexistence.

- Courses provided in November 2023 included hairdressing, tailoring as well as ICT skills. Language classes in English, French and Kinyarwanda are also delivered by UNHCR and WVI. A total of 133 refugees, asylum seekers and host community members benefited from the skills training in November 2023. An additional 34 refugees and asylum seekers attended language classes.

Skills Training	Active Refugees & Asylum Seekers			Host Community		
	Male	Female	Total	Male	Female	Total
Languages	22	12	**34**	0	0	**0**
ICT	17	9	**26**	13	2	**15**
Tailoring	8	5	**13**	0	27	**27**
Hairdressing	5	7	**12**	12	28	**40**
Total	**52**	**33**	**85**	**25**	**57**	**82**