Rwanda

March 2024

On 21 and 27 March, UNHCR Rwanda received two flights as part of the 17th convoy of refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya to the ETM in Rwanda. In total, **187 refugees and asylum seekers** were received.

In March, **133 Rwandan refugees repatriated home** from DRC. UNHCR provided cash assistance to help their reintegration.

UNHCR rehabilitated over **100 refugee shelters** in March across a variety of refugee camps to help maintain adequate standards of living for the refugee population.

KEY STATISTICS

135,109 refugees and asylum seekers are in Rwanda as of 31 March 2024. Mainly including people from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (62%) and Burundi (37%).

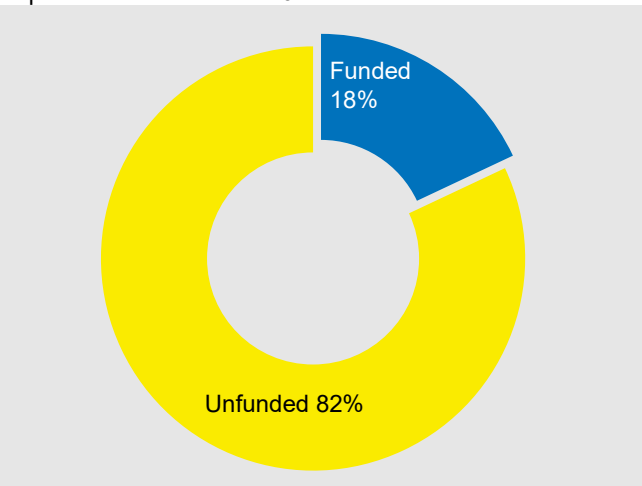
252 asylum seekers from DRC arrived in Rwanda in March 2024.

1,495 refugees were submitted for resettlement so far in 2023

FUNDING NEEDS

USD 91.7 million

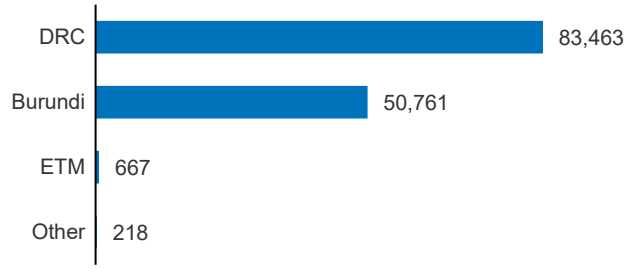
requested for Rwanda in 2024





Josseline, a science teacher at Paysannat L school near Mahama refugee camp, uses the ProFuturo connected learning platform during her biology class.

CURRENT POPULATION



Source: © UNHCR, The UN Refugee Agency

Operational Context & Partners

The Government of Rwanda (GoR), through the 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 2024, UNHCR works directly with eight 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.

PROTECTION

- UNHCR works closely with the Government of Rwanda, specifically Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration, to issue refugee ID cards to refugees over 16 years old. Currently the Refugee ID coverage stands at 86 percent.
- UNHCR works in partnership with Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) to provide legal counselling and assistance. In March, 37 criminal cases and 3 civil cases were assisted before the courts. In addition, 26 asylum seekers from Burundi, Sudan, Afghanistan, DRC, South Sudan, Ethiopia, and Cameroon were provided counselling about asylum procedures and supported to submit their asylum application to the Rwandan Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE).
- In March, 252 new asylum seekers fled from DRC to Rwanda and were initially accommodated at Nkamira Transit centre. As of the end of the month, Nkamira hosted 5,945 individuals, while 8,159 asylum seekers have been transferred to existing refugee camps in Rwanda.
- 33 percent of the refugee population were born in Rwanda. The birth registration rate among refugees born in Rwanda irrespective of age stands at 93%, and for children below 5 years of age the coverage stands at 97%. UNHCR continues to work with the Government of Rwanda and associated ministries to improve the birth registration rates as refugees are included within the national Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system. In March, UNHCR assisted in the processing of 485 birth certificates for urban refugees.
- 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 March, 189 displaced persons made inquiries in Kigali with 26 percent of requests concerning health care and community-based health insurance (CBHI) enrolment.
- On 14 March, UNHCR organized a mobile outreach mission to Muhanga to address the needs of the urban population living there. 33 individuals attended the community meeting where issues related to CBHI, financial assistance and livelihood opportunities were discussed. During the meeting refugees raised concerns on economic hardship that has impact their children's education, ranging from an inability to purchase scholastic materials to cases of school drop-out.
- In Rwanda, UNHCR partners with Humanity and Inclusion (HI) to support people with specific needs. In March, a range of mental health and psychosocial support services continued to be provided to refugees with specific needs across all camp location. In Nyabiheke refugee camp, HI also conducted a training for refugee community workers about how to better identify and support individuals with disabilities and the services available to them.
- UNHCR in Rwanda provides urgent 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 2024, this assistance is directly provided by Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) as part of UNHCR's partnership agreement

with them. During the month, eight refugee families (Burundi, Sudanese and Afghani) were supported to move from Kigali to Mahama refugee camp through this assistance due to a lack of means to sustain living in an urban environment.

- International Women's Day was observed in March across all refugee hosting locations in Rwanda under the theme "Invest in women: Accelerate progress". An event held in Mahama refugee camp featured drama, modern dance, and testimonies from refugee women. Awards were also distributed to the four best performing girls enrolled in TVET and one refugee businesswomen selected by the Refugee Executive Committee. In Nyabiheke camp, 17 refugee couples also used the occasion to celebrate their marriage.

EDUCATION

- For the 2023/24 academic year, the gross enrolment rate for refugee students currently stands at 91 percent. Among these students, on average 96 percent of students are attending school regularly.
- On 9 March, an information session organized by the German Academic Exchange Service (DAAD), UNHCR, World Vision, and Independent University of Kigali was organized for 96 graduates (69 refugee and 26 national) to increase awareness of former DAFI students regarding the DAAD scholarship opportunity, including the process and timelines for the upcoming call for application in April 2024.
- In collaboration with MINEMA, UNHCR, and World Vision, the registration of new students for the upcoming academic year is currently ongoing at Kepler University in Kiziba camp. In addition, Kepler in partnership with World Vision launched a pilot project called 'Giveback' in Kiziba. The project aims at improving the English language and technology skills of the students and teachers at camp-based secondary school in Kiziba. A total of 120 students and 10 teachers in upper secondary level are taking part in the project.
- Together with World Vision, UNHCR has been supporting students in grades P6, S3 and S6 register for the national exams which are scheduled for July. The exam registration process in Rwanda is conducted electronically on a national platform.
- A joint inspection of the water supply system at Paysannat L, A, B, C&D schools in Mahama camp was carried out in March with the support of UNHCR, WVI, AYATEKE and the school management. Almost 40 percent of the water collection points and taps were found old/ damaged. The school management has promised to rehabilitate some of these water collections points during the holiday season.
- The construction work of a latrine with 10 stances at new ECD center in Mahama has been completed. In addition, preparations for the finalization of 28 new classrooms at Paysannat L school in Mahama camp is ongoing with the procurement of over 800 new desks. The new ECD centre and the 28 classrooms are expected to be functional before end of the current academic year.

HEALTH AND NUTRITION

- UNHCR is managing eight camp-based health care facilities in Rwanda in cooperation with Save the Children (SCI) 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 in cooperation with district government health centres. In March, 18,207 primary health care consultations took place at

the camp-based facilities making the ratio 42 consultations per day, per clinician. The local Rwandan host community also have access to these health facilities free of charge.

- 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 March, 313 cases were referred to hospitals for further treatment.
- At the ETM, 322 primary health consultations took place at the clinic in March, an average of 23 persons per clinician day. In addition, 21 refugees were referred to hospitals for treatment, one new baby was born, and contraceptive services were provided to 35 women. Following recent evacuation flights to the ETM, 6 children with malnutrition were admitted to the supplementary feeding programme at the ETM to address nutrition deficiencies.
- 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. 6,009 refugee children between 6-23 months and 2,2,875 pregnant/lactating refugee women are currently assisted through the supplementary feeding programme. In addition, 13 severely acute malnutrition and 58 moderately acute malnutrition refugee children were newly admitted into nutrition programmes for treatment.
- In Mahama refugee camp, in collaboration with Save the Children and Kirehe District, a Health Week in all sectors including Mahama refugee camp between 4 and 8 March under the theme, “UBUZIMA BUZIMA AKABANDO K’IMINSI’’. The health week aimed to prioritize community well-being and promote a culture of health and wellness with the district. In addition, a training was organized in Mahama camp in March for 87 refugee community health workers to strengthen their capacity on case management for illnesses among children under five and community-based maternal and newborn health.

FOOD SECURITY

- In support of the World Food Programme (WFP) cash assistance for food programme in refugee camps across Rwanda, UNHCR provides 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, while 6 percent of refugees are moderately vulnerable. As part of the cash transfers for food assistance distributed by WFP refugees in the highly vulnerable category receive 8,500 RWF a month while moderately vulnerable receive 4,250 RWF. In addition, asylum seekers in Nkamira Transit Centre receive two meals a day from WFP.
- In support of school feeding programmes, UNHCR provides briquettes to Early Childhood Development (nursery) centres in refugee camps. For primary and secondary schools, the Government has the responsibility for school feeding and WFP also supports by contributing 90 percent of the cost of refugee school feeding directly to the Government of Rwanda.
- In March, UNHCR continued to provide three hot meals a day to refugees and asylum seekers accommodated at the ETM in Rwanda.

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 March, water supply averaged 20.7 litres per person

per day throughout the refugee camps in Rwanda. Despite this, water supply remains a challenge in Nyabiheke and Kigeme.

- In March, UNHCR in partnership with World Vision, distributed 2,345 litres of liquid soap for handwashing and other cleaning practices to stave off diarrheal diseases in all sites. Throughout the month, UNHCR also worked to remove sludge from septic tanks across the camps and dispose of garbage.
- In Nkamira transit centre, UNHCR has finalized the construction of latrines, showers, and other WASH facilities to meet the needs of 7,200 asylum seekers from DRC who can be hosted at the transit centre. Currently there are 21.0 litres of clean water per person per day, 44 persons per latrine drop hole and 46 persons per shower stance.
- A feasibility study for the solarization of water pumps and healthcare facilities in Mahama, Nyabiheke, Mugombwa and Kigeme refugee camps was completed in March 2024 alongside detailed designs as part of UNHCR's Project Flow. UNHCR will be following up in 2024 to realize the solarization of such facilities.

SHELTER AND NFIS

- During the month of March 2024, UNHCR rehabilitated a total of 103 shelters across the camps, this includes: 44 shelters in Mahama camp, 30 shelters in Nyabiheke camp, 11 shelters in Mugombwa camp,10 shelters in Kigeme camp and 8 shelters in Kiziba camp. This brings the total number of shelters rehabilitated across the camps for the year 2024 to 209 shelters. An additional three shelters in Nyabiheke refugee camp were also constructed during the month.
- In March, UNHCR provided monthly cash assistance to refugees accommodated at the ETM. In addition, bank registration processes for refugees and asylum seekers who were evacuated to the ETM Rwanda recently were completed.

ENERGY AND ENVIRONMENT

- UNHCR provides gas for clean cooking / energy in kind for refugees in Mahama and Mugombwa refugee camps in the form of Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG). LPG cookers emit 50 times fewer pollutants than cooking stoves fuelled by biomass such as mud stoves. In total, 20,269 LPG gas cylinders were distributed in March across both camps.
- UNHCR distributes cash assistance for energy to refugees in Kiziba, Nyabiheke and Kigeme refugee camps to ensure refugees have the financial resources to purchase gas for cooking and other energy needs. In 2024, UNHCR will provide cash assistance for energy on a quarterly basis.
- In March, 762 trees were planted in and nearby Mahama refugee camp to protect the environment and prevent soil erosion.

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 enhance refugee and Rwandan host community livelihoods and self-reliance through the Misizi (covering Mugombwa camp),

Nyabicwamba (covering Nyabiheke Refugee Camp), and Mushishito (covering Kigeme Refugee Camp) marshlands. In March, crop season B for 2024 started, with farmers in Nyabicwamba marshland sowing soyabean seeds for cultivation. Refugee farmers bought the seeds and fertilizers by their own means through a local agro-dealership scheme.

- In March, 246 refugees and asylum seekers and 75 host community members benefited from skills training such as ICT, tailoring and hairdressing courses at the ETM. In addition, 113 refugees participated in English, French and Kinyarwanda language classes. Registration is also ongoing for driving courses set to start at the ETM in April 2024. So far 247 candidates were registered, from which 122 students will be selected. Additionally, in March, a 4-day training on entrepreneurship and business planning was provided to 26 refugees who graduated from the ETM vocation training programmes. This is envisioned to empower them to utilize the gained skills in business and income generation.
- As part of UNHCR's livelihood programme in partnership with Caritas Rwanda to encourage refugee self-reliance, 345 refugee businesses in Mahama refugee camp were supported with mentoring to ensure they are maximising the start-up grants that were distributed in 2023.
- On the 14 of March, the Rwanda Digital Financial Inclusion Community of Practice (CoP) of the KUHI (Kubaka Ubushobozi Hifashishijwe Ikoranabuhanga) consortium was launched. Representatives from the government, UN agencies, I/NGOs, financial institutions, Mobile Network Operators, ICT chamber, private sector, academia, and commercial banks joined the inauguration of the CoP and recognized the importance of technology and its impact of forcibly displaced persons. UNHCR as part of the consortium will be following-up with the different stakeholders on the recommendations agreed upon during the event.
- As part of self-reliance programming, refugees in Rwanda are often encouraged to save through local savings groups. In March, with support from the Poverty Alleviation Coalition project run by World Vision, 26 savings groups in Kigeme refugee camp shared out their annual savings of RWF 42,115, 454 (USD 32,600), while in Mugombwa refugee camp, saving groups have been able to save up to RWF 43,190,190 (USD 33,500). Refugee and Rwandan host communities who received the proceeds from their savings were encouraged to invest the money in income generating activities.



DURABLE SOLUTIONS

- In 2024, UNHCR Rwanda received submission resettlement quota of 7,037 individuals. By the end of March 2024, 1,495 individuals are submitted to resettlement countries. 2,162 refugees have departed for resettlement and 12 refugees departed through complementary pathways.
- On 21 March the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS) concluded a round of resettlement interviews in Rwanda where they interviewed 725 cases of 1,695 refugees. The mission reported a 98% acceptance rate for the cases that were adjudicated.
- In addition, in March UNHCR supported resettlement selection missions conducted by France and Canada in Rwanda. In total 156 refugees were interviewed by France and 175 by Canada.
- So far in 2024, UNHCR has supported 95 Burundian refugees to repatriate home from Rwanda. This brings the total to 30,877 Burundian refugees who have returned home from Rwanda since 2020. An additional 208 Burundian refugees have expressed their intention to repatriate over the coming months.
- In March, UNHCR supported the return of 133 Rwandan refugees from DRC and provided cash assistance to assist their reintegration.

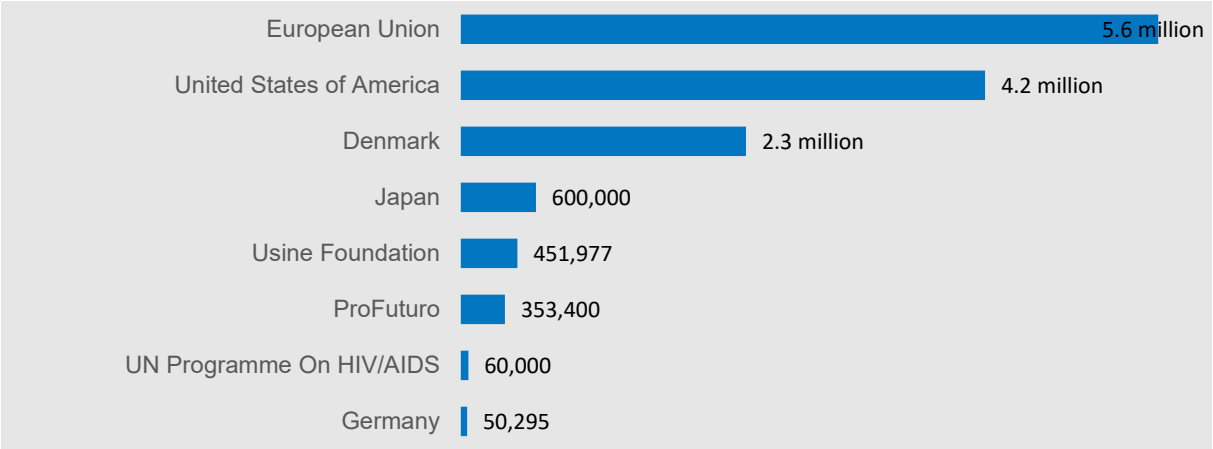
MISSIONS, DELEGATIONS AND EVENTS

- On 9 March, a delegation from the United Nations Regional Office for Central Africa and Communaute Economique des Etats d'Afrique Centrale (CEEAC) visited Nkamira Transit Centre. The purpose of their visit was to gain insight into the situation in Eastern DRC and subsequent influx into Rwanda. The delegation expressed appreciation for the work being done and pledged to contribute to advocating for peace in DRC.
- During the week beginning 4 March, Congolese refugees residing refugee camps in Rwanda conducted a series of peaceful demonstrations to denounce the ongoing killing of Kinyarwanda speaking Congolese living in DR Congo, while calling for intervention on the International Community for peace to prevail in DR Congo to enable them return home.
- On 11 March UNHCR colleagues, the Kirehe district, MINEMA camp manager, partners and refugee representatives participated in a workshop on Inclusive Market Access for Refugees-Value Added Initiatives to Boast Employment (VIBE) planned to be rolled out in Mahama refugee camp and the host community by the International Trade Centre (ITC). A similar workshop was held in Kabarore district on 12 March to launch the project in Nyabiheke refugee camp.
- From 11 – 15 March, OHCHR Special Rapporteur on the human rights situation in Burundi visited Rwanda meeting with UNHCR Representative in Kigali as well as conducting a two-day visit to Mahama refugee camp and Burundian urban refugees living in Huye. The aim of the visit was to better understand the current situation of Burundian refugees and to gather information on the human rights situation back in Burundi.
- On 13 March, the German Ambassador visited Mahama refugee camp, accompanied by UNHCR, WFP, GIZ, and MINEMA. She visited a range of sites and activities in the camp including meeting the Refugee Executive Committee, visited UNHCR's registration centre and Payasanat L schools to learn education and school feeding programmes.
- On 14 March, GIZ organised an event to present and review ECOREF (Economic Inclusion of refugees and host community in Rwanda) project accomplishments, identify the lessons learnt and discuss opportunities for follow up and continuation by partners and other local stakeholders after it closes in August 2024. The event featured remarks by HE the Ambassador of Germany, Ms. Heike Uta Dettmann; Mr. Bruno Rangira, Mayor of Kirehe District, the Camp Manager for Mahama and UNHCR as well as a small exhibition of products made by refugees and Rwandans who have been supported by the project.
- Between 26-28 March in Gasabo district and 27-29 March in Nyarungenge district, UNHCR facilitated the participation of refugees in local district open days during which refugee business exhibited their products and UNHCR explained to the public its work in Rwanda highlighting refugees' skills, rights and inclusion in national systems.

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 2024 | USD



UNEARMARKED CONTRIBUTIONS | USD

Special thanks to the major donors of other softly earmarked and unearmarked contributions.

SOFTLY EARMARKED

United States of America 8.6 million | Norway 2.8 million

UNEARMARKED

Sweden 90.6 million | Norway 58.9 million | Netherlands 36.3 million | Denmark 35.6 million | United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland 28.5 million | Switzerland 19.2 million | Republic of Korea 17.9 million | Ireland 13.6 million | Belgium 11 million | Australia 10.7 million

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