

Rwanda: COI Compilation Asylum system



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Purpose of this document

In April 2022, the UK government announced plans to relocate asylum seekers from the UK to Rwanda to have their asylum cases adjudicated, and if recognised as refugees, to start a new life there. Asylos produced this compilation of Country of Origin Information (COI) in response to high demand for information illustrating the conditions that asylum seekers relocated could face in Rwanda. In order to ensure timely publication, the research terms of reference focus on select issues relating to the conditions experienced by refugees and asylum seekers in Rwanda. The terms of reference were produced with input from the legal community, and was influenced by Asylos' recently published [Commentary on the UK Home Office Country Policy and Information Note: Rwanda, asylum system, and the related Country Policy and Information Note: Rwanda, assessment](#). This COI compilation may be subject to future updates, depending on demand.

Disclaimer

This COI compilation is intended as background reference material for legal representatives and those assisting asylum seekers who are informed of the Home Office's intention to relocate them to Rwanda, to assist in the preparation of their case. The COI compilation should be used as a tool to help identify relevant COI. Legal representatives are welcome to submit relevant excerpts cited in this document to decision makers (including judges) to assist an asylum seeker's case. **This document should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum related submissions or appeals.** The information cited in this document is illustrative, but not exhaustive of the information available in the public domain. It is not determinative of any individual human rights or asylum claim. Submissions should always be complemented by case-specific COI research. While we strive to be as comprehensive as possible, no amount of research can ever provide an exhaustive picture of the situation. It is therefore important to note that the absence of information should not be taken as evidence that an issue, incident or violation does not exist. We are COI research experts and adhere to strict research principles of providing relevant, objective, transparent, timely and reliable source material. We therefore strive to include all discoverable relevant information, whether or not supportive of any individual case. It is therefore imperative that legal representatives and those assisting asylum seekers read the whole COI compilation and submit only relevant excerpts cited in this document for their specific case in addition to conducting their own case-specific COI research.

Feedback

If you would like to suggest additional research areas or sources to include that would assist in supporting your clients, please do share them with us. If you would like to provide feedback, please contact: info@asylos.eu

Notes

- **Timeframe:** This research sought information from sources published between 5th May 2021 - 31st July 2022. Statistical sources were checked in August 2022 (see statistics sections for the specific dates the sources were last checked). Older sources have been included in instances where the information is relevant, including where more recent information was not found, or where the research terms of reference relate to past events, and therefore contemporaneous COI was relevant. Excerpts are presented under each headline in chronological order, with the newest first.
- Where information was not found in relation to a term of reference, the heading is highlighted in yellow. The fact that no information was found within our research parameters is by no means to be taken as an indicator that the issue in question does not exist.
- Please note, **the sources consulted often did not distinguish between the situation of recognised refugees and asylum seekers in Rwanda.** This may relate to the historical fact that

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the vast majority of individuals currently residing in Rwanda who migrated to Rwanda seeking refuge were recognised as refugees on a *prima facie* basis. Meanwhile the numbers of those categorised as asylum seekers, and whose cases were considered on an individual basis have remained comparatively very low. This may explain why the term “refugees” is predominantly used, and the distinct category of “asylum seekers” had less prominence in the sources consulted. Where sources have specifically referenced asylum seekers, this information has been included under the relevant terms of reference (see particularly the following sections: *Experience of individuals seeking asylum in Rwanda* and *Israel – Rwanda Agreement*). Please note that where sources refer to “refugees”, this may encompass both recognised refugees and asylum seekers.

Acronyms

BC - Birth Certificate
 CBHI – Community Based Health Insurance
 CRVS - Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system
 CRRF - Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
 DRC - Democratic Republic of the Congo
 DGIE – Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration
 ETM – Emergency Transit Mechanism
 GCR – Global Compact on Refugees
 GoR – Government of Rwanda
 IOM – International Organization for Migration
 MIDIMAR – Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs
 MIGEPROF – Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion
 MINAFFET - Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation
 MINEMA - Rwandan Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management
 MRCTDs - Machine-Read able Convention Travel Documents
 NRSDC – Rwandan National Refugee Status Determination Committee
 PoC – Person of Concern
 PoR – Proof of Registration
 NIDA - National Identification Agency
 RSD - Refugee Status Determination
 SGBV – Sexual and gender-based violence
 UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees
 WFP – World Food Programme
 WB – World Bank
 VoT – Victim of trafficking

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SECTION 1 – COI RESEARCH COLLECTION

This section is a collection of relevant COI excerpts, organised by topic.

Refugee Status Determination (RSD) in Rwanda

Number of refugees hosted in Rwanda, and their countries of origin

MINEMA [Rwandan Ministry of Emergency Management], [Refugee Management](#), undated [information as at 3 August 2022]

“127,369 Total Refugee Population in Rwanda

“76,968 = 60.43% Congolese Refugees

“49,859 = 39.15% Burundian Refugees”

All Africa/Council on Foreign Relations, [Africa: Uproar Over Britain's Rwanda Asylum Plan Overlooks Nagging Issues in Illegal Migration](#), 29 June 2022

“Rwanda, Africa's most densely populated country, is currently home to an estimated 150,000 refugees from other African countries...”

All Africa/Deutsche Welle, [Rwanda Vows to Resettle UK Asylum-Seekers Despite Criticism](#), 14 June 2022

“According to the government, Rwanda hosts more than 130,000 refugees and migrants from African nations and other countries such as Pakistan.”

All Africa/The New Times, [Rwanda: All Set for Arrival of UK Migrants, Asylum Seekers](#), 14 June 2022

“The officials cited Rwanda's strong record of providing safety to people fleeing danger, including nearly 130,000 refugees from mainly neighbors DR Congo and Burundi, as well as Afghanistan and migrants evacuated from Libya.”

All Africa/The New Times, [Rwanda: UK Migrants Expected in Kigali on June 14](#), 13 June 2022

“Currently, Rwanda hosts over 130,000 refugees, some have lived in Rwanda for over 25 years.”

AP, [Britain, Rwanda defend asylum-seekers plan at UN agencies](#), 19 May 2022

“Rwanda already is home to more than 130,000 refugees from countries such as Burundi, Congo, Libya and Pakistan.”

AP News, [For many migrants, the view of Rwanda is often far from rosy](#), 28 April 2022

“Rwandan authorities in recent years have given asylum to hundreds of people seeking shelter as a result of arrangements with Israel, the African Union, the United Nations and others. Many were from Eritrea and Ethiopia, including a group that had languished for months in detention centers in Libya.”

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019 (updated 27 April 2022)

“Could you give us a picture of Rwanda’s refugee operations?

“Rwanda hosts about 127,585 refugees, the overwhelming majority of whom come from just two countries: the Democratic Republic of Congo (about 77,288) and Burundi (about 49,827).”

AP News, [UK plan to fly asylum-seekers to Rwanda draws outrage](#), 14 April 2022

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“He [Rwandan Foreign Affairs Minister Vincent Biruta] said his country is already home to more than 130,000 refugees from countries including Burundi, Congo, Libya and Pakistan.”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

“As of October [2021] the government hosted approximately 49,000 Burundian refugees and asylum seekers and more than 77,000 Congolese refugees and asylum seekers.”

WFP, [Rwanda Country Brief](#), March 2022

“Operational Context

“[...] according to UNHCR data, as of 31 March 2022 Rwanda hosts 127,585 refugees and asylum-seekers, primarily from the Democratic Republic of Congo and Burundi..”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Population of Concern Map](#), December 2021

The “Rwanda: Population of Concern Map” shows that as of 31st December 2021, there were 121,903 refugees, 393 asylum seekers and 4,816 “others of concern” in Rwanda.

UNHCR, [Rwanda Operational Update](#), November - December 2021

“Highlights [...]

“Rwanda hosted a total of 127,112 refugees and asylum seekers at the end of December 2021. The population of concern included mainly persons from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (60.7%) and Burundi (38.9%).”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Who we help](#), undated

“Refugees

The demography of the refugee population in Rwanda remains in majority women and children.

Congolese Refugees:

From 1996, Rwanda has been hosting primarily Congolese refugees who now number nearly 74,000. They include refugees who fled in the 1990s, as well as more recent arrivals who fled to Rwanda during the 2012-2013 renewed hostilities in eastern DRC...

Burundian Refugees:

As a result of election-related tensions in neighbouring Burundi, Rwanda has opened its border to host thousands of Burundian refugees who have fled the country since April 2015...

Other Refugees:

In addition to the primarily Congolese and Burundian caseloads, Rwanda host around 60 refugees from additional countries, including:

- Afghanistan
- Angola
- Central Africa Republic
- Chad
- Eritrea
- Ethiopia
- Guinea
- Haiti
- Kenya
- Somalia
- South Sudan
- Tanzania
- Uganda”

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Prima facie and individual refugee status determination in Rwanda

UK Home Office [Country Policy Information Note on the Asylum System in Rwanda](#), 9 May 2022

“4.3.4 [...] ‘As mentioned, due to the shifting of the policy from Prima Facie to individual recognition, there are some bottle neck[s] at DGIE [Rwandan Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration] and NRSDC [National Refugee Status Determination Committee] to comply with the timeframe.’[...]”

“4.14.4 While Burundian and DRC refugees have largely been granted on a prima facie basis, other nationalities have been assessed individually. According to UNHCR, which met with the HO on 21 March 2022, DRC and Burundian refugees are no longer granted on a prima facie basis:

“‘Since August 2021, the Rwandan government shifted its policy for Burundian refugees to be considered on an individual basis (instead of prima facie), DRC refugees have been going through individual basis recognition for a little longer. No prima facie recognition anymore.’”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

“The law provides for the granting of asylum or refugee status, and the government has established a system for providing protection to refugees. The government continued to grant prima facie refugee status to Burundian refugees who had fled instability after Burundi’s 2015 presidential election. For other nationalities, significant delays existed in the application of individual refugee status determinations. An interagency committee that makes individual refugee status determinations in cases where claimants are not eligible for prima facie refugee status met infrequently.”

“The government provided temporary protection to individuals who may not qualify as refugees. For example, after the Taliban seized control of Afghanistan, the government allowed some Afghans (notably scholars and educators) to temporarily relocate to the country

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“The Congolese population that arrived during the inflows of 1996 and in 2012–2013, as well as the Burundian nationals who arrived in 2015, were recognized as refugees by the Government of Rwanda on a prima facie basis in line with Article 13 of the Refugee Law. While newly-arriving Burundian nationals continue to be recognized as refugees on a prima facie basis, all other new asylum-seekers must undergo the national Refugee Status Determination (RSD) process on an individual basis.”

Proportion of the current refugee population in Rwanda granted prima facie refugee status

UNHCR, [Submission to OHCHR](#), July 2020

“The vast majority of refugees living in camps have been recognized on prima facie basis...”

Number of individual asylum applications considered and determined by Rwanda each year

UNHCR, [Data Finder](#), last accessed on 11 August 2022

The following data for the past five years is derived from the UNHCR [Data Finder](#) tool “an analysis tool that contains data on forcibly dis-placed and stateless populations, their demo-graphy and the solutions some of them found.” [figures accurate at 11 August 2022]

Year	Total Decisions	Recognised refugees	Complementary protection status	Rejected	Otherwise closed
2017	28	11	0	0	17
2018	235	35	0	0	200

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2019	305	188	0	0	117
2020	228	70	0	0	158
2021	487	434	0	0	53

Body/bodies responsible for considering asylum applications in Rwanda

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

“The Government of Rwanda (GoR), through MINEMA [Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management], leads the refugee response in the country with UNHCR and partners providing direct operational support, capacity development, and technical advice to the local authorities.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“The National Refugee Status Determination Committee (NRSDC), which is in charge of RSD in Rwanda, was established by the 2015 Prime Minister’s Order Determining the Organisation and Functioning of the National Refugee Status Determination Committee (NRSDC) and Benefits granted to its Members. This Ministerial Order defines the composition, functions and frequency of meeting of the Committee and contains provisions outlining access to asylum procedures. Under this framework, the Directorate-General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) performs an initial screening of asylum-seekers before they are referred to NRSDC. “Article 7 of the Ministerial Order includes the provision of UNHCR being invited to NRSDC committee meetings as an observer, in line with Article 35 of the 1951 Convention. Although procedures for asylum seeking are publicly disclosed on MINEMA and DG-Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) websites, upon reception at the entry points and in reception centers, together with periodic awareness campaigns in refugee camps, UNHCR continues to inform on how to access asylum procedures during counselling sessions conducted by UNHCR and partners”.

Government of Rwanda, [Prime Minister's Order determining the organisation and functioning of the National Refugee Status determination committee and benefits granted to its members](#), 29 June 2015

“[...] Article 7: Meetings of the Committee

[...] The Committee shall hold its meeting at least twice (2) in a quarter and whenever it is considered necessary...

[...] The Committee may invite in its meetings the agency of United Nations for Refugees in Rwanda, any other person or organ from whom or which it may seek advice on certain issues on the agenda. The invitee may give his/her opinion but shall not be allowed to vote.”

“Article 8: Decisions of the Committee

[...] Decisions of the Committee shall be made by consensus. If the consensus is not reached, decisions are made by two thirds (2/3) of majority of the members present at the meeting.

[...] The Committee shall take decision on the asylum seekers's applications submitted to it by the Service in charge of Immigration and Emigration. In case that Service fails to submit the asylum seeker's application to the Committees [sic] in the period provided for by the Law, the Committee can take a decision upon request by the Minister.”

Size of the staff function responsible for refugee status determinations in Rwanda

All Africa/UN News Services, [Rwanda: UK's Bid to Export Some Refugees to Rwanda, 'All Wrong', Says UN Refugee Chief](#), 13 June 2022

“[UN High Commissioner for Refugees,] Mr. Grandi continued, insisting that the country did not have the capacity or infrastructure to carry out the refugee status assessments that were required on a case-by-case

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basis.”

AP, [UK judge rejects bid to ground Rwanda deportation flight](#), 10 June 2022

“Laura Dubinsky, a lawyer representing the U.N. refugee agency [...] said the agency had ‘serious concerns about Rwandan capacity’ to handle the arrivals.”

UNHCR, [Submission to the OHCHR](#), July 2020

“[...] The NRSDC’s capacity needs to be built, with currently only one eligibility officer assessing all of the cases [...]”

UNCHR, [Rwanda: Law No. 13 ter/2014 of 21/05/2014 relating to refugees](#), pages 79-80, 21 May 2014

“Article 5: Composition of the Refugee Status Determination Committee Members of the Refugee Status Determination Committee shall come from the following entities:

- 1° Prime Minister's Office;
- 2° the Ministry in charge of refugees;
- 3° the Ministry in charge of foreign affairs;
- 4° the Ministry in charge of local government;
- 5° the Ministry in charge of justice; 6° the Ministry in charge of defence forces;
- 7° the Ministry in charge of natural resources;
- 8° the Ministry in charge of internal security;
- 9° the Ministry in charge of health;
- 10° the National Intelligence and Security Service;
- 11° the National Human Rights Commission.”

Support to the Government of Rwanda from international organisations to manage refugee inflows

IOM Rwanda Country Office, [Annual Report 2019](#), 27 July 2020

“Frameworks

IOM actively supports the Government of Rwanda in all its migration related efforts. IOM work in Rwanda is guided by the Migration Governance Framework (MiGOF). The MiGOF framework provide essential elements for facilitating orderly, safe, regular and responsible migration and mobility of people through planned and well managed migration policies.”

“As a member of the One UN Country Team “Delivering as One”, IOM coordinates its activities closely with the UN partners and works harmoniously towards the achievement of the United Nations Development Assistance Plan (UNDAP II) through operational projects focused on migration management.”

“Immigration and Border Management

Improving border management is a crucial part of Rwanda’s country strategy. IOM is working in close collaboration with the Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) to provide capacity building, training and technical assistance.”

“[...] Migration Operations

IOM Rwanda works to find long-term sustainable solutions for individuals who have spent years living in refugee camps. IOM Rwanda resettles refugees to third countries, mainly to Australia, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United States of America (USA). IOM provides beneficiaries with pre-departure briefings, fitness to travel checks and movement assistance. IOM also provides logistical support to Cultural Orientation sessions for refugees being resettled to Australia, New Zealand and the USA with context adapted to the destination countries.”

“[...] Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

IOM Rwanda works with the Government to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants, particularly those who find themselves in difficult migratory circumstances. These can include individuals whose application for asylum was rejected or withdrawn, stranded migrants, victims of trafficking in persons, and other vulnerable groups. From 2010 to 2015, IOM Rwanda, in close coordination with the Government, assisted more than

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8,000 Rwandan returnees from neighbouring countries, especially the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through different socioeconomic reintegration projects.”

[...] Migration Operations

The Migration operations unit directs, oversees, and coordinates IOM Rwanda resettlement work by facilitating pre-departures formalities for refugees and migrants travelling overseas under various resettlement programmes. Functions and responsibilities of the Migration Operations unit include pre-screenings, adjudication, facilitating medical assessments with IOM’s medical team and conducting pre-departure cultural orientation for migrants and refugees. In 2019, IOM Rwanda provided resettlement support through the Australia, Canada, Finland, New Zealand, Norway, Sweden and the United States Refugee Admissions Program (USRAP) resettlement programmes.”

“Key Activities Migration Operations

Pre-Screening Facilitated Interviews

“Pre-screening interviews are conducted before applicants make it to the next stage of the selection process. This process weeds out unqualified candidates and advances those who might qualify for the resettlement programmes. IOM Rwanda facilitated 6139 pre-screening interviews in 2019 for the United States Refugee Admissions Program. These include adjudications for the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services (USCIS).”

“Cultural Orientation

Anyone moving to a country where culture, tradition and practices are different can be expected to undergo an adjustment period of variable duration and difficulty. Refugees accepted for resettlement to third countries often come straight out of refugee camps and have little, if any, knowledge of the traditions and economic practices of a foreign country. To reduce stress and anxiety associated with moving to a new environment, IOM Rwanda supported by Resettlement Support Centre 1 (RSC) conducts cultural orientations (CO) to equip refugees and migrants with coping skills to deal with the unfamiliar and help them shape attitudes towards life in their new society. In 2019, IOM facilitated pre-departure orientation sessions for 5675 applicants to the Australia, Canada and the United States of America resettlement programmes.”

IOM, [Refugee Resettlement](#), October 2018

“Due to its geographical location, Rwanda hosts thousands of refugees in refugee camps, as well as in urban settings. These refugees mostly come from the Democratic Republic of Congo (52.4%) and Burundi (47.2%) [...]”

“With the refugees’ prospects for return being uncertain, IOM Rwanda resettles refugees to third countries. Third Country Resettlement movement of refugees and the relevant activities to facilitate orderly migration is a significant role of IOM Rwanda’s programmes. At the earliest opportunity prior to departure, it is important that each refugee is well informed and empowered, proper care is given to their health and well-being, and necessary arrangements are in place for their safe travel and meaningful integration. From 2008 to June 2018, IOM Rwanda facilitated resettlement activities and final departures for 11,631 refugees. IOM Rwanda assisted 9,793 refugees to the United States, 671 to Finland, 408 to Canada, 235 refugees to Australia, 145 to Sweden, 132 to the United Kingdom, 76 to the Netherlands, 61 to Norway, 55 to Denmark, 49 to Belgium, 5 to Ireland and 1 to Switzerland.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [About us](#), undated

“In Rwanda, UNHCR co-leads the response for refugees with the Government of Rwanda’s Ministry in charge of Emergency Management ([MINEMA](#)). UNHCR’s responsibility includes ensuring protection of refugees, such as registration, prevention of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), and protecting children; finding durable solutions for refugees; and providing multisectoral assistance ranging from shelter, water and sanitation, health and reproductive health, education, access to energy, etc. UNHCR assists refugees living in six refugee camps, three reception/transit centers, and also those living in urban areas.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Protection](#), undated

[...] Registration

Registration is one of the most fundamental ways that UNHCR protects refugees, by ensuring that their identity is known and documented. This enables agencies providing services to refugees to know how many people need help, and allows refugees to access those services. In Rwanda, UNHCR registration includes the

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capture of refugee bio-data, photos and fingerprints. Registration is crucial for identifying those individuals who are at risk or have special needs. It also helps protect refugees against refoulement (forced return), arbitrary arrest and detention. Registering children helps in protection monitoring and may prevent forced recruitment and child exploitation. In addition, registration is key for helping keep families together, and assists UNHCR and partners in reuniting separated children with their families.”

“[...] Voluntary repatriation

[...] Prospects for returning home for around 74,000 Congolese refugees, many of whom have lived in Rwanda since the mid-1990s, continue to be very limited due to on-going insecurity and conflict in the Eastern DRC. UNHCR’s Division of International Protection has issued a recommendation of non-return for all refugees from Eastern DRC. According to the results of an intention survey conducted in 2012-2013, 98% of the Congolese refugees indicated unwillingness to return to the DRC, citing concerns about insecurity and ethnic-related conflict. Organized return of Burundian refugees who have fled election-related tensions since April 2015 is not envisioned in the near future, until it can be assured that their return is safe and voluntary. However Burundian refugees are able to return to Burundi spontaneously, at their own volition.”

“[...] Resettlement

For UNHCR, resettlement to third countries for those refugees who have been in Rwanda for many years is seen as the most protective and pragmatic step through which to bring an end to the protracted situation of Congolese refugees in Rwanda, over 90% of whom originate from conflict zones in the DRC. In March 2012, resettlement was entrenched within the operation as a core activity targeting the refugees in a protracted caseload. Over 46,000 refugee in Rwanda live in a protracted situation, having being in the camps for up to 20 years.

“UNHCR prioritizes for resettlement persons with specific needs, including survivors of violence and torture, women and children at risk, refugees with legal and physical protection needs and unaccompanied or separated minors.”

“[...] The protection strategy for UNHCR Rwanda for 2015 is to prioritize the following areas:

- Legal Protection to build and strengthen Government capacity in RSD, to ensure all refugees have Refugee ID cards, birth registration is systematic and MRCTDs are provided to those who wish to travel for legitimate reasons
- To continue to strengthen interventions in prevention and response mechanisms for Sexual and Gender Based Violence (SGBV) and Child Protection in both camp and urban settings;
- To continue pursuing resettlement with a new multi-year target of 7,000 submission for 2016-2017.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Capacity Building](#), undated

“[...] UNHCR Rwanda regularly conducts trainings throughout each year. In 2015, we have led capacity building in the following areas:

- Developing a training curriculum for the police who work in camp settings
- Training the National Refugee Status Commission
- Training, mentoring project partner staff in SGBV
- Preparing for an emergency influx of refugees – ‘simulation’ exercise
- Code of Conduct and Prevention of Sexual Exploitation and Abuse (SEA)”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Registration](#), undated

“[...] Registration and documentation services in Rwanda:

[...] New arrivals registration after clearance by the Government of Rwanda...

[...] UNHCR and partners support you to obtain several documents including birth, marriage, divorce and death certificates. The Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) provides and coordinates the protection, assistance to refugees including facilitating the issuance of refugee identity document from the National Identification Agency (NIDA) [...]”

IOM, [IOM Rwanda Infosheet](#), undated

“Activities at IOM Rwanda’s Country Office

IOM Rwanda actively supports the Government of Rwanda in all its migration related efforts;

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implementing projects focused on counter trafficking, immigration and border management, migration and health, return and reintegration of Rwandan nationals and refugee resettlement to third countries, labour migration and human development.”

“[...] Counter Trafficking

...IOM Rwanda also works to increase awareness on Trafficking in Persons, identification and referrals among the refugee community and staff operating in refugee settings, including the six camps and their surrounding communities.”

“[...] Migration and Health

...IOM Rwanda’s newly established Migration Health Assessment Center (MHAC) clinic is the leading provider of health assessment and travel assistance services for migrants and refugees traveling temporarily or permanently to USA, Canada, Australia, UK, Sweden and New Zealand.”

“[...] Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

IOM Rwanda works with the government to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants, particularly those who find themselves in difficult migratory circumstances. These can include individuals whose application for asylum was rejected or withdrawn, stranded migrants, victims of human trafficking, and other vulnerable groups.”

“[...] Resettlement Assistance

IOM Rwanda works to find long-term sustainable solutions for individuals who have spent years living in refugee camps. IOM Rwanda resettles refugees to third countries, mainly to the United States, Canada, Australia and New Zealand. IOM provides beneficiaries with pre-departure briefings, fitness to travel checks and movement assistance.”

Process for appealing the rejection of an individual’s asylum claim in Rwanda

UK Home Office [Country Policy Information Note on the Asylum System in Rwanda](#), 9 May 2022

“4.11.1 The applicant has a right to appeal within 30 days from notification of the decision. Appeal cases (first review) are decided by the Minister of MINEMA within one month, during which time the applicant has the right to remain in Rwanda[footnote 91].”

“4.11.2 In December 2017, the UN Committee Against Torture (UNCAT) noted that it regretted ‘... the State party’s failure to provide information on the time frames observed in the adjudication of asylum claims and on the use of judicial remedies to challenge deportations.’[footnote 92]”

“4.11.3 During the meeting between the Rwandan Government and HO officials on 18 January 2022, a senior Rwandan Government official explained the appeals process:

‘When rejected, the applicant asylum seeker can make an appeal [request a review] to the Minister in charge of Emergency Management. She/he submits a letter appealing the RSDC decision. In this case the Minister assigns a special team to assess the decision taken by RSDC for confirmation or revocation. From the departments of Ministry of Foreign affairs or the PM’s ministry legal dept, not those part of the RSDC. The team is not fixed it depends on the case. The minister gathers a team with the capacity and experience to consider and analyse the case.’”

“‘The asylum seeker has a second level appeal option [the first court appeal after ministerial review] provided by the law to submit the case to the High Court.’ [footnote 93]”

[91] Government of Rwanda, ‘Official Gazette number 26 of 30/06/2014’ (page 83), 30 June 2014

[92] UNCAT, ‘Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Rwanda...’, 21 December 2017

[93] Notes of interviews, Annex A1, Meeting between HO and Government of Rwanda, 18 January 2022

UNHCR, [Submission to the OHCHR](#), July 2020

“[...] Basis of the RSD decisions, particularly rejection, are not known or properly explained including to the asylum seekers. Furthermore, the practice of appeal decisions being taken by the Minister of MINEMA [Ministry of Emergency Management] poses questions as to the independency of the appeal process and could further result in bottlenecks once a larger number of applications needs to be processed. Moreover, Article 8 of the Law relating to Refugees states that the “local authority to whom the asylum seeker reports shall take him/her to the nearest immigration and emigration office within twelve (12) hours”. The Immigration Authority (DGIE) shall register the asylum seeker, grant temporary residence permit valid for 3 months and

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then submit the case to the Secretariat of the NRSDC within 15 days. In case the DGIE [Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration] fails to submit the asylum application within the specified period, the NRSDC can take a decision upon request by the Minister (Article 8(2) of the PM Order). To date and despite the provisions in the PM Order, the NRSDC has never taken up a case that had not been referred by the immigration service and this despite intense and repeated advocacy by UNHCR at the level of the Minister of MINEMA.”

Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Rwanda](#), 2 May 2016

“[...] Asylum seekers and immigration detention

29. The Committee [...] notes with concern that, under the 2014 Refugee Law, an appeal against a rejected refugee claim is not brought before an independent authority and asylum seekers are not granted free legal aid [...]”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Law No. 13 ter/2014 of 21/05/2014 relating to refugees, page 83](#), 21 May 2014

“Article 11: If a person applying for refugee status is not satisfied with the decision of the Refugee Status Determination Committee, he/she may appeal to the Minister within a period of thirty (30) days from the date he/she was notified of the decision. The Minister to whom the appeal is made shall decide thereon within one (1) month. In case of appeal, the refugee status applicant shall continue to have the right to stay in Rwanda until the Minister decides on the appeal.”

Access to the High Court for asylum seekers appealing a rejected claim in Rwanda

UNHCR, [Analysis of the Legality and Appropriateness of the Transfer of Asylum Seekers under the UK-Rwanda arrangement](#), 8 June 2022

“18. UNHCR has expressed concerns with regard to shortcomings in the capacity of the Rwandan asylum system in its July 2020 submissions to the Universal Periodic Review [22] and with both the Rwandan and UK authorities. [23] UNHCR’s concerns in this regard include: [...]”

“f. Appeals against rejection at the first instance are made to Rwanda’s Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA), which is also part of the RSD Committee which makes the first instance decisions. This raises concerns about the independent nature of the administrative appeal stage. There is no precedent for asylum appeals at the High Court.”

[22] UNHCR Submission for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights’ Compilation Report Universal Periodic Review: 3rd Cycle, July 2020.

[23] UNHCR’s comments to the UK authorities in this regard have since been published by the UK Home Office, available at: https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1073961/RWA_CPIN_Review_of_asylum_processing_-_notes.pdf, pages 52-62

The Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM)

Reuters, [Asylum seekers say Rwanda better than Libya, but they will try for Europe again](#), 14 June 2022

“Asylum seekers sent from filthy, dangerous Libyan detention centers to Rwanda [to the Emergency Transit Centre at Gashora] say their new quarters are a huge improvement [...]”

“Kigali, the African Union and the United Nations refugee agency agreed in 2019 that migrants held in squalid Libyan detention centres could be voluntarily evacuated to Rwanda on United Nations-operated flights [...]”

“The 10 asylum speakers who spoke to Reuters said they are awaiting official, legal resettlement. The asylum seekers have no choice as to which country they could go to and Nyuon does not know where he might be bound for. People from Gashora have been resettled in Canada, Sweden, Norway, France, Finland and Belgium.”

All Africa/The New Times, [Rwanda: Inside Gashora Transit Centre Hosting Refugees From Libya](#), 13 June 2022

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"Rwanda agreed to temporarily host these people before they can be processed for relocation to third-party countries."

"It is in this regard that Gashora Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) was set up, courtesy of an agreement signed between the government of Rwanda, the African Union and the UNHCR."

"Located in Gashora sector, Bugesera district, the camp has hosted a total of 1,055 refugees and asylum seekers since September 2019."

"Nevertheless, only 457 remain in the facility as of today whereas 628 have been resettled to third party countries like Canada, France and Sweden among others."

"Resettlement to the third country is one of the durable solutions provided to the asylum seekers and refugees by UNHCR alongside repatriation to own land or integration in the host community."

"Apart from daily meals, free accommodation and constant supply of domestic materials, each POC is provided with Rwf50,000 per month as their living allowance."

"Touring through the camp, they all have available infrastructures to allow them cope with mental health which was affected by the life they've been through in Libya."

"Gashora ETM is currently being upgraded to accommodate more refugees."

AP, [Refugees in Rwanda warn of challenges for arrivals in UK](#), 14 June 2022

"[...] The Gashora center for previous arrivals in a rural area outside the capital offers more basic shared living facilities instead."

All Africa/The New Times, [Rwanda: Over 100 More Refugees Jet in From Libya](#), 1 June 2022

"A plane carrying 132 refugees and asylum seekers evacuated from Libya landed yesterday May 31, at the Kigali International Airport."

"This was the ninth batch to arrive in the country, and was made up of 74 Eritreans, 5 Ethiopians, 4 Somalis, 4 South Sudanese and 45 Sudanese."

"The asylum seekers, mostly youths, were welcomed by officials from the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management (MINEMA) alongside the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR)."

"According to the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management, they will be accommodated at the Gashora Transit Center located in Bugesera District that currently hosts 325 refugees and asylum seekers."

"The evacuees have safely arrived in Gashora ETM Center. They were warmly welcomed by their fellows received in previous batches. pic.twitter.com/fcv1UUSqa0 -- Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (@RwandaEmergency) May 31, 2022"

"Rwanda made the commitment to host African refugees stuck in Libya, after their desperate journeys to seek asylum in European countries were cut short as European nations stepped up migrant controls."

"Persons eligible to benefit from the center include refugees recognised by UNHCR Libya, asylum-seekers registered with UNHCR Libya, children and youth at risk (registered as refugees), as well as spouses and children of asylum-seekers and refugees."

"The refugees have the right to access medical care, school and work."

Global Detention Project, [Rwanda](#), 20 January 2022

"[...] Rwanda's ETM centre in Gashora...has been sharply criticised for abuses suffered by refugees evacuated from Libya who have been housed there. In April 2020, a Rwandan police commander was accused of sexually assaulting a child refugee at the ETM centre. Rwanda's police force accused the refugees of lying, saying they were unhappy with coronavirus-related restrictions and that the boy was drunk."

African News Agency, [Rwanda Receives New Asylum Seekers From Libya](#), 13 December 2021

"Up to 176 refugees and asylum seekers from Libya arrived in Rwanda on Friday, the Ministry of Emergency and Disaster Management confirmed in a statement obtained by APA in Kigali. The refugees who were received in the early hours at Kigali International Airport have been taken to Gashora Transit camp where they will settle. They included 34 females and 142 males. Eritreans made up a bigger part of the refugees as they were 102 followed by 62 Sudanese. Five are from Somalia while 4 and 3 come from South Sudan and Ethiopia respectively. Rwanda has so far received a total of 824 refugees and asylum seekers from eight African countries namely Eritrea, Sudan, South Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia, Nigeria, Chad, and Cameroon. However, only

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362 including the latest batch will be remaining in the Gashora transit camp while others have been resettled in third countries.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [The Government of Rwanda, the African Union, and UNHCR agree to continue the evacuation of refugees and asylum seekers from Libya](#), 1 November 2021

“[...] The Government of Rwanda, the African Union and UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency on 14 October 2021 signed the First Addendum and extension to the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) dated 10 September 2019 between the Republic of Rwanda, the African Union, and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees establishing an Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) from the State of Libya to the Republic of Rwanda.”

“This addendum takes effect immediately and will ensure that the established ETM in Gashora, Rwanda continues until 31 December 2023, and increases its capacity from the initial 500 to 700 persons at any one time. Under this agreement, the Government of Rwanda will continue to receive and provide protection to refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as others identified as particularly vulnerable and at risk, who are currently being held in detention centres in Libya. They will be transferred to safety in Rwanda on a voluntary basis. After their arrival, UNHCR will continue to pursue durable solutions for the evacuees. While some may benefit from resettlement to third countries, others will be helped to return to countries where asylum had previously been granted, or to return to their home countries if it is safe to do so. Some may be given permission to remain in Rwanda subject to agreement by the competent authorities.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan](#), 19 April 2021

“The Gashora Transit Center was established in 2015 in response to the influx of Burundian refugees fleeing insecurity in their country. UNHCR Rwanda is currently engaged in the rehabilitation and upgrading of this Transit Centre, which was originally built with a capacity to host up to 320 refugees and soon have the capacity to welcome a maximum of 500 persons in conformity with UNHCR humanitarian standards. Once in the Gashora Transit Center, the evacuees go through an initial medical screening to assess their health and nutritional status [...] In contrast, several refugees and asylum-seekers were diagnosed with a psychotic disorder and were referred to tertiary psychiatric care. In the transit facility, response partners provide them with essential protection services and humanitarian assistance, including accommodation, education, food, basic hygiene products, health care services, etc. In health sector, all refugees and asylum seekers have access to primary health care and psychosocial support in the health center within the ETM facility. CRP partners are also facilitating medical referrals for patients requiring secondary or tertiary health care.”

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Thirty-seventh session, Summary of Stakeholders' Information A/HRC/WG.6/37/RWA/3](#), 16 November 2020

“[...] Refugees and asylum seekers”

“[...] 95. AI stated that since September 2019, Rwanda has hosted African refugees and asylum-seekers evacuated from detention centres in a third country through an emergency transfer mechanism. The Memorandum of Understanding signed with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees and the African Union states that the transfer would be voluntary. The options for durable solutions open to those transferred to Rwanda include resettlement into a third country, return to country of origin, return to a country of where first asylum had been granted, or remaining in Rwanda, subject to agreement with the authorities.”

Rwandese nationals who claim asylum in other countries

Number of asylum applications made by Rwandese nationals in other countries and numbers granted refugee or other protection status

UNHCR, [Refugee Data Finder](#), last accessed on 2 August 2022

The following statistics are derived from the UNHCR's [Refugee Data Finder](#), “an analysis tool that contains data on forcibly dis-placed and stateless populations, their demo-graphy and the solutions some of them found.” Note that the statistics represent a snapshot as at 2 August 2022. Due to the

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time lag between applications and decisions being made, some of these statistics will be subject to future change.

Year	Number of asylum applications of Rwandese nationals seeking asylum in other countries
2017	3825
2018	3690
2019	5238
2020	2920
2021	13,651

Year	Number of decisions on Rwandese asylum claims (around the world)	Number of asylum, or complementary protection grants on Rwandese asylum claims (around the world)
2017	3984	878
2018	2598	1001
2019	3395	1567
2020	2600	1001
2021	7014	2190

Number of asylum applications made by Rwandese nationals in the UK and numbers granted refugee or other protection status

UNHCR, [Refugee Data Finder](#), last accessed on 2 August 2022

The following statistics are derived from the UNHCR's [Refugee Data Finder](#), "an analysis tool that contains data on forcibly dis-placed and stateless populations, their demo-graphy and the solutions some of them found," and the UK Home Office [Asylum and Resettlement datasets](#). These statistics were derived from datasets available as at 2 August 2022. Some of these statistics may be subject to change in future, due to the time lag between asylum applications and decisions made.

*Please note there are some discrepancies between the UNHCR and UK Home Office statistics. The reasons for these differences are unknown at present.

Year	Number of asylum applications made by Rwandese nationals in the UK (UNHCR stats)	Number of asylum applications made by Rwandese nationals in the UK (UK Home Office stats)

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2017	47	32
2018	55	31
2019	22	17
2020	22	18
2021	12	5

Year	Number of decisions on asylum claims by Rwandese nationals in the UK (UNHCR stats)	Number of decisions on asylum claims by Rwandese nationals in the UK (UK Home Office stats)	Number of asylum claims of Rwandese nationals granted refugee or a complementary protection status in the UK (UNHCR stats)	Number of asylum claims of Rwandese nationals granted refugee or a complementary protection status in the UK (UK Home Office stats)
2017	45	45	10	10
2018	50	51	10	12
2019	26	21	12	12
2020	18	20	13	6
2021	5	7	5	4

Number of asylum applications made by Rwandese nationals in EU countries and numbers granted refugee or other protection status

UNHCR, [Refugee Data Finder](#), last accessed on 2 August 2022

The following statistics are derived from the UNHCR's [Refugee Data Finder](#), "an analysis tool that contains data on forcibly displaced and stateless populations, their demography and the solutions some of them found," and [Eurostat](#), last accessed on 18 August.

Year	Number of asylum applications by Rwandese nationals in EU27 countries (UNHCR)	Number of asylum applications by Rwandese nationals made in EU27 countries (Eurostat)
2017	627	480
2018	861	610
2019	870	820

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2020	773	500
2021	1061	660

Year	Number of decisions on Rwandan asylum claims made by EU27 countries (UNHCR)	Number of decisions (first instance and final) on Rwandan asylum claims made by EU27 countries (Eurostat)	Number of Rwandan asylum claims granted refugee or a complementary protection status by EU27 countries (UNHCR)	Number of Rwandan asylum claims granted refugee or a complementary protection status (first instance and final decisions) by EU27 countries (Eurostat)
2017	740	860	261	305
2018	547	1035	238	470
2019	765	895	294	415
2020	988	920	282	285
2021	1059	1125	280	310

Profiles of Rwandese nationals who seek asylum abroad

African News Agency, [DRC Expels 101 Alleged “Illegal” Rwandan Migrants](#), 18 January 2022

“A total of 101 Rwandans have been expelled from Democratic Republic of Congo for lack of proper documentation, an authoritative source confirmed Tuesday. According to the Congolese government, the Rwandans were expelled Thursday, January 13, 2022 by the Congolese authorities in close collaboration with their counterparts in Rwanda. Details indicate that the Rwandans had fled their country claiming they were running away from alleged forced vaccination against Covid-19.”

Refugee Survey Quarterly, [Re-Thinking Protection for LGBTI Refugees in Kampala, Uganda: A Relational, Trust-Based Approach](#), Volume 41, Issue 1, March 2022, Pages 26–51, published 28 September 2021

“[...] in the DRC and Rwanda, although same-sex sexual acts have never been criminalised, there is no constitutional protection for LGBTI persons, or protection against discrimination in employment, hate crimes, and incitement [...] Similar to LGBTI Ugandans, LGBTI persons from the DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda experience severe societal discrimination which leads them to seek refuge elsewhere.”

African News Agency, [Rwandan Refugee Karemangingo Shot Dead In Mozambique](#), 14 September 2021

“Karemangingo was gunned down in Liberdade in the Matola municipality, less than 20km from Mozambique’s capital Maputo, Deutsche Welle (DW) reported [...] Karemangingo held refugee status in Mozambique and had lived in the country since the 1990s as a businessman involved in alcohol and pharmaceutical sales.”

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The Rwandan, [APPEAL TO DUTCH PARLIAMENT TO END THE HANDING OVER OF POLITICAL REFUGEES TO THE RWANDAN BRUTAL REGIME](#), 12 August 2021

"In November 2016, the Dutch government handed over to the Rwandan government, two people Mugimba and Iyamuremye suspected of having committing [sic] genocide. They were held in jail, first in The Netherlands since 2012, then in Rwanda since November 2016, until March 2021 they were not tried yet. In Jean Baptiste Mugimba case, it became clear last year that witnesses had lied. During one of the hearings, a witness from the prosecution who was expected to testify against him, did the opposite, clearing him of all blame [...] In spring 2021 it became known that the judges asked for a reopening of his trial in May 2021, because they wanted to hear more witnesses. Highly unusual as the prosecutor and the defence lawyers had all held their final speech."

Human Rights Watch: [Mozambique: Grave Concerns for Rwandan Asylum Seeker: Acknowledge his Detention; Ensure Access to Lawyer; Block Any Return to Rwanda](#), 15 June 2021

"(Nairobi) – A Rwandan asylum seeker and founder of an opposition movement, who has been forcibly disappeared by Mozambique authorities, risks being handed over to Rwanda, where his rights would be violated, including by being subject to an unfair trial and arbitrary detention, Human Rights Watch said."

"Although the asylum seeker, Cassien Ntamuhanga, was taken into custody by Mozambican police on May 23, 2021, the authorities have denied knowledge of his detention, and his whereabouts are unknown. The Mozambican authorities should urgently acknowledge Ntamuhanga is in their custody, reveal his whereabouts, allow access to a lawyer, ensure that his due process rights are respected, and prevent any forced return to Rwanda."

"Ntamuhanga escaped from Mpanga prison in Nyanza District, Southern Province, on October 31, 2017, and registered as an asylum seeker in Mozambique in February 2018."

"According to a blog post published by Ntamuhanga and several sources close to him, three of his brothers were reported missing in 2016. A family member told Human Rights Watch that they are still missing. Human Rights Watch was not able to independently verify the circumstances of their disappearances."

"Kidnappings and Forced Returns of Rwandan Refugees"

A number of Rwandan victims of attacks abroad have been granted refugee status in the country to which they had fled in recognition of the risks they faced in Rwanda. Rwandan refugees or asylum seekers who are known to be political opponents, critics, or outspoken journalists, are particularly at risk. The fact that recognized refugees or Rwandans who have taken on a second nationality have fallen prey to such attacks has heightened fears among exiled Rwandans, who now believe that no one is out of reach."

"The most recent, high-profile case is that of Paul Rusesabagina, who was the manager of the Hotel des Mille Collines, a luxury hotel in central Kigali where hundreds of people sought protection during the 1994 genocide in Rwanda. After the genocide he fled Rwanda, fearing for his safety. He later became a fierce critic of the government of Rwanda and co-founded the opposition Rwandan Movement for Democratic Change (Mouvement rwandais pour le changement démocratique, MRCD), whose armed wing has claimed responsibility for several attacks in Rwanda's southern province since 2018."

"Rusesabagina's arrest and detention in August 2020, which started as an enforced disappearance, falls within the same pattern of abuse and raised grave concerns over his ability to receive a fair trial in Rwanda. Rusesabagina, now a Belgian citizen, was living in the United States when he traveled from the US to Dubai, United Arab Emirates, on August 27. He was forcibly disappeared on or about the evening of August 27 until the Rwanda Investigation Bureau announced it had Rusesabagina in custody in Kigali, Rwanda, on August 31. Human Rights Watch has documented several fair trial violations since his trial began on February 17, 2021."

"Some Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers have faced security threats in their country of asylum. Armed men abducted Joel Mutabazi, a former presidential bodyguard in Rwanda with refugee status in Uganda, in 2013. He was put on trial in Rwanda and sentenced to life in prison after a military court found Mutabazi guilty of terrorism, forming an armed group, and other offenses linked to alleged collaboration with an exiled opposition group and the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda (FDLR), a predominantly Rwandan armed group operating in eastern Democratic Republic of Congo that consists in part of people who took part in the 1994 Rwandan genocide. In the past 10 years, numerous Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda have reported to Human Rights Watch a range of incidents, including personal threats by people they know or believe to be Rwandan, attacks on their homes, beatings, attempted abductions, and, in the most serious cases, killings,

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or attempted killings. Some have also reported being threatened and intimidated by Rwandan diplomatic representatives in Uganda.”

“Another notable case is that of Norbert Manirafasha, a political opposition activist and a registered Rwandan refugee, who was abducted by Rwandan intelligence agents in April 2014 in Goma, eastern Congo, and taken to Rwanda the same day. At the time of his abduction in Congo, Manirafasha was a refugee registered with UNHCR. This status should normally provide refugees protection under international law. He told Human Rights Watch he was tortured at Kami military camp, a notorious torture and interrogation center outside of Kigali, and forced to confess to working with opposition groups and the FDLR. He was sentenced to life in prison in Rwanda, although he told the court he had been tortured into making a false confession. The judges did not dismiss his earlier confession, even though he stated it was extracted under torture, nor did they order an investigation into his allegations.”

Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration, [ORAM and Rainbow Railroad Announce Kakuma Refugee Camp Research Project](#), 10 May 2021

“[...] Currently, there are approximately 300 known LGBTIQ asylum seekers and refugees residing in Kakuma refugee camp, hailing predominantly from Uganda, with other community members coming from Burundi, Congo, Ethiopia, Rwanda, Somalia and several other countries [...].”

Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration, [HOW SOAP IS PROTECTING THE LGBTIQ COMMUNITY](#), 14 October 2020

“[...] within the heart of Kakuma, there is a flicker of hope within the LGBTIQ refugee community. Despite an array of daily discrimination, violence, and obstacles, this LGBTIQ enterprising group has created the first of its kind: an LGBTIQ refugee-led soap making business [...].”

“[...] The first group of trainees to run the cooperative included 12 LGBTIQ refugees from South Sudan, Sudan, Rwanda, Uganda, Burundi, Congo and Somalia. All of these trainees have been residents in the camp for up to thirteen years [...].”

Erasing 76 Crimes, [20 gay refugees protest, then are jailed in Kenya](#), 25 March 2019

“[...] **These LGBT refugees came to Kenya seeking freedom. Instead, they’ve been imprisoned and abused**

“[...] [On Feb. 22], 20 LGBT refugees who had come to Kenya hoping to escape repression in countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Congo were spending their first full day in jail [...].”

Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs, [Country Report on Human Rights and Justice in Rwanda](#), 18 August 2016, pp. 42-43 [based on a range of sources]

“The refugee status for Rwandans was ended on 30 June 2013. UNHCR and the Rwandan government came to this decision to invoke the so-called cessation clause because they were of the opinion that the unsafe and unstable circumstances that had led to flight no longer existed in Rwanda. However, many of the estimated 100,000 Rwandans who lived outside the country - mainly in eastern, central and southern Africa - remained unwilling to repatriate, citing fear of persecution by the government. In 2014, Burkina Faso, Burundi, the Republic of Congo, Niger, Senegal, Togo and Zambia had ended the refugee status of the Rwandans who had fled to these countries. UNHCR remained responsible for the Rwandan refugees in the DRC. Between July 2013 and June 2014, over 24,000 Rwandan refugees returned including those expelled from Tanzania. Rwanda, UNHCR and the twelve countries hosting the largest numbers of Rwandan refugees made some new agreements in 2015 because, despite the ending of refugee status, there were still problems with regard to Rwandan refugees. They agreed that Rwandan refugees would be given the choice to either return (which the Rwandan government actively promotes) or to remain in the host country and to normalise their status to that of regular immigrant, exchanging their refugee document for a Rwandan passport. This process should be completed by 31 December 2016. On 31 December 2017, the refugee status will be ended definitively for all Rwandans who fled Rwanda between 1959 and 1998.”

Global Gayz, [The LGBT Refugees Who Are Seeking Asylum In the World’s Most Notoriously Anti-Gay Country](#), 5 May 2014

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"[...] One of these asylum-seekers is a trans man from Rwanda who asked to be identified as Green, because of his love of trees. 'I like to be near trees,' he said during an interview in Kampala. 'They don't have hate, they don't reject me, and if I tell them [secrets], they won't tell everybody.'"

"Green arrived in Kampala four years ago, still recovering from a police beating at his home in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, that was so severe he walks with a crutch to this day. Green grew up largely on the streets after his father turned his back on him when he was a very small child, but he managed to continue his education all the way through university, determined to be an activist for children's rights and the rights of the disabled.

"According to Green's account, police showed up at his house a few months after he graduated, accompanied by a neighborhood official, who accused him of recruiting girls into homosexuality even though Rwanda has no law against same-sex intercourse [...]"

"[...] Most of David's clients come from Congo, but also countries like Rwanda and Burundi. Many come from places where homosexuality isn't technically criminalized, but where they still sometimes face assault and police abuse under the authority of "morality" or "decency" laws [...]"

Number of asylum claims by Rwandese nationals based on sexual orientation or gender identity

i) the UK

Home Office, [Immigration Statistics](#), 26 August 2021

According to the most recently available statistics, [Asylum claims on the basis of sexual orientation, year ending December 2020](#), published in August 2021, there were 7 initial decisions on asylum applications where sexual orientation formed part of the basis for the claim, by the nationality of Rwanda in year 2017. The dataset covered between 2015-2020.

*Note: apart from year 2017 which indicated the 7 applications... the rest of the row's data was replaced with *. Home Office note reason is: Values of less than 5 have been suppressed, and replaced by *. These values are not included in the 'Other' row, but are included in the 'Total' row. Note that 'Grants' and 'Refusals' have been suppressed where either of these values is less than five in a given year.

ii) EU countries

Experience of individuals seeking asylum in Rwanda

Note: The sources consulted often did not distinguish between recognised refugees and asylum seekers. Where sources have specifically referenced asylum seekers, this information has been included under the relevant terms of reference. Please note information included in the section *Conditions for Refugees in Rwanda*, may also be relevant to asylum seekers. See also the section covering the *Israel – Rwanda Agreement* for relevant COI on the experience of a specific group of asylum seekers in Rwanda.

i) Financial/socioeconomic

UK Home Office [Country Policy Information Note on the Asylum System in Rwanda](#), 9 May 2022

"10.3.18 HO officials asked whether employers draw a distinction between refugees and asylum seekers and Rwandan citizens in the job market, and the Regional Manager explained: 'It depends on the job, not having the Kinyarwanda language may prevent someone from getting a job, but likely only very local jobs. The govt encourages opportunities for refugees. Goes back to us advocating for young people.' [footnote 203] [...]"

"10.3.23 In a meeting between the HO and LAF on 21 March 2022, a LAF representative explained:

"By Law, asylum seekers cannot work whilst waiting for their initial decision or an appeal outcome. It is not possible to work without ID, nor open a Bank account, but some people might work in the informal sector. But

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most asylum seekers have ‘connections’ and are supported by relatives or friends. ”
 “Asylum seekers are not treated fairly when working in the informal sector.”

[203] Notes of interviews, Annex A5, Meeting between HO and Harambee, 19 January 2022

ii) Accommodation

UK Home Office [Country Policy Information Note on the Asylum System in Rwanda](#), 9 May 2022

“8.1.1 During the meeting with the Rwandan government on 18 January 2022, HO officials asked where asylum seekers live during the 3-month period when they have a temporary residence permit and the Director of Response and Recovery Unit at MINEMA explained: ‘The asylum seeker has choice between living in transit/reception centre/refugee camp or urban area.’ The government further explained that a person is unable to choose his/her camp: ‘It depends on their arrival and availability. They don’t have a choice, they go where settlement is available.’ [footnote 145]”

[145] Notes of interviews, Annex A1, Meeting between HO and Govt of Rwanda, 18 January 2022

UNHCR, [First evacuation flight of 2022 from Libya to Rwanda brings over 100 asylum seekers to safety](#), 30 March 2022

“UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, on Tuesday evening evacuated a group of 119 vulnerable asylum seekers out of Libya to safety in Rwanda [...]”

“The group evacuated last night will join another 269 refugees and asylum seekers at the Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM) in Gashora, Rwanda, where UNHCR provides assistance including shelter, food, medical care, psycho-social support for vulnerable cases, activities for children, and language courses.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“3.3 Land, housing and property rights

Article 18 of the Refugee Law enables refugees to enjoy the provisions relating to emphyteutic land leases for business and agricultural purposes without obstacle. Asylum-seekers cannot exercise this right until a decision has been taken on their status [...]”

iii) Healthcare

UK Home Office [Country Policy Information Note on the Asylum System in Rwanda](#), 9 May 2022

“10.2.6 Refugees and asylum seekers can access COVID-19 services at no cost [footnote 181].”

[181] UNHCR, ‘Health insurance in Rwanda’, 24 June 2020

UNHCR, [Community-based health insurance for urban refugees and refugee students in Rwanda](#), 24 June 2020

“Challenges

“Some principal applicants (PA) were registered as asylum seekers – pending refugee status determination (RSD) procedure, while their dependents were registered as refugees. Initially, dependents could not access the CBHI but the Government of Rwanda later authorized their access irrespective of the PA’s status [...]”

“Two health centers in Kigali were selected to provide primary health care services for PoCs who are not yet enrolled in CBHI (asylum seekers and others not in the CBHI system).”

iv) Administrative assistance, e.g., to complete the asylum application

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review 37th Session, Compilation on Rwanda A/HRC/WG.6/37/RWA/2](#), 13 November 2020

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“[...] 5. Refugees and asylum seekers”

“[...] 99. UNHCR recommended that Rwanda ensure that all asylum seekers were issued with temporary residence permits and had their files transferred to the Refugee Status Determination Committee within 15 days.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“2.2 Security of legal status”

“[...] Registered asylum-seekers hold a temporary residence permit with a validity of three months, which is renewable.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Registration](#), undated

“[...] Registration and documentation services in Rwanda:

[...] New arrivals registration after clearance by the Government of Rwanda...

[...] UNHCR and partners support you to obtain several documents including birth, marriage, divorce and death certificates. The Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) provides and coordinates the protection, assistance to refugees including facilitating the issuance of refugee identity document from the National Identification Agency (NIDA) [...]”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Legal assistance](#), undated

“Refugees and asylum-seekers to UNHCR may receive legal assistance through our partner organisations,

Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) and Legal Aid Forum (LAF), including the following services:

- Provision of legal advice and counseling
- Information and support on access to asylum and the refugee status determination procedure
- Legal representation, including at Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB), prosecution and court level
- Birth registration and other documentation
- Detention monitoring”

v) Legal counsel

Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW), [State report on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021 \[18 May 2021\] \[CEDAW/C/RWA/10\]](#), 4 October 2021

“Concerning access to justice, refugees including women have the right to seek remedies from courts when their rights are at stake. They also have access to free legal services through different actors. For the period under consideration, between 2015 and 2020 a total of 77 asylum seekers gets free legal aid. 20 Among them 68 were male and 9 were female.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“As per Article 18 of the Refugee Law and Article 12/g of the Ministerial Instructions Determining the Management of Refugees and Refugee Camps, asylum-seekers...enjoy the right to access justice...”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Legal Assistance](#), undated

“Refugees and asylum-seekers to UNHCR may receive legal assistance through our partner organisations, **Prison Fellowship Rwanda (PFR) and Legal Aid Forum (LAF)**, including the following services:

- Provision of legal advice and counseling
- Information and support on access to asylum and the refugee status determination procedure
- Legal representation, including at Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB), prosecution and court level
- Birth registration and other documentation
- Detention monitoring”

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Prison Fellowship Rwanda, [Community Based Protection and Legal Aid](#), undated

[...]LEGAL ASSISTANCE ACTIVITIES

We provide legal advice to the person of concern and follow up the received cases whenever needed; 1,683 PoC have been assisted through [sic] legal advice, advocacy, legal orientation, mediation and enforcement of court decisions. We provide legal representation to PoC (at RIB, prosecution and court levels), Identify cases that need legal representation and prepare case files for advocates; 318 PoC who have been detained 162 among them have been assisted and released from detention, whereby 58 have been convicted and serving their sentence in different prisons across the country, 98 PoC are still in detention in different detention facilities. Legal education (Legal awareness on Rwanda national laws and advocate for refugees for accessing fundamental human rights as nationals), 30,761 POCs were sensitized on crime prevention, evidence preservation and SGBV Prevention through national laws [...]"

vi) Mental health services

Africa Humanitarian Action, [Gashora Refugee Camp: AHA becoming a Beacon of Hope for Refugees](#), 21 February 2022

"Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), one of the partners working with UNHCR, has been providing vital integrated healthcare services to save the lives of some of the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers which include curative and preventive health care, hospital admissions, laboratory, referrals, nutrition services, mental health care, antenatal, immunization and postnatal care at the ETM center."

Altai Consulting for EUTF, [CASE STUDY Emergency Transit Mechanism](#), June 2021

"As they suffer from extremely deep trauma related to their stay in Libya, evacuees also receive psychosocial support [...]"

vii) Education

UNHCR Rwanda, [Education](#), undated

"Refugees and asylum-seekers can have access to inclusive education at all levels in Rwanda. The Rwandan government allows refugee children and youth to attend public primary, secondary and tertiary education on the same conditions as nationals. UNHCR, along with partners, supports the Government to enhance the inclusion of refugees and asylum-seekers in the national education system where refugee and host community children attend school together."

Barriers to accessing support for asylum seekers in Rwanda

i) Financial/socioeconomic

AP, [Refugees in Rwanda warn of challenges for arrivals in UK](#), 14 June 2022

"[...] Some who came to this East African country under earlier arrangements tell the Associated Press the new arrivals can expect a difficult time ahead.

"[...] "There is nothing for me to want to stay here," he said. Even those who came straight to Rwanda to escape troubles at home say the country, while peaceful, isn't easy.

"When you are not employed, you cannot survive here," said Kelly Nimubona, a refugee from neighboring Burundi. "We cannot afford to eat twice a day. There is no chance to get a job or do vending on the street." But he described Rwanda as an oasis of order in the region.

"Rwanda is already home to more than 130,000 refugees and migrants from other African nations and countries such as Pakistan, the government has said."

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UK Home Office [Country Policy Information Note on the Asylum System in Rwanda](#), 9 May 2022

“10.3.18 HO officials asked whether employers draw a distinction between refugees and asylum seekers and Rwandan citizens in the job market, and the Regional Manager explained: ‘It depends on the job, not having the Kinyarwanda language may prevent someone from getting a job, but likely only very local jobs. The govt encourages opportunities for refugees. Goes back to us advocating for young people.’[footnote 203]...

“10.3.23 In a meeting between the HO and LAF on 21 March 2022, a LAF representative explained:

“By Law, asylum seekers cannot work whilst waiting for their initial decision or an appeal outcome. It is not possible to work without ID, nor open a Bank account, but some people might work in the informal sector. But most asylum seekers have ‘connections’ and are supported by relatives or friends.

“Asylum seekers are not treated fairly when working in the informal sector.”

[203] Notes of interviews, Annex A5, Meeting between HO and Harambee, 19 January 2022

ii) Accommodation

Haaretz, [Asylum Seekers Deported From Israel to Rwanda Warn Those Remaining: ‘Don’t Come Here’](#), 2 February 2018

“For more than two months now he has been living in the street. “Things are so bad. I am living very badly. I have no home, there is no work,” he says. “Before, there were a few people who helped me. The United Nations also helped – they gave me money for lodging and food. But they stopped.

He describes a daily fight for survival. ‘Sometimes I eat with friends, sometimes I ask for help from people who have a restaurant, sometimes I go to sleep without eating.’ In the four years he has been living in Rwanda he has not been employed for a single day, though he says he has invested a lot of effort in looking for work.

“[...] The luckier ones have a roof over their heads and money for food. Others depend on the generosity and kindness of friends and local people and the limited help from the UN.”

“[...] He asked the UN office for absorption in a refugee camp but was refused. ‘A refugee camp is better for me. If they would take me I would get food and housing but they refused.’

“[...] Teklesambat, 38, from Eritrea...The \$3,500 he received from Israel, he says, did not last him a year. Then the UNHCR office funded an apartment and food for him and his roommates. ‘After that maybe they got tired and they told us: ‘You have to find work.’ Where are we going to find work? We slept outside the UNHCR office for two months. That was in 2016. After that, what can we do? We have nothing, we have no work, we are suffering. We asked to go to a refugee camp and they didn’t let us,’ he says, noting that he applied in writing several times to the Rwandan government office responsible for dealing with refugees, and never received a reply.

‘I live in the street. People help me. People here are generous but they don’t even have enough for themselves,’ he says. ‘It is better to stay in Israel, even in prison – you have food, you have a place to stay. You know what our situation is here. It is better to stay there and struggle.’”

iii) Healthcare

UNHCR, [Community-based health insurance for urban refugees and refugee students in Rwanda](#), 24 June 2020

“Challenges”

“[...] Some principal applicants (PA) were registered as asylum seekers – pending refugee status determination (RSD) procedure, while their dependents were registered as refugees. Initially, dependents could not access the CBHI but the Government of Rwanda later authorized their access irrespective of the PA’s status [...].”

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iv) Administrative assistance, e.g., to complete the asylum application

UNHCR, [Analysis of the Legality and Appropriateness of the Transfer of Asylum Seekers under the UK-Rwanda arrangement](#), 8 June 2022

"[...] 18. UNHCR has expressed concerns with regard to shortcomings in the capacity of the Rwandan asylum system in its July 2020 submissions to the Universal Periodic Review [...] and with both the Rwandan and UK authorities [...] UNHCR's concerns in this regard include:"

"[...] c. UNHCR has concerns about the impartiality of the RSD Committee's decision-making, with high rates of rejection observed for asylum applicants originating from both neighbouring and non-African countries.

d. Lack of representation by a lawyer for asylum seekers during panel deliberations on their case.

e. Reasons for negative decisions are not provided, rendering the right to appeal difficult or impossible to exercise in practice.

f. Appeals against rejection at the first instance are made to Rwanda's Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA), which is also part of the RSD Committee which makes the first instance decisions. This raises concerns about the independent nature of the administrative appeal stage. There is no precedent for asylum appeals at the High Court.

g. The efficiency and timeliness of the asylum procedure is of concern, with decisions taking up to one to two years to be issued in some cases. In recent years there has only been one MINEMA eligibility officer tasked to prepare all cases for the RSD Committee.

h. There is insufficient access to interpreters for asylum claimants throughout the process."

UNHCR, [Country Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"In 2020, given the outbreak of the COVID-19 pandemic, coupled with the limited capacity of the national RSD committee, many asylum seekers were still awaiting their decisions [...] The national asylum process for new asylum seekers remains cumbersome [...] In contrast, the provision of documentation for asylum seekers is delayed/denied causing protection risks to this vulnerable population who cannot access basic services."

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

"[...] **Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**"

"20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] b) some requests for asylum lodged by Eritreans and South Sudanese with the Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration have not been transmitted immediately to the Refugee Status Determination Committee of Rwanda, despite the 15-day time limit on asylum applications set by the law of the State party, which could well expose them to the risk of refoulement [...]"

v) Legal counsel

UNHCR, [Analysis of the Legality and Appropriateness of the Transfer of Asylum Seekers under the UK-Rwanda arrangement](#), 8 June 2022

"[...] 18. UNHCR has expressed concerns with regard to shortcomings in the capacity of the Rwandan asylum system in its July 2020 submissions to the Universal Periodic Review [...] and with both the Rwandan and UK authorities [...] UNHCR's concerns in this regard include:"

"[...] d. Lack of representation by a lawyer for asylum seekers during panel deliberations on their case."

Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Rwanda](#), 2 May 2016

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"[...] Asylum seekers and immigration detention"

"[...] 29. The Committee...notes with concern that, under the 2014 Refugee Law, an appeal against a rejected refugee claim is not brought before an independent authority and asylum seekers are not granted free legal aid [...]"

vi) Mental health services

Altai Consulting for EUTF, [CASE STUDY Emergency Transit Mechanism](#), June 2021

"In Rwanda, the Gashora Transit Centre was already built, but evacuees [evacuees comprise both refugees and asylum seekers] started arriving before the centre was upgraded. The programme itself was also very new for UNHCR, leading to unforeseen challenges, especially regarding refugees' psychosocial needs. A large majority have been subjected to physical and/or sexual abuse, and suffer from behavioural disorders, such as trouble sleeping, talking, and sometimes fits of anger or depression [...] Most evacuees [refugees and asylum seekers] thus require intense psychosocial care, and personal and individual follow-up. In Rwanda, though local capacity in this sector is relatively strong, the language barrier between evacuees and ETM staff can be challenging for the provision of psychosocial support. NGOs work with interpreters but these are scarce, and constitute an additional link between the counsellor and the patient, which can limit the level of trust between them [...]"

vii) Education

Permission to work for asylum seekers

UK Home Office [Country Policy Information Note on the Asylum System in Rwanda](#), 9 May 2022

"10.3.23 In a meeting between the HO and LAF on 21 March 2022, a LAF representative explained: 'By Law, asylum seekers cannot work whilst waiting for their initial decision or an appeal outcome. It is not possible to work without ID, nor open a Bank account, but some people might work in the informal sector. But most asylum seekers have 'connections' and are supported by relatives or friends [...] Asylum seekers are not treated fairly when working in the informal sector.'"

Refoulement/indirect refoulement

All Africa/The Conversation, [Africa: Western Countries Are Shipping Refugees to Poorer Nations in Exchange for Cash](#), 28 July 2022

"[...] Many of those deported to Rwanda have consistently struggled with lack of documentation and poverty, and have mostly fled the country and attempted to return to Europe. Facing international and national criticism, the Israeli program was later abandoned."

All Africa/Reuters, [Rwanda: Besides Britain, Which Nations Send Asylum Seekers Overseas?](#), 20 June 2022

"In 2014, Israel introduced a now-defunct policy to send those rejected for asylum and illegal immigrants - mainly from Sudan and Eritrea - to Rwanda and Uganda for third-country resettlement. They were given the choice of either being deported back to their country of origin or accepting a payment of \$3,500 and a plane ticket to either Uganda or Rwanda, with any who stayed in Israel facing jail."

"Israel has said about 20,000 people either returned home or went to one of the East African countries under the policy, which human rights groups criticised for sending refugees to countries where there were no guarantees over their safety."

"Research conducted by the University of Oxford and the International Refugee Rights Initiative found that many deported to Rwanda and Uganda had their travel documents taken away on arrival and were held in hotels guarded by armed men. Most escaped and paid people smugglers to make the dangerous journey to

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Europe.”

“Amid mounting international and domestic criticism, the Israeli programme was scrapped in 2019 following its suspension by the country's Supreme Court.”

Global Detention Project, [Rwanda](#), 20 January 2022

“[...] The country [Rwanda] was previously involved in receiving deportees from Israel under a ‘voluntary departure’ scheme between 2014 and 2017. Around 4,000 people were deported under that scheme to Rwanda and Uganda and almost all are thought to have left the country almost immediately, many attempting to return to Europe. Testimonies collected by the International Refugee Rights Initiative found that following their arrival in Rwanda from Israel, ‘people were being smuggled out of the country by land to Kampala within days.’ Testimonies also highlighted that people were ‘not given an opportunity to apply for asylum, and even if they wish to stay in Rwanda, their refugee claims cannot be assessed as the national refugee status determination committee has not yet been established.’”

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: [Fifth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant](#), due in 2018 [24 December 2020] [E/C.12/RWA/5], 24 June 2022

“[...] Article 10

Protection and assistance for the family

Reply to paragraph 11 of the Concluding Observations

99. The Government of Rwanda enacted Law n° 13 ter/2014 Of 21/05/2014 relating to refugees. The principle of non-refoulement is covered under article 21 of the law which stipulates that under no circumstances may a refugee be sent back or deported to a country where his/her life or liberty may be compromised.”

UNHCR, [Analysis of the Legality and Appropriateness of the Transfer of Asylum Seekers under the UK-Rwanda arrangement](#), 8 June 2022

“[...] 18. UNHCR has expressed concerns with regard to shortcomings in the capacity of the Rwandan asylum system in its July 2020 submissions to the Universal Periodic Review [...] and with both the Rwandan and UK authorities [...] UNHCR’s concerns in this regard include:

“a. Some persons seeking asylum are arbitrarily denied access to asylum procedures by Rwanda’s Directorate General for Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) and are not referred to the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Committee for consideration of their claims for international protection. This places those wishing to claim asylum undocumented, at risk of detention and deportation and has resulted in recent incidents of chain refoulement.”

Haaretz, [Asylum Seekers Deported From Israel to Rwanda Warn Those Remaining: ‘Don’t Come Here’](#), 2 February 2018

“[...] The UNHCR office in Kigali knows about only nine [of] them [asylum seekers transferred from Israel who remained in Rwanda]. All the rest have left; most have been smuggled into Uganda.”

UN Committee Against Torture, [Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report of Rwanda CAT/C/RWA/CO/2](#), 21 December 2017

“[...] **Non-refoulement and detention of asylum seekers**”

“[...] 46. While welcoming the new legal framework aimed at strengthening protection against refoulement, the Committee is concerned at the reported delays in registering asylum seekers, placing them at risk of being deported. It also expresses concern at the difficulties in accessing the asylum procedure faced by Turkish residents as well as Eritreans and South Sudanese relocated from Israel, some of whom have reportedly been forcibly expelled to neighbouring countries. While acknowledging that the State party has granted prima facie refugee status to over 80,000 Burundians, and noting the delegation’s denial of forced returns, the Committee takes note with concern of information reported in the media that more than 1,000 Burundians were forcibly expelled in May 2016. It is also concerned at information that in July 2017 several refugees were arrested at Mahama camp on the ground of possession of drugs, reportedly in disregard of their due process rights. The Committee is concerned that the arrested refugees could be at risk of deportation. In the light of this

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information, the Committee regrets the State party's failure to provide information on the time frames observed in the adjudication of asylum claims and on the use of judicial remedies to challenge deportations (art. 3)."

"47. The State party should:

- (a) Ensure that the asylum authorities are provided with sufficient personnel and resources to be able to register asylum seekers in a timely manner and adjudicate on asylum claims within the legal time frame;
- (b) Ensure that all asylum seekers, without restriction relating to nationality or the profile of the claim, are issued with temporary residence permits and that their claims are processed within the legal time frame;
- (c) Screen all foreign nationals prior to their expulsion or relocation in order to guarantee at all times that no persons in need of international protection are expelled to a country where they are in danger of being subjected to acts of torture or to chain refoulement and that they are granted access to the refugee status determination procedure;
- (d) Guarantee procedural legal safeguards for refugees and asylum seekers in police custody as well as their right to be protected from refoulement."

UNHCR, [UNHCR concerned over Israel's refugee relocation proposals](#), 17 November 2017

"UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, is seriously concerned by proposals announced yesterday by Israel's Interior Minister Aryeh Deri and Public Security Minister Gilad Erdan. Under these proposals, Eritreans and Sudanese asylum-seekers and refugees would be compelled to accept relocation to countries in Africa or face imprisonment in Israel. [...] From the start of this programme in December 2013 until June 2017, some 4,000 Eritrean and Sudanese were relocated under the Government's 'voluntary departure programme' to two African countries, named in media reports as Rwanda and Uganda. Due to the secrecy surrounding this policy and the lack of transparency concerning its implementation, it has been very difficult for UNHCR to follow up and systematically monitor the situation of people relocated to these African countries. UNHCR, however, is concerned that these persons have not found adequate safety or a durable solution to their plight and that many have subsequently attempted dangerous onward movements within Africa or to Europe."

Foreign Policy, [Inside Israel's Secret Program to Get Rid of African Refugees](#), 27 June 2017

"KIGALI, Rwanda — The man picked Afie Semene and the 11 other Eritreans on the flight from Tel Aviv out of the stream of disembarking passengers as if he already had their faces memorized. He welcomed them to the Rwandan capital, Kigali, and introduced himself as John. He was a Rwandan immigration officer, he explained, there to help smooth their arrival. He collected the travel documents each of them had been issued in Israel and led them past the immigration counter where the rest of the passengers from their flight queued. Nobody stopped them. Nothing was stamped.[...]"

"[...] the next day brought new despair: There would be no visas. No work permits. No asylum. None of the things Israeli authorities had promised the 12 Eritreans when they had agreed to relocate to Rwanda a few weeks prior. Instead, John offered to smuggle them into neighboring Uganda, which he told them was a 'free nation.' 'If you live here, you can't leave,' Semene recalled John saying of Rwanda. 'It's a tight country. Let me advise you, as your brother, you need to go to Uganda.'"

"They would need to sneak across the border, since they had no proof of legal entry into Rwanda. (The Israeli *laissez-passers* had gone unstamped at the Kigali airport the night before, an oversight that now felt suspicious.) But John told them not to worry; he could easily get them into Uganda for a fee of \$250. "I have everything," he said. 'Contacts with the government over there. Contacts with the Israeli government. If something happens, I call the Israeli government and they do something for you.'"

"The alternative, John said, was to remain in the Kigali house, where they would be under constant surveillance. They would have to pay rent, but without documentation, they would not be allowed to work. Semene and the others understood that John was not really giving them a choice. Everyone agreed to the plan."

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

"[...] Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers"

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“20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that:[...] b) some requests for asylum lodged by Eritreans and South Sudanese with the Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration have not been transmitted immediately to the Refugee Status Determination Committee of Rwanda, despite the 15-day time limit on asylum applications set by the law of the State party, which could well expose them to the risk of refoulement [...]”

Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, [Deported To The Unknown](#), 7 December 2015

“Confiscation of all documents upon arrival at the destination: All nine testified to the fact that they were given travel documents in Israel, which were then confiscated upon their arrival in Rwanda.

Held captive in Rwanda before being smuggled to Uganda: Eight Eritrean citizens testified to being held captive in Kigali and forbidden to leave the place where they were being held, until they were smuggled to Uganda. Six testified to wanting to stay in Rwanda, but were not allowed to do so and were forced to continue to Uganda.

Robbery: Five testified to having to pay additional fees when they were forcibly smuggled to Uganda, ranging anywhere from \$100-\$250. They also testified to being additionally extorted financially by people in uniform on their journey to Uganda.”

International Refugee Rights Initiative, [“I was left with nothing”: ‘Voluntary’ departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda](#), 8 September 2015

“[...] For those asylum seekers who are sent to Rwanda, testimonies collected by IRRI suggest that the majority, if not all, are being smuggled out of the country by land to Kampala within days of arriving in Kigali. They are not given an opportunity to apply for asylum, and even if they wish to stay in Rwanda, their refugee claims cannot be assessed as the national refugee status determination committee has not yet been established. These transfers appear to be coordinated by the people who receive the asylum seekers at Kigali airport [...]”

Hotline for Refugees and Migrants and ASSAF, [Where there is no free will](#), 16 April 2015

“The authors of the present report managed to interview only a few asylum seekers in Rwanda. Those who testified about leaving for Rwanda went on to other destinations immediately. The authors of the present report could not locate a single asylum seeker who found protection and stayed in Rwanda for more than a few days. Other interviewees, when asked about it, clarified that staying in Rwanda was not an option.”

Human Rights Watch, [“Make their lives miserable”, Israel’s Coercion of Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum Seekers](#), 9 September 2014

“In late May 2014, Human Rights Watch met with nine Eritreans and a Sudanese national in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, who said they had flown from Israel to Kigali earlier in the month and that on arrival they were simply allowed into the country but given no permit to stay. As of early August, they had not been given any secure immigration status.”

LGBTQI+ persons in the Rwandan asylum system

Grants of refugee status in Rwanda where the claim is based on sexual orientation or gender identity

COMMISSARIAT GÉNÉRAL AUX RÉFUGIÉS ET AUX APATRIDES, [COI Focus RWANDA L’homosexualité](#), 30 October 2019 [referring to an article in [Mashable](#)]

“[A] Rwandan LGBT activist claimed in 2017 that Ugandan LGBT people persecuted in their country of origin had taken refuge in Rwanda. Cedoca found no other source that identifies LGBT people who sought refuge in Rwanda.”

Original Source:

“[U]n activiste LGBT rwandais affirme en 2017 que des LGBT ougandais persécutés dans leur pays d’origine se

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sont réfugiés au Rwanda. Le Cedoca n'a trouvé aucune autre source qui identifie des LGBT ayant cherché refuge au Rwanda."

Number of asylum grants for claims based on sexual orientation or gender identity in Rwanda

Barriers faced by LGBTQI+ asylum seekers within the Rwandan RSD process

i) Financial/socioeconomic

ii) Accommodation

iii) Healthcare

iv) Administrative assistance, e.g., to complete the asylum application

UNHCR, [Analysis of the Legality and Appropriateness of the Transfer of Asylum Seekers under the UK-Rwanda arrangement](#), 8 June 2022

"[...] 18. UNHCR has expressed concerns with regard to shortcomings in the capacity of the Rwandan asylum system in its July 2020 submissions to the Universal Periodic Review [22] and with both the Rwandan and UK authorities. [23] UNHCR's concerns in this regard include: [...]"

"[...] b. Discriminatory access to the asylum procedures is of concern, including the fact that some LGBTQI+ persons are denied access to asylum procedures."

[22] UNHCR Submission for the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights' Compilation Report Universal Periodic Review: 3rd Cycle, July 2020.

Pinknews, [Parliament passing 'deplorable' Tory borders bill 'is a devastating blow to LGBT+ people'](#), 28 April 2022

"Members of one LGBT+ Rwandan campaign group, who spoke on the condition of anonymity for their safety, told *PinkNews* that British ministers have strived to present Rwanda as a 'safe' place. "

"But 'from experience', they said, it's anything but. 'It is neither safe nor good for us, they said.' They expressed concern that those being deported to Rwanda will likely face harassment from processing centre officials, among other services, who hold 'homophobic and conservative attitudes'."

"Striking a hopeful tone, the members said that if any LGBT+ people are offshored to Rwanda, they will be waiting for them with open arms."

"We hope and look forward to working with them to protect LGBT+ rights'," they said."

UNHCR, [Submission to the OHCHR](#), July 2020

"[...] Some asylum seekers, i.e. LGBTI asylum seekers, continue to face challenges upon submission of their asylum requests to the immigration service, who verbally rejects their applications. UNHCR is concerned that such practices are subjecting asylum seekers to harsh living conditions as well as placing them at risk of detention and deportation."

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

"...1.2 Social Cohesion

"[...] Rwanda is also one of a few African countries whose constitutions criminalize discrimination. Different laws have been enacted to deal with the offence of discrimination, which is punishable under Article 163 of Law No 68/2018 determining offences and penalties in general. Overall, refugees in Rwanda enjoy a conducive

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protection environment and there is no systematic discrimination or denial of rights targeting refugees based on the grounds mentioned above. While discrimination might occur in some situations, for instance in relation to sexual orientation and gender identity, this is true for both refugees and members of the host community.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Age, Gender and Diversity](#), undated

“[...] UNHCR seeks to ensure that all persons of concern enjoy their rights on an equal footing and are able to participate fully in the decisions that affect their lives and the lives of their family members and communities. This is achieved through the systematic application of an Age, Gender and Diversity (AGD) approach in our operations worldwide including in Rwanda.”

“[...] **DIVERSITY** refers to different values, attitudes, cultural perspectives, beliefs, ethnic background, nationality, sexual orientation, gender identity, ability, health, social status, skill and other specific personal characteristics. While the age and gender dimensions are present in everyone, other characteristics vary from person to person. These differences must be recognized, understood and valued by UNHCR in each specific context and operation in order to ensure protection for all people [...]”

v) Legal counsel

Commissioner-General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, Belgium, [RWANDA L'homosexualité](#), 30 October 2019

“The Belgian Commissioner-General for Refugees and Stateless Persons, quotes Jean-Claude Uwihoreye, executive director of Rwandan LGBT organisation My Rights Alliance, based on information obtained in August 2019:

‘[...] even if the lawyers are aware that lgbti community is not criminalized they are homophobic because of their societal origin influence and many of them ignore to treat and defend lgbti cases in courts. Judicial authorities actions against lgbti are not frequent but cases of rejecting their cases occur. LGBTI can't at all request protection from the police or from the courts’

vi) Mental health services

vii) Education

Conditions for refugees in Rwanda

*The sources consulted often did not distinguish between recognised refugees and asylum seekers. Please note that where sources refer to “refugees”, this may encompass both recognised refugees and asylum seekers.

Number of recognised refugees in Rwanda

*The following statistics distinguish between refugees and asylum seekers, though the term “recognised refugees” is not used.

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Population of Concern Map](#), December 2021

The “Rwanda: Population of Concern Map” shows that as of 31st December 2021, there were 121,903 refugees, 393 asylum seekers and 4,816 “others of concern” in Rwanda.

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Proportion of refugees living in refugee camps

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Population Statistics](#), December 2021

The UNHCR “Rwanda: Population Statistics” document indicates that as at 31st December 2021, “90% of refugees in Rwanda resided in camps”.

UNHCR, [Refugee Policy Review Framework](#), as at 30 June 2020

“Most refugees live in six camps which are dispersed throughout the country.”

Comparative Migration Studies, [How do refugees affect social life in host communities? The case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda](#), 6 August 2019

“Approximately 90% of Congolese refugees in Rwanda reside in one of the five camps spread throughout the country: Gihembe and Nyabiheke camps in the North, Kiziba camp near the western border, and Kigeme and Mugombwa camps in the southern part of the country. Four of these camps host ‘old caseload’ refugees, referring to refugees who entered the country during the first or the second Congo wars that respectively took place between 1996 and 1997, and between 1998 and 2003.”

Living conditions in refugee camps

Famine Early Warning Systems Network, [Rwanda Key Message Update: Food availability enhanced with Season B harvest, but high prices persist](#), July 2022

“Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes will likely be sustained among the estimated 127,340 refugees and asylees in Rwanda, a phase that would likely be worse in the absence of ongoing humanitarian food assistance. As confirmed by WFP’s June 2022 brief, around 93 percent of the refugee population received a cash-based transfer intended to cover 46-92 percent of their monthly kilocalorie needs. However, the purchasing power of the ration is declining, with WFP’s June 2022 price monitoring data showing the cost of the food basket increased by 12 and 54 percent, respectively, compared to May 2022 and June 2021.”

Human Rights Watch, [Public Letter to UK Home Secretary on Expulsions to Rwanda](#), 11 June 2022

“In 2018, at least twelve refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo died after police fired live ammunition at the unarmed refugees who were protesting a cut to food rations. Rwandan police arrested over 60 refugees and tried them for participating in illegal demonstrations, rebellion and spreading false information to create a ‘hostile international opinion’ of Rwanda, a criminal offence in Rwanda’s Penal Code. As one Burundian refugee living in Rwanda summed it up, ‘Life in Rwanda is ok as long as you keep your mouth shut.’”

UNFPA, [Gov’t, Partners Lead Effort To Make Menstruation A Normal Fact Of Life By 2030](#), 10 June 2022

“A Rapid assessment on the status of Menstrual Health Management in Rwanda conducted Liliane Umwiza, a project associate at Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) indicated that a pack of single-use sanitary pads costs between Rwf700 (71 US cents) and Rwf1000 (\$1), roughly a day’s wage for many women, putting it out of reach for many.”

“It also indicated that in refugee’s camp, parents prioritize food over such MHM needs and this often leads to girls feeling neglected and pushes some to resort to sex in exchange for commodities.”

WFP, [Rwanda Country Brief](#), June 2022

“In June 2022, WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 124,798 people under strategic outcome 1, including 116,921 refugees, 200 Rwandan returnees, 546 asylum seekers, and 7,131 Rwandan children from the host communities around the camps attending the same schools with 28,060 refugee children. A total of USD 599,852 cash-based transfers (CBT) was made to refugees in five camps to allow them purchase food of their choice. ”

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“WFP continued to provide reduced rations due to funding constraints. Refugees classified as highly vulnerable (86 percent of all refugees) received a food ration equivalent to 92 percent of the food basket (RWF 7,000) instead of the 100 percent recommended, while refugees classified as moderately vulnerable (7 percent of refugees) received a food ration of 46 percent of the food basket (RWF 3,500) instead of the 50 percent recommended ration.”

AP News, [For many migrants, the view of Rwanda is often far from rosy](#), 28 April 2022

“In the Gashora camp for refugees in Rwanda’s east, one man said he was one of hundreds of migrants sent from Libya who still plan to reach Europe. ‘Many have left for Sweden already,’ he said on condition of anonymity for his safety. He said he would leave ‘even if it means death,’ saying refugees in the camp often don’t have adequate food and clothing.”

All Africa/Human Rights Watch, [Rwanda: UK's Rights Assessment of Rwanda Not Based On Facts](#), 12 May 2022

“[...] Between February and May 2018, Rwandan authorities used excessive force and killed 12 Congolese refugees during a protest over cuts in food rations, and police arrested over 60 others. They charged them with participating in illegal demonstrations, violence against public authorities, rebellion, and disobeying law enforcement. Some were also charged with ‘spreading false information with intent to create a hostile international opinion against the Rwandan state.’ Human Rights Watch confirmed that between October 2018 and September 2019, at least 35 refugees were sentenced to between 3 months and 15 years in prison. One refugee was accused of sharing information with us, and the communications were used as evidence against him during trial. He is currently serving a 15-year sentence.”

Forced Migration Review, [Climate Resilience in Rwanda: evaluating refugees’ and host populations’ vulnerability to risk](#), March 2022

“The majority of the approximately 127,000 camp residents in Rwanda, and their host communities, lack access to sustainable livelihoods which has a detrimental impact on their resilience. Protracted displacement may make certain groups of refugees in camps especially vulnerable to climate risks. UNHCR’s policy on alternatives to camps promotes avoiding encampment entirely and pursuing alternative hosting modalities [...] but the encampment approach is likely to remain for some time.”

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

“Who’s in charge? What challenges do they face?”

“[...] There are also various partners who provide services like healthcare, water, and shelter in the camps. But even in longstanding camps like Kiziba, refugees face limited access to electricity and clean water. Because inhabitants have been there for a long time, their family sizes have grown but infrastructure hasn’t kept up.”

“While assistance agencies can address some of these challenges, they are constrained by both practical and political factors.”

“Rwanda is a small country, about 26,000km² in size. Finding available land to expand refugee camps or which refugees can farm is difficult [...]”

“But there’s dwindling aid funding for protracted refugee situations. For instance, in 2021 the World Food Programme announced it would reduce food assistance to refugees in Rwanda by a shocking 60% – three years after a 25% food ration cut for refugees in Rwanda was the basis for protests which led to 11 refugee fatalities.”

“In 2021, just 55% of UNHCR’s operation costs to support refugees in Rwanda was covered by funding. This figure is all the more worrying when compared against the level of need – the number of refugees in eastern Africa has almost tripled in the last decade from 1.82 million in 2012 to nearly 5 million in 2022. Funding shortfalls mean that more than 70% of these refugees do not receive a full food ration.”

WFP, [WFP welcomes US\\$ 5.5 million from the United States to support refugees in Rwanda](#), 19 April 2022

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“The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) has welcomed a contribution of US\$5.5 million from the United States (through USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance) to provide cash transfers to refugees living in all five camps in Rwanda. This funding is in addition to an earlier contribution of US\$4 million [...]”

“However, despite this new funding, WFP is still not able to provide full rations to meet the minimum food requirements for refugees. Following chronic funding shortfalls, WFP introduced a prioritisation scheme in May 2021 – a system under which refugees are given rations according to their levels of vulnerability.”

“Under this scheme, the most vulnerable refugees receive 92 percent of a full ration and those deemed moderately vulnerable receive 46 percent of a full ration. This ensures that the most vulnerable refugees are prioritized for general nutrition assistance while more self-reliant refugees are supported to graduate from external support.”

“WFP requires an additional US\$9.8 million to provide full rations to all registered refugees living in camps in Rwanda until December 2022.”

Famine Early Warning Systems Network, [Pockets of households are Stressed \(IPC Phase 2\), mainly due to elevated food prices](#), April 2022

“[...] Stressed! (IPC Phase 2!) outcomes will likely persist among the refugee and asylee population, which numbers around 128,000. Most have limited or no access to income or social support, especially in the aftermath of the economic impacts of the pandemic, and they rely on food assistance. The most recent WFP report indicates 114,153 people received assistance in February, with those categorized as highly vulnerable receiving a 92 percent cash ration and those categorized as moderately vulnerable receiving a 46 percent cash ration. Without food aid, this population would likely face food consumption gaps indicative of Crisis (IPC Phase 3) [...]”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

“Authorities sometimes restricted access to the camps for external visitors and international staff due to COVID-19 prevention measures.”

WFP, [Rwanda Country Brief](#), March 2022

“Operational Context

“[...] Many refugees have been in the country for decades and rely almost completely on WFP food assistance [...]”

WFP, [Rwanda Country Brief](#), March 2022

“Operational Updates [...]”

“Refugee Assistance [...]”

“In March 2022, WFP provided food and nutrition assistance to 112,620 people, including 106,095 refugees, 200 Rwandan returnees hosted in transit centres, 19 Burundian asylum seekers and 6,306 children from the host communities attending same schools as refugee children.”

“WFP continued to provide reduced general food assistance rations to camp-based refugees due to funding constraints, prioritizing refugees classified as highly vulnerable (86 percent of all refugees) and provided food ration equivalent to 92 percent of the food basket entitlements instead of the 100 percent recommended. Refugees classified as moderately vulnerable (7 percent of refugees) received 46 percent of their food basket entitlement instead of the 50 percent recommended.”

Famine Early Warning System Network, [Rwanda Remote Monitoring Update](#), October 2021

“[...] According to WFP estimates, 82 percent of about 127,163 refugees and asylum seekers are highly vulnerable and incapable of meeting basic food needs while nine percent each are moderately and least vulnerable. However, due to funding shortages, food assistance since August 2021 has been reduced and prioritized by vulnerability level; the highly vulnerable receive a 92 percent ration instead of a 100 percent while the moderately vulnerable receive a 46 percent ration instead of the recommended 50 percent. Given that the funding gap is yet to be filled, ration reductions will persist and this together with declining income

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earning opportunities due to COVID-19 impacts are expected to drive Crisis (IPC Phase 3) acute food insecurity among refugees in Rwanda.”

UNFPA, [Strengthening life-saving sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls in refugee camps in Rwanda with Japan’s support](#), 1 October 2022

“[...] The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent preventive measures to stop the quick spread of the infection have affected the access to SRH and GBV prevention and response services provided at community and health facility levels. UNFPA and its partners have mobilized funds from the Government of Japan to support Humanitarian Response in Rwanda especially during the context of COVID-19 pandemic context [...]”

“[...] Under the 2018 Japan Supplementary Project, UNFPA supported health system strengthening programs to ensure every pregnancy is wanted & every childbirth is safe. Various medical equipment have been procured to strengthen Maternal, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response in Mahama camp including an ambulance to ease the referral of complicated obstetric & GBV cases to the hospital.

“During the launch of the new Japan Supplementary project in Kiziba camp, the delegation laid the foundation stone at the site where the safe room is being constructed by Alight. The SGBV case workers as well as the community workers in Kiziba camp were also handed over the assorted items, including telephones, torch and Sound systems that will help them in their daily duties [...]”

“[...] This project will contribute to reduce preventable maternal mortality and morbidity during COVID-19 context in all six refugee Camps, increase access to the maternal Health and SRH services by women and girls and ensure their safety while attending services and Strengthen capacity of midwives to deliver quality SRH in the context of COVID-19 pandemic.”

New Times, [Over 500 refugees evacuated from landslide-prone Gihembe camp](#), 21 September 2021

“The government has relocated 538 refugees from Gihembe refugee camp in Gicumbi—which is considered to be a high-risk zone that is characterised by landslides during the rainy season. The refugees from 139 families have been relocated to Mahama refugee camp in Kirehe District, which officials said is safe for their lives. Goreth Murebwayire, the Gihembe Camp Manager, said the move aims at protecting the wellbeing of refugees and conserving the environment. “We are entering the rainy season which might put the refugees into more danger,” she said. Although there has never been any case of loss of life, rampant cases of injuries stemming from people falling in ravine ditches were increasingly putting the lives of refugees at stake.”

WFP News Release, [WFP welcomes US\\$5.3 million from the United States for food assistance for refugees in Rwanda](#), 24 June 2021

“[...] The United Nations World Food Programme (WFP) received today US\$5.3 million from USAID’s Bureau for Humanitarian Assistance (BHA) to provide humanitarian food assistance in the form of cash transfers to over 104,000 Congolese and Burundian refugees in camps across Rwanda.”

“WFP’s refugee operation has faced severe resourcing constraints in 2021 and WFP was forced to reduce general food assistance rations to 40 percent of a full ration in March and April 2021. Nutrition assistance to protect against malnutrition and school feeding continued without any cuts [...]”

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), [Tenth Periodic Report of the Republic of Rwanda on the implementation status of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), May 2021

“(g) Refugee women and girls

(g.1) Increase the security situation both within and around refugee camps, including by deploying an adequate number of police officers, including women, ensuring adequate lighting within and around camps, establishing Isange One Stop Centres in the vicinity of camps and providing women and girls with accessible shelter and food for them and their children to avoid so-called “survival sex”;

271. The state ensures the security of citizens and their properties wherever they are within its territory. Police officers of both genders are deployed in sufficient numbers at each refugee camp. Should there be a need to reinforce security in terms of increasing the number of police

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officers, the police station at Sector level, which is close to the refugee camps, would be ready to intervene. With regard to lighting, the GoR is pleased to report that all refugee camps are connected to electricity and have sufficient lighting.

272. Concerning legal services, non-state actors have greatly contributed to the free legal aid services to refugees. Legal officers and lawyers are deployed in different camps with the mandate to provide legal support to refugees daily. This service includes legal advice, legal orientation and legal assistance before court of law and other administrative entities. As a result, lawyers have intervened in 154 cases, most of them being GBV related. Lawyers are requested to manage GBV cases in an ethical manner with confidentiality of the victim's identity.

273. Legal Aid Forum (LAF), one of the NGOs offering legal aid services in refugee camps has also empowered 121,974 people on how to manage GBV cases and conducted awareness campaigns within the camp on human trafficking.

274. The Government of Rwanda in collaboration with Partners provides women, girls and children shelter and food. The Government in collaboration with partners train refugees on SGBV and they are taught on early reporting and evidence for legal purposes against SGBV.

275. All refugee camps have access to Isange One Stop Centres available in the District hosting. Each camp has a health facility.

(g.2) Provide confidential complaint mechanisms for refugee women and girls who are victims of violations of their rights and enhance their access to justice, including through the deployment of mobile courts to camps, and provide adequate protection for victims and witnesses, including the nondisclosure of identity and the provision of adequate shelter;

276. Concerning access to justice, refugees including women have the right to seek remedies from courts when their rights are at stake. They also have access to free legal services through different actors. For the period under consideration, between 2015 and 2020 a total of 77 asylum seekers gets free legal aid. 20 Among them 68 were male and 9 were female.

277. The law allows the court to move and conduct hearings on the ground where the crime has been committed. Further, the law allows for hearing in care and the National Public Prosecution Authority has a unity which deals with witness and victims protection.

(g.3) Strengthen the measures taken to prevent trafficking in refugee camps.

278. In addition to other existing measures to prevent trafficking in Rwanda, including the adoption of the law N° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others, to prevent human trafficking in refugee camps, the Government of Rwanda had enacted the Ministerial instructions n° 02/2016 of 1 June 2016 determining management of refugees and camp management which regulate access to the refugee camps. The Government of Rwanda deploys police officers in refugee camps in order to increase the security situation both within and around those camps."

African News Agency, [Refugees In Rwanda Desperate As Cuts Made To UN Aid](#), 20 April 2021

"Since the UN World Food Programme (WFP) cut assistance to Rwanda more than a month ago, 60% of refugees are suffering from hunger, with reports of suicide as a direct consequence. On February 12, Edith Heines, WFP's Rwanda director, announced: 'This is a desperate situation and without an immediate response from donors, we simply have no choice but to reduce our assistance to the refugees.' Before the 60% cut, refugees in Rwanda were receiving a US\$7.72 cash transfer a month to purchase food from local markets." "Refugees at Mahama refugee camp, located on the periphery of Tanzania's border and its Kimisi Game Reserve but within Rwanda's borders, as well as those at Kigeme refugee camp, close to Rwanda's Nyungwe Forest National Park, were interviewed. They said that hunger will kill them due to the cost of food at local markets and the reduced aid. There were also reports of suicide and attempted suicide due to the desperate situation. Mahama refugee camp is home to more than 54,000 refugees and was established in 2015 by the Rwandan government and the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR)."

United Nations Rwanda, [One UN Country Annual Results Report 2019-2020](#), 6 April 2021

"[...] **Maintaining WASH for refugees**

At least 3,000 meters of retaining wall and drainage channels were built and maintained in all refugee camps and Gashora emergency transit management (ETM) centre. In addition to public hygiene, this contributes to

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soil and water conservation, as well as rainwater harvesting. Sanitary facilities were constructed in both locations. This contributed to maintaining the person of concern per drop-hole below 30 people. Also, to ensure hygiene in camps, desludging trucks continued for desludging human waste. Meanwhile, 200 landfills were used along with garbage trucks for solid waste management. The UN also continued to ensure adequate clean water supply in all refugee camps and health facilities in hosting areas. This was done through repair and maintenance of existing water infrastructure and rehabilitation of over 760 water taps. This has maintained access to water within the standard of at least 20 liters per person per day, ensuring access to water for over 140,000 camp-based refugees and at least 30,000 people in host communities.”

U.S. Department of State, [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 30 March 2021 [covering the year 2020]

“Journalist Jean Bosco Kabakura remained outside the country after fleeing in 2018 because of threats related to his publication of an article examining the roles of police, military, and civilian authorities in the shooting of refugees from the Kiziba refugee camp earlier in 2018.”

U.S. Department of State, [2020 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 30 March 2021 [covering the year 2020]

“Authorities generally provided adequate security and physical protection within refugee camps. The RNP worked with UNHCR to maintain police posts on the edge of and station police officers in refugee camps. Refugees were free to file complaints at both camp and area police stations. There were no major security incidents at refugee camps during the year.”

UN Human Rights Council, [Forty-Seventh Session Report of the Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review](#), 25 March 2021

“[...] B. **Interactive dialogue and responses by the State under review**”

“[...] 51. Georgia welcomed the policy for refugees and asylum seekers, despite the closure of the borders to contain the COVID-19 pandemic, and noted the initiatives to combat gender-based violence and human trafficking [...]”

“[...] II **Conclusions and/or recommendations**”

“[...] 134.157 Intensify efforts to safeguard the rights of immigrants and refugees (Barbados);

“134.158 Continue efforts to promote and protect the rights of refugees, in particular their rights to food, education and access to clean and safe drinking water (Lesotho); ”

“134.159 Ensure that all reception centres for refugee and asylum-seeking children are adapted to their needs and that all unaccompanied and separated children have access to national refugee status determination procedures, as well as investigate any reports of the alleged disappearance of children from refugee camps, in particular adolescent girls (Mexico) [...]”

New Times, [What is the fate of families left in ex-Gihembe Refugee Camp?](#), 12 March 2021

“Sifa Manzi is a Congolese refugee who was born and raised in the former Gihembe camp located in Gicumbi District. She still lives here with her family and other few people while others were relocated in Mahama Refugee Camp last year. The government of Rwanda, together with UNHCR and other partners decided to relocate refugees in this camp after the area was badly damaged by disasters which left them vulnerable. In an interview with *The New Times*, Manzi said that apparently, they don’t have where they belong systematically which makes their case unique and complicated to be evacuated like others. ‘In the system, we are neither Congolese refugees nor are we recognised as Rwandans [...] so we were told we belong nowhere,’ she said. Asked on how they used to get facilities before the camp was evacuated, she said they never got any reason to suspect that anything was amiss in their documents because everything seemed normal. ‘We always received what meant for us such as food rations, access to health services and education as other refugees until last year but we’ve reported our case and they promised to work on it,’ she added [...] However, an interview with *The New Times*, Elise Villechalane, the UNHCR spokesperson and external relations officer in Kigali, said that as far as they knew, all people registered as refugees have been evacuated.”

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UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Thirty-seventh session, Summary of Stakeholders' Information A/HRC/WG.6/37/RWA/3](#), 16 November 2020

"[...] **Refugees and asylum seekers**"

"[...] 96. HRW stated that in February 2018, police fired live ammunition at unarmed refugees protesting outside UNHCR office in Karongi District Western Province, killing about 12 people. A report published by NCHR concluded that the police used force as a last resort, contradicting HRW's findings."

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review 37th Session, Compilation on Rwanda A/HRC/WG.6/37/RWA/2](#), 13 November 2020

"[...] **4. Prohibition of all forms of modern slavery**"

"[...] 53. The Committee against Torture noted the denial by Rwanda that the security forces facilitated or tolerated the recruitment of Burundian refugees into armed groups and the transport of Congolese refugees, including children, for sex trafficking. It stated that Rwanda should ensure that all cases of human trafficking were thoroughly investigated, intensify its efforts to protect refugees against the risk of being trafficked and provide training to immigration officers, camp management staff and military personnel on the identification of victims of trafficking."

"[...] **5. Refugees and asylum seekers**"

"[...] 98. UNHCR stated that in February 2018, police had fired on refugees demonstrating against a 25 per cent reduction in food rations outside the UNHCR Karongi Field Office, killing at least 12 of them."

"[...] 100. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure that all reception centres for asylum-seeking and refugee children were child-friendly and that all unaccompanied and separated children had prompt access to national refugee status determination procedures, and investigate any reports of alleged disappearance of children, particularly adolescent girls, from refugee camps.

101. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda increase the security situation in and around refugee camps, including by establishing Isange One Stop Centres in the vicinity of camps and providing women and girls with accessible shelter and food for them and their children to avoid so-called "survival sex".

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Thirty-seventh session National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*](#), 9 November 2020

"[...] **13. Asylum-seekers – Refugees**"

"[...] 153. The practice of hosting asylum seekers and refugees in Rwanda continues and the country has made efforts to improve their basic human rights and living conditions [...]"

"154. The GoR, in collaboration with UNHCR made efforts to improve the welfare of refugees. Refugee camps have health centres, Refugee children have access to education, particularly 12-year basic education. A system to register children born as refugees is in place and implemented across all refugee camps in Rwanda. Some services offered through Isange One Stop Centres (IOSC) are also made available in refugee camps."

UNHCR, [Refugee Policy Review Frame: Country Summary](#), as at 30 June 2020

"Overall, refugees living in camps and in urban areas have developed social, economic and family ties with the host community, with whom they share cultural and linguistic similarities. As a result, the Rwandan host population has a positive attitude and a fair level of acceptance towards the refugees, despite underlying issues that could challenge social cohesion such as overcrowding of schools, soil erosion and deforestation in and around some of the camps."

Comparative Migration Studies, [How do refugees affect social life in host communities? The case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda](#), 6 August 2019

"Namely, the Rwandan government has a relatively unrestrictive, integrative policy approach to hosting refugees which gives them increased rights of mobility, access to social services such as health and education and opportunities for economic interactions (O'Connor, 2013; UNHCR, 2011)."

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United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Concluding Observations on the initial report of Rwanda](#), 3 May 2019

"[...] **Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art.16)**"

"[...] 29. The Committee is concerned about:"

"[...] b) The lack of effective measures to prevent violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, particularly in homes, institutions, communities and refugee camps where persons with disabilities live, and measures to monitor such prevention measures [...]"

United Nations Rwanda, [Common Country Analysis](#), 13 November 2017

"2.12.2 Refugees"

"[...] Although Rwanda's law on refugees provides refugees with the right to work, to own property, to freedom of movement and to access documentation, policies and legislation have always created an "in-camp" settlement that cannot extend into agricultural and other economically productive activities. The "in-camp" settlement approach to the refugee situation has resulted in majority of refugees not being formally educated and due to the limited availability of arable land and the protracted nature of their stay, refugees' incomes remain very low. Also, as a result of congestion and long stays, the environment in and around refugee camps has experienced extensive removal of green cover and suffered severe environmental degradation. Refugee-hosting districts are also more vulnerable to refugees' underlying poverty in relation to nationals. For example, the six districts that host all the refugee camps in Rwanda make up half of the 15 poorest districts in Rwanda with between 41.5 and 62 percent of their populations in poverty [...]"

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda: Activities of Burundian militias in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Uganda, including relationship with Burundian refugees](#), 14 March 2017 [citing sources published between 2015 - February 2017]

"According to Radio publique africaine (RPA), a Burundian radio station [2], [translation] "a hunt against Burundian refugees in the East African Community appears to be happening," with Burundian refugees in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya being [translation] "the most targeted" (RPA 20 Jan. 2016). According to the same source, as of January 2016, in the East African Community countries [Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi], [translation] "five [Burundian refugees] have been assassinated and others tortured" (RPA 20 Jan. 2016)."

"[...] 2.3 Situation in Rwanda

Sources report that Rwanda's Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs assured Burundian refugees in the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda of their security (The New Times 4 June 2015; La Croix international 5 June 2015), saying that "the camp was secure and would not be infiltrated by militia groups" (La Croix international 5 June 2015). An article in Rwandan newspaper The New Times cites Burundian refugees in the Mahama refugee camp as saying that "some members of [the] Imbonerakure and [Burundian] state operatives had crossed the border into Rwanda posing as refugees" and claimed they had seen them in the Mahama refugee camp (4 June 2015). RPA stated that [translation] "emissaries" from Bujumbura have gone to Rwanda to track regime opponents, but that, as of January 2016, no cases of assassination attempts or human rights violations against Burundian refugees had been reported (20 Jan. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response."

"Sources report that the Burundian government accuses the Rwandan government of recruitment for rebel groups in refugee camps, including Mahama (RFI 25 Nov. 2015; France24 4 Nov. 2015). The Al Jazeera article indicates that a leaked UN report accused Rwanda of "recruiting and training Burundian refugees in a Rwandan camp to fight against the Burundian government" (5 Feb. 2016). An article by Newsweek, an American news magazine and website (Newsweek n.d.), reports that a February 2016 "expert report" to the UN Security Council "cited testimony from 18 Burundian combatants who said they were recruited from the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda and given training in the use of weapons" (Newsweek 2 Dec. 2016). The same source reports that the combatants, who were located in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, stated that "some of the training was carried out by Rwandan military personnel" (Newsweek 2 Dec. 2016). In a December 2015 report on the recruitment of Burundian refugees, Refugees International indicates that,

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while doing field research in Rwanda, they "received numerous allegations [...] that refugees were being targeted for recruitment into non-state armed groups," including in the Mahama refugee camp and in urban areas (RI 14 Dec. 2015, 3). Sources report that the Rwandan government has denied its involvement (Newsweek 2 Dec. 2016; Al Jazeera 5 Feb. 2016; RFI 25 Nov. 2015). Radio France internationale (RFI) further reports that the UNHCR indicated that [translation] "they had no proof of such recruitment" (RFI 25 Nov. 2015). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response."

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

"[...] **Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**"

"20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] c) the overcrowding in refugee camps means that the space available for each refugee is reduced, as a result of which there have been some cases of sexual violence and child abuse [...]"

U.S. Department of State, [Rwanda 2013 Human Rights Report](#), 27 February 2014

"[...] Violence and discrimination against women and children occurred, including the recruitment by the M23 armed group of Rwandan and refugee minors as child soldiers. There was a small and declining incidence of trafficking in persons [...]"

UNHCR Rwanda, [Meeting Refugees' Basic Needs](#), undated

"[...] **Access to clean water and sanitation and hygiene**"

"[...] UNHCR is responsible for ensuring access to water for refugees, and in Rwanda water is an essential part of UNHCR's work to meet refugee's basic needs. Under international humanitarian standards, refugees should receive a minimum of 15 litres of clean water per person per day in an emergency, or 20 litres per day in older refugee camps. These standards reflect the minimum amount required to ensure that refugees enjoy satisfactory conditions of health, sanitation and hygiene. Many people forget that this standard includes not only water for drinking, but also cooking, bathing, and cleaning."

"In Rwanda, we collaborate with sister UN agency UNICEF and project partners PAJER, ARC and World Vision International, to provide refugees with water through various means including the sourcing and trucking of water into refugee camps, the drilling of boreholes and the design, construction and maintenance of water systems and infrastructure which also benefit host communities surrounding the camps. As with all UNHCR activities, adaptability and creativity are key when developing water solutions; due to the scarcity of water at the newly created refugee camp of Mahama, for example, the provision of potable water has taken the form of a river water treatment system drawing on water from the Akagera River on the Rwanda-Tanzania border." "The topography of Rwanda has proven to be a challenge in UNHCR's endeavour to deliver potable water in sufficient quantities to refugee populations in the country. The hilly terrain means that water supply and distribution solutions are complex, requiring frequent interventions and maintenance in addition to what would be necessary for normal wear and tear."

"In addition to ensuring supply of clean water, establishing and maintaining satisfactory conditions of sanitation and hygiene in refugee settlements is a cornerstone of public health and safety. UNHCR is responsible to ensure that sanitary facilities and hygiene promotion are provided and maintained in order to prevent communicable disease outbreaks and incidence of diarrhoeal illnesses."

"To contribute to safe conditions of sanitation and hygiene, UNHCR and its partners PAJER, ARC and World Vision International invest significantly in sanitation infrastructure projects to construct and maintain latrines, showers and refuse pits for community solid waste management. In addition, sensitisation of the population of concern is prioritised with community mobilisers and hygiene ambassadors trained to communicate the importance of hygiene to refugees, in order to elicit positive behavioural change. Furthermore, sanitation and hygiene concerns inform other UNHCR activities such as shelter strategy and site planning where sanitary corridors are considered during the planning phase."

UNHCR Rwanda, [Meeting Refugees' Basic Needs](#), undated

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“[...] Access to Energy and Environmental Protection”

“[...] Refugees in camps receive dry food rations from the World Food Program that must be cooked to be edible. As such, provision of materials that enable cooking, including firewood, is an essential life-saving priority for refugees during their stay in a camp. UNHCR works with our key Government counterpart MIDIMAR to ensure that refugees have access to firewood so that families can cook their own meals, with the support of ADRA in distribution. In order for refugees to be able to consume the food rations provided by WFP, UNHCR provides 0.8 kg firewood per person per day for all refugees.”

“UNHCR’s longer-term energy strategy involves the procurement and distribution of fuel-efficient stoves in order to reduce the consumption of firewood by the refugee population and reduce the impact on the environment. UNHCR is also working to procure and distribute solar lanterns for refugee families, to improve access to energy-efficient lighting – which is critical for protection of refugees – for example women and girl refugees going to latrines at night – as well as the ability of children to read and study after sunset. Additionally, UNHCR engages in tree-planting, in order to mitigate the consumption of firewood in refugee camps.”

“In constructing refugee camps, UNHCR carefully assesses proposed sites with an expert site planner in order to ensure that infrastructure and services are designed to minimally impact the environment. Given the topography of the country, UNHCR also terraces the landscape in some refugee camps before constructing shelters, where necessary, to ensure drainage channels reduce the risk of soil erosion.”

Proportion of urban refugees

Note: The term “urban refugees” refers to refugees living outside of camp settings, and in urban areas.

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Population Statistics](#), December 2021

The UNHCR “Rwanda: Population Statistics” document indicates that as at 31st December 2021, 10% of refugees resided in urban areas.

UNHCR, [Refugee Policy Review Framework](#), as at 30 June 2020

“A few refugees live in rental arrangements in urban areas such as in Kigali, Nyamata and Huye areas. In 2020, the urban refugee population was estimated at 11,411, approximately 8 per cent of the total refugee population. Refugees live near host communities with whom they have daily interactions.”

Location of urban refugees

UNHCR, [Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to OHCHR](#), July 2020

“[...] A total of nearly 11,516 refugees reside in urban areas (10,714 in Kigali and 802 in Huye) [...]”

Living conditions for urban refugees

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

“Ultimately, supporting refugees better in the region means granting rights – like the right to work and freedom of movement – and enabling access to these rights. Refugees in Rwanda have many of the same rights as those in Uganda yet face more challenges and discrimination in accessing them. Lack of assistance in urban areas, or the right to legally reside in them as recognised refugees, is a crucial ongoing issue in many countries in the region and beyond.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

“More and more urban refugees have exhausted their savings and cannot sustain themselves anymore and seek relocation to the camp. A situation aggravated by the negative economic impact of COVID-19. Urban refugees enjoy more freedom of movement than those in camps who need the authorization to leave camps.”

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UNHCR, [Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to OHCHR](#), July 2020
 “[...] A total of nearly 11,516 refugees reside in urban areas (10,714 in Kigali and 802 in Huye) where they live largely independently of humanitarian assistance [...]”

Sexual and gender-based violence

UNFPA, [Strengthening life-saving sexual and reproductive health services for women and girls in refugee camps in Rwanda with Japan's support](#), 1 October 2022

“[...] The outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic and subsequent preventive measures to stop the quick spread of the infection have affected the access to SRH and GBV prevention and response services provided at community and health facility levels. UNFPA and its partners have mobilized funds from the Government of Japan to support Humanitarian Response in Rwanda especially during the context of COVID-19 pandemic context [...]”

“[...] Under the 2018 Japan Supplementary Project, UNFPA supported health system strengthening programs to ensure every pregnancy is wanted & every childbirth is safe. Various medical equipment have been procured to strengthen Maternal, Sexual and Reproductive Health, Gender Based Violence Prevention and Response in Mahama camp including an ambulance to ease the referral of complicated obstetric & GBV cases to the hospital.”

“During the launch of the new Japan Supplementary project in Kiziba camp, the delegation laid the foundation stone at the site where the safe room is being constructed by Alight. The SGBV case workers as well as the community workers in Kiziba camp were also handed over the assorted items, including telephones, torch and Sound systems that will help them in their daily duties [...]”

UNFPA, [The Government of Japan supports UNFPA to keep women and young girls in humanitarian settings in Rwanda, safe and healthy amid Covid 19 pandemic](#), 27 September 2021

“[...] Since 2018, UNFPA & Government of Japan have been collaborating to reduce maternal & child mortality in humanitarian settings in Rwanda. The Government of Japan supports UNFPA to implement SRH & GBV lifesaving interventions in refugee camps.”

“[...] In 2018, UNFPA in partnership with Alight Rwanda, facilitated the installation of an anonymous hotline 4433, a 24-hour toll-free to respond to/prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Mahama refugee camp.”

“[...] In Gihembe refugee camp, SGBV case workers were provided with mobile phones to continue deliver services to victims especially during the COVID 19 pandemic when they could not go on the field [...]”

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), [Tenth Periodic Report of the Republic of Rwanda on the implementation status of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), May 2021

“(g) Refugee women and girls

(g.1) Increase the security situation both within and around refugee camps, including by deploying an adequate number of police officers, including women, ensuring adequate lighting within and around camps, establishing Isange One Stop Centres in the vicinity of camps and providing women and girls with accessible shelter and food for them and their children to avoid so-called “survival sex”;

271. The state ensures the security of citizens and their properties wherever they are within its territory. Police officers of both genders are deployed in sufficient numbers at each refugee camp. Should there be a need to reinforce security in terms of increasing the number of police officers, the police station at Sector level, which is close to the refugee camps, would be ready to intervene. With regard to lighting, the GoR is pleased to report that all refugee camps are connected to electricity and have sufficient lighting.

272. Concerning legal services, non-state actors have greatly contributed to the free legal aid services to refugees. Legal officers and lawyers are deployed in different camps with the mandate to provide legal support to refugees daily. This service includes legal advice, legal

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orientation and legal assistance before court of law and other administrative entities. As a result, lawyers have intervened in 154 cases, most of them being GBV related. Lawyers are requested to manage GBV cases in an ethical manner with confidentiality of the victim's identity.

273. Legal Aid Forum (LAF), one of the NGOs offering legal aid services in refugee camps has also empowered 121,974 people on how to manage GBV cases and conducted awareness campaigns within the camp on human trafficking.

274. The Government of Rwanda in collaboration with Partners provides women, girls and children shelter and food. The Government in collaboration with partners train refugees on SGBV and they are taught on early reporting and evidence for legal purposes against SGBV.

275. All refugee camps have access to Isange One Stop Centres available in the District hosting. Each camp has a health facility.

(g.2) Provide confidential complaint mechanisms for refugee women and girls who are victims of violations of their rights and enhance their access to justice, including through the deployment of mobile courts to camps, and provide adequate protection for victims and witnesses, including the nondisclosure of identity and the provision of adequate shelter;

276. Concerning access to justice, refugees including women have the right to seek remedies from courts when their rights are at stake. They also have access to free legal services through different actors. For the period under consideration, between 2015 and 2020 a total of 77 asylum seekers gets free legal aid. 20 Among them 68 were male and 9 were female.

277. The law allows the court to move and conduct hearings on the ground where the crime has been committed. Further, the law allows for hearing in care and the National Public Prosecution Authority has a unity which deals with witness and victims protection.

(g.3) Strengthen the measures taken to prevent trafficking in refugee camps."

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"SGBV is one of the most significant protection concerns for refugee women and children. UNHCR and partners continued to work together to avail adequate child and youth-friendly spaces and equipment in all the camps [...]"

"In 2020 and early 2021, WFP faced again recurrent challenges to maintain the food pipeline, and should the funding levels not increase, ration cuts will occur as of March 2021 and might trigger tensions among refugees due to the existence of high dependency on humanitarian assistance."

"[...] The supply of water remains below standards in Nyabiheke, Kigeme, and Gihembe camps. Advocacy efforts and investments are needed to upgrade and improve the reliability of water supply systems. Meanwhile, most of the access to sanitation facilities should be adapted for people with disabilities."

"[...] Access to electricity in shelters in camps remains very low, and more than 95 percent of households have access to Tier 0-2 electricity services only. Reliance on candles and mobile phones for lighting were most common, and only a minority of families had access to either solar lanterns or solar home systems [...]"

"[...] The result of the 2020 Participatory Assessment revealed that SGBV, survivor sex, begging, child defilement, and teenage pregnancy were the main concerns of the refugee women and youth in all locations indicating the negative coping mechanism of the socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on PoCs [...]"

"In general, most security problems linked to Child Protection and SGBV stem from harmful coping mechanisms, limited access to higher-level schooling, vulnerabilities relating to age and disability, service provision issues such as insecurity in the context of CBI, power imbalance between husband and wife on decisions related to family financials, inadequate lighting in and around camps and transit centers, and lack of lifesaving information or safe and confidential reporting channels. According to the 2020 PA, SGBV incidents are believed to have increased due to the COVID-19 pandemic. A spike in child defilement/ rape has been reported, while the overall reporting frequency has decreased compared to the previous years. Though SGBV prevention and response services are in place in all refugee settings, there remained challenges of limited knowledge and awareness (on the available response mechanisms, including remote case management during the lockdown) of the community on such issues, difficulty collecting or preserving evidence for justice mechanisms, and delayed or lack of reporting."

United Nations Rwanda, [One UN Country Annual Results Report 2019-2020](#), 6 April 2021

"[...] **Strengthening child protection systems**

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...The UN is also working to integrate refugee children into the national child protection system. A thematic training module for the IZU is being developed, and the national social service workforce will acquire knowledge and skills related to working with refugee children and ensuring that refugees children who experience violence, neglect, exploitation and abuse are facilitated to access specialized services, including health and justice administration by the national social workforce.”

“[...] GBV prevention and response in refugee communities

Increasing the knowledge and awareness of different GBV and protection against sexual exploitation and abuse (PSEA) related topics among refugee and host communities remained a priority this year. Though sensitization was slowed down by the COVID-19 pandemic lockdowns, trainees continued to support their communities in prevention and increasing awareness of reporting GBV crimes. This enhanced awareness contributed to an increase in reporting of GBV incidents all refugee locations including from Congolese refugees’ communities in Kigeme, Mugombwa, Kiziba, Gihembe and Nyabiheke camps, and Burundians in Mahama camps as well as transit centers in Nyanza, Gatore, Gashora and Kijote and urban areas around Kigali and Huye. Following the reporting, the UN supported over 130 GBV survivors to access legal assistance in the camps. Legal assistance included, providing counselling on available options for the way forward, supporting them throughout the case investigation processes and representing them for court hearings.”

“Through a partnership between the UN and the NGO Alight Rwanda, a GBV Helpline initiated in Mahama refugee camp was very effective resulting in an average of 2,490 calls each month including 1,484 of GBV and 1,006 non-GBV cases. This toll-free line is increasing the capacity of refugee community to report GBV cases confidentially. Since the toll-free line was introduced refugee camps have recorded an increase in the number of referrals of victims and survivors of GBV to health facilities and safe spaces from within the refugee camps”.

UNHCR, [Burundi Regional Refugee Response Plan January – December 2021](#), 15 February 2021

“[...] While refugees in Rwanda generally enjoy a favourable protection environment...”

“Sexual and gender-based violence remains a key concern; incidents are underreported and often result in unwanted pregnancies, school dropouts and stigmatization, putting survivors at further risk of exposure to negative coping mechanisms like survival sex. Programmatic gaps in other sectors such as overcrowded shelters, limited access to livelihood opportunities and lack of clean cooking energy also compound SGBV risks. Beside efforts made in availing sexual and reproductive health, including family planning services, teen pregnancies continue to be a serious concern in the camp.”

UNFPA, [Addressing Gender-Based Violence in Refugee Camps during Covid 19 Pandemic](#), 2 December 2020

“[...] In 2018 UNFPA in partnership with Alight Rwanda, facilitated the installation of an anonymous hotline 4433, a 24-hour toll-free to respond to/prevent sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) in Mahama refugee camp.”

“The goal of the SGBV hotline is to involve the camp community in the fight against sexual violence and other forms of violence committed against women and children, by ensuring early reporting of all the cases and to ensure that all forms of violence are ended by bringing in a platform that will enable the camp community to speak freely about the issues affecting them.”

“During the lockdown period, the 4433 Hotline has become a much-needed tool that has helped in maintaining remote case management and following up on survivors. During that period, it helped the case workers in continuing to communicate with the survivors and monitor them and provide them with appropriate assistance. All cases received in April and May, some of those of June and July 2020 were received and managed through Hotline.”

“During this critical period the GBV hotline was the one and only way to keep communicating with the GBV survivors to continue remote case management and coordinate prevention activities by playing audio messages in Mahama Camp.”

Forced Migration Review, [Vulnerability of refugees with communication disabilities to SGBV: evidence from Rwanda](#), June 2017

“Sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) is a significant risk for refugees in Rwanda, particularly for women and children. The risk is considered to be significantly higher for refugees with disabilities, because of factors

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such as being separated from family members, isolation, poor living conditions that may impact them disproportionately, and shortfalls in community protection mechanism. Other contributing factors include people with disabilities being stigmatised, their accounts of abuse being discredited and, in some cases, their lack of mobility hindering escape [...]"

"There is some emerging evidence that humanitarian organisations are beginning to recognise communication disabilities as a barrier to accessing services for SGBV (including prevention, support and legal redress), and as a major protection risk, but there is little evidence of good practice in supporting people with communication disabilities to report SGBV and to access ongoing support. Front-line humanitarian staff in Rwanda are aware of the difficulties that people with communication disabilities face across the SGBV response systems but feel ill-equipped to respond to their needs."

"Findings from this preliminary investigation indicate that understanding about communication disability is very limited across the board, at community level and among service providers and strategic actors. For people with a communication disability, barriers to accessing services occur at every stage of SGBV response: prevention, disclosure, support and redress. There were anecdotal reports of perpetrators targeting people with communication disabilities and bribing them with food, or threatening them with exposure, and evidence of people with communication disabilities being targeted in their own homes when they were alone. Endemic stigmatisation and discrediting of people with communication disabilities by community members and service providers make reporting abuse almost impossible."

"Critically, service providers do not have sufficient knowledge and understanding about the range and impact of communication disabilities, or skills to support people with communication disabilities. There is also a widespread misunderstanding that using sign language is the best solution, even though most people with communication disabilities in humanitarian contexts do not use a formal sign language. It was apparent that when a SGBV survivor has a communication disability, medical practitioners did not have the skills to take a medical report and police are unable to take statements effectively. Furthermore, judicial systems may not be able to prosecute if a victim cannot bear witness to the crime. In addition, counselling and psychosocial support services are often based on talking therapies, and providers lack the skills and resources necessary to provide services using alternative methods."

UNHCR Rwanda, [Protection](#), undated

"[...] Protection of children and prevention and response to violence

Women and children make up 80% of the refugee population, and like refugee men and boys, they are at risk of incidences of violence such as physical aggression, domestic violence, rape, child abuse, neglect, and survival sex. Many cases go unreported due to social and cultural norms (e.g., the culture of silence, gender roles, patriarchy, discrimination against children, sense of impunity for perpetrators), limited knowledge on child rights, and a lack of awareness on available supportive services."

"To respond to these issues, UNHCR in Rwanda partners with Plan International to respond to and prevent incidents of sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV) and child abuse, neglect, exploitation, and violence, and to provide basic support to persons with specific needs, namely older adults and people with disabilities.

UNHCR and Plan respond to child protection and SGBV incidents including through psychosocial support and referrals to health, legal and other services. UNHCR and Plan also work to prevent SGBV and child abuse by building networks of community mobilizers within the refugee community. UNHCR and Plan also work with Rwandan organization ARDHO to provide legal assistance and community-based socio-therapy."

"UNHCR and Plan are also working to identify unaccompanied and separated children and persons with specific needs among refugees, in an effort to provide them with basic material support, advocate for their needs, and intervene with referrals or service provision when necessary."

"UNHCR, the Government of Rwanda and the One UN have established One Stop Centers for holistic support to SGBV survivors in each district of Rwanda. These centers will by end 2015 provide free medical, psychosocial and legal assistance to all survivors of SGBV in the country, including refugees. UNHCR has also entered into an agreement with Rwanda National Police for the establishment of police posts outside each refugee camp and the agreement to develop a training curriculum for the police."

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Trafficking

AP, [Lawsuit: UK officials had concerns with Rwanda deportations](#), 19 July 2022

“Husain also said the U.K.’s high commissioner to Rwanda indicated last year that the country should not be used be considered for several reasons — including that it “has been accused of recruiting refugees to conduct armed operations in neighboring countries.”

Reuters, [UK officials warned government not to pursue Rwanda deportation plan, court told](#), 19 July 2022

“[...] In February last year, the British High Commissioner to Rwanda said in a memo that Rwanda should not be selected as a place to send migrants for a variety of reasons including that the East African country had been accused of “recruiting refugees to conduct armed operations in neighbouring countries”, according to written evidence submitted to the court.”

Freedom House, [Freedom in the World 2022 - Rwanda](#), 28 February 2022

“[...] Children are trafficked internally for domestic service under abusive conditions, or for commercial sex work, and little effort is made to hold internal traffickers to account. Many children work informally in the agricultural sector. Young Congolese and Burundian refugees are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and coerced recruitment into armed groups linked to Rwandan security forces. While Rwanda has increased prosecutions for transnational trafficking in recent years, the number of investigations and convictions remains low, and victim and witness support programs are lacking.”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“Refugees fleeing conflict and political violence in Burundi and the DRC remain highly vulnerable to trafficking in Rwanda due to an inability to secure legitimate employment and stigma within the country, and some are exploited by traffickers in other countries after transiting Rwanda. Researchers report some parents in refugee camps receive money in exchange for their daughters’ work in domestic service or in the commercial sex industry. Researchers report Burundians and Congolese were at risk for trafficking. There were no reports of forcible or coerced recruitment out of the Mahama refugee camp by Rwandan government officials since 2015.”

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review 37th Session, Compilation on Rwanda A/HRC/WG.6/37/RWA/2](#), 13 November 2020

“[...] **4. Prohibition of all forms of modern slavery**”

“[...] 53. The Committee against Torture noted the denial by Rwanda that the security forces facilitated or tolerated the recruitment of Burundian refugees into armed groups and the transport of Congolese refugees, including children, for sex trafficking. It stated that Rwanda should ensure that all cases of human trafficking were thoroughly investigated, intensify its efforts to protect refugees against the risk of being trafficked and provide training to immigration officers, camp management staff and military personnel on the identification of victims of trafficking.”

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

“Consistent with previous research, this study shows that internal trafficking primarily takes the rural–urban form, with Kigali the main destination (USDOL, 2016; USDOS, 2018). This study supports previous reports that young women and girls are most vulnerable to this form of trafficking, which primarily results in domestic servitude, but at times also leads to working in bars or industry (Save the Children, 2017; UCW, 2011; UNICEF, 2015; USDOL, 2016). Given the harsh conditions of refugee camps, informants asserted that young girls living in these camps are at an even greater risk for this type of internal trafficking and are especially vulnerable to sexual exploitation [...]”

“Informants identified labour trafficking and sex trafficking as the most common forms of human trafficking in Rwanda...Informants cited examples of parents who receive money in

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exchange for their young daughters or sons who are then forced to become domestic workers or sex slaves; this scenario especially occurs in refugee camps. Victims of sex trafficking at times start off working as domestic workers, but are then gradually forced into prostitution by their employers.”

“Sexual exploitation, especially sex trafficking of Congolese refugees in Rwandan camps, has received considerable scholarly attention (Bertani & Morisio, 2013; Iyakaremye & Mukagatare, 2016; Prickett et al., 2013; USDOS, 2018). Iyakaremye and Mukagatare provide a particularly in-depth analysis of the Kigeme camp in the Southern Province, which houses Congolese refugees. It documents sex trafficking, especially of girls, in the camp through deceptive labour practices. The researchers state that adolescent girls sometimes “go missing in the camp” and that they are “taken by people from outside the camp who promise them paid jobs and when they come back they are pregnant or HIV positive” (Iyakaremye & Mukagatare, 2016, p. 265). One representative of a non-governmental organisation (NGO) working in the camp further explains:

“There are refugees who are in connection with people from outside who come to traffic adolescent girls. [I just learned that] there are four adolescent girls from Kigeme camp who have been found in Ruhango [a town far from Kigeme camp]. This is a crucial problem we have; people come to take girls from the camp to use them” (Iyakaremye & Mukagatare, 2016, p. 265).”

All Africa, [Kenya: Breaking Vicious Cycle of Trafficking for Sexual Exploitation](#), 29 April 2019

“While Rwanda has tried to combat human trafficking, law enforcement agencies stress that the main challenge revolves around the financial and other assistance for repatriated victims. Limited budgets of the institutions in charge of investigation and rehabilitation of the victims have meant that these programmes are not working optimally [...]”

“To prevent human trafficking, Rwanda has adopted several measures, including passing a new law in 2018.

“Under the current legislation, offenders face up to 15 years of imprisonment, but activists say this measure is not enough deterrent.”

“Although law enforcement officers were trained in combatting human trafficking, Evariste Murwanashyaka, a fervent defender of human rights who is based in Kigali, told IPS that enforcing laws is a challenge, mainly because it is hard to detect women who are engaged in sex work or other forms of sexual exploitation in neighboring countries.”

“Murwanashyaka is the Program Manager of Rwandan based Umbrella of Human Rights Organization known as 'Collectif des Liges et Associations de Défense des Droits de l'Homme' (CLADHO)”

“Young women are still more likely to become targets of trafficking due to the growing demand for sexual slavery across the region,” he said.”

UN Committee Against Torture, [Concluding Observations on the Second Periodic Report of Rwanda CAT/C/RWA/CO/2](#), 21 December 2017

“Trafficking in human beings”

“[...] 48. While noting the data provided by the State party regarding cases of trafficking, the Committee regrets the lack of information concerning the convictions and the sanctions imposed on the perpetrators. It also notes the State party’s denial that Rwandan security forces facilitated or tolerated the recruitment of Burundian refugees into armed groups and the transport of Congolese refugees, including children, for sex trafficking, despite various reliable sources reporting about this ongoing practice (arts. 2, 12 and 16).

49. The State party should:

(a) Ensure that all cases of human trafficking are thoroughly investigated, including officials and individuals potentially involved in the recruitment and use of refugees in armed groups and sex trafficking, that perpetrators are prosecuted and, if convicted, punished with appropriate sanctions, and that victims are adequately compensated;

(b) Intensify its efforts to protect refugees against the risk of being trafficked by, inter alia, increasing the presence of law enforcement officials in refugee camps;

(c) Provide training to immigration officers, camp management staff and military personnel deployed close to refugee camps on the identification of victims of trafficking, including victims of torture among the trafficked persons.”

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Refugees International, [Asylum Betrayed: Recruitment of Burundian Refugees in Rwanda](#), 14 December 2015

“The recruitment of Burundian refugees into non-state armed groups was first noted by members of the international community in Rwanda in late May 2015, when refugees began to complain of recruitment in Mahama. International officials told RI [Refugees International] that these refugees continued to allege ongoing recruitment through October, with one knowledgeable official telling RI that recruitment continued at an “aggressive” level through November as well. While this report only describes recruitment in and around official refugee sites, some refugees in Mahama claimed that their fellow Burundians living in urban areas were also being recruited.”

“Between May 2015 and early December 2015, at least 14 groups of refugees resident in Mahama – comprising at least 50 individuals – separately and independently raised concerns about recruitment to international and Rwandan officials. At least 30 additional Burundians who had been refugees in Mahama were also apprehended in the DRC and provided information about recruitment to international officials.”

Trafficking and the legal framework in Rwanda

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: [Fifth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2018 \[24 December 2020\] \[E/C.12/RWA/5\]](#), 24 June 2022

“Article 10

Protection and assistance for the family

Reply to paragraph 20 of the Concluding Observations

“[...] 128. In 2018, the GoR adopted a specific law n° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 relating to the prevention, suppression and punishment of trafficking in persons and exploitation of others (hereafter referred to as the 2018 law on prevention of trafficking in person). The law defines trafficking in persons in the same terms as the United Nations Protocol to Prevent, Suppress and Punish Trafficking in Persons, Especially Women and Children, supplementing the United Nations Convention against Transnational Organized Crime (hereafter referred to as the UN Protocol on prevention of trafficking in person).

“129. Article 3(6^a)(a) of the 2018 law on prevention of trafficking in person defines trafficking in persons as any act committed by a person who, for the purpose of exploitation, hires or recruits, transports, transfers, harbours, or receives another person; by means of threat or use of force, or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability, or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”

“130. Article 3(6^a) (b) adds to the definition, any act of a person who recruits, transports, transfers, harbours or receives a child for the purpose of exploitation, even if this does not involve any of the means set out in item (a) of the same paragraph. Like the UN Protocol on prevention of trafficking in person, the Rwandan law pays particular attention to a child.”

Screening of potential victims of trafficking in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“Law enforcement, immigration officials, and social workers in government one-stop centers had victim identification guidelines, but implementation remained limited and officials reported lacking knowledge and training to screen specifically for trafficking among GBV victims they assisted...”

“Immigration authorities emphasized screening of foreign workers for trafficking indicators when such workers arrived at border posts [...]”

“The government detained thousands of potential victims in district transit centers without conducting adequate screening or referring identified victims to proper care and assistance [...]”

“The government minimally increased protection efforts. The government identified and referred more victims

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to care, but it neglected to conduct adequate screening of potential victims detained at government transit and detention centers. The government identified 131 trafficking victims in 2020, compared with 96 victims in 2019. Officials referred 37 victims to government and NGO shelters for assistance, compared to 30 during the previous reporting period [...]"

"[...] social workers did not always screen and identify trafficking victims as distinct from GBV victims.

"NGO service providers offered general assistance and support in refugee camps, but a lack of capacity and resources inhibited the development and implementation of effective procedures, screening, and assistance to victims of trafficking in refugee camps. NGOs reported a lack of coordination and collaboration between the government and civil society inhibited their ability to provide assistance for trafficking victims."

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022

"[...] Advocates raised concerns that detainees at transit centers were not adequately screened for human trafficking indicators."

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

"Informants asserted that identification of human trafficking is key to deterrence, as self-reporting by victims is extremely rare. Nevertheless, service providers report a number of challenges related to identification; many have no guidelines for identification and often confuse trafficking with gender-based violence (GBV). Service providers in camps especially lack proactive screening mechanisms for identifying trafficking when working with refugees [...]"

"[...] emerging from this research is a need to train both state and non-state actors on victim identification, screening, protection, and assistance in accordance with Rwanda's human trafficking law [...]"

"Service providers in camps appear to be the least knowledgeable about victim assistance and referrals for support services. Overall, service providers express a need for capacity-building in the following areas: identification guidelines, key indicators of human trafficking cases, screening including screening checklists, criminal prosecution, rehabilitation, integration, and techniques for interviewing victims [...]"

"The low level of self-reporting emphasises the importance for all stakeholders to be able to detect human trafficking. Many informants, however, reported challenges in this regard. Interviews with key service providers indicate that many have no guidelines to detect cases of human trafficking and they frequently confuse them with cases of GBV. Currently, no formal procedures exist for detecting VoTs in communities and camps. Service providers cite a need for proactive screening or mechanisms for identifying trafficking when working with refugees. The UNHCR has not yet established formal procedures or guidelines to facilitate the identification of VoTs falling under its mandate, namely asylum seekers and refugees in camps [...]"

"Overall, border posts have effective standard operating procedures for screening suspected cases of human trafficking [...] Front-line immigration officers also work with proactive screening procedures and, as a result, they have intercepted many traffickers from Burundi in transit. Nevertheless, some of these informants reported frustration when cases are dropped as a result of unsubstantiated evidence."

Screening to identify potential victims of trafficking relocated from the UK

UN OHCHR, [UN expert urges UK to halt transfer of asylum seekers to Rwanda](#), 17 June 2022

"UK authorities will conduct an initial screening before deciding on whether an individual may be transferred to Rwanda. Mullally [UN Special Rapporteur on trafficking in persons] said the initial screening was not sufficient to identify and recognise the specific protection needs of asylum seekers, including victims of trafficking."

UK Home Office, [Memorandum of Understanding between the government of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland and the government of the Republic of Rwanda for the provision of an asylum partnership arrangement](#), 14 April 2022

"[...] **14 Modern slavery**

Rwanda will have regard to information provided about a Relocated Individual relating to any special needs

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that may arise as a result of their being a victim of modern slavery and human trafficking, and will take all necessary steps to ensure these needs are accommodated.”

Risk assessment(s) in place for victims of trafficking prior to removal to Rwanda, and on arrival in Rwanda

Hansard, [HC Debate: Asylum Seekers: Removal to Rwanda](#), Vol 716, Col 44, 13 June 2022

“Margaret Ferrier (Rutherglen and Hamilton West (Ind): Can the Minister confirm what risk assessments were undertaken in advance of each individual being served with a notice? Was the risk of modern slavery considered as a key factor in the Court’s decision to overturn some notices?”

“Tom Pursglove [was Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Justice and Tackling Illegal Migration at the time of the debate]: It is fair to say that reports of modern slavery are taken into consideration as part of the processes. I will not comment in any further detail on operational matters, but I refer the hon. Lady to the published information out there around the process. It is publicly available.”

National referral mechanism or other trafficking victim identification processes in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“PRIORITIZED RECOMMENDATIONS:

“[...] Finalize and implement the national referral mechanism and train officials on its use [...]”

“[...] Law enforcement, immigration officials, and social workers in government one-stop centers had victim identification guidelines, but implementation remained limited and officials reported lacking knowledge and training to screen specifically for trafficking among GBV victims they assisted. In addition, sources reported challenges distinguishing trafficking from other crimes such as forced marriage, abduction, commercial sex, migrant smuggling, and rape [...]”

“Due to the government’s lockdown and strict curfews during the pandemic, the government had not yet adopted the draft national action plan drafted in partnership with an international organization and quasi-governmental entities in the previous reporting period. During the reporting period, the government drafted two ministerial orders to clarify responsibilities of interagency coordination to combat human trafficking as well as responsibilities on victim protection and referral; due to the pandemic lockdown, work-from-home logistical and resource limitations, and the government’s efforts to mitigate pandemic-related economic and social issues, the orders remained unsigned at the end of the reporting period.”

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

“The law is silent on the modalities of establishing a coordinating counter-trafficking body to bear the responsibility of steering counter-trafficking policies and strategies. It is assumed the current counter-trafficking task force, revived in June 2018,¹⁶ should be the coordinating body; it may be expanded to include other non-state actors. Part of its responsibility is to design, implement, and monitor a referral system based on cooperation between various stakeholders [...]”

“Although service providers uniformly agree that they have a responsibility to respond to suspected cases of human trafficking, virtually all of them expressed a need for training on assisting victims and making referrals tailored to the specific needs of women, men, and children. Service providers in camps appear to be the least knowledgeable about victim assistance and referrals for support services [...]”

“Comprehensive TIP legislation is relatively new in Rwanda, and government agencies are in the early stages of developing implementation tools that identify and assist VoTs, such as standard operating procedures and referral mechanisms. At the time of writing, the IOM is still training front-line officers, service providers in camps, and others who work with VoTs to identify and respond to their cases. Informants noted that since many of these workers are still in the capacity-building stage, they may confuse TIP crimes with other crimes such as GBV, irregular migration, abduction, forced marriage, or rape [...]”

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“Many informants observe that some of their colleagues received training at the senior central level, while it remains in dire need among operational and front-line officials. Informants working at border posts noted that insufficient resources impede accurate identification of VoTs in need of protection and assistance. They also identified inadequate safe spaces to identify, interview, and properly assist these victims through appropriate referrals [...]”

“Rwanda has several mechanisms for protecting and assisting victims. It established a counter-trafficking task force, which has undertaken a number of proactive interventions, in addition to national coordination and referral mechanisms.”

IOM, [IOM Trains Rwanda’s Law Enforcement Officers To Address Human Trafficking](#), 28 March 2019

“The International Organization for Migration (IOM), in collaboration with the Government of Rwanda, conducted a Training of Trainers (TOT) for 33 law enforcement officers on identification, investigation and referral of victims of trafficking on 25-29 March. The training took place in Musanze District.”

“The officers were selected from the Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE), Rwanda Investigation Bureau (RIB), Rwanda National Police (RNP) and the National Public Prosecution Authority (NPPA).”

“The training was meant to strengthen the capacity of law enforcement agencies on identification of victims of trafficking as well as investigation of human trafficking related cases.”

Efficacy of any victim of trafficking identification processes

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022

“[...] Advocates raised concerns that detainees at transit centers were not adequately screened for human trafficking indicators.”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Report on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022

“An international organization reported the government increased radio and social media programs to increase awareness of trafficking threats and facilitated video presentations in refugee camps to educate refugees and asylum-seekers on identification and reporting of trafficking cases and tips. RIB, RNP, and other government agencies and human rights commissions continued to operate national hotlines for reporting crimes, including trafficking, that were staffed by social workers trained to identify and refer trafficking cases. These hotlines accommodated speakers in English, French, Kinyarwanda, and Kiswahili, and advertised in public awareness campaigns on TV, radio, and social media. The government reported identifying nine victims via the hotline.”

IOM Rwanda Country Office, [Annual Report 2019](#), 27 July 2020

“[...] IOM has been able to respond to recommendations derived from previous reports, such as the U.S. Department of State Trafficking in Persons Reports from recent years which, among other, have recommended that Rwanda should expand anti-trafficking awareness campaigns, increase training of law enforcement and develop a formal mechanism to systematically refer trafficking victims to appropriate care.”

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

“Informants enumerated a long list of training needs in order to implement Rwanda’s new TIP law fully and effectively, while emphasising that training needs to occur within the context of a decentralized, standardised referral and case management system. In general, training needs to fall within the areas of identificationIdentification [sic], investigation, victims’ rights and assistance, case management and establishment of a centralised database, border management for porous areas, and monitoring and evaluation [...]”

“Informants asserted that identification of human trafficking is key to deterrence, as self-reporting by victims is extremely rare. Nevertheless, service providers report a number of challenges related to identification; many have no guidelines for identification and often confuse trafficking with gender-based violence (GBV). Service providers in camps especially lack proactive screening mechanisms

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for identifying trafficking when working with refugees [...]"

"Many informants observe that some of their colleagues received training at the senior central level, while it remains in dire need among operational and front-line officials. Informants working at border posts noted that insufficient resources impede accurate identification of VoTs in need of protection and assistance. They also identified inadequate safe spaces to identify, interview, and properly assist these victims through appropriate referrals [...]"

"[...] emerging from this research is a need to train both state and non-state actors on victim identification, screening, protection, and assistance in accordance with Rwanda's human trafficking law. Informants suggested two strategies for building capacity: 1) in-house professional development by human trafficking experts, and 2) technical assistance for front-line workers to use standard operating procedures, guidelines, and memory aides [...]"

"Service providers in camps appear to be the least knowledgeable about victim assistance and referrals for support services. Overall, service providers express a need for capacity-building in the following areas: identification guidelines, key indicators of human trafficking cases, screening including screening checklists, criminal prosecution, rehabilitation, integration, and techniques for interviewing victims [...]"

"The low level of self-reporting emphasises the importance for all stakeholders to be able to detect human trafficking. Many informants, however, reported challenges in this regard. Interviews with key service providers indicate that many have no guidelines to detect cases of human trafficking and they frequently confuse them with cases of GBV. Currently, no formal procedures exist for detecting VoTs in communities and camps. Service providers cite a need for proactive screening or mechanisms for identifying trafficking when working with refugees. The UNHCR has not yet established formal procedures or guidelines to facilitate the identification of VoTs falling under its mandate, namely asylum seekers and refugees in camps [...]"

"Despite an array of protections and services available to VoTs, scarce resources, limited knowledge on human trafficking among service providers, a lack of proper identification protocols, and challenges associated with the reintegration of victims into society all mean that combating human trafficking has a long way to go. Filling these gaps is critical to ensuring the victim's physical and psychological Integrity [...]"

"[...] 6.2 Recommendations

To the Rwandan government

Observed gap [...]"

"[...] Limited knowledge about human trafficking across the board, including among local leaders, teachers, youth, border community, refugees, implementing partners in refugee camps, and the community in general [...]"

"[...] In refugee camps, cases of human trafficking do not make it into the sexual and gender-based violence referral pathway, and even when they do it is as cases of GBV. This was found to be not only specific to the camps, but to spill over to the general public; there was no specific referral pathway for human trafficking found. Cases of human trafficking were referred to Isange One Stop centres where there are no specific protocols for handling them."

Standard Operating Procedures for identifying, protecting and supporting victims of trafficking in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

"In 2019, the government collaborated with an international organization to develop standard operating procedures (SOPs) for victim identification and referral; however, due to limitations imposed by the pandemic, the government did not finalize and implement the SOPs during the reporting period."

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

"The government is also beginning to institute victim-centred protocols and standard operating procedures that address the rights and needs of victims."

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Gender specific victim identification procedures for victims of trafficking in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

"[...] sources reported a need for gender-specific victim identification procedures."

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

"Overall, border posts have effective standard operating procedures for screening suspected cases of human trafficking. However, these procedures are not gender-specific and do not include guidance for interviewing and assisting females [...]"

Safeguards to ensure that victims of trafficking or persons at risk are given assistance and access to international protection

Taarifa, [Legal Analysis: Rwanda's Approval Of Prime Minister's Order On Human Trafficking, Victim's Protection Is Great Step](#), 15 July 2021

"Rwandan anti-trafficking law provides for protection of human trafficking victims which is in conformity with the provisions of the Palermo Protocol especially in its article 6 which creates obligations to its state parties to this protocol."

"Protective mechanisms for human trafficking victims under Rwanda law (especially in its Articles Art. 10, 11, 12,13) include; keeping the identity of the victims confidential, preventing them from discrimination of any kind, giving them special treatment, repatriation of foreign victims or even allowing them to stay in Rwanda, plus not holding them criminally liable for illegal entering Rwanda as well as several exclusive protective measures for child victims *inter alia*."

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Law N° 51/2018 of 13/08/2018 Relating to the Prevention, Suppression and Punishment of Trafficking in Persons and Exploitation of Others](#) [Rwanda], 24 September 2018

"[...] Section 2: Protection of the victim

Article 7: Non-discrimination against the victim

The protection of and assistance and support to the victim are carried out without any discrimination.

Article 8: Protection of the victim and the victim's accompanying dependants

The Ministry takes all appropriate measures to ensure that the victim and the victim's accompanying dependents, have access to adequate protection if their safety is at risk.

Article 9: Protection of the identity of the victim during court proceedings

During the court proceedings, a judge may order upon the request of the victim, or where he/she deems it necessary in the interest of justice, that:

1° the court proceedings be conducted in camera;

2° records of the court proceedings be sealed;

3° evidence of the victim be heard through a video link or the use of other adequate communications technology;

4° the victim use a pseudonym;

5° the statement of the victim made during the pre-trial phase be admitted as evidence.

Section 3: Assistance to the victim

Article 10: Basic assistance services to the victim

The Ministry cooperates with other public institutions, private institutions, civil society and international organizations to ensure that basic assistance services are provided to the victim, without regard to the immigration status of the victim, or the ability or willingness of the victim to participate in the investigation or prosecution of his/her alleged trafficker.

The assistance services referred to in Paragraph One of this Article are also provided to a victim who is repatriated from another State.

Article 11: Special treatment granted to the victim

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The victim benefits from the following special treatment:

- 1° he/she is provided, in a language he/she understands, with information on the nature of protection, assistance, and support to which he/she is entitled and the possibilities of assistance and support by non-governmental organizations or victim assistance agencies, as well as updated information on any ongoing legal proceedings related to him/her;
- 2° he/she has the right to participate in the proceedings against the perpetrator of trafficking in persons, and is assisted to present his/her views and concerns for consideration at appropriate stages of the proceedings relating to the offence;
- 3° he/she is provided with the legal assistance throughout the entire proceedings;
- 4° he/she is exempted from payment of any filing fees required under civil procedure laws when bringing a civil suit in compensation for damages caused by the crime of trafficking in persons committed against him/her;
- 5° he/she receives social services, health care and security.

An Order of the Minister provides for other particular means for support to the victim and services made available to him/her.

Article 12: Special assistance to the child victim

In addition to any other protection provided for under this Law, the child victim is accorded special treatment as follows:

- 1° where the age of the victim is uncertain and there are reasons to believe that the victim may be a child, the victim is presumed to be a child and is treated as such, pending verification of his/her age;
- 2° assistance to the child victim is provided by specially trained professionals and in accordance with the children's special needs;
- 3° if the victim is an unaccompanied child, he/she is provided with a legal guardian, in accordance with the provision of Law;
- 4° the organ in charge of child protection ensures that the child's identity or nationality is established, and makes every effort to locate his/her family if it is in the best interest of the child to do so.

Article 13: Permission for a non-Rwandan victim to remain in Rwanda

The victim is not removed from the territory of Rwanda until the identification process has been completed by the competent authority.

Without prejudice to the provisions of other laws, the victim is permitted to remain in Rwanda for a minimum of six (6) months, and until the legal proceedings are concluded.

Article 14: Repatriation of the foreign victim to his/her country

Without prejudice to other legal provisions, the Ministry, in collaboration with the authority in charge of immigration and emigration, may repatriate the victim to his/her country of origin [...]"

Recovery Needs Assessment or equivalent process for victims of trafficking in Rwanda

Support and protection available to potential and/or recognised victims of trafficking in Rwanda

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: [Fifth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant, due in 2018 \[24 December 2020\] \[E/C.12/RWA/5\]](#), 24 June 2022

"Article 10

Protection and assistance for the family [...]"

"131.[...] As it was recommended by the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, the same provision also provides that the law provides for the protection of, and assistance to, the victims of trafficking in persons."

"132. With regard to the protection and assistance of victims of human trafficking, the 2018 law on prevention of trafficking in person provides that protection and assistance should be provided without any discrimination. Further, the law caters for other important aspects such as the protection of the victim and the victim's accompanying dependants; protection of the identity of the victim during court proceedings; basic assistance

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services to the victim; special treatment granted to the victim; special assistance to the child victim; permission for a non-Rwandan victim to remain in Rwanda; repatriation of a foreign victim to his/her country; and return of the victim to Rwanda (articles 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14 and 15). ”

“133. Remaining on protection and assistance, it is important to mention that the law delegates the power to the relevant Ministry to provide for other particular means for support to the victims and services made available to them.”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“The government’s one-stop centers—located in hospitals and district capitals—provided short-term shelter and psycho-social, medical, and legal services to victims. The government did not report how many trafficking victims it assisted at the one-stop centers; however, NGOs reported assisting 21 victims referred by the one-stop centers. NGOs reported the one-stop centers primarily focused on the needs of female victims; assistance for male victims remained insufficient and service providers lacked knowledge on how to prevent further trauma and revictimization. The government organized 16 government-run and 12 NGO-run shelters into a network for the provision of longer-term care; the government operated and oversaw the network during the reporting periods. The long-term shelters provided up to six months of shelter services for human trafficking and GBV victims [...]”

“[...] service providers lacked knowledge on how to prevent further trauma and revictimization.”

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

“[...] Article 7 of the Rwandan TIP law... stipulates that, “protection provided to victims is also extended to the victim’s accompanying dependents to avoid any potential retaliation measures exercised by traffickers over the families of victims”. Article 9 of the law provides for the protection of victims during court proceedings where the judge can order any protective measures commensurate with the level of safety and confidentiality that the case requires.”

“Section 3 of Rwanda’s TIP law provides for basic assistance services to victims. Article 11 details supports granted to the victim without discrimination, including the provision of healthcare, waiving of legal and administrative fees, free legal assistance, the right to get information in the language the victim is comfortable with, and the right to participate in legal proceedings related to perpetrators.”

“Article 12 outlines more specific assistance to a child victim in accordance with a fundamental principle contained in all legal instruments related to child protection: “any policy, law, strategy, programme, or decision at any phase should assess the best interest of the child and align to it” (see, for example, Article 3 of the Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989).”

“In the section related to protection of and assistance offered to victims, Article 13 prescribes a non- Rwandan to remain in its territory as far as the identification is ongoing for a minimum period of six months until the conclusion of the legal proceedings. Article 14 allows the MINIJUST, in collaboration with the authority in charge of immigration and emigration, to repatriate the victim.”

Assistance for male victims of trafficking in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“The government [...] did not maintain shelters for male victims...NGOs reported the one-stop centers primarily focused on the needs of female victims; assistance for male victims remained insufficient [...]”

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

“[...] females and youth comprise a large majority of victims, but this fact contributes to an absence of facilities and shelters for male victims [...]”

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Psychological support for trafficking victims in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“The government’s one-stop centers—located in hospitals and district capitals—provided short-term shelter and psycho-social [...] services to victims [...] The extent and quality of services varied between locations, particularly regarding the provision of adequate psycho-social counseling [...]”

Challenges in accessing support for trafficking in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“The government lacked a victim-witness support program... The government detained thousands of potential victims in district transit centers without conducting adequate screening or referring identified victims to proper care and assistance [...]”

“The government minimally increased protection efforts. The government identified and referred more victims to care, but it neglected to conduct adequate screening of potential victims detained at government transit and detention centers. The government identified 131 trafficking victims in 2020, compared with 96 victims in 2019. Officials referred 37 victims to government and NGO shelters for assistance, compared to 30 during the previous reporting period [...]”

“The government decreased funding for victim care due to pandemic-related budget shortfalls; it dedicated 206 million Rwandan francs (\$216,840) for victim care in 2020 compared to 233 million Rwandan francs (\$245,260) in 2019. Despite decreased funding, the government continued to operate its network of 44 one-stop centers to assist GBV and trafficking victims [...]”

“The extent and quality of services varied between locations, particularly regarding the provision of adequate psycho-social counseling, and social workers did not always screen and identify trafficking victims as distinct from GBV victims.”

“NGO service providers offered general assistance and support in refugee camps, but a lack of capacity and resources inhibited the development and implementation of effective procedures, screening, and assistance to victims of trafficking in refugee camps. NGOs reported a lack of coordination and collaboration between the government and civil society inhibited their ability to provide assistance for trafficking victims.”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“Scarce resources, deficient operating procedures, and a lack of a centralized data system inhibited law enforcement efforts to investigate trafficking cases, prosecute suspected perpetrators, and convict traffickers. The government focused on transnational trafficking cases and interceptions at border crossings and did not prioritize identifying and investigating possible internal trafficking crimes.”

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

“[...] The most notable governmental intervention to assist VoTs has been through the Isange One Stop centres, which are countrywide centres designed to assist victims of GBV [...] The Kigali centre has already assisted a number of VoTs, but overall the centres need more development in the area of trafficking. According to one respondent, assistance rarely moves beyond short-term assistance addressing urgent needs. The average time a victim spends in the centre is between three and six days... Another challenge includes a lack of privacy for VoTs due to limited resources and infrastructure; as a result, some victims do not feel safe at the centres. Informants from two centres also pointed to a lack of shelters to accommodate many victims. In addition, the centres focus primarily on the needs of female victims [...]”

“[...] 6.2 Recommendations

To the Rwandan government

Observed gap [...]”

“[...] In refugee camps, cases of human trafficking do not make it into the sexual and gender-based violence referral pathway, and even when they do it is as cases of GBV. This was found to be not

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only specific to the camps, but to spill over to the general public; there was no specific referral pathway for human trafficking found. Cases of human trafficking were referred to Isange One Stop centres where there are no specific protocols for handling them.”

Re-trafficking, factors associated with it, and actions to prevent it in Rwanda

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Trafficking in Persons Report: Rwanda](#), 1 July 2021

“[...] service providers lacked knowledge on how to prevent further trauma and revictimization [...]”

“[...] Observers reported the government held many potential victims of trafficking in these centers, which functioned as de facto detention facilities, for up to six months. Observers further noted that authorities often released detainees back on the streets abruptly and without notice, thereby exposing them to possible revictimization.”

Never Again Rwanda, [Understanding Human Trafficking in Rwanda: Causes, Effects, and Impact](#), August 2019

“For foreign victims, the new human trafficking law [...] provides legal channels for preventing deportation to a country where victims may face retaliation from traffickers and/or their accomplices.”

General support for refugees

Comparative Migration Studies, [How do refugees affect social life in host communities? The case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda](#), 06 August 2019

“The Rwandan government has adopted a relatively permissive policy for refugees, allowing for the freedom of movement and work. Moreover, the government has promoted a community-integrated approach to social services, meaning that where possible refugees and local Rwandans have access to the same public services (e.g. health and education services) and the labour market. The Rwandan government also makes land available for refugee camps. This approach in essence allows refugees to be present in local communities even though they still predominately reside in the camps, and provides opportunities for social and economic interaction with host populations. Furthermore, Congolese refugees have the right to apply for Rwandan citizenship, which can facilitate refugees’ integration into their host communities.”

“This approach has been under development since October 2009, when UNHCR proposed a comprehensive strategy to bring to a closure the Rwandan refugee situation following the post-war period (UNHCR, 2011). It can be considered as part of the broader reintegration assistance provided for repatriated Rwandans, which has been extended to include other vulnerable groups such as foreign refugees (O’Connor, 2013). The minister for Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR), Seraphine Mukantabana has summarised this community-integrated approach as follows:

‘We have introduced community-integrated approach whereby programs meant to benefit refugees have to also benefit local communities and programs for citizens’ development benefit refugees.’ (MIDIMAR, 2014)”

i) Civil registration and documentation

UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights: [Fifth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under articles 16 and 17 of the Covenant](#), due in 2018 [24 December 2020] [E/C.12/RWA/5], 24 June 2022

“[...] Article 10 [...]”

“Protection and assistance for the family [...]”

“Reply to paragraph 11 of the Concluding Observations”

“[...] 103 [...] article 5 of the Ministerial instructions n0 02/2016 Of 01/06/2016 determining the management of refugees and refugee camps underlines that every newly born refugee child in refugee camp or outside the camp must be registered in civil status office within thirty (30) days.”

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U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

"The law does not restrict freedom of movement of asylum seekers, but refugees continued to experience delays in the issuance of identity cards and convention travel documents."

Government of Rwanda & UNHCR, [Joint Strategy on Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda 2021-2024](#), 19 August 2021

"[...] **3.9.1 Advocacy strategies vis-à-vis stakeholders**

3.9.1.1 The Government of Rwanda"

"[...] MINEMA and UNHCR consider issues related to access to livelihoods and documentation as interrelated. The Government of Rwanda made significant progress towards fulfilling its ambitious target to achieve 100% documentation for all refugees living in Rwanda. As of February 2021, so far about 78% eligible refugees (aged 16+) have an ID card. The strategy recognizes that documentation contributes towards an enabling environment for sustainable livelihood activities by enhancing business and work opportunities and access to services [...]"

United Nations Rwanda, [One UN Country Annual Results Report 2019-2020](#), 6 April 2021

"[...] **Increasing availability and use of data**

"[...] The CRVS [Civil Registration and Vital Statistics system] was also used to register births of refugees in camps and has facilitated refugee documentation and issuing of identification documents to the refugees as much as citizens. Furthermore, the National Identification Agency (NIDA) was supported to facilitate issuance of IDs to refugees."

"[...] the Rwanda Directorate General of Immigration and Emigration (DGIE) provided Machine-Read - able Convention Travel Documents (MRCTDs) to refugees while MINEMA continued to issue Proof of Registration (PoR) documents to all refugee families as a protection document in Rwanda. NIDA was also facilitated to identify more effective means of collecting information on deaths and causes of deaths through the new National Centralized and Integrated CRVS (NCI-CRVS) system. Over 30,000 refugees received IDs and MRCTDs in 2019/20."

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#), 21 March 2021

"The National Identification Agency (NIDA), has made concerted efforts over the years in the areas of policy, business process, communications, and support to ensure that all people in Rwanda are able to access IDs and register births and receive birth certificates. This has included initiatives like "CRVS week" in 2017 to encourage people to register the births of their children. It also includes nationwide communications campaigns to ensure equal access to IDs and the ability to use these to access services, with specific targeting for vulnerable groups like refugees."

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#), 21 March 2021

"The national ID card and NIN are widely used by adults aged 16+. Both are required for accessing most services in Rwanda, including healthcare, higher education, taxation, pensions, social assistance, financial services, and SIM registration. The Rwanda national ID card is also accepted as a valid travel document by Kenya and Uganda, and vice versa, as part of the Northern Corridor Integration Projects. NIDA also issues ID cards to registered refugees (as valid as Rwandan IDs) and legal residents."

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#), 21 March 2021

"Refugees were vocal about wanting an ID that would give similar privileges as the national ID, and cited activities they were unable to do with a refugee ID, also issued by NIDA. While the refugee ID is supposed to confer access to many of the same services as a national ID, many participants cited experiences where that was not the case (e.g. SIM registration), likely due to poor implementation of policy by individual officers or

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employees. Several refugee participants also cited challenges with registering for IDs in general, mentioning challenges furnishing documentation, lengthy timelines, and difficulties in getting replacement IDs when necessary. In addition, some refugees objected to the name of the ID, claiming that the term “refugee ID” stigmatized the cardholders unnecessarily. One participant proposed the term “ID for refugees” as being preferable.

“I lost my sim card. When I went back to buy a new one, they denied [me], and they said that unless I have a National ID, they cannot subscribe me on a refugee ID.

- Female (refugee), Gisagara”

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#), 21 March 2021

“Some refugees consulted in the study reported experiencing delays in the issuance or replacement of their refugee ID cards after registration. NIDA, UNCHR, and MINEMA regularly organize communications campaigns and registration drives for refugees in both camps and urban areas. Camp-based refugees consulted in this research confirmed taking part in those enrollment drives. Many participants in the study reported waiting long periods for the issuance of their refugee ID, with some choosing to travel to Sector offices to follow up on their application status. In a few instances, some refugees who previously had a refugee ID which expired claimed to have not received a replacement and were unaware of how to go about seeking a replacement”

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#), 21 March 2021

“Community leaders cited a lack of documentation as a reason why younger refugees do not have BCs [Birth Certificates], and participants further cited a lack of confidence and awareness of the BC application process as one reason why refugees do not apply for BCs for themselves or their children. UNHCR and MINEMA have put in place various support systems to ensure that all births are registered and birth certificates are issued in refugee camps, in a timely manner.”

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Thirty-seventh session National report submitted in accordance with paragraph 5 of the annex to Human Rights Council resolution 16/21*](#), 9 November 2020

“[...] 8. Rights of the child [...]

“[...] 91 [...] a system to register children born in refugee camps was initiated and is fully implemented across all refugee camps in Rwanda. Extensive sensitization campaigns on birth registration were conducted and children were registered free of charge. This is also extended through mass media, meetings and workshops at all levels.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“2.2 Security of legal status [...]

“[...] All registered refugees on Rwandan territory receive a Proof of Registration (PoR). All refugees above 16 years old are also entitled to a refugee ID, issued in collaboration with MINEMA and NIDA, which is considered to constitute a residence permit and proof of legal identity [...] The format is the same as the ID card for nationals. These cards are issued at a low cost of RWF 500 (approximately \$0.50 cents), which is covered by UNHCR and is commensurate with the cost of issuance of national IDs. The cost of renewal is the same as for initial applications and the replacement cost in the event of loss is 1,500 RWF, or approximately \$1.50. The ID card is valid for a period of five years and can be renewed as long as the person holding it remains a refugee in Rwanda [...]

“Under Article 19 of the Refugee Law in line with the provisions of Organic Law No 30/2008 on Rwanda Nationality, refugees can acquire Rwandan citizenship through marriage, birth and residence in Rwanda or naturalization.”

United Nations Rwanda, [Rwanda Common Country Analysis](#), 13 November 2017

“2.12.2 Refugees [...]

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"[...] Even though the UN-GOR joint resilience strategy is a step to enhancing refugees' self-reliance through wage and self-employment among others, some issues still hinder progress in full integration of refugees into Rwanda society. For example Rwandan law of nationality allows that sustainable occupation in the country for five years allows for foreigners residing in Rwanda to seek naturalisation. However, there is limited evidence to suggest that many of the refugees hosted in Rwanda, especially the protracted refugees from Congo, have benefited from this legislation."

The Republic of Rwanda, [Chapter 6: Findings of the Comprehensive Assessment. Rwanda Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Systems: Comprehensive Assessment. Volume I](#), November 2016

"Civil registration in Rwanda is essentially governed by Law n°32/2016 governing natural persons and family as well as relations between them. [...] The current law meets the international principles of a comprehensive civil registration system which are: Compulsoriness, Continuity, Universality and Permanence. [...] However, some weaknesses were identified: [...] (iv) The law is not specific on the registration for vital events occurring in institutions (e.g. military, air transport, refugee camps or internally displaced people, orphanages, etc.)"

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

"[...] **Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**"

"[...] 20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] (f) refugees are not being made aware of the law on nationality (art. 5)."

ii) The right to work, and employment opportunities

All Africa/Premium Times, [Rwanda: EU Human Rights Court Stalls UK-Rwanda Migration Deal](#), 15 June 2022

"According to the UNHCR, although Rwanda has generously provided a safe haven to refugees fleeing conflict and persecution for decades, the majority live in camps with limited access to economic opportunities."

AP News, [For many migrants, the view of Rwanda is often far from rosy](#), 28 April 2022

"[...] But some migrants in Kigali appear to have settled in well. Frezghi Alazar, an Eritrean who co-owns a bakery, said he is grateful Rwanda gave him a 'chance to thrive over the last 10 years.' He spoke of the country as a bastion of order. 'When you have capital and you start a business, nobody will come and take your business,' he said. 'You don't need to bribe people here. There is security. So, there is some benefit in Rwanda.'"

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

"[...] Refugees in many countries remain in camps and don't have access to social or business networks or other resources they might need to access or create employment. For example, while refugees in Rwanda have the right to freedom of movement and work, in practice it's difficult for them to move around because of bureaucracy as well as the remote location of some camps. Officially they must receive permission to leave camps; this alone can take up to a month. And they have to return to camps regularly to renew their permits."

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

"No laws restrict refugee employment, and the government continued to support employment programs and financial inclusion initiatives benefitting both refugees and their host communities. Many refugees, however, were unable to find local employment. A 2019 World Bank study found local authorities and businesses often were unaware of refugees' rights with respect to employment."

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The New Times, [Over 4,000 refugees secure jobs in Rwanda](#), 14 October 2021

“Members of Parliament have observed that there is improvement in the integration of refugees in the Rwandan society and labour sector as 4,047 have so far secured jobs in the country. The Lower Chamber observed this during a virtual Plenary Session which adopted a report by the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security, which assessed is the implementation of the law of 2014 relating to refugees. While presenting the report, MP Emmanuel Bugingo, the Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security, said that the jobs refugees in Rwanda secured jobs in education, health, cleaning services and trade sectors etc.”

Government of Rwanda & UNHCR, [Joint Strategy on Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda 2021-2024](#), 19 August 2021

“1.2.1 Legal and Policy Framework as a foundation for refugee protection and self-reliance

“[...] Refugee rights to work

Few countries in the world allow refugees on their territory to exercise the fundamental right to work as prescribed in articles 17, 18 and 19 of the 1951 Refugee Convention. Rwanda is an exemplary exception to this general rule as the country not only allows refugees to work, but also allows refugees to move freely within the country, establish companies, pay taxes, create jobs and in most other ways become part of Rwanda’s economy. The fundamental right to work combined with an enabling environment provide refugees with the opportunity de jure to contribute economically to their host society. However, despite the favourable legal environment, through some assessments including the WB study on Economic Activity and Opportunity for Refugee Inclusion [...] and some de facto structural challenges have been identified that hinder refugees to become full productive members of the Rwandan society. These challenges and sometimes non-legal barriers include the lack of awareness among some employers about refugees’ right to work and the process of hiring refugees, insufficient access to finance for refugee entrepreneurs, limited access to tertiary and vocational education, as well as some other challenges (e.g., lack of documentation) specific to displaced people. In practice, refugees in Rwanda can pursue self-employment activities similarly to nationals. Many refugees, in urban and camps, were able to establish their own businesses, employ other refugees or Rwandans, pay taxes, and travel in the region for business purposes. They are also accorded the same right as nationals when seeking wage-earning employment, although with some challenges, mostly non-legal. For instance, refugees report that employers often request the possession of the Rwandan national identity card and the health insurance card. Even though urban refugees have been granted access to the national health insurance and have been issued refugee ID cards, some refugees still report that many employers do not accept refugee ID card as a valid document.

Consequently, many refugees turn to informal employment.

Refugees can engage in professions like medical doctors, teachers, engineers, and lawyers if they fulfill the national qualification requirements. However, the majority have backgrounds from subsistence farming and other traditional or simple skills professions that are in over-supply in Rwanda. Refugees also have the right to join non-political associations and forums, including trade Unions.”

“Refugees and Financial Inclusion

In Rwanda, refugees have access to full-fledged personal bank accounts since 2017, as part of the introduction of cash assistance across the camps. UNHCR’s and other partner’s cash transfers represent a critical first step towards financial inclusion. By working through existing formal financial institutions using both banking and mobile money services, UNHCR enables recipients to access a range of financial services and products that can be used for productive purposes. In addition to receiving monthly humanitarian cash assistance for basic needs and e.g., livelihood grants, they also access micro-finance and loans from formal Microfinance Institutions and social enterprises and may use services related to village savings and loans, remittances, and utility payment services. Since 2017, over 40,000 bank accounts have been opened and over 11,000 households have accessed various forms of financial services, including financial literacy and loans. Recent assessment shows that ‘92% of households in refugee camps own at least one mobile phone compared to 78% in host communities, around two thirds of households in refugee camps are registered with a mobile money provider and one in ten households in refugee camps have saved money on their mobile wallet account. Repayment rate (about 80%) remains high for loans. Digital financial products and services are emerging and may further benefit the

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refugee populations. This growing trend of financial inclusion is therefore paving a sustainable way for promoting stronger livelihoods and economic inclusion of refugees and their host communities in Rwanda'. In summary, from the legal perspective, refugees have the right to a favourable enabling environment and employment conditions at the same level as nationals. However, in practice, sometimes refugees face obstacles in accessing and sustaining employment, particularly in the formal sector for reasons related to employer's lack of awareness about refugee's right to work, lack of documentation/refugee ID, delays in obtaining longer term passes to stay outside the camp for livelihoods purposes etc. UNHCR and the GoR, through the implementation of this strategy, will work with partners to address those challenges, especially the non-legal barriers [...]"

"[...] 2.2 Challenges and barriers to livelihoods activity

As reported by refugees, below are some of challenges that refugees face in their daily livelihoods' activities

- In general, there are limited access to financial services (capital, loans, financial education), but refugees have some additional layer of challenges related to limited availability of financial service providers in and around the camps; lack of documentation needed for know your customer (KYC) for some refugees, lack of capacity to provide collateral etc.
- Limited employment opportunities for refugees who have finalized their studies at various levels (senior six, university degree and masters). However, unemployment is not limited to refugees only as it is applicable to the general population in the country including host communities.
- Although refugees have legal right to work, sometimes some refugees face challenges during the job recruitment because of lack of awareness among the employers about refugee's right to work in Rwanda. For accessing public services possession of the Rwandan national identity card usually part of the requirements for job applications. However, many skilled refugees access specialised public sector jobs including teaching, nursing etc. on contractual basis.
- Some refugees also reported that the skilled refugee workers are not getting competitive market wage rates. However, it is to be noted that all camp-based refugees receive humanitarian assistances (including monthly Cash assistance for food/non-food items).
- Limited access to market-based vocational training and start-up capital/kits are also a general challenge for both refugees and host communities.
- Limited access to land for farming or livestock as there is general land scarcity in the country but also most refugees do not own land and livestock for cultivation (except a few ongoing joint farming projects between refugees and host communities operational in some marshlands).
- Youth groups identified the lack of recognition of Proof of Registration or even in cases the Refugee ID, in accessing jobs, driving license, market spaces and mobility, as a challenge. For business and self-employment in the camps, several practical challenges were also identified which include lack of space for doing businesses, particularly at the marketplaces; lack of basic and financial literacy; lack of capital etc.
- Lack of talent development interventions for the youth
- Some level of delays and obstacles to obtain longer term permission for refugees to go outside the camp (generally not difficult to obtain about 3 months permission, but this is perceived to be short time for refugees who go out to seek jobs outside the camp) and sometimes also their financial means could be a challenge to come back to the refugee camps for renewal of the permission.
- Limited access to energy/power for productive use and other infrastructures (e.g., Markets and roads), which are generally very expensive.
- Refugees still have a high dependency on UNHCR and humanitarian assistance, which one may argue as a 'dependency syndrome'. It is also evident from various assessments livelihoods support so far extended to the beneficiaries were helpful and necessary but that due to funding constraints not enough to enable the refugees to become self-reliant gradually through integrated medium-term (2-3 years) support."

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"While refugees enjoy a generally favorable protection environment, the refugee camps' poor situation and lack of livelihood opportunities maintained a high dependency on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs [...]"

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"[...] There are many business activities in the camp whose growth is constrained by a lack of energy access. The amenities most demanded by refugee households, lighting, entertainment, and mobile phone charging, are essential services provided by most solar home systems."

"[...] despite the favorable legal environment, challenges remained for refugees to become productive members of Rwandan society, including non-legal barriers, e.g., employer's attitude and limited awareness about refugees' right to work, insufficient access to financial services for refugee entrepreneurs, etc. By the end of 2020, only 16,975 refugees were engaged in income-generating activities. Due to the effects of COVID-19 on the regional economic situation, refugees were hit hardest, considering that they have only limited livelihood opportunities in hosting areas."

United Nations Rwanda, [One UN Country Annual Results Report 2019-2020](#), 6 April 2021

"Financial inclusion and resilience in rural and refugee communities"

The UN promoted entrepreneurship and job creation to enhance economic resilience of refugees through business skills development and increasing their access to formal financing. This has been mostly achieved through partnerships with INKOMOKO and Access to Finance Rwanda (AFR), enabling refugees' access to affordable credit to finance their businesses. Refugees also received training in business development and started their own businesses in general trade, transport and agriculture.

To contribute to the Ministry of Emergency Management (MINEMA) strategy to support self-reliance of refugees and their host communities, in partnership with Equity Bank and Umutanguha microfinance, a digital financial education application was developed to enhance refugees' financial literacy and capabilities. This resulted in formal financial inclusion of refugees which has also streamlined the cash-based interventions (CBI) assistance and engagement in formal enterprises. 100 women in Burundian refugee women's cooperatives in Mahama refugee camp were trained in weaving skills and connecting refugees with social enterprise partners to design, produce and market artisanal products around the world through the MADE51 initiative which brings refugee-made products to international markets."

The New Times, [Refugees in Rwanda to benefit from multi-billion business financing schemes](#), 15 March 2022

"Gonzague Karagire, the Refugee Program Manager at the Ministry told Doing Business that there are various small businesses that have been found viable and bankable for refugees living in Rwanda a "Any refugee living in Rwanda who might have a business idea could get funding to implement it. We have launched a Rwf12 billion scheme to finance the business ideas until 2026," he said. He said that there are different partners who have been identified to boost financial inclusion for refugees. "Some can get startups kits to create jobs after training on TVET. There are different viable businesses such as trading different products. They are allowed to carry out businesses in different sectors," he said. He said that refugees could get matching grants to implement their businesses ideas. Matching grants are conditional awards that require an organization or individual to raise a specified portion of the grant through solicitation of new money."

"The scheme to provide matching grants to refugees is in addition to the other one dubbed "Renewable Energy For Refugees" that has been under implementation at 8.6 million Euros which has enabled refugees to create different small businesses. Denyse Umubyeyi, the Country Representative at Practical Action organization that has funded the project said that that 50 percent of Refugees in Kigeme, Nyabiheke and Gihembe refugee camps have benefitted from the project. "It has helped to provide renewable energy and improved cook stoves and it supported some to start small businesses," she said. She said that 50 percent of the refugees have got solar energy while 703 new businesses have been created. "At least 150 refugee businesses that were in existence were supported to grow by 50 percent in incomes. Business centres have been established in the refugees' camps as an enabling environment for their economic independence," she noted. At least 50,000 refugees could benefit from the initiative. Umubyeyi said that the businesses that the refugees are managing to create include hairdressers and salons, butchers, cybercafe [sic], phone repair shops, tailoring and shoe-repair shops, food production, egg incubation, carpentry, cafes, maize processing, milk collection centres, among others."

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

"[...] 3.2 Rights to work and rights at work"

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Refugees in Rwanda are entitled to seek wage-earning employment. In the absence of a specific legal provision on refugees' right to work and in accordance with Article 18 of the Refugee Law, recognized refugees in Rwanda benefit from the same level of worker protection as nationals, including salary levels in the private sector. No additional documentation or work permits are needed for refugees. To apply for a job, they need only to provide a document that establishes their identity and legal status. Refugees who hold a refugee ID card face an easier process for accessing employment than those who hold only proof of registration (PoR). Refugees in possession of a driving licence stand a higher chance of finding employment because it is a marketable skill. Despite this enabling environment for refugees to access wage-earning employment, securing a job is difficult to achieve for various reasons: employers' misconceptions about refugee's right to work, inadequate skills set, unavailability of jobs, etc."

"As per normal business procedures, refugees are allowed to open businesses in the same manner as nationals and register them under their own name. Camp-based refugees can register their business at sectoral level and have to pay monthly taxes. In urban areas, only refugees with a refugee ID card can register their business at the Rwanda Development Board (RDB). They are issued with a certificate of registration and a Tax Identification Number (TIN) and have the same tax obligations as nationals."

"[...] **5.2 Social Inclusion**"

"[...] We note that refugee women face [...] a disadvantage in terms of job opportunities and livelihood interventions because of their generally lower level of education."

Comparative Migration Studies, [How do refugees affect social life in host communities? The case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda](#), 6 August 2019

"The minister for Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs (MIDIMAR), Seraphine Mukantabana has summarised this community-integrated approach as follows:

'We have introduced community-integrated approach whereby programs meant to benefit refugees have to also benefit local communities and programs for citizens' development benefit refugees.' (MIDIMAR, 2014)."

"The long-term goal of this approach is to implement measures that mutually benefit different segments of the society, to stimulate the socio-economic inclusion of refugees and to reduce their dependency on humanitarian aid. In practice, however, the freedom of movement and the access to employment opportunities for refugees are limited by bureaucratic procedures and costs (Bilgili & Loschmann, 2018; Easton-Calabria & Lindsay, 2013). As a result, many of the Congolese refugees remain dependent on humanitarian aid for decades (Hovil, 2011)."

World Bank Group, [Rwanda - Economic Activity and Opportunity for Refugee Inclusion](#), 23 May 2019

"Why economic inclusion of refugees and host communities matters

"[...] 15 [...] Poverty in five of the six districts hosting refugees is higher than the national average. Gisagara (which hosts the Mugombwa camp) and Karongi (which hosts the Kiziba camp) are two of the four poorest districts in the country, with poverty levels of 56 and 53 percent respectively [...] Host communities suffer from the same development constraints as refugees – limited employment opportunities, poor quality education and a dependence on low-income agriculture for livelihood."

"[...] **C. Key Findings**

"[...] 33. Livelihoods in the districts and in the camps are based on a few core sectors: agricultural production, retail and food trade, and, 'hands-on' trades such as carpentry, construction, tailoring, and hairdressing. Agro-processing activities also engage the district workforce [...]"

"[...] 39. Refugees have very limited access to electric power. Most of the businesses in camps that acquire power use expensive fuel-operated generators. This increases the cost of doing business and hinders the growth of businesses within the camps [...] The lack of street lighting in the camps also raises personal security concerns and reduces movement after dark. Young women are especially at risk."

"[...] 40. Refugees make the most of the freedom of movement available in Rwanda to pursue livelihood opportunities and strive towards economic self-reliance. There is considerable movement of refugees from the camps to the host sector, the district and to other commercial centers in the country. For security reasons, refugees seek permission from MINEMA camp management to leave the camp for extended periods of time and/or to leave the district. Permission is granted for periods ranging between one to three months based on the discretion of the camp management and the reason for exiting the camp. Movement in and around refugee camps does not necessitate the permission. Thus, a significantly higher number of refugees freely

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move in and out of the camp without permission.

41. Refugees leave the camp to seek day labor and wage employment. They typically undertake lowskilled jobs on farmlands in the sector or in positions such as security guards, cleaners and housekeepers in the district. They also seek economic opportunities away from their district in line with their work skills in urban centers and beyond. Refugees in Gihembe camp in Gicumbi district in the north, for instance, reported traveling to Gishwati in northwest Rwanda to work in cattle-rearing [...]"

"[...] 48. There are significant livelihood-related stressors in the camps which affect refugee households. Agencies such as Plan International and ARC report cases of child neglect and separation from care-givers. This leaves children and young people vulnerable to risks such as substance abuse and sexual exploitation. Tensions are present in some households due to the perceived undermining of traditional gender roles (when men are not working) and due to the erosion of parental authority and family cohesion. Young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation both within the camp and in places outside the camp where they seek livelihood opportunities [...]"

Forced Migration Review, [Refugees and host communities in the Rwandan labour market](#), June 2018

"Of the approximately 164,500 officially registered refugees residing in Rwanda today, 45% are from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). The Rwandan government has adopted a relatively progressive policy approach to support the integration of refugees, and refugees have the freedom to move outside their designated camps and the right to engage in wage-earning or self-employed activities. This enabling environment helps increase the economic and social interaction between refugees and local populations, and as a result one might expect the areas around the camps to have a labour market freely accessible to locals and refugees alike.

"Analysis of the experiences of refugees and locals, however, brings to light the varying dynamics, opportunities and challenges for both groups [...] A key finding is that although Congolese refugees officially have the right to work, in reality their experiences in the local labour market differ considerably from that of local Rwandans.

"Congolese refugees are significantly more likely to be unemployed than locals, and a major reason for this, given by the refugees themselves, relates to local employers' lack of knowledge of the refugees' right to work. According to the focus group participants, finding a job outside the camp is rare due to the fact that they do not have the appropriate identity papers requested by potential employers. As one participant from Kiziba camp said, *"They mostly ask if you have an identity card to prove that you are a Rwandan citizen. So, if you do not have an identity card then you can't get a job."* It is not sufficient simply to provide the right to work; there needs to be practical follow-through."

"Jobs and skills in camps

Job opportunities for refugees are quite limited outside the camps but within the camps themselves non-governmental and international organisations employ a significant number of refugees. It is clear, however, that these organisations cannot address the employment needs of all refugees. This situation also raises the question of refugees' dependency on humanitarian organisations beyond basic protection and needs. It seems evident that the more refugees are able to integrate in the wider Rwandan economy and not remain within the confines of the camp-based setting, the better off they will be in the long term."

"Unsurprisingly, we found that the work-related experiences of refugees differ also by skill level. Those refugees with professions and who have diplomas are in a more advantageous position than others with fewer skills. As one participant from Kiziba said, *"There are [refugee] teachers and even health providers but ... ordinary people have nothing to do."* [...]

"For Congolese refugees, however, the experiences were more mixed. Being granted the right to work and thus to access the local labour market is not sufficient to promote sustainable self-reliance, and a more comprehensive strategy is needed to provide opportunities for the wider refugee population."

United Nations Rwanda, [Rwanda Common Country Analysis](#), 13 November 2017

"2.12.2 Refugees"

"[...] structural challenges continue to limit refugees from contributing productively to their host communities and overall national development. Some of these challenges include; insufficient access to finance for entrepreneurship, limited access to upper secondary, tertiary and vocational education and considerable lack of employable skills."

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UNHCR Rwanda, [Protection](#), undated

[...] Local integration prospects

A lack of economic and professional prospects for refugees in Rwanda, linked to factors such as the high number of graduates in the country and unemployment rate, makes financial independence and self-sufficiency difficult for the vast majority of refugees in Rwanda. There is also an acute shortage of land in the country and as a result refugees are unable to access enough agricultural land to meet their needs or to become self-sufficient. Additionally, the country faces the prospect of return of thousands of Rwandans currently in exile. As such, the ability for the country to absorb the refugee population through integration and naturalization has proven both challenging and extremely limited.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Economic Inclusion of Refugees in Host Communities](#), undated

“The Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA) of the Government of Rwanda (GoR) and UNHCR launched a joint strategy on Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities for 2021-24.”

“The Strategic objectives include:

Enable refugees and host communities to acquire and preserve livelihoods assets to construct their living, become self-reliant and build resilience to shocks

Promote socio-economic inclusion of refugees and host communities and their enhanced access to economic opportunities on a sustainable basis

1. Expand proven and innovative ways of supporting self-reliance of refugees and host communities in Rwanda, especially through the graduation approach and market-based interventions
2. Promote results and evidence-based programming by improving planning- implementation – monitoring – learning and practice on successful livelihoods approaches”

“Strategic Approach

Overall, the strategy focuses on the promotion of livelihoods assets by supporting income generation through sustainable employment, asset creation and investments to support graduation out of extreme poverty alongside prevention approach for managing risks and shocks (including Covid) and protection measures to ensure that basic needs are met.”

“To support the realization of the GoR’s commitments on graduating refugees out of humanitarian assistance and promoting refugee employment opportunities as made at the Leaders’ Summit in year 2016, this strategy will ensure that livelihoods interventions take a ‘whole-of-society’ approach in the context of the Global Compact on Refugees (GCR) and the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) [...]”

iii) Civil and political rights

The Guardian, [Home Office admits LGBTQI+ refugees could be persecuted if sent to Rwanda](#), 10 May 2022 [quoting Lewis Mudge, central Africa director at Human Rights Watch]

“Congolese refugees rot in jail for protesting their living conditions”

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

“Rwanda is also a very politically restricted country. Constraints on political advocacy and freedom of speech affect citizens, refugees, and assistance agencies – including UNHCR. They risk their activities being curtailed if they denounce the treatment of refugees, like the killing of refugees in Kiziba and Karongi Town [...]”

Government of Rwanda & UNHCR, [Joint Strategy on Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda 2021-2024](#), 19 August 2021

[...] 3.9.1 Advocacy strategies vis-à-vis stakeholders

3.9.1.1 The Government of Rwanda

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"[...] Despite the room for improvement regarding the ease of approval system to enable camp-based refugees freedom of movement for livelihoods purpose, the GoR has demonstrated in practice considerable goodwill with regards to ensuring the enjoyment of the right of freedom of movement by both refugees and asylum seekers [...] Refugees also have the right to join non-political associations and forums, including trade Unions."

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"[...] Refugees registered in camp locations face arrest and detention risks if they move outside the camp without the requisite documents such as refugee IDs or Proof of registration and a letter authorizing their absence from the camp. Thus, there is a need for legal assistance and detention monitoring, and advocacy for greater freedom of movement of camp-based refugees."

UNHCR, [Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to OHCHR](#), July 2020

"[...] In February 2018, about 700 Congolese refugees resident in Kiziba camp in Rwanda marched towards Karongi town and ended up camping outside the UNHCR Karongi Field Office. Two days later, the Rwandan police fired live ammunition on refugees killing at least 12 people outside the UNHCR Field Office in Karongi and in Kiziba refugee camp. The refugees were protesting outside a UNHCR building against a 25 percent cut in food rations."

"Between February and May 2018, 77 refugees, including three minors and three females, were arrested following this incident. They were charged with participating in illegal demonstrations (Art. 685 PC), violence against public authorities (Art. 540 PC), rebellion (Art. 530 PC), disobeying enforcement of law (Art. 464 PC). In total, 29 refugees were released: 2 of them after having already served their sentence of one year and six months, seven (including three minors) after the court suspended their penalty of two years and six months, one proven not guilty and 18 released with no charges."

"Five refugees, including four identified as leaders of the refugee camp's Executive Committee were charged with "spreading false information with intent to create a hostile international opinion against the Rwandan state" (Art. 451 PC), "inciting insurrection or trouble amongst the population (Art. 463 PC). One refugee was sentenced to 15 years on 21 October 2018 for the following charges (Spreading false information with intent to create a hostile international opinion against Rwandan State (Art. 451 PC); illegal demonstration or public gathering (Art. 685 PC); inciting insurrection or trouble amongst the population (Art. 463 PC). He is serving his sentence at Muhanga prison and has appealed, his date of the hearing has not been fixed yet (more than a year and a half later). The four refugees identified as leaders of the protest were charged with the same counts. A hearing on merit took place on 26 May 2020 and the pronouncement date is scheduled on 31 July 2020. One of them is under provisional release while the rest are in Nyarugenge prison."

"In 2018, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) published the findings of its investigation into the killing in March, which state that police responded to a "violent and organized attack" and used force as a last resort. This contradicts Human Rights Watch's investigation... into the events, which found that refugees were unarmed and that Rwandan police had used excessive force as well as UNHCR's statement at the time, which states the use of "the disproportionate use force against refugees is not acceptable."

UNHCR, [Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to OHCHR](#), July 2020

"[...] camp based refugees are required to apply for a permission to leave the camp. The complex procedures and time spent in applying for and approving the permission as well as the short validity of these permissions, maximum of three months, have led some refugees to lose their jobs and others who left the camp without valid permissions to be at risk of arrest [...]"

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

"3.1 Freedom of movement

For several decades, refugees have settled upon arrival in Rwanda in camps designed to host and take care of them. They usually settle in camps according to their regions of origin, which determines the location of the camp and their affiliations. Article 18 of the Refugee Law enshrines into national law the enjoyment of all rights accorded to refugees by the 1951 Convention, including freedom of movement. Refugees can therefore move and settle wherever opportunities are available within the country including in urban areas. However,

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camp-based refugees need to request permission to leave the camp. Those who chose to reside outside of the camp may do so in line with Article 25 (2) of the Refugee Law."

"This permit is issued for a period of three months, on the recommendation of the camp management, and must be renewed at the camp. If not renewed, the refugees lose their entitlement to camp-based assistance, except access to health insurance and legal support. In practice, once refugees have settled in a new place of residence, they have to report to the local authority at village level, as do citizens. Like nationals, refugees are expected to carry an identity document whenever moving around (PoR or refugee ID card)."

United Nations Rwanda, [United Nations Development Assistance Plan \(UNDAP\) July 2018 to June 2023 for Rwanda](#), 1 November 2018

"Refugees: [...] As a signatory to the 1951 Refugee Convention, its 1967 Protocol and the 1969 Organization of African Unity Refugee Convention, the Government maintains a policy to protect and advance the rights of refugees as is enshrined in the Rwandan Refugee Law. The Law also outlines the procedure to access asylum, apply for refugee status, and provides refugees with essential rights including the right to work, freedom of movement and to access documentation such as refugee identity cards, birth and death certificates, and marriage and education certificates. Rwanda provides a uniquely enabling environment for refugees to access wage-earning employment and self-employment [...]"

United Nations Rwanda, [Rwanda Common Country Analysis](#), 13 November 2017

"2.12.2 Refugees

"[...] Rwanda's law on refugees provides refugees with the right to work, to own property, to freedom of movement and to access documentation [...]"

iv) Accommodation

African News Agency, [Rwanda Shuts Down Camp For Congolese Refugees](#), 18 October 2021

"The Rwandan government has closed down one of the camps hosting Congolese refugees in Gihembe (North) following the full evacuation of all its occupants to another site near the border with Tanzania, an official source confirmed Monday. The closed camp has been home to over 12,000 refugees for the past 24 years. The motive for their relocation is to settle refugees in a better place given that Gihembe camp is located in a high-risk area and is affected by environmental hazards caused by erosion and ravaging ravines, with aging infrastructures, a government statement said."

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"Most shelters in Congolese camps are very old, and camps are congested with no space for the camp extension, resulting in inadequate access roads or no fire breakpoints. Environmental damage and continuous erosion have resulted in the development of giant ravines that put refugees' shelters in "unsafe" conditions in Kiziba, Nyabiheke, Gihembe, and Kigeme camp. By the end of 2020, around 80% of refugees had adequate shelters [...]"

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

"[...] 3.3 Land, housing and property rights

"[...] Article (12/c) of the 2016 Ministerial Instructions on Determining the Management of Refugees and Refugee Camps provides for the right for refugees to own immovable and movable property in a similar way to citizens. In practice, however, very few refugees can afford to buy a house. Refugees in camps are provided shelters and for other basic needs but are not included in social housing programmes intended for Rwandan nationals [...]"

UNHCR Rwanda, [Meeting Refugees' Basic Needs](#), undated

"[...] Shelter and infrastructure

UNHCR provides shelter and communal infrastructures as a core life-saving activity to all refugees living in camps in Rwanda. Our key partner in this endeavor in Rwanda is the American Refugee Committee. UNHCR's shelter and infrastructure strategy in Rwanda consists of providing semi-permanent houses made out of a pole structure

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covered with mud plastering and iron sheet roofing, for Congolese refugees living in camps. To respond to the sudden mass influx of Burundian refugees since April 2015, UNHCR immediately constructed communal hangars for emergency shelter, and dispatched individual family tents, for the initial sheltering of refugees while semi-permanent structures are being constructed to improve the lives of the refugees. 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 and basic needs services.”

v) Healthcare

All Africa/Voice of America, [Rwanda: Rwanda: Reports - Refugees in Rwanda Suffering From 'Urban' Disease](#), 26 July 2022

“A report Monday in the British newspaper The Guardian said a growing number of people in the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda are registering in health centers for non-communicable diseases, or NCDs, that are usually seen in older people and in urban areas.”

“Examples cited in the paper included a hypertensive 6-year-old, a 2-year-old with respiratory problems, a 40-year-old woman with kidney failure who became hypertensive during a pregnancy, and a 20-year-old woman, diagnosed with diabetes after falling into a coma.”

“The report says while the number of people with NCDs at Mahama is at 5% of the total caseload, the figures are rising every month. Mahama houses 58,000 of the country's 127,000 refugees, The Guardian reported.”

“Dieudonne Yiweza, senior regional public health officer for East and Horn of Africa at the U.N. refugee agency told the publication, “Before, we said NCDs affect urban settings. Now, they are attacking refugee settings . . . Now, they are affecting children and young people. For refugees, this is a challenging situation.”

“Yiweza said it is not uncommon to encounter children as young as 10 or 15 who have suffered strokes.

Contributing factors to the NCDs in young people, Yiweza said, include poor housing, a limited diet that often lacks protein, and trauma.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda Operational Update – February 2022](#), 27 May 2022

“Cases of COVID-19 were identified among refugees in February 2022. 1,907 cases identified since the beginning of the pandemic. So far 64.4% of eligible refugees have received second vaccination dose.”

BMJ, [UK-Rwanda migration plan fails to safeguard refugees' medical care, say campaigners](#), 28 April 2022

“Rapid Response:

Re: UK-Rwanda migration plan fails to safeguard refugees’ medical care, say campaigners

Dear Editor”

“[...] Government plans to transport allegedly “illegal” migrants to Rwanda are eliciting widespread ethical and legal objections [1] The medical implications have received less attention.

Malaria is endemic in Rwanda, falling from a peak in 2016 of more than 4 million cases to about 1.8 million in 2020 in a population of about 13,000,000 [2]. Natives of the country are exposed from birth. Most survive and acquire relative resistance but suffer a very high incidence of recurrent attacks. People who have never, or not recently been exposed to the parasite who are relocated to an endemic area, are at significantly elevated risk of serious infection and death [3].”

“Official UK government advice states [4]:

‘According to Rwandan law, any person on Rwandan territory must have health insurance.’

Only limited medical facilities are available in Rwanda. In the event of serious accident or illness evacuation by air ambulance to Kenya or South Africa may be required. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.”

“The Home Office has a duty of care to deportees to Rwanda. That includes ensuring that doctors assess and meet their needs for measures to prevent or mitigate malaria infection (bed nets and prophylactic drugs). For Rwanda, the Advisory Committee on Malaria Prevention recommend three medications [5] for short term visitors (Atovaquone/Proguanil, Doxycycline or Mefloquin). All are contra-indicated or problematic for some patients, particularly Mefloquin in people suffering from PTSD and depression, which are very common among asylum seekers.”

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- [1] Limb M. UK-Rwanda migration plan fails to safeguard refugees' medical care, say campaigners. *BMJ* 2022;377:o1087. <https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.o1087>
- [2] Karema C, Wen S, Sidibe A, Smith JL, Gosling R, et al. History of malaria control in Rwanda. *Malaria Journal*. 2020; 19: 356.
- [3] Doolan DL, Dobaño C, Baird JK. Acquired Immunity to Malaria. *Clin Microbiol Rev*. 2009; 22: 13. <https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2620631/>
- [4] 6) UK Government. Foreign travel advice: Rwanda. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/rwanda/health>
- [5] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/advisory-committee-on-malaria-...>

Global Detention Project, [Rwanda](#), 20 January 2022

"[...] In March 2021, the country began providing vaccinations to refugees and prison populations as these groups reside in crowded settings. The UNHCR, which has urged all countries to include forcibly displaced and stateless people in their national vaccination programmes, praised the Rwandan government's efforts. Ahmed Baba Fall, UNHCR representative in Rwanda said: 'Ensuring that refugees are included in the vaccine programme is key to ending the COVID-19 pandemic.'"

UNICEF, [Rwanda Annual Humanitarian Situation Report](#), 31 December 2021

"[...] As the pandemic continues with emerging new variants, significant gap persists with regards to the coverage of WASH services in the refugee camps and host communities. Despite funding constraints, UNICEF continued to support the Government of Rwanda (GoR) to mitigate the secondary effects of COVID-19 on children and families, including by supporting remote learning during closure of schools, providing Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for community health workers (CHWs) and child protection volunteers, providing mental health and psychosocial support to children including those with disabilities, as well as by supporting the construction of handwashing facilities in schools [...]"

UNFPA, [Unstoppable Adolescents and Young Women Rising to Greatness in Kigeme Refugee Camp](#), 9 August 2021

"Irakoze Dinah is a young mother from Kigeme Refugee Camp, she got pregnant at a young age and faced stigma and discrimination from her family and society. She ended up in sex work so that she may get the essential needs for herself and her baby [...]"

"'Stigma and discrimination in family and society have been the biggest challenge because culturally, a girl who gives birth before marriage is considered a curse.' Irakoze said"

"To support these young mothers, Africa Humanitarian Action (AHA), in collaboration with UNFPA and funding support from the Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA), the aid agency of the Government of the Republic of Korea is implementing the Healthy & Empowered Youth Project in the refugee camps, including Kigeme and the districts of Rusizi, Nyamasheke, and Karongi. The Project supports the most vulnerable young people, mainly FTYM, to undertake economic empowerment training, get life skills mentorship, and provide inputs to start income-generating activities (IGA)."

UNFPA, [Nothing for youth without youth](#), 5 July 2021

"Early and unintended pregnancy has a severely negative impact on girls' education. With the majority of teenage mothers never completing school, our girls are prevented from reaching their full potential and an intergenerational cycle of poverty often prevails [...]"

"[...] In partnership with KOICA, UNFPA is implementing the "Health & Empowered Youth" project that aims at empowering adolescents and young people in Rwanda to realize their human right to equality, sexual and reproductive health, and freedom from violence and discrimination project [...]"

"[...] Launched in July 2020 by KOICA, UNFPA, and the Ministry of Youth and Culture, the "Health & Empowered Youth" project will be implemented over three years 2020 – 2023 in the districts of Rusizi, Karongi, Nyamasheke; and across six refugee camps and host communities of Mahama, Kigeme, Mugombwa, Kiziba, Gihembe, Nyabiheke."

United Nations Rwanda, [One UN Country Annual Results Report 2019-2020](#), 6 April 2021

"[...] **Reproductive health services for refugees**

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1,465 refugees from Burundi and DRC residing in camps, as well as their host communities, received comprehensive free reproductive health and HIV healthcare services including provision of anti-retroviral therapy (ART) to refugee people living with HIV (PLWH), from the UN. The healthcare services included antenatal care, delivery and postnatal care as well as family planning services. Refugees in urban settings continued to have full access to comprehensive reproductive health services. Access to reproductive health services for urban refugees, including ante-natal care (ANC) and delivery, with financial contribution, while immunization and family planning services were accessed at no charge in government health facilities. This partnership between the UN and the GoR enabled affordable access to mostly vulnerable women refugees residing in urban settings. Increased access to affordable quality maternal healthcare has had a positive impact to the reduction in maternal death in refugee communities where only one death was recorded in 2019/20 compared to four in 2018/19.”

“[...] Infectious diseases prevention

“Through advocacy and payment of premiums by the UN, the GoR extended the Community Based Health Insurance (CBHI) to all refugees in urban settings. Primary care services including care for refugees living with HIV, TB and other chronic diseases are now accessible to refugees at public health centres. Referrals made to secondary or tertiary reference hospitals are also covered by the CBHI. The UN continued to ensure all camp-based health facilities are maintained, equipped, with essential drugs and run by qualified personnel. The MoH integrated refugees in camps into the national viral hepatitis management and elimination program following advocacy by the UN. This integration of refugees, especially those infected with hepatitis B and C has enabled affordable access to hepatitis treatment previously not available to refugees.”

International Labour Organization (ILO) & UNHCR, [Handbook on social health protection for refugee: Approaches, lessons learned and practical tools to assess coverage options](#), 9 November 2020

“3.1 Typical country contexts

Countries fall broadly into three groups according to the degree of development of their social health protection system and how it may be made available to refugees.

1. The country has almost reached UHC [Universal Health Coverage] for its population

Most of the population has good access to primary and essential health services and incur less household expense on health because: i) much of the primary and secondary health care package is free; ii) they are registered in a mandatory national health insurance scheme; iii) they benefit from a combination of both (usually countries that have reached UHC have a combination of both). The government has the political will and a fiscal commitment to providing social health protection. There is a legal framework in place and regulatory enforcement by the government. Examples include Rwanda [...].”

“In these countries, the government may or may not encourage or mandate refugees to enrol in the national scheme(s). Vulnerable refugees may or may not be able to enrol in social protection programmes, including social health insurance schemes. UNHCR’s role in these instances would be to advocate for the inclusion of refugees in national schemes with the same rights and obligations as nationals. The ILO can help to provide the necessary evidence when it comes to the feasibility of their integration and its alignment with ILO social security standards.

2. The country is developing social health protection and improving health services

...In some countries such as Ghana or Rwanda, the CBHI is universal and functions like a national health insurance scheme. In many of those countries, the government has a conscious strategy and coordinates the sector while building its national health financing and social protection strategies for extension. UNHCR’s role in these instances would be to monitor refugees’ access to health care services as well as their ability to contribute.”

“[...] Box 7. The example of Rwanda

The national social health protection system in Rwanda comprises several schemes addressing different professional and socio-economic groups. In 2017, the Rwandan government pledged to integrate refugees gradually into the national social health protection system, namely the community-based health insurance (CBHI), which is a public social security scheme administered by the Rwandan Social Security Board (RSSB). A technical feasibility study was conducted by the ILO and UNHCR the following year. The enrolment of urban refugees began in September 2019, along with the issuance of identity cards by the Rwandan government. The feasibility study effectively revealed close links between legal protection measures for refugees, such as access

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to identification documents in the host country, and administrative barriers to accessing social protection and care...”

“Just over 6,200 refugee adults and children were covered by CBHI by the end of 2018. The short-term goal is to enrol the 12,000 refugees living in urban areas into the CBHI, with this coverage to be extended to those living in camps at a later stage if feasible. Any adaptations are discussed in the context of a memorandum of understanding between the ministry responsible for refugees, CBHI and UNHCR, with the aim of ensuring that refugees can access conditions similar to those enjoyed by host communities. In particular, this will require a contribution categorization system, registration and a membership renewal process for refugees, similar to those available to Rwandan households operating in the informal economy. It is envisaged that the cost of this health coverage will be shared progressively between refugees and UNHCR, depending on the refugees’ capacity to contribute.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“Following up on the commitments made during the 2016 New York Leaders’ Summit on Refugees, the Government took the necessary policy steps in 2019 to integrate urban refugees into the national Community-Based Health Insurance (CBHI), a scheme managed by the national insurance administrator. All urban refugees who wish to enrol and present refugee ID Cards are enrolled in the Community-Based Health Insurance system. Thanks to their enrolment in the CBHI, urban refugees have access at 10 per cent cost to all the primary care services provided by public health centres and can be referred to secondary or tertiary reference hospitals if required.”

“Refugees in camps receive health-care services from the UNHCR-supported health facilities run in collaboration with the Government and partner organizations as part of the humanitarian refugee response in the country. These include primary health care, sexual and reproductive health services, mental health and psychosocial support, care for non-communicable diseases as well as nutrition screening and management. Secondary-level health care is provided at district and national hospitals with which agreements exist. At tertiary level, one implementing partner of UNHCR has an agreement with various health facilities and receives refugee patients from locations all across the country.”

“Urban female refugees enrolled in CBHI can access sexual and reproductive health services, including maternal and neonatal health services, and other women’s services through the national health system. Even if not yet enrolled in CBHI, refugee women and girls can, like Rwandan women, access sexual and reproductive services that are free of charge for nationals. Other sexual and reproductive health services are accessible, but they are not free, such as antenatal care, normal and C-section delivery, management of childbirth complications, treatment of sexually transmitted infections, etc. HIV and Hepatitis screening and treatment, as well as contraceptives, are available free of charge at public facilities for nationals and refugees equally, regardless of CBHI enrollment. In rural areas, all refugee women and girls can access sexual and reproductive health services through humanitarian NGOs. Refugees routinely and fully avail themselves of the right to these services.”

“In keeping with national priorities to eliminate Hepatitis C in Rwanda by 2024, all refugees in Rwanda (in camps and urban settings) have been integrated into the national subsidised hepatitis elimination programme since September 2019. This is in addition to the existing national subsidised health programmes for immunization, family planning, malaria, HIV and TB, which cover refugees in all settings. The commitment to eliminate Hepatitis C was reiterated in a pledge made by the Government at the GRF in December 2019.”

“The draft national COVID-19 response plan includes refugee camps as high-risk, vulnerable locations. In leading the COVID-19 response, the Government conducts testing and case management for refugees across the country.”

ILO & UNHCR, [Social protection in action: Exploring public options of social health protection for refugees in West and Central Africa](#), 27 April 2020

“3. A promising example of integration in Rwanda

“The national social health protection system in Rwanda comprises several schemes addressing different professional and socioeconomic groups. Aside from a number of students registered with the national university mutual fund and workers covered by Rwandan Health Insurance scheme (RAMA, from the French *Rwandaise d’Assurance Maladie*), all other refugees are covered by community-based health insurance (CBHI). CBHI is a public social security scheme administered by the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB). In 2017, the

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Rwandan Government pledged to integrate refugees gradually into the national social health protection system. A technical feasibility study was conducted by the ILO and UNHCR the following year. The enrolment of urban refugees began in September 2019 along with the issuance of identity cards by the Rwandan Government. The feasibility study effectively revealed close links between legal protection measures for refugees, such as access to identification documents in the host country, and administrative barriers to accessing social protection and care.”

“Just over 6,200 adults and children are now covered by CBHI. The short-term goal is to enrol the 12,000 refugees living in urban areas onto the system, with this coverage to be extended to those living in camps at a later stage. Any adaptations are discussed in the context of a memorandum of understanding between the ministry responsible for refugees, CBHI and UNHCR, with the aim of ensuring that refugees can access conditions similar to those enjoyed by host communities. In particular, this will require the application to refugees of a contribution categorization system and registration and membership renewal procedures that are similar to those available to Rwandan households operating in the informal economy. At some point in the future, the cost of this health coverage will be shared between refugees and UNHCR, which will continue to cover contributions for children, people in vulnerable circumstances and those with specific needs.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Meeting Refugees’ Basic Needs](#), undated

[...] Health and Nutrition

UNHCR Rwanda works to ensure that all refugees have access to life-saving and essential health care, reproductive health care, HIV prevention and treatment and nutritional well-being. The Government of Rwanda has generously adopted a policy of integration into the national health system for refugees. As such, wherever possible UNHCR builds capacity of national institutions to enable refugees to make use of existing facilities. Where this is not feasible, UNHCR establishes health services for refugees, which can also be accessed by surrounding host communities. We work with our key partners Africa Humanitarian Action and American Refugee Committee to provide health services for refugees. Other partners include IOM, UN agencies UNFPA, UNICEF, WFP and WHO, and non-governmental organizations Save the Children, Concern Worldwide, and Caritas, who provide key complementary health and nutrition interventions for refugees.”

“Since the sudden mass influx of Burundian refugees in April 2015, emergency health posts were established in reception centers where refugees are temporarily accommodated before being relocated to Mahama camp. At the reception centers, UNHCR screens refugees in order to identify and prevent potential outbreaks of disease, check for malnutrition, and to provide emergency and primary health care services, as well as referrals for new arrivals with serious medical conditions or obstetrics needs. All Burundian refugees in Mahama and in reception centers have benefited from these services, and as a result, no outbreaks of disease occurred during the emergency [sic] and UNHCR succeeded in maintaining crude mortality rate and under-5 mortality rate well within humanitarian standards.”

“In order to treat and combat malnutrition, UNHCR established systematic nutrition screening at the onset of the Burundi emergency [sic], in close coordination with partners ARC, WFP and UNICEF. Malnutrition screening continues at all reception centers and Mahama camp. As nutritional outcomes of refugees are key to UNHCR’s mandate, well-structured severe and moderate acute malnutrition management programmes are in place at all locations with the support of UNICEF, WFP and ARC.”

“In the context of the protracted refugee situation, UNHCR operates with the strategic objectives of availing quality Primary Health Care services, decreasing morbidity due to communicable diseases and epidemics, improving childhood survival, access to prevention and control of non-communicable diseases and access to secondary and tertiary care. Additionally, HIV prevention, protection and treatment and access to standard reproductive health care are closely supported while prevention of malnutrition and micronutrient deficiencies, effective treatment of acute malnutrition, regular nutrition surveys and surveillance are actively pursued by UNHCR.”

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Concluding Observations on the initial report of Rwanda](#), 3 May 2019

[...] Health (art.25)”

“[...] 45. The Committee notes with concern:”

“[...] (c) That refugees with disabilities do not benefit from health-care coverage [...].”

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United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

“[...] **Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] (e) there are obstacles preventing some refugees from obtaining effective access to the health system established by the State party [...].”

vi) Mental health services

Note that the COI in this section relates to the general availability of mental health services in Rwanda, and specifically in relation to the refugee population, as general availability could impact on refugees' access to these services.

Sen, P., Crowley, G., Arnell, P., Katona, C., Pillay, M., Waterman, L. Z., & Forrester, A., [The UK's exportation of asylum obligations to Rwanda: A challenge to mental health](#), *Medicine, Science and the Law*, 14 June 2022

“[...] the current provision of mental health resources in Rwanda is extremely limited, with only 12 psychiatrists working in the country (0.10 per 100,000 people), no child psychiatrists, and only two psychiatric hospitals.”

“Sending asylum seekers from the United Kingdom to Rwanda may further reduce the availability of already scarce specialist services to the people of Rwanda.”

The New Times, [Calls grow for more mental health services](#), 22 March 2022

“Bwiza (not real name) is a 26 years old single mother who has been suffering from mental health issues from the age of 17. She never got the chance to get help early on.”

“In an interview with *The New Times*, she said that growing up in a religious family with mental health issues plus living in a rural area was the biggest challenge and only worsened her condition.

‘My family was not there for me when I was going through tough times and whenever I tried to go to the hospital, I was not able to get a psychologist and lived with mental problems until I turned 23 years old,’ she said.”

Bwiza added that the lack of mental health services in her area exacerbated her situation citing an example of how she attempted to commit suicide more than three times.

She said that she only got her break when she relocated to Kigali for work and was introduced to a private psychiatric hospital.

‘While still in the village, I was told that there were psychiatric services at the local hospital but I’ve never accessed such services and I highly doubt that time the service was there,’ she added.

Innocent Nsengiyumva, the psychologist at Ndera Neuropsychiatric Hospital said that there is more effort needed in that specific area as well.

‘The numbers show that over 20 percent of Rwandan population have mental health issues knowingly or unknowingly...that still big number,’ he said adding that; ‘Yet we still have a big number of qualified medics who are not deployed in any hospital.’

He further explained that these psychologists should have been deployed to help people in need. He also pointed out the challenge in having access to work as a private institution specialized in mental health issues.

‘There is also a deficit of private hospitals in this specific medical practice due to the tight process of being allowed to open one. This also is another reason for insufficient facilities,’ he said.

In addition, he said that a huge number of Rwandans are not aware of mental health issues until it is too late due to lack of information among other reasons.

He recommends raising more awareness around mental health as well as facilitating new private hospitals for those who qualify to ensure the services are brought closer to as many people as possible.

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However, commenting on these concerns Dr. Jean Damascene Iyamuremye, the head of psychiatric care and treatment in Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) said that there are enough mental health facilities but people don't use them enough.

'According to the research we conducted, at least 75 percent Rwandans know that the mental health facilities exist, but those who use them are less than 10 percent,' he said

"In addition, Iyamuremye said 80 percent of public hospitals provide mental health services and in all public hospitals, there are qualified psychologists and specialized nurses in mental health issues.

'On top of that, we have 15 psychiatrists in CHUB, CHUK, Caraes Ndera Hospital, and Rwanda Military Hospital,' he said adding that 'we are even among countries with a big number of psychiatrists,'

He added that more training has been conducted for health workers so that they can at least offer basic support for all patients that seek such services.

Iyamuremye, however, said that despite the existence of mental health services, the problem is worrying and it is mainly worsened by stigma and some medics who project unprofessional conduct on patients seeking services, among other reasons.

As a way forward, he revealed that they are increasing the services provided, raising more awareness around this topic, and reaching 100 percent availability of mental health services countrywide among other measures.

'To be able to increase these services, we intend to among others increase group therapy,' he said, adding that other measures include mobile clinics and using technology to reach more patients.

A recent mental health survey by the Ministry of Health estimated that 20.49 percent of the general population met the diagnostic criteria for one or more mental disorders."

KT Press, [Rwanda To Conduct A New Mental Health Research In Post COVID-19](#), 7 March 2022

"Currently all referral, district hospital and 512 health centers in the country provide mental health services with at least two specialists in each service, however RBC indicates that there has been a reduced uptake of the mental health services due to pandemic lockdowns and social factors including fear for social victimization.

"This adds to over 55,000 Health Workers and community-based health specialists have been trained on handling cases of trauma and mental health cases during the genocide commemoration period."

WHO, [Mental Health Atlas 2020 Member State Profile Rwanda](#), 9 February 2022

[Profile includes information on mental health provision in Rwanda]

2 mental hospitals, 46 psychiatric units in general hospitals

Mental hospital beds / annual admissions (per 100,000 population): 3.65 / 41.40

General hospital psychiatric unit beds / annual admissions (per 100,000 population): 0.48 / 43.88

Lordos, A., Ioannou, M., Rutembesa, E., Christoforou, S., Anastasiou, E., & Björgvinsson, T., [Societal Healing in Rwanda: Toward a Multisystemic Framework for Mental Health, Social Cohesion, and Sustainable Livelihoods among Survivors and Perpetrators of the Genocide against the Tutsi](#), *Health and Human Rights Journal*, June 2021

"A medicalized mental health care model still prevails, with patients seeking mental health care typically being referred for individual treatment at district-level hospitals."

"[...] by 2019, only 12 psychiatrists were registered in Rwanda, and no child psychiatrists were reported as practicing. Another factor that contributes to the treatment gap is the possible unwillingness of sufferers to utilize individual one-on-one treatment services, which appear to be a poor fit for collectivist sub-Saharan African cultures, where most issues and challenges of daily life are addressed in the context of group-based processes at the community level [...]"

"In Rwanda, community-based sociotherapy has been used as a hybrid intervention that integrates psychological trauma healing with rebuilding community trust and resilience [...] More than 20,000 Rwandans are estimated to have participated in different variants of sociotherapy since the approach became popular in the early 2000s [...] However, because the focus of sociotherapy groups is not directly mental health, social reconnection objectives might be hampered for those presenting with more severe mental health problems or those with limited cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills. At the same time, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission has recognized a need to assess sociotherapy more systematically and has noted

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that healing should be provided as an intervention with greater regularity, not only during the genocide commemoration period.”

Altai Consulting for EUTF, [CASE STUDY Emergency Transit Mechanism](#), June 2021

“In Rwanda, the Gashora Transit Centre was already built, but evacuees started arriving before the centre was upgraded. The programme itself was also very new for UNHCR, leading to unforeseen challenges, especially regarding refugees’ psychosocial needs. A large majority have been subjected to physical and/or sexual abuse, and suffer from behavioural disorders, such as trouble sleeping, talking, and sometimes fits of anger or depression... Most evacuees thus require intense psychosocial care, and personal and individual follow-up. In Rwanda, though local capacity in this sector is relatively strong, the language barrier between evacuees and ETM staff can be challenging for the provision of psychosocial support. NGOs work with interpreters but these are scarce, and constitute an additional link between the counsellor and the patient, which can limit the level of trust between them [...]”

Louis EF, Eugene D, Ingabire WC, Isano S, Blanc J., [Rwanda's Resiliency During the Coronavirus Disease Pandemic](#), *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 27 January 2021

“[...] each district hospital has a mental health department with psychiatric nurses and a clinical psychologist who provide outpatient and inpatient care including diagnosis, treatment, and counseling services. The mental health departments refer complicated cases to Ndera, the only national referral hospital for neuropsychiatric services in the country.”

Nkundimana Balthazar, [Challenges Encountered by Mental Health Workers in Rwanda; Current Situation and Future Needs](#), Volume 4, Issue 1, *Journal of Quality in Health care and Economics*, 12 January 2021

“The shortage of well-trained mental health might have a negatively impact on the quality of services provided and outcome of treatments. According to Rwandan statistical year book by 2015 Rwanda counts 208 psychiatric nurses and 103 psychologists who work in public institutions and few is known on registered mental health professionals working in other institutions [...] The number of trained psychiatrists has increased from 1 to 7 psychiatrists. These ones are rotated in different referral hospitals like Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Butare (CHUB), Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Kigali (CHUK), Ruhengeri and Ndera Hospital. In addition to this, the Ministry of Health through Rwanda Biomedical Centre has trained more than 15.000 community health workers who are attached to health centres. These community health workers are not professionals but simply trained basic mental on mental illness, how to identify and with symptoms of mental illness in their areas. These ones are added to each two general nurses and one general practitioner that is trained on psychiatric cares each year since 2014. Currently a total of 468 health centers across the country have more general nurses trained in mental health.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“Refugees in camps receive health-care services from the UNHCR-supported health facilities run in collaboration with the Government and partner organizations as part of the humanitarian refugee response in the country. These include primary health care, sexual and reproductive health services, mental health and psychosocial support, care for non-communicable diseases as well as nutrition screening and management. Secondary-level health care is provided at district and national hospitals with which agreements exist. At tertiary level, one implementing partner of UNHCR has an agreement with various health facilities and receives refugee patients from locations all across the country.”

Ingabire, C. M., & Richters, A., [Suicidal Ideation and Behavior Among Congolese Refugees in Rwanda: Contributing Factors, Consequences, and Support Mechanisms in the Context of Culture.](#), *Frontiers in Psychiatry*, 24 April 2020

“Most of the respondents referred to the sociotherapy program in the camps for sharing and healing in a group setting and individual counselling services provided by the Rwandese Association of Trauma Counsellors (ARCT) for individuals with psychological distress who can also be transferred to the camp health centre or district hospital if needed.”

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“Community-based sociotherapy aims to contribute to psychosocial wellbeing, reconciliation and social cohesion in the aftermath of mass violence...People meet in their neighbourhood for weekly sessions over a period of 15 weeks facilitated by two trained sociotherapists who are from the same neighbourhood.”

Chiumento, A., Rutayisire, T., Sarabwe, E. *et al.* [Exploring the mental health and psychosocial problems of Congolese refugees living in refugee settings in Rwanda and Uganda: a rapid qualitative study](#). *Conflict and Health*, 16 November 2020

“[...] Across both settings the most commonly reported problems relate to daily living such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of healthcare access and education opportunities. Alongside these participants reported social problems including alcohol and drug abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, and discrimination/segregation. Problems related to their refugee status were also highlighted, including difficulties obtaining official papers or in Rwanda obtaining employment if one’s status is identified as “refugee”, and a lack of resettlement opportunities. This problem was mentioned more often by refugees in Rwanda as compared to Uganda, which may reflect that the majority of study respondents had been living in Gihembe for over 21 years...

“In Rwanda KI interviews explored unwanted pregnancies amongst girls (n = 7), inequity/inequality (ubusumbane) (n = 4), sexual and gender-based violence (ihohoterwa rishingiye kugitsina) (n = 3), and drug abuse (kwishora mu biyobyabwenge) (n = 3) [...]”

UNHCR, [Life-saving evacuations from Libya supported by Danish funding](#), 2 January 2020

“[...] When the refugees are taken to safety in Gashora, they are accommodated and provided life-saving assistance, as well as medical care and psycho-social support by UNHCR [...]”

Rwandan Ministry of Health, [Rwanda's Performance in Addressing Social Determinants of Health and Intersectoral Action](#), 17 Oct 2018

“Mental health services have also been integrated into all health facilities of the national system and mental health problems are managed at the community level.”

“To deal with aftermath of the 1994 Genocide against Tutsis, the GoR devised a number of strategies to assist those presenting mental health problems with particular attention to those resulting from the genocide

- Treatment of patients with mental health issues has effectively been decentralized, as all hospitals are now staffed with at least one psychiatric or mental health nurse.
- To ensure this capacity is maintained, two general practitioners and two general nurses from each district hospital are trained each year in psychiatric care.
- The decentralization of mental health services improved the geographic accessibility and reduced transfers to mental health reference structures.
- During the annual commemoration of the Genocide against Tutsis, Health Centers and District hospitals work with the community members to coordinate patient care during this time.”

Ng, L., & Harerimana, B. [Mental health care in post-genocide Rwanda: Evaluation of a program specializing in posttraumatic stress disorder and substance abuse](#), *Global Mental Health*, 19 May 2016

“[...] like most low-income countries [...] Rwanda had almost no mental health treatment services prior to, or following, the genocide [...] The availability of mental health services is still very limited due in part to a lack of trained professionals and a small budget for mental health services [...]”

“The Rwandan mental health care system consists of two agencies that provide specialized mental health care: CARAES Ndera Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, the national referral hospital for neuropsychiatric disorders, and the outpatient Psychosocial Consultation Service [...] Both CARAES Ndera and the SCPS primarily serve patients with epilepsy, severe mental illness, psychosomatic disorders, and neurological disorders [...] In addition, the government has been actively decentralizing health care, and recently the district hospitals have started employing mental health nurses and psychologists. Mental health professionals have also been training health center staff in diagnosing and treating mental disorders [...]”

“Although it is likely that millions of Rwandans are affected by PTSD symptoms [...] Rwanda did not have

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specialized treatment for PTSD available until 2004, 10 years after the genocide. In 2004, CARAES Ndera created a service branch called Le Centre Psychothérapeutique Icyizere (The Hope Center), whose mission is to serve patients with PTSD [...]"

"Another unexpected result from the program evaluation was the small number of patients receiving a primary diagnosis of PTSD despite the mission of Icyizere being to serve patients with PTSD. The most prevalent diagnoses among adults were psychotic and substance use disorders. Results suggest that the number of people with PTSD in Rwanda who are receiving mental health care is extremely low. Although services are available, people are not presenting to care. Reasons for the disconnect between the potential number of patients and the actual patients being seen in care could be due to lack of community awareness about PTSD and services, or an inability to access care due to geographic, financial, or individual barriers. Additionally, in many communities including those in Rwanda, mental illness is understood almost exclusively to be psychosis [...] and PTSD symptoms may not be viewed as warranting mental health care. This may be particularly true in communities where the burden of trauma exposure and PTSD is extremely high, long-term mental health outcomes are heterogeneous [...] and symptoms may seem disconnected from functioning [...] Further research is required to understand specific factors that may be limiting treatment seeking in this setting."

IRCT, [Great Lakes Project, Providing holistic and community– based rehabilitation to victims of torture in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda](#), 2015

"In the Great Lakes region, the availability of services is extremely limited. In Rwanda for example, the Ministry of Health stated in 2010 that almost 30 percent of Rwandans suffer from severe trauma; yet it is estimated that only two percent can access mental health services.⁶ The project sought to fill gaps of this kind. Over four years it focused on increasing access to more effective torture rehabilitation services for victims and their families living in rural areas of Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda. It also focused on rural areas where there is little access to rehabilitation services [...]."

"According to the 2011 Mental Health Atlas of the World Health Organization, Rwanda only has one psychiatrist per 2,000,000 inhabitants, or six psychiatrists in the entire country [...]"

"Even when victims can access existing services, those with rehabilitation needs may not be diagnosed correctly, as those required to provide holistic services, such as hospitals, police, lawyers, psychologists, local authorities, community workers and others are either not trained to do this work or do not work in collaboration. The expertise required to diagnose psychosomatic diseases for example is very rare."

"Moreover, the existing health centres in more rural areas of Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC are often staffed with nurses instead of doctors or psychologists. The main cause of the lack of availability and access to services is poverty. The 2014 UN Human Development Index lists Rwanda as 151, Burundi as 180 and DRC as 186 out of a total of 187 countries [...] For gross domestic product per capita from 2011 to 2014, Rwanda is listed as 171, DRC as 182 and Burundi as 184 out of 186 countries [...] This acute lack of resources results in very limited infrastructure for rehabilitation services. More importantly, when living in extreme poverty, people struggle to meet their basic needs, such as food, sanitation or proper housing and cannot afford to seek care. In all three countries, many victims of torture do not have health insurance, just as they cannot afford to pay for transportation to care providers, hospital bills or the medication prescribed."

Erin Pfeiffer, [Case Study: Mental Health Reform in Rwanda](#), undated

"Mental health services are now decentralized across Rwanda, with each of the 38 District Hospitals having a mental health unit that can administer a comprehensive mental health care package of inpatient and outpatient services such as diagnosis, treatment, and follow up measures. At least one Community Health Worker per village is trained to ensure an integrated mental health care component in Health Centers in community outreach, with referral to hospital-based care as needed. Based on growing evidence on effective task-shifting in mental health, a combination of specialists and non-specialists deliver mental health and psychosocial support at all levels of the health system."

vii) Education

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UNHCR Rwanda, [UNHCR in partnership with Profuturo Foundation supports access to digital education in refugee and host community schools](#), 23 November 2021

“The United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) today handed over 185 computers, 1,680 tablets, and other IT equipment to the Rwanda Basic Education Board (REB) to enhance access to equitable quality education in refugee and host community schools.”

“[...] The project, implemented by UNHCR and its partners ADRA and World Vision, will equip 15 national schools hosting refugees with ICT equipment such as laptop computers, tablets, projectors, routers and other essential accessories necessary for setting up digital education programme. The schools are located in Gatsibo, Gicumbi, Kirehe, Gisagara, Nyamagabe, and Karongi districts. The programme targets around 17,952 students of grades 4-6 [...]”

The New Times, [Over 4,000 refugees secure jobs in Rwanda](#), 14 October 2021

“[...] Regarding the strategy to integrate refugees into the education system in Rwanda, he [the Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security] said that all refugees of school-going age are entitled to schooling. Currently, Bugingo said, 44,261 refugees, are enrolled in primary and secondary school across the country, whereby they follow the national education programme and study in the same classes with their Rwandan colleagues.”

CEDAW, [State report on implementation of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, Tenth periodic report submitted by Rwanda under article 18 of the Convention, due in 2021 \[18 May 2021\] \[CEDAW/C/RWA/10\]](#), 4 October 2021

“The government of Rwanda has developed the Strategic Plan for Refugee Inclusion (2019–2024) in response to its commitments towards refugees’ inclusion during the Leaders’ Summit for Refugees held in New York, on 20th September 2016. Thus; refugee students are enrolled in national schools and given same opportunities as national students.”

“Regarding refugee children, the Government of Rwanda is committed to integrate refugee children into the national education system. The integration of refugees means attending along with Rwandan students, following the same national curriculum and taught by the same teachers.

Enrolment of refugees in schools from 2018–2019

	2018		2019	
Level	Female	Male	Female	Male
Nursery	984 (49.6%)	998 (50.4%)	871 (50.3%)	859 (49.7%)
Primary	13 236 (48.8%)	13 883 (51.2%)	13 077 (49.3%)	13 437 (50.7%)
Secondary General Education	4 529 (45.2%)	5 486 (54.8%)	5 473 (47.4%)	6 078 (52.6%)
TVET	202 (43.6%)	261 (56.4%)	151 (42.4%)	205 (57.6%)

Source: Education statistical yearbook 2019.”

The New Times, [Over 2,800 students from Over 2,800 refugee students sit national exams](#), 13 July 2021

“Over 2,800 students from refugee camps attended the primary leaving examinations, which started on Monday. The Ministry of Emergency Management said that they worked with Rwanda Education Board (REB) and a number of districts to ensure that refugee students attend national exams safely. The examinations are taking place in the midst of tight measures to control the surge in new coronavirus cases. Alexis Ntamunozu, a supervisor of examination centres in Mahama camp in Kirehe District told The New Times that there were enough facilities control possible transmission of the virus. Of 254,678 candidates registered for the national

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examinations, 2868 were students from six refugee camps located in different districts. However, on Monday, some refugee students were reported absent at exam centres in Gicumbi District due to their relocation to Kirehe District. The ministry confirmed that the students attended exams. "A total of 92 pupils whose families were relocated to Mahama Camp in Kirehe District are doing their national exams using registration number from Gicumbi District," a communications officer at the ministry said on Tuesday."

Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF), [Tenth Periodic Report of the Republic of Rwanda on the implementation status of the United Nations Convention on the Elimination of all Forms of Discrimination Against Women \(CEDAW\)](#), 18 May 2021, p.28

"The government of Rwanda has developed the Strategic Plan for Refugee Inclusion (2019-2024) in response to its commitments towards refugees' inclusion during the Leaders' Summit for Refugees held in New York, on 20th September 2016. Thus; refugee students are enrolled in national schools and given same opportunities as national students."

"[...] Regarding refugee children, the Government of Rwanda is committed to integrate refugee children into the national education system. The integration of refugees means attending along with Rwandan students, following the same national curriculum and taught by the same teachers."

"Table 3: Enrolment of refugees in schools from 2018-2019

Level	2018 Female	2018 Male	2019 Female	2019 Male
Nursery	984 (49.6%)	998 (50.4%)	871 (50.3%)	859 (49.7%)
Primary	13236 (48.8%)	13883 (51.2%)	13077 (49.3%)	13437 (50.7%)
Secondary General Education	4529 (45.2%)	5486 (54.8%)	5473(47.4%)	6078(53.6%)
TVET	202 (43.6%)	261 (56.4%)	151 (42.4%)	205 (57.6%)

Source: Education statistical yearbook 2019"

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"Most schools lack necessary infrastructures, like classrooms, libraries and laboratories, teachers, and supplies. All urban refugee children have the right to be enrolled in different national schools in and out of Kigali. By the end of 2020, we observed a gap of 200 classrooms in all the locations."

United Nations Rwanda, [One UN Country Annual Results Report 2019-2020](#), 6 April 2021

"[...] **Access to inclusive education**"

"30,000 refugee children, representing 85% of primary school-going age enrolled in primary education. To ensure host communities can accommodate the student population new schools were constructed, and school feeding and educational materials provided. To improve girl's attendance, "girls' safe room" services were availed at all schools supported. Additionally, about 38% of refugees of secondary school-going age were enrolled in secondary education. At least 568 refugees were supported to attend tertiary education. To further support refugee integration at least 100 persons of concern among evacuees from Libya in the Gashora transit centre were enrolled in English language classes."

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

"[...] **4.1 Education**

The 2018/19–2023/24 Education Sector Strategic Plan makes no reference to refugee education or education in emergency situations. In the absence of a specific policy document on refugee education, Article 18 of the 2014 Refugee Law applies; this provides refugee children access to learning in the same way as nationals. In practice, refugee learners are included in the national education system at all levels (following the national curriculum, participating in the same extracurricular activities, etc.) and are expected to meet the same

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standards for certification and accreditation as nationals. Refugee students are integrated into national education systems.”

“[...] The Government pledged at the Global Refugee Forum in December 2019 to improve the quality of education in refugee and host-community settings through upgraded infrastructure and increased equipment and teaching and learning materials, to expand technical and vocational education and training (TVET) and to support the country’s TVET infrastructure and provide related equipment.”

“Kinyarwanda is the language of instruction in pre-primary and lower primary education, whereas English is the language used at all other levels. To ensure the adequate and timely integration of refugees into the national education system, learners are supported with language training in Kinyarwanda, by humanitarian partners. Students who arrive after the start of the academic year are provided with catch-up classes supported by humanitarian actors. However, this latter programme has been scaled down as students have been progressively integrating into the national system.”

“Refugees can obtain administrative documents and certification of their foreign diplomas for employment or education purposes. The Rwandan Education Board has a dedicated certification process for foreign diplomas. Access to national driving licences and recognition of driving licences from the country of origin, require possession of a refugee ID card [...]”

“[...] **5.2 Social inclusion**”

“[...] Refugee inclusion in the education system has been eased both by investment of international actors, and the benefit of a shared common language and culture between the refugees and their hosting communities. However, tertiary education is expensive for both refugees and host communities, but because of relative income disparity, refugees have extremely limited options to access tertiary education, whether in Rwanda or abroad [...]”

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Concluding Observations on the initial report of Rwanda](#), 3 May 2019

“[...] **Education (art.24)**”

“[...] 43. The Committee is concerned that children with disabilities face barriers to the enjoyment of the right to quality, inclusive education in mainstream schools, especially children with disabilities in refugee camps and institutions.”

Forced Migration Review, [Refugee children with communication disability in Rwanda: providing the educational services they need](#), March 2019

“Analysis of UNHCR’s ProGres database undertaken in September 2017 revealed that only 0.01% of refugees in Rwanda are currently registered as experiencing a ‘speech disability/impairment’ and that only 10 out of almost 55,000 refugee children under 12 in Rwanda are registered as having a special educational need. Yet research suggests that 15% of any population are likely to have a disability... and prevalence may be even higher for refugees, some of whom may have trauma-related disabilities, including CD. It is clear from this initial analysis that prevalence of CD – and related needs – are currently under-estimated among refugees in Rwanda.”

UNHCR Rwanda, [Meeting Refugees’ Basic Needs](#), undated

“[...] **Education**

“As part of its international mandate, UNHCR is responsible for ensuring that refugees can access education while they are living in a country of asylum. In Rwanda, UNHCR is committed to ensuring that all refugee children and youth access their fundamental right to basic education, whether they are living in one of six refugee camps, or in urban areas. As the Government of Rwanda has adopted a policy of integration into its national education system to refugees, the UNHCR Rwanda Education Strategy aims to further this integration.”

“In partnership with ADRA, UNHCR ensured that more than 27,000 refugee children were enrolled in the 2015 academic year following the national curriculum in Kiziba, Gihembe, Nyabiheke, Kigeme and Mugombwa refugee camps. In order to promote integration, where possible UNHCR builds capacity of schools located near refugee camps, to build more classrooms and hire and train teachers, so refugees and host community children attend school side by side. In 2015, 44 classrooms were rehabilitated in Kiziba and 4 new classrooms

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constructed. In Mahama camp, since end of June more than 9,000 Burundian children are enrolled in the Orientation Programme to prepare them integrate into Rwandan education system next year. Psychosocial support services is also provided to students.”

“Early Child Development services are provided in the camps in partnership with UNICEF and CARE. UNHCR also supports students in urban areas: 449 children accessed primary education and 222 youth in secondary education in 2015. Access to university is provided in partnership with Kepler university and through DAFI scholarships that include tuition fees, living allowance, internship cost, medical insurance, and dissertation and library fees.”

“There is also continuous sensitization to promote gender equality through the Parent-Teacher Associations and community leadership. In collaboration with school management, the education project promotes sport activities by organizing competitions between schools, hence improving social integration of refugee children and talent development. These activities have contributed to students’ sensitization on reproductive health, sexual violence and HIV/ AIDS. In addition to education services, a school feeding program is in place in partnership with WFP benefitting both refugee and national students is in place.”

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

“[...] **Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

“[...] 20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] (d) some refugee children have difficulty in gaining full access to secondary education, owing to lack of space and the high cost of educational materials [...]”

viii) Social Security

The New Times, [Over 4,000 refugees secure jobs in Rwanda](#), 14 October 2021

“The government has also implemented the strategy to provide health insurance to urban refugees – those living outside the camps. The Committee said that the Ministry of Emergency Management, the Rwanda Social Security Board (RSSB) and the UN’s refugee agency (UNHCR) signed a cooperation agreement under which all urban refugees have the right to access the Community based health insurance scheme commonly known as Mutuelle de Santé. “So far, 9,632 refugees (representing 86.2 per cent of the total) have such a health insurance and that the activity it is still ongoing,” Bugingo [the Chairperson of the Committee on Foreign Affairs, Cooperation and Security] indicated.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“3.3 Land, housing and property rights”

“[...] Refugees in camps are provided shelters and for other basic needs but are not included in social housing programmes intended for Rwandan nationals, nor are they part of most other formal Government social protection initiatives, except for the Community Based Health Insurance, which is available for urban based refugees, supported by UNHCR.”

“[...] 4.3 Social Protection”

“Rwanda implements different schemes and programmes in the social protection sector as part of its economic development and poverty reduction strategy. As illustrated above, some of the schemes that cover the majority of Rwandans also extend to urban refugees.”

“As at June 2020, approximately 40,000 refugees were registered with specific needs, representing 25 per cent of the refugee population in Rwanda. In the refugee camps, identified vulnerable refugees, including elderly persons and those living with disabilities, receive blanket cash assistance and have access to specialized service (devices, supplementary feeding, psychosocial services, rehabilitation, etc.) Supported by UNHCR and provided by its partners. In urban settings, identifying refugees with special needs is challenging, as is their referral to specialized health services where available. UNHCR provides limited financial support to the most at-risk urban refugees on a case-by-case basis.”

“The commitment of the Government to the CRRF provides a platform to initiate a dialogue between the authorities and international partners, with the aim of gradually aligning humanitarian aid and support with the

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objective of broader social and economic inclusion and fostering development opportunities for refugees and local communities alike [...]"

"4.4 Protection for vulnerable refugees

Rwanda has ratified the Convention on the Rights of the Child through Presidential Order No 773/16 of September 1991, the optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the Involvement of children in Armed Conflict through Presidential Order No 32/01 of February 2002 and the Optional Protocol on the Rights of the Child on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography through Presidential Order No 32/1 of February 2002. In 2001, Rwanda passed Law No 27/2001 of 2001 Relating to Rights and Protection of the Child Against Violence and, in 2018, Law No 71/2018 Relating to the Protection of the Child."

"A National Commission for Children (NCC) was established by Law No 22/2011 as an independent body under the Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion (MIGEPROF) mandated to promote and protect children's rights. In 2011, the National Integrated Child Rights Policy (ICRP) was issued with a view to fulfilling all children's rights, including those of refugee children as per Article 5.7 ("All refugee children in Rwanda, accompanied or unaccompanied by adult family members will have all the rights stipulated in this policy"). Subsequently, a Road Map for National Child Protection Systems and Protection of Refugee Children (2017–2022) was developed by MIGEPROF and NCC with the support of UNHCR and UNICEF. The Government of Rwanda is committed to strengthening child protection systems at all administrative levels through a cadre of professional staff and the involvement of other relevant Ministries. The competent child protection institutions are going through structural reforms and a new Bill is before the Parliament."

"At camp level, UNHCR leads the protection response for at-risk refugee children in collaboration with the partners & authorities, notably the camp management & national social service workforce, and within the framework of the existing roadmap for child protection. In parallel, efforts have been made at the district level by the NCC to engage with refugees and host communities to address child protection issues and build their respective capacities. The best interest determination process for refugee children involves government staff. Best care options are explored in line with national alternative care policies and in coordination with the NCC [...]"

Barriers/challenges experienced by refugees in accessing support/services

i) Civil registration and documentation

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

"[...] refugees continued to experience delays in the issuance of identity cards and convention travel documents."

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#), 21 March 2021

"Refugees were vocal about wanting an ID that would give similar privileges as the national ID, and cited activities they were unable to do with a refugee ID, also issued by NIDA. While the refugee ID is supposed to confer access to many of the same services as a national ID, many participants cited experiences where that was not the case (e.g. SIM registration), likely due to poor implementation of policy by individual officers or employees. Several refugee participants also cited challenges with registering for IDs in general, mentioning challenges furnishing documentation, lengthy timelines, and difficulties in getting replacement IDs when necessary. In addition, some refugees objected to the name of the ID, claiming that the term "refugee ID" stigmatized the cardholders unnecessarily. One participant proposed the term "ID for refugees" as being preferable.

"I lost my sim card. When I went back to buy a new one, they denied [me], and they said that unless I have a National ID, they cannot subscribe me on a refugee ID.

- Female (refugee), Gisagara"

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#),

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21 March 2021

“Some refugees consulted in the study reported experiencing delays in the issuance or replacement of their refugee ID cards after registration [...] Many participants in the study reported waiting long periods for the issuance of their refugee ID, with some choosing to travel to Sector offices to follow up on their application status. In a few instances, some refugees who previously had a refugee ID which expired claimed to have not received a replacement and were unaware of how to go about seeking a replacement”

World Bank Group, [People's Perspectives on ID and Civil Registration in Rwanda : Research Report](#), 21 March 2021

“Community leaders cited a lack of documentation as a reason why younger refugees do not have BCs [Birth Certificates], and participants further cited a lack of confidence and awareness of the BC application process as one reason why refugees do not apply for BCs for themselves or their children. UNHCR and MINEMA have put in place various support systems to ensure that all births are registered and birth certificates are issued in refugee camps, in a timely manner.”

United Nations Rwanda, [Rwanda Common Country Analysis](#), 13 November 2017

“2.12.2 Refugees [...]”

“[...] Even though the UN-GOR joint resilience strategy is a step to enhancing refugees’ self-reliance through wage and self-employment among others, some issues still hinder progress in full integration of refugees into Rwanda society. For example Rwandan law of nationality allows that sustainable occupation in the country for five years allows for foreigners residing in Rwanda to seek naturalisation. However, there is limited evidence to suggest that many of the refugees hosted in Rwanda, especially the protracted refugees from Congo, have benefited from this legislation.”

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

“[...] **Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**”

“[...] 20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] (f) refugees are not being made aware of the law on nationality (art. 5).”

ii) The right to work, and employment opportunities

All Africa/Premium Times, [Rwanda: EU Human Rights Court Stalls UK-Rwanda Migration Deal](#), 15 June 2022

“According to the UNHCR, although Rwanda has generously provided a safe haven to refugees fleeing conflict and persecution for decades, the majority live in camps with limited access to economic opportunities.”

UNFPA, [Gov’t, Partners Lead Effort To Make Menstruation A Normal Fact Of Life By 2030](#), 10 June 2022

“A Rapid assessment on the status of Menstrual Health Management in Rwanda conducted Liliane Umwiza, a project associate at Swiss Tropical and Public Health Institute (Swiss TPH) indicated that a pack of single-use sanitary pads costs between Rwf700 (71 US cents) and Rwf1000 (\$1), roughly a day’s wage for many women, putting it out of reach for many.”

“It also indicated that in refugee’s camp, parents prioritize food over such MHM needs and this often leads to girls feeling neglected and pushes some to resort to sex in exchange for commodities.”

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

“[...] while refugees in Rwanda have the right to freedom of movement and work, in practice it’s difficult for them to move around because of bureaucracy as well as the remote location of some camps. Officially they

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must receive permission to leave camps; this alone can take up to a month. And they have to return to camps regularly to renew their permits.”

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

“No laws restrict refugee employment, and the government continued to support employment programs and financial inclusion initiatives benefitting both refugees and their host communities. Many refugees, however, were unable to find local employment. A 2019 World Bank study found local authorities and businesses often were unaware of refugees’ rights with respect to employment.”

Forced Migration Review, [Climate Resilience in Rwanda: evaluating refugees’ and host populations’ vulnerability to risk](#), March 2022

“The majority of the approximately 127,000 camp residents in Rwanda, and their host communities, lack access to sustainable livelihoods which has a detrimental impact on their resilience. Protracted displacement may make certain groups of refugees in camps especially vulnerable to climate risks. UNHCR’s policy on alternatives to camps promotes avoiding encampment entirely and pursuing alternative hosting modalities [...] but the encampment approach is likely to remain for some time.”

Government of Rwanda & UNHCR, [Joint Strategy on Economic Inclusion of Refugees and Host Communities in Rwanda 2021-2024](#), 19 August 2021

“1.2.1 Legal and Policy Framework as a foundation for refugee protection and self-reliance”

“[...] Refugee rights to work”

“[...] despite the favourable legal environment, through some assessments including the WB study on Economic Activity and Opportunity for Refugee Inclusion [...] and some de facto structural challenges have been identified that hinder refugees to become full productive members of the Rwandan society. These challenges and sometimes non-legal barriers include the lack of awareness among some employers about refugees’ right to work and the process of hiring refugees, insufficient access to finance for refugee entrepreneurs, limited access to tertiary and vocational education, as well as some other challenges (e.g., lack of documentation) specific to displaced people.

“[...] They [refugees] are also accorded the same right as nationals when seeking wage-earning employment, although with some challenges, mostly non-legal. For instance, refugees report that employers often request the possession of the Rwandan national identity card and the health insurance card. Even though urban refugees have been granted access to the national health insurance and have been issued refugee ID cards, some refugees still report that many employers do not accept refugee ID card as a valid document.

Consequently, many refugees turn to informal employment.

Refugees can engage in professions like medical doctors, teachers, engineers, and lawyers if they fulfill the national qualification requirements. However, the majority have backgrounds from subsistence farming and other traditional or simple skills professions that are in over-supply in Rwanda [...]

“[...] In summary, from the legal perspective, refugees have the right to a favourable enabling environment and employment conditions at the same level as nationals. However, in practice, sometimes refugees face obstacles in accessing and sustaining employment, particularly in the formal sector for reasons related to employer’s lack of awareness about refugee’s right to work, lack of documentation/refugee ID, delays in obtaining longer term passes to stay outside the camp for livelihoods purposes etc. UNHCR and the GoR, through the implementation of this strategy, will work with partners to address those challenges, especially the non-legal barriers [...]

“[...] 2.2 Challenges and barriers to livelihoods activity

As reported by refugees, below are some of challenges that refugees face in their daily livelihoods’ activities

- In general, there are limited access to financial services (capital, loans, financial education), but refugees have some additional layer of challenges related to limited availability of financial service providers in and around the camps; lack of documentation needed for know your customer (KYC) for some refugees, lack of capacity to provide collateral etc.

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- Limited employment opportunities for refugees who have finalized their studies at various levels (senior six, university degree and masters). However, unemployment is not limited to refugees only as it is applicable to the general population in the country including host communities.
- Although refugees have legal right to work, sometimes some refugees face challenges during the job recruitment because of lack of awareness among the employers about refugee's right to work in Rwanda. For accessing public services possession of the Rwandan national identity card usually part of the requirements for job applications. However, many skilled refugees access specialised public sector jobs including teaching, nursing etc. on contractual basis.
- Some refugees also reported that the skilled refugee workers are not getting competitive market wage rates. However, it is to be noted that all camp-based refugees receive humanitarian assistances (including monthly Cash assistance for food/non-food items).
- Limited access to market-based vocational training and start-up capital/kits are also a general challenge for both refugees and host communities.
- Limited access to land for farming or livestock as there is general land scarcity in the country but also most refugees do not own land and livestock for cultivation (except a few ongoing joint farming projects between refugees and host communities operational in some marshlands).
- Youth groups identified the lack of recognition of Proof of Registration or even in cases the Refugee ID, in accessing jobs, driving license, market spaces and mobility, as a challenge. For business and self-employment in the camps, several practical challenges were also identified which include lack of space for doing businesses, particularly at the marketplaces; lack of basic and financial literacy; lack of capital etc.
- Lack of talent development interventions for the youth
- Some level of delays and obstacles to obtain longer term permission for refugees to go outside the camp (generally not difficult to obtain about 3 months permission, but this is perceived to be short time for refugees who go out to seek jobs outside the camp) and sometimes also their financial means could be a challenge to come back to the refugee camps for renewal of the permission.
- Limited access to energy/power for productive use and other infrastructures (e.g., Markets and roads), which are generally very expensive.
- Refugees still have a high dependency on UNHCR and humanitarian assistance, which one may argue as a 'dependency syndrome'. It is also evident from various assessments livelihoods support so far extended to the beneficiaries were helpful and necessary but that due to funding constraints not enough to enable the refugees to become self-reliant gradually through integrated medium-term (2-3 years) support."

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"While refugees enjoy a generally favorable protection environment, the refugee camps' poor situation and lack of livelihood opportunities maintained a high dependency on humanitarian assistance to meet their basic needs [...]"

"[...] There are many business activities in the camp whose growth is constrained by a lack of energy access. The amenities most demanded by refugee households, lighting, entertainment, and mobile phone charging, are essential services provided by most solar home systems."

"[...] despite the favorable legal environment, challenges remained for refugees to become productive members of Rwandan society, including non-legal barriers, e.g., employer's attitude and limited awareness about refugees' right to work, insufficient access to financial services for refugee entrepreneurs, etc. By the end of 2020, only 16,975 refugees were engaged in income-generating activities. Due to the effects of COVID-19 on the regional economic situation, refugees were hit hardest, considering that they have only limited livelihood opportunities in hosting areas [...]"

"More and more urban refugees have exhausted their savings and cannot sustain themselves anymore and seek relocation to the camp."

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

"[...] 5.2 Social Inclusion"

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"[...] We note that refugee women face [...] a disadvantage in terms of job opportunities and livelihood interventions because of their generally lower level of education."

Comparative Migration Studies, [How do refugees affect social life in host communities? The case of Congolese refugees in Rwanda](#), 6 August 2019

"[...] In practice [...] the freedom of movement and the access to employment opportunities for refugees are limited by bureaucratic procedures and costs (Bilgili & Loschmann, 2018; Easton-Calabria & Lindsay, 2013). As a result, many of the Congolese refugees remain dependent on humanitarian aid for decades (Hovil, 2011)."

World Bank Group, [Rwanda - Economic Activity and Opportunity for Refugee Inclusion](#), 23 May 2019

"Why economic inclusion of refugees and host communities matters"

"[...] C. Key Findings"

"[...] 39. Refugees have very limited access to electric power. Most of the businesses in camps that acquire [sic] power use expensive fuel-operated generators. This increases the cost of doing business and hinders the growth of businesses within the camps [...] The lack of street lighting in the camps also raises personal security concerns and reduces movement after dark. Young women are especially at risk."

"[...] 48. There are significant livelihood-related stressors in the camps which affect refugee households. Agencies such as Plan International and ARC report cases of child neglect and separation from care-givers. This leaves children and young people vulnerable to risks such as substance abuse and sexual exploitation. Tensions are present in some households due to the perceived undermining of traditional gender roles (when men are not working) and due to the erosion of parental authority and family cohesion. Young women are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation both within the camp and in places outside the camp where they seek livelihood opportunities [...]"

Forced Migration Review, [Refugees and host communities in the Rwandan labour market](#), June 2018

"[...] Analysis of the experiences of refugees and locals, however, brings to light the varying dynamics, opportunities and challenges for both groups [...] A key finding is that although Congolese refugees officially have the right to work, in reality their experiences in the local labour market differ considerably from that of local Rwandans.

"Congolese refugees are significantly more likely to be unemployed than locals, and a major reason for this, given by the refugees themselves, relates to local employers' lack of knowledge of the refugees' right to work. According to the focus group participants, finding a job outside the camp is rare due to the fact that they do not have the appropriate identity papers requested by potential employers. As one participant from Kiziba camp said, *"They mostly ask if you have an identity card to prove that you are a Rwandan citizen. So, if you do not have an identity card then you can't get a job."* It is not sufficient simply to provide the right to work; there needs to be practical follow-through."

"Jobs and skills in camps"

Job opportunities for refugees are quite limited outside the camps but within the camps themselves non-governmental and international organisations employ a significant number of refugees. It is clear, however, that these organisations cannot address the employment needs of all refugees. This situation also raises the question of refugees' dependency on humanitarian organisations beyond basic protection and needs. It seems evident that the more refugees are able to integrate in the wider Rwandan economy and not remain within the confines of the camp-based setting, the better off they will be in the long term."

"Unsurprisingly, we found that the work-related experiences of refugees differ also by skill level. Those refugees with professions and who have diplomas are in a more advantageous position than others with fewer skills. As one participant from Kiziba said, *"There are [refugee] teachers and even health providers but ... ordinary people have nothing to do."* [...]"

"For Congolese refugees, however, the experiences were more mixed. Being granted the right to work and thus to access the local labour market is not sufficient to promote sustainable self-reliance, and a more comprehensive strategy is needed to provide opportunities for the wider refugee population."

United Nations Rwanda, [Rwanda Common Country Analysis](#), 13 November 2017

"2.12.2 Refugees"

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"[...] structural challenges continue to limit refugees from contributing productively to their host communities and overall national development. Some of these challenges include; insufficient access to finance for entrepreneurship, limited access to upper secondary, tertiary and vocational education and considerable lack of employable skills."

UNHCR Rwanda, [Protection](#), undated

"[...] Local integration prospects

A lack of economic and professional prospects for refugees in Rwanda, linked to factors such as the high number of graduates in the country and unemployment rate, makes financial independence and self-sufficiency difficult for the vast majority of refugees in Rwanda. There is also an acute shortage of land in the country and as a result refugees are unable to access enough agricultural land to meet their needs or to become self-sufficient. Additionally, the country faces the prospect of return of thousands of Rwandans currently in exile. As such, the ability for the country to absorb the refugee population through integration and naturalization has proven both challenging and extremely limited."

iii) Civil and political rights

Human Rights Watch, [Public Letter to UK Home Secretary on Expulsions to Rwanda](#), 11 June 2022

"In 2018, at least twelve refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo died after police fired live ammunition at the unarmed refugees who were protesting a cut to food rations. Rwandan police arrested over 60 refugees and tried them for participating in illegal demonstrations, rebellion and spreading false information to create a 'hostile international opinion' of Rwanda, a criminal offence in Rwanda's Penal Code. As one Burundian refugee living in Rwanda summed it up, 'Life in Rwanda is ok as long as you keep your mouth shut.'"

All Africa/Human Rights Watch, [Rwanda: UK's Rights Assessment of Rwanda Not Based On Facts](#), 12 May 2022

"[...] Between February and May 2018, Rwandan authorities used excessive force and killed 12 Congolese refugees during a protest over cuts in food rations, and police arrested over 60 others. They charged them with participating in illegal demonstrations, violence against public authorities, rebellion, and disobeying law enforcement. Some were also charged with 'spreading false information with intent to create a hostile international opinion against the Rwandan state.' Human Rights Watch confirmed that between October 2018 and September 2019, at least 35 refugees were sentenced to between 3 months and 15 years in prison. One refugee was accused of sharing information with us, and the communications were used as evidence against him during trial. He is currently serving a 15-year sentence."

The Guardian, [Home Office admits LGBTQI+ refugees could be persecuted if sent to Rwanda](#), 10 May 2022 [quoting Lewis Mudge, central Africa director at Human Rights Watch]

"Congolese refugees rot in jail for protesting their living conditions"

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

"Rwanda is also a very politically restricted country. Constraints on political advocacy and freedom of speech affect citizens, refugees, and assistance agencies – including UNHCR. They risk their activities being curtailed if they denounce the treatment of refugees, like the killing of refugees in Kiziba and Karongi Town [...]."

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

"[...] Refugees registered in camp locations face arrest and detention risks if they move outside the camp without the requisite documents such as refugee IDs or Proof of registration and a letter authorizing their absence from the camp. Thus, there is a need for legal assistance and detention monitoring, and advocacy for greater freedom of movement of camp-based refugees."

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review, Thirty-seventh session](#),

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[Summary of Stakeholders' Information A/HRC/WG.6/37/RWA/3](#), 16 November 2020

"[...] **Refugees and asylum seekers**"

"[...] 96. HRW stated that in February 2018, police fired live ammunition at unarmed refugees protesting outside UNHCR office in Karongi District Western Province, killing about 12 people. A report published by NCHR concluded that the police used force as a last resort, contradicting HRW's findings."

UNHCR, [Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to OHCHR](#), July 2020

"[...] In February 2018, about 700 Congolese refugees resident in Kiziba camp in Rwanda marched towards Karongi town and ended up camping outside the UNHCR Karongi Field Office. Two days later, the Rwandan police fired live ammunition on refugees killing at least 12 people outside the UNHCR Field Office in Karongi and in Kiziba refugee camp. The refugees were protesting outside a UNHCR building against a 25 percent cut in food rations."

"Between February and May 2018, 77 refugees, including three minors and three females, were arrested following this incident. They were charged with participating in illegal demonstrations (Art. 685 PC), violence against public authorities (Art. 540 PC), rebellion (Art. 530 PC), disobeying enforcement of law (Art. 464 PC). In total, 29 refugees were released: 2 of them after having already served their sentence of one year and six months, seven (including three minors) after the court suspended their penalty of two years and six months, one proven not guilty and 18 released with no charges."

"Five refugees, including four identified as leaders of the refugee camp's Executive Committee were charged with "spreading false information with intent to create a hostile international opinion against the Rwandan state" (Art. 451 PC), "inciting insurrection or trouble amongst the population (Art. 463 PC). One refugee was sentenced to 15 years on 21 October 2018 for the following charges (Spreading false information with intent to create a hostile international opinion against Rwandan State (Art. 451 PC); illegal demonstration or public gathering (Art. 685 PC); inciting insurrection or trouble amongst the population (Art. 463 PC). He is serving his sentence at Muhanga prison and has appealed, his date of the hearing has not been fixed yet (more than a year and a half later). The four refugees identified as leaders of the protest were charged with the same counts. A hearing on merit took place on 26 May 2020 and the pronouncement date is scheduled on 31 July 2020. One of them is under provisional release while the rest are in Nyarugenge prison."

"In 2018, the National Commission for Human Rights (NCHR) published the findings of its investigation into the killing in March, which state that police responded to a "violent and organized attack" and used force as a last resort. This contradicts Human Rights Watch's investigation... into the events, which found that refugees were unarmed and that Rwandan police had used excessive force as well as UNHCR's statement at the time, which states the use of "the disproportionate use force against refugees is not acceptable."

UNHCR, [Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to OHCHR](#), July 2020

"[...] camp based refugees are required to apply for a permission to leave the camp. The complex procedures and time spent in applying for and approving the permission as well as the short validity of these permissions, maximum of three months, have led some refugees to lose their jobs and others who left the camp without valid permissions to be at risk of arrest [...]"

iv) Accommodation

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

"Ultimately, supporting refugees better in the region means granting rights – like the right to work and freedom of movement – and enabling access to these rights. Refugees in Rwanda have many of the same rights as those in Uganda yet face more challenges and discrimination in accessing them. Lack of assistance in urban areas, or the right to legally reside in them as recognised refugees, is a crucial ongoing issue in many countries in the region and beyond."

African News Agency, [Rwanda Shuts Down Camp For Congolese Refugees](#), 18 October 2021

"The Rwandan government has closed down one of the camps hosting Congolese refugees in Gihembe (North) following the full evacuation of all its occupants to another site near the border with Tanzania, an official source confirmed Monday. The closed camp has been home to over 12,000 refugees for the past 24 years. The

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motive for their relocation is to settle refugees in a better place given that Gihembe camp is located in a high-risk area and is affected by environmental hazards caused by erosion and ravaging ravines, with aging infrastructures, a government statement said.”

New Times, [Over 500 refugees evacuated from landslide-prone Gihembe camp](#), 21 September 2021
 “The government has relocated 538 refugees from Gihembe refugee camp in Gicumbi—which is considered to be a high-risk zone that is characterised by landslides during the rainy season. The refugees from 139 families have been relocated to Mahama refugee camp in Kirehe District, which officials said is safe for their lives. Goreth Murebwayire, the Gihembe Camp Manager, said the move aims at protecting the wellbeing of refugees and conserving the environment. “We are entering the rainy season which might put the refugees into more danger,” she said. Although there has never been any case of loss of life, rampant cases of injuries stemming from people falling in ravine ditches were increasingly putting the lives of refugees at stake.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

“Most shelters in Congolese camps are very old, and camps are congested with no space for the camp extension, resulting in inadequate access roads or no fire breakpoints. Environmental damage and continuous erosion have resulted in the development of giant ravines that put refugees' shelters in "unsafe" conditions in Kiziba, Nyabiheke, Gihembe, and Kigeme camp. By the end of 2020, around 80% of refugees had adequate shelters [...]"

New Times, [What is the fate of families left in ex-Gihembe Refugee Camp?](#), 12 March 2021

“Sifa Manzi is a Congolese refugee who was born and raised in the former Gihembe camp located in Gicumbi District. She still lives here with her family and other few people while others were relocated in Mahama Refugee Camp last year. The government of Rwanda, together with UNHCR and other partners decided to relocate refugees in this camp after the area was badly damaged by disasters which left them vulnerable. In an interview with *The New Times*, Manzi said that apparently, they don't have where they belong systematically which makes their case unique and complicated to be evacuated like others. ‘In the system, we are neither Congolese refugees nor are we recognised as Rwandans [...] so we were told we belong nowhere,’ she said. Asked on how they used to get facilities before the camp was evacuated, she said they never got any reason to suspect that anything was amiss in their documents because everything seemed normal. ‘We always received what meant for us such as food rations, access to health services and education as other refugees until last year but we’ve reported our case and they promised to work on it,’ she added [...] However, an interview with *The New Times*, Elise Villechalane, the UNHCR spokesperson and external relations officer in Kigali, said that as far as they knew, all people registered as refugees have been evacuated.”

UN Human Rights Council, [Working Group on the Universal Periodic Review 37th Session, Compilation on Rwanda A/HRC/WG.6/37/RWA/2](#), 13 November 2020

“[...] 5. Refugees and asylum seekers”

“[...] 100. The Committee on the Rights of the Child recommended that Rwanda ensure that all reception centres for asylum-seeking and refugee children were child-friendly and that all unaccompanied and separated children had prompt access to national refugee status determination procedures, and investigate any reports of alleged disappearance of children, particularly adolescent girls, from refugee camps.

101. The Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women recommended that Rwanda increase the security situation in and around refugee camps, including by establishing Isange One Stop Centres in the vicinity of camps and providing women and girls with accessible shelter and food for them and their children to avoid so-called “survival sex”.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“[...] 3.3 Land, housing and property rights

“[...] Article (12/c) of the 2016 Ministerial Instructions on Determining the Management of Refugees and Refugee Camps provides for the right for refugees to own immovable and movable property in a similar way to citizens. In practice, however, very few refugees can afford to buy a house. Refugees in camps are provided

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shelters and for other basic needs but are not included in social housing programmes intended for Rwandan nationals [...]"

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Concluding Observations on the initial report of Rwanda](#), 3 May 2019

"[...] **Freedom from exploitation, violence and abuse (art.16)**"

"[...] 29. The Committee is concerned about:"

"[...] b) The lack of effective measures to prevent violence, including sexual and gender-based violence, particularly in homes, institutions, communities and refugee camps where persons with disabilities live, and measures to monitor such prevention measures [...]"

Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada, [Burundi, Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda, Tanzania and Uganda: Activities of Burundian militias in Rwanda, the Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania and Uganda, including relationship with Burundian refugees](#), 14 March 2017 [citing sources published between 2015 - February 2017]

"According to Radio publique africaine (RPA), a Burundian radio station [2], [translation] "a hunt against Burundian refugees in the East African Community appears to be happening," with Burundian refugees in Uganda, Tanzania, and Kenya being [translation] "the most targeted" (RPA 20 Jan. 2016). According to the same source, as of January 2016, in the East African Community countries [Tanzania, Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, and Burundi], [translation] "five [Burundian refugees] have been assassinated and others tortured" (RPA 20 Jan. 2016)."

"[...] 2.3 Situation in Rwanda

Sources report that Rwanda's Permanent Secretary at the Ministry of Disaster Management and Refugee Affairs assured Burundian refugees in the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda of their security (The New Times 4 June 2015; La Croix international 5 June 2015), saying that "the camp was secure and would not be infiltrated by militia groups" (La Croix international 5 June 2015). An article in Rwandan newspaper The New Times cites Burundian refugees in the Mahama refugee camp as saying that "some members of [the] Imbonerakure and [Burundian] state operatives had crossed the border into Rwanda posing as refugees" and claimed they had seen them in the Mahama refugee camp (4 June 2015). RPA stated that [translation] "emissaries" from Bujumbura have gone to Rwanda to track regime opponents, but that, as of January 2016, no cases of assassination attempts or human rights violations against Burundian refugees had been reported (20 Jan. 2016). Corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response."

"Sources report that the Burundian government accuses the Rwandan government of recruitment for rebel groups in refugee camps, including Mahama (RFI 25 Nov. 2015; France24 4 Nov. 2015). The Al Jazeera article indicates that a leaked UN report accused Rwanda of "recruiting and training Burundian refugees in a Rwandan camp to fight against the Burundian government" (5 Feb. 2016). An article by Newsweek, an American news magazine and website (Newsweek n.d.), reports that a February 2016 "expert report" to the UN Security Council "cited testimony from 18 Burundian combatants who said they were recruited from the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda and given training in the use of weapons" (Newsweek 2 Dec. 2016). The same source reports that the combatants, who were located in eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, stated that "some of the training was carried out by Rwandan military personnel" (Newsweek 2 Dec. 2016). In a December 2015 report on the recruitment of Burundian refugees, Refugees International indicates that, while doing field research in Rwanda, they "received numerous allegations [...] that refugees were being targeted for recruitment into non-state armed groups," including in the Mahama refugee camp and in urban areas (RI 14 Dec. 2015, 3). Sources report that the Rwandan government has denied its involvement (Newsweek 2 Dec. 2016; Al Jazeera 5 Feb. 2016; RFI 25 Nov. 2015). Radio France internationale (RFI) further reports that the UNHCR indicated that [translation] "they had no proof of such recruitment" (RFI 25 Nov. 2015). Further and corroborating information could not be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate within the time constraints of this Response."

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

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“[...] Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers”

“20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] c) the overcrowding in refugee camps means that the space available for each refugee is reduced, as a result of which there have been some cases of sexual violence and child abuse [...]”

v) Healthcare

All Africa/Voice of America, [Rwanda: Rwanda: Reports - Refugees in Rwanda Suffering From 'Urban' Disease](#), 26 July 2022

“A report Monday in the British newspaper The Guardian said a growing number of people in the Mahama refugee camp in Rwanda are registering in health centers for non-communicable diseases, or NCDs, that are usually seen in older people and in urban areas.”

“Examples cited in the paper included a hypertensive 6-year-old, a 2-year-old with respiratory problems, a 40-year-old woman with kidney failure who became hypertensive during a pregnancy, and a 20-year-old woman, diagnosed with diabetes after falling into a coma.”

“The report says while the number of people with NCDs at Mahama is at 5% of the total caseload, the figures are rising every month. Mahama houses 58,000 of the country's 127,000 refugees, The Guardian reported.”

“Dieudonne Yiweza, senior regional public health officer for East and Horn of Africa at the U.N. refugee agency told the publication, “Before, we said NCDs affect urban settings. Now, they are attacking refugee settings . . . Now, they are affecting children and young people. For refugees, this is a challenging situation.”

“Yiweza said it is not uncommon to encounter children as young as 10 or 15 who have suffered strokes.

Contributing factors to the NCDs in young people, Yiweza said, include poor housing, a limited diet that often lacks protein, and trauma.”

BMJ, [UK-Rwanda migration plan fails to safeguard refugees' medical care, say campaigners](#), 28 April 2022

“Rapid Response:

Re: UK-Rwanda migration plan fails to safeguard refugees’ medical care, say campaigners

Dear Editor”

“[...] Government plans to transport allegedly “illegal” migrants to Rwanda are eliciting widespread ethical and legal objections [1] The medical implications have received less attention.

Malaria is endemic in Rwanda, falling from a peak in 2016 of more than 4 million cases to about 1.8 million in 2020 in a population of about 13,000,000 [2]. Natives of the country are exposed from birth. Most survive and acquire relative resistance but suffer a very high incidence of recurrent attacks. People who have never, or not recently been exposed to the parasite who are relocated to an endemic area, are at significantly elevated risk of serious infection and death [3].”

“Official UK government advice states [4]:

‘According to Rwandan law, any person on Rwandan territory must have health insurance.’

Only limited medical facilities are available in Rwanda. In the event of serious accident or illness evacuation by air ambulance to Kenya or South Africa may be required. Make sure you have adequate travel health insurance and accessible funds to cover the cost of any medical treatment abroad and repatriation.”

“The Home Office has a duty of care to deportees to Rwanda. That includes ensuring that doctors assess and meet their needs for measures to prevent or mitigate malaria infection (bed nets and prophylactic drugs). For Rwanda, the Advisory Committee on Malaria Prevention recommend three medications [5] for short term visitors (Atovaquone/Proguanil, Doxycycline or Mefloquin). All are contra-indicated or problematic for some patients, particularly Mefloquin in people suffering from PTSD and depression, which are very common among asylum seekers.”

[1] Limb M. UK-Rwanda migration plan fails to safeguard refugees’ medical care, say campaigners. BMJ 2022;377:01087.

<https://doi.org/10.1136/bmj.o1087>

[2] Karema C, Wen S, Sidibe A, Smith JL, Gosling R, et al. History of malaria control in Rwanda. Malaria Journal. 2020; 19: 356.

[3] Doolan DL, Dobaño C, Baird JK. Acquired Immunity to Malaria. Clin Microbiol Rev. 2009; 22: 13.

<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC2620631/>

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[4] 6) UK Government. Foreign travel advice: Rwanda. <https://www.gov.uk/foreign-travel-advice/rwanda/health>
 [5] <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/advisory-committee-on-malaria-...>

UNFPA, [Nothing for youth without youth](#), 5 July 2021

“Early and unintended pregnancy has a severely negative impact on girls’ education. With the majority of teenage mothers never completing school, our girls are prevented from reaching their full potential and an intergenerational cycle of poverty often prevails [...]”

“[...] Launched in July 2020 by KOICA, UNFPA, and the Ministry of Youth and Culture, the “Health & Empowered Youth” project will be implemented over three years 2020 – 2023 in the districts of Rusizi, Karongi, Nyamasheke; and across six refugee camps and host communities of Mahama, Kigeme, Mugombwa, Kiziba, Gihembe, Nyabiheke.”

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Concluding Observations on the initial report of Rwanda](#), 3 May 2019

“[...] Health (art.25)”

“[...] 45. The Committee notes with concern:”

“[...] (c) That refugees with disabilities do not benefit from health-care coverage [...]”

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

“[...] Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers

20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] (e) there are obstacles preventing some refugees from obtaining effective access to the health system established by the State party [...]”

vi) Mental health services

Note: COI on the general challenges in accessing mental health have been included as general availability could impact on the ability of refugees to access these services.

Sen, P., Crowley, G., Arnell, P., Katona, C., Pillay, M., Waterman, L. Z., & Forrester, A., [The UK’s exportation of asylum obligations to Rwanda: A challenge to mental health](#), *Medicine, Science and the Law*, 14 June 2022

“[...] the current provision of mental health resources in Rwanda is extremely limited, with only 12 psychiatrists working in the country (0.10 per 100,000 people), no child psychiatrists, and only two psychiatric hospitals.”

“Sending asylum seekers from the United Kingdom to Rwanda may further reduce the availability of already scarce specialist services to the people of Rwanda.”

The New Times, [Calls grow for more mental health services](#), 22 March 2022

“Bwiza (not real name) is a 26 years old single mother who has been suffering from mental health issues from the age of 17. She never got the chance to get help early on.”

“In an interview with *The New Times*, she said that growing up in a religious family with mental health issues plus living in a rural area was the biggest challenge and only worsened her condition.

‘My family was not there for me when I was going through tough times and whenever I tried to go to the hospital, I was not able to get a psychologist and lived with mental problems until I turned 23 years old,’ she said.”

Bwiza added that the lack of mental health services in her area exacerbated her situation citing an example of how she attempted to commit suicide more than three times.

She said that she only got her break when she relocated to Kigali for work and was introduced to a private psychiatric hospital.

‘While still in the village, I was told that there were psychiatric services at the local hospital but I’ve never

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accessed such services and I highly doubt that time the service was there,' she added.

Innocent Nsengiyumva, the psychologist at Ndera Neuropsychiatric Hospital said that there is more effort needed in that specific area as well.

'The numbers show that over 20 percent of Rwandan population have mental health issues knowingly or unknowingly...that still big number,' he said adding that; 'Yet we still have a big number of qualified medics who are not deployed in any hospital.'

He further explained that these psychologists should have been deployed to help people in need. He also pointed out the challenge in having access to work as a private institution specialized in mental health issues. 'There is also a deficit of private hospitals in this specific medical practice due to the tight process of being allowed to open one. This also is another reason for insufficient facilities,' he said.

In addition, he said that a huge number of Rwandans are not aware of mental health issues until it is too late due to lack of information among other reasons.

He recommends raising more awareness around mental health as well as facilitating new private hospitals for those who qualify to ensure the services are brought closer to as many people as possible.

However, commenting on these concerns Dr. Jean Damascene Iyamuremye, the head of psychiatric care and treatment in Rwanda Biomedical Centre (RBC) said that there are enough mental health facilities but people don't use them enough.

'According to the research we conducted, at least 75 percent Rwandans know that the mental health facilities exist, but those who use them are less than 10 percent,' he said

"In addition, Iyamuremye said 80 percent of public hospitals provide mental health services and in all public hospitals, there are qualified psychologists and specialized nurses in mental health issues.

'On top of that, we have 15 psychiatrists in CHUB, CHUK, Caraes Ndera Hospital, and Rwanda Military Hospital,' he said adding that 'we are even among countries with a big number of psychiatrists,'

He added that more training has been conducted for health workers so that they can at least offer basic support for all patients that seek such services.

Iyamuremye, however, said that despite the existence of mental health services, the problem is worrying and it is mainly worsened by stigma and some medics who project unprofessional conduct on patients seeking services, among other reasons.

As a way forward, he revealed that they are increasing the services provided, raising more awareness around this topic, and reaching 100 percent availability of mental health services countrywide among other measures.

'To be able to increase these services, we intend to among others increase group therapy,' he said, adding that other measures include mobile clinics and using technology to reach more patients.

A recent mental health survey by the Ministry of Health estimated that 20.49 percent of the general population met the diagnostic criteria for one or more mental disorders."

KT Press, [Rwanda To Conduct A New Mental Health Research In Post COVID-19](#), 7 March 2022

"Currently all referral, district hospital and 512 health centers in the country provide mental health services with at least two specialists in each service, however RBC indicates that there has been a reduced uptake of the mental health services due to pandemic lockdowns and social factors including fear for social victimization. "This adds to over 55,000 Health Workers and community-based health specialists have been trained on handling cases of trauma and mental health cases during the genocide commemoration period."

Lordos, A., Ioannou, M., Rutembesa, E., Christoforou, S., Anastasiou, E., & Björgvinsson, T., [Societal Healing in Rwanda: Toward a Multisystemic Framework for Mental Health, Social Cohesion, and Sustainable Livelihoods among Survivors and Perpetrators of the Genocide against the Tutsi](#), *Health and Human Rights Journal*, June 2021

"A medicalized mental health care model still prevails, with patients seeking mental health care typically being referred for individual treatment at district-level hospitals."

"[...] by 2019, only 12 psychiatrists were registered in Rwanda, and no child psychiatrists were reported as practicing. Another factor that contributes to the treatment gap is the possible unwillingness of sufferers to utilize individual one-on-one treatment services, which appear to be a poor fit for collectivist sub-Saharan African cultures, where most issues and challenges of daily life are addressed in the context of group-based processes at the community level [...]"

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“In Rwanda, community-based sociotherapy has been used as a hybrid intervention that integrates psychological trauma healing with rebuilding community trust and resilience [...] More than 20,000 Rwandans are estimated to have participated in different variants of sociotherapy since the approach became popular in the early 2000s [...] However, because the focus of sociotherapy groups is not directly mental health, social reconnection objectives might be hampered for those presenting with more severe mental health problems or those with limited cognitive, emotional, and interpersonal skills. At the same time, the National Unity and Reconciliation Commission has recognized a need to assess sociotherapy more systematically and has noted that healing should be provided as an intervention with greater regularity, not only during the genocide commemoration period.”

Altai Consulting for EUTF, [CASE STUDY Emergency Transit Mechanism](#), June 2021

“In Rwanda, the Gashora Transit Centre was already built, but evacuees started arriving before the centre was upgraded. The programme itself was also very new for UNHCR, leading to unforeseen challenges, especially regarding refugees’ psychosocial needs. A large majority have been subjected to physical and/or sexual abuse, and suffer from behavioural disorders, such as trouble sleeping, talking, and sometimes fits of anger or depression... Most evacuees thus require intense psychosocial care, and personal and individual follow-up. In Rwanda, though local capacity in this sector is relatively strong, the language barrier between evacuees and ETM staff can be challenging for the provision of psychosocial support. NGOs work with interpreters but these are scarce, and constitute an additional link between the counsellor and the patient, which can limit the level of trust between them [...]”

Nkundimana Balthazar, [Challenges Encountered by Mental Health Workers in Rwanda; Current Situation and Future Needs](#), Volume 4, Issue 1, Journal of Quality in Health care and Economics, 12 January 2021

“The shortage of well-trained mental health might have a negatively impact on the quality of services provided and outcome of treatments. According to Rwandan statistical year book by 2015 Rwanda counts 208 psychiatric nurses and 103 psychologists who work in public institutions and few is known on registered mental health professionals working in other institutions [...] The number of trained psychiatrists has increased from 1 to 7 psychiatrists. These ones are rotated in different referral hospitals like Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Butare (CHUB), Centre Hospitalier Universitaire de Kigali (CHUK), Ruhengeri and Ndera Hospital. In addition to this, the Ministry of Health through Rwanda Biomedical Centre has trained more than 15.000 community health workers who are attached to health centres. These community health workers are not professionals but simply trained basic mental on mental illness, how to identify and with symptoms of mental illness in their areas. These ones are added to each two general nurses and one general practitioner that is trained on psychiatric cares each year since 2014. Currently a total of 468 health centers across the country have more general nurses trained in mental health.”

Chiumento, A., Rutayisire, T., Sarabwe, E. *et al.* [Exploring the mental health and psychosocial problems of Congolese refugees living in refugee settings in Rwanda and Uganda: a rapid qualitative study](#). *Conflict and Health*, 16 November 2020

“[...] Across both settings the most commonly reported problems relate to daily living such as poverty, unemployment, and lack of healthcare access and education opportunities. Alongside these participants reported social problems including alcohol and drug abuse, sexual and gender-based violence, teenage pregnancy, and discrimination/segregation. Problems related to their refugee status were also highlighted, including difficulties obtaining official papers or in Rwanda obtaining employment if one’s status is identified as “refugee”, and a lack of resettlement opportunities. This problem was mentioned more often by refugees in Rwanda as compared to Uganda, which may reflect that the majority of study respondents had been living in Gihembe for over 21 years...”

“In Rwanda KI interviews explored unwanted pregnancies amongst girls (n = 7), inequity/inequality (ubusumbane) (n = 4), sexual and gender-based violence (ihohoterwa rishingiye kugitsina) (n = 3), and drug abuse (kwishora mu biyobyabwenge) (n = 3) [...]”

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Ng, L., & Harerimana, B. [Mental health care in post-genocide Rwanda: Evaluation of a program specializing in posttraumatic stress disorder and substance abuse](#), *Global Mental Health*, 19 May 2016

"[...] like most low-income countries [...] Rwanda had almost no mental health treatment services prior to, or following, the genocide [...] The availability of mental health services is still very limited due in part to a lack of trained professionals and a small budget for mental health services [...]"

"The Rwandan mental health care system consists of two agencies that provide specialized mental health care: CARAES Ndera Neuro-Psychiatric Hospital, the national referral hospital for neuropsychiatric disorders, and the outpatient Psychosocial Consultation Service [...] Both CARAES Ndera and the SCPS primarily serve patients with epilepsy, severe mental illness, psychosomatic disorders, and neurological disorders [...] In addition, the government has been actively decentralizing health care, and recently the district hospitals have started employing mental health nurses and psychologists. Mental health professionals have also been training health center staff in diagnosing and treating mental disorders [...]"

"Although it is likely that millions of Rwandans are affected by PTSD symptoms [...] Rwanda did not have specialized treatment for PTSD available until 2004, 10 years after the genocide. In 2004, CARAES Ndera created a service branch called Le Centre Psychothérapeutique Icyizere (The Hope Center), whose mission is to serve patients with PTSD [...]"

"Another unexpected result from the program evaluation was the small number of patients receiving a primary diagnosis of PTSD despite the mission of Icyizere being to serve patients with PTSD. The most prevalent diagnoses among adults were psychotic and substance use disorders. Results suggest that the number of people with PTSD in Rwanda who are receiving mental health care is extremely low. Although services are available, people are not presenting to care. Reasons for the disconnect between the potential number of patients and the actual patients being seen in care could be due to lack of community awareness about PTSD and services, or an inability to access care due to geographic, financial, or individual barriers. Additionally, in many communities including those in Rwanda, mental illness is understood almost exclusively to be psychosis [...] and PTSD symptoms may not be viewed as warranting mental health care. This may be particularly true in communities where the burden of trauma exposure and PTSD is extremely high, long-term mental health outcomes are heterogeneous [...] and symptoms may seem disconnected from functioning [...] Further research is required to understand specific factors that may be limiting treatment seeking in this setting."

IRCT, [Great Lakes Project, Providing holistic and community-based rehabilitation to victims of torture in Burundi, the Democratic Republic of Congo and Rwanda](#), 2015

"In the Great Lakes region, the availability of services is extremely limited. In Rwanda for example, the Ministry of Health stated in 2010 that almost 30 percent of Rwandans suffer from severe trauma; yet it is estimated that only two percent can access mental health services.⁶ The project sought to fill gaps of this kind. Over four years it focused on increasing access to more effective torture rehabilitation services for victims and their families living in rural areas of Burundi, the DRC and Rwanda. It also focused on rural areas where there is little access to rehabilitation services [...]"

"According to the 2011 Mental Health Atlas of the World Health Organization, Rwanda only has one psychiatrist per 2,000,000 inhabitants, or six psychiatrists in the entire country [...]"

"Even when victims can access existing services, those with rehabilitation needs may not be diagnosed correctly, as those required to provide holistic services, such as hospitals, police, lawyers, psychologists, local authorities, community workers and others are either not trained to do this work or do not work in collaboration. The expertise required to diagnose psychosomatic diseases for example is very rare."

"Moreover, the existing health centres in more rural areas of Burundi, Rwanda and the DRC are often staffed with nurses instead of doctors or psychologists. The main cause of the lack of availability and access to services is poverty. The 2014 UN Human Development Index lists Rwanda as 151, Burundi as 180 and DRC as 186 out of a total of 187 countries [...] For gross domestic product per capita from 2011 to 2014, Rwanda is listed as 171, DRC as 182 and Burundi as 184 out of 186 countries [...] This acute lack of resources results in very limited infrastructure for rehabilitation services. More importantly, when living in extreme poverty, people struggle to meet their basic needs, such as food, sanitation or proper housing and cannot afford to seek care. In all three

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countries, many victims of torture do not have health insurance, just as they cannot afford to pay for transportation to care providers, hospital bills or the medication prescribed.”

vii) Education

UNHCR, [Rwanda Country Refugee Response Plan Jan to Dec 2021](#), 19 April 2021

“Most schools lack necessary infrastructures, like classrooms, libraries and laboratories, teachers, and supplies. All urban refugee children have the right to be enrolled in different national schools in and out of Kigali. By the end of 2020, we observed a gap of 200 classrooms in all the locations.”

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

“[...] **5.2 Social inclusion**”

“[...] Refugee inclusion in the education system has been eased both by investment of international actors, and the benefit of a shared common language and culture between the refugees and their hosting communities. However, tertiary education is expensive for both refugees and host communities, but because of relative income disparity, refugees have extremely limited options to access tertiary education, whether in Rwanda or abroad [...]”

United Nations Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, [Committee on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities Concluding Observations on the initial report of Rwanda](#), 3 May 2019

“[...] **Education (art.24)**”

“[...] 43. The Committee is concerned that children with disabilities face barriers to the enjoyment of the right to quality, inclusive education in mainstream schools, especially children with disabilities in refugee camps and institutions.”

Forced Migration Review, [Refugee children with communication disability in Rwanda: providing the educational services they need](#), March 2019

“Analysis of UNHCR’s ProGres database undertaken in September 2017 revealed that only 0.01% of refugees in Rwanda are currently registered as experiencing a ‘speech disability/impairment’ and that only 10 out of almost 55,000 refugee children under 12 in Rwanda are registered as having a special educational need. Yet research suggests that 15% of any population are likely to have a disability... and prevalence may be even higher for refugees, some of whom may have trauma-related disabilities, including CD. It is clear from this initial analysis that prevalence of CD – and related needs – are currently under-estimated among refugees in Rwanda.”

United Nations Committee on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination, [Concluding observations on the eighteenth to twentieth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 10 June 2016

“[...] **Situation of Refugees and Asylum Seekers**

“[...] 20. While taking note of the information provided by the State party, the Committee is concerned at information to the effect that: [...] (d) some refugee children have difficulty in gaining full access to secondary education, owing to lack of space and the high cost of educational materials [...]”

viii) Social Security

The Conversation, [Taking stock of Rwanda as a host for refugees](#), 3 March 2019, updated 27 April 2022

“Who’s in charge? What challenges do they face?”

“[...] There are also various partners who provide services like healthcare, water, and shelter in the camps. But even in longstanding camps like Kiziba, refugees face limited access to electricity and clean water. Because inhabitants have been there for a long time, their family sizes have grown but infrastructure hasn’t kept up.”

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"While assistance agencies can address some of these challenges, they are constrained by both practical and political factors."

UNHCR, [Rwanda: Refugee Policy Review](#), 30 June 2020

"3.3 Land, housing and property rights"

"[...] Refugees in camps are provided shelters and for other basic needs but are not included in social housing programmes intended for Rwandan nationals, nor are they part of most other formal Government social protection initiatives, except for the Community Based Health Insurance, which is available for urban based refugees, supported by UNHCR."

Accommodation for asylum seekers relocated to Rwanda from the UK in the immediate term

Reuters, [Asylum seekers say Rwanda better than Libya, but they will try for Europe again](#), 14 June 2022

"The first group of migrants from Britain will be sheltered close to the Rwandan capital at Hope Hostel, which can host 100 people."

"The 50-room hostel is clean, newly renovated [sic] and the yellow-painted rooms until recently housed survivors of the Rwandan genocide."

"The migrants will be free. This is not a prison. It is like a home," said Ismail Bakina, the building manager."

Birmingham Mail, [Rwanda refugees plan - inside hotel where they will be housed, who will be sent and what happens when they arrive](#), 14 June 2022

"Deported refugees will be housed in hostels close to the Rwandan capital, Kigali, while their claims are processed. Three hostels are planned in total, with one - the Hope Guest House in Kigali - already operational and two more yet to be opened."

BBC News, [UK-Rwanda asylum seekers' deal: Good news for Kigali hotels](#), 20th May 2022

"With the pink paint on its walls fading, the Rouge by Desir hotel is about a 10-minute drive from the centre of Rwanda's capital, Kigali."

"The six-storey hotel has 72 rooms with views of the hilly city. It is set in a residential area with a mix of stand-alone homes and businesses - and will be one of the places in the city where Rwanda plans to accommodate asylum seekers sent by the UK under a controversial deal between the two governments."

"Operations manager Jackie Uwamungu cheerfully shows me around."

"We have VIP, silver, double and twin rooms, a swimming pool and a conference hall," she said as we went up the stairs."

"The rooms are basic with a bed, movable wardrobe, desk and chairs and a small television set mounted on the wall."

"[...] Though it is unclear how many asylum seekers the UK plans to send, Rwanda has also identified 102 rooms at the Hallmark Residence in Kigali's Nyarugunga suburb."

"There are 30 furnished three- and four-bedroom bungalows, with their own gates and gardens."

"[...] Other migrants will be hosted at the more basic Hope Hostel, currently under renovation."

The Guardian, [UK asylum seekers to be housed in no-frills hostel in Rwandan capital](#), 14 April 2022

"Asylum seekers flown to Rwanda by the British government will be put up in a no-frills hostel a mile away from Kigali city centre."

"People fleeing war and persecution will be taken to a guest house, built in 2014, which only has 50 rooms available, although there are plans to expand the facility."

"Hope guest house, a privately owned hostel in the Gasabo district of the capital, is currently being used for tourist accommodation, according to Rwandan government officials."

"However, it is understood that Rwandan authorities are in negotiation to lease the basic and stripped-back property to be used to house UK asylum seekers while their claims are being processed."

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“However, given Britain’s growing asylum backlog, a hostel that can only accommodate 100 people – if there are two people to a room and guests share communal bathrooms – falls well short of what is required as part of the Home Office’s immigration strategy.”

“There are just 12 toilets and five showers for about 100 people and small 12ft by 12ft (3.6 x 3.6-metre) bedrooms, with two beds in each.”

“There are plans to expand the facility by building more accommodation blocks, eventually offering 150 rooms and able to sleep up to 300 people, but the government has not said how long this will take.”

“Asylum seekers are expected to be given three meals a day to eat in a communal dining room, with some kitchen facilities also available for those with special dietary requirements [...]”

“[...] they [asylum seekers relocated from the UK to Rwanda] are set to be housed in a former travellers hostel called Hope House in the Gasabo district of Kigali. The cost of this to the UK government has not been clarified. The building is one of three that are planned, with the Rwandan government hoping two more will be built in the coming years.”

“After asylum processing has completed people staying in Rwanda will be offered different long-term accommodation.”

iNews, [Inside the Rwanda centre which will house asylum seekers and UK Channel migrants](#), 14 April 2022

“Here i takes a look inside the hostel, exploring the bedrooms, bathrooms and communal areas of where those shipped to Rwanda by the UK Government will stay.”

“Outside of the building

“The building itself is moderately large and is built over five floors. The inside of the building has a small courtyard with a staircase and corridors leading to the individual rooms.”

“The complex is 2000 square metres, with the asylum processing facilities included onsite.”

“It was built over four years, from 2010 to 2014 meaning it could take up to four years for further rooms to be opened.”

“The Bedrooms

“Each of the bedrooms will be shared by two people. The rooms are quite spacious and feature double beds and a small table.”

“Currently, there are 50 rooms which could house two people in each bedroom but the plan would be for a total of 150 rooms to be housed on this site.”

“Bathrooms

“Communal bathrooms shall be shared between other migrants. Individual rooms will not be given en-suite facilities.”

“There are four bathrooms per block, shared by the 50 rooms, and separate sinks.”

“Communal areas

“The building has kitchen facilities and three meals a day will be provided.”

“The room currently set up as a meeting room will be the dining area as well as a leisure area where people will be able to socialise. There are kitchen facilities people can use if they wish to.”

Accommodation in Kinigi, Karama and other model villages

UK Home Office, [Country policy and information: Rwanda, asylum system](#), May 2022

The UK Home Office’s published [Country Policy and Information Note](#) on the asylum system in Rwanda indicates that in the long term, asylum seekers relocated from the UK to Rwanda could be housed in so-called ‘model villages’ such as Kinigi and Karama. The following COI was found in relation to so-called ‘model villages’.

KT Press, [Special Senate Committee To Evaluate IDP Model Villages](#), 29 December 2021

“IDP Model village settlements are a government initiative to provide proper housing to disadvantaged and persons in high-risk areas.

“The idea was born in 2010 with each of the 30 districts supposed to have a model village to promote proper

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human settlement in rural areas.

"The Latest Ministry of Infrastructure reports showed 130 IDP model villages constructed countrywide. Out of these, 70 IDP villages have been constructed using clustered buildings approach (4-in-1, 2-in-1 and 8-in-1 units) with over 4,200 households benefiting from the program.

Besides proper housing, most of the IDP model villages have fully-fledged infrastructure such as roads, water, electricity, health, education, social and recreational amenities and others with communal income generating activities.

"In November a Senate report presented by Senator Marie Rose Mureshyankwano indicated that there were some issues including mismanagement of infrastructure, communal projects, and selection and reintegration of beneficiaries in the new lifestyle among others.

The report recommended that Senate sets up a specialized committee to evaluate and assess the issues faced by persons living in the IDPs and how they are integrated in the program within the government policies.

"[...] The committee will also assess governance programs, conflict resolution initiatives and how far the unity and reconciliation program (Ndi Umunyarwanda) have been implemented in the IDPs."

The New Times, [Senate highlights challenges in model villages](#), 2 December 2021

The senate on Wednesday December 1, received a report on different challenges that people who live in different 'models villages' have been experiencing, describing the challenges as "highly concerning". The report presented by Senator Marie-Rose Mureshyankwano was conducted in model villages in Nyabihu, Rubavu, Rutsiro and Musanze districts."

"[...] the main issues highlighted in the senate report included; lack of appropriate biogas systems, poor maintenance of infrastructure, lack of water and electricity, malnutrition, among others. The report also shows that due to poverty and poor mindset, some residents in these model villages have sold off their houses and cows given to them and gone back to deplorable conditions. Senator Mureshyankwano explained that due to lack of biogas systems, residents in these villages now use charcoal, or firewood to cook, yet their kitchens were built inside the houses, which damages these houses. The report also indicated that some of the houses in the villages lack water and electricity supply [...] some of the houses leak, and there is no proper channel for rain water.

On this issue Senator Faustin Habineza, criticized the contractors who used fake materials to build some of the houses, adding that in some areas, some houses are already dilapidated within two years of occupation. Senator Cyprien Niyomugabo said that due to lack of proper sensitization of residents before they move in, leads to mismanagement of the homes and the furniture they find inside."

News Decoder, [Rwanda invests in model villages to tackle poverty](#), 13 November 2019

"Rwanda is expanding a rural development program that is slashing poverty, but at the expense of free choice. Are the benefits worth it?"

"Over the last decade, more than 4,000 Rwandan families have been resettled into model villages. The villages feature three-bedroom brick homes equipped with water, solar panels and sanitation systems, along with social and economic infrastructure."

"Rwanda is now expanding the model village program. The government's goal is to have 70% of the population living in an urban area or village by 2024."

"Rwanda is the fifth most densely populated country in the world and the most densely populated in Africa, with 512 people per square kilometer. The hilly terrain and increasingly short supply of land make it difficult to deliver roads, sewers and electrical infrastructure to thousands of scattered farming settlements."

"...Model villages are typically home to 200-500 people and can cover five to 10 hectares of land (one hectare is roughly the size of a 400-meter racetrack). Government ministries determine where model villages will be located, taking account of land, development, local government and infrastructure conditions."

"The government already owns some of the land devoted to the model villages. In other cases, the government uses its expropriation powers to buy private property."

"This isn't always a smooth process. A 2017 Human Rights Watch report said a number of Rwandan families were forcibly removed by authorities to make way for a model village. Those who were displaced said their rights to fair compensation and public consultation were ignored."

"Local governments determine who will live in each village. They work off a list of the districts' most

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vulnerable people. The vulnerability standards are set yearly and based on a process called *ubudehe*, where households are ranked by the community to determine each family's level of poverty based on assets, quality of living structure, disability, gender and the extent to which they were affected by Rwanda's genocide of 1994."

"In some areas, residents vulnerable to landslides — which are commonplace in a mountainous land — get priority."

"A district committee made up of locally elected leaders and their staff determine individuals' eligibility. Once selected, people are not given a choice about relocation. Those who refuse to move are ostracized by the government and cut off from social support until they comply."

"The biggest challenge to the model village program is addressing the cultural mindset of the rural population, said John Twahirwa of the Rwandan Housing Authority in Kigali. Moving from the country to a village is difficult, even with the lure of water and electricity and the prospect of owning a nice home."

"Under Rwanda's land tenure laws, new residents are granted ownership of the land and house after five years of occupancy. A contract between the tenant and the district leadership requires that the home be occupied by the designated tenant for five years and not rented out."

"Public sentiment about the mandatory moves is mixed."

"In interviews with more than 15 recently resettled families, most said they were grateful to have large homes equipped with electricity and running water and access to nearby schools and clinics. One family noted their children no longer risked being burned by candlelight and were able to be more productive after sunset."

"Villagization has a long history.

Others were frustrated by the distance they were now required to travel to farm their land — in some cases, further than the five kilometers recommended by the Model Village Program guidelines."

"For the first time in our lives, we have electricity, but no food," said one elderly couple who became eligible for the program due to their poverty and genocide survivor status. They had previously lived in a rented, thatched-roof home near family and were now far from relatives and sources of support. They now rely on their new neighbors and handouts from local churches for food."

"The implementation of model villages — sometimes called villagization — has a long history in sub-Saharan Africa. Human rights groups criticized similar efforts by Ethiopia and Tanzania in the 1980s that resulted in more than 12 million people being forced to move, saying violent and forced relocations resulted in significant rights abuses."

KT Press, [Kwibohora25: A Look at the New Karama Model Village Inaugurated by President Kagame](#), 3 July 2019

"[...] a multi-million dollar Karama village, which will host over 240 vulnerable families and those formerly living in high-risk zones. The village is equipped with everything; including food stuffs, a modern market, an Early Childhood Development Center, water and electricity connectivity, and a health post, among others."

Published Masters Thesis by Tara Heidger, [The Land of One Thousand Villages; Examining Rural Resettlement Planning as a Driver for Poverty Reduction in Post-Conflict Rwanda](#), Columbia Academic Commons, 20 March 2018

"[...] One of the challenges identified during this move came from their initial allocation of food and furniture as these resources were to come from their individual cell leadership. The discrepancies of who was given what in terms of food, seeds, furniture etc. was identified as being a shortcoming of their originating cell leadership..."

"[...] Another challenge of the rural resettlement program is that although great strides have been made, Rwanda is still a country with less than a quarter of the population having regular access to electricity..."

"[...] Finally, the scale at which the IDP Model Villages are being created is being far outpaced by the growing population. The rush to move people into the Model Villages has created gaps in services for those who moved in prior to the settlement being ready for them. As I sat down with the four families in the IDP created for genocide survivors, none of them had yet been allocated a plot of land or seeds to grow on it. They were resettled once the houses were complete, but the provisions for them to feed themselves, have access to clean water, in some cases furniture and a plot of land, were yet to be funded or allocated. This gap in services is a result of a hastily run program that may be trying too hard to show solid progress (potentially to meet imihigo requirements) without ensuring that the overall intent of the program is being met."

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Rejected asylum seekers and immigration detention in Rwanda

Processes of 'voluntary' and/or 'enforced' returns from Rwanda

Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation (MINAFFET), [REMARKS BY HON. MIN DR. VINCENT BIRUTA AT THE UK & RWANDA MIGRATION AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP PRESS CONFERENCE](#), 14 April 2022

"And for those who don't wish to make Rwanda their new home, they will be facilitated to return to their country of origin, or settled in other receiving countries."

U.S. Department of State, [2021 Country Reports on Human Rights Practices: Rwanda](#), 12 April 2022 [covering the year 2021]

"In 2019 the government, UNHCR, and the African Union signed a memorandum of understanding to set up a transit mechanism for evacuating refugees from Libya. The mechanism provides a framework for the country to temporarily host these individuals, who would eventually be resettled in third countries, helped to return to countries where asylum had previously been granted, helped to return to their home countries, or granted permission to remain in Rwanda. More than 300 refugees were in the country under the auspices of the transit mechanism as of July. In cooperation with UNHCR and the government of Burundi, the government continued to facilitate the voluntary repatriation of refugees to Burundi, reaching a total of approximately 28,000 persons by September 1."

United Nations Security Council, [Report by the UN Secretary-General on developments in the Great Lakes region from 16 September 2021 to 15 March 2022 \(security situation; political developments; humanitarian situation; human rights and rule of law; other topics\)](#), 30 March 2022

"Burundian refugees also continued to repatriate voluntarily. As at 31 January, 263,846 Burundian refugees were registered in the region. UNHCR facilitated the voluntary repatriation of 65,279 Burundian refugees, including 30,061 from the United Republic of Tanzania; 22,973 from Rwanda; 7,565 from the Democratic Republic of the Congo; 3,856 from Uganda and 1,024 from Kenya. In addition, UNHCR facilitated over 1,700 refugee returns to Rwanda."

IOM Rwanda Country Office, [Annual Report 2019](#), 27 July 2020

"[...] Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

IOM Rwanda works with the Government to provide humanitarian assistance to migrants, particularly those who find themselves in difficult migratory circumstances. These can include individuals whose application for asylum was rejected or withdrawn, stranded migrants, victims of trafficking in persons, and other vulnerable groups. From 2010 to 2015, IOM Rwanda, in close coordination with the Government, assisted more than 8,000 Rwandan returnees from neighbouring countries, especially the Democratic Republic of the Congo, through different socioeconomic reintegration projects."

UNHCR Rwanda, [Protection](#), undated

"[...] Voluntary repatriation

"[...] Prospects for returning home for around 74,000 Congolese refugees, many of whom have lived in Rwanda since the mid-1990s, continue to be very limited due to on-going insecurity and conflict in the Eastern DRC. UNHCR's Division of International Protection has issued a recommendation of non-return for all refugees from Eastern DRC. According to the results of an intention survey conducted in 2012-2013, 98% of the Congolese refugees indicated unwillingness to return to the DRC, citing concerns about insecurity and ethnic-related conflict. Organized return of Burundian refugees who have fled election-related tensions since April 2015 is not envisioned in the near future, until it can be assured that their return is safe and voluntary. However Burundian refugees are able to return to Burundi spontaneously, at their own volition."

IOM, [IOM Rwanda Infosheet](#), undated

"[...] Assisted Voluntary Return and Reintegration

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Use of administrative detention in the immigration system

Global Detention Project, [Rwanda](#), 20 January 2022

“[...] It is unclear whether the country ceased or restricted deportations during the COVID-19 pandemic. Nonetheless, on 14 April 2021, two Ugandan nationals were arrested and declared “prohibited immigrants” for staying irregularly in the country. Four days later, they were abandoned at the Katuna border post with a deportation note: “Take note that you are declared a prohibited immigrant in Rwanda within the meaning of Articles 12 and 15 of Law 57/2018 of 13/08/2018 on Immigration and Emigration in Rwanda [...]”

Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, [Concluding observations on the second periodic report of Rwanda](#), 21 October 2021

“[...] **Due process, detention and equality before the courts**

27. The Committee notes that Law No. 57/2018 repealed Law No. 04/2011. It also notes the assurances of the State party that detention of migrants for violations of immigration law is used only as a measure of last resort in special facilities, and that the National Commission for Human Rights monitors and may make unannounced visits to places of detention where migrant workers may be held. However, the Committee is concerned about:

(a) Ministerial Order No. 06/01 of 29 May 2019, relating to immigration and emigration, which fixes administrative faults and sanctions in the event of non-compliance with the provisions of that law, sets fines for delay in applying for a visa or residence permit ranging from 50,000 to 1 million Rwanda francs for an overstay of 6 days to more than 9 months, and opens up the possibility of expelling the offender;

(b) Point (a) of article 44 of Law No. 57/2018, which provides that any person who assists a foreigner when he or she knows, or ought to know, that such a foreigner is an irregular immigrant in Rwanda, and which is overinclusive;

(c) The lack of statistical data on cases involving the placement of migrant workers and members of their families in administrative custody for reasons related to irregular migration [...]

UNHCR, [Submission by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to OHCHR](#), July 2020

“[...] During the COVID-19 situation, rejected asylum-seekers, who exhausted the asylum process, were allowed to remain on the territory until the borders are open.”

UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Rwanda](#), 2 May 2016

“[...] Asylum seekers and immigration detention”

“[...] 29. The Committee notes that the State party has granted prima facie refugee status to over 70,000 people from Burundi and that it is committed to upholding its international obligations with regard to the protection of refugees. The Committee is concerned, however, about the final status of these refugees [...] The Committee is also concerned that foreigners awaiting deportation are detained in prisons (arts.7, 9-10 and 13).”

International Refugee Rights Initiative, [“I was left with nothing”: ‘Voluntary’ departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda](#), 8 September 2015

“In July 2015, in a letter to the Refugee Rights Clinic in Tel-Aviv University, UNHCR confirmed that its office in Rwanda was able to contact three Eritreans who were transferred to Rwanda during 2014 and remained there [...] According to UNHCR, those Eritreans that arrived in 2014 remain undocumented with no legal status in

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Rwanda. They are therefore subject to repeated detention, and are unable to work legally. UNHCR has reported that these asylum seekers rely on 'the modest financial support provided by UNHCR Rwanda,' and are assisted by UNHCR when arrested..."

UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, [Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families 17th Session \(10-14 September 2021\)](#), 10 October 2012

"[...] 23. The Committee is concerned at the fact that migrants arrested for immigration offences are detained with persons who have committed offences under common law."

"24. The Committee recommends that the State party:

(a) Ensure that detention of migrants for violations of immigration law is used only as a measure of last resort and in special facilities; and that, insofar as practicable, migrants detained for immigration offences are held separately from ordinary prisoners [...]"

Conditions in immigration detention

UN Committee on the Rights of the Child, [Concluding Observations on the Combined fifth and sixth periodic reports of Rwanda](#), 28 February 2020

"[...] **Asylum-seeking and refugee children**

41. The Committee welcomes the various legislative and policy measures to protect the rights of asylum-seeking and refugee children. In the light of joint general comments No. 3 and No. 4 (2017) of the Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families/No. 22 and No. 23 (2017) of the Committee on the Rights of the Child on the human rights of children in the context of international migration, the Committee recommends that the State party: (a) Ensure that all reception centres for asylum-seeking and refugee children are child-friendly and that all unaccompanied and separated children have prompt access to national refugee status determination procedures [...]"

UN Human Rights Committee, [Concluding observations on the fourth periodic report of Rwanda](#), 2 May 2016

"[...] Asylum seekers and immigration detention

"[...] 29. The Committee notes that the State party has granted prima facie refugee status to over 70,000 people from Burundi and that it is committed to upholding its international obligations with regard to the protection of refugees. The Committee is concerned, however, about the final status of these refugees [...] The Committee is also concerned that foreigners awaiting deportation are detained in prisons (arts.7, 9-10 and 13)."

UN Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families, [Committee on the Protection of the Rights of All Migrant Workers and Members of Their Families 17th Session \(10-14 September 2012\)](#), 10 October 2012

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Numbers of individuals removed from Rwanda following a rejected asylum claim

Israel - Rwanda Agreement

The Israel-Rwanda Agreement

American University, [Washington DC, Western Countries Are Shipping Refugees to Poorer Nations in Exchange for Cash](#), 28 July 2022

"In addition, between 2013 and 2018, Israel paid \$5,000 for every African migrant deported to Rwanda under a 'voluntary' migration agreement.

Israel made a similar arrangement with Uganda. Under the terms of the controversial arrangement, several thousand Sudanese and Eritrean asylum-seekers had to choose between immigration detention in Israel or to 'voluntarily' agree to be deported to Rwanda and Uganda."

All Africa/Reuters, [Rwanda: Besides Britain, Which Nations Send Asylum Seekers Overseas?](#), 20 June 2022

"In 2014, Israel introduced a now-defunct policy to send those rejected for asylum and illegal immigrants - mainly from Sudan and Eritrea - to Rwanda and Uganda for third-country resettlement. They were given the choice of either being deported back to their country of origin or accepting a payment of \$3,500 and a plane ticket to either Uganda or Rwanda, with any who stayed in Israel facing jail.

Israel has said about 20,000 people either returned home or went to one of the East African countries under the policy, which human rights groups criticised for sending refugees to countries where there were no guarantees over their safety.

Research conducted by the University of Oxford and the International Refugee Rights Initiative found that many deported to Rwanda and Uganda had their travel documents taken away on arrival and were held in hotels guarded by armed men. Most escaped and paid people smugglers to make the dangerous journey to Europe.

Amid mounting international and domestic criticism, the Israeli programme was scrapped in 2019 following its suspension by the country's Supreme Court."

Reuters, [UK charities seek injunction to block migrant deportations to Rwanda](#), 8 June 2022

"Israel previously attempted a similar scheme to send asylum seekers to Rwanda. But in 2018 the Israeli Supreme court blocked the policy, saying it was not compatible with the United Nations' refugee convention."

Global Detention Project, [Rwanda](#), 20 January 2022

"[...] The country [Rwanda] was previously involved in receiving deportees from Israel under a 'voluntary departure' scheme between 2014 and 2017. Around 4,000 people were deported under that scheme to Rwanda and Uganda and almost all are thought to have left the country almost immediately, many attempting to return to Europe. Testimonies collected by the International Refugee Rights Initiative found that following their arrival in Rwanda from Israel, 'people were being smuggled out of the country by land to Kampala within days.' Testimonies also highlighted that people were 'not given an opportunity to apply for asylum, and even if they wish to stay in Rwanda, their refugee claims cannot be assessed as the national refugee status determination committee has not yet been established.'"

Reslow, N. [Human rights, domestic politics, and informal agreements: parliamentary challenges to international cooperation on migration management](#), *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 11 October 2019:

"[...] in 2018 the Israeli prime minister reported that the deal with Rwanda had collapsed [...]"

D'Orsi C, [To Stay or to Leave? The Unsolved Dilemma of the Eritrean Asylum-Seekers in Israel](#), *Harvard International Law Journal*, Spring 2018

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"[...] in the ruling (delivered on August 28, 2017) of the 2015 Administrative Appeal Zegete v. Minister of Interior, it was unanimously decided by the High Court of Justice that there was no reason to prevent the removal of "infiltrators" to a third country, the court holding that there was no proof that the third country—Rwanda, in this case—was unsafe."

Birger, L., Shoham S. & Bolzman, L., ["Better a prison in Israel than dying on the way"](#), January 2018
 "In April 2015, the Israeli government formed a new plan to augment the rate of departure of Eritreans and Sudanese and announced that all those who will refuse to "voluntarily" depart to a third country will be jailed in Saharonim Prison indefinitely. The attorney general set six conditions for the implementation of this policy, central among them is that the life and liberty of the deportees will not be at risk in the country of destination, and that the deportees will enjoy a "dignified life" there and at least "the prospect of remaining, working and making a living" [...] As part of the legal proceedings in court against this policy, spanning between the summer of 2015 and the summer of 2017 (and concerning Rwanda alone), the State promised that changes and improvements were made to the agreement with the third country. The State promised to improve the monitoring of the implementation of the agreement and to maintain contact with the deportees, as well as to guarantee that the travel document will remain in their possession after landing [...]"
 "In August 2017, the High Court of Justice ruled that as long as the agreement concerns what is defined as "voluntary departure," a person cannot be jailed to force him to agree [...] However, the court found that it has not been proven that Rwanda (without explicitly stating its name, due to the secrecy of the agreements) is an unsafe country for those departing, or that the agreements (which the judges became privy to, but not the appellants) are being violated by Rwanda. This ruling was made despite dozens of testimonies and affidavits of those who "voluntarily" departed Israel that were submitted to the court. Several issues that emerged from the testimonies disturbed the court, but the justices sufficed themselves by expressing hope that the State's promises to address the problems will be kept, and that the supervision over the implementation of the agreement and the fate of the deportees will be improved [...]"

International Refugee Rights Initiative, ["I was left with nothing": 'Voluntary' departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda](#), 8 September 2015

"[...] In March 2014, as part of legal proceedings challenging the anti-infiltration law, the Israeli State Prosecutor's Office told the Israeli High Court that the state had reached, and begun to implement, two transfer agreements with African countries that had requested their identities to remain confidential [...] In January 2015, the state further argued before the court that as part of 'the strengthening of the cooperation between Israel and the third countries with regard to the implementation of the agreements, there is a possibility for hundreds of infiltrators to depart every month.'"

"[...] By April 2015, more than 1,500 asylum seekers from Eritrea and Sudan had left Israel for "third countries" under these agreements...However, the content of the agreements has never been revealed to the public."

"[...] In April 2015, the Rwandan president Paul Kagame admitted that his country "[had] been approached" with regard to receiving irregular African migrants from [sic] Israel [...]"

Numbers of asylum seekers relocated to Rwanda under the Israel-Rwanda Agreement

Global Detention Project, [Rwanda](#), 20 January 2022

"[...] The country [Rwanda] was previously involved in receiving deportees from Israel under a 'voluntary departure' scheme between 2014 and 2017. Around 4,000 people were deported under that scheme to Rwanda and Uganda [...]"

Reslow, N. [Human rights, domestic politics, and informal agreements: parliamentary challenges to international cooperation on migration management](#), *Australian Journal of International Affairs*, 11 October 2019:

"[...] Journalists have estimated that 1400 migrants were deported from Israel to Rwanda in the years 2014–2017 (Green 2017) [...]"

This document is intended as background reference material to assist in case preparation. It should not be submitted directly, in its entirety or in isolation as evidence to decision-makers in asylum applications or appeals.

ECRE, [Israeli Minister tells asylum seekers to relocate or go to jail after detention centre closure](#), 24th November 2017

“According to UNHCR 4,000 Eritrean and Sudanese asylum seekers have been relocated under the present ‘voluntary departure programme’ reportedly to Rwanda and Uganda. However, ‘Due to the secrecy surrounding this policy and the lack of transparency concerning its implementation, it has been very difficult for UNHCR to follow up and systematically monitor the situation of people relocated to these African countries. UNHCR, however, is concerned that these persons have not found adequate safety or a durable solution to their plight and that many have subsequently attempted dangerous onward movements within Africa or to Europe.’”

International Refugee Rights Initiative, [“I was left with nothing”: ‘Voluntary’ departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda](#), 8 September 2015

“[...] during the last two years, more than 1,500 asylum seekers from Eritrea and Sudan have also left Israel for unknown “third countries”... Although these third countries have not been officially identified, it is now widely known that African asylum seekers in Israel who are not willing to go back to their countries of origin are being sent, almost exclusively, to Uganda or Rwanda [...]”

Numbers relocated under the Israel-Rwanda Agreement still residing in Rwanda

Haaretz, [Asylum Seekers Deported From Israel to Rwanda Warn Those Remaining: ‘Don’t Come Here’](#), 2 February 2018

“[...] His story reflects the situation of the few asylum seekers who left Israel for Rwanda and have remained there. The UNHCR office in Kigali knows about only nine [of] them.”

European Council on Refugees and Exiles (ECR)E, [OPed: Israel’s plan to deport Eritreans and Sudanese to Rwanda is a wake-up call for Europeans](#), 15 December 2017

“According to all testimonies collected in recent years, those who “voluntarily” left to Rwanda quickly realized that none of the Israeli promises came true. Their documents were taken from them immediately after arrival and they were granted no assistance or protection. Most searched for a way out and went on a second escape journey, this time aiming for Europe. Many are stranded in Libya or along the route to Libya, and some found their death in the Mediterranean. Some, however, managed to get to Europe, where they quickly received status.”

Living conditions for individuals transferred under the Israel-Rwanda agreement

All Africa/The Conversation, [Africa: Western Countries Are Shipping Refugees to Poorer Nations in Exchange for Cash](#), 28 July 2022

“[...] Many of those deported to Rwanda have consistently struggled with lack of documentation and poverty, and have mostly fled the country and attempted to return to Europe. Facing international and national criticism, the Israeli program was later abandoned.”

University of Oxford Faculty of Law, Border Criminologies Blog, [‘Traded Like Commodities and Transferred Abroad for Processing’: The Legal and Political Claims Against the UK-Rwanda Deal](#), 10 May 2022

“In Israel, like in the UK, various policies were adopted to create a hostile environment for asylum seekers. Israeli policies aimed to deter refugees and encourage the departure of those already in the country included prolonged detention, economic coercion through deduction from wages, and imprisonment meant to encourage ‘voluntary’ departure to third countries: Rwanda and Uganda. Evidence based on the affidavits and testimonies of asylum seekers deported from Israel to Rwanda suggests such deportation might result in trafficking and exploitation. Like the claims now made in the UK context, the Israeli plan was accompanied by

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promises of protection in Rwanda, access to the asylum mechanism, housing and support for vulnerable migrants. As the agreement was kept secret, and formal statements did not even disclose Rwanda as the state of destination, information regarding safeguards was hard to obtain. Nonetheless, strong evidence refuted the promises of protection and asylum [...]"

"Almost all had to leave Rwanda and travel to other countries, relying on smugglers and crossing borders illegally. Many encountered abuse, exploitation and trafficking as a result of their deportation to an unsafe situation. As the UK definition of trafficking explicitly includes exploitation after travel, in any part of the world, and as states' international obligations to prevent trafficking are not limited to their territory, such concerns cannot be dismissed. There is a real risk the UK-Rwanda deal will result in exactly the same abuse the PM and the Home secretary claim it will reduce."

AP News, [For many migrants, the view of Rwanda is often far from rosy](#), 28 April 2022

"One Eritrean refugee who was deported from Israel to Rwanda in 2015 said he found the country "too difficult" and moved his family to South Sudan, which promised better economic opportunities than Rwanda even though it was gripped by civil war at the time. Berhani, 35, who gave only his first name to avoid possible reprisals, said he knows many other Eritreans resettled in Rwanda who have since left to make new homes in neighboring African countries or in Europe."

Haaretz, [Asylum Seekers Deported From Israel to Rwanda Warn Those Remaining: 'Don't Come Here'](#), 2 February 2018

"[...] I didn't want to go to the prison. I thought maybe it would be better for me in Rwanda than in prison, but it has become like a prison for me here," he [an asylum seeker who left Israel] said this week in a video interview with Haaretz from Kigali, Rwanda's capital. The despair is evident on his face.

For more than two months now he has been living in the street. 'Things are so bad. I am living very badly. I have no home, there is no work,' he says. 'Before, there were a few people who helped me. The United Nations also helped – they gave me money for lodging and food. But they stopped.'

He describes a daily fight for survival. 'Sometimes I eat with friends, sometimes I ask for help from people who have a restaurant, sometimes I go to sleep without eating.' In the four years he has been living in Rwanda he has not been employed for a single day, though he says he has invested a lot of effort in looking for work.

"[...] 'For more than a year I lived without any documentation,' Goitom says. Then the authorities in Rwanda gave him a visa that he was required to renew every three months. After a year, they refused to renew it again and sent him to the local office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees. There he received a UNHCR document stating that he is an asylum seeker. Last year he left the document at the place where he was living, was stopped and arrested and sent to prison for two days."

"[...] His story reflects the situation of the few asylum seekers who left Israel for Rwanda and have remained there. The UNHCR office in Kigali knows about only nine [of] them. All the rest have left; most have been smuggled into Uganda. Six of those who remain in Rwanda agreed to share their stories with Haaretz. The interviews with four of them were conducted in English and the other two in Arabic, with the help of an interpreter. All six live a meager existence in Kigali, struggling to survive. Some have lost all hope. The luckier ones have a roof over their heads and money for food. Others depend on the generosity and kindness of friends and local people and the limited help from the UN.

The authorities in Rwanda do not recognize their right to be there and refuse to grant them residency permits. Lacking official documents, they have frequently been arrested and jailed. They are not fluent in the local language, the culture is foreign to them and finding work is nearly impossible. Though they arrived in Rwanda at different times, they all tell a similar story that raises concern for the fate of those who will be deported from Israel in the near future. All the people interviewed regret their decision to leave for Rwanda and urge the asylum seekers in Israel not to follow their example.

'The prison in Israel is preferable,' they declare.

'I hope Israel won't send my children to Rwanda.'

The confiscation of their documents recurs in all the testimonies. 'When I arrived here they took my documents. They said to me that if you want to, you can go to Uganda, if want to, you can stay in Rwanda. I told them that my country is at war and I want to remain in Rwanda,' recounts 'Jacob,' (not his real name), 42, from South Sudan, who left a wife and four children behind in Israel. His wife, a citizen of Sudan, was

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permitted to remain in Israel with the children while he was required to leave after his country declared its independence.

At first he refused to leave Israel and was held in Saharonim Prison in the Negev. The population authority offered him the option of leaving for Rwanda or Uganda. After a year in Saharonim he gave up and chose Rwanda. 'The situation here is very bad. I am suffering. I have no work and I have no home. I have nothing. The UN gives us hospital [care], clothing and shoes, not food,' he says.

"Shortly after he arrived in Rwanda, Jacob opened a small business but could not maintain it. 'I didn't have food, I didn't receive any support. The UN [...] did not give us food or housing.' Currently he is living with friends. 'I don't pay them,' he clarifies. "Sometimes I live with friends, sometimes I sleep outside.'

Jacob, too, has only a UN document, after the authorities in Rwanda granted him a visa for a limited time and refused to renew it. "They didn't explain to me why they stopped. They said they don't want people who came from Israel to come for immigration," he says, noting that he was referred to the UN.

He says the police arrested him three times and that he filed an application for asylum but has not received a reply. 'They didn't reject me but they said you have to wait. We are still waiting.' He asked the UN office for absorption in a refugee camp but was refused. 'A refugee camp is better for me. If they would take me I would get food and housing but they refused. I am sorry I came to Rwanda,' Jacob concludes. 'I have received nothing. There is no work. Life is very hard here. I hope that Israel will not send my children to Rwanda,' he repeats. His message to asylum seekers in Israel is clear and unambiguous:

'I am telling you that there is no work here, no help. We are suffering. How can you bring people here? We have no food, we have no home. If people come, they will suffer like I am. It is better to stay there in prison than to come here.'

'Why do I need to go to prison?'

"Teklesambat, 38, from Eritrea, spent five years in Israel. When in 2014 he was ordered to report to Holot, he decided to leave the country. 'If you have a problem with your own country, go to Rwanda,' the population authority people told him. 'I was a soldier for eight years in Eritrea. I can't go back there,' he says, adding that he knew nothing about Rwanda but decided to go there in order to avoid imprisonment in Israel. 'I didn't make any mistake in Israel so why do I need to go to prison? I left Israel and I came to Rwanda.'

At the airport in Kigali he received a one-month tourist visa. He says immigration officials confiscated all his documents. Along with two other asylum seekers who came with him from Israel, he rented an apartment for \$200 a month, far more than the market price. One of the men who made the journey with him is still in Rwanda. The other left for Uganda and contact with him has been cut off.

'When we came, we didn't have anything, not a single document. I stayed here in Rwanda for a year without any documents,' says Teklesambat. "The UNHCR office sent us to immigration. We didn't get anything.' He too says he never managed to find work. 'Even the locals don't have work, so how am I going to find work as a foreigner?'

The \$3,500 he received from Israel, he says, did not last him a year. Then the UNHCR office funded an apartment and food for him and his roommates. 'After that maybe they got tired and they told us: 'You have to find work.' Where are we going to find work? We slept outside the UNHCR office for two months. That was in 2016. After that, what can we do? We have nothing, we have no work, we are suffering. We asked to go to a refugee camp and they didn't let us,' he says, noting that he applied in writing several times to the Rwandan government office responsible for dealing with refugees, and never received a reply.

'I live in the street. People help me. People here are generous but they don't even have enough for themselves,' he says. "It is better to stay in Israel, even in prison – you have food, you have a place to stay. You know what our situation is here. It is better to stay there and struggle.'

John, 28, from South Sudan has been arrested three times for lack of a visa since he arrived in Rwanda. He says the first time he was held for five days, the second time for a week and the third time for nearly two weeks. The first two times he was released by immigration authorities and the third time was helped by the UNHCR office. John, like the others, spent many months with no official documents. For a year he had a visa from the government of Rwanda and now he has a document from the UN refugee office.

He came to Israel in 2007 and left for Rwanda after seven years. 'When I arrived at the airport in Rwanda they did not take away my documents. They took me to a hotel. At the hotel they took away my documents. Because I could not afford to stay there, they advised me to rent an apartment in Kigali. I rented with three other people and together we paid \$200 a month.' An immigration official came to him and proposed that he

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leave for Uganda. 'He advised me to be in touch with a person who could smuggle me into Uganda. I refused because I didn't want to go to Uganda that way.

'I asked the immigration authority for a document so that I could open a business,' he continues. 'I also asked for a travel document so I could go to Uganda in an official way, not through smuggling. I waited for a year and then they sent me to the UNHCR office, where they made it clear to me that they could not issue me any such document. I am still waiting.' For five months now he has been living on a friend's farm in a rural area outside Kigali. "I tend animals at the farm. He does not pay me but in exchange I can live there and eat."

For seven years Mussie, 32, from Eritrea lived in Israel. In 2015 he was sent to Holot and decided to leave for Rwanda. Fifteen people from Israel came with him. One, whose Facebook posts he saw, went on to Libya in an attempt to get to Europe. Then Mussie heard from friends that the man had been murdered by Islamic State fighters. Mussie has no connection anymore with the rest of the group and does not know what has become of them.

At the airport in Rwanda officials confiscated his documents. He says that from there the immigration people took him straight to a hotel, where he stayed three nights for free. After that he was asked to pay and left for an apartment, for which he paid exorbitant rent.

The grant he received in Israel lasted him two years. His situation is better than that of the others. He is now living alone in a small apartment in Kigali and paying about \$20 a month for it. He owns a small shop for basic items but says he will close it soon. 'I'm not making any profit, I am losing money. I don't have customers. It is my own business, but very small. I sell soap, sugar. I want to close,' he says. 'We don't have any work in Rwanda, we don't have food, we don't have anything. This is just a life of survival. From the government of Rwanda you can't get any papers or any help.'

'I advise people not to come to Rwanda'

Aman, 39, from Eritrea served in the army for nine years until he deserted to Ethiopia in 2008. He stayed in a refugee camp for awhile and from there he continued to Israel via Sudan and Egypt. After six years in Israel, during the summer of 2015, he was told he had to report to Holot or go back to his country. 'I told them I had a political problem in my country and I can't go back there, so they suggested that I go to Rwanda,' he says. Aman also says the immigration officials in Rwanda confiscated his documents as soon as he landed at the airport. 'I traveled with 11 other people – nine men and two women. They took our documents and sent everyone to sleep for three nights at a hotel.' After one night at the hotel, the group decided to continue on to Uganda. Each of them was asked to pay \$250 to be smuggled across the border into that country.

'I'm not sure whether the man was from immigration or from the hotel. He was called John,' he says of a man who is mentioned many times by the asylum seekers interviewed.

'The whole group left for Uganda except for me. I came to stay in Rwanda. John said to me, 'Why are you staying here? This is not a good country to live in. You'd be better off in Uganda.' I insisted on staying in Rwanda. For three days I stayed at the hotel that was paid for by the government. After the three days, that same person took me into Kigali in his car. He left me by myself to look for a place to stay.'

He rented an apartment and tried again and again to apply to the Rwandan immigration authority but was refused. 'At the immigration office I was told, 'You can open a business. You can work. There's no problem.'" At the end of 2015, he says, he received a visa like the others. Then he opened a restaurant but lost money and closed it after two months and sold the equipment. From the remaining money he bought a motorcycle and drove passengers for pay. After three months of that, he opened a small shop where he sold basic household items but after a month he had to close it because of a criminal entanglement.

Aman says a woman with whom he had a romantic relationship accused him of harassment. 'The police arrested me and I stayed in jail for 45 days.' During that time, he says, the woman stole all his savings and disappeared. 'When I was in jail a friend advised me to sell the shop and the motorcycle to pay for a lawyer. After 45 days a judge ruled that I was innocent and I didn't need to stay in jail after I had already lost everything. I complained to every government office, and to the immigration office and to the UNHCR office. At the moment I have nothing, I am hopeless, I have no work and sometimes I sleep at night at people's' homes and sometimes I sleep in the street.'

He regrets his decision to come to Rwanda and says the government of Israel forced him to do it, against his will. 'I urge people not to come to Rwanda because they will not get any aid. This is not the life I had hoped for when I arrived here.'"

Foreign Policy, [Inside Israel's Secret Program to Get Rid of African Refugees](#), 27 June 2017

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“KIGALI, Rwanda — The man picked Afie Semene and the 11 other Eritreans on the flight from Tel Aviv out of the stream of disembarking passengers as if he already had their faces memorized. He welcomed them to the Rwandan capital, Kigali, and introduced himself as John. He was a Rwandan immigration officer, he explained, there to help smooth their arrival. He collected the travel documents each of them had been issued in Israel and led them past the immigration counter where the rest of the passengers from their flight queued. Nobody stopped them. Nothing was stamped [...].”

“[...] the next day brought new despair: There would be no visas. No work permits. No asylum. None of the things Israeli authorities had promised the 12 Eritreans when they had agreed to relocate to Rwanda a few weeks prior. Instead, John offered to smuggle them into neighboring Uganda, which he told them was a ‘free nation.’ ‘If you live here, you can’t leave,’ Semene recalled John saying of Rwanda. ‘It’s a tight country. Let me advise you, as your brother, you need to go to Uganda.’

They would need to sneak across the border, since they had no proof of legal entry into Rwanda. (The Israeli *laissez-passeurs* had gone unstamped at the Kigali airport the night before, an oversight that now felt suspicious.) But John told them not to worry; he could easily get them into Uganda for a fee of \$250. ‘I have everything,’ he said. ‘Contacts with the government over there. Contacts with the Israeli government. If something happens, I call the Israeli government and they do something for you.’

The alternative, John said, was to remain in the Kigali house, where they would be under constant surveillance. They would have to pay rent, but without documentation, they would not be allowed to work. Semene and the others understood that John was not really giving them a choice. Everyone agreed to the plan.

A few hours later, a van pulled up outside the house and the Eritreans piled in. Several miles from the border with Uganda, the vehicle came to a stop and John urged them out onto the side of the road. It was the last they would see of him [...].”

“[...] While a handful of the Eritreans and Sudanese have managed to maneuver or mislead their way into asylum in Rwanda [...] most have given in to the pressure to leave those countries, making dangerous illegal border crossings that leave them vulnerable to blackmail and physical abuse at the hands of smugglers and security forces. Some have continued north to Sudan or Libya in an effort to reach Europe. A few have been captured and killed by Islamic State fighters or drowned on the treacherous Mediterranean crossing.

Officials across several relevant ministries in Israel, Rwanda, and Uganda all issued denials or refused repeated requests for comment. But the nearly identical experiences of asylum-seekers arriving in Rwanda and Uganda, as well as their ability to bypass standard immigration channels and occasionally procure official documents from their handlers, suggests a level of government knowledge, if not direct involvement, in all three capitals [...].”

“[...] It is unclear whether the driver friend is John, the man who picked Semene and the other Eritreans up from the airport, or someone working for him. It is also unclear whether John is actually an immigration official or just posing as one. But in a country as notoriously repressive as Rwanda it is almost inconceivable that anyone regularly bypassing immigration isn’t operating with the blessing of senior government officials [...].”

“[...] What happens to those asylum-seekers who refuse John’s offer to be smuggled into Uganda is yet another mystery. Kabtom Bereket, an Eritrean who arrived separately from Semene in July 2014, told me that several members of his six-person group asked to visit the UNHCR offices in Kigali immediately after they arrived at the house from the airport. John refused their request, Bereket said, telling them, ‘We are immigration. There is the security on the gate. You stay here.’ No one in the group was allowed out of the house, according to Bereket, which is also a pseudonym, until they all left to cross illegally into Uganda.

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“[...] Rwandan officials do admit having discussed a deal with Israel to accept asylum-seekers, but say that no agreement was ever reached. It may be that the Ugandan and Rwandan governments do not want to answer questions about what they are receiving in exchange for accepting refugees [...].”

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Barriers to support experienced by asylum seekers relocated under the Israel-Rwanda agreement

i) Acquisition of refugee/other legal status/ or civil registration and documentation

All Africa/The Conversation, [Africa: Western Countries Are Shipping Refugees to Poorer Nations in Exchange for Cash](#), 28 July 2022

"[...] Many of those deported to Rwanda have consistently struggled with lack of documentation and poverty, and have mostly fled the country and attempted to return to Europe. Facing international and national criticism, the Israeli program was later abandoned."

The Conversation, [Threat of expulsion hangs over thousands of Eritreans who sought refuge in Israel and the US](#), 23 November 2017

"Bahabolom – or 'Bob' as he's known – set off from Eritrea (probably Africa's most repressive state) back in 2009. Via Sudan and Egypt, he crossed the Sinai before entering Israel. 'I got a job as a dishwasher and then a cook, in Tel Aviv,' he told me. 'But I couldn't get asylum – I was only given a conditional release and had to report to the authorities every three months.' In 2013 this changed. He was told to choose between three years in prison, being returned to Eritrea or deportation to Rwanda. Faced with this dilemma he chose Rwanda and – armed with Israeli travel documents and US\$3,500 – he flew to Kigali. 'We arrived at two in the morning. At the airport we were met by a man who called himself 'John'. He was a black man – I think he was a Rwandan official.' He was taken to a house, where his Israeli travel documents were taken from him. 'I protested,' says Bahabolom, 'but John didn't care. We had been promised by the Israelis we could live and work, but it didn't happen.'"

International Refugee Rights Initiative, ["I was left with nothing": 'Voluntary' departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda](#), 8 September 2015

"[...] For those asylum seekers who are sent to Rwanda, testimonies collected by IRRI suggest that the majority, if not all, are being smuggled out of the country by land to Kampala within days of arriving in Kigali. They are not given an opportunity to apply for asylum, and even if they wish to stay in Rwanda, their refugee claims cannot be assessed as the national refugee status determination committee has not yet been established. These transfers appear to be coordinated by the people who receive the asylum seekers at Kigali airport [...]"

"At the airport in Kigali, Eritreans were received by a person who sent them directly to a small hotel. According to some accounts, the name of this person was John, and he was also involved in their later transfer to Uganda. Eritreans reported that they were warned not to leave the hotel. One Eritrean said: 'The hotel is like prison. They say: 'it is a problem here, you are not like the people here, you look like an Arab.' [...] The travel documents that the Eritreans received in Israel were taken from them, as well as the single entry visa acceptance letter. No other papers were given to any of the Eritreans interviewed, leaving most with no valid identity papers or no identity papers at all. In the hotel, the Eritreans were given the choice between staying in Rwanda with no documents and going to Uganda. The interviews show that none of the asylum seekers believed that staying in Rwanda with no status or documents was a realistic or viable option. Furthermore, none of the Eritreans who were transferred to Kampala and were interviewed by IRRI knew of anyone who had stayed in Rwanda [...]"

"[...] Transfers from Rwanda to Uganda were done systematically and in an illegal manner. All interviewees shared a similar story that involved being driven from the hotel to the border, crossing it by foot in the dark, and then being driven in another minibus to a hotel in Kampala. One Eritrean recounted: 'There was someone, he came after a day or two to the hotel. [He] said: 'come, you are going now.' We said: 'no, we first have to receive the documents.' [He replied:] 'No, there are no documents. You came here, if you don't want [to go to Uganda], we give you nothing. Everybody has to know that we will not accept anyone. But, if you want to go to Uganda, come here and pay [USD] 250.' I know some people who stayed two or three weeks [...] But they paid and then when their money was over they came here [to Kampala]' [...]"

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"In July 2015, in a letter to the Refugee Rights Clinic in Tel-Aviv University, UNHCR confirmed that its office in Rwanda was able to contact three Eritreans who were transferred to Rwanda during 2014 and remained there...According to UNHCR, those Eritreans that arrived in 2014 remain undocumented with no legal status in Rwanda. They are therefore subject to repeated detention, and are unable to work legally. UNHCR has reported that these asylum seekers rely on "the modest financial support provided by UNHCR Rwanda," and are assisted by UNHCR when arrested [...]"

"UNHCR has further explained that there is no functioning asylum system in Rwanda, as the national refugee status determination committee has not yet been established. With regard to the Eritreans transferred from Israel, UNHCR noted that 'their many attempts to file an asylum claim and be recognised as refugees by the Rwandan authorities have thus far been refused.' UNHCR also reported that there is no temporary protection policy in place for Eritreans in Rwanda [...]"

"[...] International standards for transfer agreements"

"[...]Asylum seekers who are sent to Rwanda are coerced into being smuggled into Uganda. They have no access to international protection in Rwanda both because they cannot stay in the country, and because the Rwandan asylum system is currently unable to assess their refugee claim or grant them any other status. They remain with little option other than to risk their lives trying to find protection elsewhere [...]"

"[...] Migrant smuggling and complicity by Israeli authorities"

"[...] As this paper shows, some asylum seekers who are sent from Israel to Uganda, and the vast majority of those sent to Rwanda, if not all of them, are transferred onto countries in which they are neither residents nor nationals. This may be done by obtaining fraudulent documents or by traveling with "guides" across the border, as most Eritreans sent to Rwanda do. As asylum seekers pay hundreds of US dollars for these transfers, it seems that the conduct of those arranging them amounts to migrant smuggling. Israeli authorities are not only enabling these illegal activities, but are also encouraging them by sending asylum seekers into countries in which they are not legally accepted. Moreover, the systematic and continuous nature in which these illegal transfers, mainly out of Rwanda, are conducted raises serious concerns that Israeli officials may be complicit in this illegal conduct [...]"

Hotline for Refugees and Migrants and ASSAF, [Where there is no free will](#), 16 April 2015

"The authors of the present report managed to interview only a few asylum seekers in Rwanda. Those who testified about leaving for Rwanda went on to other destinations immediately. The authors of the present report could not locate a single asylum seeker who found protection and stayed in Rwanda for more than a few days. Other interviewees, when asked about it, clarified that staying in Rwanda was not an option."

Human Rights Watch, ["Make their lives miserable", Israel's Coercion of Eritrean and Sudanese Asylum Seekers](#), 9 September 2014

"In late May 2014, Human Rights Watch met with nine Eritreans and a Sudanese national in the Rwandan capital, Kigali, who said they had flown from Israel to Kigali earlier in the month and that on arrival they were simply allowed into the country but given no permit to stay. As of early August, they had not been given any secure immigration status."

ii) Permission to work, and employment opportunities

All Africa/The Conversation, [Africa: Western Countries Are Shipping Refugees to Poorer Nations in Exchange for Cash](#), 28 July 2022

"[...] Many of those deported to Rwanda have consistently struggled with lack of documentation and poverty, and have mostly fled the country and attempted to return to Europe. Facing international and national criticism, the Israeli program was later abandoned."

University of Oxford Faculty of Law, Border Criminologies Blog, ['Traded Like Commodities and Transferred Abroad for Processing': The Legal and Political Claims Against the UK-Rwanda Deal](#), 10 May 2022

"They were not allowed to work in Rwanda."

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AP News, [For many migrants, the view of Rwanda is often far from rosy](#), 28 April 2022

“One Eritrean refugee who was deported from Israel to Rwanda in 2015 said he found the country “too difficult” and moved his family to South Sudan, which promised better economic opportunities than Rwanda even though it was gripped by civil war at the time.”

Haaretz, [Asylum Seekers Deported From Israel to Rwanda Warn Those Remaining: ‘Don’t Come Here’](#), 2 February 2018

“[...] They are not fluent in the local language, the culture is foreign to them and finding work is nearly impossible.”

“[...] ‘I told them that my country is at war and I want to remain in Rwanda,’ recounts ‘Jacob,’ (not his real name), 42, from South Sudan, who left a wife and four children behind in Israel. [...] ‘The situation here is very bad. I am suffering. I have no work and I have no home. I have nothing. The UN gives us hospital [care], clothing and shoes, not food,’ he says [...] ‘I am sorry I came to Rwanda,’ Jacob concludes. ‘I have received nothing. There is no work. Life is very hard here. I hope that Israel will not send my children to Rwanda,’ he repeats. His message to asylum seekers in Israel is clear and unambiguous:

‘I am telling you that there is no work here, no help. We are suffering. How can you bring people here? We have no food, we have no home. If people come, they will suffer like I am. It is better to say there in prison than to come here.’ [...]”

“‘When we came, we didn’t have anything, not a single document. I stayed here in Rwanda for a year without any documents,’ says Teklesambat. ‘The UNHCR office sent us to immigration. We didn’t get anything.’ He too says he never managed to find work. ‘Even the locals don’t have work, so how am I going to find work as a foreigner?’

The \$3,500 he received from Israel, he says, did not last him a year. Then the UNHCR office funded an apartment and food for him and his roommates. ‘After that maybe they got tired and they told us: ‘You have to find work.’ Where are we going to find work? We slept outside the UNHCR office for two months. That was in 2016. After that, what can we do? We have nothing, we have no work, we are suffering. We asked to go to a refugee camp and they didn’t let us,’ he says, noting that he applied in writing several times to the Rwandan government office responsible for dealing with refugees, and never received a reply.

‘I live in the street. People help me. People here are generous but they don’t even have enough for themselves,’ he says. ‘It is better to stay in Israel, even in prison – you have food, you have a place to stay. You know what our situation is here. It is better to stay there and struggle.’

“[...] ‘I’m not making any profit, I am losing money. I don’t have customers. It is my own business, but very small. I sell soap, sugar. I want to close,’ [Mussie, 32 from Eritrea says]. ‘We don’t have any work in Rwanda, we don’t have food, we don’t have anything. This is just a life of survival. From the government of Rwanda you can’t get any papers or any help.’”

The Conversation, [Threat of expulsion hangs over thousands of Eritreans who sought refuge in Israel and the US](#), 23 November 2017

“He was told to choose between three years in prison, being returned to Eritrea or deportation to Rwanda. Faced with this dilemma he chose Rwanda and – armed with Israeli travel documents and US\$3,500 – he flew to Kigali. ‘We arrived at two in the morning. At the airport we were met by a man who called himself ‘John’. He was a black man – I think he was a Rwandan official.’ He was taken to a house, where his Israeli travel documents were taken from him. ‘I protested,’ says Bahabolom, ‘but John didn’t care. We had been promised by the Israelis we could live and work, but it didn’t happen.’”

International Refugee Rights Initiative, [“I was left with nothing”: ‘Voluntary’ departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda](#), 8 September 2015

“[...] Asylum seekers from Sudan and Eritrea have chosen to go to Rwanda and Uganda mainly because their other options – to remain in detention in Israel or to go back to their countries of origin – are intolerable. Therefore, they have arrived in places that are entirely foreign to them: they are usually unable to find work, and have no support from family members or other networks. Under these circumstances, staying in these third countries is difficult, and for most, unsustainable [...]”

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International Refugee Rights Initiative, [“I was left with nothing”: ‘Voluntary’ departures of asylum seekers from Israel to Rwanda and Uganda](#), 8 September 2015

“[...] prior to their departure from Israel, those who chose to leave to Rwanda were given travel documents (an Israeli Laissez Passer, sometimes valid for as little as four days after their departure) and USD 3,500. In addition, they received a Rwandan “single entry visa acceptance” letter stipulating that the purpose of their visit in Rwanda was “holiday”, and that they may not be employed.”

iii) Civil and political rights

All Africa/Reuters, [Rwanda: Besides Britain, Which Nations Send Asylum Seekers Overseas?](#), 20 June 2022

“Research conducted by the University of Oxford and the International Refugee Rights Initiative found that many deported to Rwanda and Uganda had their travel documents taken away on arrival and were held in hotels guarded by armed men. Most escaped and paid people smugglers to make the dangerous journey to Europe.”

University of Oxford Faculty of Law, Border Criminologies Blog, [‘Traded Like Commodities and Transferred Abroad for Processing’: The Legal and Political Claims Against the UK-Rwanda Deal](#), 10 May 2022

“Upon arrival, asylum seekers were held in a guarded hotel they were not allowed to leave. They had their documents taken, were denied legal status, and were subject to arrests.”

Hotline for Refugees and Migrants, [Deported To The Unknown](#), 7 December 2015

“Confiscation of all documents upon arrival at the destination: All nine testified to the fact that they were given travel documents in Israel, which were then confiscated upon their arrival in Rwanda.

Held captive in Rwanda before being smuggled to Uganda: Eight Eritrean citizens testified to being held captive in Kigali and forbidden to leave the place where they were being held, until they were smuggled to Uganda. Six testified to wanting to stay in Rwanda, but were not allowed to do so and were forced to continue to Uganda.

Robbery: Five testified to having to pay additional fees when they were forcibly smuggled to Uganda, ranging anywhere from \$100-\$250. They also testified to being additionally extorted financially by people in uniform on their journey to Uganda.”

iv) Accommodation

University of Oxford Faculty of Law, Border Criminologies Blog, [‘Traded Like Commodities and Transferred Abroad for Processing’: The Legal and Political Claims Against the UK-Rwanda Deal](#), 10 May 2022

“Upon arrival, asylum seekers were held in a guarded hotel they were not allowed to leave.”

Haaretz, [Asylum Seekers Deported From Israel to Rwanda Warn Those Remaining: ‘Don’t Come Here’](#), 2 February 2018

“For more than two months now he has been living in the street. ‘Things are so bad. I am living very badly. I have no home, there is no work,’ he says. ‘Before, there were a few people who helped me. The United Nations also helped – they gave me money for lodging and food. But they stopped.’

He describes a daily fight for survival. ‘Sometimes I eat with friends, sometimes I ask for help from people who have a restaurant, sometimes I go to sleep without eating.’ In the four years he has been living in Rwanda he has not been employed for a single day, though he says he has invested a lot of effort in looking for work.”

“[...] The luckier ones have a roof over their heads and money for food. Others depend on the generosity and kindness of friends and local people and the limited help from the UN.”

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"[...] He asked the UN office for absorption in a refugee camp but was refused. 'A refugee camp is better for me. If they would take me I would get food and housing but they refused'

"[...] Teklesambat, 38, from Eritrea [...] The \$3,500 he received from Israel, he says, did not last him a year. Then the UNHCR office funded an apartment and food for him and his roommates. 'After that maybe they got tired and they told us: 'You have to find work.' Where are we going to find work? We slept outside the UNHCR office for two months. That was in 2016. After that, what can we do? We have nothing, we have no work, we are suffering. We asked to go to a refugee camp and they didn't let us,' he says, noting that he applied in writing several times to the Rwandan government office responsible for dealing with refugees, and never received a reply.

'I live in the street. People help me. People here are generous but they don't even have enough for themselves,' he says. 'It is better to stay in Israel, even in prison – you have food, you have a place to stay. You know what our situation is here. It is better to stay there and struggle.'"

v) Healthcare

Haaretz, [Asylum Seekers Deported From Israel to Rwanda Warn Those Remaining: 'Don't Come Here'](#), 2 February 2018

"After a year in Saharonim he gave up and chose Rwanda. 'The situation here is very bad. I am suffering. I have no work and I have no home. I have nothing. The UN gives us hospital [care], clothing and shoes, not food,' he says."

vi) Mental health services

vii) Education

viii) Social Security

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SECTION 2 – COI SOURCES

This section is a list of potentially relevant COI sources that were systematically scanned for this report. The list is non-exhaustive, and additional sources were found during the course of research, which have been included in the report where relevant. The date in square brackets shows the research cut-off date. No COI from the source has been included beyond the research cut-off date.

International Organisations

[International Labour Organization \(ILO\) \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[International Organization for Migration \(IOM\) \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations High Commissioner for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[UNICEF Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations Development Programme Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[UNHCR Global Compact \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations Human Rights Office of the High Commissioner \(Rwanda news\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[UNHCR Operational Portal \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations Population Fund - UNFPA \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations Reports of the UN Secretary General \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[UNHCR Refugee Statistics \[see statistics sections for the last date source was checked\]](#)
[United Nations Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations Special Rapporteur on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations World Food Programme \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[United Nations World Health Organisation \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[The World Bank in Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[The World Bank Data - Refugee Statistics \[31.07.2022\]](#)

Governmental Organisations

[Belgian COMMISSARIAT GÉNÉRAL AUX RÉFUGIÉS ET AUX APATRIDES \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Danish Immigration Service \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Dutch Ministry of Foreign Affairs \(Ambtsbericht\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Dutch Immigration and Naturalisation Service \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[French Ministry of Foreign Affairs - dossiers pays \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Immigration and Refugee Board of Canada \(IRBC\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[IRBC - Responses to Information Requests \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[IRBC - National Documentation Packages \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[National Institute of Statistics Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Norwegian Country of Origin Information Centre - Landinfo \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Rwandan Ministry in Charge of Emergency Management \(MINEMA\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)

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[Rwandan Ministry of Gender and Family Promotion \(MIGEPROF\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Rwandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs and International Cooperation \(MINAFFET\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[UK Asylum Statistics \[see statistics sections for the date statistics were last checked\]](#)
[UK Foreign & Commonwealth Development Office \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[UK Home Office \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[U.S. Department of State Country Reports on Human Rights Practices \[31.07.2022\]](#)

Intergovernmental Organisations

[European Commission \(annual asylum statistics\) \[18.08.2022\]](#)
[European Union Agency for Asylum \[31.07.2022\]](#)

Databases

[Asylos \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[ecoi.net \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[European Union Agency for Asylum Portal \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Refworld \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Reliefweb \[31.07.2022\]](#)

NGOs and Think Tanks

[Amnesty International \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Amnesty International - State of the World's Human Rights 2021/22 \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Danish Refugee Council \(DRC\) \[Denmark\] \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Dutch Council for Refugees \(DCR\) \[The Netherlands\] \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[European Council on Refugees and Exiles \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Global Detention Project \(Rwanda\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Human Rights Watch \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Human Rights Watch - World Report 2021 \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[International Refugee Rights Initiative \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[International Rescue Committee \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Kiva \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Legal Aid Forum Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Prison Fellowship Rwanda \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Refugees International \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Samuel Hall \[31.07.2022\]](#)

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Academic

*Only open sources were reviewed as part of this research.

[Comparative Migration Studies \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Forced Migration Review \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[IZA Journal of Development and Migration \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Migration and Society \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Nordic Journal of Migration Research \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[University of Oxford, Faculty of Law Border Criminologies Blog \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[University of Oxford Refugee Studies Centre \[31.07.2022\]](#)

Media

[African News Agency \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Agence France Presse \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[AllAfrica \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Associated Press \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Reuters \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[The New Times \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[The Rwandan \[31.07.2022\]](#)

Sources reporting on international LGBTQI+ issues

[76 Crimes \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Edge Media Network \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Equal Rights Trust \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[European Union Agency for Asylum Research on the situation of LGB persons in countries of origin \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Gay Law Net \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Gay Star News \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Global Gayz \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[International Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Trans and Intersex Association \(ILGA\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Kaleidoscope Trust \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Legal age of consent \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Organization for Refuge, Asylum & Migration \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[OUTRIGHT \(formerly the International Gay and Lesbian Human Rights Commission\) \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Pink News \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Sexual Orientation and Gender Identity Claims of Asylum \(SOGICA\) Database \[31.07.2022\]](#)
[Sexual Rights Initiative \[31.07.2022\]](#)

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[Sodomy Laws in the World \[31.07.2022\]](#)

[United Nations Independent Expert on sexual orientation and gender identity \[31.07.2022\]](#)

[University of Toronto \[Country specific Sexual Orientation and Gender research reports\] \[31.07.2022\]](#)

Additional useful sources to find expert witnesses

Please note that these experts have not been vetted by us and each database/source will have its own vetting process.

[EIN Experts Directory](#) – The Electronic Immigration Network Directory of Experts gives access to detailed information from a wide variety of experts in a fully searchable database.

- Rights in Exile Programme’s “[Country of Origin Information Experts database](#)”.
- The Centre for Gender and Refugee Studies’ [Expert Witness database](#) [requires registration]
- Country experts cited in relevant UK [country guidance determinations](#)
- Interlocutors cited in [EUAA COI products](#)
- Interlocutors cited in fact-finding mission (FFM) reports. These are published by a range of country of asylum/receiving country’s governments. You can find them through a Google search or on [ecoi.net](#).
- Academics and/or (I)NGOs who may be cited in this COI compilation
- Ask an expert who you have worked with in the past to suggest other relevant individuals who may be in a position to comment
- Global Experts – [Global Experts](#) is a UN database of academics, analysts, former officials, faith leaders, civil society activists, private sector/business and media experts around the world. You can search for experts by area of expertise as well as by geographical area.
- Expertise Finder – [Expertise Finder](#) is a directory of experts in a variety of subjects. Search by keywords, for instance country, to find experts and their contact details.
- [SheSource](#) – Same concept as the two sources above, except that this website only lists female experts.
- [Google Scholar](#) / [Microsoft Academic](#) – Google Scholar and Microsoft Academic are search engines for academic publications, although you will find media articles on there as well. On Google Scholar, clicking on an author’s name will typically take you to his / her profile page. Contact details are not provided, but affiliation is; you can then search on his / her institution’s website.

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