



**UNHCR**  
The UN Refugee Agency



**World Food Programme**

JOINT PROGRAMME EXCELLENCE AND TARGETING HUB

# UNHCR-WFP JOINT POST DISTRIBUTION MONITORING AND NEEDS ASSESSMENT

## For Refugees in Rwanda – Brief

### BACKGROUND

Rwanda hosts approximately 133,000 refugees (28 February 2021, UNHCR), 90% of whom are living in six refugee camps (Gihembe, Kigeme, Kiziba, Mahama, Mugombwa and Nyabiheke). Around 58 percent of refugees in Rwanda are from the Democratic Republic of Congo and 41 percent are from Burundi. The Joint Post Distribution Monitoring (JPDM) and Need Assessment was undertaken in the six refugees camps by the World Food Programme (WFP) and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), supported by the Joint UNHCR-WFP Programme Excellence & Targeting Hub.

The objectives of the assessment were to:

1. Ensure corporate continuity in monitoring refugees' food security outcomes and basic needs, the household impact of COVID-19, income situation and livelihoods;
2. Inform programmatic decisions and the development of a joint targeting approach for WFP and UNHCR.

### Methodology

Data collection was conducted in December 2020 across all six camps in the country. The sampling was designed to generate representative findings at the camp level and 2,501 households were randomly assessed.

### HOUSEHOLD VULNERABILITY

#### **Refugee vulnerability remains high with 71 percent of households in camps demonstrating high vulnerability.**

There are different levels of vulnerabilities among the refugee population across all camps. The majority of refugees (71 percent) are considered highly vulnerable and are not able to meet their basic food needs given their own economic capacities, livelihoods resilience and food access. The remaining refugee households are moderately vulnerable (20 percent) or least vulnerable (9 percent). On average, 67 percent

of households do not have the economic capacity to afford the WFP food basket if assistance is not received. Refugees' vulnerability is associated with: illiteracy of the household head, female or single female head, high dependency ratio (with children, elderly members and no able-bodied adults aged 18-59 years) and presence one or more children below 5 years of age and the presence of chronically ill or disabled members. Vulnerability is associated with households that are economically unstable being less likely to engage in income generating activities or engage in activities with more stable sources of income and owning less assets.

## PROTECTION AND ACCOUNTABILITY

**The majority of respondents in the assessment did not report any safety problems during food or NFI distributions.** The proportion of those reporting a safety concern, however, was higher among persons with disabilities, with 5 percent reporting feeling unsafe during NFI distributions. Seven in ten households said they were aware of how to make complaints regarding food or cash distributions in general, but there are significant differences amongst camps. Among households that complained, 86 percent reported that their complaints were not addressed in a timely manner or to their satisfaction (82 percent), indicating the need to improve feedback loops. Nine in ten households reported knowing what their food / cash entitlements were and nearly all (97 percent) confirmed receiving the amount they had been expecting from WFP. In contrast, only 46 percent of households reported knowing what their NFI cash entitlements were.

## WATER SANITATION AND HYGIENE (WASH)

**Satisfaction with quality of water is high among households but more could be done to increase access to improved water sources while, access to improved toilet facilities remains limited.** More than half (57 percent) of households reported having access to improved water sources and about 8 in 10 households treat water before drinking it. Only 4 in 10 households have access to an improved toilet facility. Almost the totality of refugees share latrines and on average, each toilet is used by 23 refugee households.

**Food security deteriorated from June - December 2020.** Only 69 percent of refugees had acceptable food consumption in December 2020 compared to 80 percent in June 2020. Mahama camp (60 percent) and Kigeme camp (64 percent) reported the lowest prevalence of acceptable food consumption. The consumption based coping strategy index increased from November 2019 to December 2020, reflecting more stress on household-level food access. The percentage of households consuming key nutrient rich foods also declined over the same period. Households consuming vitamin A rich foods declined from 27 percent to 17 percent, whereas daily consumption of proteins sharply fell from 71 percent to 53 percent. Overall, 43 percent of the households in the camps adopted crisis or emergency coping strategies and more than 50 percent did so in Kigeme and Mugombwa camps. The deterioration in food consumption and increase in consumption-based coping mechanisms is in part due to the impact of COVID-19.

## LIVELIHOOD

**Refugees have limited income opportunities and high levels of debt.** 54 percent of households are not engaged in any income generating activities and only 3 percent are engaged in two or more income generating activities, while COVID-19 has further negatively impacted most refugees' livelihoods across all camps. Two thirds of households are indebted.

The cost of the food basket remains stable, but the price of some food items has increased. The cost of the food basket in December 2020 registered a 1 percent reduction compared to November 2020. However, nearly all (97 percent) of households reported that food prices had increased in the month preceding the survey.

### AT A GLANCE



**133,054**  
Refugees in Rwanda



**98%** of refugees live in **SIX CAMPS**



**71%** HIGHLY VULNERABLE



**46%** of households involved in income activity



**67%** do not have the economic capacity to cover the food basket



**2/3** of households are indebted



**69%** of refugees had an acceptable food consumption



**56%** households are headed by female and 43% by single female



**56%** access water from an improved source



**37%** uses improved toilet facilities

## RECOMMENDATIONS

1. **Targeted food assistance** to the most vulnerable for all camp-based refugees is recommended to ensure that limited resources are utilized in the most effective way to meet refugee needs. The targeting strategy should be developed by the categorization of the refugee population which also takes into account protection needs.
2. **The provision of cash-based items (CBI) assistance for non-food needs** should continue aiming to mitigate further negative impacts on food consumption or other essential needs.
3. Combining food assistance with additional/complementary assistance to refugees based on household vulnerability levels could lead to improved outcomes over time among all vulnerability groups. Specifically, **investments in scaling-up multi-year livelihoods interventions** to increase the self-reliance of refugees to meet their basic food and non-food needs and strengthen household resilience should be prioritized in close partnership with the Government and development partners.
4. **Priority programmatic interventions** should focus on supporting access to land for agricultural production, support should further focus on increasing access to productive assets in particular livestock.
5. **Monitoring the impact of existing livelihoods programmes** on outcomes, including food security and ability to meet basic needs, should be prioritized to enable evidence-based approaches to livelihoods programming.
6. Distribution practices should be adapted **to reduce the risks faced by persons with disabilities**, though overall the vast majority are able to safely access their assistance.
7. **Increasing awareness of Complaints and Feedback Mechanisms (CFM)** should be promoted especially in Gihembe and Mahama camps.
8. Simplify the way NFI assistance is provided, potentially providing the same amount of assistance across all quarters calculated per capita. Further work to **sensitize refugees on their NFI entitlements** during and in-between distributions should also be considered.
9. Continuous support regarding access to and availability of improved water and sanitation is required to ensure access to services is safely managed based on agreed standards.

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