



URGENT APPEAL

Emergency Transit Mechanism in Rwanda

On 10 September 2019, the Government of Rwanda signed an agreement in Addis Ababa with the African Union (AU) and UNHCR to provide urgent and lifesaving assistance to African refugees and asylum-seekers currently being held in detention centers in Libya. This MoU followed a generous offer from Rwanda's President Paul Kagame to host up to 30,000 vulnerable people at risk and stranded in Libya. Under the MoU, UNHCR in partnership with the Government of Rwanda and the AU has established an Emergency Transit Mechanism (ETM), to facilitate the relocation of up to 500 people of concern at any given time from the conflict zones in Libya to safety in Rwanda, while continuing to seek durable solutions options in and outside the country. UNHCR is therefore urgently appealing for an additional \$10.5 million to implement the ETM and provide urgent lifesaving protection and assistance to those evacuated from Libya.

Key figures



People of concern in Rwanda: 149,279 as of 30th August

Planning figure for ETM operation in Rwanda for 2019: 500 people

People of concern evacuated to Rwanda: 66 as of 26 September

People of concern held in detention in Libya and in need of urgent care: 3,600

The Government of Rwanda is a signatory to the 1951 Convention on the Status of Refugees and its related 1967 Protocol, the 1969 OAU Convention Governing the Specific Aspects of Refugee Problems in Africa. As of 30 August 2019, Rwanda hosts 149,279 refugees, mainly from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Burundi. Rwanda maintains an open-door policy for refugees and asylum-seekers.

Photo: Somali parents Abdulbasit and Zainab with their two-month-old daughter at the Gathering and Departure Facility in Tripoli ahead of the evacuation flight to Rwanda. © UNHCR/Tarik Argaz

Libya is a major transit route for refugees seeking to reach Europe by boat. Renewed and escalating fighting between rival groups have further complicated the situation and caused widespread suffering. Many refugees and migrants are being held under dire conditions in detention centres, where abuse is rife, and violence remains a potent threat. A total of 3,600 people of concern are currently held in detention and need urgent protection solutions. UNHCR has been at the forefront in efforts to move the most vulnerable refugees and asylum-seekers to safety outside Libya.

Objective

Given recent developments, UNHCR is urgently appealing for **\$10.5 million** to enable UNHCR and the Government of Rwanda to implement the ETM and provide lifesaving protection and assistance to those evacuated from Libya. The operation will also support the search for durable solutions and undertake activities to support a coordinated response and to inform planning and programming in Rwanda and neighboring countries. Options for durable solutions include: voluntary return and reintegration to countries of origin; return to a previous country of admission, where agreed by the authorities; third-country resettlement; family reunification in a third country or in a country of origin; as well as longer-term stay in Rwanda, subject to the agreement of relevant authorities and access to other solutions in third countries.

Urgent needs

- Rehabilitation and upgrade of reception and transit facilities.
- Provision of protection services, including registration, refugee status determination (RSD), prevention and response to sexual and gender-based violence (SGBV), child protection, legal assistance and support to persons with specific needs.
- Identification of durable solutions.
- Provision of basic services, including health, education, food assistance, and water, sanitation and hygiene (WASH) activities.
- Strengthening UNHCR's operational capacity in the Bugesera District, including staffing, office space and engagement with strategic partners.
- Transportation/airlifting of the affected population.

Key challenges

- Limited reception capacity of the existing transit facility in Bugesera, which requires repair and maintenance work to accommodate up to 500 people.
- Limited UNHCR and partner staff capacity to respond to protection needs of the existing refugee population in addition to the evacuees from Libya.
- Additional funding requirements for the ETM were not envisaged in UNHCR's 2020 planning for Rwanda. The operation has therefore had to reprioritize and readjust its plan to receive the first convoy of evacuees, without securing any additional funds.

Implementation

The Government of Rwanda, with the support of UNHCR will receive subsequent flights on a monthly basis carrying up to 125 evacuees at a time. Upon arrival in Rwanda, the evacuees will be immediately transferred to the Gashora transit centre, in Bugesera District, approximately 60 km from Kigali, where they will be registered and provided with documentation that will enable them access to protection services and basic humanitarian assistance. UNHCR is currently rehabilitating and upgrading the transit centre to increase its capacity to accommodate 500 evacuees at a time.

Assistance and protection services: While at the transit facility, UNHCR will provide essential protection services and humanitarian assistance including accommodation, education, food, basic hygiene products and health care services to the evacuees. Other income-generating activities and skills training programmes will be provided. The Government, in close collaboration with UNHCR, will make every effort to ensure that the refugees become self-reliant. Considering the profile of the evacuees, which includes a large number of children and youth, UNHCR will also facilitate their access to recreation activities to address their psychosocial needs.

Durable solutions: UNHCR will undertake all necessary efforts in order to facilitate the timely search and implementation of durable solutions. While some may benefit from resettlement to third countries, others will be assisted to return to countries where asylum had previously been granted, or to voluntarily return to their home countries, if it is safe to do so. Some may be given permission to remain and integrate in Rwanda.

Coordination

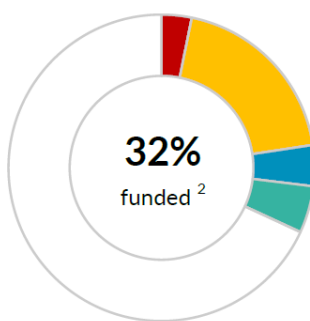
The Refugee Coordination Model in Rwanda is co-led by the Government's Ministry for Emergency Management (MINEMA) and UNHCR. It includes UN Agencies, NGOs and operational and development partners. UNHCR also coordinates sector working groups, coordinating with partners where relevant. NGO partners are involved in UNHCR programming aspects and, when possible, mobilize resources to complement UNHCR's efforts. As part of the ETM, UNHCR will work with six NGOs, including the Adventist Development and Relief Agency, Africa Humanitarian Action, American Refugee Committee, Legal Aid Forum, World Vision International, and Humanity and Inclusion. UNHCR, MINEMA immigration services and each of these NGO partners will meet weekly to coordinate ETM preparations for evacuations and receptions at the transit centre.

In parallel, resources will be dedicated to establishing a cross-regional evidence-based platform to monitor and respond to emerging trends on population movements to inform programming and service development across the countries covered by the Mediterranean Migration Movement Project. An integrated response will be coordinated through the Special Envoy's Office for the Central Mediterranean, enabling the continuous exchange of best practices and lessons learnt across different evacuation activities from Libya to Italy, Niger, Rwanda and Romania.



Funding the response

UNHCR's financial requirements for its operations in Rwanda for 2019 total **\$92.8 million**. To date, only **32%** of these needs have been funded. UNHCR is urgently appealing for an additional **\$10.5 million** to implement the Emergency Transit Mechanism and provide lifesaving protection and assistance to evacuees from Libya.



UNHCR's financial requirements 2019

\$92.8 million

as of 24 September 2019

- Tightly earmarked
- Earmarked
- Softly earmarked (indicative allocation)
- Unearmarked (indicative allocation)
- Funding gap (indicative)

2019 budget requirements for ETM operations in Rwanda

Activities	USD millions
CCCM and shelter (transit facility)	1,683,835
Health and nutrition	638,000
Food assistance/Non-food items	931,000
WASH	545,423
Registration and refugee status determination	291,275
Protection services (SGBV, child protection, legal assistance, services for persons with specific needs)	1,493,000
Community mobilization and psychosocial welfare	280,000
Adult education, livelihoods & self-reliance	517,500
Durable solutions	233,475
Transport and logistics	637,946
Operational costs and staffing	3,203,903
Total	10,455,357

NB: The Initial phase of the implementation of the ETM operation will require significant investment in infrastructure development and rehabilitation.

The importance of flexible funding

Flexible financial support, particularly unearmarked funding, greatly facilitates UNHCR being able to kick-start an emergency response, bolster forgotten or under-resourced crises, and enable the fullest possible implementation of programmes. They enable UNHCR to plan and manage its resources efficiently and effectively, contributing to the collective success in every life that is transformed and saved.

UNHCR is grateful to the donors which have provided unearmarked and softly earmarked contributions. Additional financial and operational information is available on the Global Focus website (reporting.unhcr.org).

