

Assessment of Rwanda Refugee Camps in the Context of the Villagization Process

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Abstract

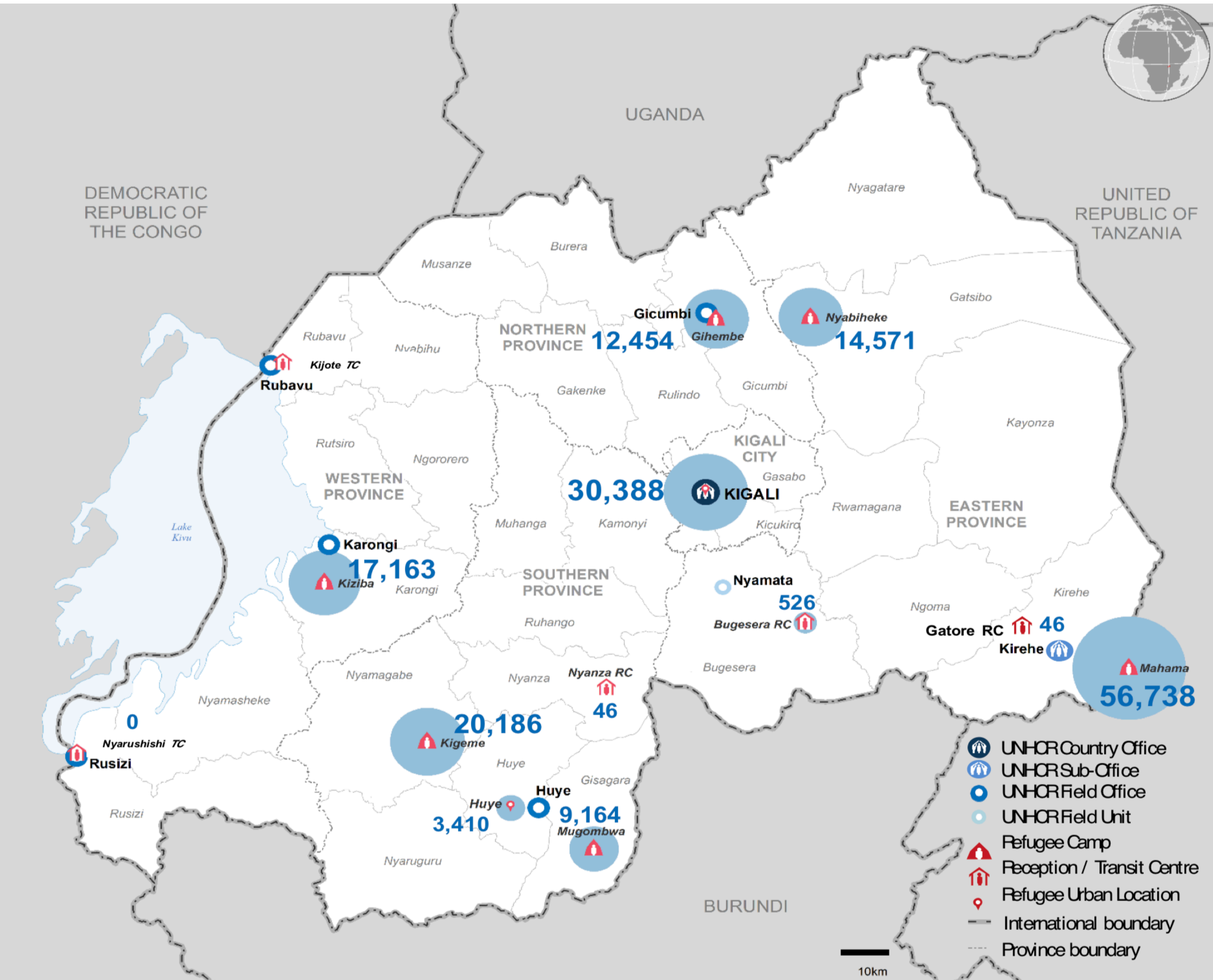
This report aims to provide recommendations on best practices for the transition of a Rwandan refugee camp into a self-sustaining village.

Introduction

The world is currently experiencing the highest rate of displaced people, 149,602 of whom are seeking shelter in refugee camps in Rwanda.

Although the UN Refugee Agency (UNHCR) considers refugee camps to be temporary shelters of last result, the average length of time refugees spend in camps is now 17 years.

Rwanda aims to have all refugees, living safe, dignified, and productive lives outside of camps by 2030. Because of this, processes to transform their biggest camp (Mahama) into a self-sustaining village have begun to be explored.



Methods and Objectives

The methodology used for this report is primarily the case study approach and additionally a literature review. Further data was collected from site visits, participatory observation, and interviews with key informants.

Objective 1: Assess the current condition of refugee camps in Rwanda providing a by sector analysis of needs focusing on Mahama Camp.

Objective 2: Identify how UNHCR Rwanda is using the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) to respond to the protracted and growing refugee situation as it transitions out of being categorized as an emergency situation.

Objective 3: Determine best practices on and viability of villagization for Mahama Refugee Camp.

Results

Objective 1: Findings of this study show that attention must be focused on the construction and rehabilitation of infrastructure and WASH facilities. Most specifically, measures to combat the effects of erosion and overcrowding must be implemented.

Objective 2: Although CRRF promotes the autonomy of refugees and the host community through the integration of schools, water filtration systems, and the shift to cash-based assistance, the traditional layout of refugee camps hinders the self-reliance of refugees.

Objective 3: Conversion of Mahama to a refugee city are contingent upon the development of commerce zones, increased agricultural activities, and desire of the refugees to integrate into the Rwandan community.

	Population	Under 5 Mortality Rate (deaths/1,000/mo.)	Maternal Mortality (deaths/yr.)	Global Acute Malnutrition	Water Supply (liters/person/day)	Latrine Coverage (refugees/communal toilets or latrines)
Gihembe Camp	12,473	0.3	0	4%	20	19
Kigeme Camp	20,070	0.1	1	4%	14	45
Nyabiheke Camp	14,544	0.2	0	3%	10	32
Mugombwa Camp	9,117	0.2	0	3%	20	34
Mahama Camp	57,589	0.49	3	5%	20	68
Kiziba Camp	17,253	0.3	2	4%	28	39

Conclusions

Rwanda's response to their protracted refugee situation is a strong example of the use of best practices. Through the application of CRRF, Rwanda is beginning to remedy the issues that have developed as they provide refuge to thousands. Taking lessons learned from neighboring countries who have implemented similar strategies, Rwanda currently acts as a successful case study for hosting refugees. After successful implementation of CRRF, Rwanda's response to their prolonged refugee situation can be used as a transferable and scalable model for other countries seeking long term, sustainable solutions.



Figure 1. Mahama Education Center



Figure 2. Mahama Camp Meeting

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