

Malawi

August 2021

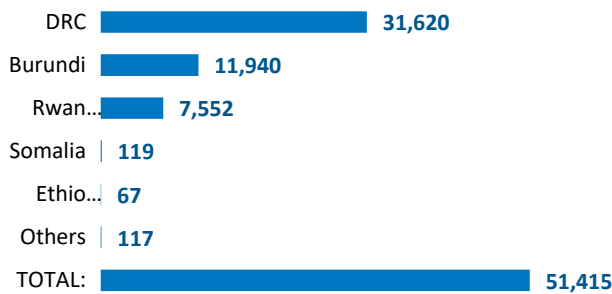
51,415 refugees and asylum seekers are registered in Malawi as of 31 August 2021 with the majority living in Dzaleka refugee camp. **122** new arrivals and **181** new-born babies were registered in August.

As of 31 August 2021, UNHCR registered a cumulative total of **217** Covid-19 positive cases, **171** recoveries, **03** deaths and **18** lost follow-ups amongst persons of concern.

Dzaleka refugee camp, initially designed for 10,000 people, is congested with over **51,415** posing a serious health risk of community transmission of Covid-19 and other ailments.

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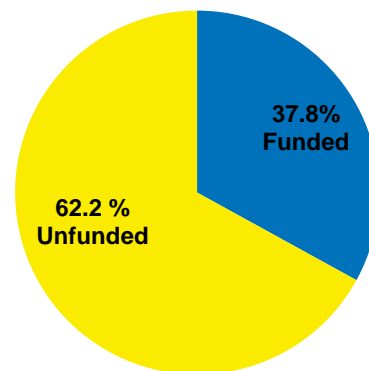
Host Countries



FUNDING (AS OF 31 AUGUST 2021)

USD 14.7 million

requested for UNHCR operation in Malawi



For more information: <http://reporting.unhcr.org>

UNHCR PRESENCE

Staff:

- 28 National Staff
- 21 International Staff

Offices:

- 01 Branch Office in Lilongwe
- 01 Field Office in Karonga



Covid vaccine jabs being administered on refugees at Dzaleka Health Centre. ©UNHCR/ R. Msiska

Working with Partners

Under the Refugee Coordination Model, UNHCR coordinates activities with the following partners in Malawi:

- **Government partners:** Ministry of Homeland Security (MoHS), Ministry of Health (MoH).
- **Implementing Partners:** Plan International Malawi (PIM), Jesuit Refugee Services (JRS), Churches Action in Relief and Development (CARD) and Welthungerhilfe (WHH).
- **Operational partners:** There Is Hope Malawi, Moravian Church.
- **UN Agencies:** World Food Programme (WFP), International Organization for Migration (IOM)
- UNHCR is part of the UN Country Team (UNCT); the UN “Sustainable” Development “Cooperation” Framework; the Humanitarian Country Team (HCT) and other National Sectorial/Technical Working Groups.

Main Activities

Field Operations

- The Covid-19 pandemic remains a hinderance to the delivery of protection assistance and services throughout Malawi. Since August 2020, the UN and its related programs has been working under Business Continuity Plan (BCP) Level 3. Apart from the provision of health services, UNHCR and Partners in the Dzaleka refugee camp including the main Government interlocutor the MoHS have been working at the BCP level 3 with limited presence.
- In June and July 2021, there was a surge in Covid-19 cases in Malawi and Dowa district which hosts Dzaleka Refugee Camp was not spared. As of 31 August, a cumulative total of 217 Covid-19 positive cases were recorded amongst refugees and asylum seekers, 171 had recovered, 03 deaths recorded, and 18 had lost follow up.
- Dzaleka Covid-19 Task Force Meetings: Bi-Weekly meetings to monitor and implement activities on Covid-19 preventive and containment measures including care of those affected continued taking place under the leadership of UNHCR Field Office and Camp Management.
- **Directive on relocation of rural and semi-urban refugees to Dzaleka refugee camp:** On 01 April 2021, the Ministry of Homeland Security issued a notice to all refugees and asylum seekers living and doing businesses in rural and semi-urban areas to return to the camp on/or before 28 April 2021 due to security concerns linked to the situation in Mozambique. The Minister of Homeland Security argues that the government by law is entitled to enforce its encampment policy to ensure refugees are living in a dedicated location where the government could provide protection and monitor their situation due to security concerns.
- UNHCR met with government officials on several occasions to discourage them from proceeding with implementing the notice on the basis that it was counterproductive and contrary to the five pledges made by the country at the Global Refugee Forum.
- Some concerned refugees petitioned the High Court and obtained two injunctions from the High Court in Lilongwe and Blantyre, respectively. The effect of the injunctions was that government would proceed to implement its decision. The government managed to vacate the injunction obtained in Lilongwe and is fighting to also vacate the one in Blantyre. The decision of the Court in Blantyre is still pending. A Contingency Plan has been prepared in case the High Court in Blantyre vacates the injunction and the notice will be implemented.

Education

- A total of 2,477 children are enrolled in pre-school: 6,292 pupils in primary school and 1,224 students in secondary schools in Dzaleka Refugee Camp.
- ECHO approved €560,000 to support Primary and Secondary Education in Malawi. The duration of the project runs from March 2021 to March 2023 and covers staffing cost.
- UNICEF developed the project document with inputs from UNHCR costing €300,000 for 18 months commencing in October 2021. The project seeks to improve access to internet connectivity in selected schools to reduce the digital divide among school-aged children and promote inclusion and participation of refugee children in and around Dzaleka refugee camp.
- The intervention shall focus on two schools, one within the Dzaleka camp, with an estimated enrolment of 6,218 (3,046 Girls) and 103 (53 Females). The second school will be in the host community with 944 (514 Girls) learners and 18 (11 Female) teachers.

- The project entails teachers and learners training on leveraging ICT in the teaching and learning process, procurement, and distribution of twenty desktop computers, 300 tablet computers, internet connectivity, and solar power installation for the two schools. The intervention will also create the opportunity for learners in Dzaleka camp, host community, and Basque County in Spain to interact virtually as part of their learning experience.
- UNHCR, JRS worked with Ministry of Education to change refugee primary and secondary schools as grant aided so that government deploys teachers into refugee schools. UNHCR is working around the clock to meet all the requirements to necessitate this transition.

Health

- Despite the threat of Covid-19, UNHCR in liaison with health partner Ministry of Health continued provision of services to persons of concern and nationals at Dzaleka Health Centre.
- The Covid-19 Quarantine, Isolation and Treatment facility in Dzaleka is designated for management of Covid-19 patients amongst refugees and nationals residing in Dowa district.
- As of 31 August 2021, cumulatively Dzaleka refugee camp had registered 217 confirmed cases, 171 recoveries, 03 deaths and 18 lost to follow up. A total of 438 refugees and asylum seekers are fully vaccinated with Covid-19 vaccines; 375 with AstraZeneca vaccine and 63 with Johnson & Johnson vaccine.
- A mission was organized to Karonga transit shelter following revelations that about 20 asylum seekers tested positive to Covid-19. The mission's objectives were set up of Covid-19 isolation site at Karonga Transit Shelter and refugee housing unit (RHU) installation at Songwe Border; delivery of PPEs and WASH materials for our Persons of Concern (PoC) and Ministry of Homeland Security (MoHS) officials; support Karonga District Health office with Covid-19 Antigen test kit, PPE's and other medical supplies and also to facilitate site visit for the supply and installation of solar power backup system project in Karonga transit shelter.



(Left) Karonga transit shelter isolation site with installed lights and (Right) Partition fence enclosing the transit shelter's kitchen: ©UNHCR/ Syson Siima

Registration

- After a 4-month break due to outdated information on the ID Card template, UNHCR Malawi resumed ID Card printing and distribution in Dzaleka Refugee Camp. A consultation day for name collection has been implemented every Tuesday between 10am – 12pm. The first session took place on 24 August. The 4-month break was the opportunity to implement Verify plus in Malawi. Verify plus is a new application developed by UNHCR HQ which helps verify the authenticity of ID cards issued to refugees and asylum seekers in Malawi with help of QR codes. As such the ID Cards now carry QR codes instead of barcodes.

Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

- RSD legal status backlog remains high with 34,739 asylum seekers currently not being recognised as refugees and just 16,428 having a refugee status.
- The backlog remains a challenge for protection unit as a lot of projects require to know the legal status of persons of concern such as requests from resettlement, education and for voluntary repatriation.

Food and non-food items

- The July-August food distribution was planned for 45,000 beneficiaries and 300 new arrivals for in-kind distribution. The food was delivered on 05 July and the distribution exercise begun on 07 July as agreed on the pre-food distribution meeting among partners in Dzaleka camp.

Water and Sanitation

- **Water supply:** UNHCR continues to undertake efforts to increase access to safe water in Dzaleka refugee camp supplying an average of 11.5 litres of water per person per day. A solar powered reticulated water supply system was installed to supply water to Dzaleka hills. Routine water quality monitoring informed shock chlorination of two boreholes to improve water quality in the camp.
- **Sanitation and hygiene:** Additional 50 household WASH units (latrines and bathing sites) were constructed at Dzaleka hills and new Katubza sites. A total of 1,226 persons of concern participated in a 3-day clean-up campaign aimed to improve general cleanliness in the camp.
- **Covid-19 response:** At the Dzaleka isolation extension site, a 10,000-litre water tank was installed to boost water supply while at the newly established isolation site at Karonga transit shelter, four WASH units were constructed, two water taps installed, four waste bins, three handwashing stations, 100 bottles each of hand sanitizers and liquid soap were provided.

Settlement & Shelter

- Dzaleka refugee camp initially established to accommodate between 10,000 and 12,000 refugees and asylum seekers is heavily congested with a current population of 51,415. Government of Malawi recently ordered all rural and semi-urban refugees to relocate to Dzaleka refugee camp. Although the Government of Malawi has identified two extension sites namely Katubza and Dzaleka Hills, this has not yielded the desired results as the identified sites can only accommodate less than 5,000 individuals. UNHCR continues to engage with the Government of Malawi and advocate for suitable solutions for the situation at hand.

Community Empowerment and Self-Reliance

- UNHCR is engaged in self-sufficiency projects for refugees, to ensure their economic independence alongside the surrounding host community and in this regard normal implementation of livelihood activities continued in August 2021.
- Livelihood interventions were included in the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Road Map developed by Government of Malawi in liaison with UNHCR.

Durable Solutions

- Resettlement continues to be the most viable and durable solution for refugees in Malawi as local integration and voluntary repatriation seem not to be feasible. UNHCR continues to appeal to the Government of Malawi to fast track the implementation of the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) and adoption of the five pledges made at Global Refugee Forum (GRF) some of which if adopted will pave way for a settlement model which would create an economic hub for the self-reliance of both refugees and nationals.

Financial Information

UNHCR is grateful for donor contributions to the Southern Africa region.

- Belgium | Canada | CERF | Denmark | Education Cannot Wait | European Union | France | Germany | Ireland | Japan | Netherlands | Norway | Private donors | Sweden | Switzerland | United States of America | UNO-Fluechtlingshilfe | UN Peacebuilding Fund

CONTACTS

KOUAME Cyr Modeste, Representative, UNHCR Malawi
kouame@unhcr.org, Tel: +265 1 771 027

Rumbani Msiska, Reporting Associate, UNHCR Malawi
msiskar@unhcr.org, Tel: +265 1 772 155, Cell: +265 999 911 830

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