

1. Crisis overviewⁱ

3.3 / 5	1.8 million	1.8 million	\$858 million	44%
Inform severity index	People in need of humanitarian aid (UCRRP 2024)	People targeted in the response plan (UCRRP 2024)	Required to reach the target (UCRRP 2024)	Of the required funding secured (UCRRP 2024)
19 MSEK	4 MSEK	-	23 MSEK	
Initial allocation	Additional allocation	Flexible Funding	Total Sida funding 2025	

Uganda is highly vulnerable to shocks and natural disasters and hosts the largest refugee population in Africa, close to 1.8 million refugees and asylum-seekers, in what is both a protracted and acute refugee crisis. A total of 146,000 refugees and asylum seekers entered the country during 2024, and over 86% were from South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Kongo (DRC). As a consequence of the volatile security situation in eastern DRC more than 31,000 have crossed the border into Uganda in 2025.

Access to land, financial services and livelihood opportunities are limited, leaving most refugees dependent on monthly food rations that have been cut multiple times in recent years due to funding shortfall. Food rations now only last for a few days, with major implications on food security, nutrition and protection outcomes.

The crisis in Uganda is currently one of the most severely underfunded refugee responses in the world, with a 54 per cent funding gap in 2024, with the situation expected to worsen in 2025 due to the US freeze on foreign assistance. Due to resource uncertainties, WFP will be forced to reduce general food assistance (GFA) from 1.4 million to 650,000 refugees and asylum seekers across Uganda, starting from May 2025.

In addition to the refugee crisis, an estimated 600,000 people in the Karamoja region continue to experience acute levels of food insecurity (IPC phase 3), driven by conflict and insecurity, exacerbated by recurrent climate-related shocks, structural poverty and limited livelihood opportunities.

2. Humanitarian needs & affected population

More than half of the refugees and asylum-seekers in Uganda come from South Sudan and about one third from the Democratic Republic of the Congo. The remaining refugees originate from Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Burundi, Rwanda and Ethiopia. Most refugees, particularly new arrivals, are in need of protection, food assistance and shelter as well as basic social services, including health, nutrition and WASH services. Having fled insecurity and conflict, many have experienced or witnessed violence and abuse, including sexual violence, been separated from family members, and often suffer from malaria, tuberculosis and malnutrition. A significant portion of the new arrivals from DRC are expected to face IPC phase 4 of food insecurity. There are also frequent epidemic outbreaks; most lately of Mpox, Ebola and Marburg diseases.

Children, many unaccompanied and separated, constitute 55 per cent of the refugee population and child protection risks are widespread, including issues of violence, exploitation, abuse, neglect and child labour. Harmful and traditional gender norms expose girls and women to gender-based violence and issues of teenage pregnancies, child marriage and prostitution are common. Other vulnerable groups include elderly and persons with specific needs who experience challenges in accessing services due to physical disabilities, long distances to service points and because of limited awareness about their rights and available services. All in all, women and children constitute 79 per cent of the total refugee population.

Limited funding for education, health, and water and sanitation and hygiene (WASH), has resulted in overcrowded classrooms, insufficient access to clean water and latrines, while health facilities are serving catchment populations high-above their intended capacity. Nearly half of all children are anaemic and stunted and malnutrition rates are expected to rise further, both as a result of reduced food assistance and because funding gaps have forced health and nutrition actors to reduce preventive health and nutrition interventions, such as supplementary feeding and outreach activities. Overall, funding gaps have eroded the capacity of humanitarian actors to effectively respond to the current displacement crisis as well as new or deteriorating crises throughout the country.

Once registered, most refugees are provided with small plots for housing and subsistence farming in one of 13 major settlements where both refugees and host communities can access basic services. Small plot sizes, that are constantly reduced due to influx of new refugees, together with poor soil quality and insufficient market and financial infrastructure, limit livelihood opportunities, and most refugees remain dependent on food assistance, which has been gradually reduced since 2020. So while Uganda's policy allows refugees to work, livelihood opportunities are limited. WFP has implemented a shift towards needs-based targeting and cash for food assistance and has been based on three categories of vulnerability, where the most vulnerable 14 per cent of the refugee population receive 60 per cent of a full food ration per month. A vast majority of households (82 per cent) received a 30 per cent ration, which is equivalent to about \$3.5 per person/month. However, due to funding gaps (exacerbated by the

US freeze) arising in 2025 this system is now being dismantled, where WFP can be without any food at all in May 2025.

After years of reductions in General Food Assistance (GFA), combined with rising food and commodity prices, and shrinking donor funding, the majority of refugee settlements experiences Crisis (IPC Phase 3) outcomes. Before recent cuts, food rations only lasted for 3-5 days for most refugees, leaving most refugees reliant on negative coping mechanisms, such as selling parts of their rations in order to buy other essential in-kind items as well as sharing rations with more vulnerable refugee households. There are reports of the breakdown of social support networks and refugees are increasingly employing negative coping mechanisms, such as theft, borrowing, selling assets, reducing number of portions and portion sizes as well as begging and prostitution. Movements, both in country as well as pendular border movements, in search for livelihoods opportunities are common, leaving thousands of unaccompanied children behind.

Around nine per cent of the refugee population resides in Kampala, many of whom originate from Sudan. However, other urban refugees are not recognised outside of the settlements in Uganda where they first registered. Assumed to be self-reliant, urban refugees are ineligible for assistance and protection interventions and rely on temporary and unpredictable low-wage labour and remittances. They also suffer from poor housing conditions, discrimination and limited access to basic social services. Tracking and monitoring of refugees outside of the settlements remain inconsistent, but according to reports, many refugees, fearing to lose their refugee status, frequently return to the settlements in order to collect their rations, despite the fact that travel costs are generally higher than the amount of cash/food received.

The expected influx of new arrivals have reached unprecedented levels, mainly caused by the situations in DRC, Sudan and South Sudan. The situation for refugees in Uganda is already difficult, with competition for the scarce resources they have access to. With an expected increase of refugees from a variety of ethnic groups it could create challenges and potential conflicts among refugees already in Uganda, host communities, and new arrivals.

3. The humanitarian response

In line with the Refugee Coordination Model (RCM), the refugee response in Uganda is led by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR, supported by a number of UN agencies, international and national NGOs, refugee-led organisations as well as line ministries and district authorities. Uganda has developed a framework for refugees (CRRF) which contributes positively to the coordination and planning of governmental, humanitarian and development interventions for refugees and host communities.

The Refugee Humanitarian Partner Group (RHPG) serves as a forum for UNHCR, WFP, donors, and NGOs to discuss strategic and operational issues related to the Refugee Response Plan (RRP). The UCRRP 2022-2025 is the main mechanism for analysis, planning and financing with operational coordination taking place at various levels, including at inter-agency level, sector level as well as district and settlement levels and it is accompanied by a number of

inter-sector working groups. The vision of the UCRPP is to ensure an open asylum space, ensure access to lifesaving protection, shelter, education, WASH, health and nutrition services, and to foster socio-economic development and the longer-term transition of services to national systems.

Food security is the largest sector in terms of targets and financial requirements, explained by the humanitarian food and cash assistance, with protection also being prioritised due the continuing influx of new arrivals and the need for refugee registration and protection case management services. Livelihoods and resilience is another prioritised sector as all stakeholders increasingly recognise the need to foster self-reliance and socio-economic development in refugee hosting areas in order to reduce vulnerabilities and reliance on food assistance. At the same time, food assistance remains chronically underfunded.

Uganda was one of the first countries to adopt the CRRF framework, which has since been accompanied by a number of policies, frameworks and strategies, including five sector response plans covering education, health, water and environment, jobs and livelihoods as well as energy. Refugee management has been integrated into Uganda's National Development Plan (NDPIII) and a corresponding Action Plan and Strategic Direction. A CRRF Secretariat and a Steering Group have been established, together with a Refugee Engagement Forum and a District Engagement Forum. The US was until 2025 by far the biggest humanitarian donor, followed by ECHO, UK, Denmark, Netherlands, Canada, Japan and Sweden. The global freeze and scale-back of US humanitarian funding announced in January 2025 is having major consequences on aid operations, and adaptations to the response in light of the new funding landscape is being made.

4. Sida's humanitarian allocation

In light of Sida's humanitarian allocation analysis for 2025, Uganda has been identified as a crisis where needs are comparatively less acute than in other countries. The humanitarian needs in Uganda have increased but compared to previous years but the situation has worsened even more in other crisis countries. Sida's allocation will therefore be reduced in 2025, with the objective of phasing out the humanitarian allocation to Uganda by 2026, unless there are significant changes in the context. Sida will maintain capacity to respond to sudden and major changes in needs over the course of 2025, in line with its global, needs-based allocation methodology.

Sida's humanitarian allocation to Uganda in 2025 is focused on multi-sectoral and life-saving assistance to address displacement-related needs. Organisations with a strong focus on addressing food insecurity, nutrition, WASH and protection concerns through integrated programming in the refugee response will continue to be prioritised. Sida's humanitarian allocation will be provided as programme-based funding to provide the partner organisations with flexibility to prioritise the interventions needed to respond to the most urgent needs, including those in Karamoja, as well as the flexibility to shift priorities when the numbers of

new arrivals increase, and to ensure partners can leverage Sida's support with other funding sources to holistically address the multisectoral needs of the refugee populations.

INITIAL ALLOCATION (SEK)		
PARTNER	SECTOR	INITIAL ALLOCATION
AAH	Food Security, Nutrition, WASH, Protection	7,000,000
NRC	Protection, Education, WASH, Food Security	7,000,000
UNHCR	Multisectoral (Protection, WASH, Shelter, Health, Education)	5,000,000
TOTAL		19,000,000

FLEXIBLE FUNDING & ADDITIONAL ALLOCATIONS 2025		
PARTNER	FLEXIBLE FUNDING ¹	ADDITIONAL ALLOCATION
MSB ²	3,959,000	-
TOTAL	3,959,000	-

ⁱ The 2025 initial allocation of humanitarian funding is based on Sida's humanitarian allocation analysis methodology. The analysis reflects the current humanitarian situation across crises and is being updated continuously with the latest available data. The information in the HCA is based on reports, data, and information from partner organisations and other entities, as well as observations from field visits and dialogue with partners.

¹ Flexible funding includes a mix of allocations such as Rapid Response Mechanism and other flexible funding mechanisms.

² Sida provides flexible funding to MSB, and this allocation is therefore subject to change.