Gasabo District, in partnership with health promotion organisations, is intensifying efforts to curb malaria, launching awareness campaigns and encouraging residents to embrace preventive measures and seek early treatment.

The push was highlighted during an outreach campaign organised by the Rwanda NGO Forum on HIV/AIDS and Health Promotion on 25 November 2025 in Gikomero Sector. The initiative aimed to educate “easy-to-reach groups” on malaria prevention, diagnosis, and treatment, and to encourage positive health-seeking behaviours.

According to the Rwanda Biomedical Center (RBC), the term “easy-to-reach groups” refers to hotel staff and clients, students, security personnel, healthcare workers, rice farmers, miners, and fishers, populations considered at higher risk due to their exposure and mobility.

Gasabo, with its dense population and numerous wetlands, has the highest number of malaria cases in the country, particularly among these groups.

“We witnessed an exponential surge of malaria cases from July to November. Over the last four months, we recorded 11,000 cases. The situation is alarming, and that’s why the district and partners are working tirelessly to halt the spread,” said Ellen Nyiranyamibwa, Director of Health in Gasabo District.

Leoncie Kankindi, RBC Coordinator in the districts of Gasabo, Rulindo, Gicumbi, and Bugesera.

While malaria incidence often rises between July and December, the latest figures are unprecedented. Compared to the last two years, the number of cases has surged despite ongoing control measures. Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), one of the key interventions aimed at killing and repelling infectious mosquitoes, has been regularly implemented.

“Prevalence in Gasabo is also linked to factors such as its topography, wetlands, dense population, and negligence among urban residents,” said Leoncie Kankindi, RBC Coordinator for Gasabo, Rulindo, Gicumbi, and Bugesera districts.

Community health workers (CHW’s), such as Concensa Tuberinka in Gikomero, have observed high malaria rates among these easy-to-reach populations. “Two to five patients I see daily are from these groups. Most live along the shores of Lake Muhazi, in wetlands, or work in mining, quarrying, and rice farming,” she said.

To tackle the surge, RBC has launched an operation called “14 Days for Malaria”, which seeks to raise awareness and identify patients in households and public

spaces, with a focus on Gasabo. The campaign is expected to strengthen prevention, diagnosis, and early treatment.

In addition, RBC also plans to conduct a study mapping malaria hotspots among easy-to-reach populations across Rwanda to better address gaps in prevention strategies.

Despite the recent surge, Rwanda has made notable progress in reducing malaria incidence and deaths through strong political commitment, community-based health initiatives, and the widespread use of Long-Lasting Insecticidal Nets (LLINs), Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS), and artemisinin-based combination therapies (ACTs).

Latest data indicate that the Malaria Annual Parasite Incidence (API) has declined from 47 cases per 1,000 people in 2022-2023 to 45 cases per 1,000 in 2023-2024, representing a 2% reduction.