

Rwanda has received 173 asylum seekers transferred from Libya under a humanitarian programme supported by the United Nations refugee agency, UNHCR.

The group arrived in Rwanda on Wednesday night, June 17, 2026, and includes 85 Sudanese nationals, 66 Eritreans, two Somalis, seven Ethiopians and 12 South Sudanese.

The asylum seekers were taken to the Gashora Emergency Transit Centre in Bugesera District, where they will receive temporary accommodation and support while awaiting possible relocation to countries that can offer them permanent resettlement.

The group is the 23rd to arrive in Rwanda from Libya since the programme began in 2019.

Since September 2019, Rwanda has received more than 3,000 refugees and asylum seekers from Libya, with 2,623 already relocated to other countries through official resettlement arrangements.

Most of those transferred to Rwanda come from Eritrea, Sudan, Somalia, Ethiopia and South Sudan, while others are from different African countries.

The programme allows asylum seekers to voluntarily move to Rwanda, where they receive protection and basic services from the government in partnership with UNHCR while longer-term solutions are identified.

The initiative was launched on Sept. 10, 2019, when Rwanda, the African Union and UNHCR signed an agreement in Addis Ababa to receive refugees and asylum seekers stranded in Libya.

The arrangement followed Rwanda's decision to support African migrants who had travelled to Libya in search of safety and opportunities but became trapped amid insecurity and difficult living conditions.

Many had been unable to cross the Mediterranean Sea to Europe and remained stranded in Libya.

Through the programme, more than 2,100 people have already been resettled in countries including Canada, Sweden, Norway, France, Finland, the Netherlands, Belgium, the United States and Germany.

Canada has received 656 people, the United States 318, Sweden 255, Finland 236, Norway 225, France 194, Germany 132, Belgium 72 and the Netherlands 52.

The refugees and asylum seekers in Rwanda receive assistance from the government through the Ministry in charge of Emergency Management (MINEMA), UNHCR and international partners, including the European Union and Denmark.

Rwanda's involvement in the programme has been described by officials as part of efforts to provide protection for vulnerable migrants while permanent solutions are arranged.