



UGANDA

SUDAN SITUATION: COUNTRY SOCIOECONOMIC PROFILE

January 2025

Country Context

The Sudanese crisis that began in April 2023 has significantly impacted Uganda’s refugee situation. As of September 2024, Uganda hosted over 1.74 million refugees. Among them, the number of Sudanese refugees rose from about 15,000 in January 2024 to nearly 55,000 by September 2024, surpassing predictions and accounting for 40% of new arrivals in Uganda for the year to date.

The majority reside in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement, which was designated as the primary reception and registration point for Sudanese refugees. In total, 60% of Sudanese refugees live in Kiryandongo, 25% in Kampala and the remainder (comprising mostly those who entered Uganda before 15 April 2023) in other settlements in the North. Refugees who settle in Kiryandongo receive regular refugee response benefits, which include humanitarian assistance such as food, education and health care services and emergency shelter items, while those in Kampala benefit from policy and advocacy support to reduce barriers to accessing jobs and livelihoods as urban refugees are expected to be self-reliant. Earlier this year the Government of Uganda approved the prima-facie status for Sudanese refugees for both those arriving at border and at the airport.

Uganda’s globally acclaimed refugee framework, underpinned by the Refugees Act (2006) and Regulations (2010), guarantees refugees essential rights, including freedom of movement, employment, and access to national services. This progressive approach, coupled with the explicit inclusion of refugees in Uganda’s National Development Plan III (and the follow up NDP IV 2025/26 –2029/30, which is being developed) creates an unparalleled environment for development investments.

Socioeconomic Characteristics of Displacement

According to registration records, the majority of Sudanese refugees in Uganda are women and children (71%), represent several different ethnic groups and came primarily from Khartoum settings in Kiryandongo and Kampala. Roughly equal shares of Sudanese refugees in Uganda are female (49%) and male (51%). Most are Muslim, coming from different ethnic groups, of which 26% are Zaghawa and 19% Fur, Forok. The majority fled from Khartoum (50%), followed by South Darfur (13%) and other states (37%) and settled in Kiryandongo Settlement or Kampala.

Figure 1: Age and gender (left), ethnicity (center) and religion (right), Sudanese refugees in Uganda

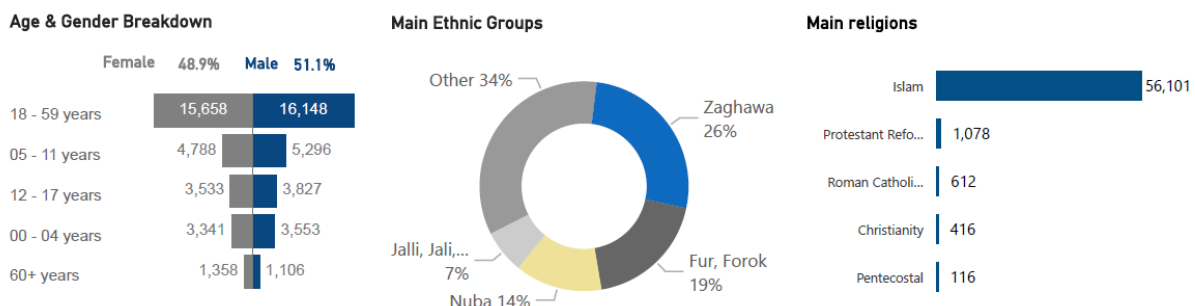
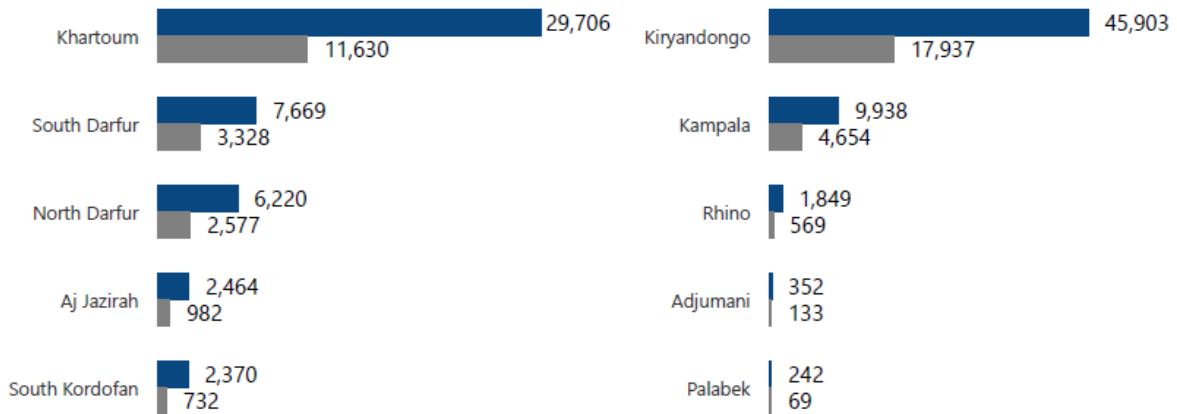


Figure 2: Main regions of origin (left) and hosting locations (right)



Source: UNHCR registration data

Sudanese refugees in Uganda bring skills and occupational backgrounds. Approximately, 8,333 refugees have studied at the university level. Many continue to act primarily as students, but others have a mix of occupational backgrounds.

Figure 3: Education level, registered Sudanese refugees

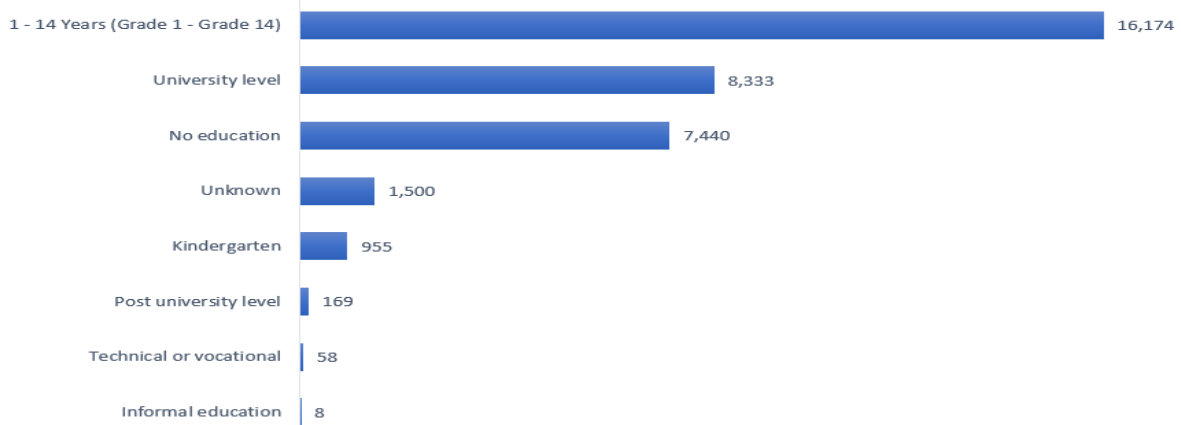
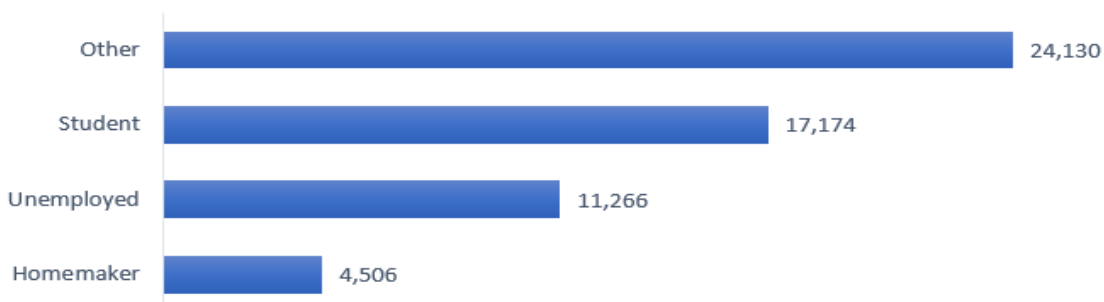


Figure 4: Occupation category, registered Sudanese refugees



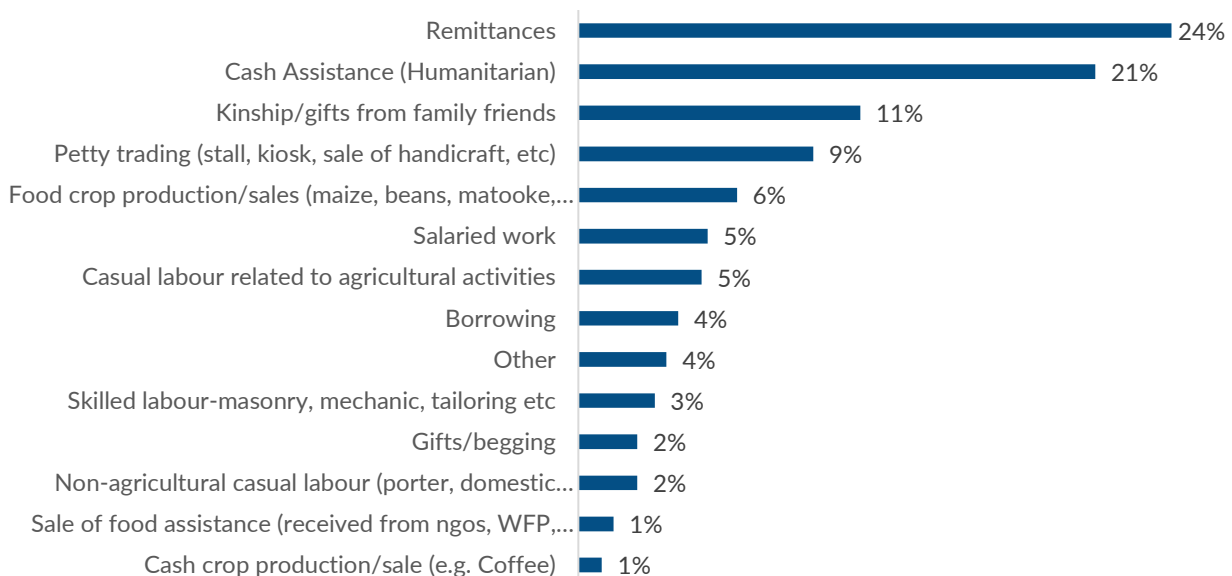
Food Security and Nutrition Assessment (FSNA) for Sudanese refugees (2024)

The data from the survey shows that two-thirds (66%) of Sudanese refugee households are financially excluded. This is due to a lack of access to bank accounts, which could limit their ability to save, access credit, or manage financial transactions. Only one-third (33%) of households have a bank account, indicating a limited level of financial inclusion. This distribution can be further analyzed to explore its implications for household financial resilience, food security, and overall economic stability.

A significant majority (about 78%) of households lack savings and many (38%) carry debt. Lack of savings can reflect limited access to financial savings tools as well as income to save and indicates a vulnerability to financial shocks and economic instability. While a majority (62%) of households are not carrying debt, a significant portion do (38%), which could indicate financial pressures or the need to borrow to cover expenses.

There is heavy reliance on remittances and humanitarian cash assistance, which suggests many households depend on external or temporary financial support rather than stable income sources like employment or business. Petty trading and agriculture are key local income sources, but fewer households rely on skilled labor or salaried work.

Figure 5: Income sources



Other Recent Insights from Data and Research on Refugees in Uganda

Uganda boasts one of the most thorough evidence bases on which to build refugee response and policy. Refugees are included alongside host communities in a number of significant surveys: the [2018 Uganda Bureau of Statistics-World Bank 2018 Refugee and Host Communities Household Survey](#), [2021 IFC Consumer and Market Study in Southwest and West Nile](#), [2020/21 High Frequency Phone Survey Monitoring Covid Impacts \(First Round, Second Round, Third Round\)](#), [2022 Demographic and Health Survey](#), and [2023 Uganda National Household Survey](#). More than 30 publications on refugees in Uganda are available through the [Joint Data Center Literature Review Database](#). Among other findings, this research demonstrates that inclusive refugee-hosting in Uganda [improves local development and prevents public backlash](#). The presence of refugees [benefits many Ugandan households](#), including those who have shifted from subsistence agriculture into commercial farming and wage employment. At the same time, targeted efforts, such as [providing aid to microentrepreneurs](#), shows promise for reducing tensions and improving attitudes towards refugees. Yet, research also indicates that despite the favorable environment [refugees face challenges securing employment](#), are more likely to accept jobs below their skills levels and are paid less than host community peers for similar jobs.