

Mpanda refugee location gets official recognition

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THE Prime Minister, Mizengo Pinda.

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THE Prime Minister, Mr Mizengo Pinda, has assured residents of Mishamo area (the former refugee location in Mpanda District, Katavi Region) of the on-going arrangements to formalise the habitation for ordinary administrative operations and availability of the basic necessities.

He gave the assurance at Mishamo playground on Wednesday, as the residents gathered to express gratitude for the support extended to them by the government of Tanzania for the last 43 years since they arrived as refugees from Rwanda and Burundi.

The area accommodates a total of 52,594 residents. "We have to come up with a workable strategy to transform social services and administrative procedures to the convenience of the community.

At least 16 villages in four wards are for habitation and we know that the population is growing and the area is not big enough. The government in collaboration with the

Member of Parliament (MP) and councilors in the area will work out a common strategy to help secure more land,” Mr. Pinda clarified.

It was explained that the area had only one division with limited carrying capacity, insisting that it would have been more convenient for them to get two more or three wards with improved social services like schools, better infrastructure, water supply, health centres, electricity, among others.

Giving thanks on behalf of residents of Mishamo, the councillor of Irangu ward, Mr Augustino Matthew, said the entire community was grateful to the government of Tanzania for making them live like all other citizens and not as refugees.

“Today is a memorable day for us. We are delighted and really thankful to President Jakaya Kikwete and the people of Tanzania for ending our refugee status that hang on our shoulders for the last 43 years.

We promise to abide by laws of the land and become responsible citizens. God bless Tanzania,” Matthew said.

He said out of 53,379 residents, a total of 52,594 of them received citizenship certificates, while 710 others had their applications turned down and 75 others were repatriated.

He prayed that everything was in place for the system of administration to come to effect with accessibility to many other social services including banks.