



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

UNHCR Monthly Protection Update Refugee Status Determination (RSD) June 2019

The Ugandan Government is responsible for Refugee Status Determination (RSD). UNHCR works with the Refugee Department within the Office of the Prime Minister and other partners to build and enhance the capacity of national RSD procedures.

Key Figures of the month

1,637	# of new asylum seekers registered at the Refugee Desk in Kampala
8,838	# of new arrivals from DRC registered in settlements
6,554	# of new arrivals from South Sudan registered in settlements
390	# of new asylum seekers from Burundi registered in Nakivale settlement

Key Achievement of 2019

11,853	# of asylum applications adjudicated by the REC
11,357	# of asylum applications granted
95%	% of recognition rate in the first instance
25	# of asylum appeals reviewed by the RAB
14	# of appeals set aside by the RAB

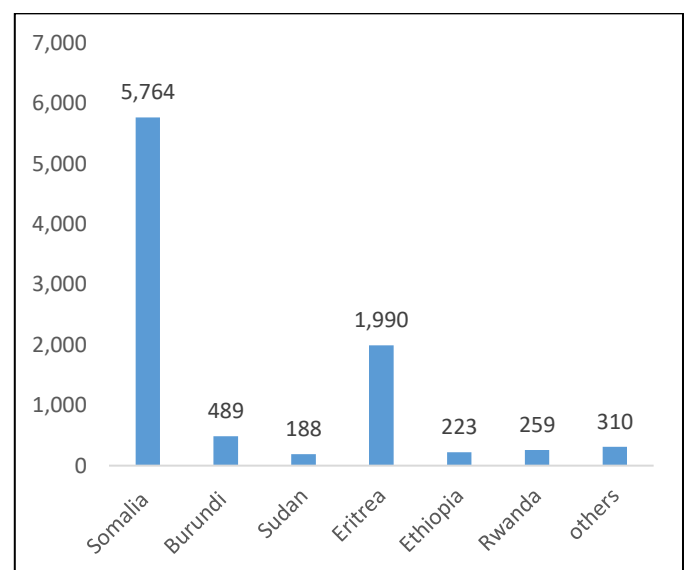
NOTE:

As of writing, DRC nationals (*who enter Uganda via designated border points*) and South Sudanese are granted refugee status on prima facie basis in accordance with Section 25 of the Refugees Act

Monthly Trend of Asylum Seekers

- During the reporting period, a total of 1,637 new asylum seekers were registered at the Refugee Desk in Kampala including 916 Somalis and 398 Eritreans. This represents a slight decrease in comparison to the figures reported in May 2019.
- 8,838 new arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were recorded in south west and mid-west of the country. The number of new arrivals was higher when compared to the previous month. The majority of new arrivals from DRC fled from ongoing insecurity and violence in North and South Kivu, and Ituri Provinces.
- 6,554 new arrivals from South Sudan were reported in Arua, Adjumani, Lamwo and Yumbe districts. The figure indicates an upward trend since the beginning of the year. The reasons of their displacement included violence and insecurity, human rights violations, as well as lack of access to humanitarian assistance and basis services.
- 390 Burundian asylum seekers were newly registered in Nakivale settlement owing to continuous insecurity caused by Imbonerakure militia.

Country of origin of asylum seekers registered at Refugee Desk in Kampala in January – June 2019



Refugee Status Determination

- The **Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC)**, during the session of 18-21 June in Jinja, adjudicated 3,775 asylum application largely concerning nationals of Somalia. About 98% of applicants were granted refugee status.

Capacity development

- **UNHCR** provided OPM with a compilation of country of origin information (COI) to enhance access to relevant and timely COI. This is as a result of continuous consultations with Refugee Status Interview Officers.

Strategy

UNHCR supports the Ugandan authorities to assume their responsibility for individual refugee status determination with the following objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of the government to deliver a fair, credible and efficient refugee status determination
- To advocate for improvement of the national legislation and related by-laws on asylum in line with applicable international and regional standards
- To actively engage with other government authorities to ensure access to asylum in face of mixed flows of refugees and migrants.

Challenges

- **Limited capacity to process asylum claims:** As of June 2019, there are 26,539 asylum seekers across the country, out of which almost 75% represents applications filed in Kampala. The analysis of backlog is ongoing, which will help develop a strategy for its reduction.
- **Lack of adequate space for initial screening:** The poor physical condition of the Refugee Desk hampers the effective initial screening of asylum seekers in Kampala. The current set-up does not have equipment for proper file

management but also significantly compromises the principle of confidentiality and privacy.

- **Insufficient quality of RSD interview/decision-making:** A combination of several factors such as limited number of interview officers and interpreters (in light of the current caseload), inadequate quality of interpretation service and limited capacity to handle complex cases undermines the quality of RSD decisions.
- **Gaps in law, and gaps between law and practice of asylum procedure:** The review process of the Refugees Act and its Regulations has been ongoing since 2015. Coupled with lack of proper application of certain provisions, there are several deficits such as limited authority of Refugee Appeals Board, lack of clear definition in certain terms as well as absence of the clear provision regulating the reception/admission procedure for asylum seekers in Kampala.
- **Increasing mixed migration flows:** The government has increasingly faced difficulties in recognizing the situation of refugees and refugees within migratory movements, which results in tightening an access to asylum procedure.

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