



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency

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

1,689	# of new asylum seekers registered at the Refugee Desk
4,662	# of new arrivals from DRC recorded in settlements
6,233	# of new arrivals from South Sudan recorded in settlements
313	# of new asylum seekers from Burundi recorded in Nakivale settlement

Key Achievement of 2019

8,078	# of asylum applications adjudicated by the REC
7,649	# of asylum applications granted
94%	% 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

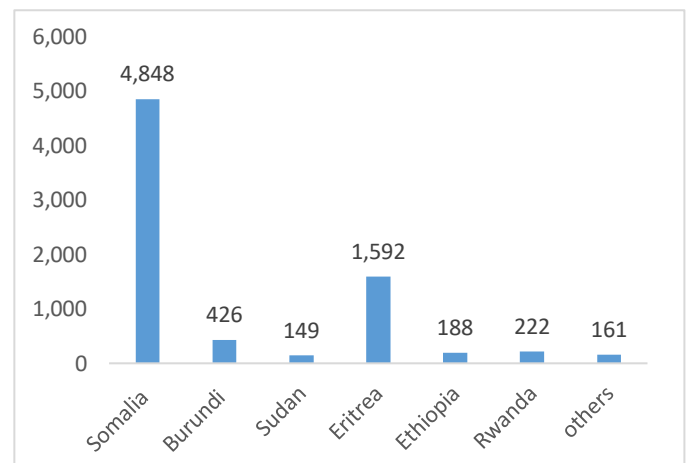
UNHCR Monthly Protection Update Refugee Status Determination (RSD) May 2019



The Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) session in Kyangwali settlement

- A total of 1,689 new asylum seekers were registered at the Refugee Desk in Kampala including 882 Somalis and 454 Eritreans. The figure has increased by more than 300 individuals compared to April 2019.
- 4,662 new arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were recorded in south west and mid-west of the country. This is a higher number in comparison to April 2019. The majority fled from ongoing insecurity and violence in North and South Kivu, and Ituri Provinces.
- 6,233 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 service.
- 313 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 Jan – May 2019



Refugee Status Determination

- The **Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC)**, during the session of 7-9 May in Kyangwali settlement, adjudicated 459 asylum applications of 1,177 individuals, largely concerning DRC nationals. About 89% of applicants were granted refugee status.
- The REC, during session of 28-31 May in Nakivale settlement, adjudicated 2,078 asylum applications of 4,180 individuals, largely concerning nationals of Burundi and DRC. Approximately 96 % of applicants were granted refugee status.
- The Refugee Appeals Board (RAB) completed its three-year mandate on 31 May 2019 during which the RAB reviewed a total of 512 appeal applications filed in Kampala, Nakivale and Kyaka settlements. The establishment of a new RAB is pending the decision of the Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees.

Capacity development

- OPM and UNHCR held a meeting in Nakivale settlement on 29 May to discuss how to improve the implementation of RSD-related procedures outlined in the Refugees Act and its Regulations. The outcome of the discussion will be jointly addressed in the coming months.
- UNHCR organized a seminar with OPM Refugee Status Interview Officers (RSIOs) on 31 May with focus on credibility assessment in asylum adjudication. The discussion mainly concerned principles of credibility assessment, credibility indicators, as well as factors affecting credibility assessment. This new initiative aims at providing an opportunity for RSIOs to improve their RSD-related knowledge and skills on a monthly basis.

Strategy

UNHCR supports the Ugandan authorities with the assumption of responsibility for individual refugee status determination with the following objectives:

- To strengthen the capacity of government to deliver 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 the government to ensure access to asylum in face of mixed flows of refugees and migrants.

Challenges

- **Limited capacity to process asylum claims:** As of May 2019, there are 23,546 asylum seekers across the country, out of which close to 80% 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 an initial screening of asylum seekers in Kampala effectively. The current set-up does not equip 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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