



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

1,808	# of new asylum seekers registered at the Refugee Desk
8,799	# of new arrivals from DRC registered in settlements
1,147	# of new arrivals from South Sudan registered in settlements
679	# of new asylum seekers from Burundi registered in Nakivale settlement

Key Achievement of 2019

15,714	# of asylum applications adjudicated by the REC
15,023	# 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

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

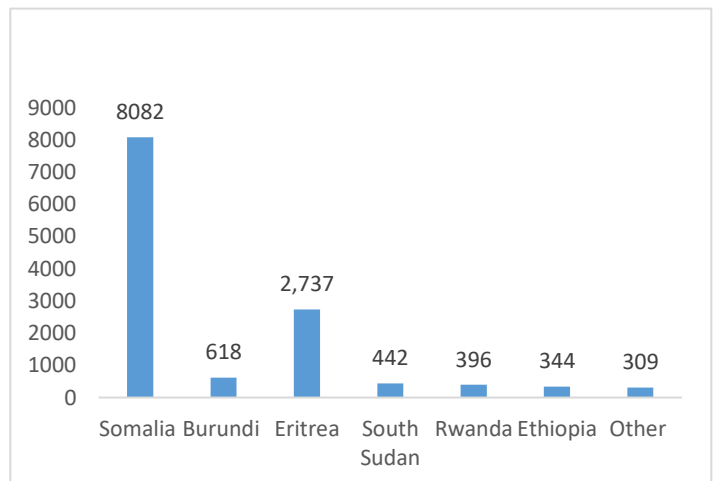


The REC session at Nakivale settlement

Monthly Trend of Asylum Seekers

- During the reporting period, a total of 1,808 new asylum seekers were registered at the Refugee Desk in Kampala including 1,071 Somalis and 390 Eritreans. The figure, particularly of Somali and Rwandan, is reduced compared to July 2019.
- 8,799 new arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were recorded in south west and mid-west of the country, which shows the overall decline by 3,000 individuals compared to previous month. Most of them fled from ongoing insecurity and violence in North and South Kivu, and Ituri Provinces.
- 1,147 new arrivals from South Sudan were reported in West Nile districts. The figure indicates a lower number in comparison with July 2019. The reasons of their displacement included violence and insecurity, seeking family reunification as well as lack of access to humanitarian assistance and basic service.
- 679 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 - August 2019



Refugee Status Determination

- The Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC), during the session of 13-16 August at Nakivale settlement, adjudicated 1,538 asylum applications of 3,953 individuals, largely concerning nationals of DRC and Burundi. About 96% of applicants were granted refugee status.
- The REC, during session of 20-24 August in Jinja, adjudicated 2,006 asylum applications of 2,716 individuals, largely concerning nationals of Somalia. Approximately 97 % of applicants were granted refugee status.
- On 26th August, new members of the Refugee Appeals Board (RAB) were approved by Cabinet. The RAB is composed of 5 members: Mr. Gordon Lakidi Oloya (chairperson); Mr. Charles Wadenya; Mr. Gordon Mwesigye; Ms. Rosemary Tutegyerize; and Ms. Animu Angupale. The previous RAB's mandate ended in May 2019.

Capacity development:

- UNHCR organized a seminar with OPM Refugee Status Interview Officers (RSIOs) on 9 August to discuss challenges of interview in asylum adjudication. The meeting was designed to review key lessons from previous sessions with focus on i) PEACE interview model and different types of questions to be used in the account phase; and ii) a structured approach to credibility assessment. This initiative aims at providing an opportunity for RSIOs to improve their RSD-related knowledge and skills on a monthly basis.
- OPM and UNHCR Protection teams held a meeting in the Nakivale settlement on 14 August to discuss how to improve the fairness and efficiency of case-processing in the settlement including file management of asylum applications, identification of and application of an accelerated procedure for vulnerable applicants and the need of training interpreters.

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 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 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 August 2019, there are 25,264 asylum seekers across the country, out of which approximately 66 % 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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