



# UNHCR Monthly Protection Update Refugee Status Determination (RSD) April 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



Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) session in Nakivale settlement

## Key Figures of the month

<b>1,361</b>	# of new asylum seekers registered at the Refugee Desk
<b>4,592</b>	# of new arrivals from DRC recorded in settlements
<b>5,898</b>	# of new arrivals from South Sudan recorded in settlements
<b>272</b>	# of new asylum seekers from Burundi recorded in Nakivale settlement

## Key Achievement of 2019

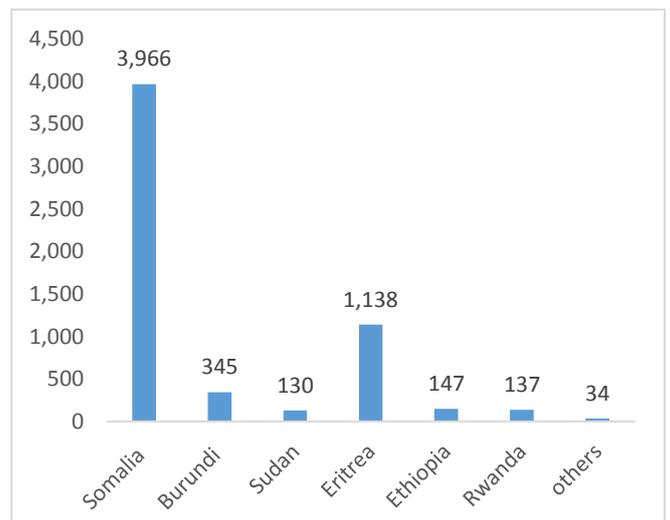
<b>6,000</b>	# of asylum applications adjudicated by the REC
<b>5,639</b>	# of asylum applications granted
<b>94%</b>	% of recognition rate in the first instance
<b>25</b>	# of asylum appeals reviewed by the RAB
<b>14</b>	# of appeals set aside by the RAB

### 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

- A total of 1,361 new asylum seekers were registered at the Refugee Desk in Kampala including 1,045 Somalis and 100 Eritreans. The figure is slightly reduced compared to March 2019.
- 4,592 new arrivals from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) were recorded in south west and mid-west of the country. The majority fled from ongoing tension and violence in North Kivu and Ituri Provinces.
- 5,898 new arrivals from South Sudan were reported in Arua, Adjumani, Lawmo and Yumbe districts. The reasons of their displacement included violence, insecurity, human rights violations, as well as lack of access to humanitarian assistance and basic services.
- 272 Burundian asylum seekers were newly registered in Nakivale settlement owing to continuous insecurity and the request for family reunification.

## Country of origin of asylum seekers registered at Refugee Desk in Kampala in Jan – April 2019



## Refugee Status Determination

- The **Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC)**, during the session of 9-12 April in Kyaka settlement, adjudicated 850 asylum applications of 2,337 individuals, largely concerning nationals of DRC and Burundi. 87% of applicants were granted refugee status.
- The **REC**, during session of 16-18 April in Rwamwanja settlement, adjudicated 559 asylum applications of 1,098 individuals, largely concerning nationals of DRC. Approximately 84% of applicants were granted refugee status.
- The **Refugee Appeals Board (RAB)**, during the sessions of 3-4 April and 24-25 April, reviewed 11 asylum appeals (10 Eritrean cases and one Ethiopian case). The RAB set aside seven REC's decision, while confirming four REC's decision.

## Capacity development

- UNHCR organized a seminar with OPM Refugee Status Interview Officers (RSIOs) on 26 April with focus on the use of country of origin information in asylum adjudication. The discussion mainly concerned functions of COI, scope and limitations of COI, quality standards for COI resources as well as principles for researching and using COI. 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 the 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 April 2019, there are 26,616 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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