



# UNHCR Monthly Protection Update

## Legal and Physical Protection

### August 2019

#### Key Figures

339

Number of Police  
deployed

30

Number of female Police  
deployed

28

Number of Police Posts  
in Refugee Settlements

1,600

Number of refugees that  
received legal Assistance

18,799

Number of Refugees  
reached during community  
sensitization

271

Detention monitoring visits  
conducted \*(police stations,  
prisons, remand homes)

65

Number of Packages  
Provided by UNHCR  
(Fuel, accommodation,  
WASH facilities, protection  
house, vehicle, motorbikes and  
transport)



Mobile court session at Rhino camp settlement Zone 7, Arua © UNHCR

#### Physical Safety and Security

- 197 crime incidents were registered in settlements in Arua and Yumbe districts. Rhino settlement (89) recorded the highest number of cases followed by Imvepi (47). Physical assault, Domestic Violence, Defilement and threatening violence remained highest.
- 42 Police Officers (6F/36M) are currently deployed in 11 police posts in Arua to cover three Settlements; in addition to the 29 (9F/20M) crime preventers. Due to financial constraints and a new government policy, all crime preventers will be integrated within FDU (Field Defence Unit) by 1st September 2019. In order to support police in maintaining law and order, the operation continues to engage 89 (08 Lobule, 39 Imvepi and 42 Rhino) and 343 community watch groups and vigilantes respectively.

#### Access to Justice, Legal Assistance and Legal Remedies

- In Arua and Yumbe, UNHCR in coordination with OPM, the Justice Law and Order Sector (JLOS) and IRC conducted mobile court sessions in Rhino camp Zone 7 and in Yumbe Zone 1. The court was presided over by Magistrate Grade One of Arua and Yumbe Magisterial area respectively and attended by 98 refugees (31F/67M). The mobile court sessions help mitigate challenges of witnesses not appearing in court and reduction of backlog hence promoting expeditious adjudication of cases.

- In Isingiro and Kyangwali, HIJIRA facilitated 49 (31M/18F) persons of concern (PoC) to Isingiro Magistrates Court and Police Station to follow up on their cases. In addition, 09 (6M/3F) mediators were met by HIJIRA to review cases and sensitized them on best practices during the mediation, their role as well as the mediation process. 20 cases were identified and mediated in August.
- In, Kyangwali HIJIRA, facilitated three (03) Court personnel (The Grade one Magistrate, the State Attorney and the Court Clerk) from Hoima to attend court sessions at Kyangwali; as a result, 84 cases comprising of 79 criminal and 5 civil cases were heard.

#### Detention Monitoring

Detention monitoring was conducted in Imvepi, Rhino Camp, Lobule, Bidibidi, Yumbe Central Police Station and other Police Posts including Kululu, Odravu detention facilities in Arua, Koboko and Yumbe town. 151 refugees (14F/137M) were identified. In Yumbe, IRC facilitated reintegration of 2 (Male) discharged prisoners to the settlement. In addition, relatives of 17 inmates (10F/7M) were supported to visit refugees in detention through family detention visit initiative. In Oruchinga, HIRJA legal team participated in a joint visit by relatives of 18 inmates (16M/2F) at Riumi, Ibuga and Katojo prisons. Visits by family members of detainees often impacts positively on prisoners and reduces depressive symptoms and recidivism.

### Community Policing and Advocacy

- Community policing sessions were conducted in Kyangwali, Yumbe, Oruchinga and Nakivale reaching 1,238 (635F/603M) PoCs with information on roles of partners, Police, crime prevention, juvenile justice, refugee rights and obligations in ensuring peaceful co-existence.

### Coordination

- UNHCR in coordination with JLOS convened the Court Users Committee meeting on 22<sup>nd</sup> August in Arua. 60 representatives from the Directorate of Public Prosecution, HADS, Uganda Law Society (ULS), Judiciary, Police, Arua Remand Home, Prisons, IRC, DRC, UNHCR with refugee leaders from Arua in attendance. The meeting sought to provide an inclusive forum to address concerns on administration of justice in the settlements as well as to actualize the dissemination of information.
- District Coordination Meetings were held in Arua, Yumbe and Kyaka. Representatives from the Judiciary, DPP, and Justice for Children, Police, Uganda Human Rights Commission, ULS and Arua Remand Home were in attendance. The meeting sought to evaluate access to justice, rule of law and security in refugee hosting districts.

### Capacity Development

- UNHCR, ARC and police officers attached to Palabek Police station co-facilitated 02 legal awareness sessions in Palabek targeting 291 PoCs. Key messages included highlights on rights under the 2006 Refugee Act, the Children's Act and basic guiding principles under the criminal procedure of Uganda including rights of accused persons.
- In Yumbe, refresher training was conducted for 609 (384F/225M) community-based paralegals in Bidibidi and Yangani village. The training sought to build the capacity of paralegals on alternative dispute resolution mechanisms with emphasis on mediation, refugee rights, record keeping, documentation, procedures and laws of Uganda.
- UNHCR provided 7 motorbikes to support police work in various police posts throughout Bidibidi settlement to improve mobility and monitoring.
- IRC provided 800 file folders to law enforcement institutions in Yumbe. Additional material support including soap (12 Boxes), blankets (50) and (06) plastic sheeting was also provided to improve the welfare of detainees at the detention facilities.

### Gaps Identified

There are several obstacles stifling provision of access to justice. They include:

- Limited facilities for holding juvenile offenders at Police posts.
- Inadequate facilitation of Court personnel which affects discharge of Court duties and participation in Mobile Courts.
- Limited knowledge of Ugandan laws coupled with limited knowledge of Court procedures.
- Inadequate facilitation of Police (fuel, vehicles and accommodation) continues to affect presence of Police in settlements. International standards require that one Police Officer is deployed per 500 individuals, current numbers of Police Officers deployed in all settlement totals to 339 which is below the required standard.
- Language barrier at the Police stations and courts remains a challenge for witnesses, this is coupled with difficulty in accessing interpreters for court which often results in miscarriage of justice.
- Long period of remand for refugee inmates due to failure to access sureties on grounds that refugees lack fixed places of abode.
- Some prisons have inadequate facilities (accommodation, permanent latrines, fences) leading to congestion and poor welfare of detainees.
- Delay in reporting of SGBV cases often affect investigation especially where material evidence is missing/tampered with leading to miscarriage of justice.
- Poor and prolonged investigation of cases due to limited capacity, lack of investigative skills, poor turn up of witnesses leading to frequent adjournments and case dismissal for want of prosecution.
- Delays in expediting cases (especially capital offences) due to intermittent court sessions, lack of legal representation and limited number of Judicial Officers to handle cases leading to increased case backlog.

#### Partners Implementing Access to Justice Response

**Partners:** IRC, HIJRA; DRC, ULS, ARC, RLP; InterAid Uganda, CAFOMI

**Operational Partners:** UNDP, LASPNET

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