



OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER
DEPARTMENT OF REFUGEE MANAGEMENT
HALF-YEAR REPORT JANUARY – JUNE 2025





The Republic of Uganda

THE OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

**DEPARTMENT OF REFUGEES
MANAGEMENT**

HALF-YEAR REPORT

2025

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STATEMENT OF THE COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES MANAGEMENT



The Department of Refugees Management, established under Section 7 of the Refugees Act, 2006 (Now Cap. 312), is responsible for all administrative matters concerning refugees in Uganda and, in that capacity, coordinates inter-ministerial and non-governmental activities and programmes relating to refugees.

In accordance with Section 9(5) of the Refugees Act, and on behalf of the Office of the Prime Minister, the Department of Refugees Management, and on my own behalf, I am honoured to present this Half-Year Report for the period January to June 2025. This report highlights key achievements, performance indicators, and the collaborative efforts of the Department and its partners in implementing Uganda's refugee response.

We acknowledge, with gratitude, the continued contribution and support of the Government of Uganda, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Secretariat, UNHCR, UN Agencies, as well as Development Partners, Humanitarian Actors (including NGO partners), host communities, refugees, and all stakeholders. Their unwavering commitment, despite ongoing challenges such as significant funding cuts, has been instrumental in sustaining refugee operations across the country.

I particularly extend appreciation to the dedicated staff of the Department of Refugees, whose tireless efforts have ensured the day-to-day management of refugee affairs and the successful preparation of this report. I commend the active participation of all Refugee Desks and the critical coordination role played by the Monitoring and Evaluation Unit throughout the reporting process.

Finally, I recognize the contributions of all Government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies whose roles directly or indirectly impact refugee management in Uganda. Strengthening coordination, partnerships, and collaboration across the refugee response architecture remains vital to ensuring effective service delivery, refugee protection, and welfare— while upholding national interests and aligning with international legal frameworks and standards.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Patrick Okello', with a stylized flourish at the end.

Patrick Okello

COMMISSIONER FOR REFUGEES MANAGEMENT

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Department of Refugees continues to implement Uganda's innovative and inclusive approaches in refugee management.

At the end of June 2025, the registered refugee and asylum seeker population in Uganda stood at 1,927,593 persons (1,887,595 refugees and 39,998 asylum seekers) marking an increase of 130,984 (6.8%) individuals from the registered population in December 2024. Of the total refugee population, 92% live in settlements, while 8% reside in urban areas, mainly around Kampala, and Wakiso districts.

Important to note is, the number of refugees below the age of 18 years has surpassed one million, which demographic structure poses significant challenges to designing and implementing effective interventions aimed at ensuring self-sufficiency and resiliency among refugees.

Since January 2025, over 130,984 new arrivals have been received mainly through the entry points or transit centers such as Nyakabande, Matanda and Bubukwanga. During the reporting period a total of 45,261 refugees have been issued with Refugee, 91,265 refugee households issued with Family Attestation Cards and 5,880 asylum seekers issued with Asylum seeker certificates.

With regards to Refugee Status Determination (RSD), the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) held multiple sessions, including three central sessions and seven field sessions where a total of 2,354 individual asylum seeker applications from 1,022 households were assessed. However, the challenge remains with the appeal cases where Refugee Appeals Board (RAB) only handled 38 appeal cases due to limited funding constraints to facilitate field level appeal cases in the refugee settlements since majority of the appeal applications recorded are from the refugee settlements.

Relatedly, since the beginning of 2025, over 4,725 plots were demarcated and distributed to new refugee households. In the same period, over 327 refugee partner NGOs implementing refugee activities within the refugee response have been registered and coordinated of which 167 have been issued with two-month (2) months period temporary MOUs pending review by the newly established OPM Partnerships oversight committee.

During the period, the Department has continued to enhance coordination of the refugee response where 6 national level monthly coordination meetings were held, while 73 settlement-level refugee response coordination meetings and 315 sector level working group meetings held.

Regarding technical support supervision and monitoring of refugee activities by both technical staff and the political leadership, several regular field visits to refugee settlements to assess refugee response implementation, monitor humanitarian and development activities, engage with refugee and host communities, to enhance accountability and transparency were conducted.

During the reporting period, the department engaged in several national and regional development activities relating to refugees, in line with current international refugee practices including workshops on forced displacement organised by EAC, IGAD and African Union.

In terms of financing to the refugee response, over the 7 years there has been continuous reduction in funding with most recorded this year arising from the US donor freeze causing negative impacts in sectors such as food and nutrition, where WFP has drastically reprioritize food rations further to refugees yet the country keeps on receiving additional refugee numbers on top of the protracted old cases raising questions on the sustainability on the open-door policy if not well managed.

LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AU	:	African Union
BIMS	:	Biometric Identity Management System
Cap.	:	Chapter
CMI	:	Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence
COI	:	Country of Origin Information
CRRF	:	Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework
DLG	:	District Local Government
DOR	:	Department of Refugees
DRC	:	Democratic Republic of Congo
DRDIP	:	Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project
EAC	:	East African Community
GBV	:	Gender Based Violence
GCM	:	Global Compact on Migration
GRF	:	Global Refugee Forum
GROW	:	Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises
HIV/AIDS	:	Human Immune Virus/Acquired Immunodeficiency Syndrome
IACG	:	Inter-Agency Coordination Group meetings
ID	:	Identity Card
IGAD	:	Intergovernmental Authority on Development
IOM	:	International Organization on Migration
IRC	:	International Rescue Committee
ISO	:	Internal Security Organization
M&E	:	Monitoring and Evaluation
MAAIF	:	Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries
MDAs	:	Ministries, Departments, Agencies
MOFA	:	Ministry of Foreign Affairs
MoLG	:	Ministry of Local Government

MOSRDPR	:	Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees
MRDPR	:	Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees
NCIPs	:	Northern Corridor Integration Projects
NCM	:	National Coordination Mechanism
NDP	:	National Development Plan
NGOs	:	Non-Governmental Organisations
NITA-U	:	National Information Technology Authority - Uganda
NRC	:	Norwegian Refugee Council
OAU	:	Organisation for African Unity
OPM	:	Office of the Prime Minister
PSN	:	Persons with Special Needs
RAB	:	Refugee Appeals Board
REC	:	Refugee Eligibility Committee
RIA	:	Regulatory Impact Assessment
RS	:	Refugee Settlements
SRH	:	Sexual Reproductive Health
UDAP	:	Uganda Digital Acceleration Project
UN	:	United Nations
UNDP	:	United Nations Development Programme
UNHCR	:	United High Commissioner for Refugee
UNICEF	:	United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund
UPF	:	Uganda Police Force
URRI	:	Uganda Refugee Resilience Initiative
URRMS	:	Uganda Refugee Response Monitoring System
USA	:	United States of America
WASH	:	Water, and Sanitation, Hygiene
WFP	:	World Food Programme
WHO	:	World Health Organisation

CHAPTER ONE

1.0. Introduction

This report presents a comprehensive series of activities undertaken by the Department of Refugees for the period January – June 2025 calendar year. It covers key highlights of refugee value chain activities within the refugee response management context in Uganda in accordance with the national, regional and international refugee legal frameworks. The refugee value chain activities in Uganda consist of; admission, registration and documentation, status determination, settlement and access to social services, as well as efforts to pursue durable solutions to refugees, namely voluntary repatriation, integration and resettlement to another country.

1.2 Background

Uganda has been hosting refugees since 1943 (World War II Polish Refugees) to date, but under rapidly changing circumstances. Uganda's obligation to host refugees is premised on its commitments to the 1951 Refugee Convention and its Protocol of 1967, as well as the 1969 OAU Convention. Uganda has also ratified other International Legal Instruments relating to Fundamental Human Rights.

The 1995 Constitution puts Human Rights, including those of Refugees, at the center of our democratic principles. Article 189 (1) Sixth Schedule, Item 5 of the 1995 Constitution of Uganda, centralized refugee management. Further, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) is responsible for the coordination and management of refugee response in Uganda, through its Department of Refugees.

Established by an Act of Parliament, the Department of Refugees under Section 7, with its functions outlined in Section 8, as the principal government body, is responsible for coordinating and overseeing all aspects of refugee and asylum-seeker management in Uganda. These include; receiving, registering,

documenting, determining status of refugees, as well as settling them in addition to managing partnerships in the refugee response.

The Department collaborates with various government agencies, including the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) as the Principal International refugee agency, humanitarian and development organizations (International, regional and national NGOs), as well as local authorities (hosting communities) to provide vital services to refugees and host communities. The Departments refugee programmes and activities are guided by its Vision and mission as follows.

Departmental Vision: To find durable solutions to refugee problems by addressing refugee issues within the broad framework of Government policy and to promote self-reliance and local integration of refugees in the communities through social development initiatives in hosting areas.

Departmental Mission: To manage the response of refugees in Uganda by ensuring their welfare and protection within the framework of national policy, international laws and standards while safeguarding the Local and National interests.

1.3 Mandate of the Department of Refugees

In accordance with the 1951 Convention relating to the status of refugees and other international obligations of Uganda, the Department of Refugees was established under Section 7 of the Refugees Act, 2006 (Now Cap. 312) to repeal the Control of Alien Refugees Act, Cap. 62 and to provide for refugee related matters. Section 8 of the Act further outlines its specific responsibilities as follows:

(1) Responsible for all administrative matters concerning refugees in Uganda and, in that capacity, co-ordinate inter-ministerial and non-Governmental activities and programmes relating to refugees.

(2) Without prejudice to the generality of subsection (1):-

- (a) is the Secretariat of the Eligibility Committee (REC);
- (b) advise the Government and the Eligibility Committee on policy and other matters relating to refugees;
- (c) advise the Government on international and regional conventions and Government's obligations relating to refugees;
- (d) protect refugees and coordinate the provision of services for their welfare;
- (e) identify and initiate projects for refugees and refugee-affected areas;
- (f) advise and work in liaison with the UNHCR and other organisations on refugee programmes and their implementation;
- (g) implement national and regional development plans relating to refugees, in line with current international refugee practices;
- (h) promote and participate in inter-state and regional initiatives for voluntary repatriation of refugees;
- (i) promote Uganda's regional and international cooperation on refugee matters with other countries and international organisations;
- (j) obtain country of origin information about applications of asylum seekers;
- (k) custodian of government properties in refugee settlements;
- (l) issue identity cards and recommendations for travel documents to refugees; and
- (m) ensure the maintenance of law and order in refugee settlements.

1.4 Coordination and Management of the Uganda Refugee Response by the Department of Refugees

While the Department of Refugees is responsible for the Government's coordination of refugee affairs in Uganda, the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) is the international agency mandated with refugee

protection, resource mobilization, and humanitarian assistance. UNHCR operates in close collaboration with the Department of Refugees to ensure the effective implementation of Uganda's refugee response.

UNHCR, as the key UN agency for refugee matters, provides technical and financial support, advocates for refugee rights, and mobilizes international resources to sustain Uganda's refugee response. It also works in liaison with the Department of Refugees to implement durable solutions, including voluntary repatriation, local integration, and resettlement to third countries.

Uganda operates liberal refugee approaches under the open-door policy, especially to African refugees in distress, guided by Pan-Africanism and the spirit of "Ubuntu" (humanity for others). Uganda's settlement approach, a progressive protection model where refugees are welcomed to live side by side with locals, host communities, registered, allocated land, and provided with documentation. This conducive policy environment has enabled the inclusion of Refugees in National Development Plans, and other development frameworks e.g. Settlement Transformation Agenda, Refugee hosting district development plans, CRRF Sector Response plans, census, financial as well as cash-based interventions.

The Department of Refugees oversees refugee management and embraces the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) by coordinating a multi-stakeholder approach to refugee integration and self-reliance in line with the Refugees Act of 2006. The CRRF approach is meant to address the protracted refugee situation right from the start of conflicts and displacement to reaffirm our commitment to solidarity and collective action, ensuring that no refugee is left behind in line with the 2030 Agenda call to 'leave no-one behind' and to better manage forced migration.

In collaboration with UNHCR, the CRRF Secretariat, and other partners, the Department harmonizes efforts among Ministries, Departments, Agencies (MDAs),

security agencies, and refugee-hosting District Local Governments while fostering partnerships with NGOs, multilateral and bilateral organizations, the private sector, civil society, and advocacy groups. These coordinated efforts sustain Uganda's status as one of the world's largest refugee-hosting countries, ensuring protection, humanitarian support, and opportunities for refugee self-reliance.

The Department of Refugees is structured within the Office of the Prime Minister under the political supervision of a cabinet Minister and Minister of State and the Permanent Secretary serving as the Responsible/Accounting Officer. The Department with its headquarters in Kampala is headed by the Commissioner for Refugee Management, overseeing clusters of 13 recognised and gazetted refugee settlements, located in 12 District Local Governments

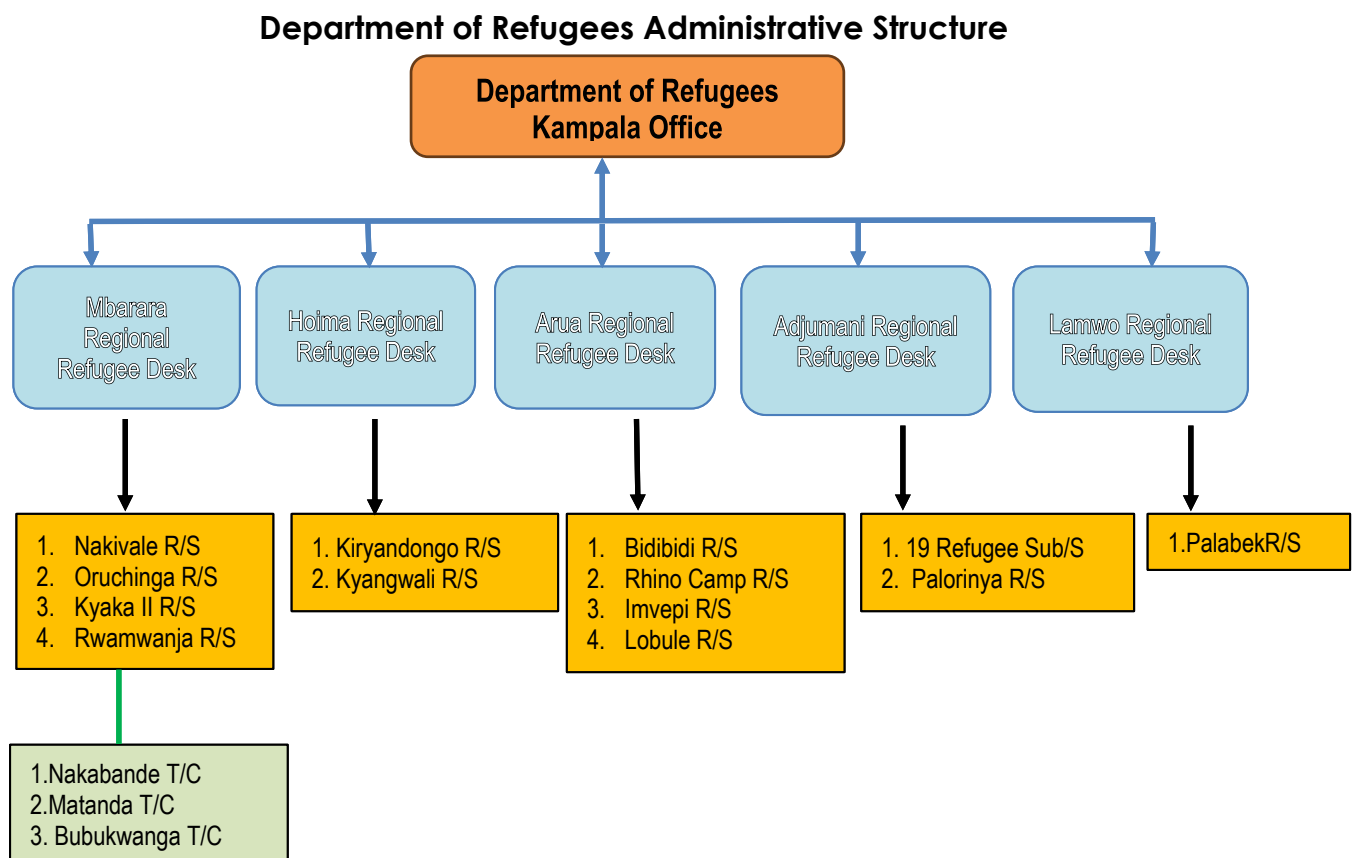


Figure 1. Showing the Department of Refugees Administrative Structure

1.5 Departmental Workforce (Staffing)

The Department of Refugees oversees the coordination of management, welfare, and service delivery for a rapidly growing refugee population of 1.9 million, which requires both direct service provision and collaboration with government agencies, humanitarian organizations, and host communities for an effective service delivery. Given the complexity of services—including receiving refugees and settling them, food distribution, shelter management, healthcare, psychosocial support, and protection for vulnerable groups—the current staffing levels present a significant challenge.

With only 491 staff members, each is estimated to be responsible for over 3,896 refugees on average as compared to the recommended 1 staff member per 50–100 refugees for basic needs. This staffing shortfall significantly hampers the department's ability to provide adequate support and coordination, highlighting the urgent need for additional personnel and resources to improve efficiency and service quality.

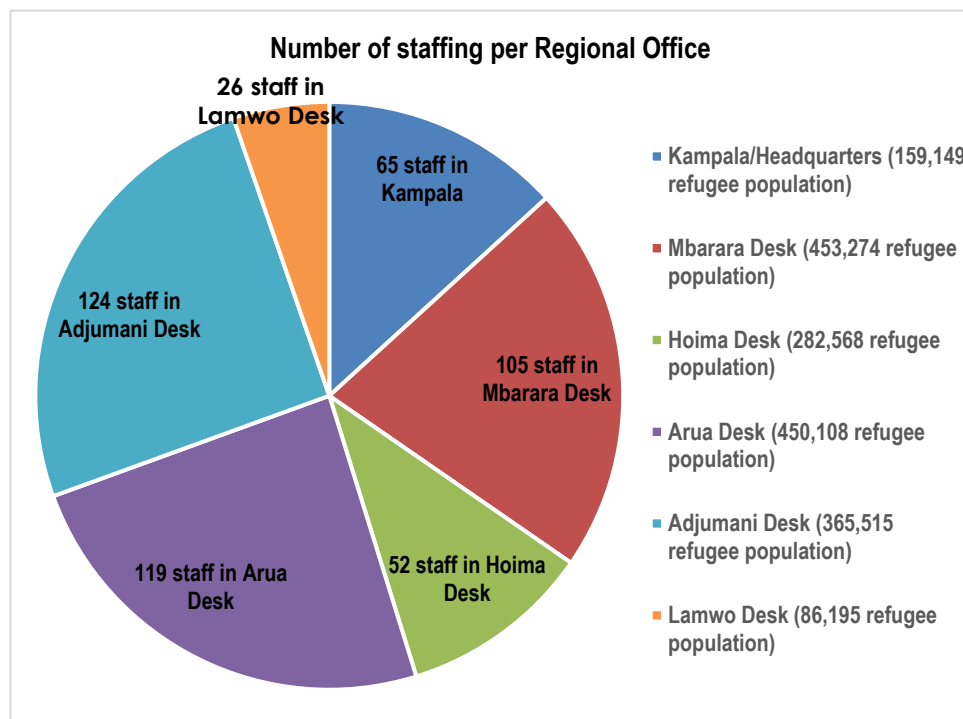
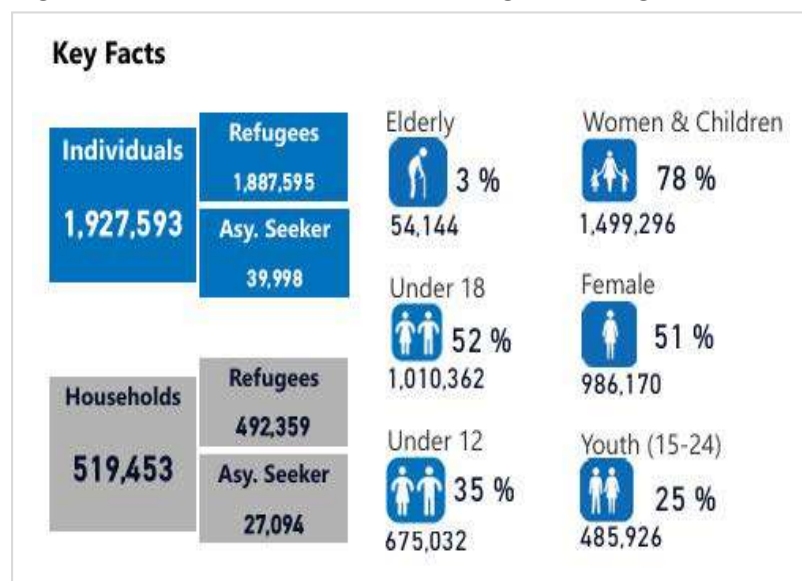


Figure 2: Showing staffing numbers per refugee desk

CHAPTER TWO

2.0 Refugee Statistics in Uganda

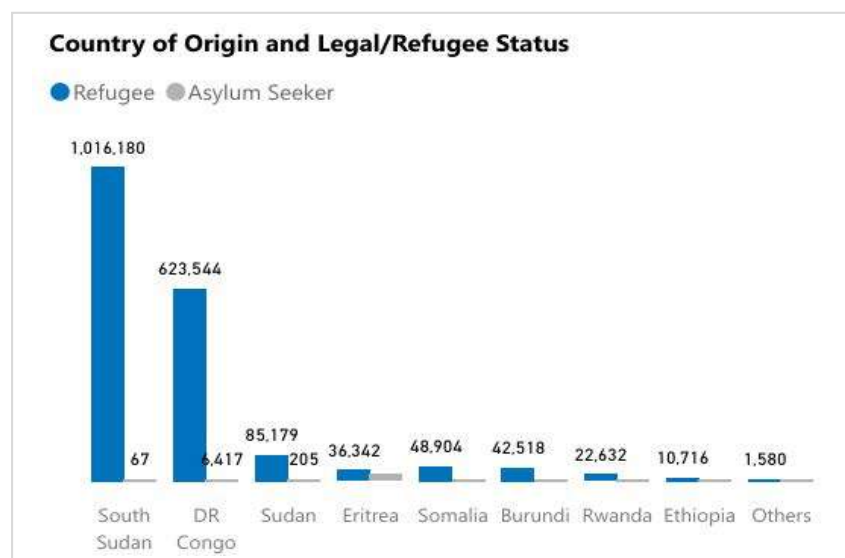
Uganda currently is the sixth largest refugee-hosting country in the world and the



largest in Africa. By the end of June 2025, Uganda was a host to 1,927,593 individual refugee refugees from 519,453 households of whom 1,887,595 individuals from 492,359 households are confirmed refugees while 39, 998 individuals from 27,094 are asylum seekers.

Figure 3: Summary showing refugee statistics from January to June 2025

Majority of the refugees come from South Sudan, 53% (1,021,624), Democratic Republic of Congo, 33% (636,106), Sudan, 4% (77,104, and the remaining 10%



(192,759) are from other countries. Notably, Uganda hosts the highest number of displaced South Sudanese outside of South Sudan, and projections suggest this number could surpass 1.1 million by the end of 2025.

Figure 4: showing refugee and Asylum seeker population by country of origin as of June 2025

Women and children constitute 78% (1,499,296) of the refugee population, elderly (60 years and over) make up 3% (54,144), youth (15-24 years) comprise 25% (485,926), those under 18 years account for 52% (1,010,362), implying that Uganda's and 51% (986,170) of the population is female. Also important to note is Uganda now hosts over 1 million refugee children as of end of June 2025, the number of refugees below the age of 18 years which has surpassed one million. This demographic structure poses significant challenges to designing and implementing effective interventions aimed at ensuring self-sufficiency and resiliency among refugees.

Of the total refugee population, 92% live in settlements, while 8% reside in urban areas, mainly around Kampala, Wakiso, and Mukono Districts.



Figure 5: Showing percentage of refugees living in refugee settlements visa-vie urban

2.1 Refugee New Arrival Trends

Cumulatively, 116,251 refugees and asylum seekers have been registered in Uganda since January 2025. The individuals registered in 2025 are mainly from DRC 58% (67,725), South Sudan 27% (31,254), Sudan 13%(15,485), and others 2% (1,787).



Figure 6: Showing new arrivals received from January - June 2025

The total population at transit, reception, and collection points at the end of the reporting is 7,773 individuals, with 4,357 in West Nile and 3,416 in the South and Midwest. Some of the reception and transit centres remain overcrowded; Kiryandongo (213%), and Nyumanzi (142%), straining the limited resources available for lifesaving WASH, protection, health, shelter, and nutrition assistance. There are also gaps in nutrition, protection, and shelter, at reception facilities receiving new arrivals from both DRC and South Sudan.

During the reporting period January – June 2025 (last 6 months, the highest number of new arrivals recorded was in April, followed by March and this was partly due to the conflict in North Kivu, in the DRC.



Figure 7: Showing new arrival registration trend for the last 6 months (Dec 2024 - June 2025)

2.2 Urban Refugees

Although various actors commonly refer to refugees residing in urban districts as "urban refugees," the official designation applies only to those formally registered by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) to reside in Kampala.

In Uganda, Kampala is the only location where refugees are officially registered and permitted to live as urban refugees.

By the end of June 2025, the reporting period, 159,018 refugees were officially registered as residing in Kampala Urban, representing 8% of the total refugee population. They are assigned to specific divisions within the city but often move to surrounding districts such as Wakiso and Mukono. The Government does not provide direct support to refugees living outside the settlements, including those in Kampala, who largely fend for themselves. However, some humanitarian partners extend assistance to refugees living outside settlements. Under Uganda's open-door policy, refugees have the right to freedom of movement and may choose where to reside.

The majority, 50% (79,509), of urban refugees are registered in Makindye Division, followed by Kampala Central 25% (39,755), Lubaga Division 20% (31,804), Kawempe Division 3% (4,771), and Nakawa Division 2% (3,179), summarily accounting for the total urban refugee population of 159,018.

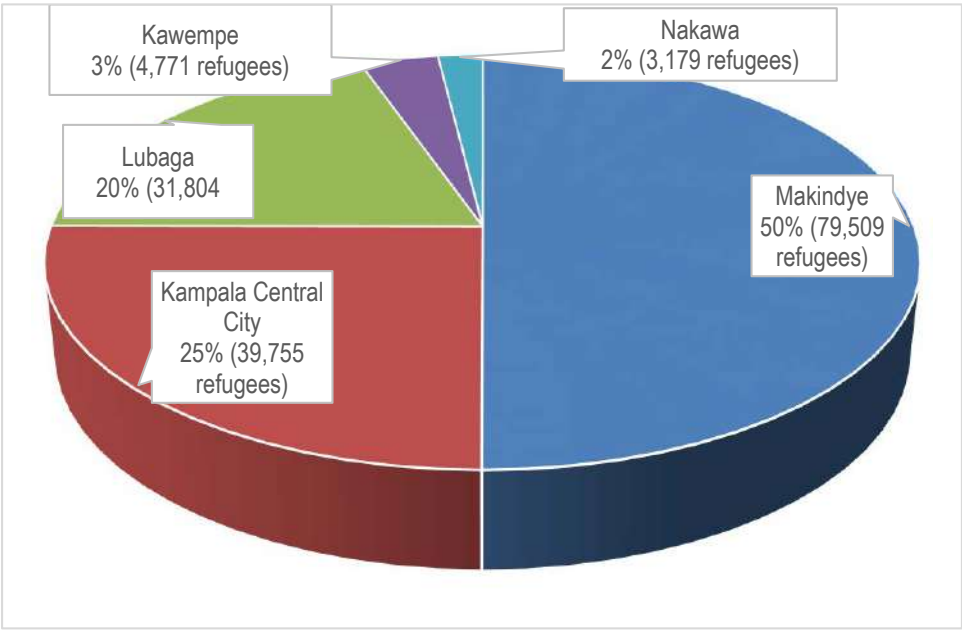


Figure 8: Showing distribution of Urban Refugees

The urban refugee population has grown significantly, increasing from 88,157 refugees in 2021 to 159,018 refugees by June 2025, representing an 80 % rise over five years. Despite the growing international support for urban refugees, who often arrive independently and fend for themselves, further research is needed to understand the factors driving this increase in urban migration. Local concerns have emerged, with some accusing urban refugees of competing for employment with nationals, particularly in sectors like the Boda Boda business. Additionally, refugees are often able to pay higher rents, displacing locals in the housing market.

These dynamics have contributed to tensions between the local population and refugees, raising questions about the sources of income that enable refugees to outcompete nationals in the urban economy.

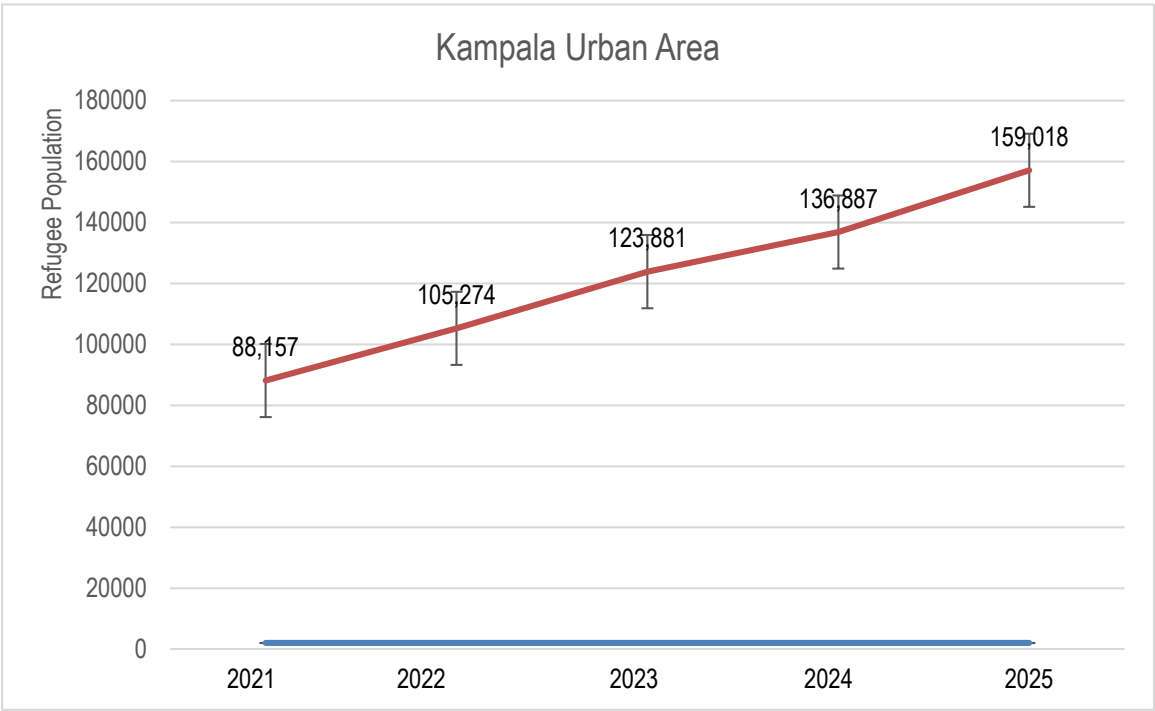


Figure 9: Showing trend of Kampala Urban Refugees for the last 5 years (2021 -2025)

While the largest refugee populations in Uganda are South Sudanese and Congolese nationals, who together make up 86% of the total refugee population, the largest urban refugee groups in Kampala are Eritreans, accounting for 37% of the urban refugee population, followed by Somalis at 25%.

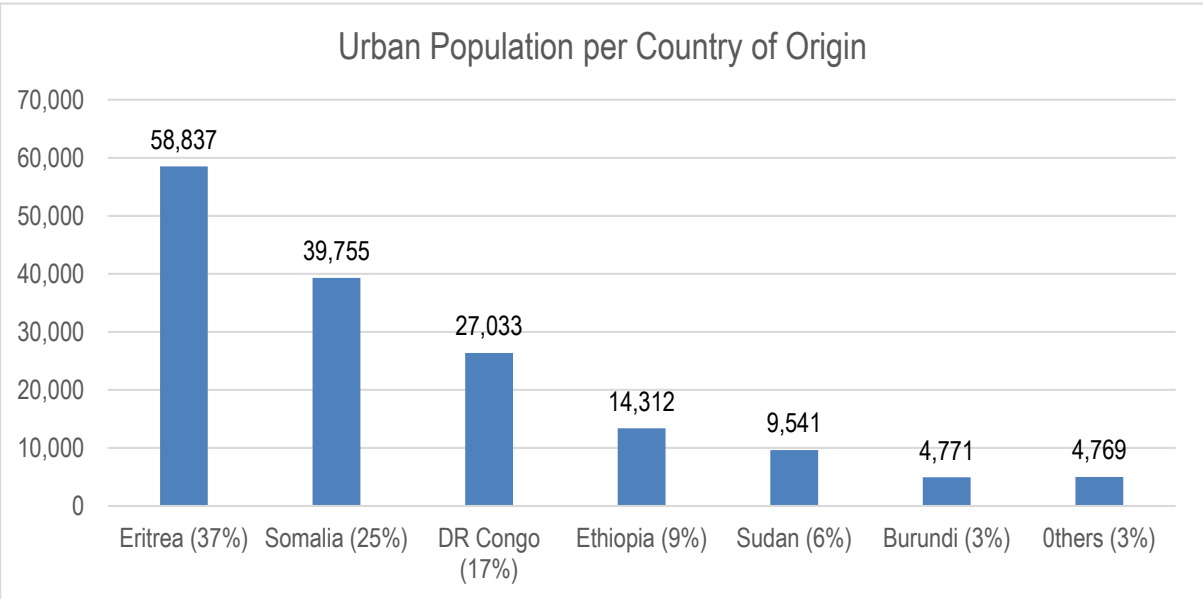
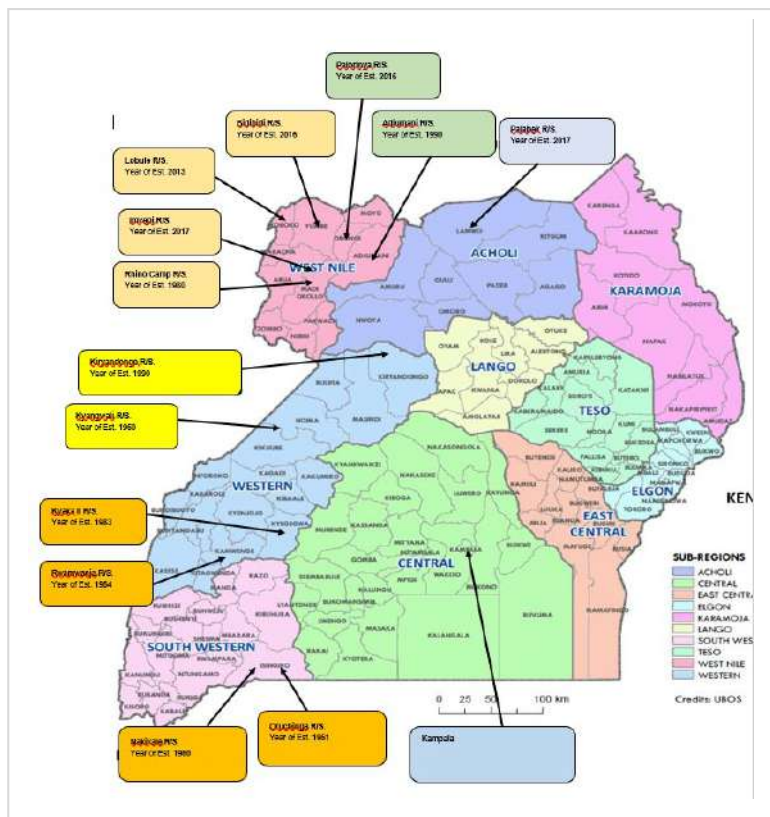


Figure 9: Showing Urban Refugee population by country of origin

2.3 Settlement of Refugees in Uganda

Uganda operates a settlement model rather than establishing refugee camps, a refugee household is allocated approximately 30x30 meter plot for shelter and subsistence farming. Uganda's settlement model is widely recognized for promoting long-term development and integration.

This settlement approach, a progressive protection model where refugees are welcomed to live side by side with locals, host communities, registered, allocated land, and provided with documentation and recognizes refugees' entitlement to the freedom of movement. Refugee settlements in Uganda are established on both government-owned land and community-owned land, with the Office of the Prime Minister - Department of Refugees serving as the custodian of these lands.



In the Southwest of Uganda, refugee settlements are located on government-owned land covering an area of approximately over 451.98 square miles. These settlements include: Nakivale, Oruchinga, Kyaka II, Rwamwanja, Kyankwali and Kiryandongo.

In the West Nile and North, refugee settlements are situated on community-owned land spanning approximately 605.009 square miles. These settlements

include: Adjumani, Palorinya, Palabek, Lobule, Bidibidi, Rhino Camp and Imvepi. Acquisition of land is facilitated through negotiations involving district leadership, lower sub-counties, and landowners. Once secured, formal agreements are signed with individual landlords, witnessed, and approved by district and sub-county authorities.

To strengthen relationships with landowners, the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) conducts regular consultative meetings to address land-related concerns. However, limited support for landlords poses challenges to land acquisition and fosters tensions, with some landlords threatening to reclaim their land as a source of livelihood.

The Office of the Prime Minister - Department of Refugees oversees the management and stewardship of all these lands, ensuring that they are used appropriately for refugee settlement and development purposes. Several refugee settlements in Uganda including Imvepi, Lobule, Palabek, Kyaka II, and

Kiryandongo, have already reached or are approaching their population capacity limits. Only a few settlements, such as Bidibidi, Rhino Camp, Adjumani, Palorinya, Oruchinga, and Kyangwali, still have some available space. The situation suggests that if Uganda were to receive over 117,271 additional refugees,

Settlement	Land Area (Km2)	Population 30th June	Capacity Population	Remaining Population
Bidibidi	234.097	207,652	299,123	91,471
Imvepi	92.2	73,352	65,000	-8,352
Rhino Camp	115.18	186,441	200,000	13,559
Lobule	2.19	6,353	6,000	-353
Adjumani	50.402	230,944	284,608	53,664
Palorinya	42.94	141,165	200,000	58,835
Palabek	68	92,440	81,655	-10,785
Nakivale	182	264,547	200,000	-64,547
Oruchinga	10.75	8,112	25,000	16,888
Kyaka II	45.08	135,203	120,000	-15,203
Rwamwanja	71.25	103,015	100,000	-3,015
Kyangwali	100.9	150,748	190,000	39,252
Kiryandongo	42	154,143	100,000	-54,143

there would be insufficient space within the current settlements to accommodate them.

In such a scenario, the Office of the Prime Minister would be required to secure additional land for the settlement of refugees. This would involve identifying and acquiring new land resources to ensure

continued support and accommodation for refugees, especially considering the unpredictable nature of refugee influxes from neighboring regions.

The need for additional land underscores the pressure on Uganda's refugee management system, as the country remains a key destination for refugees fleeing conflicts in neighboring countries. OPM, in collaboration with local authorities and international partners, would need to explore sustainable land management strategies to prevent overcrowding and ensure that refugees have access to the resources necessary for their survival and integration. Additionally, with the increasing influx of refugees, there is a need to expand existing settlements or establish new ones to accommodate the growing numbers.

CHAPTER THREE

3.0 Highlights of Refugee Interventions Undertaken by the Department of Refugees from January to June 2025

3.1 Receiving and Admission of Refugees

Refugees enter Uganda mainly through land borders from conflict-affected neighboring countries. They are first received at entry points or transit centers such as Nyakabande, Matanda and Bubukwanga, where they undergo initial screening by security agencies, health checks, and manual registration by the Department of Refugees (DOR) and UNHCR. Basic needs like food, water, medical care, and temporary shelter are provided at reception centers.

The key entry transit centers include:

1. Elegu Transit Center – Located in Amuru District, near the Uganda-South Sudan border, it primarily receives refugees from South Sudan.
2. Nyakabande Transit Center – Located in Kisoro District, near the Uganda-DRC border, it mainly receives refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo (DRC).
3. Matanda Transit Center – Located in Kanungu District, it also receives refugees from DRC, especially those entering Uganda through southwestern border points.
4. Sebagoro Reception/Transit Point – Located in Kikuube District, near Lake Albert, it serves Congolese refugees arriving by boat.
5. Bubukwanga Transit Center – Located in Bundibugyo District, primary receives DRC refugees.
6. Lokung Reception Center – Located in Lamwo District, primary receives South Sudanese refugees.

7. Bunagana Border Point – While not a formal transit center, it serves as a major entry and temporary holding point for DRC refugees before relocation.
8. Nimule/Elegu Collection Point – Another key reception area for South Sudanese refugees before they are moved to settlements

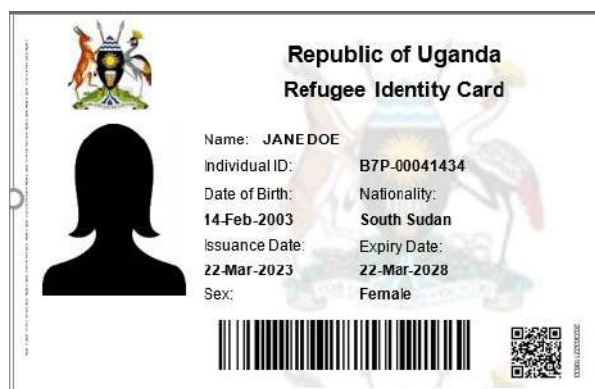


New arrivals of Congolese refugees received at Matanda transit center and are being relocated to Nakivale Refugee Settlement

[3.2 Refugee Registration and Documentation](#)

Nationality Screening is conducted by the Nationality Screening Committee before registration. The registration team captures biodata using a registration form, enters it into the ProGressV4 system (electronic refugee registration system), and records biometric data via BIMS (Biometric Identity Management System). Registered individuals receive a Refugee Family Attestation, Asylum Seeker Certificate, or Refugee ID. For newborn registration, the household head presents a birth notification, vaccination card, and parent's ID. The accompanying member undergoes biometric verification, after which the newborn is added to the system, and relevant documents are issued.

3.3 Issuance of Refugee Identity Cards (ID Cards)



In Uganda, Refugee Identity Cards (ID Cards) are issued to recognized refugees and asylum seekers to grant them legal status and access to services. Managed by the Department of Refugees and UNHCR, those over 18 and registered are eligible to receive the card, which includes

essential information like the refugee's name, photograph, status, and ID number. The card is valid for a limited time and can be renewed with re-verification of the refugee status. These ID cards are crucial for accessing services such as healthcare, education, and employment, and protect refugees under Ugandan law. During the reporting period, a total of 45,261 refugees have been issued with Refugee IDs.

3.4 Issuance of Refugee Family Attestation Cards



Family Attestation Cards serve as official proof of refugee family registration and composition. Issued after verification, these cards list all



household members, including minors, and help families access aid, healthcare, education, and other services. They also serve as identification and may be updated periodically to ensure continued support and protection while refugees awaiting their asylum status determination processes are issued with asylum seeker certificates. During the reporting period, a total of 91,265 refugee households were issued with Family Attestation Cards while 5,880 asylum seekers have been issued with Asylum seeker certificates.

3.5 Refugee Status Determination – (Asylum-Seeker Assessment) Processes

3.5.1 First instance Assessment by the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC)

The Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) is an inter-ministerial statutory committee established under Section 11 of the Refugees Act, 2006. Its mandate is to review and adjudicate applications for refugee status in Uganda. REC operates through field visits and urban sessions, processing asylum applications in compliance with Ugandan laws and international standards.



The Department of Refugees (DoR) serves as the Secretariat and Chair for REC, with representation from Permanent Secretaries (PS) of key ministries and agencies, including the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, Ministry of Internal Affairs, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Ministry of Local Government, External Security Organization, Internal Security Organization, Uganda Police Force (UPF) and UNHCR that participates in REC proceedings as an observer.

During the reporting period, the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) held multiple sessions, including three central sessions and seven field sessions. A total of 2,354 individual asylum seeker applications from 1,022 households were assessed. Additionally, REC conducted border monitoring visits at Bunagana and Nyakabande (Kisoro District), Bubukwanga (Bundibugyo District), and Matanda Transit Center (Kanungu District) to assess asylum seeker trends from the DRC, evaluate humanitarian assistance, engage local authorities on asylum procedures, and gather Country of Origin Information (COI) for policy guidance.



RSD taking place in Kampala at the Department of Refugees to address the backlog of asylum seekers

[3.5.2 Second instance assessment by the Refugee Appeals Board \(RAB\).](#)

The Refugee Appeals Board (RAB) is established under Section 16 of the Refugee Act, 2006 with the Appellant functions and Powers within the Refugee Status Determination (RSD) Procedures as provided in Section 17, of the same Act and Regulation 37 of the Refugee Regulations, 2010. Its 5 board members are appointed by the Ministry of Relief, Disaster Preparedness, and Refugees and supported by 2 members of the Secretariat from the Department of Refugees.



RAB Members at their inauguration by the Hon.Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees (4th from Right)

During the reporting period, RAB handled only 38 individual appeal cases from 14 households due to limited funding to facilitate field level appeal case handling since majority of the appeal applications recorded are from refugee settlements.



A Refugee Appeals Board (RAB) session being conducted in Nakivale Refugee Settlement with members of the Refugee Appeals Board (RAB) for appellants dismissed by the Refugee Eligibility Committee

[3.6 Refugee Settlements and Access to Social Services](#)

[3.6.1 Plot Demarcation for Refugees in Uganda](#)

Plot demarcation in Uganda's refugee settlements involves allocating land to refugee households for shelter and livelihood activities. Coordinated by the Department of Refugees, this process assigns plots based on household size and land availability. Plots are physically marked, and beneficiaries receive documentation confirming their allocation. While primarily for housing, the land may also support small-scale farming and other livelihood activities. Refugees do not own the land but are granted user rights under fair distribution guidelines. Proper demarcation improves settlement organization, security, and service access, fostering refugee self-reliance. Since the beginning of 2025, 4,725 plots were demarcated and distributed to new refugee households.

3.6.2 Legal assistance for Refugees in Uganda

The Department of Refugees provides legal assistance to ensure the rights and protection of refugees under Ugandan and international law. It supports refugees by addressing cases of detention, refoulement (forced return), and other rights violations. Legal aid, mediation, and court representation are provided for issues such as disputes, gender-based violence, and child protection. Through its community services, the department educates refugees about their rights, obligations, and legal procedures in Uganda. Legal assistance facilitates refugee integration, access to services, and protection within Uganda's legal framework. Since the beginning of 2025, over 3,115 refugees have received legal assistance through the support of protection partners e.g. Refugee Law Project etc.

3.6.3 Coordination and monitoring of refugee partners

The Office of the Prime Minister – Department of Refugees provides the overarching policy and coordination framework of the refugee response in Uganda. Operational coordination takes place within a four-level coordination structure as follows:

- 1) Leadership level, co-led by OPM and UNHCR.
- 2) National-level inter-agency, co-led by OPM Department for Refugees, Ministry of Local Government (MoLG) and UNHCR;
- 3) Technical sector level, co-led by relevant Ministries, UN and NGO partners; and
- 4) District/settlement level, co-led by OPM Department for Refugees, District Local Government (DLG) and UNHCR.

During the reporting period, the Department of Refugees led by the Commissioner for Refugees co-chaired together with the UNHCR, Ministry of Local Government, and attended by NGO partners, 6 monthly national Inter-Agency Coordination Group meetings (IACG) which provided a platform for discussion of refugee related matters including coordinating refugee response efforts, ensuring

alignment with national policies, and fostering collaboration among stakeholders. Participants include OPM, MoLG, UN Agencies (UNHCR, WFP, UNICEF, WHO, UNDP, etc.), International & National NGOs involved in refugee response, Development and Humanitarian Partners.

The Uganda Refugee Response Monitoring System (URRMS) also facilitated electronic monitoring and coordination of refugee interventions. During the reporting period, the URRMS had registered 160 refugee partners implementing within the refugee response, in addition to the 167 new partners issued with two (2) months period temporary MOUs following the guidance from the Permanent Secretary awaiting the review of their applications by the newly established OPM Partnerships oversight committee marking the total number of registered refugee partners to 327. In addition to e-monitoring, physical monitoring conducted throughout the year revealed several critical observations. Most interventions focused on groups rather than individual households, and many projects prioritized activity completion overarching long-term results. Livelihood initiatives often relied on outdated technologies, while poor project design contributed to interventions falling short of their intended impact. Repeated group memberships across multiple partners were common, and a lack of necessary data made it difficult to assess project outcomes and overall impact. Many interventions showed minimal long-term benefits, with some requiring excessively long training periods. Weak collaboration among partners working on similar projects further hindered effectiveness, while an increasing dependency on partner support was observed among refugees. Additionally, there was evidence of resource wastage and overpriced inputs, raising concerns about efficiency and cost-effectiveness.

[3.6.4 Settlement level coordination](#)

These meetings are key platforms for managing and coordinating refugee assistance at the local level. They bring together various stakeholders involved in service delivery within refugee settlements. Participants include the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Settlement Commandant and Sector Leads, UNHCR Field

Staff, Local Government Representatives, Implementing & Operational Partners, and Sector Working Group. Representatives (Health, Education, Protection, etc. These meetings ensure that responses are well-coordinated, community-centered, and aligned with Uganda's refugee policies and international standards. Since January 2025, 46 settlement-level refugee response coordination meetings and 165 sector level working group meetings were conducted.

[3.6.5 Urban Refugee Protection Working Group Meetings](#)

The Department of Refugees successfully coordinated monthly Urban Protection Working Group meetings under the urban refugee program. Chaired by the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR, these meetings brought together various partners to ensure a coordinated approach to protection assistance for urban refugees.



OPM and UNHCR conducting the urban protection working group meeting at UNHCR with partners in the urban refugee programme

[3.6.6 Linking Refugees to Obtaining Civil Marriage in Uganda](#)

In Uganda, refugees are allowed to access civil marriage services under the same legal framework as Ugandan nationals, Refugees can marry under Uganda's

Marriage Act, which provides for both civil and religious marriages and are entitled to the same rights as nationals regarding marriage registration.

Refugees register their marriage with the Registrar of Marriages to obtain a legal certificate. The registration process involves submitting relevant documents, including a Valid Refugee Identity Card or Asylum Seeker Certificate. Since January 2025 a total of 322 refugees were supported to obtain civil (marriage registration) status.

3.6.7 Deployment of Police Personnel for Security within Refugee Settlements in Uganda

The deployment of police personnel within refugee settlements in Uganda is a critical component of ensuring law and order, protecting refugees, and promoting peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities. Uganda has established a robust framework for refugee protection, with security playing a central role in the response. The Police in settlements are responsible for ensuring public safety within refugee settlements, preventing and addressing any criminal activities. Police work to protect refugees from violence, exploitation, and abuse, ensuring their safety and security. Police help mediate conflicts; Community security dialogues are conducted to promote peaceful co-existence between refugees and host communities. Police are deployed in refugee settlements, where they work closely with other security agencies such as the Internal Security Organization (ISO), and Chieftaincy of Military Intelligence among others to provide security. Police adopt community policing strategies to build trust with refugees and host communities, which is essential for effective law enforcement and conflict resolution. Over 509 police security personnel within refugee settlements were facilitated with monthly allowances, transport, fuel and stationery to support maintaining law, order and community policing in the refugee settlements.

3.6.8 Commemoration of events by Refugee stakeholders

Refugee stakeholders, including the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), UNHCR, NGO partners, and local governments, actively participated in commemoration of key international days to raise awareness, promote refugee rights, and foster inclusion.



Hon. MOSRDP&R, presiding over the World Refugee Day Commemoration as the Chief Guest in Panyadoli Primary School Ground in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement



World Refugee Day: Uganda joined the rest of the world to commemorate the International World Refugee Day on June 20, 2025. The event was celebrated in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement (Panyadoli Secondary School) under the theme “Solidarity with Refugees”.

Hon. MOSRDP&R, accompanied by the Permanent Secretary-OPM, to Panyadoli Primary School Ground during the 2025 World Refugee Day Celebrations

Key activities included exhibitions, cultural performances, awareness campaigns, media engagements, and policy dialogues. Partners highlight Uganda's refugee model, advocate for durable solutions, and promote peaceful coexistence with host communities.



Above is Hon. MOSRDP&R, together with Permanent Secretary-OPM, the UNHCR Country Representative, the UN Resident Coordinator, Commissioner for Refugees and other delegates during the World Refugee Day Commemoration event in Kiryandongo Refugee Settlement

International Women's Day (March 8th): Joined the rest of the world to celebrate the achievements of refugee women and girls advocating for gender equality and protection against GBV. Partners organized women led dialogues, skills development sessions and awareness campaigns on women rights.

Day of the African Child (June 16th): Focuses on child rights and protection, particularly for refugee children facing vulnerabilities. Activities included children's forums, education-focused discussions, advocacy campaigns and recreational events. The event highlighted issues such as child labour, reinforced commitments to improving the welfare of refugee children through policy and programmatic interventions.

3.6.9 Settlement-Level Dialogue Meetings on Peaceful Coexistence

Settlement level dialogue meetings on peaceful coexistence were organized to foster harmony between refugees and host communities. These meetings bring together key stakeholders to address tensions, promote mutual understanding and strengthen social cohesion. The meetings address disputes arising from resource sharing, cultural differences and social interactions. They also provide a platform for open discussions between refugees, host communities and local leaders. They also provide collaborations, trust-building and peaceful interactions. They educate communities on their rights, responsibilities, and the benefits of coexistence and support traditional and local leadership structures in managing community issues.

These meetings play a crucial role in preventing conflicts, fostering unity, and ensuring peaceful relations in refugee-hosting areas. Since January 2025, 26 settlement-level dialogue meetings on peaceful coexistence were conducted

3.6.10 Community Based Protection Services

The Community Services Unit at the Department of Refugees plays a critical role in enhancing access to essential services for refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda. It coordinates with partners and government institutions to provide psychosocial support, conduct outreach activities, and facilitate peaceful coexistence between refugees and host communities. The unit addresses critical issues such as gender-based violence, health service transitions, and child protection through case management and awareness sessions. It also manages referrals to settlements, organizes commemorations of key international days, and educates refugees on their rights and obligations. These efforts contribute to promoting resilience, safety, and harmonious integration within host communities.

Since January 2025, the Community Services Unit made notable progress in supporting refugees and asylum seekers. It delivered psychosocial support to 719 individuals, addressing concerns such as gender-based violence and HIV/AIDS

medication adherence. The unit managed 370 complex cases through joint case management and organized dialogues on peaceful coexistence to promote harmony among refugees and host communities. A total of 273 refugees were referred to settlements, while Best Interest Assessments were conducted for unaccompanied minors, and 195 individuals were recommended for civil marriages. The team participated in joint health monitoring to facilitate the transition of health services to the government and commemorated key national and international events. Additionally, awareness sessions on gender-based violence, child protection, and refugee rights were conducted across all refugee settlements and for urban refugees in Kampala.



Refugee leaders, refugees and host communities attending one the peaceful coexistence dialogues at Kabuusu Access Center in Kampala

[3.7 Voluntary Repatriation](#)

Over the past four years, 13,929 Burundian refugees from 3,988 households have been registered for voluntary return to their home country. In 2024 alone, 1,460 refugees from 387 households were repatriated. The Government of Uganda, UNHCR, and the Government of Burundi continue to uphold a tripartite agreement to facilitate these returns. However, many returnees face difficulties adapting to Burundi's economic conditions, which are often less favorable than those in

Uganda. With a total refugee population of 1,796,609, the 13,929 repatriated refugees represent less than 1%—highlighting the need for greater efforts by UNHCR, the Ugandan government, and the international community to enhance voluntary repatriation initiatives. Meanwhile, volatile conditions in other countries continue to complicate the process.

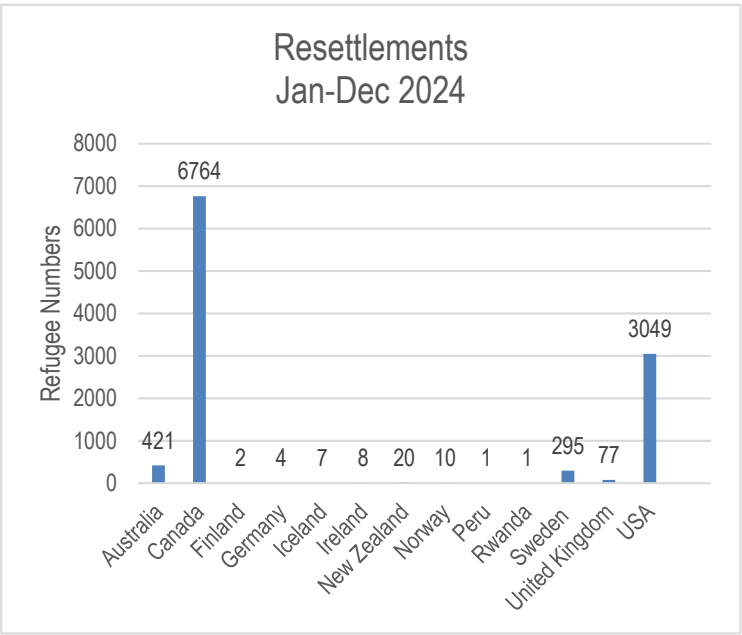


The above graph illustrates voluntary returnees since 2020

3.8 Resettlements to Other Countries

Since January 2024, a total of 10,659 refugees have been resettled in various countries with the assistance of IOM and UNHCR. Over 63.5% of resettlements occurred in Canada, 29% in the USA, 4% in Australia, 3% in Sweden and the remaining 0.5% were across nine other countries.

Country of Destination	Jan-Dec 2024
Australia	421
Canada	6764
Finland	2
Germany	4
Iceland	7
Ireland	8
New Zealand	20
Norway	10
Peru	1
Rwanda	1
Sweden	295
United Kingdom	77
USA	3049
	10,659



3.9 Field Support Supervision Missions

The Department of Refugees, both technical staff and the political leadership conducted regular field visits to refugee settlements to assess refugee response implementation, monitor humanitarian and development activities, engage with refugee and host communities, enhance accountability and transparency, strengthen multi-stakeholder coordination, and support policy and decision-making. These visits reinforce the government's commitment to a well-coordinated, effective, and sustainable refugee response in Uganda.

3.10 Progress on the National Refugee Policy

While Uganda has a Refugee Act and various practices in place, it still lacks a comprehensive National Refugee Policy. A well-documented policy is crucial to align Uganda's refugee response with international laws and best practices, particularly as the refugee population continues to grow and donor support becomes increasingly unpredictable.

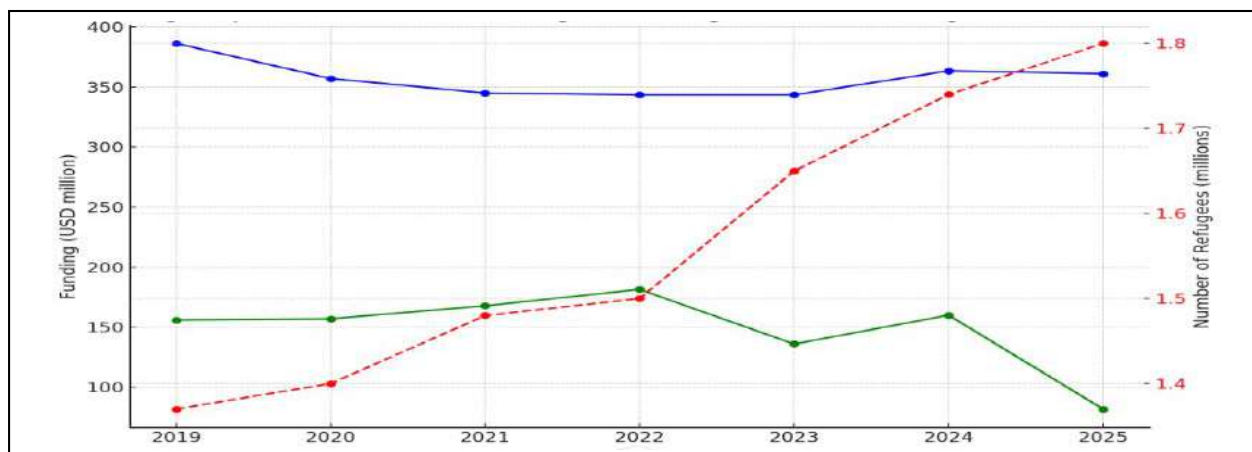
A Regulatory Impact Assessment (RIA) was conducted to analyse the root causes, effects, and potential solutions, providing evidence-based recommendations for policy development. As a result, a Draft National Refugee Policy was developed in 2024. This draft has undergone stakeholder validation, incorporating feedback from key actors such as UNHCR, the World Bank, and various government ministries and agencies.

Currently, a consultant is leading the revision process, integrating stakeholder input to ensure the policy is robust, inclusive, and aligned with Uganda's national priorities and international commitments. Once finalized, the policy will be submitted for Cabinet approval, paving the way for a structured and sustainable approach to refugee management in Uganda.

3.11 UNHCR Funding to the Refugee Response in Uganda over the past 5-years

Year	Budget	Released	% released	No. of Refugees in Uganda
2019	\$386.2M	\$156M	40%	1.37M
2020	\$357M	\$157M	44%	1.4M
2021	\$345M	\$167.8M	49%	1.48M
2022	\$343.4M	\$181.4M	53%	1.5M
2023	\$343.4M	\$136M	40%	1.65M
2024	\$363.4M	\$160M	44%	1.74M
2025	\$360.96M	\$81.83M	23%	1.88M

- The **Blue** line indicates the annual budget, while the **Green** indicates actual annual funding.
- The **Red** dotted line shows the increasing refugee numbers over the years amidst reduced funding raising sustainability questions on the current refugee policy



Over the past 7 years there has been continuous reduction in funding towards the refugee response operations in Uganda and yet the country keeps on receiving additional refugee numbers on top of the protracted old cases raising questions on the sustainability on the open-door policy if not well managed.

3.11.1 Implications of the Reduced Funding to the Refugee Response Sectors

1. **Food Assistance:** As of April 2025, WFP significantly reduced General Food Assistance, cutting rations for moderately vulnerable refugees (82%) from

30% to 22%, for the most vulnerable (13%) from 60% to 40%, and for new arrivals from 100% to 60%.

2. Health & Nutrition:

- Community outreaches by Village Health Teams have been suspended.
- Staffing support to referral facilities and health centers has been withdrawn.
- Some health posts have closed due to staffing shortages.
- SRH, disability-focused, HIV/AIDS programmes, and specialized care (orthopaedics, dental, sonography) have been deprioritized.
- Major nutrition programmes, including Maternal Child Health and Nutrition and the Targeted Supplementary Feeding Programme, were suspended

3. WASH: Water supply in all refugee settlements will drop from an average of 17 to 12 LPD, and emergency communal sanitation facilities halted.

4. SHELTER: Refugee households receive limited shelter materials upon arrival, but shrinking funding has reduced support further, which is forcing them to rely on natural resources like vegetation, degrading the environment.

5. PROTECTION: Several partners have drastically reduced staff and operations, leading to rising caseloads and gaps in GBV, Child Protection, and Mental Health and Psychosocial Support.

6. EDUCATION: Education programmes funding teachers across all settlements have been impacted as some supported teachers will be laid off, likely to worsen the pupil-teacher ratio (currently 79:1) and pupil-classroom ratio (currently 117:1), impacting nearly 400,000 refugee learners.

7. LIVELIHOODS & RESILIENCE: Reduced funding has impacted over 13 livelihood programmes closed, leaving over 416,811 refugees and 95,000 host community members without assistance, hence threatening long-term integration efforts of refugees.

8. ENVIRONMENT & ENERGY:

- Woodlot maintenance, household tree-growing and conservation programs have been scaled down.
- Cooking programmes, including the construction and distribution of energy-efficient cookstoves, are also affected.
- Given the heavy reliance on biofuel and ongoing deforestation, these cuts could have serious long-term effects on the environment.

9. NGOS ARE SUSPENDING OPERATIONS, impacting both refugees and host communities. So far, over 20,000 Ugandans have lost professional jobs, and this number is expected to rise

3.12 Implementation of the Directive on Suspension of Registration of other nationalities (Eritreans and Somalis) and its current implications.

3.13 As per the guidance of the Honourable Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, the Department has temporarily suspended the registration of new arrivals of Eritrean origin, pending further directive. Since the implementation of this decision, the Department has not received any asylum claims from individuals of Eritrean origin, although a few cases of their presence within communities have been noted.

3.14 Updates on the office renovation works at the Department of Refugees.

The Department undertook the renovation of its office block at the headquarters in Old Kampala, which was completed and fully branded in January 2025. This

renovation has significantly enhanced the image and visibility of the Department. The photos below illustrate the scope of the works undertaken, highlighting the transformation through before-and-after visuals.



Back View showing situations Before and After the Renovation works



Front View showing situations Before and After the Renovation works

[3.14 National, Regional and International engagements](#)

In addition to national engagements, the Department is also responsible for promoting Uganda's regional and international cooperation on refugee matters in collaboration with other countries and international organizations. It actively participates in and engages with partners and refugee stakeholders at national, regional and international activities. Below are some of the activities the Department participated in since January 2025.

- A team from the Department of Refugees together with World Bank, Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and Private Sector Foundation participated in a field mission in the West Nile region where they monitored DRDIP projects with the following objectives;
 - To replicate some of the best implementation practices for the successful implementation of the GROW project.
 - To identify and engage the DRDIP implementation teams and structures.
 - Assess the possibility of using some of the DRDIP physical structures to support the implementation of the GROW project and;
 - To popularize the GROW project and identify key implementation needs.
- The Commissioner for Refugees also attended a Capacity Building Training in Tokyo, Japan in February 2025.
- Chaired the National Coordination Mechanism (NCM) meeting coordinated by IOM held from January 29th - 30th, 2025 where various stakeholders including other Government Agencies participated to review and validate the draft Global Compact on Migration National Implementation Action Plan and its accompanying M&E Framework.
- The Department of Refugees also attended the Mutual Peace and Security cluster meeting under the Northern Corridor Integration Projects (NCIPs) convened in Kigali, Rwanda from January 27th to 30th, 2025 to discuss and update the status of implementation of the Directives of the 14th Summit of (NCIPs) as informed from the previous updates provided at the Ministerial cluster, Permanent, Principal, Undersecretaries meetings held in December 2018, and Technical Officials meetings held in October 2024. Uganda is to communicate the readiness to sign the implementation Framework on the management of refugees and Asylum seekers. Meanwhile, Uganda is ready

to undertake all the implementation areas under the Refugee and Asylum seeker matrix except only the cessation clause for Rwandan Refugees.

The areas include:

- **AREA 1:** Streamlining movement of Refugees and Asylum Seekers across the partner states.
 - **AREA 2:** Fast tracking the search and Implementation of Durable Solutions including Protracted Caseload.
 - **AREA 3:** Fast tracking the Implementation of the Cessation Clause for Rwandan Refugees among partner States (Implementing the four-component strategy of the Cessation Clause).
 - **AREA 4:** Partner states to create their own Refugees and Asylum Seekers' Database and Seek to share relevant information.
- The Department together with National Forestry Authority, Uganda World Life Authority and Ministry of Water and Environment also participated in the World Bank Support Mission on wood fuel distribution for Persons with special needs (PSN) households being implemented by the Ministry of Water and Environment through World IFPA Project aimed at investing in forest areas for Climate Smart Development.
 - The Commissioner for Refugees also convened a DOR General staff meeting for the month of February 2025, attended by staff at the headquarters and virtually by the field staff. The Commissioner emphasized teamwork, integrity, staff rationalization, and salary standardization among items discussed.
 - The Department attended the National Partnership Forum at Sheraton Hotel in Kampala, organized by the OPM and partners, chaired by the Rt. Hon. Prime Minister and attended by a cross-section of Ministers, Ambassadors and Development partners aimed at promoting transparency and accountability between the Government partners in the management of development cooperation.

- The Department also participated in a regional IGAD-workshop on Harmonization and improvement of production and utilization of migration data in the IGAD region, organized in Mombasa, Kenya, from February 17th to 20th, 2025 by the IGAD secretariat, aimed at improving the availability and quality of migration statistics within the IGAD region by strengthening national and regional actors in the production and use of migration statistics.
- The Commissioner for Refugees also organized a DOR staff meeting with the new Permanent Secretary/OPM Mr. Alex Kakooza who expressed his appreciation for the team's good work and emphasized the importance of teamwork, staff discipline, following hierarchy of reporting and adhering to the public standing orders among others.
- The Department also participated in the validation of the Refugee Value Chain Implementation Strategy for the Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation Project, funded by World Bank and Implemented by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries aimed at addressing challenges related to food, nutrition and climate related hazards.
- The Commissioner for Refugees as the Chair of the National Coordination Mechanisms on Migration (NCM), launched the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) National Implementation Plan of Action for Uganda, which aims to operationalize the objectives of the GCM on safe, orderly and regular migration.
- The Department also participated in the M&E Training organized by the OPM-Directorate of Monitoring and Evaluation together with Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on the Integrated NDP M&E System held in Serena - Kigo from February 20th to 22nd, 2025. The training was attended by staff from the different departments within OPM.
- Participated in a leadership capacity workshop organized by JICA from March 17th to 19th at silver springs, Bugolobi, Kampala.

- Attended the DCIC -OPM interministerial committee meeting at the Ministry of Internal Affairs held on 28th March 2025.
- Attended six (6) monthly National protection working group meetings, for all protection partners co-chaired by UNHCR and OPM.
- A drafted Cabinet Information Paper on the Impact of reduced humanitarian funding and WFP food ration reductions for refugees in Uganda has been drafted by the Department and will soon be shared with you for further.
- Participated in and attended the MOU committee meeting held on March 17th, 2025, at OPM main, aimed at streamlining the MOU process between OPM and partners.
- Participated at the launch of the Uganda Refugee Resilience Initiative (URRI) an initiative implemented by Danish Refugee Council, Save the Children and the ten (10) Local Implementing Partners poised to make a transformative impact on the lives of refugees and host communities in West Nile, Uganda.
- Participated in a high-level policy dialogue on AI-Driven Refugee Flow Modelling & Prediction for Policy Action, organized by World Bank that brought together policymakers, development partners, and experts to explore the role of predictive analytics in shaping responsive and data-driven policy interventions, including for the World's first displacement risk financing mechanism.
- Participated in the negotiation meetings of DRDIP 2 project organized by the Work Bank.
- Participated in a validation workshop held in Nairobi, Kenya, and organized by IGAD on monitoring framework.
- Participated in the stakeholder engagement on the roll-out of Uganda Digital Acceleration Project (UDAP) organized by NITA-U.

- The Department of Refugees also participated in the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development side event held in Munyonyo from 10th to 11th April 2025, with an objective to drive job creation, economic growth through sustainable inclusive solutions.
- The Department of Refugees hosted a delegation from the Republic of South Sudan who were on a study tour on Uganda's Refugee Response Operations from 7th to 12th April 2025.



Commissioner for Refugees Management, Mr. Patrick Okello Fifth from the right and other staff from the Department of Refugees together with the South Sudanese Delegation at the Department of Refugees Headquarters in Kampala

- The Department further was also represented in a Regional Workshop on East African Standby Force on Maritime Security organized by the East African Standby Force Secretariat in Djibouti from 5th to 10th April 2025.
- Participated in and attended the National Development Plan (NDP) Indicator Manual training workshop organized by the Development Plan

Implementation (DPI) Secretariat together with Ministry of Finance and Private Sector Foundation from 28th to 30th April 2025 held in Imperial Golf View Hotel, Entebbe.

- Participated in a workshop to Review the Regional Gender Analysis Report on the dynamics of forced displacement in the IGAD region organized by IGAD Secretariat held in Entebbe, Uganda from 23rd to 25th April 2025.
- Participated in a regional workshop to Review the Regional Qualifications Framework in the IGAD region organized by IGAD Secretariat held in Nairobi, Kenya from 23rd to 25th April 2025.
- Participated in a workshop on Justice Analysis and Paralegal Programming toolkits to enhance access to Justice for Refugees organized by International Rescue Committee (IRC) from 27th to 29th April 2025.
- Attended a meeting of the sectoral council of interstate security of the East African Community Partner states in Entebbe from 19th to 23rd May 2025 and critical on the agenda was the discussion of the Draft East African Refugee Policy.
- Attended the Climate SMART project preparatory meeting organized by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF).
- Convened a general staff meeting, attended by staff at the headquarters and virtually by the field staff. Key discussions focused on teamwork, integrity and staff harmonization.
- Attended a meeting together with the CRRF Secretariate on Munyonyo Declaration on durable solutions organized by IGAD at their offices in Kampala on 23rd May 2025.
- The Department of Refugees also participated in a field visit to Refugee Hosting districts organized by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic

Development to assess the progress made in the 51 transitioned education facilities and 35 health facilities.

- Attended the launch of the employment guidelines for both refugees and nationals organized by Norwegian Refugee Council (NRC) on 30th May 2025.
- Attended the Global Compact on Migration (GCM) and National Implementation Plan of Action peer exchange regional workshop organized by International Organisation on Migration (IOM) from 28th to 29th May, 2025 in Nairobi, Kenya.



The Commissioner for Refugees/ NCM Chairman, Uganda in a group with other NCM members from Kenya, Ethiopia, during a peer exchange visit in Nairobi Kenya.

- The Department participated and attended meetings on Netherlands enhanced cooperation on migration in which the government of Netherlands wants Uganda's support to manage removal of rejected asylum seekers from Netherlands through a "transit hub" in Uganda. Several meetings taken place since January to tease out the subject for cabinet decision led by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs with Ministry of Internal Affairs, Attorney Generals Office and Office of the President as members.

- The Department together with the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) Secretariat attended African Union (AU) meeting in Maputo, Mozambique from June 16th - 18th 2025 to assess 2023 Global Refugee Forum pledge implementation status in preparation for the UNHCR High level senior officials meeting in Geneva, December 2025.



Third from the left is the Assistant Commissioner Refugees Mr. Douglas Asimwe in a group with some of the delegates who attended the African Union meeting on GRF pledge implementation in Maputo, Mozambique

- Organized a Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) security sub-committee field visit and meeting in Nyakabande and Matanda transit centres from 3rd to 6th June 2025.
- Convened meetings with UNHCR, donors and Refugee partners to mobilise resources for the World Refugee Day.

3.15 Refugee related Projects

3.15.1 Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)

The primary objective of the DRDIP is to improve access to basic social and economic services, expand economic opportunities, and enhance environmental management for both refugee and host communities in targeted areas.

DRDIP I was implemented from May 2016 to June 2024. In Uganda, the project initially received a US\$50 million credit, which was later supplemented in 2019 by an additional US\$150 million grant.

The project achieved significant results, including:

- 3,035,432 people gained access to social and economic services and infrastructure (exceeding the target of 2,211,678); 1,856,842 direct beneficiaries were reached (target: 1,674,528); 43,119 individuals reported increased income (target: 36,684); and Sustainable land management practices were adopted on 5,110 hectares of land (target: 4,500 hectares).

Preparations for DRDIP II are currently underway. The second phase will focus on refugee settlements, refugee-hosting districts, transit districts, and urban centers. DRDIP II will build on the lessons learned from Phase I and other development initiatives in Uganda and the region over the past years.

Proposed outputs for DRDIP II include:

1. Construction of climate-resilient and high-quality infrastructure such as schools, health facilities, water supply systems, roads, bridges, and markets.

2. Enhanced community engagement through evidence-based and participatory planning led by public officials.
3. Development and implementation of integrated community development plans, including infrastructure subprojects.
4. Restoration of degraded land and improved soil water retention.
5. Increased tree coverage through registered community groups, generating economic benefits such as fuelwood and cash crops.
6. Strengthened investments by self-help groups (SHGs) in resilient value chains, climate-smart inputs and technologies, and diversified income-generating activities.
7. A higher number of small-scale producers accessing value chain services through Producer Organizations (POs).
8. Provision of specialized services to small-scale producers, including agricultural extension, climate-smart practices, market information, pricing trends, weather forecasts, livestock health management, and enterprise development.

3.15.2 Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework Performance

Priority Area 01: Multi-stakeholder networking and Engagement of Refugee actors strengthened

1. One (1) National CRRF Steering Group meeting was convened in April 2025. Decisions arising are being implemented.
2. One (1) National consultative meeting co-chaired by PS OPM and PS Gender was convened on 25/6/2025 at Fairway Hotel on the future

government-led Refugee Response Plans. The meeting resolved that MDAs develop successor Refugee Response plans in tandem with the NDP4 programme Framework.

3. Participated in the International World Refugee Day in Kiryandongo.

Priority Area 02: Financial and non-Financial Global Refugee Forum pledge commitments and Implementation tracked and validated.

1. GRF Pledge Tracking templates developed by the CRRF Secretariat.
2. Self-Reliance Pledge: The Self-Reliance measurement index tool to support implementation of the self-reliance pledge was completed and adopted by the 23rd Steering Group on 6 March 2025. Further Stakeholder engagement, both in the field and in Kampala, is in progress.
3. Development of the National Transition Strategy (NTS) completed, adopted by the 23rd Steering Group, and also discussed at the technical committee of MOFPED. It awaits consideration by MOFPED Senior Top Management.
4. Development of the Localization Strategy in process. A multi-stakeholder task force to oversee the performance of the consultant is in place. The Consultant produced the Inception Report and is undertaking Field consultations.
5. Durable Solutions: CRRF Secretariat held a meeting with the head of IGAD mission in Kampala on taking forward the 2023 Munyonyo Declarations. A concept Note was submitted to solicit funding to convene a regional meeting of Country Refugee Commissioners from the Member states.
6. Climate action: Joint discussions between MOEMD, UNEP, Last Mile Climate, FAO, SOLCO and Eco-Adapt are ongoing to implement the multi-stakeholder pledges of Solar-Electric Cooking and reforestation.

7. GIZ has committed to supporting a secretariat at the Ministry of Energy to operationalize the Pledges.
8. GRF Next Steps: Going Forward, CRRF Secretariat is planning to organize a 2-day national stock-taking engagement to assess fulfillment of the Pledges.

Priority Area 03: Regional Engagements.

The Director CRRF Secretariat presented a paper in Maputo, Mozambique, on Uganda's Progress in GRF implementation. The presentation was lauded for the possible benchmarking of Uganda's experience.

CHAPTER FOUR

4.0 Key Challenges faced in Refugee Management

1. Sustainability of current refugee policy given the large number of refugees, with the continued rising armed conflicts in the region.
2. Increasing refugee populations vis-à-vis land scarcity and conflicts.
3. Funding challenges and gaps, as well as rising donor fatigue, given the protracted refugee caseloads likely to have severe humanitarian consequences to the refugee population.
4. Inward-looking policies of developed countries, as a result, there is a lack of commitment to match the required resources to support addressing the issues of refugees.
5. Pendular movement of refugees between the host country and the countries of origin.
6. High expectations from refugees and host communities.
7. Social cohesion issues in refugee-hosting areas arising from refugees competing with nationals for services, resources etc.
8. Periodic outbreaks of epidemics/pandemics such as the current Mpox.

4.1 How the Department is Addressing the Challenges

1. The Department is currently developing a national refugee policy to streamline and enhance refugee management and service delivery in the country.
2. On behalf of the Government of Uganda, the Department continues to fulfil the Government's commitments towards shouldering the responsibility of hosting millions of refugees despite not receiving adequate financial and technical support.
3. The Department and partners have doubled efforts in providing relevant skills and learning opportunities to refugees to unlock the potential to become self-reliant, resilient, and active participants in building a prosperous Uganda aligned to our 2040 Vision through their vital contributions to the country's development and reconstruction of their countries of origin.
4. Calling all humanitarian partners and the international community to join in mobilizing resources, fostering partnerships, and implementing policies that prioritize refugee self-reliance.
5. Advocating for increased multi-year predictable funding to bring life to the refugee response.
6. Together with MOFA and regional blocks like IGAD, EAC, the Department is actively engaging in regional peace negotiation processes to support the sustainable return of refugees to their home countries.
7. Adopting comprehensive approaches in integrating humanitarian aid, development cooperation, and political engagement through the humanitarian-development-peace nexus, by mainstreaming services particularly on education, health, and job creation into government systems, to address not only short-term needs but also to provide long-term solutions and, in conflicts, contribute to building lasting peace as well as sustainability in the refugee response.

CHAPTER FIVE

5.0 Key Summary Situational Analysis of the Refugee Response

5.1 Displacements, mobility & intentions

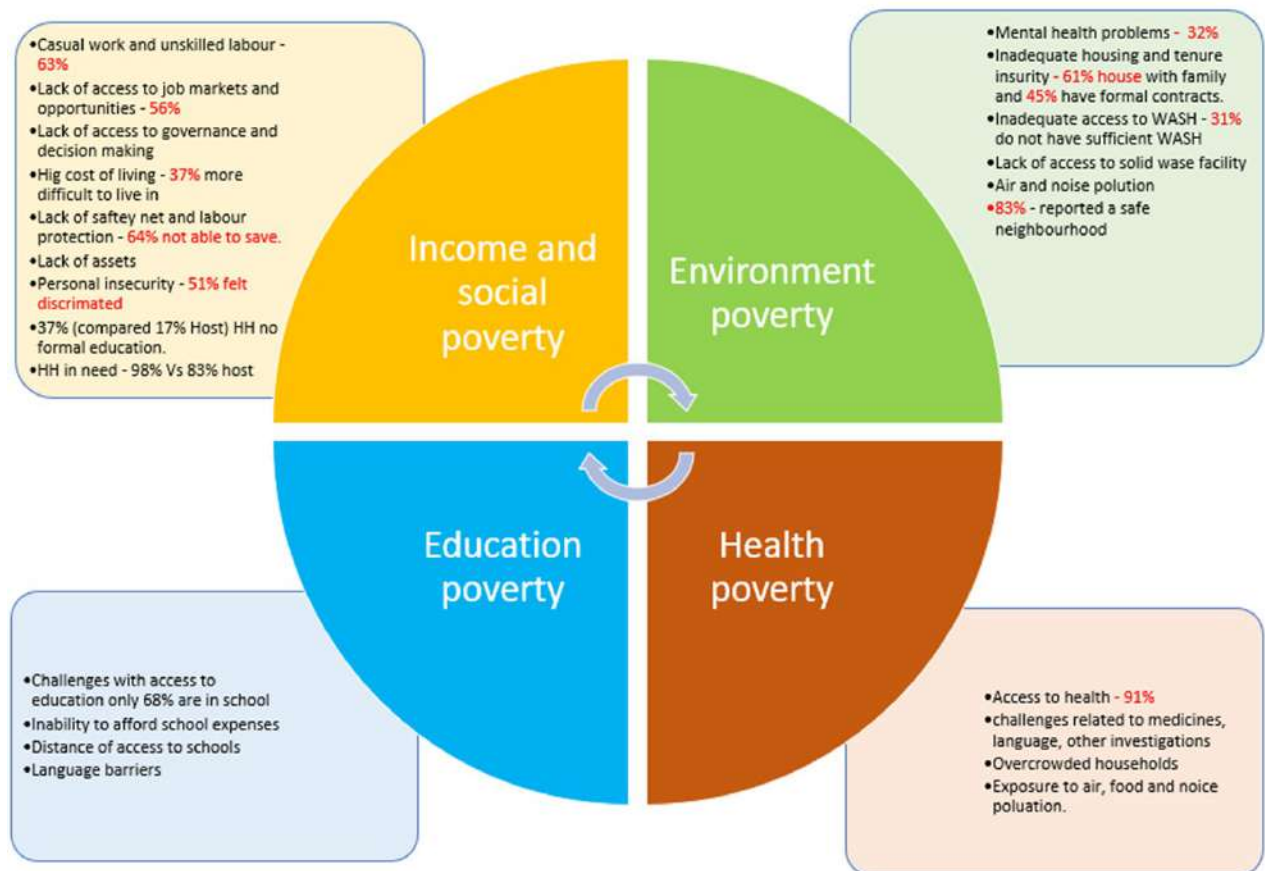
- **Duration of stay in the current location:** 58% of refugees stay in their current location for 5-10 years, 22% over 10 years, 10% between 1-5 years and 10% less than a year
- **Overall movement intentions:** 6% plan to move to a different country, 3% plan to move back to home country, 1% plan to move to urban area, 1% plan to move to a different settlement, 89% plan to stay in the current location/no plan (MSNA 2024)
- **Intention surveys for SSD and BRD:** Only 0.46% of BRD and 5% of SSD refugees plan to return their home country in the next 12 months.

5.2 Needs and Challenges

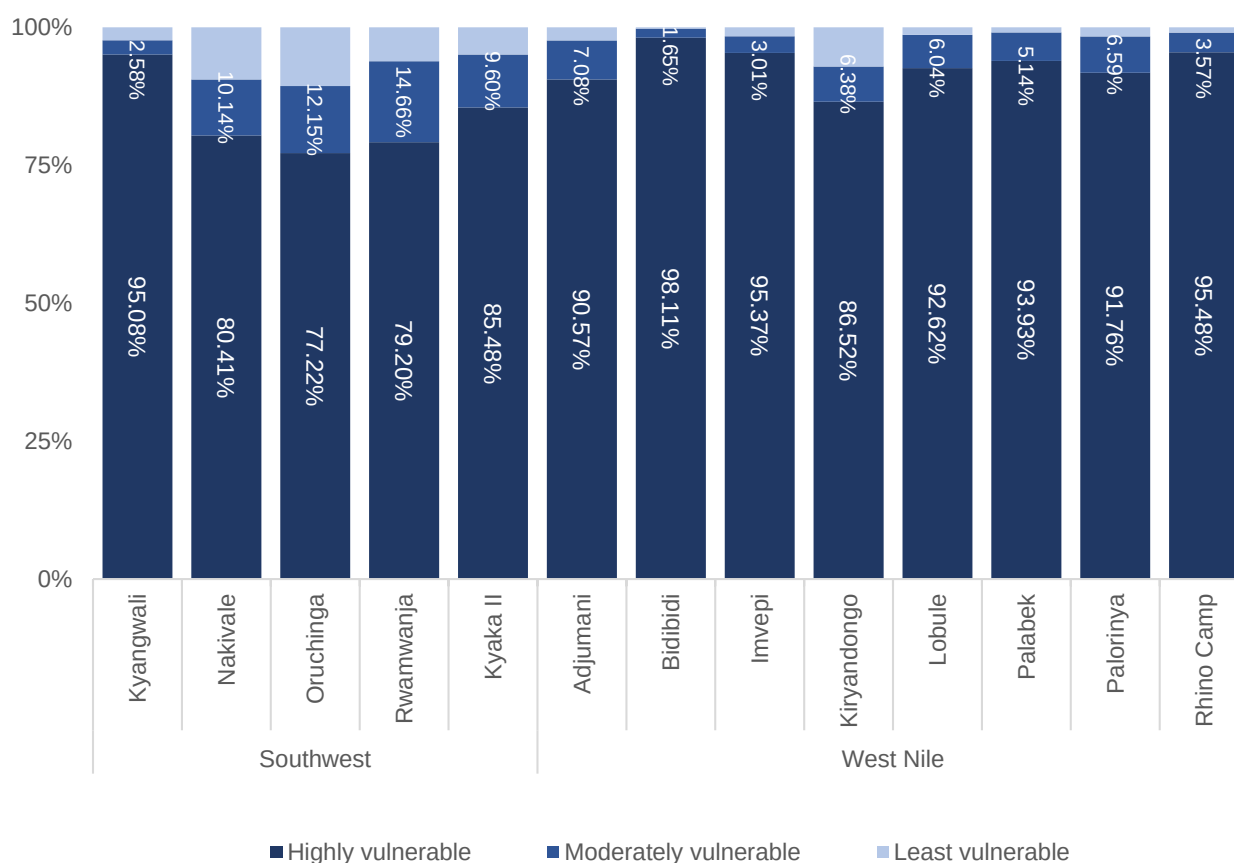
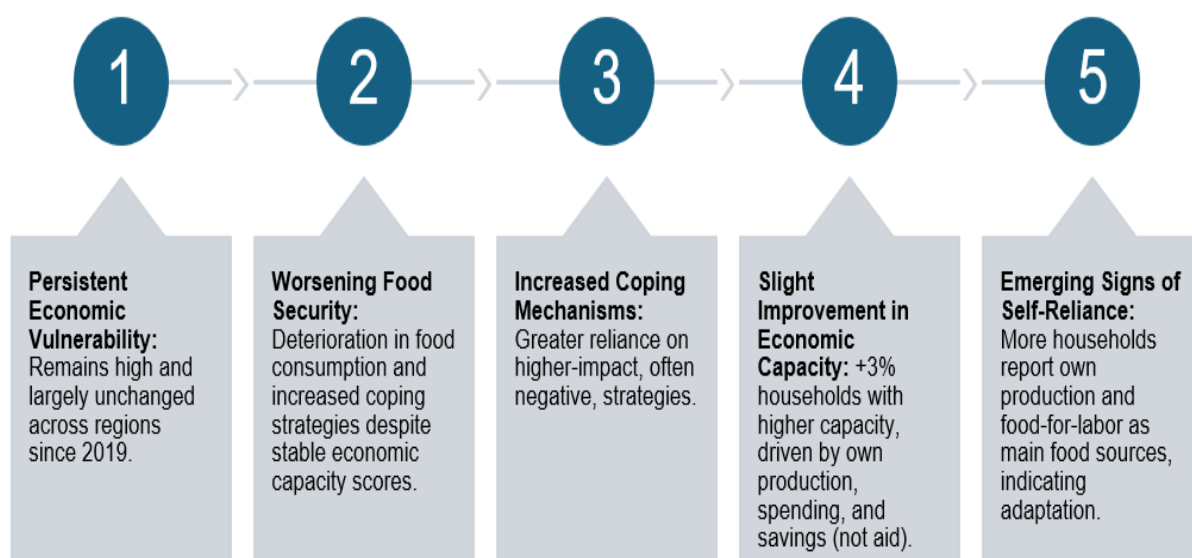
- 93% of refugees and 83% of host households are in need in at least one sector.
- The West Nile/North region showed the highest percentage of need 98% compared to 91% in the Southwest.
- Main refugee household challenges: 76% lack of access to sufficient quantity/quality of food, 62% lack of income/resources, 20% lack of access to adequate healthcare.
- Main host household challenges: 65% lack of income/resources, 36% lack of access to sufficient quantity/quality of food, 27% lack of access to enough safe drinking water.
- Households unable to meet basic needs:
- Refugee households: 72% food, 49% education
- Host households: 43% education, 41% health

- 30% of refugees feel that the aid provision is not relevant to their needs while 50% of refugees stated that the agencies do not take their opinions into account when giving assistance
- 10% of refugee households reported to have received income from selling assistance (Bidibidi is the highest settlement with 23% of households selling assistance)

5.3 Urban Refugee Situation Analysis



5.4 Socio-economic vulnerabilities



Economic vulnerability was highest in West Nile,

- The least being 86 in every 100 households is highly vulnerable in Kiryandongo.
- The highest being 98 in every 100 households in Bidibidi is highly vulnerable.

In the Southwest,

- Kyangwali stood out with 95 in every 100 households, highly vulnerable significantly higher than other settlements in the region.

5.5 Disaggregation of economic vulnerabilities (2024)

By Gender: Female-headed households (64% of total) show:

- Higher economic vulnerability
- **Lower Food Consumption Scores (37%)** vs. males (48%)
- **Higher emergency coping** (41%) vs. males (33%)

By Length of Stay

- **New arrivals (<12 months)** and those in Uganda **6–10 years** show slightly higher vulnerability.
- Refugees with **>10 years** show **lower vulnerability**, reflecting gradual self-reliance.

By Disability Status

- Households with a member with a **disability** are **slightly more vulnerable** than those without.

5.6 Economic capacity trends across all settlements per year (2019 - 2024)

	2019	2024
High economic capacity	6%	9%
Moderate economic capacity	6%	7%
Low economic capacity	88%	84%

- **Slight improvement** in economic capacity: Low capacity dropped from **88% to 84%** and **3% increase** in high-capacity households
- **Food security and coping have worsened:** Decline in **Food Consumption Scores (FCS)** and increased use of **negative coping strategies**
- **Reduced assistance since 2019:** Shift from full rations to partial distributions and Households increasingly relying on **own production**
- **Overall picture:** Slight economic gains, but **masked by worsening food security**
- Most vulnerable are relying more heavily on negative coping mechanisms

5.7 Use of negative copying mechanisms by year and by region (2019 - 2024)

BY YEAR:

	2019	2024
Begged	14%	31%
Engaged in illegal/high risk activities	1%	5%
Sold last female animal	7%	11%
Forced and early marriage	1%	2%
At least one of the above	17%	39%

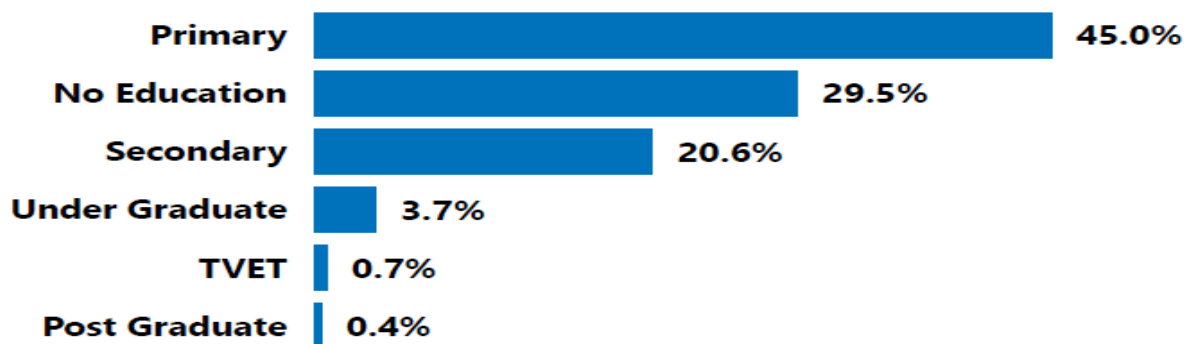
By region:

	Southwest	West Nile - North
Begged	28%	32%
Engaged in illegal/high risk activities	8%	4%
Sold last female animal	7%	13%
Forced and early marriage	2%	2%
At least one of the above	36%	41%

Use of emergency coping strategies has increased since 2019, especially begging, indicating growing desperation due to fewer food or income options. Overall use is slightly higher in West Nile, though illegal or high-risk activities are more commonly reported in the Southwest.

5.8 Labour market participation

Level of Education



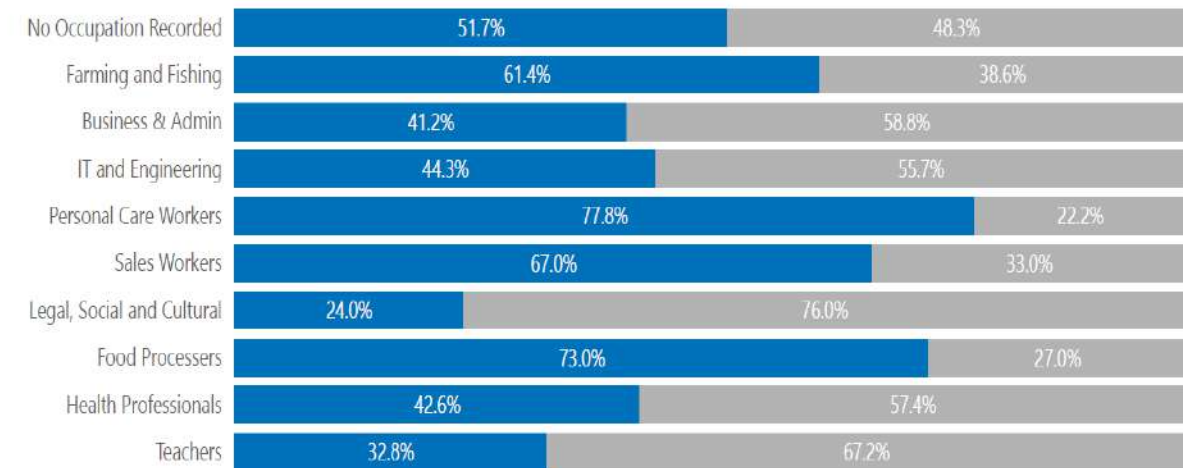
Adults (Age 15 – 64 Years)
1,040,398

Uganda National Household Survey 2023/24 revealed the following:-

- Refugee working-age population: 33% in the North and 45% in the Southwest, compared to 64% and 70% among hosts.
- Most refugees and hosts were employed in agriculture, forestry, and fishing (67–69%), followed by services.
- Refugees earned less: median monthly earnings were UGX 76,000 (North) and UGX 120,000 (Southwest), compared to UGX 296,000 and UGX 168,000 for hosts.
- Unemployment was higher in the North (Refugees: 20%, Hosts: 25%) than in the Southwest (Refugees: 11%, Hosts: 4%).
- Only 18% of refugee households engaged in non-crop enterprises, compared to 32% nationally. Most operated from home.

TOP 10 Occupation Sectors For Adults (Age 15 -64 Years) By Sex

● Female ● Male



5.9 Agricultural and the changing dynamics on land access



According to the Food Security and Nutritional Assessment of 2024;

- 68% of refugees in settlements engaged in agriculture, utilizing an average of 0.6 acres compared to 91% of hosts with an average of 2.2 acres
- 51% of refugees access at least half an acre vs 92% of hosts.
- OPM remains the main source of land for refugees (75%) followed by leasing/renting (30%)

Changing context

- Emergence of land market albeit informal

Demand for land on the rise driven by:

- Food cuts pushing refugees to subsistence agric
- Continued inflow of refugees
- Increasing demand for remuneration for land
- Infrastructure driving value of land
- Increase in demand from refugees
- Land market distortions
- Partners inflating rental prices
- Middlemen acting on behalf of landlords/owners
- Consequence:
- Rising rental prices
- Decreasing acreage accessed by refugees

5.10 Refugees access to finance

- 61.53% of refugees had an account at a bank or other financial institution or with a mobile-money-service provider (UNHCR 2024)
 - Know-your-customer verification by FSPs is still a challenge
- 10 regulated FSPs extended their financial service operations to refugee settlements (UNHCR 2024)
 - Access to formal FSPs by refugees is mainly in urban areas
- UNHCR's 2024 Results Monitoring Survey reported that for every 10 refugees, 6 had access to formal financial services.
 - Only 3 had access to financial services (FSNA, 2023)

5.11 Feedback from the field

Classification Criteria

- Vulnerability parameters need review; some settlements with active livelihoods (e.g. Kyangwali, Bidibidi) are still marked “highly vulnerable.” Better alignment with field realities is needed.

Economic Strain & Child Protection

- Economic stress is driving child protection risks, including more street-connected children and negative coping. Recommend stronger integration of protection and socio-economic data.

Land Access Challenges

- Limited access to arable land due to fragmentation and block farming is constraining productivity, food security, and livelihoods resilience.

Urban Vulnerability Dynamics

- Urban migration, especially among youth, is not well captured in current assessments - tools need refining to reflect urban-specific vulnerabilities.

Vocational Training Gaps

- Limited detail on: Gender breakdown, Skill diversity, Linkages to employment outcomes. Need for improved measurement of vocational training impact.

Recommendations

- **Integrate refugees into land use planning** to ensure equitable access and sustainable resource management.
- **Improve data collection** on market access, land availability, and value chains to better inform livelihoods programming.
- **Develop a livelihoods tracking tool** to monitor progress and impact over time.
- **Provide more settlement-specific data** to enhance targeting and tailor interventions to local contexts.

5.12 Feedback on livelihood priorities

Enhance Livelihood Sector Coordination

- Strengthening collaboration among government, UN, NGOs, and private sector for coherence, targeted livelihood support.
- Improve alignment in youth employment, financial inclusion, and agriculture to avoid duplication

Provision of Agricultural Land

- Advocate for greater access to arable land for refugees, especially those with farming experience.
- Support land negotiations with host communities and local authorities to ensure peaceful co-existence and shared benefits

Strengthen Income-Generating Activities (IGAs)

- Invest in community-led IGAs tailored to local market demand. Provide start-up kits, access to microfinance, and mentorship to enhance sustainability and profitability of livelihoods initiatives.

Diversify Skills Development

- Expand vocational training opportunities, particularly for women and youth. Ensure alignment of training with current labor market needs.

Improve Market Linkages and Business Opportunities

- Facilitate access to local and regional markets for refugee and host community products and services. Support small businesses with market information, business incubation services, and value chain integration.

Strengthen Private Sector Engagement

- Leverage corporate social responsibility (CSR) and impact investment channels to scale up job creation and economic inclusion.

Deprioritize:

- Redundant staff movements and overlapping roles.
- Handouts and non-targeted distributions (food distribution should be targeted to the most vulnerable).
- Unaccredited training programs with limited impact.
- Community gardening if accountability is unclear

5.13 Impact of underfunding on refugee sectors

Immediate Impact	Adjustments/Prioritization
Livelihoods 11 partners cut 641 staff 6 partners complete shutdown of their operations - Direct impact on 511,942 people, including 416,811 refugees and 95,131 members of host communities - RLO funding suspension impacting ongoing efforts of localization	Office consolidation and staff reductions: Three partners closed or merged with offices to cut costs, with remaining staff taking on additional responsibilities. Others reduced staffing levels to sustain core operations within limited budgets. Scaling down of assistance: Several partners reduced the scale and scope of livelihoods support, prioritizing critical needs and reaching fewer beneficiaries. Transition to local actors and community structures: To ensure continuity and promote sustainability, multiple partners transitioned project activities to local organizations and community-based structures.

5.14 Crosscutting considerations



Localization

Engagement of Local Organizations

Consider how grassroots, refugee-led, women-led, and faith-based groups can be included in planning and implementation.

Capacity Building

Consider what training or capacity building is required for local actors.

Agile Financial Support

Consider financing modalities to enable rapid and effective local response.

Whole-of-Society Approach

Collaborate with regional and local governments and diverse stakeholders.

Direct Participation

Ensure forcibly displaced people are directly engaged in shaping the response.

Climate Action

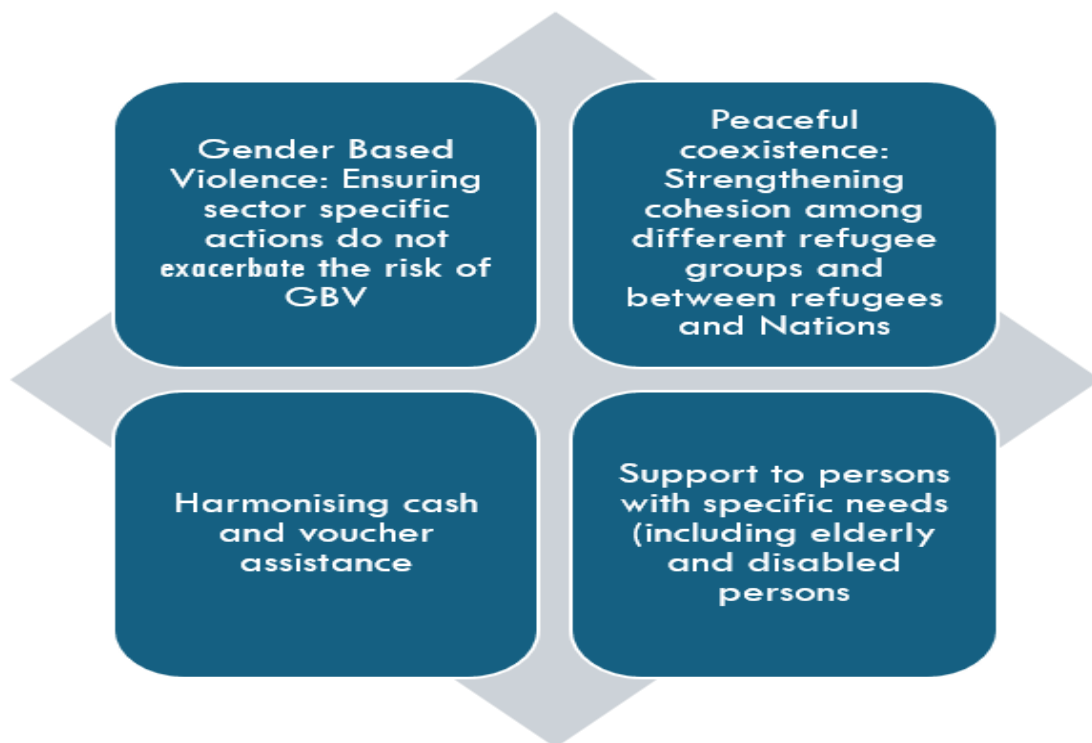
Climate-Smart Programming: Design programs that consider climate vulnerabilities and promote resilience.

Sustainable Infrastructure: Build flood protection, climate-adapted shelters, and solar-powered boreholes.

Environmentally Friendly Practices: Use clean cooking solutions and energy-efficient community facilities.

Risk Analysis and Mitigation: Assess climate risks and implement context-specific mitigation measures.

Livelihood Support: Promote sustainable livelihoods that reduce environmental impact.



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