

## **Republic of Uganda**

Submission to the representatives of different Diplomatic Missions accredited to Uganda and other people of good will during the United Nations Universal Periodic Review

26thth Session of the UPR working Group

October 31<sup>st</sup> – November 11<sup>th</sup>, 2016

### **Refugees in Kampala and in four settlements (Nakivale, Rwamanja, Kyaka II and Kyangwali)**

Joint Submission by refugee led organizations, refugee opinion leaders and refugee communities in Uganda: **Foundation People for Peace and Defense of Human Rights (Foundation PPDHR)** as the lead, Hope for Refugees in Actions (HRA), United Association for Peace and Development (UAPD), Young African Refugees for Integral Development (YARID), Darfurian Refugee Community plus Nuba Mountain and Blue Nile, Congolese Refugee Community in Uganda (CRC), Rwandan Refugee Community in Uganda, Refugee Development Vision (RDV), and South Sudan Refugee Community in Uganda.

### **The Human Rights principles**

This report is based on the established human rights standards as follow:

Human Rights are Inalienable, Universal, Inter-independent and Indivisible.

Responses towards human Rights should be available, accessible, affordable and of good quality, and lastly

The state has the obligations to respect, protect and fulfil human rights of each person in the country through various mechanisms or interventions.

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### **Summary**

Under the coordination of Foundation People for Peace and Defense of Human Rights (Foundation PPDHR) 8 refugee led organizations submitted a joint report to the UPR in March 2016. We strongly thank the Holy Sea which formulated the only recommendation about

refugees in Uganda during the UPR session in 2011 and which a great inspiring one in order to submit this document which aims at shifting the perceptions from humanitarian view to human rights standards in response to refugee needs. This is a short summery of **Refugee Civil and Political Rights** while in Uganda addressing particular human rights concerns affecting refugees.

### **Statistics about refugees in Uganda**

The last five years from (2011-2015) have been marked by the increase of refugees from about 350,000 in 2011 to about 520,000 by this year 2016 representing about 1.2 % of the entire Ugandan Population. It is also important to note that 94% of the refugee population come from countries where Uganda has been military involved in wars supporting one party in the conflicts such as Rwanda since 1990-1994, South Sudan since many years up to now, D R Congo since 1996 -2014, Central Africa Republic and Somalia among others.

### **Conflict and forced migrants**

In this particular part of Africa especially the Great Lakes Region, we may need to look at the causes of forced displacement which are mainly the political situation such as wars, lack of democracy, lack of good governance and other forms of oppressions by states in which Uganda has played a big role since 1990 up to now as mentioned above.

### **Recommendations**

We call upon Uganda to desist from interfering in other countries internal political affairs, any kind of political and military support should be through regional or international mandate limited only to peace purpose and ask Uganda to start withdrawing its soldiers in all other countries to end it by the year 2018,

We call upon Uganda to compensate the damage faced by these survives who are refugees caused by Uganda military interventions in their countries of origin since 1990, by providing better living conditions of refugees in Uganda especially high quality of basic needs, education, employment and medical care among others, through equity but not equality with nationals or other foreigners in the country,

While in Uganda refugees who survived abuses committed by Ugandan troops in their countries of origin, should be in Uganda as a transit country for not more than 6 months after which resettlement/ relocation to a third countries should prioritized, we ask Uganda to cooperate with the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees to make this a major priority for resettlement of refugees to a third country from the end of the year 2017,

By the National Financial Year 2017 -2018 Uganda should put in place specific budget allocation for refugees as they continue coming as this budget should also address the gaps faced by those who are already in the country.

## **Relationship between refugees and the refugee regime**

While the article One of the UDHR recommends about reason, conscience and the spirit of brotherhood, the relationship between refugees and the refugee regime has been marked by oppression, extreme pride and arrogance and the use of power through a well constructed wall of logics based on stereotypes, stigma and myths. This has been the basis on negative perceptions towards refugees, and the failure to appreciate the diversity among refugees. Refugees are looked at as burden, traumatized, vulnerable, dangerous people who can live in quarantine called settlement and many other negative perceptions.

## **Recommendations**

To create a forum which brings together refugee leaders, refugee opinion leaders and all actors involved in refugee affairs to discuss and dialogue on a consensus over different issues, in this we recommend Uganda to expand the *“refugee stakeholders forum”* to include refugees by April 2017.

In different offices refugees should be considered with dignity and respect and all policies should pay particular attention on dignity and respect. For example from both OPM and UNHCR it takes a refugee maximum 4 hours to meet an officer even if the refugee had an appointment. We want to see new mechanisms of engagement on a daily basis and efforts being deployed to use technology through either social media, mobile phones and emails to communicate with officers, this can be put in place by the end of the year 2017.

All offices should put in place measures to evaluate how refugees are treated in different offices and suggestions should be considered for quick actions, this can be one among the things for the work plan for various actors for the year 2017.

## **The fight against discrimination**

Discrimination against refugees takes 87% of all refugee human rights violations in Uganda, sometimes it is based on ignorance and other times it is based on xenophobia and stereotypes. This is coupled with ambiguous terminologies by the refugee regime of who a refugee is. Sometimes refugees are called *“visitors of the state by Uganda Government”*, sometimes UNHCR uses *“people of concern”* sometimes other actors use *“forced migrants, others simple migrants or foreigners, ...* and these identity issues are also reflected in Refugee Acts 2006 which often create discrimination, like the article 21 (1) E and E, which looks at refugees as aliens and the article 21 (III) which looks at refugees as nationals.

We have in place services which are based on discrimination among refugees like the dividing between refugees and asylum seekers, like the logic of refugees in camps and those in urban areas, food and other humanitarian services to some and not to others especially those in urban areas, humanitarian aid relief to some refugees in urban areas especially those who are called

*“refugee under case load”*, some refugees are selected for resettlement and others not, among others. While these do exist among the refugee regime, refugees are faced with discrimination to access services offered by other actors in Uganda such as education, health, jobs and other social services.

### **Recommendations**

Conduct massive awareness campaigns both among refugees, refugee service providers, and host communities about the real identity of **“refugees”** and encourage refugees who have been stigmatized to be proud of their refugee identity, this should be among the planning priorities by next years 2017.

Engage with all those involved in refugees’ affairs both locally and internationally to hold with the legal definitions of **“refugees”** and while refugees have been victims of negative reporting and perceptions, efforts should be in place to view also the positive part of refugees in their host communities, at national levels and international level, this should be all times up to 2011,

Funding should be allocated from various sources to prioritize the fight against discrimination towards refugees and such funding should be accessible by small refugee led organizations with limited criteria, this can be fully operational by the year 2018,

To ensure that each service provided to refugees by various actors and in all public offices, the services offered by government of Uganda such as youth funds, women among others should respond to the requirements of human rights standards **“available, accessible, affordable and of good quality”** for every single refugee in Uganda, this is an urgent matter affecting refugees and needs immediate reforms,

To amend the Refugee Act 2006 in order to remove articles which compare refugees to nationals, to foreigners and put in place articles which promote equity in response to refugee needs, and also articles which clearly define the political activities which refugees can participate in and those which they cannot, this should be done by the end of the year 2019,

### **Rights to life, liberty and security of life**

As mentioned above refugees who came to Uganda to seek asylum have been through the years recruited into different rebel groups and many have lost their lives during the wars. Many Congolese refugees in Uganda still have fresh memories of their fellow refugees who were recruited by the M23 rebels active in Uganda in 2012, who were taken to Congo to fight and did not come back. More about this can be found with the UN Security Council Report about the war in D. R. Congo in 2014. Over the years refugees have been politically assassinated and for the period of 2011-2014 we registered 3 Rwandans and 1 Congolese, while other 7 Rwandan and 3 Congolese went missing including forcefully deportation and others deported especially Rwandese since 2009 up to 2014. From **17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014** Rwandan refugees were

attacked by Uganda security agencies in Nakivale. On the other hand Uganda has not yet done enough to ensure refugees get quality and quantity basic needs and in inclusive manner. In March 2014 more than 250 Congolese refugees capsized on Lake Albert as they ran away from famine.

### **Recommendations**

Uganda should work closely with refugees especially Congolese to ensure urgent actions are taken to discourage refugee military recruitment, investigate allegations of refugee military recruitment, end attacks and threats against Rwandan refugees and hold the perpetrators accountable, concrete actions are needed now for this recommendations, this should be one among the daily interventions towards refugees and should be completely eliminated by 2019,

Urgent physical protection measures to refugees at risk especially those with serious security concerns through protection houses or relocations, desist from deportation of refugees, and increase food ration from 6kg to 15 kg of maize per refugee and per month and other humanitarian services should be equally offered to refugees regardless of where they are in Uganda, allegations of food ration which is embezzled by those in the whole refugee food industry should be investigated and all ghost refugees should be eliminated, and all services towards refugees should respond to the requirement of transparency and accountability to both the donors but also to refugees, Uganda should concrete actions by the year 2017,

### **The right against slavery**

While the traditional slavery and servitude was abolished, refugees are confronted with the modern forms of slavery such as sexual exploitation, human trafficking, and forced labor among others.

*“When I reached to the border between Congo and Uganda I had no money to pay for my transport up to Kampala. Someone offered me an opportunity for free up to here but also I had no where to stay, he took me to his place where I became his wife for six years and I could not leave the house because he used to control all my movement. I got these two children from there when I was with him, by chance a friend of mine one day took me to a refugee organization and from that time my life started changing to the point I left this man” this from a Congolese woman in Kampala.*

The UNHCR reports attributed sexual and gender based violence as one among the top problems refugees are facing in Uganda, including unintended commercial sex, while in other areas refugees are employed in private sectors and often not paid after their work. In 2015 Haya Group of Company employed 8 refugees and did not pay them, but instead opted to arrest them by involving the police. There are consistence allegations of sexual exploitations of refugees in order to access certain services provided by various actors in Uganda, especially resettlement and money for house rent.

## **Recommendations**

Investigate and Prosecute all those who have abused refugees in different forms of slavery, and ensure the victims are protected by the year 2018,

Create awareness campaigns against the contemporary forms of slavery among refugees, refugee stake holders and the host communities; this should be one among services provided to refugees by the year 2018,

Investigate, conduct a wider research and come up with responses towards these allegations sexual exploitation towards refugees, and Uganda should engage the United Nations and other donors to ensure the funding for all contemporary forms of slavery are accessible by refugee led organizations for quick projects without so much conditions, this should be done by the year 2019,

The Sexual, and Gender Based Violence program should include also Sexual and Reproductive Health Rights in a comprehensive manner and the fight against HIV/AIDS through strong partnership with refugee groups which should be able to access funding,

## **Rights against torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment**

In 2015 a refugee human rights defender was subjected to torture in Nakivale refugee settlement by the security services wanting him to publically deny the report made about the situation of refugees in the camp and which the authorities attributed to him, in 2014, a group of six Congolese refugees accompanied by a Canadian were kidnapped for two weeks in Uganda by the Police Flying Squad Unit, in 2013 Zenga Nkoranyi a refugee human rights Defender was aggressed by unidentified people and in the process one among them was apprehended by the help of people who passed by, they took him to the Police Namirembe Road Post where this suspect vanished in few minutes. The policy of giving six kgs of grains of maize to each refugee and per month is inhuman, and the policy of keeping refugees in stores called camps without plans for their future is inhuman and degrading.

## **Recommendations**

Investigate and hold accountable all those who have abused refugee rights especially those who are mostly affected such as refugee human rights defenders, journalists and other opinion leaders by the year 2019,

Put in place measures of remedy for the victims such as protection houses, financial support for relocation, medical assistance and legal assistance among others by the year 2017,

Remove all practices which encourage torture, cruel, inhuman and degrading treatment of refugees and end impunity towards all actors who abuse refugee rights, among them giving out 6 Kgs of grains of maize to refugees and limiting refugees to access quality services especially

medical treatment from private sector should be removed, this should be done by the end of the year 2017,

### **The Right to equality before the law**

While access to the courts of law is a challenge to many refugees, they also lack legal representations and in many situations, the whole court process is unclear for refugees. In many cases the arresting officers especially the police are biased against refugees, for the last 10 years here in Kampala only 1 refugee was sentenced for committing crimes while others spent years in detention without appearing to courts or they are found not guilty after spending many years in prisons. While refugees are quickly arrested and detained for alleged crimes committed against Ugandans in their host communities “*in Kampala we have more than 70 refugees who have been detained*” there are little efforts deployed to arrest and detain Ugandans who have committed crimes against refugees while crimes of refugee against a fellow refugee is simple put side on ground that they want resettlement “*here in Kampala we have identified only one Ugandan who has been arrested and detained for a crime against refugees for the last 10 years*”. While we do not have a single in court of a refugee against a refugee here in Kampala.

As refugees are being arrested for various allegations by the refugee regime, many actors in the refugee regime enjoy the culture of impunity against refugees. In many cases Inter Aid Uganda which is the implementing partner of both the government and the UNHCR has ordered refugees to be arrested and detained by the police, in 2012 UNHCR ordered refugees who were demanding for services to be brutally arrested and detained by the Police, at OPM offices a refugee was badly beaten up by the security agents last year 2015, the Refugee Law Project instructed the Police in 2011 to torture refugee children unaccompanied minors who were demanding for food, education and medical care, all those who have played roles in these atrocities have not been held accountable.

### **Recommendations**

Investigate and hold accountable all human rights violations against refugees in Uganda, we want quick investigations into all these cases above mentioned and all those who were involved should be punished, while the victims should be compensated by the year 2018,

Put in place a special Police Unit to handle refugee cases in Uganda and that Police Unit should work hand in hand with all service providers and refugees in their communities by the year 2018,

Put in place different reporting mechanisms and complaint desks which are easily accessible by refugees and put in place a specific human rights desk to look at the situation of refugee rights in Uganda in order to advise all refugee actors, much as the Uganda Human Rights Commission should come in but also other human rights organizations should have interventions towards refugees by the year 2018,

## **The right against arbitrary detention**

Here in Kampala refugees have been victims of police brutality often times as they are arrested and detained arbitrary citing various unfounded reasons. In Katwe different police operations are carried out in the name of looking for criminals especially thieves in evenings. Refugees who are well identified have also been arrested in these operations and in most cases only those who have no money to give to the police end up to Court as criminals while those who have managed to pay from 50,000 Ug Sh up to 100,000 Ug Sh are released. In some cases also refugees have been arrested and detained on fabricated cases because both the complainant and the police officers want money from refugees. Joseph Nkundimana is in Luzira Prison where he has been for the last one year and a half on allegations of murder, while at the police he was told to pay 2,000,000 Ug Sh which he failed to get in order to be released.

## **Recommendations**

To investigate cases of arbitrary arrest of refugees and hold accountable those who are involved, and review quickly the cases of all refugees detained in different prisons in Uganda for a quick hearing or just they should be released by the year 2017,

To have in place legal services which can quickly follow up cases of refugees when they in conflict with the law and ensure strong partnership between refugees, the police, courts of law and the Office of Prime Minister Department of Refugees by the year 2018,

To ask the police to discourage the arrest of refugees without enough evidence, and put to the end police operations aiming at getting money from people by the year 2017,

## **Right to be free from attacks upon his honor and reputation**

In number of cases refugees especially refugee human rights defenders who are active in the fields of human rights and refugee opinion leaders have been victims of personal attacks by actors within the refuge regime. In 2012 leaders of the Congolese refugee community in Uganda where threaten to deportation by the Office of the Prime Minister Department of refugees, while others are viewed as blacklisted by the refugee regime. Most refugees who believe in human rights are often blackmailed by various actors as “**dangerous people**” and cannot access any form of humanitarian relief aid in a difficult situation when they need it. In 2013 a critical Ethiopian refugee opinion leader died in Kampala due to sickness after he was denied medical treatment on ground of his activism. For the last 10 years no active refugee human rights defender or refugee opinion leader who has been granted resettlement to a third country and this is part of the punishment so that other refugees can learn from. In various meetings both in public or private with refugees, they are advised no to imitate those refugees who are called bad people and who are mainly opinion leaders or refugee human rights activists.

## **Recommendations**

The government to put in place measures to ensure the protection of refugee human rights defenders and extend all humanitarian services to them without discrimination, but more encouraging actions should be extended to them as they play roles on behalf of the government by the year 2017,

The government and all other actors to change their attitude and look at refugee human rights defenders as partners in the whole protection process of refugees in Uganda, therefore put in place supporting mechanism in place to ease their work and also motivating strategies like public recognition, consultations among others by the year 2018,

To have a reporting mechanism in place for refugee human rights defenders for all threats and attacks against them and ensure that investigations are done and actions taken to ensure perpetrators are hold accountable by the year 2018,

Encourage partnership with other human rights organizations involved in the protection of human rights defenders in Uganda to extend their services to refugee human rights defenders also by the year 2018,

### **The right to free movement**

In some situations refugees are required to seek for permission in order to leave the camp and come back, while those going to the camp are also required to seek for authorization which can be granted or denied. The access to Conventional Traveling Document is limited only to those who can afford it and the issue of refugees in the East African Federation where by Congolese refugees going to Rwanda and Kenya are asked to pay for the visa not as refugees in Uganda but as Congolese Citizens. From the Global level while the U.K and other European Countries have been flexible in giving visas to refugees who want to visit those countries, the USA and the Canada are among countries which have denied visas to refugees. In 2013 a Congolese refugee from Uganda was arrested and detained by Rwandan Immigration Officer for failing to pay for the Visa yet he used the Conventional Travelling Document issued by Uganda. Refugees in camps are restricted from moving out in order to sell off their produce after harvesting, in Rwamwanja the camp authorities denied refugees to come to Kampala to sell their maize at a fair price in 2015.

### **Recommendation**

To put in place free entry in all refugee settlements especially to all refugees regardless of where they are staying by the year 2018,

To reduce the cost of the Conventional Traveling Document from 120,000 which is the official amount to 50,000 and abolish all other hidden costs related to it such as transport fee and airtime for the OPM officers working on the CTDs or sometimes motivation fee for the document to be issued quickly by the year 2019,

Engage the Uganda Diplomatic Missions in various countries especially Rwanda and Kenya to allow Congolese refugees living in Uganda to enter without visa as it is for all citizens in the East African Countries, and at the same time engage with other countries to learn from the UK and European Countries and allow refugees to visit their countries by the year 2019,

We call upon Uganda to abide with the freedom of residence of refugees everywhere they want in Uganda and desist to condition humanitarian aid relief with refugee willingness to stay in camps called settlements here by the end of the year 2017, all refugees should be granted all humanitarian services available,

We call upon Uganda to put in place development projects in different refugee settlements such as good tarmac roads, electricity, clean water, access to information like TV, Radio News Papers and programs in languages spoken by refugees, good markets and public transport among others by the year 2020,

Refugees in settlements who are involved in farming should be exposed to opportunities and be encouraged to look for markets of their products beyond the settlements by the year 2018,

### **Right to asylum: Rwandan refugees are often excluded from enjoying asylum**

Much as other refugees and asylum seekers from different countries do enter Uganda without many challenges, Rwandans asylum seekers in Uganda indicated that they cannot be allowed to cross through the official borders with Uganda but have to take risky and illegal paths in order to reach Uganda, sometimes are refused to start the process from the Police Old Kampala on ground that Rwanda is safe for every Rwandan and often denied or not granted the refugee status, while other refugees from other countries are required to bring traveling documents and identity cards from their countries of origin at the Police.

### **Recommendation**

We call upon the government of Uganda to make clear its position about the protection of Rwandan refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda, assure all Rwandans asylum seekers about the willingness of Uganda to open up its borders to them through awareness campaigns by the year 2018,

Uganda should offer entrance to Rwandans, who are running away from Rwanda to Uganda seeking for asylum, and ensure that undocumented asylum seekers are given opportunities to lodge in their cases especially those who have stayed long in Uganda, and at the same time grant refugee status to Rwandan refugees without delay by the year 2018,

We call upon the government of Uganda to put in place civilian offices near the borders to receive refugees and lead them to Kampala and in other settlements and discourage the move to ask refugees travelling documents and identity cards from their countries, and build relationship with other stake holders such as drivers in all parts of the countries by the year 2018,

## **Challenges during the Refugee Status Determination Process**

Whereas asylum seekers from different countries are accorded the refugee status in Uganda, the process is highly affected by the following shortcoming: Bribe at the Police and at the Office of the Prime Minister which favours some to get the refugee status quickly in 3 to 6 months while others have to wait from 2, 3 up to five years and others do give up when it takes long, some asylum seekers do not feel safe enough to start the process from the police because of phobia against people in military uniform, some opt not to tell their true stories especially those who were persecuted by Ugandan soldiers in their countries of origin. As refugees reach in different offices they are also confronted with the issue of ethnicity of the people interviewing them especially this is common from Rwandans and Congolese depending on their tribes or ethnic belonging and the tribe or ethnicity of the officer. The high dominance of one ethnic group in different offices handling refugees especially staff members from western Uganda is a challenge to many refugees in terms of telling their true stories.

## **Recommendation**

To put in place a civil office which will be in charge of the registration of asylum seekers to replace the Old Kampala Police Refugee Desk, end the system of middlemen called “*brokers*” and take disciplinary measures against officers who deal with the brokers, through strong partnerships with refugee community leaders by the year 2019,

To empower refugee communities which receive asylum seekers for the first time in order to orient them and assure them about the service delivered by the government of Uganda to both refugees and asylum seekers, and establish referral system between the refugee regime and refugee leaders by the year 2019,

To make clear the East Africa legal framework on the issue of the protection of refugees within the region especially those who come from a member state and make it uniform. While Rwandans do face challenges for refugee status on ground that they are in East Africa, this has not been applied to Burundians and South Sudanese who seek refuge in Uganda by the year 2020,

Carry out an awareness campaign for those who resisted registering as refugees to do so and consider to put in place staff members from either Eastern Uganda or Northern Uganda, who are viewed as neutral as far as tribe and ethnicity are considered by the year 2019,

To ensure that old cases are reviewed during the refugee eligibility process and are granted refugee status, those who are rejected should be accorded a fair hearing during the appeal process and have access to legal representation where necessary, and put in place complaint Desks and motivated interpreters for all, recruit interpreters and volunteers for all nationalities by the year 2018,

## **The Right to participate in public affair: The Humanitarian Relief Aid in the hands of the few and the lack of refugee representation in government institutions**

Uganda depends greatly on the relief aid from the international community which is offered generously to alleviate the plight of refugees. On ground only 50 million \$ USA is needed per year in order to offer 6 Kg of food to all refugees in Uganda per year, only 24 million USA is needed to ensure that each single refugee in Uganda access primary education per year, 48 million USA dollars is needed for each refugee to have access to health treatment per year. But still many refugees do not access the Humanitarian Aid Services.

In terms of sharing the available humanitarian relief, consistent allegations point out that 75% of the available aid relief is used by the mainstream agencies, 10% by partner organizations and only 15% or 10 % is channelled to refugees needs.

In institutions like the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, the Office of the Prime Minister Department of Refugees, the Local Councils, and the parliament among others refugees are not represented and no one makes their views,

While some refugees in urban areas are excluded from the Relief Aid, information from refugees in different camps especially in Nakivale indicated that there are thousands of ghost refugees who consume thousands of tones of food each single month through a well- organized system between food suppliers, camp authorities and refugee welfare councils. While in Kampala refugees under caseload do share their aid with staffs of the organizations which give them the aid. They told me this *“I will approve your assistance today and I will defend it in the meeting but make sure that part of the money and things will be yours and the rest mine”*.

### **Recommendations:**

End completely the issue of ghost refugees through a regularly updated lists and put in place specific places where refugees should collect their food from, especially those who are registered in camps but who live in urban areas and travel back to collect their food by the year 2018,

To work directly with refugee led groups in order to reduce the chain from the food providers to the consumers by linking the consumer and the producer together, and due to the fact Uganda produces a lot of food; money should be encouraged to refugees than food items which give refugee more freedom to buy what they want by the year 2019,

To put in place innovative and friendly mechanisms for small groups at the community levels to access funding for their various activities by the year 2019,

Basing on the arguments from the government of Uganda about the availability of enough food reserves in the country, let us buy food which is given to refugees from local markets within Uganda by the year 2019,

The Parliament should appoint a specific committee which represents refugees in the parliament and Members of the parliament from refugee host communities should compose that committee by the year 2018,

Engage the Electoral Commission to hold regular elections of refugee leaders to represent them in various institutions and put arrangement in place for refugee representation in those various institutions by the year 2018,

Uganda government should ensure that all humanitarian services granted to refugees are done in inclusive manner, available, accessible, and affordable and of good quality for all refugees without discrimination by the year 2019,

### **Durable solutions to refugees**

While Uganda has maintained the settlement solution to some category of refugees, and voluntary repatriation to others, the country has not done enough to encourage resettlement to other countries as one among the best solutions to refugees as resettlement has remained the most little known by refugees and how to access it which over the years has remain a private business of agencies facilitating it, Uganda has completely denied refugees the opportunities for local integration, naturalizations and development options, as the voluntary repatriations exercises have been faced with a lot to desire in terms of not being based on free will. From 17<sup>th</sup> – 20<sup>th</sup> December 2014 Rwandan refugees were attacked by Uganda security agencies in Nakivale as a way to force them to go back to Rwanda. Uganda has unique characterised of different categories of refugees especially those who have been in the country since 1964, since 1996, those who have been here 20, 15, 10 years back, these can no longer be considered as temporal and cannot be left to their own anymore in name of “**self-reliance**” without plans for their future in terms of long terms development projects. While some refugees do access resettlement, refugees from Sudan especially Darfur have not been granted the resettlement options since 2006.

### **Recommendation**

Uganda should adopt a multi-sectorial approach which aims at integrating refugees in field of their professions for long term solutions to their problems by the year 2020,

Uganda should put in place the local integration programme instead of self-reliance to all refugees and play a role in the whole resettlement process by the year 2020,

We ask for naturalization of refugees, development options to others and local integration to others, while resettlement options should be granted to others, and to put in place clearly defined circumstances in which refugees can access all durable solutions and all the possible steps for the process of each durable solution to refugees by the year 2018 to the year 2020,

We ask the government to put in place an independent refugee directorate authority which will deal with refugee issues on a more realistic manner by the year 2020,

### **Governing refugees in Uganda**

In response to refugee participation in decision making, governance issues, and leadership at all levels, Uganda introduced the Refugee Welfare Councils (RWC) both in settlements and in urban areas. In settlements these RWCs lack independency from the camp authorities and their levels of influencing decisions making is very limited, sometimes they are part of the human rights abuse regime and sometimes they are perceived as a government militia. While the RWC do exist in camps, in urban areas like Kampala they were stopped since 2010 up to now.

Often times each organizations and institution working on refugees here in Kampala has its satellite refugee group which is used to serve the selfish interests of the agency, they names varies based to the agency and the tasks they are to play, sometimes refugee leaders, sometimes community leaders, some times refugee representatives, some times community mobilizers, some times peer educators among others, who in many cases have no capacity to influence the decisions but can only facilitate the implementation of the decisions.

### **Recommendations**

To restore and organize regular elections of refugee leaders in urban areas and ensure they work independently from the refugee regime, and to ensure that RWC in camps are operating independently from the camp authorities, given quality training skills in leadership, human rights a governance issues by independent qualified organizations by the year 2018,

To ensure that more of human rights education sessions are offered to refugees which will liberate them from fear, than the current trend of telling refugees only about criminal Code (law) which creates more fear among refugees. Encourage refugees to take part in different community development issues including leadership where they can contribute their skills by the year 2019,

To abolish the existing satellites refugee groups co-opted by actors within the refugee regime and replace them with popularly elected refugee leaders and refugee led organizations by the year 2019,

### **Rights to marriage**

While refugees as human beings are exposed to opportunities to form their families either in union with fellow refugees or partners from the host communities where refugees live, number of cases of refugees who have married partners from the host communities are facing challenges during the resettlement process to a third country, many of these cases are put on hold by the UNHCR on ground that they should clearance from the government first, and this is also the same the children from such kinds of parents.

## **Recommendation**

We call upon the government to issue a guideline as quick as possible for the solution of all these cases which are still pending and put on hold by the UNHCR, this guideline should respect the right of the person to move freely with his/her family members by the year 2018,

## **Right to Education**

While primary and part of the secondary education is free in Uganda, refugees are too poor to cover the hidden costs such as transport ( from Najjanankumbi up to Katwe a child needs 3,000Ug Sh going and coming back every day, the lunch ( 40,000 Ug Sh) per child and per term, Uniform at least 10, 000 Ug Sh per term, then others like toilet papers, brooms, exercises books, papers,.....In Katwe only one out of four refugee children does access education at primary level.

## **Recommendations**

Offer a total free education to refugee children by subsidizing all the costs, and remove the lunch issue by providing a school programme from morning up to 1pm,

In order to respond to the issue of class overcrowded, the government should put in place the double-shift from morning up 12:30 pm for the morning group and then they go home, then the afternoon group start at 12:45pm up to 6:30 pm.

## **Adequate medical treatment**

Refugees have been all the time faced with medical treatment when they are sick, or those who faced tortured and other inhuman treatment from their countries. Uganda approach is that refugees should access medical treatment from government health centres only. The poor services, discrimination, long distance, language barriers, and the negative attitudes are among the few obstacles for refugees to access adequate health services. In camps many refugees have lost their lives because of that and also the failure to be transferred on time, while here in Kampala refugees have often received only pain-killers, and cannot be offered treatment which goes beyond 5,000,000 Ug Sh, while not much efforts have been to offer to refugee medical services outside from Uganda.

## **Recommendations**

Uganda to ensure that refugees who came to seek protection are offered quality medical treatment and taken outside when the medical services are not available in Uganda,

## **Thanks**

On behalf of the above refugee led organization,

**Kulihoshi Musikami Pecos**

Executive Director

**Foundation People for Peace and Defense of Human Rights**