
Press Release; Kenyans stuck in refugee database go to court to seek redress from government

Due to the continued failure of the Government of Kenya in 2016 and 2019 to deregister thousands of Kenyan citizens from the refugee database and issue them with national identity cards, Haki na Sheria Initiative will file a petition on behalf of the victims in court on Thursday 12th August 2021.

Haki Na Sheria has for the last ten years been advocating for the Kenyan citizens whose finger prints have been captured by UNHCR with the engagement by both the Kenya Government and the UN refugee agency. As you may be aware that victims who are known as “double registered” were inadvertently registered as refugees for various reasons, during the Somalia’s civil war outbreak in 1991 and subsequent settlement of refugees in Kenya’s Dadaab refugee camp it coincided with prolonged drought in Northeastern Kenya that almost swept livestock; the local’s lifeline, this has made tens of thousands of Kenyans to register themselves as refugees to get opportunities from the free rations, free education, free shelter as well health provided by the UNHCR to the refugees in the camps. Approximately about 40,000 Kenyan citizens are in the refugee database; 80% being from North Eastern.

Following the mass registration of Kenyans in the refugee data, victims continue to suffer under cloud of uncertainty as they cannot secure identity cards as they are regarded as refugees. This becomes even more difficult for those with children since parents without identity cards are not able to support their children in getting birth certificates.

Majority of the victims are youths who were registered when they were young, their future is doomed as some have gone up to university but cannot do any meaningful objective because they cannot be employed, run legal business, open bank account or even able to travel.

The government has in several times initiated a process to deregister Kenyan victims from the database, but has failed to complete its reviews nor issue identity cards to rightful citizens. For this reason Haki Na sheria have decided to proceed to file a lawsuit against the government on behalf of the victims who have suffered for years without any redress.

We have documented enough evidence that we intend to show the court how these Kenyans rights have been violated for years concerning their citizenship rights.

Our resolves is ensuring each and every one of these Kenyan citizens have their identity as Kenyans so that they can live a dignified life like any other Kenyan whose rights are protected by the constitution.

Notes to editors:

Haki na Sheria Initiative (HSI) is a non-governmental organization based in Garissa, Kenya and it is dedicated to ending the discrimination and promoting the rights of marginalized communities in Northern Kenya. HSI is a local organization that has over the last 10 years empowered the community, leaving the skills with the locals. HSI envision a society in Kenya where all marginalized communities live dignified lives free of human rights violations.

Haki na Sheria provides a platform for the promotion of the participation of marginalized communities in governance and reduce human rights violations in the Garissa Region.
