

Joint Statement
on the High-Level Dialogue between the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the
United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR)
09 August 2017

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) convened a high-level dialogue on 09 August 2017 in Dar es Salaam. The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania was led by the Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Mwigulu Lameck Nchemba and UNHCR was led by Dr. Volker Turk, Assistant High Commissioner for Protection.

Noting that Tanzania currently hosts approximately 350,000 refugees and asylum seekers, of which the majority come from Burundi, the Government of Tanzania and UNHCR emphasized that to continue granting refugee status is a fundamental, humanitarian and peaceful act. Both parties emphasized the importance to continue to preserve and reinforce the humanitarian and civilian character of asylum.

Recognizing that the Government of Tanzania and UNHCR has a long-standing relationship and honouring the generosity that Tanzania has shown over many decades in hosting refugees on its territory including granting naturalization to more than 162,000 Burundian refugees who fled in 1972.

Calling for the continued policy of offering protection to refugees and asylum seekers while supporting host communities in refugee affected areas and re-doubling of efforts to seek solutions, such as finalizing the naturalization process for the 1972 Burundi refugees, assistance to support those refugees who wish to voluntarily return to their countries of origin and advocating for resettlement to third countries.

The following paragraphs summarize the outcome of the discussions on the collaboration between the Government of Tanzania and UNHCR:

Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)

- Advocate for actors and donors to commit sufficient resources and fulfil commitments for the effective and successful implementation of the CRRF.
- Schedule the first meeting of the CRRF Secretariat at the earliest date possible to further planning and to initiate the implementation phase.
- Use the CRRF as a platform to address gaps and pursue opportunities for engaging development actors and relevant stakeholders in integrated support for refugees and host communities and strengthen the protection environment for refugees in the country.
- Take the opportunity of the CRRF process to work on current procedures to align joint interests and to review the Refugee Policy.

Access to Territory and Refugee Status Determination (RSD)

- Review and refine standard operating procedures for screening to ensure that individuals with international protection needs can be identified and security concerns addressed effectively.
- Explore possible options for expediting decision-making and a simplified, fair and efficient process in order to clear and prevent future backlogs of individuals awaiting RSD.
 - Consider a hybrid *prima facie* – individualised RSD approach, such as group determination envisioned in the 2005 report (Refugee Protection Policy and Practice in Tanzania: A Gaps Analysis), which would ensure quick identification of international protection needs, while addressing security concerns.
- Provide continuous training on refugee protection principles to border management officials in the regions to ensure that they are prepared in case of mass influx.
- Call for timely resource mobilization from all sources.
- Review the Refugee Policy to update it and ensure it is equipped to address the current refugee situation.
- Consider developing a quality assurance initiative to review asylum decision-making.

Civilian character of asylum - Separation facility

- Convene a working group to discuss and resolve the key issues around the Government-UNHCR cooperation on the separation facility (Mwisa), including the review of the previous MOU.

Registration

- Adopt an Action Plan for development of a registration and documentation system to be owned and managed by the Government of Tanzania in collaboration with the UNHCR registration database and system (proGres and BIMS).

Rights, dignity of reception and living conditions of refugees and asylum seekers

- Review the legal and policy framework to ensure that it is aligned with the current global paradigms in the management of refugee situations, e.g. freedom of movement, access to employment and education in line with Tanzania's commitments made during the 2016 Leaders' Summit in New York:
 - Develop regulations to operationalise the provision in the Refugees Act, 1998.
 - Consider amendments to the policy to permit residence and freedom of movement for refugees who have secured employment permits.
 - Develop educational facilities that can be shared by both host communities and refugees.

Voluntary repatriation

- As a part of the tripartite technical discussions, jointly develop a modality for assisting voluntary repatriation for refugees who make a free and informed choice, and assist those who wish to return in safety and dignity.

- Assist voluntary repatriation of those Burundian refugees who have registered for voluntary repatriation based on a free and informed choice, while respecting and ensuring that all protection safeguards are met.

Resettlement

- Advocate and pursue vigorously the development of new and expanded opportunities for resettlement to third countries as a clear demonstration of responsibility sharing.

Naturalization

- Support the finding of durable solutions for the residual 1972 Burundian refugees in Tanzania.
- De-gazette the settlements and re-organize them under local government structures.

Support to host communities

- Provide support to local authorities in connection with their functions in refugee management in their areas.

Dar es Salaam

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