

Increase support to early solutions for South Sudanese refugees in Uganda

Since the conflict erupted in South Sudan in December 2013 and famine was declared on 20 February, 2017, [over 1.5 million South Sudanese](#) have been forced to flee, out of which [885,818](#) are hosted in Uganda making it the world's fastest growing refugee [crisis](#). Given the unlikelihood of return any time soon, early solutions is key to support solutions processes in the early stages of displacement.

Did you know?

- [Almost 1 in 3 South Sudanese are displaced](#) and 86 % of South Sudanese refugees are women and children.
- Uganda is Africa's largest refugee hosting country with a total of [1.2 million refugees](#) and ranks among the top three refugee hosting nations in the world.
- Uganda welcomed more refugees last year [than the total number of refugees and migrants](#) crossing the Mediterranean into Europe.
- **Early solutions planning** encompasses steps to build the self-reliance and resilience of refugees and host communities and to prepare refugees for future durable solutions [in the early stages of displacement](#).
- The upcoming [Solidarity Summit on June 22 and 23rd in Uganda](#) is a key opportunity for the international community and partners to support Uganda tremendous effort in implementing its progressive 'out of camp' refugee policy model despite hosting large numbers of refugees.

Facts and figures about South Sudanese refugees in Uganda

- In less than 6 months, Uganda has tripled its South Sudanese refugee population with new arrivals in April averaging [more than 2,000 people daily](#).
- **Transit and reception facilities** are rapidly becoming overwhelmed due to [chronic and severe underfunding and support](#). Significant challenges are being faced in providing refugees with adequate food rations, health and educational services, and sufficient clean water; a dire situation further compounded by the onset of heavy rains.
- **Expansion of refugee settlements:** The Bidibidi settlement in Northern Uganda which was established less than six months ago now [hosts almost 270,000 South Sudanese refugees](#) and is considered the world's largest refugee settlement.
- **South Sudanese refugees in Kampala:** It is estimated that more than [10,000 South Sudanese refugees](#) have fled to Kampala. However, as assistance is provided in the settlements, urban refugees are struggling to survive in the city.
- **Uganda is considered exemplary** for its [favorable 'out of camp' policies for refugees](#), which includes freedom of movement, right to work, land for each refugee family to settle and cultivate, access to public services and access to travel and identity documents. Uganda's inclusive refugee policy anticipates **empowering refugees to become economically self-reliant while granting them many of the same privileges that nationals enjoy**.
- Following the [UN General Assembly's adoption of the New York Declaration](#), Uganda was the first State to declare its willingness to pilot the **Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF)**. Although it is a role model for the implementation of the CRRF, it will be difficult for Uganda to continue its progressive policies in the absence of robust support from the international community.

Recommendations- Invest in early solutions

1. Support joint planning and develop a comprehensive national Solutions framework with common outcomes for humanitarian and development actors under the leadership of the Ugandan Government

Support multi-sectorial rights and needs based programming approach (legal, material and physical safety) to give the millions of displaced a chance of a better life with dignity and self-reliance.

Improve the **generation and availability of relevant data and analysis** to better understand displacement affected communities' profiles to operationalize complementary humanitarian and developmental approaches. This will also support local authorities and agencies to **better prepare and forecast population movements**, not only to respond.

Involve development actors from the onset of the emergency to complement humanitarian interventions by bringing development specialists to support the collective effort and inform medium to longer term programming (early solutions).

The international community should provide **adequate long-term and predictable political and financial support** to Uganda and its people that have been hosting displaced populations for decades, in such ways that **improve inclusive access to services, economic opportunities and infrastructure for all**.

2. Strengthen self-reliance and integrated programing for both displaced and host communities factoring in appropriate economic, environmental and social considerations – early solutions

Emergency deployment of non-emergency people to support early solutions thinking and planning: urban planners, community engagement specialists, expert in local governance, etc.

Increase absorption capacities of local services to support an integrated service delivery approach (through creation of national level surge capacity of service providers), support inclusive economic opportunities and infrastructure for both refugees and host communities.

Increase support to Uganda through pooled funding mechanisms that combine humanitarian, development and resilience elements such as the refugee response plans, the Government's Settlement Transformation Agenda (STA) and the UN-World Bank ReHoPE program.

3. Foster localized approaches and better engage local actors and communities in the search for durable solutions to ensure ownership, local relevance and social cohesion

National, regional and local authorities have the primary responsibility and they need to be supported to be able to play a leadership and coordinating role.

It is essential to **adopt a 'displacement affected communities' approach**- inclusive of refugees, and host communities – and to place accountability to displaced populations at the centre of our actions.

We must collectively **invest into capacities to sustain solutions locally and nationally**. Such investments will strengthen national institutions and partnerships that can sustain locally owned solutions.

4. Invest in Youth and in solutions in urban context

Investing in youth and education is crucial. Failing the children and youth risks creating a lost generation and sets us on a path toward new conflicts and greater displacement in the future.

Improve knowledge and solutions programing in urban contexts: more and more refugees and returnees are in urban centers. This highlights the urgent need to seek solutions in urban environments.