



UNHCR
The UN Refugee Agency



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UNHCR's Registration work from 2015 to 2018

'Registration' for many of us conjures thoughts of queues, form filling, bureaucracy, delays and obligation – few of us would think of it as a powerful process that will protect us from harm. But in a refugee's situation, it can mean the difference between your children being fed - or not; being able to get the urgent attention of a doctor – or becoming gravely ill or even dying; being thrown into jail – or being able to move freely in a safe place after fleeing for your life. By very definition each and every refugee is seeking safety and protection. The reasons they have fled can vary widely - it might be their political beliefs, their religion, their sexuality or their ethnicity – but the result is the same – their lives are under threat. When their own country cannot offer the protection that will keep them from being killed, they must seek it elsewhere. People often travel huge distances - in the harshest conditions - to find safety and protection across borders, forced to interrupt their lives and become refugees. The first step to making sure that safety and protection works at all is becoming registered as a refugee – an act which unlocks the enormous power of the 1951 Convention on the Rights of Refugees. The act of registration with the host Government or with UNHCR directly (on behalf of the Government) upon arrival in a country forms the cornerstone of a set of legal standards which we called 'protection'. These protections are life-saving and they state the following:

- that countries are not allowed to return registered refugees to the states that persecuted them (non-refoulement)
- that host countries must allow refugees access to basic human rights – to food, to water, to education, to health services
- That host countries must not imprison refugees as illegal aliens or impede their freedom to move outside their homes anywhere within the country.

Without registration, refugees have no proof of their existence or their right to be present in the host country. Consequently refugees can really struggle to access basic and essential services, leaving them vulnerable and open to exploitation. UNHCR prioritises the registration process, making sure refugees can access their full rights and make the best of their situation whilst they wait to find home. This is particularly important for the most vulnerable refugees such as children who have arrived on their own or without family support, those who are ill or injured, older refugees and those requiring special support services.

This is why, for every dollar UNHCR raised in 2017, we typically spent 9 cents ensuring that people who have fled have been properly registered with the authorities to help them access all their rights and prevent them being imprisoned or discriminated against, including providing registration for babies born en route or in camps or refugee settlements.



At the end of 2017 12 million refugees were registered with UNHCR – over half of these was registered since 2015. 2.7 million in 2017, 2.5 million in 2016 and 1.8 million in 2015. This means that today 60% of all refugees have been registered with UNHCR. This number includes 3,105,000 new arrivals and 417,000 new births during the same period. Henley & Partners' generous contributions has helped make this possible.

Government support and corporation: UNHCR working with host governments

Registration of refugees and asylum-seekers is the primary responsibility of States. UNHCR only supports or take on the task of registration if and when needed. In all such cases, this role should be done jointly with the authorities of the host country, and/or the capacity of the host country should be developed to enable it to take on this responsibility at a later stage. UNHCR is currently working on registering refugees in 77 operations, where 33 of these are joint with the governments of the country we are operating in.

Here are some examples of the registration activities we have done in the last four years...

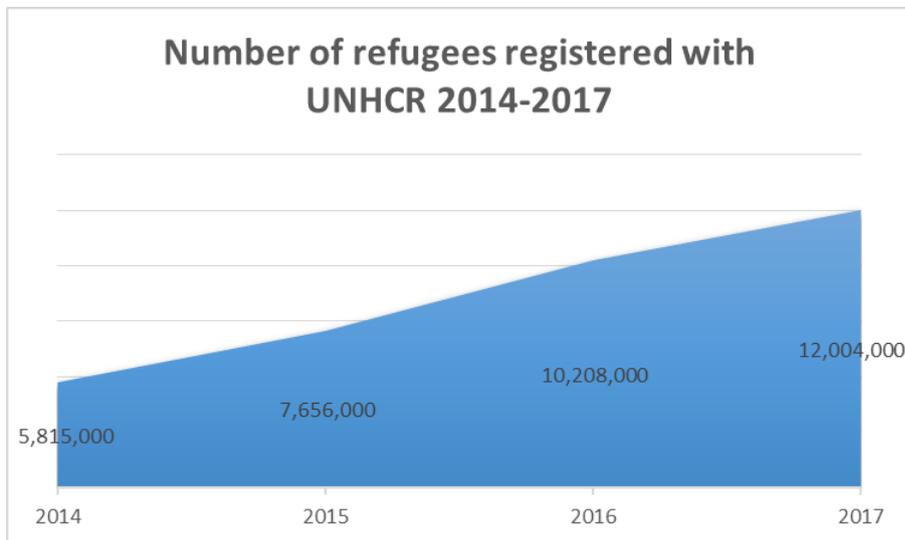
Major Registration activities and results 2015 - 2018

In 2016 UNHCR undertook 19 registration verification exercises and deployed experts to support both large-scale registration operations in Cameroon, Kenya and Niger, and emergency registration in Ethiopia, Greece and Uganda. In the beginning of 2018 UNHCR was supporting the Government of Uganda with its launch of a countrywide biometric data verification to fix any discrepancies in refugee data. The massive exercise started on 1 March 2018 in the Oruchinga refugee settlement in Uganda's South-West region, home to thousands of Congolese refugees, before being rolled out across the country. UNHCR, working with partners, will deploy more than 400 additional staff to over 30 locations in an 800-kilometre area, as well as supplying the technical equipment and software. Uganda provides protection to more than one million refugees, mostly from South Sudan, Democratic Republic of the Congo and Burundi. It maintains an open-door policy and new arrivals receive plots of land and access to public services. This project will ensure UNHCR's resources and services reach the intended recipients

We have rolled out our Biometric Identification Management system (BIMS)...

The Biometric Identity Management System (BIMS) was first rolled out in 2015 in Afghanistan, Cameroon, Chad, the Congo, the Dominican Republic, Haiti, India, Malawi, Malaysia, Pakistan and Thailand, enrolling a total of 658,327 refugees the first year. By the end of May 2018 5,326,635 persons had been enrolled in UNHCR's biometric systems and UNHCR are now using biometrics in 51 country operations. The system are scheduled to be deployed to a total of 70 operations by the end of 2019.

Biometrics is a method of recognizing an individual based on measurable biological characteristics such as the



A young South Sudanese refugee is registered at Imvepi settlement in northern Uganda. © UNHCR 2018/Georgina Goodwin



Brazil. Venezuelans arrive in border city of Pacaraima.
© UNHCR 2018/Reynesson Damasceno

fingerprint or iris. Biometrics remain constant over a person's lifespan, and while it can be affected by physical deterioration, or aging, the core patterns do not change beyond recognition. This allows for an accurate, paperless identification of a person over time. These biometric systems allow UNHCR and partners to verify identities at distribution points, ensuring a faster and more secure aid distribution process. It also enables refugees to access cardless ATM transactions and purchases at certain points of sale. For persons of concern it provides a much higher security of their identity compared to paper based documentation, and enables UNHCR to provide more accurate population figures.

In Jordan, UNHCR and its partners worked with private sector service providers to support 32,000 vulnerable refugee families throughout 2017, using the latest technology to ensure that registered refugees targeted through vulnerability assessments get the right amount of money at the right time. UNHCR employed iris scanning during the registration of refugees to verify and authenticate identities and instantly enrol them in digital banking. Refugees were then able to access funds without a cash card, meeting their needs with dignity through actions that support the local economy.

We have worked to ensure that registration data is accurate and kept securely...

We recognise the importance of ensuring all the data we record is accurate and secure. Without stringent processes, we would have to restart the registration process, causing delays to the services refugees need. In the same way, if our data is not securely stored it can be damaged or lost, similarly leading to delays as well as identity fraud. Throughout the whole registration process; UNHCR constantly strives to improve processes and prevent and solve any challenges that arise. Therefore, we regularly train our staff members on the importance of recording and storing accurate data. We make sure that all personal data is backed up with secure software and that it is regularly upgraded. Our systems incorporate sophisticated built-in tools for the detection, prevention and investigation of unauthorized or fraudulent use, so that information about staff members who added information is recorded, traceable and may be audited.

At the end of 2017, UNHCR had rolled out its web-based case management database, proGres in Partnership (proGres v4), in 37 countries, a software designed for customer relationship management to create our first truly global case management system. ProGres v4 is part of PRIMES, a suite of applications that will greatly enhance the capacity of UNHCR and partners to protect and assist refugees and other displaced populations. The system is extremely sophisticated and allows us to gather, maintain, access and analyse data and information about each and every refugee and their case, from initial contact through to durable solutions. The results are brought together centrally, allowing our staff members, whether in the field or at Headquarters, to access the same information, often in real time, thus allowing them to be more responsive to the protection needs of refugees. As well as recording biographical data and information about why they fled their country, we can also record data that influences our services and next steps in supporting refugees while they are away from home. For example, at the moment, we are rolling out an upgrade to the system that also allows us to capture skills, work experience and educational background, to help us better design activities which encourage self-reliance, so that refugees can help themselves all the better.

We have registered refugees in during large scale emergency situations...

In Bangladesh in 2017 UNHCR, in partnership with the Government, developed and implemented a digital data collection system using an innovative approach to household registration. We implemented a mobile data collection tool that yielded invaluable identity and needs data for the Rohingya refugee emergency response. This mobile technology allowed data collection with the GPS tagging of family shelters for over 760,000 Rohingya refugees. The registration exercise enabled UNHCR and partners to better understand the size and breakdown of the population,

where people were located, and their protection needs from the onset of the emergency. Such information was key to getting the right aid to the right people and resulted in more coordinated, targeted responses for the delivery of protection and lifesaving assistance. The data collected was also used to streamline and verify refugee identities for the distribution of emergency relief items. Aggregated data from the exercise was also shared with partners to improve evidence-based planning and programming and ensure timely protection interventions. Refugee families in the Kutupalong camp—known as the Kutupalong-Balukhali expansion site—and surrounding settlements did not need to queue to make themselves known to UNHCR, thanks to a smartphone application that allowed staff to collect shelter-to-shelter data. More than 175,000 refugee families from Myanmar were registered and provided with documentation. The data collected was also used to streamline and verify refugee identities ahead of the distribution of relief items.

This is an example on how your \$ 1,000,000 has helped us registering persons who have been forced to flee throughout the last 4 years...

Activities	Beneficiaries	Cost
Carrying out registration processes for each individual, ensuring...		
The registration of 100,000 eligible Somali refugees in Kenya in 2017	100,000	\$89,504
Civil status registration or documentation for 100,000 internally displaced people in Colombia in 2016	100,000	\$82,353
The registration and issuance of documentation of 359 stateless persons in Lebanon were registered and issued documentation through procedure for late birth registration in 2015	359	\$82,026
The individual registration of 50,000 Afghan refugees in Iran throughout 2015	50,000	\$90,718
We provided emergency registration activities in 35 operations, helping...		
Individually register 10,000 internally displaced in Niger throughout 2017	10,000	\$ 49,516
Register and issue documentation under regular birth registration procedure to 2,000 Nigerian children in Cameroon in 2017	2,000	\$ 111,389
Register 135,000 South Sudanese refugees in Uganda throughout 2015	135,000	\$135,408
Assist 750 refugees and asylum seekers in urban areas in Zambia with civil status registration or documentation during 2016	750	\$22,672
We provided information and trainings about registration, including...		
Training 50 government staff in registration of Internally displaced people in Iraq in 2017	50	\$ 133,659
25 advocacy interventions for refugees in Djibouti in 2016	25	\$151,795
Providing information on registration procedures to 30,000 refugees and asylum seekers in Jordan in 2015	30,000	\$51,214
Total	428,184	\$1,000,254

Stories

Uganda launches major refugee verification operation

With the support of UNHCR, government officials are using biometric data to verify more than 1 million refugees in the country.

ORUCHINGA REFUGEE SETTLEMENT, Uganda. The Ugandan government launched a large-scale programme on Thursday to verify the identities of all refugees in the country, using biometric data. With support from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and the World Food Programme, government officials began collecting fingerprints and scanning the irises of more than 1 million refugees. The purpose of the exercise is to ensure that all refugees are properly registered and receive the protection and assistance they need.



Refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo wait to go through the verification process at Oruchinga settlement in Uganda.

© UNHCR 2018/Michele Sibiloni

The government is using UNHCR's biometric registration software, which has already been used to register some 4.4 million refugees in 48 countries worldwide. The verification exercise in Uganda is the biggest in the agency's history. Refugees who are verified and registered will receive new ration cards and their biometric identification will be used to provide and improve assistance to each individual. The exercise will be carried out in all refugee settlements and among urban refugees in the capital, Kampala. It is expected to be completed in September 2018, with six teams working simultaneously to register 18,000 people a day.

Douglas Asimwe, the head of refugee protection in the prime minister's office, attended the launch at Oruchinga Refugee Settlement the south-west of the country. "The exercise follows a directive by the prime minister to the authenticate data contained in the government's refugee registration system," he told refugees at the site.

"It will help us to ensure that we have credible information to protect and assist refugees effectively and efficiently." Oruchinga has 6,852 registered refugees and the verification exercise there is expected to last until 4 March, verifying up to 3,000 per day. Ugandan Robert Byaruhanga joined UNHCR a week before the launch and, on the first day, he and 64 UNHCR and government staff were already at work in Oruchinga settlement collecting data. A day earlier, he was still learning the ropes and shadowing a colleague, fellow Uganda Winnie Mugisa. "Yesterday, Winnie supported me while I processed 12 individuals," he said at his desk where a fingerprint reader, iris scanner, web camera and laptop are ready. "It went well. I am going to do a lot of work today." Winnie, who joined UNHCR in 2007, is also ready to tackle the huge undertaking. Like many of her colleagues, she is regularly dispatched from her local UNHCR office in the northern region of Arua to conduct exercises like these. "We're used to big numbers, but today is going to be busy," she said. "The verification is very important. We need to have a system, a standard." The exercise in Oruchinga is being supported by 42 volunteers from the refugee community who are assisting with translation and crowd control.

UNHCR Associate Field Officer Gabrielle Low helps to manage the process and the volunteers. She said her aim was to keep the exercise "flowing like water". In just two weeks, she has seen the site transformed, with three huge tents, toilets, children's play area and catering for staff and volunteers. "To see it go from an empty football field to this has been amazing," she said, during a brief respite. "And refugees have done a lot of work, helping with mobilization and talking to the community." UNHCR Representative Bornwell Kantande added: "We want to have better services for all refugees and host communities, and the basis of that is verification." In Geneva, UNHCR spokesperson Babar Baloch said verification would ensure that refugees and asylum-seekers were accurately reflected in the registration system and would help the government improve the accuracy of its data. "This will make certain that resources and services provided by UNHCR and its partners reach the intended recipients," he told a news briefing at the Palais des Nations.

By Kate Bond, March 2018

ID cards bring life-saving benefits for South Sudanese in Sudan.

Teresa Majouk*, a 35-year-old South Sudanese refugee, did not appreciate the importance of the ID card she had received from the Sudanese authorities until she went into a difficult labour last month. It was midnight when Gai Deng first heard the cries of his wife in Mayo, one of around 30 informal settlements across Khartoum State. It has been home for Gai and his family since they fled violence in South Sudan.

They had not yet used the identity cards that the government of Sudan, with UNHCR support, began to distribute free of charge to an estimated half a million South Sudanese living in Sudan. An elderly midwife, with wrinkled but firm hands, soon arrived at Teresa and Gia's home, where she



discovered the baby was abnormally positioned. Teresa would require a caesarean operation. “You must get her to a hospital now, where she will be better assisted, or she and the baby will die,” urged the midwife.

Horrified, Gai rushed his wife to the nearby Academic Teaching Hospital. There, he was told the operation would cost 1,500 Sudanese pounds, and he would have to pay in advance for the operation to take place within 48 hours. A ceramics worker with little money, Gai offered to pawn his wedding ring and watch, but the hospital refused. He desperately returned to Mayo hoping to borrow money from his community, only to meet the midwife, who told him to use Teresa’s ID card. “With the identity cards, South Sudanese refugees can have access to all basic services, including free-of-charge healthcare in public hospitals,” she told him. Gai rushed back to the hospital with his wife’s ID card. From that moment, all her medical bills were cancelled.

Teresa is among nearly 500,000 South Sudanese refugees in Sudan who will be able to access critical, life-saving services thanks to these new ID cards. “Provision of identity cards is one of the most important developments in the life of South Sudanese refugees in Sudan because it gives them a package of rights, including indefinite stay in the country,” says Mohammed Adar, Representative of UNHCR in Sudan. “Given the number of those who come to register and collect the identity cards, awareness of South Sudanese people of the benefits these cards provide has increased progressively.”

In December 2014, UNHCR signed a landmark agreement with the Sudanese authorities to provide financial and technical support for the registration of South Sudanese all over Sudan over the next 18 months. Since war erupted in South Sudan in December 2013, more than 120,000 South Sudanese people have sought refuge to Sudan, joining 350,000 who remained in the country after the secession of South Sudan in 2011. All are eligible for the ID cards. So far, registration authorities have produced more than 100,000 ID cards for South Sudanese refugees around Khartoum, out of 115,000 people who are registered in that area. “I can’t thank God enough that I was issued an identity card only one week before I went into a complicated labour,” says Teresa, as she smiles at her new-born baby.

*Names have been changed to protect the refugees’ identities. Article from UNHCR News by Mohamed Elnaiem and Bahia Egeh in Khartoum, Sudan

Over 15,500 asylum-seekers pre-registered on mainland Greece

More than 15,500 asylum-seekers currently living on mainland Greece have now received temporary cards, valid for one year, allowing them to reside legally in Greece pending a final decision on their asylum applications. Pre-registration also gives them the right to access services, pending the full lodging of their asylum application.

“The exercise will help to identify those eligible for family reunification or relocation to another EU country,” UNHCR spokesperson William Spindler told a press briefing in Geneva. “It will also identify people with specific needs so that they may be referred to the appropriate organizations and receive assistance and support,” he added.

The pre-registration exercise aims to address the need to access international protection by an estimated 49,000 people currently on mainland Greece. The process is open to those who entered Greece between January 1, 2015, and March 20, 2016. For most of the refugees and migrants residing on the Greek mainland, pre-registration is the first contact they have had with the government since they arrived in the country. For Afghans in particular, most of their initial entry documents, known as “police notes,” have since expired. This means their presence in Greece is technically illegal and that they could even face arrest – though this has rarely happened. “We have more freedom now, because we have a legal status.”



Ghulam Ali Jaffari and his wife, Nabila, said they felt relieved after completing pre-registration recently at Elliniko, a former airport-turned-refugee shelter in Athens. The couple, who arrived in Greece in late February with their two-year-old son, Amir Reza, and Ghulam Ali's 15-year-old brother, took a boat across the Aegean Sea after traveling from Kandahar province, Afghanistan. Their documents expired at the end of March, and they have not wanted to leave Elliniko as a result of their uncertain legal status, now ended.

"We have more freedom now, because we have a legal status," Ghulam Ali said. After pre-registration they were given an official asylum-seekers' card which also gives them access to Greek public health and educational services. The pre-registration exercise is supported financially by the European Commission (DG Home) and implemented with the help of UNHCR and the European Asylum Support Office (EASO). In addition, the International Organization for Migration (IOM) provides information about their Assisted Voluntary Return programme. "UNHCR has supported the exercise with technical guidance on the design, planning and preparation, as well as the provision of material resources. UNHCR is also supporting the identification of people with specific needs and facilitates their access to assistance," Spindler detailed. Among the 15,500 people pre-registered to date, some 680 unaccompanied and separated children have been identified and referred to EKKA, the specialized government entity in charge of unaccompanied and separated children. At the end of the exercise, those pre-registered will be given an appointment with the Asylum Service to lodge their asylum claim and formally access family reunification and relocation.

By Tania Karas, Athens, Greece, 1 July 2016