



Press Release: DRAFT

Uganda and UNHCR concludes verification of refugees in Oruchinga

Over 6,900 refugees received new attestation forms and ration cards following the biometric verification

KAMPALA: UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency and the Government of Uganda have successfully concluded the first phase of a countrywide biometric verification exercise that was conducted in Oruchinga, in Isingiro District in Uganda's South-West region on 1 March.

During the week-long exercise, UNHCR captured fingerprints, iris scans and photos of 6,972 refugees in Oruchinga refugee settlement. Every refugee family who was verified biometrically has now received a proof of verification form and new ration card. The World Food Programme (WFP) then distributed food to a total of 6,710 refugees from 6 to 8 March at the settlement after biometrically verifying their identities.

Following the request from the Prime Minister of Uganda, Rt. Hon Dr. Ruhakana Rugunda for the biometric verification of refugees, UNHCR mobilized significant human and financial resources to facilitate the government to verify the refugee population using UNHCR's biometric system. WFP also pulled out all the stops to set up infrastructure for the verification exercise and get teams and equipment to the site to set up a new food collection process and biometrically verify those who received assistance.

Douglas Asimwe, the Officer in Charge of Refugee Protection in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) extended his appreciation to the teams for the successful completion of refugee verification in Oruchinga. He said, "Enhanced biometric verification system that captures iris and ten fingerprints will strengthen credibility and accuracy of the existing refugee data which will ensure that refugees are accurately reflected in the registration system."

UNHCR Representative in Uganda, Bornwell Kantande said that, "Using biometric identification and verification systems for large scale humanitarian operations is extremely important. It allows us to check that a refugee is not registered more than once and it will also ensure that humanitarian resources and services are being provided to refugees in efficient manner."

WFP Uganda Country Director, El Khidir Daloum added: "WFP looks forward to working closely with the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and UNHCR over the coming months to make this exercise a success and deliver assistance efficiently to the people we serve. This biometric system will ensure we are giving the right people the right assistance."

As the verification exercise moves to bigger refugee settlements, enhanced collaboration among all actors, including OPM, WFP, UNHCR and our partners, will be crucial to ensure the smooth transition from verification to the delivery of vital aid and assistance.

The verification exercise is scheduled to be completed by September 2018 – including introduction of biometric checks at 180 food distribution sites, managed by WFP - which will ensure that assistance is going to those who need it most.

This is UNHCR's biggest-ever verification exercise in Africa. The biometric teams will now proceed to Nakivale, where the verification will start on Wednesday 14, March.

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