Arnold-
Bergstraesser-
Institut

Political Stakes of Refugee Protection in Uganda

Ronald Kalyango Sebba & Franzisca Zanker

August 2022

DSF Deutsche Stiftung Friedensforschung
german foundation for peace research

KEY POINTS

Uganda is well known as a strong refugee protector, but faces a number of socio-economic and governing challenges, as well as complex political priorities and relationships. Based on our research on the political stakes of refugee protection in Uganda we found:

1. Refugee protection in Uganda follows a **development approach that emphasizes refugee self-reliance by providing access to land for subsistence farming,** as well as primary education and health facilities within settlements.
    - A number of refugees are self-settled in urban areas, resulting in practical struggles such as police harassment, limited access to healthcare, jobs, livelihood opportunities and vocational training programmes.
    - Institutionally, refugee governance in Uganda is constrained by highly centralized decision-making and underfunding of refugee hosting districts.
    - Settlement-based land policies limit refugee choice and have been difficult to sustain due to growing numbers of refugees and growing tensions with host communities.
    - The development approach avoids any potential political integration of refugees

2. Domestically, there is a **political trade-off between the idea that welcoming refugees would develop the country and the cost of hosting the growing number of refugees** given limited international aid.
    - The refugee situation is not rhetorically very securitised as the humanitarian narrative is still dominant, though there is a slowly growing narrative that refugee numbers are too high.

3. Uganda's open-door policy has attracted positive international attention, **contributing to improving bilateral relations as well as the country's geopolitical leverage** in the region.
    - It also helps take attention away from the country's domestic politics characterised by political oppression and human rights violations.

4. Varying political interest groups affect refugee protection in Uganda, in particular:
    - The **relationship between the international and national community**, primarily the OPM (as a representative of the government) and UNHCR (as a representative of the international community and refugee interests**) is characterized by tension and co-dependency.**
    - At the local level there are disputes between **local and national actors over decision-making powers** when it comes to refugee protection, refugee numbers as well as underfunding of district administrations, who are only incrementally being involved in decision-making.
    - Despite formal mechanisms for refugees to communicate and coordinate with local and national authorities there is still a general feeling of exclusion amongst refugees and **no real political role for refugees.**

5. There is growing concern among locals about the government's open-door policy, reflected in **sporadic clashes with refugee populations** over access to resources, social services, environmental destruction, land and opening borders amidst the COVID 19 pandemic.

Table of Contents

Overview of Figures

Overview of Tables

LIST OF ACRONYMS

CNDD-FDD – Conseil national pour la défense de la démocratie – Forces de défense de la démocratie

(National Council for the Defense of Democracy – Forces for the Defense of Democracy)

CPA - Comprehensive Peace Agreement

CRRF - Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework

CSOs – Civil Society Organizations

DLGs - District Local Governments

DRC - Democratic Republic of Congo

FGD – Focus Group Discussion

IGAD- Intergovernmental Authority on Development

INGO- International Non-Governmental Organization

NCMs - National Coordination Mechanisms

NDP - National Development Plan

NGO - Non-Governmental Organization

OAU – Organization of African Unity

OPM- Office of the Prime Minister

REC -Refugee Eligibility Committee

ReDSS - Regional Durable Solutions Secretariat

ReHoPE- Refugee Host Population Empowerment

RMPF - Regional Migration Policy Framework SPLA - Sudan People's Liberation Army

RWCs - Refugee Welfare Councils

SPLM - Sudan People's Liberation Movement

SPLM-IO- Sudan People's Liberation Movement in Opposition

SRS - Self-Reliance Strategy

STA-Settlement Transformative Agenda

UGX – Ugandan-Shilling

UNHCR – United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees

UPDF – Uganda People's Defence Forces

VAT – Value Added Tax

1. REFUGEE HISTORIES IN UGANDA

Globally, Uganda is regarded one of the most refugee friendly countries ever opening its borders to those that need asylum. The majority of the refugees to Uganda arrive as a result of armed conflicts in their countries or as a result of political persecution.[1] Uganda's long history of hosting refugees starts with the Polish refugees in the 1940's and the Sudanese and Rwandans in the 1950s and 60's. Between 1942 and 1944 Polish refugees were settled in Uganda by the British colonial masters (Lwanga-Lunyiigo 1993; Lingelbach 2020). In settling the Polish refugees, the British were concerned about maintaining the superior image of the Caucasian race for the local population. As such, the British policy towards the Polish refugees was that of exclusion – to prevent the mixing of refugees and locals - and control - to prevent the rise of nationalist groups among the refugee population. Subtle methods were used to later force refugees to return to Poland or resettle in other countries including Canada, the United States, France, Argentina and South Africa among others, as their local integration was not wished for (Lwanga-Lunyiigo 1993).

Since the Polish refugees, the most prominent groups of refugees have been the Sudanese, Rwandans, and those from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) formally Zaire. Sudanese refugees first arrived in 1955 following the Anyanya rebellion that lasted for over 17 years and resulted in high numbers of refugees fleeing to Uganda and Kenya primarily from 1964 to 1965 (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). Not least due to the ethnic similarities between the people of South Sudan and West Nile in Uganda, these refugees were readily received into Uganda. Although peace agreement was signed in 1972 between the Jaffar Ai-Nimeiry's government and the Anyanya rebels, this did not last long. War broke out again in 1983 between the Khartoum government and the Sudan People's Liberation Army/ Movement (SPLA/ SPLM) a new rebel group led by Colonel John Garang. The renewed conflict, that lasted until 2005, resulted in regular flows of refugees into Uganda.

The conflict came to an end with the signing of a Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) in 2005 and declaration of independence in 2011. This was immediately followed not only by a massive repatriation of South Sudanese refugees, but also Ugandan traders seeking economic fortunes in the newly created state of South Sudan. Returning refugees on the other hand maintained their social contacts sending their children to school in Uganda as well as buying property in Kampala and other cities.

Conflict continuities across borders

The conflict in South Sudan is at times read as a Nuer- Dinka conflict that finds expression in Uganda's refugee settlements. For instance, the conflicts between refugees and locals over resources mainly water and land (see below) are in part a consequence of grievances over the UPDF intervention and fights between the major ethnic groups, that is, the Dinka and Nuer. Repeated conflicts show that these are informed by wider political grievances that find expression in localized resource conflicts.

The independence celebrations were however short lived as the country returned to civil war in 2013 between the Sudan People's Liberation Movement (SPLM) led by President Salva Kiir and Sudan People's Liberation Movement in

[1] Other causes include seeking social services (healthcare and education) drought and famine leading to food insecurity, as well as hopes in trying to access resettlement to third country of asylum.

Opposition (SPLM-IO) led by Riek Machar (Rolandsen, Sagmo, and Nicolaisen 2015a; Sebba 2021; Logo 2021).

Regarding Rwandan refugees, between 1959 and 1967, following a Hutu upheaval against the Tutsi, about 78,000 Tutsi refugees crossed into Uganda with their cattle. These were settled in Oruchinga, Nakivale Kyaka and Rwamwanja refugee settlements (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). Some of them found their way out of the settlements to reside in urban centres including Kampala and Mbarara. In more recent years, Rwandans have fled to Uganda due to political oppression.

Refugees from the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) formerly Zaire fled to Uganda during the civil war of 1960-1967, fleeing repression by the Mobutu regime. Unlike other refugees, the majority of the Congolese refugees were self-settled and many found work on the Madvani sugar plantations (Pirouet 1988, 240). Other Congolese refugees were also settled in settlements such as Achol Pii in Northern Uganda, and Kyaka in Western Uganda. More recently, an ongoing and protracted conflict in Eastern DRC, including the M23 and ADF rebels, has led to repeated refugee movements to Uganda.

Other refugees include those from Burundi and Somalia. Somalis first arrived in Uganda mainly as truck drivers along the Mombasa – Kampala trade route in the 1970s. With the political upheavals in Somalia, following the fall of the government of Mohamed Siad Barre in the 1990s, Somali refugees have continued to stream into Uganda to date. These first settled in the Kampala district of Kisenyi, Uganda's capital, and were later resettled to the Nakivale refugee settlement in South-Western Uganda, even though a substantial number remain in Kampala to date. Lastly, there is also a sizeable number of Burundian refugees in Uganda which became visible in April 2015. This followed a political crisis in April 2015 that forced over 428,351 Burundians to leave their country, fleeing violence, threats, torture, and other abuses by members of the Imbonerakure, and the killings and enforced disappearances of their family members. Besides the Somalis and Burundians, other refugees in Uganda include Ethiopians, Eritreans, a smaller Kenyan population that fled following the post-election violence in 2007 and most recently the Afghan refugees in 2021 (see also below).

To date, because of its position at the centre of the expanded East African Community and the Great Lakes Region of Africa, Uganda continues to receive refugees fleeing political instability and persecution in large numbers, see Table 1 below.

Table 1: ***Number of refugees and asylum seekers in Uganda (2016-2021)***

Year	Total number of refugees and asylum seekers
2016	940,825
2017	1,395,146
2018	1,190,922
2019	1,381,122
2020	1,446,378
2021	1,553,063

Source: Operational Data Portal UNHCR

Today the country is known for its welcoming nature towards one of the highest refugee populations on the continent and globally.[2] But this has also caused increasing tensions. Host populations have generally welcomed refugees as those in need of protection but also as would-be beneficiaries of infrastructure to be left behind on their repatriation. However, temporal stays have become protracted with no near end

[2] Though Uganda also has a long history of migration and also internal displacement, for reasons of length we do not discuss this here.

envisaged. Thus, conflicts have arisen between host and refugee communities over access to resources as well as the functioning of the development-orientated policies of Uganda (see below). In the following we will give more details on refugee protection in the region, spelling out some of the challenges before iterating the political interests – both domestically and internationally as well as the political interest groups. We will then discuss the societal discourse before concluding.

Methodology

This report is based on a purposive sample of 33 expert interviews with policy makers, politicians, civil society activists, diaspora leaders and academic experts, between September 2020 and September 2021 (see Table 4 Appendix). A total of 19 interviews were located in Kampala and in refugee hosting districts in the West Nile region of Uganda, namely Arua, Yumbe, and Madi Okoro as well as 14 digital interviews (Zoom, WhatsApp calls, Skype, Phone). Whilst digital and telephone interviews do not allow for the same level of exchange in a trustful environment as face-to-face ones, since they were conducted at a time when the COVID 19 pandemic increasingly became the "new normal" (primarily from September 2020 onwards), participants were more open to them than they might otherwise have been. In addition, we conducted nine focus group discussions with refugee and asylum seekers and local host community members including women groups, youth groups and business owners in Rhino Camp, Bidibidi Camp and in Kampala in September and October 2020. The focus groups were conducted with adherence to health measures in light of COVID-19, including temperature checks, mask provisions, hand washing facilities and social distancing. The information and opinions in this report are all based on the interviews and focus group participants. Due to the political nature of the questions, most of the direct references have been removed and we are keeping all our interview partners anonymous. We asked interviewees to state their opinions in their private capacity and thus will not necessarily be representative of their organisation. An expert on the topic, Professor Deborah Mulumba, reviewed the report.[3] Additional secondary data includes parliamentary proceedings and newspaper articles and additional resources including reports as well as existing literature on the topic served as triangulation sources.

2. REFUGEE PROTECTION IN UGANDA

The focus in Uganda is on refugee protection compared to other forms of migration, unsurprising, given that the country is one of the biggest hosts of refugees, both globally and in Africa. This emphasis is also evident from the overview of policies and legislation, see Table 2 which shows that the most advanced policies are those on refugees, with those on migration still pending.[4]

The major implementer of refugee protection is the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) Refugee Desk and the UNHCR, with a variety of other implementation partners (see also 3.3 below). Most refugees today live in 31 settlements in 13

[3] Thank you to Professor Deborah Mulumba at Kyambogo University Kampala, for her insightful comments as a peer reviewer of the report. We would also like to thank a number of research assistants who helped us with background research, transcriptions and translations: Barbarita Babiry, Asema Bridget, Solveig Degen, Charlotte Jung, Lucy Naggawa, Melissa Niederlöhner, Rebecca Schmid, Nanteza Teddy, Great Ugozi and Michael Wittmann. Our thanks also to all those who made the time to speak to us in interviews and our focus groups. We are grateful to Wendy Sheppard, who did the copy editing of this report. All errors remain our own.

[4] Due to space reasons regional measures such as IGAD will not be discussed.

districts, generally in very remote areas (UNHCR Data Portal 2022). Whilst much of the financial costs are covered (if insufficiently, see 3.2.1 below) under both development and humanitarian funds, the Uganda state also covers some of the costs in their annual budgets. In the 2020/2021 budget, 250.18 Billion UGX, a significant increase from 80.25 Billion UGX in the 2018/19 budget, was allocated to the programme "Disaster preparedness and Refugees Management", making up 39% of the budget for Public Sector Management (own calculations Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development 2021).

Table 2: ***Overview of National Policies and Legislation dealing with refugees and migration***

- Immigration and Citizenship Control Act (1964; 2016 Reform)
- Constitution of Uganda (1995)
- The National Policy for Internally Displaced People (2004)
- The Employment Recruitment of Ugandan Migrant Workers Abroad Regulations (2005)
- The Refugees Act (2006)
- The Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act (2009)
- Refugee Regulations (2010)
- *National Migration Policy (pending)*
- *National Diaspora Policy (pending)*

Source: Own compilation. For an overview of international obligations, please see Ahimbisibwe (2019). [5]

In the following, refugee protection will be outlined, looking at the strong rights which in practice are often weaker, as is the implementation of the developmental approach to refugee protection that favours the self-reliance of refugees. After discussing the particular situation of urban refugees, we then discuss the institutional challenges of refugee protection in Uganda.

2.1. Strong rights with curtailed freedom: Refugee protection in Uganda

Refugee protection in Uganda has evolved into one of the strongest systems in the world. Refugees primarily live in so-called settlements where they have access to land for farming, as well as education and health facilities. Refugees have a right to free healthcare and free primary education, guaranteed in the 2006 Refugee Act and the accompanying 2010 Regulations, which further developed some elements of the 2006 Act including on access to land (World Bank 2016). The 2006 Act has been named the "most progressive refugee law in Africa" (O'Callaghan et al. 2019). This is a big change from the previous Control of Aliens Refugee Act (CAP 64 of 1960), which was an especially restrictive law.[6] Summarising this sentiment, in the words of a settlement commandant in Rhino camp "I believe refugee protection in Uganda is simply the best" (OPM Official, Rhino Camp, October 2020).[7] In the following we introduce the process of refugee recognition as well as curtailments to the strong rights, including on free movement and issues related to the land received. In a final sub-section, we discuss potential 'solutions' for refugees in the long run.

Under the Act there are possibilities for both asylum determination according to refugee status determination processes (Article 4 Refugee Act) and prima facie recognition, whereby group recognition is given to a certain nationality without having to go through an

[5] Article 12 on citizenship; Article 21 on Equality and Freedoms and Article 189 on responsibilities of Government of the Ugandan Constitution

[6] Though in practice it was largely not implemented, with many refugees being able to access education and employment opportunities despite the restrictions in the law (Hovil 2018).

[7] Only direct quotes are attributed to interviews or focus groups but the report draws on these throughout.

individual process (Article 25). This group refugee recognition is temporary and valid up to two years (ibid). Currently, there are 1,553,063 refugees and 43,387 asylum seekers, most of them recognised under a group status, see Table 1, above. Between 2016 – 2021, there was a rejection rate of only around 10%. This is because most refugees are from South Sudan (65.3%) or DRC (31.1%), who currently receive group protection (OPM and UNHCR 2022; UNHCR 2022).[8]

In terms of the formal recognition as refugees, two issues are potentially problematic: firstly, the group protection is foreseen as temporary, which is problematic given that many conflict regions today have led to long-standing protracted displacement situations (defined as more than 25,000 refugees arriving and staying for more than five years), including both South Sudan and the DRC. As for asylum seekers who have to go through the process on an individual basis, such as those from Eritrea, studies have found that there is a high backlog of tens of thousands of cases. With only one Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) in the country, this makes it even more problematic given that asylum seekers' identity documents are only initially valid for three months, and then have to be renewed every two months (Ryan 2018).

Beyond recognition, strong rights on paper often look different in practice. Refugees (not asylum seekers) are given an automatic work permit, though some of our interviewees noted bureaucratic challenges getting the work permit, including needing to apply online (see also REF 2019). In practice however, most refugees mainly work in the agricultural sector, primarily in subsistence farming. This is tied to the highly praised policy whereby refugees are given a plot of land (though not the ownership[9]), which they can farm themselves with the idea that they will eventually become self-sufficient. This however limits their choices of what they may choose to do for self-sustenance since they are tied to the settlements (e.g. Sebba and Kirk 2002).[10] Some observers note that this is not that different for ordinary Ugandans, however. respondent noted "the life of a refugee is just like any other person. Not every Ugandan can dig and not every Ugandan can do business", qualifying however that no one was forcing them to do a particular kind of work (International development agency, online, September 2020).

Aside from restraining livelihood options, the land policy has faced a number of implementation issues. The policy of land distribution varies regionally, and it is becoming increasingly difficult to maintain as the refugee population has increased. Community land is needed for the refugees in Northern Uganda, compared to South-Western Uganda, where it is government gazetted land. The significant increase of refugees in recent years, particularly in Northern Uganda from Southern Sudan, as well as the increasingly protracted situation, has heightened tensions as host communities found it increasingly difficult to give up more land (see also Bagenda, Naggaga, and Smith 2003). Thus, host communities who are allowing their land to be allocated to refugees are now also asking for direct benefits (payments) rather than just service delivery for the wider community or criticise that promised benefits haven't arrived or been implemented.

Focus group discussants noted the plots they received were too small (e.g. FGDU1)[11] which

[8] Own calculation: between 2016 – 2021, 180,579 refugees were recognised and 21,094 were rejected. See https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/download/?url=yTJPw4

[9] Which means they also cannot use the land as collateral to receive a loan to start another business (Idris 2020).

[10] This is why some scholars do not use the „settlement" terminology, given that the settlement also largely confines refugees in a specific space, and thus makes a "camp" a more accurate term (Krause 2021; Hovil 2007).

[11] New arrivals are also making it harder for older generations of refugees to maintain self-reliance as they had previously farmed excess land which has now been

meant they had to rent additional land from nationals, which was very expensive. The soil quality was also sometimes so bad it failed to yield crops (see also Krause 2016; Idris 2020). As one OPM-representative noted "with this size of land they cannot be self-sustaining. You have to continuously give food throughout" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

Moreover, whilst refugees are (theoretically) allowed to move around the country, they are only given assistance when they are in the settlements. The lack of free movement – whether formally entrenched or a de facto consequence – seriously hinders refugees holding on to their full rights (see also Kaiser 2006). Refugees who wish to leave have to request movement permits from OPM administrators in the settlements and provide dates and reasons for travel, foreseen in the Refugee Act,[12] thus a considerable obstacle to free movement (see also Addaney 2017; Krause 2021). Despite this some refugees felt free, like one participant in a focus group who noted

> "we were not safe there [in South Sudan] but here there is peace and we are free here to stay either in the town or the settlement. We are not restricted" (FGD7).

Further implementation problems include that refugees allegedly also have to pay bribes to access, for example, health services or primary school education which is supposed to be free (see also Krause 2021). Others note that the quality of schooling is limited, that health services are not sufficient to provide treatment to such a large community, including a lack of psychosocial support and that their rights are more broadly not implemented (see also Ahimbisibwe 2019). Some respondents also noted a difference in access to services depending on what zones of settlement people reside in (e.g. FGDU1).

In terms of long-term solutions, whilst the right to work and free movement goes some way towards local integration, this is not really foreseen as a potential solution in Uganda. Resettlement places are only rarely available (for the dream of resettlement see Tegenbos 2019). Whilst foreigners can apply for citizenship after living in Uganda for ten years (or being married to a Ugandan for five years), the time period with a refugee status does not count towards this, effectively closing the door on naturalisation. The 1995 constitution bars refugees from registration as citizens[13] Naturalisation is only possible for refugees after living in Uganda for at least twenty years (IOM 2018), but in practice, this does not seem to be possible.[14] This has been criticised even by the most overt fans of the Ugandan refugee system, since it also applies to the children and grandchildren of refugees in the country (e.g. World Bank 2016). In the last decade (up to 2020), the number of resettlement spots peaked at 1% of refugees in the country in 2013, and is down to 0,08% in 2020, see Table 3 below.

This puts the onus on repatriation, which is especially difficult given the situation in many of the countries refugees come from. Voluntary repatriation remains the favourite choice amongst policymakers. Though repatriation happens periodically, such as to Burundi or Rwanda, the numbers are limited and there are

transferred to newer refugees (Danish Refugee Council 2018).

[12] This is partially due to potential security risks posed by refugees who return to their home country and then come back again (World Bank 2016).

[13] On eligibility for registration as a citizen, Article 12 inter alia states that 'neither of his or her parents and none of his or her grandparents was a refugee in Uganda'

[14] In 2012, following on a cessation agreement which meant Rwandan refugees were no longer able to stay in Uganda, the Ugandan government promised to set up a committee to discuss mechanisms for naturalisation, with 5,000 applications for citizenship pending (IRIN News 2012). The citizenship seems to have not been granted yet (IRRI 2016).

many challenges for those repatriated (e.g. Rukundo 2020; Ahimbisibwe 2017). In 2020, there were concerted efforts to promote the return of Burundian refugees after the elections that saw the re-election of the Évariste Ndayishimiye of the ruling CNDD–FDD. While immediately after the election the government of Burundi started calling for its citizens to start returning, Burundians remain reluctant for fear of their safety at the hands of the Burundian government and its militia, the Imbonerakure. In addition, with no clear measures put in place for reintegration into Burundi, especially an enabling environment for livelihood sustainability, there remains a preference to stay in Uganda (European Union and Samuel Hall 2022).

*Table 3: **Number of Refugees resettled from Uganda 2010-2020***

Year	Refugees resettled from Uganda	Number of refugees in Uganda	Percentage of refugees resettled
2010	603	135,799	0,44%
2011	402	139,442	0,29%
2012	1,273	197,872	0,64%
2013	2,200	220,548	1,00%
2014	1,549	385,503	0,40%
2015	2,991	477,187	0,63%
2016	6,299	940,825	0,67%
2017	1,905	1,350,495	0,14%
2018	3,999	1,165,646	0,34%
2019	3,288	1,359,458	0,24%
2020	1,069	1,421,133	0,08%

Source: Own calculation with resettlement figures and refugee figures from https://www.macrotrends.net/countries/UGA/uganda/refugee-statistics

Given that resettlement is extremely rare, see Table 3, and refugee integration is not foreseen, the lives of refugees are permanently 'on hold' (Hovil 2007). In the meantime, the protection focus is on self-integration as discussed below.

2.2. Self-reliance as integration: Developmental approach to refugee protection

One of the most significant features of the Ugandan approach is the developmental approach, which theoretically allows refugees to become self-reliant and – economically – integrated into the country. After discussing the background to the development approach, the idea will be critically discussed before showing how it has thus-far also failed in making a big difference in terms of development for the country, including individual opportunities for many refugees and hosts alike.

The Refugee Act and Regulations from 2010 also stipulate that refugees have a right to be integrated into host communities and are included in the country's development plans (World Bank 2016). By design, the Refugee Act of 2006 and the regulations of 2010 aim at greater access to economic wellbeing of refugees leading to self-reliance. Consequently, the Ugandan government has turned to a development approach in the last two decades with the aim of stopping over-reliance on humanitarian aid and allowing refugees to become self-reliant all whilst raising the standards of living for the largely impoverished host community. This development approach is not new and paints a long history of commitment to self-reliance (OPM Official, Kampala, March 2021). The approach and its critique will be outlined next.

"Harnessing refugee's economic contribution capacity": Development-orientated refugee protection

The policies in the development approach to refugee protection include the Self-Reliance Strategy (from 1999); the Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas Programme (2003) and the Settlement Transformative Agenda (STA) launched in 2015,

see Table 6 in the appendix. The Transformative Agenda underpinned that Uganda is pursuing a non-encampment approach and that refugees are part of the broader development agenda for the country. In the same year, refugees were included in the National Development Plan II (NDP) and the Refugee Host Population Empowerment (ReHoPE) Strategic Framework was introduced. This brought in a "30-70" principle, whereby at least 30% of all interventions for refugees should target host-community needs.

Since then, as a follow-up to the New York Declaration of Refugees and Migrants, the Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF), incorporated into the Global Compact on Refugees, was launched in 2017. The CRRF is multi-stakeholder coordination model on refugee matters focusing on humanitarian and development needs of both refugees *and* host communities. It shifts the geographic focus of development interventions from the settlements to the area that hosts them (CRRF Story Book 2019). Focusing on coordination, CRFF also introduces a key role for districts in coordination refugee management and aspires to "harness refugee's economic contribution capacity" (Ugandan policy consultant, online, September 2020). It has been lauded for improving coordination and including local governments, other ministries, and refugee representatives. The sector specific approaches are exemplified in Table 7 in the appendix.

Uganda became the first country to pilot implementation. In fact, our interviews note that the Ugandan experience even inspired the CRRF, the "whole of society approach" endorsed by the CRRF, is "based on the Ugandan model" (Interview, INGO staff, Kampala, October 2020).

Despite the best intentions, the development approach to refugee-governance has led to a "bricolage of policy frameworks" with a top-down approach (Hovil 2018; see also Betts 2021) and there have been coordination problems and issues with parallel service delivery. Though the CRRF is "having a visible impact but it's very difficult to pin to the CRRF also because the CRRF is everything and nothing" (International organisation, online, October 2020). In particular, tracking donor commitment has been difficult, which is problematic given the funds needed for the ambitious plans (see also O'Callaghan et al. 2019).

The self-reliance approach has been sharply criticised for favouring the priorities of international donors seeking a cost-effective exit strategy (e.g. Easton-Calabria and Omata 2018), whilst still following a logic of traditional humanitarian aid, changing only *what* assistance is delivered – tools for self-reliance rather than resources – not *how:* refugees as aid recipients, one way or another (Krause and Schmidt 2020). Notably the idea of self-reliance shies away from a more concrete political integration of refugees. Lucy Hovil argues that, if anything, nationals have been integrated into the refugee services delivery system, whilst blocking the integration of refugees themselves (Hovil 2018). Moreover, even in terms of humanitarian aid, the system is not delivering.

"The food is not enough": Failing to achieve self-reliance

Many refugees have noted that they appreciate the extent of public services available to them (FGDU4), the training available (FGDU4, FGDU2), as well as the generally welcoming reception (FGDU4), see also above. They also noted that the 70%/30% split has "has made them [the hosts] dissolve the mentality that maybe the refugees are favoured at their expense" (FGDU1).

Despite the multitude of efforts, expectations of benefiting from development funds have often stayed unfulfilled, which has led to increased frustrations for both refugee and host

communities (see also Idris 2020; O'Callaghan et al. 2019; Van Laer 2019b). In 2016/17, 27% of Ugandans were below the poverty line, up from 19.7% in 2013 (Idris 2020) and despite some fluctuations, by 2020 it was reported that again 25% of Ugandans lived below the poverty line (The Independent 2020).[15] This poverty affects both refugees and hosts.

A recent report points out that 80% of refugees in Uganda live below the international poverty line, and significant challenges include reduction in food rations (Hargrave, Mosel, and Leach 2020). One focus group participant in a youth group in Ofua III noted "the food given to us has been reduced. I do not know whether these people want us to die… That food is not enough" (FGDU2). Another participant noted a lack of firewood which makes cooking difficult (FGDU2). One focus group participant, who owned her own business in a refugee settlement, summarized the situation as "we are living on plate to mouth to enable survival" (FGDU5). The idea to self-sustain themselves after five years is certainly not reached (see also Danish Refugee Council 2018).

As for the host population, they have on the one hand also benefited from developments, according to our respondents, such as schools and hospitals and an improved road system (and a steady market of customers for their own market produce). In addition, they have received social community benefits such as food shared by refugees or contributions to funeral expenses of local community members (see also Omata 2018). One refugee desk officer for the OPM explained "the local economy is slightly booming due to the presence of the refugees" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020; see also host population representative, Ofua 3, September 2020).

The development approach however also often doesn't go far enough, given the abject poverty many are living in, meaning that many felt a 50%/50% ratio would be fairer. One participant noted "when they bring food for these Sudanese, they do not give to us the host communities" (FGDU3). One OPM-staff member in a settlement also noted "it does appear like … the refugees are favoured in terms of the services they receive" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020) (see also O'Callaghan et al. 2019). There were also complaints about only refugees being employed by NGOs and accessing firewood (FGDU3). Moreover, some of our interviewees questioned the sustainability of new equipment and projects like solar-powered water pumps, which necessitate expensive upkeep in the long run.

2.3. Challenges for urban refugees

Despite the overall settlement approach, which ties refugees to remote areas, there are also a number of refugees living in urban areas, many of them self-settled. These urban refugees are carving out their own modes of belonging, are essentially voting against the settlement system with their feet, and remain largely 'invisible' within the political context (Hovil 2018; for the legal framework for urban refugees see Addaney 2017). Refugees certainly have certain economic advantages in urban centres such as Kisenyi Kansanga, Kabalagala in Kampala, but also Arua town and Gulu (Monteith and Lwasa 2017).[16]

But urban refugees also have problems registering, and those refugees eligible for prima facie refugee status (currently South Sudanese and Congolese refugees) need to do so in the settlements (e.g. Norwegian Refugee Council

[15] The long-term effect due to the pandemic on the development approach is yet to be seen (see, however, Segadlo et al. 2021; Lozet and Easton-Calabria 2020).

[16] The plight of urban refugees is on the whole worse in secondary cities; for example, most international organisations in the area are based in Arua, but they solely operate in the camps, so those refugees who live in Arua have to be completely self-reliant.

2019). For others, once they live in an urban setting it is hard to go back to a settlement, due to the administrative costs and interim periods of up to a few months where a loss of income is expected (FGDU7). This is worsened by the fact that some didn't realise they couldn't access benefits in the urban setting,

> "I thought as long as I registered as a refugee, I could get the same services as those in the settlement like food and healthcare. After registering and getting here, I realized I could not get any help from UNHCR for feeding in the urban setting and I have no option because I cannot go and register twice to go back to the settlement" (FGDU7).

Indeed, urban refugees have problems accessing healthcare, accessing skills training programmes and problems with paying rent on time as well as being treated harshly by landlords including higher rents. Practical barriers include police harassment and struggles with registering business licences (see also Monteith et al. 2017; O'Callaghan et al. 2019). Though some food rations have been distributed to refugees in urban areas, due to the COVID 19 pandemic, this has been sporadic and inconsistent (see also Lozet and Easton-Calabria 2020). A respondent also noted that language barriers mean that urban refugees have to pay higher prices for food commodities due to their foreigner status "this segregation has put a strain on us because they believe we have money" (FGDU9).

Urban refugees state they find it difficult to access the job market even if they have the right qualifications, and have a right to work according to the Refugee Act from 2006, which means they have to "hustle it out by ourselves by creating small business for ourselves", in the words of one juice maker (FGDU7). In the words of one focus group participant "in Uganda you can be allowed to be in town as long as you have money to survive" (FGDU7). This was repeated by representatives, who highlighted,

> "the government is not very strict about where refugees reside, they can even stay as urban refugees as long as they have skills, some investments to earn a living, to be able to pay their rent and other medical bills, and contribute to development" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

Whilst some refugees are well off and deal well with this approach, like the well-established Sudanese community "those beautiful houses on Arua Hill belong to the Sudanese" (Local government official, Madi Okollo District, September 2020) for others it is difficult to pay this price for independence.

The lack of support for urban refugees also highlights the preferences for refugees to remain in settlements: "the policy the Uganda government has adopted of settlement is the way to go because these are people who share culture and so it is better for them to co-exist alongside one another [rather than integrate in the urban context]" (Local government official, Kampala, March 2021). Efforts from UNHCR to promote better conditions for urban refugees in Uganda as elsewhere, such as their 2009 policy on urban refugees and an Alternatives to Camp policy from 2014, received little political attention and resonance (Hovil 2018).

2.4. Institutional challenges: Centralized decision making and underfunded districts

Institutionally, Uganda is restrained by highly centralized decision-making and underfunding for districts, discussed now.

Uganda is a democratic republic with a governance system comprising central and local governments. The central government retains decision making relating to 'security matters, national planning, defence, immigration, foreign

affairs and national projects (Okidi and Guloba 2008) which can include refugee-related development projects. There are however efforts at decentralisation. The 1995 constitution provides for a system of decentralisation and local governments, which is further consolidated in the Local Governments Act 1997 (Cap. 243). The decentralised system of governance is built on a Local Council (LC) system of governance whereby locally elected leaders propose policies for their legislative bodies of council. Decisions of the Local Councils are implemented by the civil servants working in each district (Mushemeza 2019). The structure ranges from levels one to five (LC1- LCV). Local Council V initiates district development plans, which is relevant for refugee protection.

Despite these efforts, refugee administration and decision making are centralised under the refugee desk established under the OPM. It is responsible for all administrative matters concerning refugees in Uganda and coordinates inter-ministerial and non-Governmental activities and programmes relating to refugees. The OPM's overall vision is to find durable solutions for the refugee problems within the broad government policy that leads to social development initiatives in refugee hosting areas. It also seeks to respond to refugees' situation in Uganda by assuring their welfare and protection within the relevant institutional frameworks. Though there is little securitised rhetoric in Uganda, see below, the practice is often securitised. Refugees are considered a security concern and thus a core responsibility of the central government.

Since 2016, there have been calls for the involvement of district local governments to make decisions in relations to refugees hosted within their districts. Whereas the district local government is concerned with security, service delivery for both refugees and hosts, inclusion of refugees into district development plans – which informs the National Development Plan (II and III); district local governments are hardly involved in any decision making in relation to managing refugee affairs, see also 3.3.2 below. In addition, the implementation of the CRRF also envisages that the DLGs would play a central role in refugee management, this is not the case to date.

Refugee Information Management System

The government of Uganda, through the Office of the Prime Minister, is responsible for refugee registration and data management in the country. The government uses the Refugee Information Management System to capture and store data on every refugee received in Uganda.

We found that the local governments' ability to provide adequate protection to refugees is constrained by a lack of resources and administrative capacity to do so. While refugee hosting districts are to receive financial support through the ReHoPE strategy, that is 30 percent of all funds meant for refugees, our interviewees told us that not all have had access to these funds. Moreover, when funds are received, they are often targeted towards capital development such as roads and water systems and do not cater for the recurrent expenditure – the day-to-day funds needed to run DLG activities. One key challenge is that of limited funding. While refugees access district level services including health and education, refugee hosting districts receive no special budgetary vote. Moreover, while the districts are expected to coordinate the activities in the refugee settlements, under the office of the deputy Chief Administrative Office who also doubles as the district refugee liaison officer, the common complaint is that this office lacks the funds to do so. Quite often as was observed in Arua, the DLG depends on the UNHCR to sometimes meet the costs of their involvement.

Though local OPM officials said in interviews they "regulate the work of the humanitarian organisations that work with the refugees and the

host populations" (Local government official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021). In practice, local officials are frequently constrained by this centralised system, Even OPM officials at camp level (commandants) often need approval from regional refugee desk offices in order to carry out particularities of their work (see also Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe 2019),

Further to that, local governments lack the capacity and mandate to register self-settled refugees in both the rural and urban areas. Whereas local officials in border areas are the first to interface with refugees, all refugees are expected to go through a reception centre run by the Office of the Prime Minister and UNHCR. From here, refugees are transferred to the refugee settlement and handed over to the camp commandant for registration and allocation of plots of land for settlement. Notable here, there are refugees who bypass the reception centre and move to their relatives or friends and live as self-settled refugees within the country.

3. POLITICAL INTERESTS IN REFUGEE PROTECTION

In the following, we discuss the domestic and external dimensions of refugee hosting in Uganda, as well as outline the major political interest groups. On the domestic level, refugee governance and protection doesn't play a leading role in state-making processes due to refugees being perceived as a highly apolitical subject, whereas, on the level of external politics, refugee governance plays an important role for Uganda's standing in the international community and as a diplomatic tool in external politics. We conclude by discussing the major political interest groups involved.

3.1. Domestic Stakes of Refugee Protection

Given that most refugees in Uganda come from neighbouring countries, giving a sense of "hosting their neighbours, hosting their cousins" (International Organisation, online, September 2020), there are less problems of refugee hosting coming at the cost of domestic legitimacy than in other contexts. The high and growing caseload of refugees, however, not only hinders the implementation of the protection mechanisms in place (see above), but also heightens political tensions in the country. Thus, there is a political trade-off between the idea that refugee hosting brings development to the country as a whole (and the duty of care to those on the move) versus the cost of hosting a very high and increasing number of refugees, also given the problems with international funding.

In the following, we show firstly, the development narrative tied to election gains at the local level. We then consider the conflict consequences between some host and refugee communities before turning to a slowly changing political narrative that there are too many refugees in the country. Lastly, we point to a potential securitized rhetoric of refugee hosting, which has, however, largely been unfounded thus far in the Ugandan case.

3.1.1. Development narrative as electoral manoeuvring

The very idea behind the development approach is that it *also* offers opportunities for the host communities. In the words of one Community Development Officer,

> "Yes you see we also as the community we do benefit … these roads are not going with the refugees, they will remain here we shall use them and in areas that need bridges they will put bridges which you could not afford" (Local government official, Bidibidi, September 2020).

Whilst acknowledging these are social benefits, the same interlocutor also points to the 'political benefits' (Ibid). As such, elected officials see

> "hosting refugees as beneficial. I have already mentioned how refugees enable districts to get priority access. Presence of refugees also means that our people are able to get jobs with the humanitarian organizations. That is one thing that the politicians will fight for – inclusion… At the back of their mind is the expectation of political leverage in elections – mentioning how through their initiative certain services were delivered to the peoples" (Local government official, Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021).

A camp representative also notes "you see the current politicians have taken advantage for all infrastructure development that have taken place to use as their achievement" (OPM official, Bidibidi Refugee Settlement, September 2020), another camp official noted" the benefit that the politicians see is that through the refugee programme they are able to get elected" (OPM official, Arua, October 2020).[17]

This has led to a situation where politicians may compete over where (i.e. in which districts and electoral constituencies) refugee settlements are located. Someone working on implementing the CRFF noted "(we now have a situation) where districts are almost competing to have refugees because they do see that there is an over developing thing hosting refugees" (International organisation, online, October 2020). There were also some responses noting that even parliamentarians were pushing to change some areas into a district status, since the sub-county in the area had such a high number of refugees "it wasn't appropriate to keep them under one administration" (Government official (education), Kampala, March 2021). Another Ugandan researcher was more direct

> "Moyo district was recently split in two. The local members of parliament, for Obongi, said I want at least one refugee settlement in my area. This shows that the importance to leverage local resources, goes right back to the local level" (Ugandan Policy Consultant, online, September 2020).[18]

Another account notes "I will give an example of the Lamwo that is hosting the refugees, they requested a district directorate from the government, so the government gave them a district status they were previously part of Kitgum" (National non-governmental organisation, online, September 2020). This results in the situation whereby "we constantly have new districts popping up also doesn't help in terms of trying to build capacity of district leadership" (International organisation, online, October 2020).

Hitchen notes "local administration has become more of a political project than a service provider" (Hitchen 2016; for Museveno using refugee protection as a form of patronage see also Betts 2021; and patrimonialism more generally see Wiegratz, Martiniello, and Greco 2019). To illustrate: The Minister for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Hilary Onek, has been in the post since 2013, and comes from the Adjumani area, considered to be a smart move from Museveni allowing for a traditionally underfunded area to be indirectly administered by someone with great interest in developing the area (Journalist, online, September 2020). Since 1986, the number of districts has grown from 30 to 146 in the run up to the 2021 elections (Hitchen 2016; Tumushabe

[17] Though this development narrative can backfire with corruption allegations, "In Yumbe I think the chairman was not elected as a flag bearer because people said he had grown richer from refugees so you may not get elected because people perceive that you are the only one benefiting" (OPM official, Arua, October 2020).

[18] Moyo district, created in 1957 was first split in 1997 and then in 2019 another district (Obongi) was carved out of the district.

et al. 2021). According to our own calculations, refugee-hosting regions have seen an increase in the districts ranging from 200% (Bunyoro) to 600% (Toro), averaging a 336% increase between 1996 and 2021, see Table 8 in the appendix.

This is not dissimilar to the other regions, which average a 300% increase, with the exception of Rwenzori (50% increase since 1996) and Bugisu (600% increase since 1996).[19] Our own interviews confirmed that districts are created as part of election tactics beyond just potential refugee development gains (Journalist, online, September 2020) and other researchers have pointed to the fact that certain parts of the country traditionally receive more development support related to the President's personal connections (Hitchen 2016; see also Hovil 2018). But 11 of the 13 refugee-hosting creating districts have been created since 2000, four in the last four years, see Table 8. This shows that refugee hosting is at least one significant factor – amongst other – in creating new districts in today's Uganda.

For the most part, interlocutors felt that refugees were discussed locally during election seasons but not at the national level (National NGO, online, October 2020). Nevertheless, it was also national politicians capitalising on the development narrative; "the MPs say we have brought the refugees for you and you are benefitting" (Local government official, Yumbe, September 2020). The number of constituencies in refugee hosting districts[20] have increased by an average of around 80%, see Table 8 (Appendix), slightly higher to other regions where the average increase has been around 74%.[21]

Though refugee hosting for development may be considered as politically advantageous by some elected officials, the tide may however be turning (slowly) with recurrent conflict with hosts (see below), a growing narrative of no capacity left for refugees though a securitized discourse has been minimal. These are discussed next.

3.1.2. Limited political narratives of refugee hosting

The benefit of hosting refugees is widely acknowledged, including by the Ugandan Foreign Minister who stated in an op-ed "refugees are a force for good in their host country… Uganda is the proof for this… we know the value they can add to a host country" (Odongo 2021). This is closely linked to the discourse of self-reliance, namely whereby refugees are not a 'burden' to their host society because they can sustain themselves through their work permits and primarily farming (though the insuffiencies of such an approach has been pointed out e.g. Berke and Larsen 2022; Abebe 2019; as well as how this in the interest of donors seeking an exit strategy, e.g. Easton-Calabria and Omata 2018; see also Krause and Schmidt 2020).

Yet despite impacts of the refugee policies for both refugees and hosts the issues are rarely discussed during election periods especially at a national level. The complete separation of refugees and election campaigning was reiterated in many interviews, though the reference was usually to the fact that refugees can't vote rather

[19] Own calculations based on Elections Monitor (Tumushabe et al. 2021) : Karamoja with 9 districts in 2021 has seen a 350% increase in districts since 1996; Similar increases since 1996 can be seen in Lango (400%); Teso (450%); Sebei(200%); Bukedi (250%); Bugisu (600%;) Busoga (300%); Rwenzori (50%) and Kigezi (100%).

[20] With the exception of Buganda / Kampala which already had 59 constituencies in 1996, and only has 78 today, a 32% increase. The region only formally hosts a small number of refugees, see Table 8

[21] Here the increase was 89 % in Karamoja between 1996 and 2021 and 75% in Lango, 100% in Teso, 100% in Sebei; 100% in Bukedi; 89% in Bugisu, 60% in Busoga, 33 % in Rwenzori and 23% in Kigezi. Own calculations based on (Tumushabe et al. 2021)

than their protection as an election issue. For example:

> "Some politicians wanted to drag refugee issues into their election campaigns. But the law is very clear, refugees cannot take part in any way in our elections. We have urged them to respect that position and steer clear of entangling refugees into national politics" (International development agency, online, September 2020).

This seems to suggest that the role of refugees is so entrenched as apolitical, that hosting one of the highest populations of refugees worldwide is not even a topic for election campaigns (or the media).[22] According to one focus group participant in Uganda "politicians avoid the topic of refugees. We never hear politicians talk about refugees" (FGDU7). When there does seem to be a more critical discussion of refugees at a district level, this was disallowed by national actors, noting that "refugees were a national government issue" not a local one (Journalist, online, September 2020).

Indeed, Uganda is an increasingly authoritative regime, whose elections are highly contested at best, as opposition parties cannot freely participate (e.g. Freedom House 2022; Human Rights Watch 2021), domestic issues are perhaps also given less importance for winning elections. Scholars like Whitaker argue, this authoritarian climate gives little room for politicians to generate support by scapegoating immigrants, which takes place in other contexts (Whitaker 2019; on scapegoating for domestic interests see Moyo and Zanker 2020). Indeed, our interviewees mentioned that in this context "refugee protection is not contested" (Ugandan policy consultant, online, September 2020).

Whitaker also notes, however, that if the political landscape changes or the number of refugees continues to rise, this can change (2019). In a focus group in Rhino camp, a participant noted

> "There is an irony in comments when it comes to politicians, when they want favour from the nationals they go and speak against the refugees and promising to chase the foreigners off their land, this is usually done during the campaign season of looking for votes" (FGD U4).

A Local Chairman in the same district confirmed, "politicians are funny people, if I want to get votes from a certain area, I will say …do not give these refugees your land, we have to fight this" (Local government official, Madi Okollo District, September 2020). More bluntly, a government representative in a camp notes "as the funding is declining to support the refugees, how much longer can the country assist refugees within its borders"? (Local Government official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021).

This change can also be perceived at a national level: an interviewee noted "some sections of parliaments question why Uganda continues to host refugees, yet the lives of the local people are not improving much" (Government official (education), Kampala, March 2021). This, according to a Ugandan journalist results in a situation "politicians need to take political capital out of … so they try use all the avenues to see that the refuges turn into prey as they do their campaigns" (Ugandan journalist, online, September 2020).

There is a newfound emerging discussion in whether Uganda can continue to host refugees in the same way. A newspaper article reported

[22] One international staff interviewee considered that the lack of domestic attention to refugee issues was also because the majority of the refugees were concentrated outside of urban centres and Kampala, which meant there was less political capital to be gained from it (International development agency, online, September 2020).

lawmakers questioning the open-door policy in the face of declining donor support and whether the country was "taking on more than it can chew" (Walubiri 2019). A discussion of whether the country may need to limit the number of refugees can be seen in some of the parliamentary debates. One MP, Susan Amero (women representative for the governing NRM) notes

> "I am aware that refugees come and leave at a certain time. Any of us here may have been refugees, but the level of freedom that the refugees in Uganda have is questionable. …. I would not like to believe that it is only Uganda which is the safest place to host refugees in Africa. There are many other countries that are safe where other refugees could go" (Parliamentary Debate, 15th March 2018).[23]

MP Yorke Odria Alioni (Independent, Aringa South) added to the debate "members this is a matter of life and death…These huge numbers of refuges feed every day and on daily basis they are cutting our trees down. Now we are going back to famine in that region and people are going to die" (Parliamentary Debate, 15th March 2018).

Speaking on behalf of Minister Onek, Minister of State Musa Francis Ecweru (NRM; Amuria County) pleaded in the same debate

> "In conclusion, please note that Uganda's refugee policy continues to remain progressive. We will continue to keep an open-door policy to refugees. I could probably add here that in the many platforms we attend, we are asked, 'When are you reaching your breaking point? Is it time for Uganda to close its gate?' I would like to make it abundantly clear to Members here that we will never close our doors for as long as refugees are being persecuted in their countries. We will continue to keep our doors open" (Parliamentary Debate, 15th March 2018).

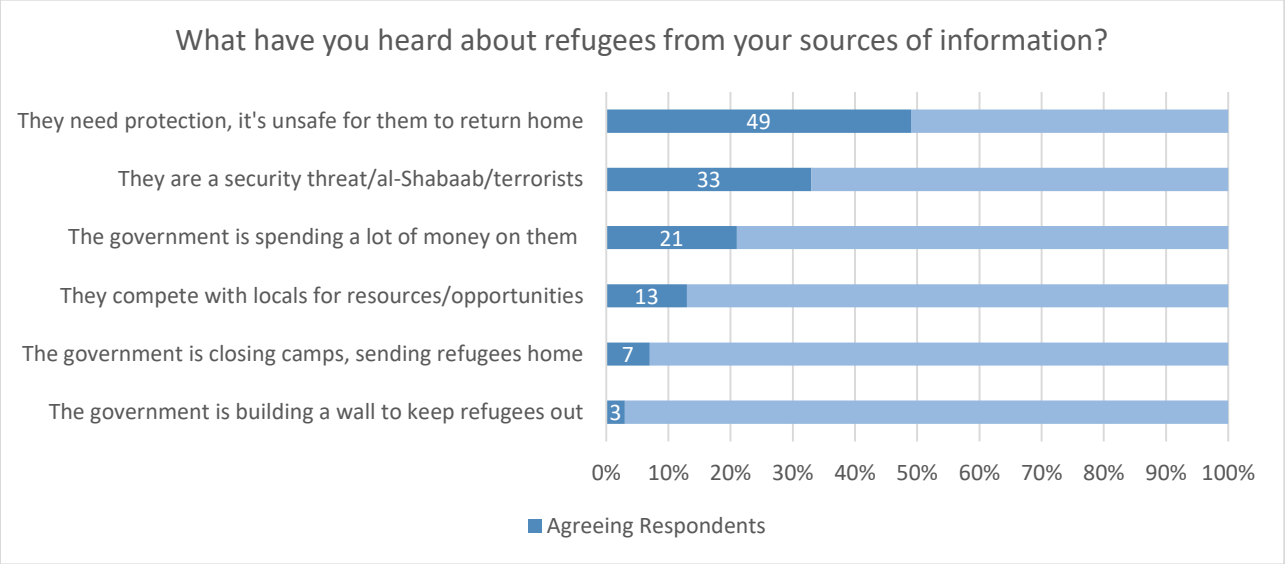
James Acidri (NRM, Maracha East) responded to this saying:

> "we will continue to have an open-door policy to refugees as if we have the capacity to host every refugee in this region or in the world….it is important that a select committee … should come up with a clear response on how many more refugees we can take and how many we cannot take because we are not going to continue accommodating refugees endlessly as if we have infinite resources in this country." (Parliamentary Debate, 15th March 2018).

A few months later, the leader of the opposition, Betty Aol (FDC, Gulu District), talking about land conflicts argued, "is it a directive to oppress the indigenous people and give options to the refugees? Why should we stay in our country as if it is not our country? You should give these people liberty to live fairly in their country" (Parliamentary Debate, 26 September 2018). Another MP, Barnabas Ateenyi Tinkasiimire (NRM, Buyaga County West), argued in a similar vein, days earlier "the Prime Minister is bent on giving space to the refugees versus the Ugandans … We are here because of the citizens of Uganda, not the refugees. We have the responsibility to protect the refugees, but we have the utmost responsibility towards Ugandans" (Parliamentary Debate, 19 September 2018).

[23] All quotes from debates are taken from the public record of debates which can be found here: https://www.parliament.go.ug/parliament-documents

Figure 1: ***Perceptions of refugees from 2018***



Source: authors illustration based on IRC polling from 2018 cited in Hargrave et al. (2020)

These narratives have not yet gathered speed and cut across party lines and thus have no distinct political capital so far. Moreover, these shifts have yet to broadly translate into societal perceptions and political action which still tends to favour maintaining an open-door policy as outlined later on.

Polling research shows however that though the predominant narrative of humanitarian concerns remains, a not insignificant proportion of Ugandans have now heard narratives that refugees are pressuring government spending or resources (21%) or that they pose a security threat (33% of those polled) (see Hargrave, Mosel, and Leach 2020) see Figure 1 above. On the whole, however, there is no prevalent securitized discourse of refugee protection in the Ugandan case, as discussed next.

3.1.3. Only marginal securitisation

Though the practice of protecting refugees is securitised the public rhetoric is not. Especially compared to other contexts like the EU externalisation policies in Africa (Andersson 2016) or even South Africa (Moyo and Zanker 2020; Musoni 2020), the Ugandan refugee and migration situation is not rhetorically very securitised.

For the most part, interviewees discussed security in terms of *protecting refugees*, namely "refugee protection is about ensuring that refugee rights are upheld so it is teamwork. We work with the other arms of government; the police will ensure there is law and order and refugees are not exploited" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020). This is done in order to ensure that refugees stay in the settlements, meaning the "security agencies…sometimes feel refugees have to be handled with soft gloves even if they are breaking the law" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

Refugees, for some part, feel the effort of creating a secure environment, e.g. "for us the refugees ever since we came we have not seen any kind of insecurity" (Host population representative, Ofua 3, September 2020).

Others complained however, that also by not knowing the Ugandan laws, refugees often felt like they were being treated unfairly by the police:

> "we have a lot of challenge in the security sector and…all of a sudden even though it's a small incident you will be taken to Arua prison … now people fear the police. As soon as the police arrives within the settlement it's evident that people begin to panic" (FGDU1).

There were also reports of tensions and conflicts between different refugee groups (see also Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe 2019).

Urban refugees also noted that the police do not or cannot help them with their problems and felt particularly unprotected compared to those in camps (e.g. FGDU7, FGDU8, FGDU9). In the words of one participant,

> "sometimes they do not protect us as urban refugees even when you have an issue, the police don't listen to us, but they listen to the locals. Many of us have our issues but in fact we prefer to report to the organizations than to the police or community leaders" (FGDU8).

Discussants in focus groups also discussed how any incidents can immediately be seen as a grave danger and feeling insecure due to previous traumas they have lived through (FGDU1). More generally, many of the participants discussed feeling insecure in the camps due to theft (FGDU4). Survey data shows that crime rates vary according to settlements, with 78% of respondents reporting being a victim of a crime in Nakivale, compared to 56% in Adjumani. The most reported crime is sexual violence (39%) followed by burglary (30%) (World Bank 2016).

On the whole, however, though there are clearly incidents of refugees feeling insecure, there is little to point to a broader threat coming from refugees. Whilst the need to get permission to leave settlements is argued on security grounds – i.e. so refugees don't secretly return home - it is only in passing that a link is made to "clandestine activity… that will affect peace with the neighbouring countries" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

There were also some reports that COVID-related border closures were used as an excuse to avoid Congolese rebels entering Uganda from the DRC, with longstanding tensions in the region including an attack on a Ugandan military detachment shortly before the borders closed (interviews and see also Olukya 2020; International Crisis Group 2020).

Securitisation or securitised narratives are also rare with a few exceptions to be noted, like Stephen Adyeeri Mukitale (Independent, Buliisa County) speaking at a debate on work permits for immigrants, noting "we are even at risk of becoming an Ivory Coast where immigrants took over business and caused war for ten years. I would like the security and environmental angle of this to be brought out" (Parliamentary Debate, 25th July 2018).

On the whole, Ugandan politicians even make a point to show that refugees are not a security threat. In an interview with a German journalist, Musa Ecweru, the Minister of Refugee Affairs notes, "refugee is not a synonym for criminal or terrorist. Of course there are always exceptions…but this is not a reason for xenophobia, like you see in Europe" (Schlindwein 2017). The next section looks at the external politics of refugee protection.

3.2. External Politics: The shaken donor darling and regional strongman

Uganda's exemplary role in refugee protection is widely known and has also featured prominently in our interviews. It also benefits from this position, necessary due to dwindling funds given the lack of international burden-sharing. A positive image of refugee protection helps the country to raise funds and turn attention away

from domestic political problems such as the crackdown on opposition members during the election season. The Ugandan position as an outstanding refugee-host is a win-win situation both for Uganda needing international support, but also for the donor community countries. As Western countries are becoming increasingly restrictive towards refugees, they are happy to support the Ugandan refugee response, which fits their goal of favouring *regional* refugee protection. For Uganda, the refugee response helps to position the country as a regional strongman which can take care of refugees.

In the following, first the need for funding will be outlined before detailing the win-win situation of the positive image of the Ugandan refugee protection. Finally, the regional setting will be elaborated.

3.2.1. Corruption and underfunding: A need for solidarity

In 2018, a corruption scandal was uncovered at the heart of the OPM and UNHCR operations. The scandal had two dimensions – firstly, regarding irregularities with regards to the contracts and goods related to refugee protection programmes. An internal audit found that there was an overpayment in taxes and contracts were awarded to 'ghost' contractors amongst other procurement irregularities. For example, the OPM paid $147,000 in cash to temporary labourers without proof of payment (Internal Audit Division 2018; Parker 2018). The audit noted the "serious …control deficiencies and accountability lapses in operational and administrative activities" (Internal Audit Division 2018, 2). Secondly, there was a problem in the counting of refugee numbers, leading to overblown figures (Internal Audit Division 2018). A biometric verification process showed that there was an excess of 300,000 refugees that did not actually exist (Schlindwein 2018; Titeca 2022).

The Minister of State, Musa Francis Ecweru, stated in a parliamentary discussion shortly after the reveal of the corruption scandal "I would like to assure colleagues that no stone will be left unturned. We have zero tolerance for corruption and abuse of public funds. Whoever will be found to have been involved will be firmly dealt with in accordance with our law" (Parliamentary Debate, 15th March 2018). The fallout from this experience still persists, however. A number of officials from the OPM, including the commissioner for refugees, and three senior staff were suspended in 2018, and in early 2020 two senior Ugandan government officials, based in Bidi-Bidi camp, were charged with money laundering, corruption and abuse of office over the awarding of contracts at refugee camps, including demanding and accepting bribes in return for awarding contracts (see also Okiror 2020a; Titeca 2022). The commissioner for refugees was, however, reinstated in September 2020 on the orders of the President (National NGO, online, October 2020). No prosecutions or further investigation followed, despite donor money to support the investigations (Ibid). No disciplinary action was reported from the UNHCR (Okiror 2019), though the head of the UNHCR in Uganda was replaced in 2018 (Barigaba 2018). Some of the biggest donors threatened to withdraw their support, and some including Germany and the UK temporarily froze their funding in 2019 (Coggio 2018; Okiror 2019).

For government officials the matter is perhaps resolved "there are issues of accountability of transparency and the recent accusations of corruption in the OPM office. This gave way to an investigation, and I think we have always been transparent in the way we work" (OPM Official, Kampala, March 2021). Another representative based in Adjumani insisted "we have been transparent in what we do, and we have accounted for every single cent we spend" (OPM Official, Adjumani, March 2021). Though large-

scale accountability has been avoided –since the affair came to light tense relationships have remained between the OPM, UNHCR and some NGOs affecting the smooth running of operations (Overall, there is little donor-government trust in Uganda (O'Callaghan et al. 2019).[24]

Building on this shaky relationship, UNHCR and other refugee protection agents are particularly interested (and dependent on) benefiting from a positive image of the Ugandan government. The severe underfunding undermines the approach set out by Uganda. The Syrian war, the pandemic, and most recently the war in Ukraine have all altered the conditions of international donor funding (see also Segadlo et al. 2021).

A Solidarity Summit from 2017, convened and jointly hosted by the UN and the Ugandan government, raised only $358 million from the requested $2 billion (Ahimbisibwe 2019; ECRE 2017). A decrease in funding or inadequate funding was widely noted by our interlocutors, particularly in relation to the solidarity summit, and there was a broad consensus that the international community needed to step up. As of 31 December 2021, UNHCR had only 49% of the funding it needed to carry out its operation in Uganda for 2021 (UNHCR 2021).

In a pamphlet describing the CRRF the following warning is used "Uganda's response remains chronically underfunded. Without more support from the international community, and investments by existing and new partners including the private sector, Uganda's ability to maintain this model *is at risk*. Uganda has fulfilled its obligations as a refugee hosting country and equally *the international community should meet its obligations*" (emphasis added CRRF Story Book 2019).

According to an NGO worker,

> "[hosting] refugees is an international responsibility… there has to be a balance where if Uganda has provided land and favourable legal regime and protection environment for the refugees then the international community needs to come in" (National NGO, Kampala, March 2021).

As such, funding (or not) is often a political question, with the benefits of a positive image discussed next.

3.2.2. Benefiting from positive imagery: A win-win scenario

It goes without saying that the positive image of Uganda as a refugee protector as well as catering for the host community is useful for UNHCR both to ensure sorely needed international funds as well as the compliance of the Ugandan government in implementing their policies.[25] In a recent article, Titeca argues this has created a situation of mutual dependency whereby both the Ugandan government and the international community depend on the perceived success (which in turn lay the groundwork for the widespread corruption Titeca 2022). Minister of State Musa Francis Ecweru argued to his parliamentary peers shortly after the corruption scandal came to light

> "We know the challenges that confront us, but our doors will continue to remain open. *This has made us receive international recognition.* Our resolve should not and must not wane. The allegations of corruption are very

[24] Though a World Bank report from 2016 states that there is an "effective partnership between the government and UNHCR. This close working relationship dates back to the early 1960s and has matured into a strong and efficient collaborative relationship for the benefit of refugees" (World Bank 2016). Some interviewees also noted the relationship as good (Local Government official, Yumbe, September 2020).

[25] In his article Titeca notes interviewees claiming UNHCR knew about the corruption incidents, but needed Uganda to be the "role model" stopping them from intervention. (Titeca 2022).

> serious. *I would like to beg that this should not divert us from the immense good work* and support that the host communities, particularly the partners and some good staff in our office, continue to provide to the refugees" (emphasis added; Parliamentary Debate, 15th March 2018).

The international preference for regional protection will be outlined below, before showing how Uganda is benefiting from this position. Opening the borders during the pandemic will be used as an example to show how the positive image of Uganda is helpful in positioning their global needs, as well as discussing how it helps to turn attention away from international criticism and improve diplomatic relations.

International preference for regional protection

The international refugee protection regime has grown increasingly dependent on the idea of outsourcing refugee protection responsibilities to regions of origin (Hovil 2018), which makes the image of Uganda as refugee protectors ideal. In the words of one international refugee protection staff member "… Uganda is kind of used as an example of how a refugee hosting country should behave in the eyes of the European Union. It should have open borders, allocation of land, freedom to services "(International development agency, online, September 2020).[26] Another researcher summed it up as follows "Europe and other western countries loved that [Uganda's approach] and were willing to pour in resources" (International organisation, online, September 2020). Speaking about the corruption scandal; Coggio writes: "The Ugandan government and UNHCR are not alone in worrying about fallout from the scandal. The European Union is motivated to ensure that Uganda's refugee-hosting model succeeds" (Coggio 2018). Summing up this approach, one interviewee noted "resources for refugee hosting areas have increased as the world no longer wants the refugees elsewhere" (Ugandan policy consultant, online, September 2020).

The approach in Uganda is so successful it is used as a global showcase. Uganda's experience has been so widely praised that it arguably influenced the development of global refugee protection standards in recent years, including being an inspiration to the CRFF (see also Titeca 2022 who found similar associations in his interviews). One local staff member of the OPM in Northern Uganda told us "so many countries have come to benchmark and learn from our country the ways of proper refugee management" (OPM Official, Rhino Camp, October 2020) with a settlement officer adding "internationally we are recognised as having the best refugee model" (OPM Official, Rhino Camp, October 2020). Another interviewee added

> "you will realize that almost every global gathering on refugees they always want to listen to Uganda because Uganda has that legal regime that supports refugees better than any other country in the world" (National NGO, Kampala, March 2021).

Lastly, the position of a champion for refugees aligns well with the position of the country as a neoliberal success story, advocated by actors like the World Bank, International Monetary Fund and other donors (e.g. Wiegratz, Martiniello, and Greco 2019) or as a regional security guarantor with Ugandan soldiers making up the main share of AMISOM soldiers in Somalia and a central part in the 'War on Terror' (see also Fisher 2013).

[26] The same interlocutor notes "… the truth of the matter is … it depends on donor commitment "(International development agency, online, September 2020).

Uganda benefiting from their position

Aside from the international benefits, the idea that Uganda benefits from refugee protection was also noted by interviewees and focus group participants. One participant in Rhino Camp for example noted: "more organisations are treating the refugees with importance because the government is benefiting from the positive reviews of their work" (FGDU4). An official in Arua surmised "I think because of the open-door policy we have is why we get praises from the international community and the benefits include the resources coming in and there are employment opportunities" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020). The major benefits include raising the development standards for the wider host community (see also domestic interests) but more generally are related to funding.

Through the EUTF, various programmes have been put in place for refugees and host communities worth 75.2 million USD, see Table 10 in the appendix. Other development funds funding from the 11th EDF between 2014-2020 for infrastructure, good governance and food security, amongst other things, all serve the purpose – at least in part – to make sure that Uganda remains stable enough to be able to continue to receive refugees (Schlindwein 2021). Other members of the international community involved in funding includes, for example, Japan, who has provided major funding for border equipment, infrastructures and technology (IOM Uganda 2021).

The link between the positive image and soliciting funds means that "politicians also talk nicely about refugees when they go outside Uganda… to solicit for more funding for government" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020). In the words of one long-standing refugee advocate "the political history of a country determines the level of refugee protection… in Uganda [it seen as] as an opportunity and source of money" (National NGO, online, October 2020).

In what has been tied to Bayart's idea of extraversion, the Ugandan state is instrumentalising its dependency on external donors to benefit them by highlighting their success in refugee protection – both donors and host states have degrees of leverage they can draw on (Titeca 2022). One example which highlights this relationship between a protective regime towards refugees in order to leverage funding is the border opening during the pandemic. Like elsewhere the pandemic had dire consequences for the livelihoods of the wider population in Uganda, including refugees. Refugee communities in particular found social distancing difficult and faced particular socioeconomic precarity (e.g. Segadlo et al. 2021; Moyo, Sebba, and Zanker 2021; Okot et al. 2021; Hovil and Capici 2020).

While on March 25th 2020, the government officially closed the asylum space because of the COVID 19 pandemic, Uganda made international headlines in July 2020, by temporarily suspending the border closures to allow in refugees from DRC stranded close to the border.[27] This opening was a difficult decision, due to the public health ramifications it could hold and there is no public record of negotiations that may have gone on behind closed doors in the run up to the border opening. Either way, on 1st July 2020, Uganda temporarily re-opened two border crossing points, through Gulajo and Mount Zeu in Zombo district to asylum-seekers from the DRC. The order came directly from President Museveni (as reported by Okiror 2020c). According to the UNHCR,

[27] Though sporadic cross-border movements continued throughout the pandemic (Okot al. 2021)

between 1st and 3rd July, 3,056 people entered Uganda, with children accounting for 65% percent of the group (UNHCR 2020b). Though applauded for having a very favourable policy towards refugees and asylum seekers, with the pandemic wreaking havoc globally, the country found itself in an uncertain situation.

The move was not widely popular, with people fearing what this would mean in terms of public health, with one interviewee stating "allowing refuges [to enter during COVID-19] raised serious questions on our safety" (OPM Official, Kampala, March 2021). Internationally, however, it was well received: "at the very least, the move reiterated the positive image of the country, as "it made news all over the world, it was a diplomatic coup" (National NGO, online, October 2020). Another interlocutor responded

> "the fact that [Uganda] has even gone over and above its own capacity … and during the Covid time to even have recognition to have a window and open for Congolese refugees who were stuck at the border so worldwide that is known and it is acknowledged" (Government official (education), Kampala, March 2021).

A researcher noted "When I hear that decision [about the border opening], it was a way of showing the international community that look at how welcoming we are to refugees, we keep borders open despite the pandemic" (International researcher, online, September 2020).

The move created leverage: "it's a way of attracting donor money … they can build a bit on the kind of guilt that maybe some European donors have that they are not dealing with the refugee issue correctly in their own countries" (International researcher, online, September 2020) or "it was a diplomatic coup" (National NGO, online, October 2020).

Figure 2: ***The narrative of border opening by the OPM (November 2021)***

Source: Twitter

This was helpful in gaining new- sorely needed- funds. Funding shortfalls and the disruption of global supply chains for relief food has negatively impacted refugee communities. As of July 2020, Uganda had only 22% of the funding it needed to carry out its operation for the year (UNHCR 2020a). Due to insufficient funds, with a shortfall of $137 million, the World Food Program announced a 30% reduction in food relief during that time (Okiror 2020b), with refugees describing the situations as "the donors are indoors" (Host population representative, Ofua 3, September 2020). At the time of the 2020 border opening, the UNHCR spokeswoman said "International support is urgently needed to help Uganda step up services both for refugees and for local communities" (Okiror 2020c). In an op-ed (a year later) the Foreign Minister noted the message the government was sending out with the border opening, "we have not escaped its debilitating economic impact – and this has put a serious strain on government finances, including those budgets for refugees. Nevertheless, Uganda's doors will remain open" (Odongo 2021).

Two weeks after the border-opening in 2020, on the 14th July, the EU announced another €24 million in humanitarian assistance for the most

vulnerable in Uganda with a special focus on refugees and their host communities. The press release notes a statement from the EU Commissioner for Crisis Management, noting

> ""EU humanitarian support in Uganda is making a difference to the lives of many refugees who have fled South Sudan *and the Democratic Republic of Congo*. … We remain committed to continuing our support in Uganda, all the more so in these challenging times" (emphasis added European Commission 2020).

Since then, borders have been opened again periodically for refugees from the DRC, including in November 2021 (Reuters 2021). In 2022, a further €30 million was released from the European Commission reasoned with "in 2021, the number of new registered refugees increased by 127,000, including new arrivals seeking refuge from neighbouring countries. The constant increase and the consequences of COVID-19 are stretching available resources and donors' funding" (European Commission 2022).

Diplomatic relationships

Apart from the funding issue, there is also the question of, more broadly, playing a role in international diplomatic relations "from a geopolitical perspective, Uganda doesn't have a lot to offer (no mines like DRC, no coastline like Kenya) so refugees are the bargaining chip on the development table" (Ugandan policy consultant, online, September 2020 (see also Wiegratz, Martiniello, and Greco 2019; Titeca 2022). The commodification of refugees in a market-based logic has long been discussed for the problematic moral and practical critiques that it raises, but is also tied to an emerging research agenda that looks at how cross-border mobility can be used as a distinct instrument of interstate diplomacy (e.g. Freier, Micinski, and Tsourapas 2021). Refugee hosting for diplomatic gains contains two elements in Uganda – improving bilateral relations and turning focus away from human rights violations.

First, open-door policies also help to improve bilateral relationships. In August 2021, Uganda took on 51 evacuated refugees from Afghanistan on behalf of the USA. A statement from the US embassy in Uganda stated "As the largest bilateral supporter of refugees in Uganda and their Ugandan host communities, the United States expresses its appreciation to the Ugandan people for their generosity and hospitality toward these communities" (US Mission in Uganda 2021). Under an agreement between the two countries, a total of 2,000 Afghan refugees were expected to be hosted in the country, awaiting resettlement in the US at a later (undetermined) date. A statement from the Ugandan Ministry of Foreign Affairs, circulated on Twitter, noted "Uganda, and the United States of America enjoy long standing cordial bilateral relations which are historic in nature and continue to pursue common interests for the mutual benefit of both countries" (Ministry of Foreign Affairs 2021).

Whilst some criticised the move, like the politician Francis Babu who worried that the deal could negatively affect relations between Afghanistan and Uganda, the government insisted this was the right move. "From a moral point of view…we could not refuse because we have to support humankind," the minister for information and communication technology Chris Baryomunsi said (Mugabi 2021; see also Odongo 2021). The foreign minister noted in an op-ed on why Uganda had taken on the Afghan refugees "… quite simply, our friend, partner and longstanding ally – the US – asked for our support. As with all our allies, when the US asks for our help and we are able to give it, we do" (Odongo 2021). According to the academic Mwambutsya Ndebesa "the president of Uganda [Museveni] will get a positive image internationally that he is generous so that he will whitewash his image about human rights abuses" (Mugabi 2021), see also below.

Similarly, if more ominously, there have long been reports with regard to Uganda taking on third-country nationals who are asylum claimants in Israel. One investigative article published in 2019 in the Daily Monitor, reported that deported Eritreans from Israel to Rwanda, were then relocated to Uganda, where they had no chance to be recognised as refugees since they had entered the country illegally. Though there is no transparency on these issues, the Minister of State for Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Musa Ecweru, publicly made statements in 2018 that they are considering voluntary 'relocation' from Israel (Kakooza and Mutaizibwa 2019). A previous investigative report in a German newspaper highlighted both the repatriation of third-country nationals as well military training of Ugandan officials in Israel, though a direct link between the two was not made (Knaul and Schlindwein 2016).

Another premise is that the positive attention of the open-door policies helps to take attention away from criticism of Ugandan domestic politics. President Museveni has been in power since 1985, regular elections have long been criticised by independent watchdogs, in addition to the growing authoritarianism affecting the independence of the media, judiciary and freedom and safety of political opponents and persecuted minorities (e.g. Human Rights Watch 2021; Freedom House 2022). This is not new for the Museveni leadership who has previously deflected accountability for various transgressions through success stories of Uganda as a developmental success or their contributions in the war on terror (Titeca 2022). The distraction from these developments by paying attention to the refugee protection in place is backed up by other scholars like Betts who notes that "international donors have abetted domestic illiberalism in order to sustain a liberal internationalist success story" (Betts 2021).

For Museveni, interviewees noted "its [refugee protection] is a passion for him but at the same time a diplomatic card" (National NGO, online, October 2020). Others also noted that the open-doors image of Uganda also helps to turn away international attention from political oppression and persecution of minorities, such as from the LGBTQ+-community or more generally provides leverage to push back on international scrutiny (see also Hargrave, Mosel, and Leach 2020). A Ugandan journalist explained

> "Uganda is credited globally for its open-door refugee policy …I think Uganda has done well … when you come to other issues like violations of human rights they [the international community] don't really see this … they forget about the violation of other rights of Ugandans" (Ugandan journalist, online, September 2020).

However, the degree of how this can work depends on a variety of issues (and perhaps more generally global priorities). A number of key donors have scaled back their direct budget support to the Ugandan government, preferring project-based aid because of constitutional amendments extending presidential mandates (from 2005), increased recognition of human rights abuses as well as the corruption scandals as outlined above (see also Idris 2020).[28]

3.2.3. Regional brokerage through refugee protection

Finally, in terms of external politics, Uganda's location at the centre of the major refugee producing regions- the Great Lakes and the Greater Horn - puts it in a position of a regional broker in refugee protection, conflict and conflict resolution initiatives. Since

[28] On this, one academic noted „ the government is openly angry that people are using Uganda's name to get money for refugee protection but they are not giving the money to the government" (Ugandan researcher, online, September 2020).

independence, Uganda has been embroiled in the affairs of its neighbours getting involved in regional conflict, including in the DRC and South Sudan as outlined in the introduction. As such Uganda doubles as a regional peace maker and as a conflict escalator.

In terms of conflict escalation which is tightly linked to refugee protection, Uganda has been accused of being a rare base for rebels fighting in South Sudan, Rwanda and Democratic Republic of Congo under the guise of refugee protection. Uganda was also in many ways instrumental to the development of the Rwanda Patriotic Front (RPF), providing a conducive environment for the promotion of refugee's political ambition. With the overthrow of the government of Mobutu from power in 1997, Uganda and Rwanda became allies to the new government of Laurent Kabila. However, in 1998 there was a fallout of the new allies with both countries supporting different factions of rebels fighting the government of Laurent Kabila in DRC (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005). On August 6th, 1999, a battle broke out between the armies of Rwanda and Uganda in Kisangani (DRC). The fighting in Kisangani – at least temporarily - shifted attitudes towards Rwandese and Congolese refugees in Uganda (Verdirame and Harrell-Bond 2005) raising suspicion of their side in the conflict. Uganda continues to play a role in conflicts both in neighbouring DRC, South Sudan (e.g. Logo 2021; Rolandsen, Sagmo, and Nicolaisen 2015b) and tensions continue to arise with Rwanda.

The continuous presence of thousands of Rwandan refugees in Uganda has had a powerful influence on Uganda′s relations with Rwanda. Despite talks on regional integration, security concerns regarding refugees have dominated relations between both countries. Rwanda's constant worry about possible rebel activities from Uganda has motivated its persistent requests for the repatriation of certain refugees, while Ugandan concern about the security threats provoked by possible criminal activities have persuaded Uganda to encourage the repatriation of Rwandans (Soi 2020). In 2018 the mistrust between the two countries was expressed in prolonged border closure between Uganda and Rwanda. Rwanda accused Uganda of harassment, abduction, illegal detention and torture of Rwandan nationals in Uganda since 2018 and supporting rebels seeking to topple Kagame. On the other hand, Uganda accuses Rwanda of spying as well as killing two men during an incursion into Ugandan territory in 2019 (Muhumuza and Ssuuna 2022). After a series of negotiations, the border was only fully reopened in March 2022 after a three-year closure.

Despite or because of these entanglements, President Yoweri Museveni of Uganda is known for his acumen in regional political brokerage, and he uses his role in refugee protection for regional leverage as a 'peace broker' within the region. The double face, as a peacemaker has resulted included the involvement in the Comprehensive Peace Agreement (CPA) that brought an end to the conflict between the Sudan People's Liberation Army (SPLA) and the government in Khartoum and creation of the new state of South Sudan. In addition, Uganda has contributed peace keeping forces to the African Union forces in Liberia (1994-1995), and in Somalia 2007 to date. Under the African Mission in Somalia (AMISOM), the Ugandan contingent remains the largest contingent in AMISOM with 6,223 troops. In addition, Uganda has been a stabilising force within the region, as for example in South Sudan- 2014 at the invitation of the Government of South Sudan to quell a mutiny that threatened the government of President Salva Kiir in Juba.

Since the 1990s, Uganda has played a major role in not only hosting international conferences on refugee protection, but also regional ones. Among these is the African Union meeting the African Union Convention for the Protection

and Assistance of Internally Displaced Persons in Africa in 2009 or the Kampala Declaration on Jobs, Livelihoods & Self-reliance for Refugees, Returnees & Host Communities in IGAD Region, in March 2019. Already in 1992, Uganda's improved standing in foreign policy was tied to Museveni's leadership. For instance, Museveni's election to become chairman of the Organisation of African Unity in in June 1990 was more in appreciation of his achievements for Uganda and the belief that he represented a new brand of leadership of which the continent was in short supply (Mutibwa 1992). Thus far, Museveni plays a largely undisputed prominent role in the region, and refugees and their protection are very much at the centre of this.

3.3. Political Interest Groups

There are many different actors involved in refugee protection at a national level, notably the OPM, but also various ministries including the Ministry of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees, Internal Affairs, Education, Agriculture, Internal Security, Local Government etc. At the local level, there are more ranging from camp commandant, local councillors, district governments to refugees themselves, notably through refugee welfare councils. Lastly there are various non-national organisations, including UN agencies including UNHCR, various INGOs, but also local NGOs or community-based organisations. It would be beyond this report to describe all these actors and their respective political interests. Instead, we focus on three issues that can affect the internal and external domestic political stakes as described above, namely the relationship between the OPM and UNHCR; the relationship of the local government to the national government and the political role of refugees themselves.

3.3.1. "Like a (quarrelling) married couple": International-national conflict divisions

Along with the recognition of the refugee protection system in the country has been the praise of the relationship between the OPM and UNHCR (World Bank 2016). One OPM official summarises "when it comes to refugee protection, we work hand in hand with UNHCR" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020). Moreover, one high-level international representative noted that despite tensions between OPM and UNHCR, see below, on a technical working level things were working really well (International organisation, online, October 2020).

As noted above however, the relationship between the international and national community, primarily the OPM (as representative of the government) and UNHCR (as a representative of the international community and refugee interests) is tense following on from the corruption scandal (e.g. Parker 2018). At the same time, given the large numbers of refugees in the country, they have a situation that needs to be dealt with and are co-dependent on each other (see also Titeca 2022). One interviewee summed the relationship of the OPM and UNHCR up "they are like a (quarrelling) married couple, they fight but… then always come back to each other" (Ugandan policy consultant, online, September 2020). For example, members of UNHCR are reportedly frustrated because for a long time they did not have direct access to the numbers of refugees being registered and continue to be dependent on the OPM for providing these. This was especially difficult in the run-up and fallout from the 2018 corruption scandal. For almost three years the OPM refused to give the UNHCR the data on refugee registration, despite the fact the organisation had paid for the registration platform (International organisation, online,

September 2020, see also Internal Audit Division 2018).

Beyond the direct relationship between the OPM and the UNHCR there is also a more general sense of frustration by donors and also with donors

> "there are issues of supremacy of donors… donors think they are more important than the host country… The international community has failed to acknowledge that the government has done incredibly a lot in refugee protection and these are issues that come in that need to be addressed" (OPM Official, Adjumani, March 2021).

NGOs and CSOs play a major role in refugee protection (Ahimbisibwe 2019). Related to the conflict at the higher level there are similar conflict patterns as to which organisations receive funding (not exclusively but often from the UNHCR) and working permission (from the OPM) as a sub-contractor in the implementation of refugee protection. The UNHCR here has a preference for international NGOs (with funding more easily distributed here than via the OPM due to the corruption allegations). Local and national NGOs feel unjustly left out and underfunded to provide services. The OPM however at least recognises the qualms of NGOS. One respondent explains

> "Yes, UNHCR normally gives funding to implementing partners … local partners or the indigenous based NGOs and CBOs should also be given funding to implement in the refugee … Unfortunately, in protocols of funding you find donors are very specific." (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

Aside from the funding issue, the OPM, however, seems to have primary control over which NGOs get to provide services to refugees and host in the settlement areas, "CSOs freely visit the refugee settlements, *though with permission from the OPM,* without any hindrance" (emphasis added, Local Government official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021). Another programme implementer noted "our relationship is quite a darling one for now because if you don't work with OPM then you don't have a place within the refugee settlement to help them" (National NGO, online, September 2020). In the words of one interviewee "refugee management in Uganda is the preserve of the Office of the Prime Minister" (OPM Official, Kampala, March 2021), another noted the relationship between OPM and NGOs as "OPM is like a father to them…there is conflict due to struggles among the partners all wanting to do this or that… the OPM always has authority" (Local Government official, Yumbe, September 2020).

The regulation of funding through the OPM was explained to be for logistical reasons, not to duplicate services or resulting in certain areas being left out.

Though one element of the corruption scandal was the realisation that the OPM was deciding (or recommending) which contractors to use, contrary to UNHCR guidelines and making space for nepotism (Schlindwein 2021; Parker 2018), this OPM influence has been hard to counteract. There are also other ways to influence the implementation work: In 2020, the OPM discontinued work permissions of 208 aid agencies (out of 277), including 85 international groups, amounting to three quarters of refugee aid organisations, citing non-compliance with operational rules (Okiror 2020d). Though no doubt some of these irregularities were valid, it was particularly sensitive during the COVID pandemic and related shortages as a result of this. This conflict division, which is constantly underscored by a need to work together is unlikely to change anytime soon but has potential effect on how the external position of Uganda develops.

Overall, there is little trust between donors and the Ugandan government, which makes plans with a 'nationally led' approach like the CRFF difficult to implement. This trickles down to the national-local level discussed next.

3.3.2. "Not an issue for local governments": Local-national conflict divisions

Whilst at a national level different ministries dispute over who has competencies, this also trickles down to the local level, namely with regard to "the challenges with the district local governments who wish to have a stronger say in refugee protection" (OPM Official, Kampala, March 2021). Again, at the local level there are also conflicts over who gets to be the host community (benefiting from development projects) which has led to rezoning districts as described above (National NGO, Kampala, March 2021).

Beyond that, local governments want to be more involved in decision-making processes with regard to the management of refugees. One interviewee noted "The local government have never had any powers to make certain decisions on managing refugees… most powers are given to the OPM and this always brings friction" (Local Government official, Yumbe, September 2020). Officials at the local level often feel insufficiently informed about upcoming activities and there are longstanding problems of mistrust, frustration and resentment of local government and district officials in the face of centralised decision-making (see also Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe 2019). One interviewee exclaimed "often times donors are really imposing programs and implementation without very much involving the district officials" (International development agency, online, September 2020).

In particular, on the issue of land, many local stakeholders from and representing host communities feel like they are not included in decision-making processes that affect them. This is where interaction with local government is particularly important

> "the local councillors are very important when it comes to the peaceful coexistence of both refugees and nationals…some areas both refugees and nationals stay …so we need the support of the local council members and local government" (OPM Official, Rhino Camp, October 2020).

An issue which was mentioned was that local government was more concerned looking after the interests of local citizens (host populations) rather than refugees (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

Some have a more optimistic view, a local council chairperson noting

> "we see increased participation of the district local government in refugee affairs that was not the case before… we at the local government level, have to plan for them too alongside the host populations. This is a useful change, otherwise all the responsibility used to go to OPM" (Local Government official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021).

More concretely, this means "we now require the NGOs working in the district to not only register with the OPM but also with us at the local government so we can know what they are doing" (Local Government official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021). Consequently, we were also told that NGOs were now signing Memoranda of Understandings both with the OPM and the local government, prior to which there had been some disagreement (National NGO, Kampala, March 2021).

This change, no matter how incremental, would certainly be a change from the past, one interviewee recalls

> "I think in the past there have been serious attempts to talk by variety of politicians particularly the district local council and the LC3 chairpersons, the district chairpersons, the members of parliament. In West Nile they had an association called WENDA (West Nile Development Agency). It tried to bring many of them to discuss refugees however the first deputy prime minister and deputy leader of government business shut them down and *said refugees is a national government issue and not an issue for local governments*. They have no right to talk about it because in essence what they were trying to do was to incite communities against refugees … What even government did was to bring policemen to block such a workshop that was supposed to take place in Arua" (emphasis added, OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

The same interviewee also mentioned quarrels between local government officials over who would be able to use vehicles donated through the REHOPE programme (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020). Another mentions that local government involvement is limited to coordination, land acquisitions and being signatories to new infrastructures being built like hospitals or schools (OPM Official, Rhino Camp, October 2020). This suggests limited decision-making powers.

The CRFF is set to increase a role for local governments and will likely add to a changed relationship. However, tracking implementation of the CRFF has been tricky – with the venture receiving criticism for the bureaucratic and time-consuming coordination structure (see also O'Callaghan et al. 2019). One interviewee described it as "the CRFF is trying to involve the local government …making them understand refugee management…because now… it's OPM doing it" (OPM Official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2020). Lastly, we turn to the political role of refugees.

3.3.3. "They do not feature anywhere": Political agency of refugees

In addition to noting some more general problems – like which NGOs and bodies are responsible for which services and refugees not knowing the laws of the host country [29] – a major question is how refugees see their own political role in the country.

There are formal participation mechanisms including the Refugee Welfare Councils (RWCs), which primarily serves as a coordination and communication function working together with the OPM camp commandants. They are zoned in a similar way to village or parish leaderships.[30] Since 2018 there has also been a Refugee Engagement Forum [31]which convenes at a national level four times a year and participates in CRFF Steering Committee meetings (see also CRRF Story Book 2019). There are also various self-organised groups, and especially during the pandemic there has been mutual support, public health communication and sharing of hygiene and food products between refugees (see also Segadlo et al. 2021). Various participatory processes in policy developments were also mentioned, "all voices are represented in the development of refugee policies" (Local Government official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021).

[29] "when the UNCHR comes around, it talks about the rights of the refugees, but we aren't aware of these rights so now I can't fight for rights that am not aware of" (FGDU1).

[30] Local Councils act as representative structures for the host population.

[31] The most recent Refugee Engagement Forum – the 11th – took place in October 2021

One respondent cautioned, however, "I imagine that probably the voice of the displaced people is captured but I don't know how effectively it is captured" (Government official (education), Kampala, March 2021), and others also noted some refugees may be getting left out.

More generally, there is a sense that the OPM does not take the Refugee Welfare Councils seriously, and rather feels 'exploited' by them:

> "you find that the government that came up with this structure doesn't even recognize the RWCs and they take these peoples' work as useless and this makes me feel there's exploitation since these people are over worked and their services are not paid for whether you are a chairman and they lack appreciating" (FGDU1).

Moreover, of course refugees are not a homogenous group, and some feel that they are not represented by the RWCs, including marginalised religious groups, 'new' refugees – who can feel like they are treated unfairly compared to 'old' refugees and women (see also Danish Refugee Council 2018; Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe 2019) Moreover, Citizenship seems an unlikely development to happen any time soon "if you ever mention that you are giving refugees citizenships…you will never be elected" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020). Though Foreign Minister Odongo says "they [the refugees] are essentially Ugandan citizens" (Odongo 2021), they are not. Whilst refugees are allowed to vote and can be elected for representative positions in the settlements, they are not allowed to take part in any other elections, especially national elections, linked to the lack of political integration available to most refugees.

In some local contexts, like Rhino camp, though refugees do not vote and are not expected to vote, they do support candidates of their choice through campaigning for them, mobilising funds and resources for them and or convincing the hosts to vote for a particular candidate. Certain candidates at the district local government are supportive of the refugee development and agenda. As such the refugees feel that once a given candidate wins, their lives would be much better and support these candidates beforehand.

More generally however, refugee voting (or supporting national politicians) is a highly sensitive topic. When in a focus group with urban refugees, some refugees discussed wanting to take part in elections, another participant distanced herself from these statements noting "this is a topic and discussions that could bring us problems" (FGDU7, see also FGDU1 and FGDU2 where participants also noted that questions on elections were too sensitive to answer).[32]

Since refugees cannot vote, even on a local level, they sometimes feel like the local government leaves their issues out, and only prioritizes citizens in their region, even when they make up a majority of the local population. In reality, the regional context gives way to multiple forms of belonging in order to access resources (Hovil 2016). One camp official recognised this difficulty, noting "some refugees have lived here for a long time and have never returned. Can we still call them refugees?" (Local Government official, Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement, September 2021). One refugee in a focus group mused

> "us refugees we are human beings and for example we are staying in this area and the country has accepted us, as a wish we would want to participate because we see people campaigning and

[32] We were told of accusations of refugees illegally voting for the ruling party.

> we know this is a good leader and if I was given a chance, I could vote for that person to be in power" (FGDU7).

In another group, the discussants agreed that though they do not participate in any elections, they felt they should be considered especially for the elections in West Nile region because the activities and work done by these leaders affects them since they reside in the same area (FGDU4).

Policy approaches largely view refugees as apolitical subjects, this denies a reality where refugees have their own goals and ideas, and refugees are also expected to improve themselves / their lives whilst staying apolitical (Omata 2017). As discussed previously, refugees are not given actual empowerment – especially not political empowerment – but rather are treated as 'actors-to-be' in the self-reliance strategy pursued by Uganda (Krause and Schmidt 2020; see also Krause 2021 for refugees given limited space for participation and only seen as protection objects). One OPM respondent surmises this argument as "these refugees are not supposed to take part in the politics of the country and not even in the politics of the country of origin, we ensure they do not feature anywhere" (OPM Official, Rhino Camp, October 2020).

Accordingly, when refugees politically organise, this is often not taken seriously. According to a Ugandan journalist when she talked to the minister of refugees about urban refugees, he said that some of them (urban refugees) just want to "defame the image of Uganda so that the foreign embassies in Kampala can quickly get special immigration visas [for them]" (National NGO, online, November 2020). In a final section below, we turn to the societal discourse on refugees.

4. "UGANDA LIKES REFUGEES TOO MUCH" – THE SOCIETAL DISCOURSE ON REFUGEES

There is a change in how refugees and hosts perceive each other over time. At the onset of an emergency, the perception is that refugees are in need of help and assistance to overcome the predicament. The host population in Uganda is known to welcome refugees with open arms and offering them support as needed. Social discourse in Uganda is largely informed by a shared experience of refugeehood between refugees and their hosts. Uganda has not only been a host to large numbers of refugees but it has also been a source of refugees to countries including South Sudan, Kenya and Tanzania.

As a result, when refugees from, for example, South Sudan enter into the West Nile region, a region with a long history of displacement, they are welcomed with open arms cause of the shared experience of being refugees (see also Leopold 2009). According to one OPM official "we know what it means to be a refugee and that is why we maintain an open-door policy" (Kampala, 19th March 2021).

Whilst Uganda is thus renowned as a refugee friendly country both in practice as well as on paper, [33] especially compared to other countries, Ugandans are increasingly showing the perception that the government is too friendly to refugees and neglecting their woes. This is highlighted through the sporadic local conflicts between the local communities and refugee populations over access to resources, social services, environmental destruction and land.

Though there have been improvements in poverty reduction in Uganda, overall inequality has increased, especially for northern districts

[33] This also includes acts of solidarity between refugees and host communities, including refugees sharing food and contributing to funeral costs of host community members.

where most refugees are hosted (see also Hargrave, Mosel, and Leach 2020). Because this area is particularly poor, it is also not surprising that tensions are perhaps higher than in other regions. In their work on Uganda, Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe caution to remember the heterogeneity between different groups of refugees and hosts (with varying cultural, historical backgrounds and livelihood strategies) as well as different generations of refugees, with newer ones more likely to face restricted service delivery due to implementation pressures (2019). This is also important to remember when discussing conflicts between hosts and refugees, which are not widespread and largely situational.

The lack of attention and service delivery felt by the host communities and the unfulfilled expectations of benefiting from development funds has led to increased frustrations (see also Van Laer 2019b). In particular, there is competition over natural resources including firewood, water and animal grazing rights, and resources like grass needed to thatch roofs. This is often linked to problems of environmental degradation caused by the large number of refugees. According to one interviewee,

> "we are bearing the burden not only of refugees staying longer in a protracted situation but also the environment has been damaged… you have seen how that trees have been cut for fuel wood in areas surrounding the settlements (in West Nile)" (OPM Official, Kampala, March 2021).

A refugee complained however that "the greatest challenge I see facing these refugees is lack of firewood… They are given food but they do not have [what they need] to cook the food" (FGDU2;). This leads to conflict, added another participant in the same group, "when our women go to get firewood, the locals chase them saying, they are causing deforestation" (FGDU2). Other conflicts mentioned included who gets to put their market stalls where in settlement areas.

For example, in September 2020, an estimated ten refugees were killed in clashes with the local population at a water point in Madi-Okollo, in Northern Uganda, with the Ugandan army sent in to prevent further clashes (Okiror 2020e). In another incident, in December 2019 violence broke out between South Sudanese refugees and host communities in a settlement in the Adjumani District, leaving 12 injured and one dead (Hargrave, Mosel, and Leach 2020), see also Table 9 in the appendix.

In addition to access to resources and environmental damage, perhaps the most contentious question is concerning land, as discussed previously. One problem is that the policy of land distribution uses community land for the refugees in Northern Uganda whereas in South-Western Uganda it is government gazetted-land which refugees are provided with (e.g. Danish Refugee Council 2018). While this makes sense due to regional differences such as land being available in areas close to Rhino Camp for example, simply because the region is sparsely populated (see also Bohnet and Schmitz-Pranghe 2019) not compensating the hosts for land given over for refugee settlement remains a major concern. Additionally, the size of plots of land allocated to refugees has significantly decreased from $100m^2$ before 2013 to $50m^2$ after 2013 and $20m^2$ after 2016. The government has not gazetted any refugee settlements nor taken any measures to increase the size of the present settlements (Barigaba 2017). The shrinking land sizes have forced refugees to rent land from surrounding communities. This practice has been a source of disputes between refugees and hosts partly as a result of unclear agreements, repossession of rented lands before refugees harvest their crops and or land having more than one claimant, thereby creating further tensions between refugees and hosts over ownership (see also Van Laer 2019a). The situation is not helped

by the fact that the land in some refugee settlements like Bidi Bidi and Rhino camp is relatively rocky and infertile making it difficult to sustain refugee livelihoods.

Moreover, promises of inclusion of hosts into refugee service delivery as a part of compensation, has never materialised. "Land owners are not happy because they were promised some goods and local money that are not coming in" (National NGO, online, September 2020). This has given way to practices such as community landowners reclaiming land previously allocated to refugees asking refugees to pay rent for farming lands and repossession farming lands before the harvests (FGDU1; see also FGDU2). For refugees, "the local population is the owner of the place, we are just outsiders seeking refuge" (FGDU1, see also interview National NGO, online, November 2020). Repossession of land is a common characteristic among the young people who claim that they were not consulted when their land was being taken over. One official working in Northern Uganda, noted "other people are claiming they were not consulted when their land was taken over and [this] keeps giving us headaches all the time" (OPM Official, Arua, October 2020).

Summarising the sentiment, a camp official explains "many in West Nile have a certain mentality that these refugees are benefiting more, and it has brought up many conflicts and … the refuges getting cash or getting food which is not given to the nationals they feel so bad" (OPM Official, Rhino Camp, October 2020).

The huge numbers of refugees arriving in recent years, particularly from Southern Sudan, as well as the increasingly protracted situation, has heightened tensions, whereby host communities continuously point to how they are not benefitting the same way as refugees, some even concluding "I think it's better to be a refugee than a national" (Local Government official, Kampala, March 2021). This was further exacerbated during the COVID-19 border opening, with one interviewee noting discussions at the time noting that "Uganda likes refugees too much, to an extent of endangering its populations" (Local government official Bidi Bidi Refugee camp, 5th September 2020).

5. CONCLUSION

As we have shown above, though Uganda tends to be seen as a leading example in refugee protection, implementation problems on the ground as well as a lack of long-term solutions underscore the difficulties of the approach. The development approach individualises protection through self-reliance, and despite the ambitions of the development approach its current implementation does little to distance it from previous humanitarian approaches.

On the domestic level, refugee governance and protection doesn't play a leading role in state-making processes due to refugees being highly apolitical whereas on the level of external politics refugee governance plays an important role for Uganda's standing in the international community and as a diplomatic tool in external politics. Domestically, refugee protection sometimes becomes politically important as the developmental approach serves local officials to seek advantages in electoral processes. On the national level politicization of refugee protection remained low however, though there is an emerging narrative questioning the open-door policy.

Internationally, refugee governance plays a significant role in Uganda's state-making towards the international community. Fund raising through keeping up a positive image as well as turning attention away from domestic problems are ways Uganda uses refugee governance as a diplomatic tool, which fits European donors and UNHCR as they are looking to present the country as a success story

of the externalization of refugee governance. But this leads to Uganda being heavily dependent on funding from external donors, which has been underfunded for years. Political interest groups in Uganda that are influencing the governance and policymaking concerning refugees are the OPM and the UNHCR, with both engaging in a turf war over decision-making. The involvement of local government officials remains low and refugees themselves have little to no formal political agency. Overall refugees are easily accepted at a societal level, though there have been sporadic conflicts over access to resources.

Uganda is well known as a strong refugee protector, but faces a number of socio-economic and governing challenges, as well as complex political priorities and relationships behind its open-door policies.

6. REFERENCES

Abebe, Tsion Tadesse. 2019. 'Refugees' Self-Reliance: The Dilemma of Implementing the Global Compact on Refugees in Africa'. *Rights in Exile* (blog). 2019. https://rightsinexile.tumblr.com/post/186141918812/refugees-self-reliance-the-dilemma-of.

Addaney, Michael. 2017. 'A Step Forward in the Protection of Urban Refugees: The Legal Protection of the Rights of Urban Refugees in Uganda'. *African Human Rights Law Journal* 17 (1): 218–43. https://doi.org/10.17159/1996-2096/2017/v17n1a10.

Ahimbisibwe, Frank. 2017. ''Voluntary'Repatriation of Rwandan Refugees in Uganda: Between Law and Practice-Views from Below.' *Journal of Identity & Migration Studies* 11 (2).

———. 2019. 'Uganda and the Refugee Problem: Challenges and Opportunities'. *African Journal of Political Science and International Relations* 13 (5): 62–72. https://doi.org/10.5897/AJPSIR2018.1101.

Andersson, Ruben. 2016. 'Hardwiring the Frontier? The Politics of Security Technology in Europe's "Fight against Illegal Migration"'. *Security Dialogue* 47 (1): 22–39. https://doi.org/10.1177/0967010615606044.

Bagenda, Emmanuel, Angela Naggaga, and Elliott Smith. 2003. 'Land Problems in Nakivale Settlement and the Implications for Refugee Protection in Uganda'. Refugee Law Project Working Paper No. 8. Kampala.

Barigaba, Julius. 2017. 'Shrinking Land Opens New Challenge Facing South Sudanese Refugees'. The East African. 2017. https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/shrinking-land-opens-new-challenge-facing-south-sudanese-refugees-1373214.

———. 2018. 'UN Refugee Agency Replaces Uganda Chief'. *The East African*, 7 April 2018. https://www.theeastafrican.co.ke/tea/news/east-africa/un-refugee-agency-replaces-uganda-chief-1387716.

Berke, Timothy, and Larissa Larsen. 2022. 'Using Land to Promote Refugee Self-Reliance in Uganda'. *Land* 11 (3): 410. https://doi.org/10.3390/land11030410.

Betts, Alexander. 2021. 'Refugees And Patronage: A Political History Of Uganda's 'Progressive'Refugee Policies'. *African Affairs* 120 (479): 243–76.

Bohnet, Heidrun, and Clara Schmitz-Pranghe. 2019. 'Uganda: A Role Model for Refugee Integration?' 2/2019. BICC Working Paper. Bonn: Bonn International Center for Conversion (BICC).

Coggio, Tessa. 2018. 'Can Uganda's Breakthrough Refugee-Hosting Model Be Sustained?' *Migration Policy Institute*, 31 October 2018. https://www.migrationpolicy.org/article/can-ugandas-breakthrough-refugee-hosting-model-be-sustained.

CRRF Story Book. 2019. 'Uganda's Refugee Response: Our Story'. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/74396.

Danish Refugee Council. 2018. 'Rapid Conflict Assessment in Kyaka II Refugee Settlement, Uganda'. https://reliefweb.int/sites/reliefweb.int/files/resources/DRC-May-2018-Kyaka-II-rapid-conflict-assessment_for-release-002.pdf.

Easton-Calabria, Evan, and Naohiko Omata. 2018. 'Panacea for the Refugee Crisis? Rethinking the Promotion of "Self-Reliance" for Refugees'. *Third World Quarterly* 39 (8): 1458–74. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2018.1458301.

ECRE. 2017. 'Uganda: Solidarity Summit on Refugees 2017'. Brussels: European Council on Refugees and Exiles. https://ecre.org/uganda-solidarity-summit-on-refugees-2017/.

European Commission. 2020. 'EU Announces €24 Million in Uganda amid Coronavirus Pandemic'. Text. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations - European Commission. 14 July 2020. https://ec.europa.eu/commission/presscorner/detail/en/ip_20_1341

———. 2022. 'Uganda'. European Civil Protection and Humanitarian Aid Operations. https://ec.europa.eu/echo/where/africa/uganda_en.

European Union and Samuel Hall. 2022. 'Study in Support of the Development of a Regional Action Plan for Refugees in the Great Lakes Region'.

Fisher, Jonathan. 2013. '"Some More Reliable than Others": Image Management, Donor Perceptions and the Global War on Terror in East African Diplomacy*'. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 51 (1): 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0022278X12000535.

Freedom House. 2022. 'Uganda: Freedom in the World 2022 Country Report'. Freedom House. 2022. https://freedomhouse.org/country/uganda/freedom-world/2022.

Freier, Luisa F., Nicholas R. Micinski, and Gerasimos Tsourapas. 2021. 'Refugee Commodification: The Diffusion of Refugee Rent-Seeking in the Global South'. *Third World Quarterly* 42 (11): 2747–66. https://doi.org/10.1080/01436597.2021.1956891.

Hargrave, Karen, Irina Mosel, and Amy Leach. 2020. 'Public Narratives and Attitudes towards Refugees and Other Migrants: Uganda Country Profile'. London: Overseas Development Institute. https://www.odi.org/publications/17271-public-narratives-and-attitudes-towards-refugees-and-other-migrants-uganda-country-profile.

Hitchen, Jamie. 2016. 'Steady Progress? 30 Years of Museveni and the NRM in Uganda'. Briefing Note 1601. Africa Research Institute. https://www.africaresearchinstitute.org/newsite/wp-content/uploads/2016/02/ARI_Uganda_BN_Final.pdf.

Hovil, Lucy. 2007. 'Self-Settled Refugees in Uganda: An Alternative Approach to Displacement?' *Journal of Refugee Studies* 20 (4): 599–620.

———. 2016. *Refugees, Conflict and the Search for Belonging*. Springer.

———. 2018. 'Uganda's Refugee Policies: The History, the Politics, the Way Forward'. Kampala: International Refugee Rights Initiative.

Hovil, Lucy, and Vittorio Capici. 2020. 'Neglected Refugees Find Themselves Even More Neglected during COVID-19'. *African Arguments* (blog). 12 May 2020. https://africanarguments.org/2020/05/neglected-refugees-find-themselves-even-more-neglected-during-covid-19/.

Human Rights Watch. 2021. 'Uganda: Events of 2021'. In *World Report 2022*. https://www.hrw.org/world-report/2022/country-chapters/uganda.

Idris, Iffat. 2020. 'Integrated Approaches to Refugee Management in Uganda'. Helpdesk Report. Department for International Development.

Internal Audit Division. 2018. 'Audit of the Operations in Uganda for the Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees'. Report 2018/097. Office of Internal Oversight Services.

International Crisis Group. 2020. 'Averting Proxy Wars in the Eastern DR Congo and Great Lakes'. Briefing Nr 150. Africa. https://www.crisisgroup.org/africa/central-africa/democratic-republic-congo/b150-averting-proxy-wars-eastern-dr-congo-and-great-lakes.

IOM. 2018. 'Migration Governance Snapshot: The Republic of Uganda'. https://www.migrationdataportal.org/overviews/mgi/uganda#0.

IOM Uganda. 2021. 'Annual Report 2020'. Kampala. https://uganda.iom.int/sites/g/files/tmzbdl1376/files/documents/IOM%20Annual%20Report%202020.pdf.

IRIN News. 2012. 'Government Plans Naturalization of Refugees - Uganda'. ReliefWeb. 21 June 2012. https://reliefweb.int/report/uganda/government-plans-naturalization-refugees.

IRRI. 2016. 'The Eligibility for Refugees to Acquire Ugandan Citizenship'. International Refugee Rights Initiative. 22 March 2016. http://refugee-rights.org/the-eligibility-for-refugees-to-acquire-ugandan-citizenship/.

Kaiser, Tania. 2006. 'Between a Camp and a Hard Place: Rights, Livelihood and Experiences of the Local Settlement System for Long-Term Refugees in Uganda'. *The Journal of Modern African Studies* 44 (4): 597–621.

Kakooza, Bart, and Emmanuel Mutaizibwa. 2019. 'Stateless: Eritreans Secretly Moved to Uganda'. *Daily Monitor*, 7 July 2019. https://www.monitor.co.ug/uganda/special-reports/stateless-eritreans-secretly-moved-to-uganda-1835978

Knaul, Susanne, and Simone Schlindwein. 2016. 'Die Währung Mensch'. *Die Tageszeitung: taz*, 26 January 2016, sec. taz.

Krause, Ulrike. 2016. 'Limitations of Development-Oriented Assistance in Uganda'. *Forced Migration Review* 52 (3): 51–53.

———. 2021. *Difficult Life in a Refugee Camp: Gender, Violence, and Coping in Uganda*. Cambridge University Press.

Krause, Ulrike, and Hannah Schmidt. 2020. 'Refugees as Actors? Critical Reflections on Global Refugee Policies on Self-Reliance and Resilience'. *Journal of Refugee Studies* 33 (1): 22–41. https://doi.org/10.1093/jrs/fez059.

Leopold, Mark. 2009. 'Crossing the Line: 100 Years of the North-West Uganda/South Sudan Border'. *Journal of Eastern African Studies* 3 (3): 464–78. https://doi.org/10.1080/17531050903273743.

Lingelbach, Jochen. 2020. *On the Edges of Whiteness: Polish Refugees in British Colonial Africa during and after the Second World War*. Berghahn Books.

Logo, Kuyang Harriet. 2021. 'The Political Stakes of Displacement in South Sudan'. Freiburg: Arnold Bergstraesser Institute. https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/sites/default/files/the_political_stakes_of_displacement_in_south_sudan_kuyang_logo.pdf.

Lozet, Florence, and Evan Easton-Calabria. 2020. 'Counting Urban Refugees during COVID-19 | Forced Migration Review'. *Forced Migration Review*, no. 64 (June): 79–80.

Lwanga-Lunyiigo, Samwiiri. 1993. 'Uganda's Long Connection with the Problem of Refugees: From the Polish Refugees of World War II to the Present'. https://opendocs.ids.ac.uk/opendocs/handle/20.500.12413/5693.

Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. 2021. 'Uganda Budget Information'. 2021. https://budget.finance.go.ug/.

Ministry of Foreign Affairs. 2021. 'STATEMENT: ARRIVAL OF EVACUEES FROM AFGHANISTAN IN UGANDA @KagutaMuseveni @UN @WhiteHouse @StateDept @GenJejeOdongo @USAmbUganda @usmissionuganda @okelloryem Https://T.Co/IAyCkn5b4o'. Tweet. *@UgandaMFA* (blog). 25 August 2021. https://twitter.com/UgandaMFA/status/1430413067892965381.

Monteith, William, and Shuaib Lwasa. 2017. 'The Participation of Urban Displaced Populations in (in) Formal Markets: Contrasting Experiences in Kampala, Uganda'. *Environment and Urbanization* 29 (2): 383–402.

Monteith, William, Shuaib Lwasa, Gloria Nsangi, Hakimu Sseviiri, and Disan Byarugaba. 2017. 'Upholding the Rights of Urban Refugees in Uganda'. International Institute for Environment and Development.

Moyo, Khangelani, Kalyango Ronald Sebba, and Franzisca Zanker. 2021. 'Who Is Watching? Refugee Protection during a Pandemic - Responses from Uganda and South Africa'. *Comparative Migration Studies* 9 (1): 37. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40878-021-00243-3.

Moyo, Khangelani, and Franzisca Zanker. 2020. 'Political Contestations within South African Migration Governance'. Freiburg: Arnold-Bergstraesser-Institute. https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/sites/default/files/political_contestations_within_south_african_migration_governance_moyo_and_zanker.pdf.

Mugabi, Isaac. 2021. 'Uganda: Arrival of Afghan Refugees in Uganda Raises Security Concerns'. *Deutsche Welle*, 26 August 2021, sec. News. https://allafrica.com/stories/202108260039.html.

Muhumuza, Rodney, and Ignatious Ssuuna. 2022. 'Rwanda to Reopen Its Uganda Border, Ending a Tense Standoff'. AP NEWS. 28 January 2022. https://apnews.com/article/africa-rwanda-diplomacy-military-intelligence-uganda-e2339d0a0d0cb6a47e9353ac4c1b7ad5.

Mushemeza, Elijah Dickens. 2019. 'Decentralisation in Uganda Trends, Achievements, Challenges and Proposals for Consolidation'. ACODE Policy Research Paper Series No. 93. Kampala, Uganda.

Musoni, Francis. 2020. *Border Jumping and Migration Control in Southern Africa*. Indiana University Press.

Mutibwa, Phares Mukasa. 1992. *Uganda since Independence: A Story of Unfulfilled Hopes*. Hong Kong: Africa World Press Inc.

Norwegian Refugee Council. 2019. 'Refugee Status Determination: A Study of the Process in Uganda'. Kampala. https://www.nrc.no/resources/reports/refugee-status-determination/.

O'Callaghan, Sorcha, Nicholas Crawford, Kerrie Holloway, Christy Lowe, and Freddie Carver. 2019. 'The Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework: Progress in Four East African Countries'. Overseas Development Institute. https://www.odi.org/publications/11454-comprehensive-refugee-response-framework-progress-four-east-african-countries.

Odongo, Jeje. 2021. 'Uganda's Doors Will Remain Open to Refugees'. *Al Jazeera*, 23 September 2021. https://www.aljazeera.com/opinions/2021/9/23/ugandas-door-will-remain-open-to-refugees.

Okidi, John A., and Madina Guloba. 2008. 'Decentralization and Development: Emerging Issues from Uganda's Experience'. In *Agriculture and Development*. Berlin Workshop Series 2008. The World Bank.

Okiror, Samuel. 2019. 'Key Donors Freeze Uganda Refugee Aid after UN Mismanagement Scandal'. *The New Humanitarian*, 28 February 2019. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2019/02/28/donors-freeze-uganda-refugee-aid-after-un-mismanagement-scandal.

———. 2020a. 'Officials Charged with Corruption over Award of Uganda Refugee Camp Deals'. *The Guardian*, 17 January 2020, sec. Global development. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jan/17/officials-charged-with-corruption-over-award-of-uganda-refugee-camp-deals.

———. 2020b. 'Food Rations to 1.4 Million Refugees Cut in Uganda Due to Funding Shortfall'. *The Guardian*, 14 April 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/apr/14/food-rations-to-14-million-refugees-cut-in-uganda-due-to-funding-shortfall-coronavirus-world-food-programme.

———. 2020c. 'Uganda Reopens Border to Thousands of People Fleeing Violence in DRC'. *The Guardian*, 24 June 2020, sec. Global development. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/jun/24/uganda-reopens-border-to-thousands-of-people-fleeing-violence-in-drc.

———. 2020d. 'Uganda Suspends Three-Quarters of Refugee Aid Agencies from Operating'. *The Guardian*, 2 September 2020. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/sep/02/uganda-suspends-three-quarters-of-refugee-aid-agencies-from-operating.

———. 2020e. 'Uganda Calls in Troops as Violence Flares between Refugees and Locals'. *The Guardian*, 15 September 2020, sec. Global development. https://www.theguardian.com/global-development/2020/sep/15/uganda-calls-in-troops-as-violence-flares-between-refugees-and-locals.

Okot, Betty J., Aloysius Tenywa Malagala, Eric Awich Ochen, Denis Muhangi, and Gloria K. Serwagi. 2021. 'COVID-19 Prevention Measures: Impact Stories and Lived Experiences of Uganda-Based Refugees'. *Stichproben. Wiener Zeitschrift Für Kritische Afrikastudien* 41: 43–62.

Olukya, Godfrey. 2020. 'Congo: 15 Rebels Who Attacked Ugandan Soldiers Arrested'. *Anadolu Agency*, 12 March 2020. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/congo-15-rebels-who-attacked-ugandan-soldiers-arrested/1762828.

Omata, Naohiko. 2017. 'Unwelcome Participation, Undesirable Agency? Paradoxes of De-Politicisation in a Refugee Camp'. *Refugee Survey Quarterly* 36 (3): 108–31.

———. 2018. 'Refugees' Engagement with Host Economies in Uganda | Forced Migration Review'. *Forced Migration Review*, no. 58 (June). https://www.fmreview.org/economies/omata.

OPM and UNHCR. 2022. 'Uganda - Refugee Statistics December 2021'. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/documents/details/90649.

Parker, Ben. 2018. 'Audit Finds UN Refugee Agency Critically Mismanaged Donor Funds in Uganda'. *The New Humanitarian*, 28 November 2018. https://www.thenewhumanitarian.org/news/2018/11/28/audit-finds-un-refugee-agency-critically-mismanaged-donor-funds-uganda.

Pirouet, Louise. 1988. 'Refugees in and from Uganda in the Post Colonial Period'. *Hansen, Hart. R. and Twaddle, Mark (Eds.). Uganda Now: Between Decay and Development. London, James Currey*, 239–53.

REF. 2019. 'Comprehensive Refugee Responses in the Horn of Africa: Regional Leadership on Education, Livelihoods and Durable Solutions. Summary of Findings',.

Reuters. 2021. 'Fighting in East Congo Pushes 11,000 Refugees into Uganda', 9 November 2021. https://www.reuters.com/world/africa/fighting-east-congo-pushes-11000-refugees-into-uganda-2021-11-09/.

Rolandsen, Østein, Tove Heggli Sagmo, and Fanny Nicolaisen. 2015a. 'South Sudan – Uganda Relations: The Cost of Peace'. *ACCORD* (blog). 2015. https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/south-sudan-uganda-relations/.

———. 2015b. 'South Sudan – Uganda Relations: The Cost of Peace'. *ACCORD* (blog). 2015. https://www.accord.org.za/conflict-trends/south-sudan-uganda-relations/.

Rukundo, Yvan. 2020. '120 Burundian Refugees Repatriated from Uganda'. Anadolu Agency. 15 December 2020. https://www.aa.com.tr/en/africa/120-burundian-refugees-repatriated-from-uganda/2077138.

Ryan, Alison. 2018. 'REFUGEE STATUS DETERMINATION: A Study of the Process in Uganda'. Kampala: Norwegian Refugee Council.
Schlindwein, Simone. 2017. 'Ugandischer Politiker über Flüchtlinge: „Unsere Grenzen bleiben offen!"'. *Die Tageszeitung: taz*, 21 June 2017, sec. Politik. https://taz.de/!5424032/.
———. 2018. 'Korruption und Flüchtlingshilfe: So schummelt das Musterland Uganda'. *Die Tageszeitung: taz*, 4 December 2018, sec. Politik. https://taz.de/!5553354/.
———. 2021. 'From the Once Model Country to a Transit Hub'. Migration Control. https://migration-control.info/en/.
Sebba, Ronald Kalyango. 2021. 'Rapid Assessment of Service Access and Resource Distribution in Uganda Refugee Settlements and Host Communities'. Unpublished Report. Kampala, Uganda: World Bank Country Office.
Sebba, Ronald Kalyango, and Huff Kirk. 2002. 'Refugees in the City: Status Determination, Resettlement and the Changing Nature of Forced Migration in Uganda'. Working Paper No.6. Refugee Law Project. Kampala, Uganda.
Segadlo, Nadine, Ulrike Krause, Franzisca Zanker, and Hannah Edler. 2021. 'Effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Refugees and Their Protection in Kenya, Uganda, Ghana, Nigeria, South Africa and Zimbabwe.' 18. ABI Working Paper. Freiburg: Arnold Bergstraesser Institute. https://www.arnold-bergstraesser.de/effects-of-the-covid-19-pandemic-on-refugees-and-their-protection-in-kenya-uganda-ghana-nigeria.
Soi, Isabella. 2020. 'Uganda-Rwanda Relations: Crossing the Border into Politics'.
Tegenbos, Jolien. 2019. 'Disappearing across the Border: Circular Return and the Social Dynamics of Secrecy and Concealment between Uganda's Nakivale Refugee Settlement and Eastern DRC'. Issue 3. Congo Research Briefs.
The Independent. 2020. '1.8 Million Fall Back into Poverty as Uganda Launches 2021-22 Budget Strategy'. *The Independent Uganda:*, 17 September 2020. https://www.independent.co.ug/1-8-million-fall-back-into-poverty-as-uganda-launches-2021-22-budget-strategy/.
Titeca, Kristof. 2022. 'Who Depends on Whom? Uganda's Refugee "Success Story", Corruption and the International Community'. *Third World Quarterly* 43 (1): 55–73.
Tumushabe, Godber, Godwin Toko, Roline Tusiime, Henry Kiragga, and Gloria Nabaye. 2021. 'Uganda Elections Atlas: A Citizen's Guide to Elections Data'. Kampala: Great Lakes Institution for Strategic Studies.
UNHCR. 2020a. 'Uganda as of July 2020'. FUNDING UPDATE. Geneva: UNHCR Division of External Relations. https://reporting.unhcr.org/sites/default/files/Uganda%20Funding%20Update%2009%20July%202020.pdf.
———. 2020b. 'UNHCR - Uganda Provides a Safe Haven to DRC Refugees amid COVID-19 Lockdown'. Safe Have. 1 July 2020. https://www.unhcr.org/news/press/2020/7/5efca8d64/uganda-provides-safe-haven-drc-refugees-amid-covid-19-lockdown.html.
———. 2021. 'Uganda as of 31 December 2021'. FUNDING UPDATE. Geneva: UNHCR Division of External Relations. https://reporting.unhcr.org/uganda-funding-2021.
———. 2022. 'Refugee Statistics'. UNHCR. 2022. https://www.unhcr.org/refugee-statistics/.
UNHCR Data Portal. 2022. 'Uganda Comprehensive Refugee Response Portal'. 31 January 2022. https://data2.unhcr.org/en/country/uga.
US Mission in Uganda. 2021. 'STATEMENT ON ARRIVAL OF EVACUEES FROM AFGHANISTAN | August 25, 2021'. U.S. Embassy in Uganda. 25 August 2021. https://ug.usembassy.gov/statement-on-arrival-of-evacuees-from-afghanistan-august-25-2021/.
Van Laer, Thijs. 2019a. 'Understanding Conflict Dynamics around Refugee Settlements in Northern Uganda'. International Refugee Rights Initiative. http://refugee-rights.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/08/Understanding-conflict-dynamics-around-refugee-settlements-in-northern-Uganda-August-2019.pdf.
———. 2019b. 'Understanding Conflict Dynamics around Refugee Settlements in Northern Uganda'. Kampala: International Refugee Rights Initiative. http://refugee-rights.org/new-report-understanding-conflict-dynamics-around-refugee-settlements-in-northern-uganda/.
Verdirame, Guglielmo, and Barbara E. Harrell-Bond. 2005. *Rights in Exile: Janus-Faced Humanitarianism*. Berghahn Books.

Walubiri, Moses. 2019. 'MPs Query Uganda's Open Door Refugee Policy'. New Vision. 7 August 2019. https://www.newvision.co.ug/articledetails/1505068.
Whitaker, Beth Elise. 2019. 'Migration and the Politics of Exclusion in Africa'. Text. ISPI. 17 July 2019. https://www.ispionline.it/en/publication/migration-and-politics-exclusion-africa-23513.
Wiegratz, Jörg, Giuliano Martiniello, and Elisa Greco. 2019. 'The "New" Neoliberal Uganda'. Africa Is a Country. 29 January 2019. https://africasacountry.com/2019/01/what-is-the-new-uganda.
World Bank. 2016. 'Uganda's Progressive Approach to Refugee Management'. Text/HTML. https://www.worldbank.org/en/topic/fragilityconflictviolence/brief/ugandas-progressive-approach-refugee-management.
Zakaryan, Tigranna. 2018. 'My Children Should Stand Strong to Make Sure We Get Our Land Back": Host Community Perspectives of Uganda's Lamwo Refugee Settlement'. Rights in Exile Policy Paper. Kampala: International Refugee Rights Initiative.

7. APPENDIX

Table 4: ***Overview of interviews with location and date***

Profession	Date	Location
Ugandan policy consultant	01.09.2020	Skype
Journalist	04.09.2020	Skype
International organisation	04.09.2020	Skype
Local Government official	05.09.2020	Yumbe
OPM official	05.09.2020	Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement
International organisation	07.09.2020	Skype
Refugee representative	07.09.2020	Ofua 3
Host population representation	07.09.2020	Ofua 3
Local government official	07.09.2020	Madi Okollo District
Local government official	08.09.2020	Arua
National development agency	08.09.2020	Arua
Ugandan journalist	09.09.2020	WhatsApp Call
International policy consultant	09.09.2020	Skype
Local government official	11.09.2020	Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement
International researcher	14.09.2020	Skype
National non-governmental organisation	22.09.2020	Phone Conversation
International development agency	28.09.2020	MS Teams
National non-governmental organisation	28.09.2020	WhatsApp Call
Ugandan researcher	28.09.2020	WhatsApp Call
International organisation	01.10.2020	Skype
Regional organisation	07.10.2020	Skype
National non-governmental organisation	12.10.2020	WhatsApp Call
OPM official	12.10.2020	Arua
OPM official	15.10.2020	Rhino Camp
OPM official	21.10.2020	Arua
OPM official	23.10.2020	Rhino Camp
National non-governmental organisation	05.11.2020	Zoom
Government official (education)	15.03.2021	Kampala
OPM official	16.03.2021	Adjumani
OPM official	19.03.2021	Kampala
Local Government official (CRFF)	20.03.2021	Kampala

National non-governmental organisation	21.03.2021	Kampala
Local Government official	05.09.2021	Bidi Bidi Refugee Settlement

Table 5: ***Overview of the focus groups***

Code	Group (number of participants)	Location	Date
FGDU1	Refugee women (8)	Ofua III Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement	05.09.2020
FGDU2	Refugee and host community youth (9)	Ofua III Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement	05.09.2020
FGDU3	National market women (8)	Ofua III Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement	05.09.2020
FGDU4	Refugee and host community business owners & Market Vendors (8)	Ofua III Rhino Camp Refugee Settlement	05.09.2020
FGDU5	Refugee and host community business owners & Market Vendors (9)	Bidibi Refugee camp	11.09.2020
FGDU6	Refugee women (9)	Bidibi Refugee camp	11.09.2020
FGDU7	Refugee business owners & market vendors (8)	Kampala urban refugees / Kawempe Tuula	14.10.2020
FGDU8	Male urban refugees (8)	Kampala urban refugees / Kawempe Tuula	14.10.2020
FGDU9	Refugee business owners & market vendors (8)	Kampala urban refugees / Kawempe Tuula	14.10.2020

Table 6: ***Overview of development-orientated refugee policies and inclusion of refugees in development policies***

Policy	Details
Self-Reliance Strategy (SRS) 1999 (drafting process began in 1998)	• Promoted by UNHCR since early 1980s • Transform refugees from "burdens" into "agents of development" through agricultural production • Already envisioned integration refugee services into exiting public services, allocating land, free access to health and education • Not achievable as refugees confined in camps
Development Assistance to Refugee-Hosting Areas Programme (DAR) (2003)	• Builds on SRS but more capacity for local stakeholders • Refugees are provided with a plot of land, but remote location of settlement persists • Complemented the new Refugee Act
National Development Plan II (NDP II) 2015/16 – 2019/2020	• Refugees included for the first time in planning and structures • Refugee-hosting districts made a priority for development as recognised under vulnerability criteria • Refugees make up 3% of the population and essential contributors to making Uganda a middle-income country by 2040
ReHoPE Strategic Framework 2015	• Drafted by the UN and World Bank to support the STA • Includes "trademark" 30/70 principle, 50/50 when resources allow

	• Supports the integration of refugees in NDP II • Together with STA; NDP II confirms paradigm shift from humanitarian to development response to refugee protection (as supported by the SDGs) • Improve basic service delivery and expand economic opportunities and sustainable livelihoods for the refugees and host populations
Settlement Transformative Agenda launched in 2015 (STA)	• Promote social and economic development for both refugees and hosts • Implements both NDP II and ReHoPE • Supported by World Bank Loan • Non-encampment approach to refugee protection
Comprehensive Refugee Response Framework (CRRF) in 2017	• Replaces SRS Model but incorporates ReHope and STA • Districts play a role • Confirms the 70/30 ration principle • Long-term aim: inclusion of refugees into development plans • Holistic inclusion of refugees in all ministries and Ministry of Local Government is co-chair to the secretariat in the CRRF Steering Group • Refugee Welfare Advisory Meetings with refugee representatives • Opened up more space for development funding
NDP III 2020/21-2024/25	• Refugees included in national planning and statistics • Refugee-hosting districts continue to be classified as vulnerable, prioritizing them for development intervention • A section is dedicated to 'regional conflicts and refugee challenges' • Recognises environmental impact of large numbers of refugees • Asks to integrate migration and refugee planning and all other cross cutting issues in national, sectoral and local government plan

Sources: Own compilation from interviews (Hovil 2018; Krause 2016; Idris 2020)

*Table 7: **Selected sector-specific plans under the CRRF in the "whole of government approach"***

Plan	Details
Education Response Plan for Refugees and Host Communities (2018-2021)	• Investment of $389 million USD (funded by GoU and up to 26 development partners) • First of its kind worldwide • Sets out how to provide education to refugee and host children • Emphasises reduction of infrastructure (in case refugees leave) and rather double shift school system
Jobs and Livelihoods Integrated Refugee Plan (2020/2021 - 2024/2025)	• Launched in April 2021 • Investment of $169 million USD (funded by various development partners) • Improve sustainable jobs for both hosts and refugees and relationships between the two
Water and Environment Sector Response Plan for refugees and host communities in Uganda November 2019 (2019-2022)	• Launched November 2019 • Investment of $915 million USD required (funded by GoU and various development partners)

	• The overall objective is to respond to the urgent need for an integrated coordination and strategic planning in order to serve the refugees and host communities in Uganda better.

Sources: Ministry of Education and Sports; Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and Ministry of Water and Environment

Table 8: ***District and Constituency Increases in Refugee Hosting Regions***

Refugee Hosting Regions (in 6 out of 15 regions) in 2021	Refugee hosting districts in 2021 within that region (13 out of 146 districts) and their creation date	Total number of districts in the region in 2021 compared to 1996 and % increase	Number of constituencies in the region in 2021 compared to 1996 and % increase
West Nile	1. Adjumani (1997) 2. Koboko (2005) 3. Madi-Okollo (2019) 4. Obongi (2019) 5. Terego (2020) 6. Yumbe (2000)	13 compared to 3 – 333% increase	26 compared to 14 – 86% increase
Acholi	7. Lamwo (2009)	9 compared to 2 – 350% increase	19 compared to –111% increase
Bunyoro	8. Kikuube (2018) 9. Kiryandongo (2010)	9 compared to 3 – 200% increase	19 compared to 9 –111% increase
Toro	10. Kamwenge (2000) 11. Kyegegwa (2009)	7 compared to 1 – 600% increase	13 compared to 8 – 63% increase
Buganda	12. Kampala (Founded in the 19th Century and became a city in 1962 with independence)	27 compared to 9 - 200% increase	78 compared to 59 – 32% increase
Ankole	13. Isingiro (2005)	13 compared to 3 333% increase	35 compared to 20 –75% increase

Source: Own compilation using (Tumushabe et al. 2021)

Table 9: ***Overview of selected conflict incidents between refugees and hosts***

Year	Location	Incident
2021	Terego	January: Thirteen people were arrested by the Ugandan police for the alleged killing of a South Sudanese refugee in Terego District. According to a police report, the suspects killed the refugee for allegedly poisoning a Ugandan national. The incident happened in Omugo camp. (Source: Eye Radio 2021).
2020	Obongi District	July: At least 20 suspects were arrested after clashes between South Sudanese refugees in Obongi District of northern Uganda. An 'ethnic fight' instigated by alleged stolen maize from a nearby farm left many injured and hundreds of houses burned down in Palorinya refugee settlement. (Source: Eye radio 2020).
	Rhino Settlement	September: 10 refugees were killed in an attack by local residents amid tensions over increasingly scarce resources. At least 19 others were injured in the dispute, including a member of the host community in the Rhino refugee settlement. Fifteen refugee

		houses were destroyed and another 26 were looted and vandalized. Ten refugees remain missing (Source: UNHCR 2020).
2019	Adjumani District	December: A South Sudanese refugee was killed and several others seriously wounded during clashes with locals. The violence was sparked by the death of a local man who was suspected of being killed by a refugee. (Source: news24 2019).
	Palabek Settlement	Reported in 2019: Both Ugandans and refugees were beaten up when returning home from a bar. The groups accused each other of stealing, fighting, sexual misconduct and alcohol abuse (Source: IRRI 2019, 24).
2018	Ayilo refugee settlement,	July: A Ugandan girl was found dead allegedly sexually abused and strangled. After this incident Ugandans attacked refugees, one was killed, three injured and one missing. Several houses of both refugees and Ugandans were burned: "One refugee was killed, three were injured and one reported missing, while several houses – of both refugees and Ugandans – were burned." (Source: IRRI 2019, 24).
	Imvepi refugee settlement	Fighting in a disco hall resulted in several days of police intervention and left several people injured (Source: IRRI 2019, 24).
2017	Maaji ; Nyumanzi and Boroli Settlements	At a primary school around Maaji III refugee settlement, a fight between a refugee and Ugandan boy escalated into tensions between the two groups. Angry Ugandans attacked refugees, damaged the school building and burned property requiring the intervention of local leaders, police, UNHCR and OPM. Similalr incidents at schools in Nyumanzi and Boroli refugee settlements, led to refugees allegedly mobilizing themselves and attacking the host community members (Source: IRRI 2019, 24).

Table 10: ***Additional major loans and projects from the World Bank and EUTF***

Funders	Programme	Details
World Bank	IDA 18 Regional Sub-Window for refugees and host (2017-2020)	• $50 million for the **Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development Programme** to improve physical planning, land tenure security, and small-scale infrastructure • $58 million for the **Integrated Water Management and Development Project** to improve access to water and sanitation services for several rural and urban refugee hosting communities across Uganda • $150 million for the **Development Response to Displacement Impacts Project (DRDIP)** in the Horn of Africa to boost ongoing efforts to improve access to basic social services and expand economic opportunities. Aims to support the implementation of the STA
	IDA 19 Window for Host Communities and Refugees (WHR) (2020)	• supports countries that host significant refugee populations to create medium- to long-term development opportunities for both the refugees and their host communities • will finance up to $2.2 billion in operations, including a dedicated sub-window of $1 billion for operations that respond to the impacts of COVID-19 • Uganda eligible but exact programmes not yet clear

EU Trust Fund	Regional Development and Protection Programme (RDPP): Support Programme to the Refugee Settlements and Host Communities in Northern Uganda (SPRS-NU) (2016-2021)	• 23 million EUR • reduce the risk of violent conflict between host communities and refugees in districts in Northern Uganda • improve livelihoods, food and nutrition security, to mitigate risks of further escalation of conflicts and to increase access to education
	Strengthening Social Cohesion and Stability in Slum Populations (2016-2020)	• 4.3 million EUR • provide employment opportunities and basic local services, as well as preventing conflict in marginalised communities in urban slums
	Response to increased demand on Government Service and creation of economic opportunities in Uganda (RISE) (2018-2022)	• 20 million EUR • strengthen local authorities' coordination and development & contingency planning, as well as local authority-led service delivery to refugees and the host populations • increase economic self-reliance of refugees and host populations
	Security, Protection, and Economic Empowerment (SUPREME) (2018 - ?)	• 18 million EUR • peaceful and safe co-existence within the refugee-hosting districts and access to employment and increase of economic opportunities for refugees and host communities
	Response to Increased Environmental Degradation and Promotion of Alternative Energy Sources in Refugee Hosting Districts (2019 - ?)	• 9.9 million EUR • resource protection, and host and refugee adoption of environmental-friendly practices • improved access to alternative sources of energy; increased capacity to construct and maintain these; decreased dependence on energy from unsustainable and unregulated sources for households; causes of conflicts between refugees and host communities are addressed • energy, environment and climate action programming, coordination and capacity is strengthened at local, district government and sub-county levels

Sources: Various sources including interviews. This is not a comprehensive overview and does not include the funds from individual donor countries or donor organisations.