

UGANDA

Uganda is a state party to the United Nations Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees and its Protocol, as well as to the International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights and its First Optional Protocol. Uganda hosted approximately 175,000 refugees at the end of 2001.¹ According to the UNHCR, Uganda follows a “liberal refugee policy.”² Many refugees live in settlements rather than camps and receive farmland to grow their own food. In addition, the government grants automatic refugee status to refugees from Sudan and Congo-Kinshasa and authorities typically conduct interviews with asylum seekers from other countries to determine whether they merit refugee status.

Generally, asylum seekers are not detained. However, they may be arrested as illegal immigrants if they do not present themselves to the authorities within a reasonable time (2 to 4 weeks) after entering the country or if they are found without any identification, in which case they may be charged under the Immigration laws of Uganda for illegal entry. As long as an asylum seeker has valid documentation from the Directorate of refugees stating that he or she is an asylum seeker in Uganda whose case is awaiting the decision of the Refugee Eligibility Committee, he or she may not be detained.³

Is there independent review of the detention decision? No.

Is there periodic review of detention? No.⁴

Are there time limits on the period of detention? No.⁵

Is there access to government-funded free legal aid? No.⁶

Vulnerable groups: Special arrangements for vulnerable groups are made by the UNHCR.⁷

¹ U.S. COMMITTEE FOR REFUGEES, WORLD REFUGEE SURVEY 2002 at 62, *available at* <http://www.refugees.org/WRS2002>. (Immigration and Refugee Services of America 2002) [hereinafter USCR WORLD REFUGEE SURVEY 2002].

²*Id.* at 64.

³ E-mail from Ronald Kalyango, Refugee Law Project, to Anna Mecangni, Lawyer’s Committee for Human Rights (Aug. 1, 2002) (on file with Debevoise & Plimpton).

⁴E-mail from Ronald Kalyango, Refugee Law Project, to Anna Mecangni, Lawyer’s Committee for Human Rights (Aug. 30, 2002) (on file with Debevoise & Plimpton)..

⁵*Id.*

⁶ *Id.*

⁷*Id.*

