



Republic of Namibia



Namibia Refugee Verification Exercise

23rd March to 9th April 2021

Background

The Government of the Republic of Namibia, in coordination with UNHCR and partner - Society for Family Health (SFH), conducted a verification exercise in Osire Settlement during the period from 25th March to 6th April and, in Windhoek for urban-based refugees from 7th April to 9th April 2021. It had been close to three years since the last verification exercise had been conducted in Namibia, and it was time to ascertain and update the data once again, equally considering the developments that had taken place since it was last done.

A written notification announcement and awareness raising exercise on the verification exercise was published two and a half weeks before the commencement of the exercise – at the Settlement, as well as through social media channel platforms shared with refugees. Due consideration for refugees with special needs and circumstances were accommodated within the planning and roll-out of the exercise. 23-24 March 2021 was dedicated to capacity building training for all the participating staff from all offices concerned. The training focused on the UNHCR Mandate and registration basics, the consideration of different legal status, the theoretical and practical use of Rapp application and, BIMs in Registration and Verification.

Personnel who participated in the exercise:

Government Officials from the Ministry of Home Affairs, Immigration, Safety and Security (MHAISS): from Windhoek, Osire Settlement and Katima Mulilo Reception Centre.

UNHCR SAMCO: Registration and Identity Management Officer, Senior Registration Assistant and Protection Associate, in close coordination and consultation with the Senior Legal Officer in Namibia.

SFH: two Protection Staff from Osire Settlement

Key refugee focal points both at Osire Settlement and Windhoek supported the organisation of the exercise as Community leaders, Interpreters, runners, and line management attendants.

Objectives of the verification exercise:

- Use the results of the verification exercise to inform planning, programming, protection interventions, assistance provision and all engagements related to asylum seekers and refugees in Namibia for the government, UNHCR and partners.
- Update biodata information including updates on addresses in country of origin and country of asylum, contact information, education, occupation, PWSN cases and Protection needs & legal status developments, to reflect actual current situation.
- On-job training as the days progressed the participants were aware of the fields that shall be updated regularly during continuous registration process (e.g. what fields shall be updated when a new born baby is added such as the address in COA, SPNs if any)

- Resolve outstanding issues related to registration which are:
 - Persons of concern registered as “not of concern” but active. Either the legal status or the process status shall be corrected
 - Correcting the country of origin addresses and legal status.
 - Conducting a clean-up for individuals who went through litigation. The profile of cases for litigations were:
 - ❖ Individual/s not found on proGres but have active biometrics record
 - ❖ Biometrics record not found
 - ❖ Biometrics record match found but active in another operation
 - ❖ Inconsistencies related to family composition.
 - ❖ Multiple/duplicate registrations
 - ❖ On hold/inactivated individuals who were present during the verification
- A short intention to return survey was introduced during the exercise to enable the quantifying of this data, against proGres number to tie it in with other updated verified data. The survey was designed for durable solution reasons.
- Print new updated bio form (proof of registration) for all verified individuals
- Inactivate individuals who did not show up during the verification exercise.
- Training the government staff on how to produce reports and statistics from ProGres.

Activities and observations:

- **5,331** individuals showed up during the verification exercise as follows:
 - 119 individuals were verified in Windhoek
 - 5,212 individuals were verified in Osire Settlement

Osire Settlement:	5212
25-Mar	235
26-Mar	312
27-Mar	399
28-Mar	293
29-Mar	440
30-Mar	401
31-Mar	449
01-Apr	445
02-Apr	539
03-Apr	551
04-Apr	527
05-Apr	470
06-Apr	151

Windhoek	119
07-Apr	78
08-Apr	21
09-Apr	20

- 568 individuals were inactivated because they did not show up during the verification exercise. The following criteria was used for inactivation:
 - Those who did not show up during the verification exercise.
 - All new registered individuals in 2021 were not included in the batch inactivation.
- 5 individuals were not found on proGres after they stated that they were registered under the old system, those individuals were referred to the MHAISS Admin Officer at the Refugees Directorate.

- 76 individuals were immediately closed by the MHAISS Admin Officer as they were holders of “final rejection of RSD claims” and “not of concern”. The active status of their cases was erroneous.
- The MHAISS Admin Officer at the Refugees Directorate updated the legal status of all individuals who had acceptance letters to be refugees, and whose legal status were pending ProGres updates.
- Legal status of 40 Namibians who were dependants to PoCs were updated as “other of concern”
- Legal status of 19 Angolans who were dependents to POCs were updated as “other of concern”
- There are currently 4 individuals from other nationalities registered as other of concern and the MHAISS Admin Officer at the Refugees Directorate is consulting the physical files to confirm their actual legal status.
- Add-ons were registered based on legal documentation proving the relationship with the focal point.
- 9 individuals claimed they were Stateless persons as they said they are from mixed Angolan and DRC origins, but the two countries did not recognise them as their nationals. They are still asylum seekers and their former habitual place of residence is the DRC; as they all came from DRC, before they were repatriated to Angola, and then had to return to Namibia to seek asylum owing to the rejection of recognition in Angola. The Namibian Commissioner of Refugees confirmed that there is an ongoing discussion with both the Angolan and DRC authorities in Namibia to resolve these cases.
- 28 protection interviews were assessed at the Protection Desk, and related follow-up actions shall be undertaken by UNHCR in close collaboration with MHAISS.
- Specific needs were identified and captured on ProGres. 50 specific needs were identified during the exercise.
- 51 cases could benefit from psychosocial support that UNHCR will follow up on with the implementing partner.
- 2 cases were referred on spot for social assessment by SFH.

➤ **Breakdown of years of arrival table (all nationalities)**

Arrival date	Individuals
Before 2010	692
2010	78
2011	103
2012	85
2013	203
2014	215
2015	344
2016	502
2017	647
2018	751
2019	1230
2020	563
2021	238
Grand Total	5651

Intention to Return Survey:

- 22 individuals indicated interest to return to COO as below.

Country of origin	Asylum Seeker	Refugee	Not of concern
Burkina Faso	1		
Burundi	1	1	
Cameroon	2	2	
Central African Republic	1		
DRC	8	2	2
Rwanda	1		
Zimbabwe	1		
Grand Total	15	5	2

- 37 focal points indicated that they required more information and assistance before they could decide on VOLREP.
- 1,697 focal points said they are not willing to return to COO. 316 indicated an interest in being considered for RST; and 1090 indicated an interest in consideration for local integration in Namibia. In general, it has observed that most of POCs said that they feel that Namibia is a safe country, but they want to enjoy more inclusion in social/economic affairs.
- Detailed analysis of the outcome of the survey in the attached presentation, and for which immediate and phased related follow-up actions will be conducted by the UNHCR Namibia team.

Active Population of asylum seekers and refugees in Namibia as of 15th April 2021: 5,651

From the total active population:

- Total Asylum Seekers: 2,063
- Total Refugees: 3,515
- Others of concern: 63

Breakdown by legal status:

Country of origin	Asylum Seeker	Refugee	Other of concern	Grand Total
Angola			19	19
Bangladesh	1			1
Burkina Faso	1			1
Burundi	130	295		425
Cameroon	15	24		39
Central African Republic	8	5		13
Chad	1			1
Congo, Republic of the	11	3	6	20
DRC	1819	3001	2	4822
Eritrea	2	1		3
Ethiopia	1			1
Kenya	2	3		5
Namibia			40	40
Nigeria	3			3
Rwanda	21	121		142
Somalia	4	3		7
South Sudan	1			1
Sudan		7		7
Uganda	8	3		11
United Republic of Tanzania	3			3
Zambia		2	2	4
Zimbabwe	35	48		83
Grand Total	2066	3516	69	5,651

➤ New registration done from 1st January till 15 April 2021:

2021	391
Jan	48
Feb	11
Mar	113
15 Apr	219

➤ **Addresses of POCs in Namibia:**

Address in Country of Asylum	No.
Khomas (Mainly Windhoek)	244
Osire settlement	5,197
Other locations	210

Disaggregation by age and Sex:

1- Males

Sex	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male	Male
Age	0-4	5_11	12_17	18-24	25-49	50-59	60	Total
Angola	1	4	0	3	0	1	0	9
Bangladesh	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Burkina Faso	0	0	0	1	0	0	0	1
Burundi	28	31	25	29	126	9	0	248
Cameroon	0	2	4	0	13	3	0	22
Central African Republic	3	2	0	0	4	0	0	9
Chad	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Congo, Republic of the	3	2	1	3	4	1	0	14
DRC	383	483	312	389	895	92	26	2580
Eritrea	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Kenya	0	0	0	0	3	0	1	4
Namibia	3	5	2	1	0	0	0	11
Nigeria	0	0	0	0	3	0	0	3
Rwanda	4	7	6	8	38	14	5	82
Somalia	0	0	0	1	6	0	0	7
Sudan	2	0	0	0	2	0	0	4
Uganda	1	1	0	0	7	0	0	9
Zambia	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
Zimbabwe	1	6	2	5	31	2	1	48
Total	429	543	352	440	1139	122	33	3058

2- Females

Sex	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female	Female
Age	0_4	5_11	12_17	18-24	25-49	50-59	60	Total
Angola	0	1	0	0	7	2	0	10
Burundi	35	34	26	21	55	2	4	177
Cameroon	1	2	2	2	10	0	0	17
Central African Republic	0	1	1	0	2	0	0	4
Congo, Republic of the	2	1	0	0	3	0	0	6
DRC	411	486	302	281	686	50	25	2241
Ethiopia	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Kenya	1	0	0	0	0	0	0	1
Namibia	3	7	6	3	9	1	0	29
Rwanda	7	6	11	6	21	5	4	60
South Sudan	0	0	0	0	1	0	0	1
Sudan	1	1	0	0	1	0	0	3
Uganda	0	0	0	0	2	0	0	2
United Republic of Tanzania	0	0	0	0	1	0	2	3
Zambia	0	0	0	0	1	1	0	2
Zimbabwe	4	5	5	0	17	3	1	35
Grand Total	465	544		313	817	64	36	2239

Summary conclusion:

Following the end of the verification exercise, a debriefing meeting was held between the offices concerned, and a general appreciation for the exercise was shared, and an acknowledgement that the objectives of the exercise had been achieved.

It was agreed that UNHCR would draft the Verification and VOLREP Intention Survey Reports for clearance and approval by MHAISS before general publication.

MHAISS field staff also requested for support for additional equipment to support with their daily continuous registration exercise activities and which included the need for additional laptops, BIMs, and other material, for which an official letter would be shared for Pretoria Registration consideration.

Equally, following a clearance given by the Commissioner of Refugees, all former Angolan refugees that had been repatriated or accorded Permanent Resident Status were formerly closed on the database and not indicated as others of concern, as had been the case before.

Going forward, UNHCR in collaboration with MHAISS will establish a registration/Data Management community of practise, which will comprise of the officials and staff who participated in this exercise and routinely carry out registration activities, to have a once a month virtual meeting of one – two hours, to exchange technical ideas and experiences, in order to ensure that registration standards are maintained, and any outstanding or occurring issues are resolved in time. It was also agreed to have timely weekly and monthly statistics shared on registration, new arrivals and legal status changes – the latter immediately decisions of the Refugee Committee and Appeals Board are received, so that they could be acted on with immediate effect.

This concludes the Verification Exercise needs for Namibia for the next two years, and in the interim, continuous registration will continue to be made, in line with the updated Registration SOPs to soon be cleared by the Commissioner of Refugees, and which will also be aligned to the Namibia RSD SOPs, equally revised in 2021.

END