

**A REVIEW OF THE LEGAL FRAMEWORK OF  
REFUGEES IN UGANDA**

A Thesis

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## **ABSTRACT**

The study reviewed the Legal Framework of Refugees in Uganda, and was guided by three research questions: what legal procedures are adopted in vetting refugees who enter Uganda? What rights are guaranteed by the international instruments do the refugees enjoy while in Uganda? What roles have the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) and Government played in facilitating the realization of refugees' rights in Uganda? Using a triangulation study design, and a Researcher Devised Documentary Review Guide, the researcher studied 10 (out of the 30) years UNHCR's Global Reports. In relation to the research questions, the study revealed as follows. First, to be determined for refugee status in Uganda, one has to qualify to be a refugee by applying to the Refugee Eligibility Committee (REC) for refugee status, properly identify himself or herself to the refugee reception officer, furnish proof to the satisfaction of the REC that he/she is eligible to be granted refugee status, be issued with a temporary pass valid for ninety days, after which the Commissioner has to issue him/her an identification document signifying his/her refugee status. Second, the study also found that while in Uganda, refugees enjoy several rights which include: being issued with an identity card and protection; being permitted to remain in Uganda; being entitled to fair and just treatment without discrimination; receiving at least the same treatment as is generally accorded to aliens under the Constitution and any other law in force in Uganda; being accorded the same rights as the nationals of Uganda; and getting the same protection as is accorded to the nationals of Uganda in respect of the protection of intellectual property rights, including industrial, inventions, patents, designs, trade names, copyrights and other artistic and scientific works. Lastly, the study found that UNHCR and Government of Uganda worked very closely as partners and complimented and supplemented each other in helping refugees realize their rights by providing support services and logistics in areas of legal assistance, education, crop production, health and nutrition, settlements, shelter and other infrastructure, and peaceful return (repatriation) of refugees. In order to adequately handle the issues relating to refugees in Uganda, the researcher recommends that the Government and UNHCR should: increase their inter-face and ensure effective communication on all issues relating to refugees; jointly produce and circulate the Refugees Act 2006 and the Refugees Regulation 2010 to the refugees as well as the general public; and carry out nation-wide sensitization campaigns about the rights and obligations of refugees, and the responsibilities and obligations of the general public in assisting them.

