

# **CHANNEL FOR CORRUPTION AND ITS WAY OF ERADICATION IN REFUGEE REGIME IN UGANDA.**

## **I. INTRODUCTION:**

The network of corruption is widespread in refugee settlements in Uganda. Uganda is the third biggest refugee hosting country in the whole world and this explains why corruption can adversely affect service delivery to persons of concern if it is not checked. The country ranked 144 in the 2021 corruption Index according to Transparency International. The problem of corruption is pronounced in both urban and remote refugee settlements. According to asylum seekers who shared their experiences with us, staff in charge of refugees in the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM) and United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR), a UN agency responsible for refugees and its implementing Partners, it's known that if a person of concern needs quick services, they must first pay some money. Corruption, mismanagement of funds, bribery is found in the way funds are channeled from donors to beneficiaries.

## **II. WHAT KIND OF SERVICES THAT USE TO RECEIVE CORRUPTION AND HOW?**

### **II.1. GOVERNMENT OFFICE IN CHARGE OF REFUGEES**

#### **1.1 Desk of Police in charge to register new asylum seekers:**

Here every nationality has his own interpreter at that desk who negotiate with his or her people in their languages the cost of money (Uganda shilling or USD) to pay in order to be registered as asylum seeker. The cost varies between 200.000 USH to 200 or 300 USD, and this is dependent on the country of origin and the size of peoples.

#### **1.2 Desk of OPM which is in charge of registering refugees and offers the Asylum seeker attestation document.**

At the desk, services are postponed many times and sometimes they are told that the machine is down and does not work well, this happens at every appointment, to avoid being postponed many times, refugees must pay some amount of money. The cost value is between 100.000 USH to 500.000 USH depending on the size and nationality **of the refugees.**

#### **1.3. To receive a full refugee status.**

Some refugees testified that they have paid 300 USD, 500 USD, 1000 USD, 1500 USD, 2000 USD in order to receive a full refugee status, those that did not pay any money and waited for a long time to receive a full status.

#### **1.4. To receive a Convention Travel Document (CTD)**

Normally it costs 125.000 Uganda shillings but many refugees added some amount, when you are a refugee businessman you pay between 1000 USD and 3000 USD especially Eritreans and Ethiopians.

## **II.2. UN AGENCY FOR REFUGEES AND ITS IMPLEMENTING PARTNERS.**

### **2.1. Norwegian Refugee Council “NRC”**

It is in charge of protection and livelihoods, the assessment of persons in need of protection, for durable solutions, refugees at risk and most vulnerable refugees starts from their office before being referred to the department of Protection of UNHCR. At this level poor, refugees are rejected in the way of delaying their interview while those who pay between 2500 USD and 5000 USD thought interpreters who work as go between of staffs of UNHCR and refugees pass immediately to UNHCR protection interview and few months are called by UNHCR resettlement staff for doing interview of resettlement. Then after few months the corrupt refugee receive a submission letter as a resettlement Decision.

#### **NOTE:**

At the level of NRC, the corrupt refugee must pay at his nearest police station an amount of money for a police report full of cooked up stories of insecurity which must be reported at NRC. Or pay a big amount to lawyers who are in touch with police officers and UNHCR protection Officers.

The more a refugee pays, his or her submission letter and departure is processed faster, because that money is shared with NRC staff, UNHCR protection staff, UNHCR resettlement staff and IOM staff.

### **2.2. CAFOMI**

It is the Implementing partners of UNHCR in charge of the protection for Child and sexual gender based violence (SGBV) at this level the corrupt refugee is advised by staff of CAFOMI to bring a cooked **Medical report and police report** which confirm the real case of rape, or the use to lie that the lady victim was raped and impregnated by Ugandan while that pregnancy was made by his husband how is not at her family attestation. When that lady reach in third country start the process of reunification with her husband.

For people how live with HIV/AID they use to say that they were infected during rape.

### **2.3. AFRICAN HUMANITARIAN ACTION “AHA”**

AHA is an Implementing partner of UNHCR in charge of the protection for Health issues for refugees.

The corrupt refugee must pay money through staff of AHA in order to be reviewed by a MEDICAL REFERRAL COMMITTEE doctor in order to be selected among refugees who will be relocated abroad for medical treatment. Poor refugees are blocked at that level and die in the host country.

#### **2.4. ill treatment of cases for Refugees from HIAS in UNHCR Uganda**

HIAS closed its office in Kampala in 2018. In December 2018, the president and CEO of HIAS Mr. MARK HETFIELD met Refugees in Kampala Uganda at the former office of HIAS in Kansanga and told Refugees that due to the decision of the then president of USA Donald Trump of reducing the number of Refugees to be resettled in USA, HIAS is not able financially to remain with its office in Kampala and for this reason some cases that were already finished are sent to their headquarters in order to be submitted in USRAP through Resettlement Support Center Africa and uncompleted ones will be submitted and handled by UNHCR Uganda. Unfortunately, those ones that were submitted to UNHCR Uganda are still blocked and held there. For those cases that are supposed to be handled by RSC African are held and stuck in their Office especially the cases of Rwandan refugees. Those Refugees do not have any office where they can ask the progress of their cases (neither in UNHCR nor in HIAS) because the majority of them do not have USRAP case numbers. Note: These cases need the intervention of USRAP to force UNHCR- UGANDA and RSC Africa to release them.

Regarding the cases of HIAS in the situation of Refugees before HIAS closes its Offices in Uganda HIAS used to have conflicts of interests with UNHCR Uganda because of corruption noted that some individual staff in UNHCR used to call some Refugees who had cases in the process in HIAS to come to the UNHCR Offices to bear testimony of accusing HIAS staff corruption some refugees were asked to accuse themselves of giving corruption HIAS Staff and some Refugees were asked to accuse each other's corruption while promising them to give them resettlement this is how they ended the work of HIAS in Uganda. HIAS was supposed to be prementing partner of UNHCR Uganda but because of corruption of individual staff who works with UNHCR Uganda who always want to use corruption in resettlement process where Vulnerable refugees will continue to be affected because of this corruption etc.

### **III.MISMANAGEMENT OF FUNDS FROM DONORS DESIGNATED TO HELP REFUGEES.**

Refugees are so unhappy because many funds are not reaching the proper beneficiaries while people who donate that money are full of generosity, especially American people.

The reasons of that mismanagements are due to the following:

- A) Refugee beneficiaries are not involved during the designing of projects meant to benefit them. NGOs collect information from refugee communities without explaining the purpose of data collection, the manner in which the data is collected is as though refugees are being spied on. The data includes information, photos, videos and testimonials, which are used without the express consent of refugees.
- B) There is no- direct link between Donors and Beneficiaries most of the time NGOs ghost refugees, or refugees who don't know about the budget, goal, target, donor for the project.
- C) Most of the time, a lot of money is used in sensitization, seminars, awareness, building capacity building (training) and much money is spent on hiring conference rooms of hotels,

that is why in the end, those projects lack impact on the life for refugees while staff and managers of those projects become rich from the money from taxpayers of USA.

*One example among many cases:*

**1.Name of organization: INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE**

**Name of project:** Provision of essential services to meet the basic needs of at –risk urban refugees in response to COVID -19.

**Cooperative Agreement:** SPRMCO20CA0050

**Amount of funding:** \$1,000,000

**Time Period of Agreement:** July 6,2020 to April 5,2021

**Country:** Uganda

**Site (s) Location (S):** Kampala

**Primary point of Contact /Title:** Kajal Patel, Regional Program Officer

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**Date of final report:** 15 June 2021

**Time Period Covered by Report:** July 6, 2020 - April 5,2021.

**2. Name of organization: MERCY CORPS**

**Name of project:** Enhancing the resilience of urban refugees and vulnerable host communities in Kampala through an integrated protection and livelihoods approach.

**Cooperative Agreement:** SPRMCO20CA0089, MERCY CORPS AWARD # 3

**Amount of funding:** \$400,000

**Time Period of Agreement:** 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 – 31<sup>st</sup> July,2021

**Country:** UGANDA

**Site (s) Location (S):** Kampala

**Primary point of Contact /Title:** Fredrick Mpaata, Program Manager

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Date of Annual Report: 23 September 2021

**Time Period Covered by Report: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2020 – 31<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

**3. Name of organization: MERCY CORPS**

**Name of project:** Enhancing the resilience of urban refugees and vulnerable host communities in Kampala through an integrated protection and livelihoods approach

**Cooperative Agreement: SPRMCO19CA0124**

**Amount of funding: \$400,000**

**Time Period of Agreement: 1<sup>ST</sup> September 2019 – 31<sup>th</sup> July 2020**

**Country: UGANDA**

**Site (s) Location (S): Kampala**

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**Date of Annual Report: 27<sup>th</sup> - August 2020**

**Date of Annual Report: 1<sup>st</sup> August 2019 - 3<sup>st</sup> July 2020**

**NOTE:**

Those two NGOs (INTERNATIONAL RESCUE COMMITTEE, MERCY CORPS) have supported refugees and host communities in two divisions” KAWEMPE and MAKINDE in Kampala Uganda Mercy Corps used \$ 800,000 in 9 months, International Rescue Committee used \$1,000,000 in 8 months from 1<sup>st</sup> September 2019 to 31 July 2021 by \$ 1,800,000. Unfortunately beneficiaries have been informed of the amount of support and the donor of those three projects on 15<sup>th</sup> October 2021 during the launch of the urban refugee resilience program at Fairway Hotel ,Kampala.

Refugees have claimed many cases of fraud, mismanagement and bribes engaged in by those NGOs but they do not reach the concerned office to report the cases.

1. Donors must impose on NGOs the participation of the beneficiary in the designing of the project.
2. creation of link between donor and beneficiaries (eg: a website designed for the project)

3. Donor must oppose the use of Mobile Money to the beneficiary and be replaced by an account bank in order to facilitate the monitoring and evaluation of funds.

4. Those NGOs use to create other Refugee Led Organizations in order to circulate funds between one organization while refugees remain very poor and not supported.

UNHCR, MERCY CORPS, INTERNATIONAL RESUE COMMMITTEE have those types of local NGOs.