



REFUGEE CONSORTIUM of KENYA

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Briefing Note Update on the Security Operation

Operation Usalama Watch entered the fourth week and the Government of Kenya is keen on expanding it beyond Nairobi. In the past week, the security forces have widened their scope to include other urban areas such as South C in Nairobi, Mombasa, Nakuru and Nyeri. RCK has continued to keenly follow reports from various sources on what is happening on the ground. Below is a compilation of the incidents and interventions taken thus far:

- 71 persons of concern were arrested in Nairobi, Nakuru, Kiambu and Thika between 16/04/2014 and 22/04/2014. 23 were released to self-relocate to the camps, 10 (all Somali) were taken to Kasarani stadium for verification and the rest have been charged for illegal presence and residing outside a designated area.¹ RCK is following up on the cases in court and providing other requisite legal services on need basis.
- 111 refugees and asylum seekers were on 17/04/2014 evening transported to Kakuma refugee camp in four public buses hired by the Government. Another 170 refugees and asylum seekers were transported to the camps on 18/04/2014.² All of these caseloads were from Kasarani Stadium where the screening and verification is taking place.
- Kakuma refugee camp has received 308 refugees and asylum seekers from Nairobi, Nakuru and Naivasha. 210 were new arrivals and were referred to the reception centre while the rest (98) were integrated into the refugee population as they had previously resided in Kakuma. As at 23/04/2014, more arrivals of urban refugees are expected before the end of the day.
- As of 22/04/2014, 56 refugees/asylum seekers were received in Dadaab refugee camp where they were temporarily accommodated at the Hagadera transit centre and were scheduled to move to Kambioos camp. 17 Ethiopians (asylum seeker) of this group who were interviewed by RCK said they wanted to be repatriated back to Ethiopia.
- In Nairobi, 6 Ethiopian nationals were arrested in Eastleigh on 21/4/14 and taken to Kasarani for verification. RCK also received information that 2 other Ethiopians had been arrested in Pangani but each paid a bribe of Ksh. 2,000 and were released. A similar report was filed with RCK where 2 Ethiopian refugees arrested on 22/4/14 and another on 23/4/14 were arrested in Eastleigh and each paid a bribe of Ksh. 4,000 and were subsequently released.

¹ Protection Monitoring Updates Report covering the period of 16th – 22nd April, 2014

² <http://mobile.nation.co.ke/news/281-refugees-transferred-to-camps/-/1950946/2285590/-/format/xhtml/-/oomqj5/-/index.html>

- According to media reports, 100 immigrants are to be deported in the next couple of days following their arrest and verification during the Easter holiday³. RCK is yet to confirm the nationalities and when this exercise is to be conducted. As of 25/04/14, media sources reported that police had arrested 27 persons in Nyeri county and these persons would be further screened and vetted to determine if they are illegal immigrants.⁴
- RCK conducted a protection monitoring visit to Nakuru on 11/04/2014. As of 19/04/2014, over 20 persons had been arrested and detained for verification when the security agencies began the operation in Nakuru. At the time of the visit, RCK learnt from the South Sudanese leaders in Nakuru that 9 persons of South Sudanese nationality had been detained but some were released after producing their passports. Latest reports after our follow up indicate that only 3 of the 9 arrested have been arraigned in court. RCK instructed our pro bono advocate based in Nakuru to make a follow up of the cases of persons of concern arraigned in court.

Challenges observed & Recommendations:

- i. Majority of the caseloads being relocated to the camps are at risk of being separated from their family members. RCK Kakuma office is in the process of documenting the new arrivals whose children or part of family members have been left behind in the urban areas. RCK is liaising with the DRA Kakuma camp manager and UNHCR to seek assistance for such persons;
- ii. Refugees awaiting resettlement are at risk of missing their scheduled flights. There is therefore need to enhance advocacy with the Government to consider exempting such categories of persons from being relocated to the camps;
- iii. Persons being relocated to the camps are experiencing immense trauma, especially those that have never been to the camp. There is need for enhanced psychosocial support and pre-travel counseling for the refugees and asylum seekers being relocated. However the space for refugee agencies to be able to offer such assistance at the moment is limited due to Government's continued barring of access to refugee agencies at Kasarani stadium;
- iv. The continued barring of access to UNHCR and refugee agencies at Kasarani stadium is hindering proper verification of documentation held by refugees and asylum seekers and this has the potential of exposing the persons of concern to illegal deportation or refoulement.

Dated: 25th May 2014

For more information about this briefing note or the security operation, kindly contact Lucy W. Kiama, Executive Director, Refugee Consortium of Kenya at refcon@rckkenya.org

³ http://www.standardmedia.co.ke/?articleID=2000109870&story_title=state-to-deport-over-100-arrested-illegal-immigrants

⁴ <http://www.citizennews.co.ke/news/2012/local/item/18812-27-illegal-immigrants-arrested-in-nyeri>