

REFUGEE PROTECTION IN UGANDA DURING COVID-19

“ Refugee-led initiatives took over in the settlements, volunteering to educate the refugees on the pandemic when INGOs left the settlements.

– Person with a refugee background, Uganda

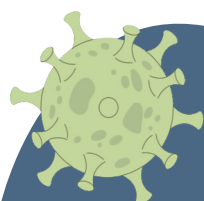
“ Refugees do not have access to personal protection equipment including masks, hand sanitisers and soaps.

– Person with a refugee background, Uganda



Though Uganda has been complimented for its development-oriented approach to refugees, most continue to live in poverty. The majority is located in so-called “settlements” which fulfil the features of camps.

To slow down the spread of the virus, Uganda closed its borders. Yet, it has partially opened it repeatedly to enable asylum seekers from the Democratic Republic of the Congo to enter.



123,572 infected
3,158 people died

(September 2021, WHO)



25,236 asylum seekers
1,421,133 refugees

(2020, UNHCR)

From our research findings:

- Refugees and asylum seekers have been affected by the pandemic and the political responses in both urban and camp settings.
- Though all refugees are affected, LGBTQI communities are especially vulnerable.
- Tensions amongst refugees have increased due to the pandemic namely through the consequential economic, social, political and protection effects.
- Refugees were also accused of bringing the virus to the country, contributing to tensions between Ugandans and refugees.
- Humanitarian measures to protect and assist refugees decreased in light of the lockdown and budget constraints.
- Refugee-led organizations have played particularly important roles for mutual support and protection. This included material assistance (e.g. masks) but also information-sharing.

Read more about our research [here](#).