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**1** family torn apart by war  
**is too many.**



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Khartoum, Sunday 10 January 2016

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## Press Release

### **UNHCR welcomes the start of asylum application procedures to assist urban refugees in Khartoum**

Khartoum, Sudan, 10 Jan 2016 (UNHCR): The Office of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in the Sudan welcomes the start of refugee status determination (RSD) procedures in Khartoum. The procedures will help urban-based asylum-seekers who qualify to acquire an official refugee status and enjoy access to specific rights.

The initiative is thanks to the recently enacted 2014 Asylum (Organization) Act, which underlined the right to seek asylum, including the possibility for recognized refugees to reside in urban areas in the Sudan. The Government's adoption of the 2014 Asylum Act and 2014 Trafficking Act, as well as the ratification of the Palermo Protocol on Human Trafficking, represent landmark developments for the legal framework for refugees and asylum-seekers in the Sudan. The Asylum Act includes a number of provisions that positively promote the rights of refugees and asylum-seekers in the Sudan, including the right to basic education and health services.

Welcoming the start of urban refugee processing, UNHCR's Representative Mohammed Adar said, "This is a very important development at a time when UNHCR and the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees (COR) of the Government of the Sudan are working closely together to strengthen the services provided to refugees in urban areas."

Of the estimated 379,000 refugees and asylum-seekers in the Sudan, between 70,000 and 75,000 are believed to be currently residing in the capital, Khartoum. Access to refugee status determination procedures is an essential foundation of legal protection and is expected to contribute to the prevention of onward movements that place refugees at greater risk from people smugglers and traffickers by improving their situation and providing access to essential services in cities as well as their first countries of asylum.

Adar noted that the setting up of these procedures in Khartoum has been on hold since March 2003, but will now provide what has been the missing link in the joint Government and UNHCR efforts to strengthen the protection environment for refugees in the city. He expressed the hope that this development could be a model for providing access to similar procedures for asylum-seekers in other urban settings in the Sudan, especially in the East.

The Khartoum exercise will be undertaken by COR for asylum-seekers residing in Khartoum at COR's Refugees' Counseling and Services (RCS) building in Al Amarat. UNHCR will work with COR as an observer during the procedures. The center will be open five days a week.

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#### About UNHCR

UNHCR has been present in Sudan since 1968 and currently provides support to the Government of Sudan's efforts to protect and assist 379,000 refugees and asylum-seekers, as well as internally displaced nationals in Khartoum, the East, South and West Kordofan, White Nile and Darfur. UNHCR has 11 offices in the Sudan. For more information about UNHCR and its work visit: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org). You can also follow news on refugees and UNHCR on Twitter @RefugeesMedia. (<https://www.facebook.com/UNHCR>)

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