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Sri Lanka asks refugee receiving countries to expedite processes of finalizing resettlement claims

Sri Lanka has called on refugee receiving countries to expedite the processes of finalizing resettlement claims and to also assist UNHCR to enhance its resource capacity, in order to overcome present difficulties being experienced in Sri Lanka on account of rapid influx of refugees/asylum seekers.

Deputy Permanent Representative to the UN in Geneva and CDA a.i. Mrs. Samantha Jayasuriya in a statement to the 65th Session of the Executive Committee of the UNHCR on Thursday in Geneva (2 October 2014), said despite not being a signatory to the 1951 Convention Relating to the Status of Refugees, Sri Lanka has been accommodating refugees/ asylum seekers in the country. However, during the last two years Sri Lanka witnessed an almost 700% increase in the arrival of asylum seekers/refugees, resulting in serious law & order, security, as well as health related issues for Sri Lanka. While being sensitive to the humanitarian aspects of asylum seekers/refugees, the Government has sought UNHCR's assistance in addressing related issues including establishment of a safe house/welfare centre for identified refugees until they are resettlement, regularization of the return of asylum seekers whose claims have been rejected, expediting the resettlement process; and ensuring adequate facilities and monetary assistance provided to Asylum seekers until their claims are processed or resettlement is found. However these issues remain largely unresolved and Sri Lanka urges UNHCR to work closely with the Government to resolve these issues.

Full Statement

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