

Political Stakes of Refugee Protection in Africa

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Background

Little is still known about how individual African states deal with refugee protection in their own contexts, how policies are made, unfold and become to be contested.

Research Approach

Three interlinked processes are studied to uncover the politics and stakeholders behind refugee protection :

- **Governance;**
- **political stakes;**
- **societal discourse**

comparative and structured design

country case studies (Uganda and South Africa, South Sudan and Zimbabwe)

intra-dyadic comparison

cross-regional comparison



Initial findings

In **South Africa** we found:

- Systemic xenophobia and securitised practices positioned as domestic leverage
- Free movement ideals undermined by domestic interests which leads to diplomatic strains
- A performative relationship between the Department of Home Affairs to CSOs

Fieldwork: Feb - March 2020



Source: GovernmentZA

In **Uganda** we are considering:

- The political costs and interests in self-reliance model (internationally but also domestically)
- Role of refugee protection in elections

Fieldwork: September 2020

Methodology

- Qualitative interviews with politicians, civil society, academics and international organisations
- Focus groups with refugee and host communities

Migrants or Refugees?

- different forms of migration may become politically instrumentalized or played off against each other.
- Thus considers refugee displacement amongst other forms of movements such as immigration or emigration

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