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Zambia grants Temporal Residency permits to over 1,400 former Rwandan refugees

Kalumbila-Zambia: Today, the Government of the Republic of Zambia has granted temporal Residence permits to **1,468** former Rwandan refugees at Meheba Refugee Settlement, marking the beginning of a process that will lead to local integration of some 4,000 Rwandan former refugees in Zambia.

The UN Refugee Agency, UNHCR is welcoming this progressive development as a landmark in providing sustainable solutions for former Rwandan refugees who have opted to remain in Zambia after the end of the voluntary repatriation in 2016.

At a ceremony in Meheba Refugee Settlement, in Zambia's North Western Province, which was officiated by the Minister of Home Affairs, Hon. Stephen Kampyongo and UNHCR Representative to Zambia, Ms. Pierrine Aylara, the **1,468** permits were granted to the Rwandans.

"As Government, we are committed to the local integration of former refugees in Zambia, but we need international solidarity to continue to support the unfinished legal and socio-economic interventions," said Mr. Kampyongo.

Zambia has pledged to locally integrate 4,000 Rwandan former refugees, some of whom have been living in Zambia for 24 years.

Ms. Aylara thanked the Government and people of Zambia for their legendary generosity and hospitality toward refugees from various countries as well as the former refugees. She encouraged the former Rwandan refugees to continue to contribute positively to Zambia's society, respect Zambian laws and leave peacefully with the host communities.

"Refugees feel at home in Zambia and they highly appreciate the hospitality of Zambia. UNHCR encourages the Government of Zambia to continue supporting the refugees and former refugees, who should now be included in the country's development plans. UNHCR, in close coordination with the Office of the Commissioner for Refugees, will continue supporting the Government in mobilizing development partners to facilitate the socio-economic integration of refugees." Ms. Aylara said.

Zambia currently hosts over 74,000 refugees and other persons of concern mainly in Meheba Settlement, in North-Western Province, Mayukwayukwa in Western Province and Mantapala, in Luapula Province, as well as in transit centres in Makeni (Lusaka) and Kenani in Nchelenge. Many more are also self-settled across the country.

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