

Refugee Laws of Ethiopia

Description

By Dagnachew Tesfaye, Partner at DMLO

The Refugee Convention of July 28, 1951 done at Geneva and the Protocol Relating to the Status of Refugees of 31st January 1967 done at New York are made integral parts of Ethiopia, with reservations on the Articles 8,9,17(2) and 22(1) of the Convention. Ethiopia is a member of the regional convention namely the OAU Refugee Convention of 10th September 1969 done at Addis Ababa. Based on these international and regional Conventions, the Refugee Proclamation No 1110/2019 was adopted by the Ethiopian parliament on February 27, 2019 by replacing the previous Refugee Proclamation No 409/2004. A brief look into the 2019 Refugee Proclamation and Directives issued to implement the Proclamation shall be dealt in here below.

The Refugee Proclamation No 1110/2019 (the Proclamation hereafter) is issued with the objective of creating a comprehensive legal framework that better protects refugees and promotes sustainable solutions. This Proclamation provides the procedure of determination of refugee status. The Proclamation incorporates rights and obligations of asylum seekers and recognized refugees. Some of the rights include the right to work, right to association, freedom of movement, right to acquire and transfer of property, right to access to justice, access to banking, finance, telecommunication services, vital event registration and naturalization upon fulfillment of the relevant Ethiopian nationality laws.

Following this Proclamation, the Agency for Refugees and Returnees Affairs has issued several duly registered directives that enable the Agency to implement the Refugee Proclamation.

The Out of Camp Movement and Residence of Refugees Directive No 07/2019 and Directive No 430 and 431/2013 E.C can be mentioned. These Directives detail the procedure in which a refugee applies for out of camp movement and residence. The Directives describe the rights and obligations related to out of camp movement and residence.

Refugees deserve to be treated with the standard the law has put in place. When such a standard is not met and treatment of refugees results in grievances, there should be a procedure for voicing such grievances. As a result Grievance and Complaint Procedure Directive No 9/2019, Directive No 432 and 433 of 2013 E.C were issued to address the complaint and grievances of refugees and returnees.

Determination of Conditions of Right to Work Directive No 429/2013(E.C) has been issued to implement the right to work of refugees enshrined in the Refugee Proclamation. The Directive provides how residence and work permits are requested and acquired. In addition to that the Directive grants the right for refugees to engage in employment in areas open to foreigners. See the link here to know more about the areas of investment reserved for domestic investors and the government and the rest is open for foreigners. <https://dmethiolawyers.com/investment-businesses-open-for-foreign-investors-in-ethiopia/>. Refugees can be self-employed and work in such areas of work open for foreigners. Another area of work for refugees are common projects designed by the international community and the government of Ethiopia.

Conclusion

Ethiopia has done its part in making the Refugee Conventions part of its law and enacting favorable proclamations that show the country's commitment towards refugees and returnees. Furthermore Ethiopia has enacted implementation Directives to accommodate rights and obligations of refugees and returnees to Ethiopian society, economy and well being of the refugees themselves.

For further information you may contact us at info@dmethiolawyers.com

This article is dedicated to Zena who initially posed the questions on Refugee laws of Ethiopia.

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Author

dmethiol_admin