

An Analysis of Attempts by the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in Solving Immigrants and Refugees Problem in the SADC Region: A Case of South Africa

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ABSTRACT Many countries in the SADC region have experienced serious problems concerning immigrants and refugees. The problems troubled and escalated in the region during the 1990s up to date. In the main, this has been due to the nature of the conflicts and violence experienced by the citizens of the countries involved. The purpose of this study is to highlight the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in its attempt to solve the immigrant and refugee problem in the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region with special reference to South Africa. For this study, both qualitative and quantitative research methods were adopted. As previously stated, the focus on the study will be on South Africa as one of the SADC countries. However, it should be noted that although the focus is on South Africa, lessons learnt from other countries proved useful for this study. Furthermore, the study examines and critiques the various challenges as experienced by the UNHCR. A narrative approach was chosen to discuss the findings of the study. The findings show that most immigrants, refugees and asylum seekers felt unsafe in their countries of origin; therefore, they headed to neighbouring countries which in this case included South Africa. In this study, the researcher is mindful of the fact that the refugee status determination is conducted not by governments but by the UNHCR.