



Uganda – Researched and compiled by the Refugee Documentation Centre of Ireland on 14 October 2010

Information on the East African Customs Union Kenya.

A page on the *East African Community Portal* website states:

“The East African Community (EAC) is the regional intergovernmental organisation of the Republics of Kenya, Uganda, the United Republic of Tanzania, Republic of Rwanda and Republic of Burundi with its headquarters in Arusha, Tanzania. The Treaty for Establishment of the East African Community was signed on 30 November 1999 and entered into force on 7 July 2000 following its ratification by the original three Partner States – Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania. The Republic of Rwanda and the Republic of Burundi acceded to the EAC Treaty on 18 June 2007 and became full Members of the Community with effect from 1 July 2007.” (East African Community Portal (undated) *About EAC*)

In a paragraph headed “Aims and Objectives” this page states:

“The EAC aims at widening and deepening co-operation among the Partner States in, among others, political, economic and social fields for their mutual benefit. To this extent the EAC countries established a Customs Union in 2005 and are working towards the establishment of a Common Market in 2010, subsequently a Monetary Union by 2012 and ultimately a Political Federation of the East African States.” (ibid)

A *BBC News* report states:

“A customs union linking Kenya, Tanzania and Uganda comes into force on Saturday following six years of negotiations. The new trading bloc is a first step towards a common market and will gradually enable goods to pass between the three countries tax-free. The member states hope it will also lead to a common currency and eventually a political federation. The union is an attempt to revive the East African community which collapsed 10 years after it was set up in 1967. Correspondents say the three countries' farm-based economies are considered stable when compared to their war-devastated neighbours. The treaty setting up the East Africa Community (EAC) Customs Union was signed last March.” (BBC News (1 January 2005) *East Africa trade accord launched*)

An *East African* article states:

“Further, although the EAC has introduced a common passport valid within the Community, free cross-border movement of people and goods remains more of a goal than a reality. According to the East Africa Business Climate Index 2008 survey conducted by the East African Business Council, some 172,236 days are lost each year as a result of delays at weighbridges,

roadblocks and Customs offices, with the equivalent of \$9.8 million paid out in bribes along the way. While the elimination of Customs barriers will help, it is instructive to note that the lion's share of delays and bribe solicitation actually occurs at the weighbridges and roadblocks." (East African (10 January 2010) *East Africa: Everything You Wanted to Know About the 131 Million-Strong Common Market*)

A *Daily Nation* article refers to the extradition of suspected criminals from Kenya to Uganda as follows:

"However, government spokesman Alfred Mutua said the action to transfer the suspects to Uganda was within the security agreement among the five member states of East African Community. 'The Government wishes to inform the public that there exists a security agreement under the East African Community to reduce and stop cross border crimes,' said a statement posted on his website. 'Now, with the free movement of people and services in the region, it is even more critical that criminals are stopped from taking advantage of this economic protocol to start stealing and selling goods in the countries or plotting and carrying out criminal activities in one country or another.' 'Therefore, people who commit crime in any of the East African Countries will be handed over to the affected country for questioning and further legal action in any of the East African countries,' Dr Mutua said." (Daily Nation (23 September 2010) *East Africa: Crime - Kenyans to Face Legal Action Within Region*)

See also *East African* article which states:

"In the wake of a Kenyan High Court ruling against the illegal transfer of Kenyan terrorism suspects to Uganda for detention and trial, it has emerged that security chiefs have been trading high profile criminals in blatant disregard of extradition laws. Uganda's Inspector General of Police, Maj-Gen Kale Kayihura, says extradition laws are not the only instruments that security agencies can use to transfer criminals. The partner states have a common agreement on mutual extradition of nationals who are suspected or accused of organised crimes and corruption, said Tanzanian security sources. It is not something that is done above board but a practice that has been in existence since 1967 when the first East African Community was established. There is no protocol, but in police circles, it is assumed that the neighbouring countries will always co-operate when pursuing criminals, the Kenyan side said." (East African (11 October 2010) *East Africa: Exchange of Crime Suspects Within Region 'Normal,' Say Police Chiefs*)

This response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Refugee Documentation Centre within time constraints. This response is not and does not purport to be conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim to refugee status or asylum. Please read in full all documents referred to.

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