



## African Refugee Network

**Introduction:** Today, there are over 60 million refugees and internally displaced people in the world with a disproportionate percentage found in Africa. Most of those refugees have been driven from their homes by armed strife, displacing people to search for better lives for themselves and their children in settings that fail to meet standards for even basic human dignity. Protection of the human rights of these people is highly uncertain and unpredictable.

According to the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR) it is estimated that Africa is home to 26% of the world's refugee population, estimated at 18 million people.

Theories are not in short supply as to why the plight of African refugees has not received the same attention as that of other refugees for a very long time. When Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship Canada (IRCC) released highlights in August 2017 from Visa Office Specific Information on PSR processing, the average processing time in all the African missions that have been capped since 2011 remains deeply troubling. African Visa posts historically and even now have some of the longest processing time in the world.

**Mandate:** The mandate of the African Refugee Network (ARN) of the Canadian Council for Refugees is to serve as a national network of concerned individuals with a passion to link hands with African refugees, immigrants, and victims of human rights abuses such as human trafficking and to highlight their rights and need for protection to the Canadian Government and the public. The ARN will address settlement support as well as the challenges of family reunification of African refugees. The ARN will advise the CCR to ensure these concerns have a strong national voice.

**Objectives:** Working within the structures of the CCR, the ARN will:

1. Advocate for just and fair policies on the protection of African refugees.
2. Engage in advocacy campaigns for African refugees who are detained or confined to camps for decades.
3. Engage in public education campaigns around root causes of conflicts and how Global Affairs Canada can play a role in addressing the conflicts as well as the effects.
4. Mobilize and empower African diasporas, including the youth, to engage further in advocacy, cultivate a strong and united national voice within the CCR in the best interests of African refugees.

**Working with the CCR:** The network will be an integral part of the CCR, linked to the Overseas Protection and Resettlement (OPR) Working Group and tasked with raising issues about African refugees. As a subcommittee of the CCR, the advocacy of ARN will be guided by CCR policies. The ARN will bring recommendations for public statements to the OPR, which in turn will bring them to the Executive to speak on behalf of CCR.

**Leadership:** The leadership of ARN will comprise of representatives from all the Canadian provinces and territories and will work in collaboration with OPR leadership.

Approved by the Executive March 2018, for review in one year