

Refugees in Africa routinely wait years for Canadian immigration officials to process their applications to come to Canada.

While they wait, refugees are struggling to survive in desperate and dangerous situations, even though they have sponsors in Canada ready to support them here.

The long delays also affect families of refugees. Children are waiting years to be reunited with their parents in Canada. A five year wait for a child is a lifetime!

Sadly Canada's processing of refugees is too slow in many parts of the world, but it is slowest of all in Africa.

*We need to do better.*

*We need to be fair to all refugees.*

## Five years to reunite children with their mother



Lisa and Jordan (aged 14 and 10) were reunited with their mother in Canada in 2009. They had not seen her for seven years. It took two years before she was accepted as a refugee in Canada, and **five years** for their family reunification applications to be processed through the Nairobi visa office.

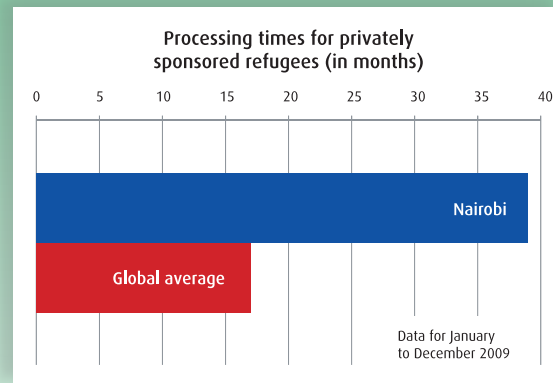
## Nairobi: severely overburdened

Processing is particularly slow at the Nairobi office.

Canada's visa office in Nairobi (Kenya) covers 18 countries, including Democratic Republic of Congo, Eritrea, Somalia, Ethiopia, Burundi and Rwanda – countries from which large numbers of refugees come.

The Nairobi office is by far the **slowest in the world** for privately sponsored refugees.

Half the cases of privately sponsored refugees in Nairobi take **more than 3 YEARS** (39 months, compared to 17 months globally).



## Amina 6 years, still waiting

Amina fled Ethiopia to Kenya as a refugee. More than 6 years ago Amina and her family were sponsored by a group in Canada. She waited nearly 4 years for an interview, during which time her husband died of malaria. More than two years after the interview, she is still waiting to come to Canada.

Amina and her three children are in Kakuma refugee camp in Kenya.

*I am living in intolerable conditions in a refugee camp in search of peace and security, hoping that I will be able to raise my children in a safe environment one day. Considering the conditions that I described above, could you please help me in moving my case forward toward finalizing my immigration process.*



Meanwhile, the sponsoring group in Canada is ready and able to support Amina's family here – they also feel discouraged by the long wait.

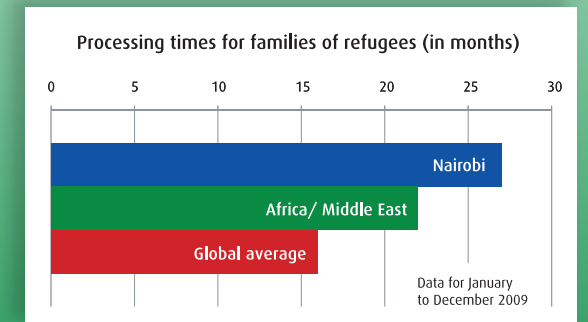


## Reuniting refugee families

Nairobi is the **slowest visa office** for applications for family reunification from refugees accepted in Canada.

Half the cases of refugee dependants processed by Nairobi take more than **27 months** (compared to 16 months globally).

This means that children in some parts of Africa routinely wait **more than two years** to be reunited with their parents, after their parents have already been accepted as refugees in Canada.



# You can help ensure that Canada's refugee program is fair and effective.

Join the CCR in asking the government to guarantee fast processing for refugees in Africa.

For action ideas, go to [www.ccrweb.ca/en/nairobi-action](http://www.ccrweb.ca/en/nairobi-action)

For more information, read the CCR report, *Nairobi: Protection delayed, protection denied*, October 2009, [www.ccrweb.ca/documents/Nairobi-report.pdf](http://www.ccrweb.ca/documents/Nairobi-report.pdf)

For photos of separated families, [www.settlementarts.ca](http://www.settlementarts.ca)



## CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES

6839A Drolet #302  
Montréal QC, H2S 2T1  
(514) 277-7223  
Fax (514) 277-1447  
info@ccrweb.ca

[www.ccrweb.ca](http://www.ccrweb.ca)

COVER PHOTO CREDIT: SETTLEMENT ARTS/ANNA HILL

## Jean-Claude



Jean-Claude arrived in Canada in 2001, and was finally accepted (on humanitarian grounds) in March 2007. He is still waiting to be reunited with his wife and two young children who remain in the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Three years after Jean-Claude was accepted in Canada, in April 2010, the Nairobi office finally began processing his family's applications. The office decided that the family must undergo DNA testing. This means further delays.

## Impacts of long delays

The extremely long processing times have multiple and profound impacts on the children, women and men applying, as well as on others involved.

- Refugees are not protected
- Children are kept separated from their parents for years
- Sponsors lose motivation

08/2010

PHOTO CREDIT: SETTLEMENT ARTS/ANNA HILL

## Working towards a solution?

The Canadian government has recently acknowledged that the Nairobi visa office needs more staff to handle the many, many cases it is responsible for.

We do not know whether the extra staff will be enough to significantly reduce the serious delays in Nairobi.

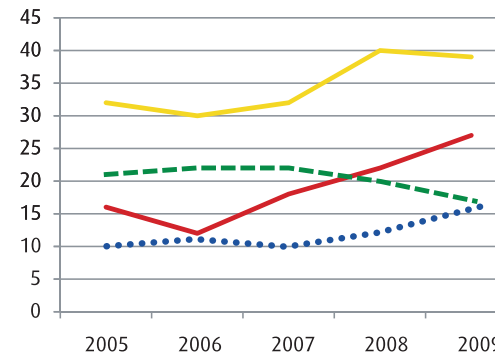
In 2009 there was a marginal improvement for privately sponsored refugees, but delays for refugee families have gone UP.

There are also longer than average delays at most other offices in Africa too.

We need fair treatment for African refugees and their families.

Three of the four slowest offices for refugee family reunification cases are in Africa: Nairobi, Accra and Abidjan.

Wait times (in months), 2005-2009



— Privately sponsored refugees: Nairobi  
- - - Privately sponsored refugees: All offices  
— Refugee dependants: Nairobi  
••• Refugee dependants: All offices



CANADIAN COUNCIL FOR REFUGEES

## REFUGEES FROM AFRICA:

# ARE WE BEING FAIR?

