



African Refugee and Migrants Aid (ARMA)

We are here for you!

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UN DESA's Division for Inclusive Social Development

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ARMA Submission on SG Report on the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD)

Introduction

The rights of persons with disabilities have been neglected for so many years and these has cause that their voices cannot be heard. The rights to education, employments, safety, access to housing, freedom of movement, job creation, etc... these are among the challenges facing persons with disability. The problem of displacement and humanitarian emergencies is a worldwide phenomenon. Today, there are more 103 million displaced people across the world with 53.2 million of them internally displaced persons in need of emergencies (UNHCR, 2022). Statistics also indicate that 4.9 million people are seeking asylum in various countries while 5.3 million are refugees in various countries of the world largely due to forced displacements and emergencies (UNHCR, 2022). Also, 12.4 million out of the 103 million displaced people are said to be people with various forms of disabilities (UNHCR, 2021).

People living with disabilities are faced with a lot of challenges which include accessibility, lack of assistive devices, negative attitude of the public towards people with disability, communication barriers, policy barriers and attitudinal barriers. Of particular importance are the situations of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities. Many refugees and asylum seekers are more likely to be excluded and discriminated against in all aspects due to their precarious conditions. For instance, some of the refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities are likely to be excluded from accessing basic amenities, sexual abuse and exploitation and lack access to education. According to Buye (2021:1) "physical, mental, intellectual and sensory impairment coupled with social, physical and environmental barriers hinder effective participation of refugees on equal basis in community life". In other words, there is a need for safety and protection for refugees with disabilities in situations of emergency refugees. This is why the Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities (CRPD), under the United Nations is bringing together various stakeholders to address the challenges and social exclusion of asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities as contained in Article 11 (Situations

of risk and humanitarian emergencies) of CRPD and intervention of African Refugees and Migrants Aid (ARMA) in that respect.

Challenges facing person living with disabilities:

Education: Education has been the biggest challenges for person with disabilities, because majority of person with disabilities don't have financial support for them to further their studies.

Employment: Majority of countries in African don't prioritize persons living with disabilities when it comes to employment. The rights to employment for person with disabilities need to be prioritize.

Freedom of movement: persons with disabilities have limited rights of movement, more specially people with albinism.

Persons with Albinisms: People with albinism have been living I fear in different part of the world, more specially in the African continent, has made hundreds of people of albinism is not free and to enjoy their rights of movement. They can't just go anywhere without having that fear of being killed and used for ritual. As an organization we call upon of the UN and its member countries to protect people living with albinism and maximum sentence should be applied to individuals who are committing crime against people living with albinism.

According to an article published by UN experts (OHCHR, 29 July 2021). "The ground-breaking resolution passed by the Human Rights Council earlier his month condemned human rights violations committed through witchcraft accusations and ritual attacks and called for international consultation and recommendations on the matter."

The intervention of ARMA towards Refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities in South Africa

As a Non-Profit organization funded in 2018 with registration no. 214-221 NPO in terms of the Non-profit Organization Act 1997(Act no. 71 of 1997) in Port Elizabeth, South Africa, ARMA has as one of its objectives to assist the vulnerable, orphan, refugees, and asylum seekers in Africa and beyond. Based on this mission, ARMA has been involving asylum seekers, refugees, and other migrants with disabilities in their programmes to address their challenges. Even though is hard to get the actual figure of asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities in Eastern Cape and South Africa in general, ARMA, has helped a significant number of refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities. Although, structures, facilities and roads in South Africa are relatively accessible and friendly for people with disabilities. However, asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities in South Africa are still excluded. This is why ARMA is taking the following intervention to implement the provision of Article 11 of CRPD.

1. ARMA empowers refugees and asylum seekers to be fully integrated into various communities in Eastern Cape, South Africa through skill acquisition and seminars.
2. The organization equally embarks on counselling and also provides therapy for asylum seekers and refugees and migrants living with disabilities in Eastern Cape and South Africa as a whole.
3. ARMA also links forcefully displaced people in Eastern Cape and South Africa in general with where services that will be of benefit to them are available in South Africa.
4. The organization equally provides education for asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities in South Africa.

5. ARMA also sensitizes the host community members on the need to accept and accommodate refugees and asylum seekers especially those with one form of disability or the other.
6. ARMA also makes it a point of call to empower women and girls with disabilities in Eastern Cape and South Africa.
7. In some cases, ARMA also organizes free medical check-ups with the support of other organizations for asylum seekers and refugees living with disabilities in South Africa.

Recommendation:

Based on our organization’s implementation of CRPD, we hereby recommend that:

1. The United Nations through CRPD should commit more resources to support the efforts of NGOs in providing services to refugees and asylum seekers with disabilities.
2. The United Nations through CRPD should also mandate governments of various countries to make budgetary provisions for people living with disabilities.
3. Involvement of other stakeholders such as private organizations and multinational companies in providing the needed assistance and support for people living with disabilities.
4. Develop a socio-legal framework that will guarantee the protection and support of asylum seekers and refugees with disabilities across the world.
5. Meaningful participation of people with disabilities in decision making at local, national, regional, and international levels.
6. Organizations led by people with disabilities should be prioritized and funded during the humanitarian emergency.
7. Introduction of institutions of higher learning (Universities) for people with disabilities. E.g., Universities that will enable deaf people to pursue their carrier.
8. Introduction of law that will protect people with disabilities, life sentence for people founds guilty for killing people with albinism.
9. Involving people with disabilities when it comes to project of new innovations.
10. Persons with disabilities to access and be part of hight panel of humanitarian emergency.
11. Organizations that advocate for persons with disabilities must have the same people in top managerial of the organization, they should be involved in decision making.
12. Evaluation and monitoring organization that advocate for persons with disabilities is very important prior or after the humanitarian emergencies.
13. Engaging persons with disabilities from grassroots of our community when there is a humanitarian emergencies.

References

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