



International Refugee Day

Today the 20 of June is World Refugee Day. A day on which we give extra consideration to those who were forced to flee their houses, their home ground and their countries. People who did not want to leave their home ground, but who weren't safe in their own country; people who wanted to fight, but saw no future for themselves in their country to fight for. By the end of 2021, there were a total of 89.3 million people fleeing worldwide, so announced the UNHCR. Never ever was this amount of people fleeing so high. And due to ongoing and uprising international wars, civil wars, human right violations, terrorism, extreme poverty, environmental change, this amount of people who have to flee their home will rise, so is the expectation.

Therefore, it is so important to be aware of the suffering these people have gone through, and the terrible road they have traveled and have to travel. Behind every refugee their lays a different incredible personal live story. From the Ukrainian who has to flee his country due the recent war with Russia, and the Syrian who has to leave his country because it is terrorized.

Unfortunately, also on our own continent, Africa, many people are still forced to leave their homes. Due civil wars, domestic violence, family disputes, human rights violations and extreme poverty, people from all over Africa have no future in their own country and have to seek for shelter and safeness somewhere else. So for example, in the DR Congo wherein the war is still going on, a war that has totally divided the country and makes many displaced people. A continuing domestic clan war in Somali, where people lost their hope to any further solution. Extremist Islamic groups in Mozambique, who terrorizes the country, by making it unsafe in various places. And don't forget the heated family issues in, among other areas, the Western African countries, who make that people are not safe anymore in their own communities. Unfortunately, this are just only some examples of reasons why people flee their country, looking for a better future. A large amount of them try to reach Europe, where live should be better. But the realistic story is that many of them face a European border that is extremely hard to reach, an estimate by the UNCHR puts the number of migrants killed trying to reach Europe by sea at more than 3,000 by 2021. Another big group of displaced people, refugees and asylum-seekers try to build up a new live in a different African country. According to a UNCHR Africa's estimate, about 30 million, making up almost a third of the world's refugee population, seeks shelter in Africa.

All these people have the right to be listened to, to a safe environment and home, and to enforcement of the human rights to which every human being is entitled, wherever that person may be.



To our great regret, this is often still not the case. Too many refugees are still not welcome at their new destinations. Still many governments seem to be sympathetic to refugees on paper, but are afraid to shelter and care for them. Nowadays still too many refugees face daily racism, or a lack of possibility to enforce their own rights.

So too, unfortunately, in South Africa. We as a country must never forget that we, South Africans were also dependent of the welcoming and open attitude of our neighboring countries when our citizens wanted to flee our country. And that we therefore have strong laws on paper who should protect the people who seek help, shelter and a new life in our country.

Fortunately, many people are aware of that importance. And together with them, we, *African Refugee and Migrants Aid* “ARMA”, will fight for the right of the people who seek shelter and safeness in South Africa. So, let's pay extra attention today to the personal stories of all those people worldwide, who have had to flee their homes, to the suffering they have been subjected to, and to the long ordeal they are going through or have gone through. Let's never forget to help those vulnerable people as much as we can. Together we will fight for a refugee-friendly future!

AFRICAN REFUGEE AND MIGRANTS AID “ARMA”