



**Katie Springer**

## Katie Springer Assumes ECDC Resettlement Post

Katie Springer, a former field team leader with the Overseas Processing Entity (OPE) in Nairobi, has been appointed program manager for ECDC's refugee resettlement program.

A graduate of the University of Minnesota with a double major in international relations and French, she has extensive experience working with refugees, both in Africa and with federal and local refugee agencies in the United States.

With Lutheran Social Services of Minnesota, she served as a case manager for two years, working mostly with Liberian, Somali and Oromo clients. Pursuing her interest in African affairs, she first worked on the continent as a teacher in a village school in Tanzania, also engaging in a grassroots movement for HIV/AIDS orphans in the area. Returning to Minnesota in 2006, she spent a year as case manager with the Temporary Assistance to Needy Families program, again working mostly with single African refugee mothers.

Returning to Africa in 2007, she joined the staff of OPE in Nairobi, interviewing refugees seeking resettlement in

## Georgetown Symposium Observes 30th Anniversary of Refugee Act of 1980

Addressing a symposium in mid-March marking the 30th anniversary of the Refugee Act of 1980, Eric P. Schwartz, Assistant Secretary of the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration, acknowledged the key leadership role of Senator Ted Kennedy in achieving its passage, noting that the Act has resulted in the resettlement of nearly two and a half million refugees and grants of asylum to another half million people.

Sponsored by Human Rights First and the Georgetown University Law Center, the symposium featured top leaders in refugee and humanitarian affairs, members of Congress, policy

experts, journalists and refugees. Sessions highlighted achievements under the Refugee Act, honored contributions by refugees to the nation's social, cultural and economic fabric, and evaluated ways to overcome current challenges to the resettlement and asylum systems.

Also applauding the support of Senators Patrick Leahy, Carl Levin, Alan Simpson, and Vice President Joe Biden in helping Senator Kennedy shepherd the original legislation through Congress, Schwartz said they recognized the need for a system that "reflected our highest aspirations and our most noble values."

While refugee protection and assistance remain the major focus of agencies engaged in administering the Act, Schwartz said, the concept and goals of protection have expanded and now embrace the special needs of women and children, combating gender-based violence and the promotion of economic programs for conflict-affected women.

Noting that the nation's refugee resettlement program accommodated about

[Continued on page 2]

### Obama Proclamation Honors African American History

In the centuries since African Americans first arrived on our shores, they have known the bitterness of slavery and oppression, the hope of progress, and the triumph of the American Dream," President Obama noted in his annual proclamation designating February as National African American History Month, describing the observance as a moment to reflect upon how far we have come as a nation and what challenges remain. This year's theme for the month was *The History of Black Economic Empowerment*, urging an acknowledgement of the struggle by earlier generations who overcame injustice and inequality to achieve financial independence and the security of self empowerment that comes with it. "We are heirs to their extraordinary progress," the proclamation said. "Racial prejudice is no longer the steepest barrier to opportunity for most African Americans, yet substantial obstacles remain in the remnants of past discrimination. Structural inequalities—from disparities in education and health care to the vicious cycle of poverty—still pose enormous hurdles for black communities across America." Obama outlined current initiatives to expand economic opportunities, urging parents and community leaders to be partners in his efforts. "In the volumes of black history, much remains unwritten. Let us add our own chapter, full of progress and ambition, so that our children's children will know that we, too, did our part to erase an unjust past and build a brighter future," he said.

*In My Opinion...*

**Legacies of Leadership**

**T**he tributes to Senator Ted Kennedy with which PRM’s Eric Schwartz opened and closed his remarks at the recent Human Rights Symposium on the 30th anniversary of passage of the Refugee Act of 1980 served to remind us of the enormous influence one dedicated legislator can have on issues of great social and humanitarian import. That his remarks also included high praise for the contributions made three decades ago by Senators Patrick Leahy, Carl Levin, and other key supporters was an indication of the value of collegial pursuit of worthy causes. And that Leahy and Levin again joined in introducing the Refugee Protection Act of 2010 in mid-March was a welcomed reaffirmation of their steadfast efforts to assure that America’s values and commitments are honored in its treatment of refugees and immigrants.



**Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.**

The bill includes provisions that Senator Leahy had introduced in previous sessions of Congress to repeal some of the most harsh and punitive elements included in the Illegal Immigration Reform and Immigrant Responsibility Act of 1996, a law that had tragic consequences for many refugees and asylum seekers.

The new bill would eliminate the one year waiting period for refugees and asylum seekers to apply for a green card; reform policies and procedures currently being used in the expedited removal of those seeking safety in the United States; and modify provisions in laws passed after 9/11 regarding “material support” of terrorist groups to ensure that innocent asylum seeker and refugees are not unfairly denied protection, while

leaving in place provisions that prevent dangerous terrorists from manipulating the nation’s immigration system.

The bill also embraces our long-held view that the resettlement program should apply humanitarian considerations for special groups of refugees who are targets of persecution and abuse because of shared vulnerabilities and who have no hope of integration in their countries of first asylum. It authorizes the Department of State to make such determinations on an annual basis.

It also strengthens the resettlement program’s family reunification priorities, allowing children and family members of refugees to be considered as derivative applicants for refugee status and requiring prompt adjudication of family reunification petitions. And it addresses funding issues of particular concern to voluntary organizations like ECDC who work in partnership with the Department of State and ORR in providing initial reception and placement services. Always needing more resources to help newcomers achieve self-sufficiency and independence, we were gratified by PRM’s recent increase of the per capita allocation. But it had remained fixed for so many years that its value had diminished by more than 50 percent. Under the Leahy bill—beginning with FY 2012—the State Department would be required to notify Congress of the proposed grant amount for the coming fiscal year, including adjustments for inflation and cost of living, and for additional amounts as needed to meet emergency needs.

As he introduced the Refugee Protection Act of 2010, Senator Leahy quoted Senator Kennedy’s goal in 1980 “to give statutory meaning to our national commitment to human rights and humanitarian concerns.”

“We lost our dear friend last year,” Leahy said, “but we can honor Ted Kennedy’s memory by carrying forward the mantle of refugee protection.” By introducing the new legislation and maintaining his career-long dedication to refugee and humanitarian causes, Leahy is not only carrying forward the mantle, he is also enhancing his own legacy of leadership.

**Georgetown Symposium Honors 30th Anniversary Of Historic Refugee Act**

[Continued from page 1]

75,000 people last year, Schwartz said that the admissions program should vindicate protection objectives, describing PRM’s current efforts to enhance the capacity of UNHCR to identify vulnerable communities in need of resettlement; to develop innovative interim protection measures such as emergency transit centers in several parts of the world; and to use resettlement programs as a tool to encourage host governments to promote policies of greater tolerance.

Citing the recent increasing of the per capita grant provided to VOLAGs for initial reception and placement services for newly arriving refugees as evidence of his agency’s commitment to meet current challenges, he said it also served as an expression of solidarity with receiving communities that have been so dramatically affected by the economic downturn.

“We well understand that more must be done,” Schwartz said. “And we’ll be working very closely with the White House and the Department of Health and Human Services to secure additional job training, education, cash, and medical assistance in the months that follow initial reception and placement and, frankly, take a much broader look at the way in which the program is administered.”

By expanding efforts to protect and empower vulnerable communities and to meet new challenges with energy and enthusiasm, he concluded, the nation honors Senator Kennedy’s legacy and “sustains the commitment reflected in a Refugee Act that has so valuably stood the test of time.”

**REGISTER NOW!**  
 ECDC’s  
 16TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE  
 ON AFRICAN REFUGEES  
 AND IMMIGRANTS  
**MAY 3-5, 2010**  
 Arlington Holiday Inn at Ballston  
 Arlington, Virginia  
 [For more information and registration forms, visit: [www.ecdc-cari.org](http://www.ecdc-cari.org)]

## Two African Activists are Among 2010 ‘Courage Award’ Winners

By Jane Morse  
Staff Writer, *America.gov*

First lady Michelle Obama and Secretary of State Hillary Rodham Clinton honored women human rights activists from around the world with this year’s Women of Courage awards at a special ceremony March 10 at the State Department.

“These 10 women have overcome personal adversity, threats, arrest and assault to dedicate themselves to activism for human rights,” said Melanne Vermeer, the State Department’s first-ever ambassador-at-large for global women’s issues. “From striving to give

more voice to politically underrepresented women in Afghanistan to documenting human rights abuses in Zimbabwe, these heroic individuals have made it their life’s work to increase freedom and equality in the world.”

The awardees this year are Shukria Asil of Afghanistan; Colonel Shafiqra Quraishi of Afghanistan; Androula Henriques of Cyprus; Sonia Pierre of the Dominican Republic; Shadi Sadr of Iran; Ann Njogu of Kenya; Dr. Lee Ae-ran of South Korea; Jansila Majeed of Sri Lanka; Sister Marie Claude Naddaf of Syria; and Jestina Mukoko of Zimbabwe.

The Women of Courage award was established in 2007 by then-Secretary of State Condoleezza Rice to recognize and honor women around the globe who have shown exceptional courage and leadership in promoting women’s rights and advancement.

Clinton said the stories of this year’s honorees are a reminder of how much work there is to do before human rights are respected and protected by all governments. She told the Women of Courage awardees: “We are standing with you. ... We here at the State Department and [the Obama] administration are trying to be good partners.

We look forward to building relationships with you.”

Clinton emphasized that the United States will be watchful of the awardees’ safety. “We send a message to your governments, who may not be thrilled that you are here, that we will be watching them as well.”

Michelle Obama lauded the awardees for taking risks and facing hardships few people are willing to endure. She noted that among the invited guests in the room were young women from a local school and from the White House mentoring program, which pairs young people from area high schools with White House staff mentors for a year.

“Listen closely,” Obama told the young women, “because if these women can endure relentless threats, then surely you can all keep going. ... None of you are too young to start making a difference.” She urged the young American women to take inspiration from the Women of Courage awardees.

Speaking on behalf of all the awardees, Jestina Mukoko of Zimbabwe said the Women of Courage award is “a solidarity message that unites women all over the world. By accepting this award, we confirm that women have a place in the fight for equality and justice.”

Also speaking at the awards ceremony was Andrea Jung, chairman and chief executive officer of Avon, a 125-year-old company that got its start by providing women with opportunities for economic independence through the sale of cosmetics. Jung announced that the Avon Foundation for Women is presenting a \$500,000 grant to the U.S. Department of State Secretary’s Fund for Global Women’s Leadership for programs designed to help end violence against women.

Jung also said the foundation is donating another \$1.2 million to Vital Voices, a nongovernmental organization aimed at training women the world over for leadership. That grant will bring together women leaders from 15 countries to share insights in furthering the progress of women in fields such as business, government and law enforcement.



Ann Njogu of Kenya poses with Secretary of State Hillary Clinton and First Lady Michelle Obama after receiving her Women of Courage Award.

### FY 2010 African Refugee Admissions

As of March 31, 2010 ● Ceiling for FY 2010 is 15,500

Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Burundi	201	Guinea	3
Cameroon	6	Liberia	159
Central African Republic	11	Mauritania	31
Chad	9	Rwanda	78
Congo	122	Sierra Leone	29
Dem. Rep. Congo	1,332	Somalia	1,970
Equatorial Guinea	9	Sudan	229
Eritrea	883	Togo	1
Ethiopia	184	Uganda	15
Gabon	1	Zimbabwe	7
Gambia	4	TOTAL	5,285

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

## NEWS BRIEFS

**Obama Donates Peace Prize Funds to Ten Charities**

AfriCare and the United Negro College Fund are among the ten charities chosen by President Obama to receive a portion of the \$1.4 million that accompanied his Nobel Peace Prize.

The charities work on such issues as housing for veterans, college assistance and economic development in Africa and Central Asia.

AfriCare will receive \$100,000, the United Negro College Fund, \$125,000.

Other recipients are: Fisher House, \$250,000; The Clinton-Bush Haiti Fund, \$200,000; College Summit, \$125,000; Posse Foundation, \$125,000; the Hispanic Scholarship Fund, \$125,000; the Appalachian Leadership and Education Foundation, \$125,000; the American Indian College Fund, \$125,000; and the Central Asia Institute, \$100,000.

**Former Georgetown Dean Assumes High UNHCR Post**

Alexander Aleinikoff, former dean of the law school at Georgetown University, has assumed the duties of United Nations Deputy High Commissioner for Refugees. An expert in refugee, immigration and citizenship law and policy, he has held several key leadership positions at Georgetown, including executive vice president, dean of the school's Law Center and a professor of law.

Aleinikoff served as general counsel for the former Immigration and Naturalization Service in the early 1990s, participating in major decisions that included reform of the nation's asylum process. More recently, he co-chaired the Immigration Policy Review Team for President Barak Obama's transition. He was also a consultant to UNHCR for its Global Consultations on international protection. He succeeds Craig Johnstone.

**UNHCR Seeks Nominees For 2010 Nansen Award**

Nominations for the 2010 Nansen Award, the most prestigious honor conferred by UNHCR to an individual or organization in recognition of extraordinary and dedicated service to refugees, are being received in Geneva with a deadline of April 30.

The award consists of a commemorative medal and a \$100,000 monetary prize donated by the governments of Norway and Switzerland. The late Senator Ted Kennedy received the award last year.

A nomination form is available on the agency's website at: [www.unhcr.org](http://www.unhcr.org).

**Senate Bill Seeks to Curb LRA Atrocities in Africa**

With wide bipartisan support, the U.S. Senate passed a bill in early March aimed at curbing atrocities in Uganda

and Sudan committed by the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA), a vicious rebel group that has terrorized eastern Africa for more than two decades and whose depredations are spreading to Africa's Great Lakes region.

The Lord's Resistance Army Disarmament and Northern Uganda Recovery Act was sponsored by senators Russ Feingold (D-Washington, Sam Brownback R-Tenn.) and James Inhofe (R-Okla.) and co-sponsored by 60 other senators.

**Five MAAs Receive Grants Through MITA Program**

Five African community-based mutual assistance associations have been awarded grants to help improve programs and services through ECDC's MAA Innovations in Technical Assistance (MITA) program.

They are the Sudanese Community & Women Services Center, Nashville, TN; Arizona Lost Boys Center, Phoenix, AZ; North Carolina African Services Coalition, Inc., Greensboro, NC; Somali Bantu Community Association of Idaho, Inc., Boise, ID; and the Somali Culture and Development Association of Maine, Portland, ME.

Funded by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, the grants range in value from \$5,000 to \$10,000 and provide focused assistance in such areas as strategic planning and action; fund-raising and resource development; organizational leadership; management; and accountability.

## CALENDAR

**April 10** — ECDC's African Community Center in Arlington will conduct its first annual Health Fair from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at 901 S. Highland Street in Arlington. Free to all comers, the event will offer HIV testing, eye exams and blood pressure checks, along with information on other health issues. Also available will be information on immigration, employment, business loans and matched savings plans provided through ECDC's Enterprise Development Group. For further details, call (703) 685-0410.

## RESOURCES

**ACS Data Tool: Language & Education Characteristics** is the latest up-to-date fact sheet from the Migration Policy Institute analyzing data from the 2008 ACS/Census report. It includes a map of the United States allowing users to click on each state to learn about the language and education characteristics of immigrants and native born. Similar fact sheets are being prepared to cover workforce and income and poverty statistics. For more information, visit: [www.migrationinformation.org/DataHub/acscensus.cfm](http://www.migrationinformation.org/DataHub/acscensus.cfm)

## African Refugee NETWORK

Vol. 19, No. 3

February-March 2010

*The African Refugee NETWORK* is produced bimonthly by the ECDC Center for African Refugees and Immigrants (ECDC-CARI). Opinions presented do not necessarily reflect official viewpoints and you should not assume endorsement by ECDC. Material appearing in the newsletter may be reproduced with credit. For additional information, contact:

*African Refugee NETWORK*

901 S. Highland St • Arlington, VA 22204

Phone: (703) 685-0510 Fax: (703) 685-0529

Email: [info@ecdc-cari.org](mailto:info@ecdc-cari.org)

Website: [www.ecdc-cari.org](http://www.ecdc-cari.org)