

## Inside This Issue

In My Opinion	2
PRM Conducts Open Hearing	3
African Refugees in the News	4
Obama Remarks in Ghana	5
News Briefs	6
Refugee Scholarships	7
Calendar/Resources	8

## UNHCR Urges Closer Relationship With NGOs As ‘Humanitarian Space’ Shrinks

Describing the shrinking of humanitarian space as a major challenge facing his agency, UNHCR António Guterres concluded the annual UNHCR-NGO consultations in Geneva on July 1 by urging an even closer strategic relationship with “civil society in general and the NGO community in particular.”

He identified three main factors behind the shrinking humanitarian space:

the changing nature of conflict, particularly the multiplicity of parties involved; a hardening of attitudes on state sovereignty; and the increasingly difficult situation where humanitarian aid workers are present in conflict areas.

“It is more and more difficult to be able to guarantee to our staff the minimum of security conditions,” he said, adding that this was true for NGO partners and other U.N. organizations. He cited the killing of two UNHCR staff and the abduction of one more in Pakistan this year as well as the slaying in northern Afghanistan of three staff from an NGO partner of the refugee agency.

Guterres also discussed the shrinking of asylum space, highlighting the development of xenophobic attitudes and its implication in the way migration and asylum are being perceived, particularly recently in Europe. “There are clear tendencies to see foreigners in general as the problem, or the enemy, and that has a serious implication for both your and our actions.”

Other global challenges and “mega” trends identified by Guterres included demographic pressure; urbanization; climate change and related environmental

[Continued on page 4]

## Obama Fills Top Refugee Leadership Posts

After confirmation by the Senate in mid-June, Eric P. Schwartz assumed duties as Assistant Secretary of State for Population, Refugees and Migration (PRM) on July 8, completing fulfillment by the Obama administration of the nation’s top refugee leadership positions with officials widely experienced in humanitarian and refugee affairs.

Eskinder Negash, a former refugee from Ethiopia, became director of the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR) in late May.

Schwartz is a former executive director of the Connect U.S. Fund, a foundation/NGO partnership focused on foreign policy and international affairs. From 2005 to 2007, he served as U.N. Secretary-General Kofi Annan’s Deputy

Special Envoy for Tsunami Recovery.

He formerly served as the second-ranking official at UNHCR headquarters, overseeing a variety of planning and budget activities during an exceptionally difficult transition period. From 2001 through 2003, Schwartz held fellowships at the Woodrow Wilson Center, the U.S. Institute of Peace and the Council on Foreign Relations, completing articles and book chapters on peace operations, humanitarian issues, and refugee policy.

From 1993 to 2001, Schwartz served at the National Security Council, ultimately as Senior Director and Special Assistant to the President for Multilateral and Humanitarian Affairs. He

[Continued on page 2]

## Symbolism, Substance in U.S. Relations Highlight First Family Visit to Africa

By Charles Corey  
Staff Writer, *America.gov*

Capping his historic visit to Ghana, President Obama told the Ghanaian people his visit to their country had been particularly meaningful” and that Ghana sends a message to the world: “Democracy can thrive in Africa.”

Speaking at Kotoka International Airport in Accra before leaving on July 11, Obama said he had a chance to discuss not only the future of Ghana but the future of Africa with Ghanaian President John Atta Mills, who also spoke and was there to bid farewell to the U.S. president.

“I have spoken to the parliament here in Ghana about America’s commitment to supporting democracy and development,” Obama told those gathered to see him off. Obama then fondly recalled his visit to La General Hospital for a visit with women and children who are getting the health care they need.

Additionally, he mentioned his tour of Cape Coast Castle with his family. It was “a place for centuries where men, women and children of this nation and surrounding areas were sold into slavery.”

“I will never forget the image of my two

young daughters, the descendants of Africans and African-Americans, walking through those doors of no return but then walking back (through) those doors. ... It was a remarkable reminder that while the future is unknowable, the winds always blow in the direction of human progress.”

Obama told the Ghanaian people that “at each point of our visit here, I was reminded of the enduring bond between our nations. The men and women taken from this nation helped to build my own. Today, many of our leading citizens trace their roots to these shores. Your first

[Continued on page 5]

*In My Opinion...***Examining Refugee Life in America**

**I**n a rare and admirable commitment of resources and talent to illuminating *What It's Like to be a Refugee in America*, the Christian Science Monitor and journalist Mary Wiltenburg have collaborated on a recent project that could exert significant influence on refugee and media affairs. The project unfolded in mid-July, culminating an initiative titled "Little Bill Clinton: A School Year in the Life of a New American." As noted in the item on African Refugees in the News on page 4 of this issue, Wiltenburg spent a year developing multimedia materials documenting the terrors and triumphs of a mixed Congolese-Rwandan family who arrived in Atlanta three years ago, confronting the typical challenges of adjusting to a new homeland, but made more challenging by the economic recession that has impacted all aspects of American life. The project title comes from the name of Bill

Clinton Hadam, the 7-year-old son of Hassan Mwanasumpikwa and Dawami Lenguyanga who met and married during a ten-year existence at a refugee camp in Tanzania. Admiring President Bill Clinton's politics and empathizing with his personal problems after impeachment proceedings, Hassan chose the name for his son, he said, to remind him that even a big man can have big problems.

Beyond the scope and depth of Wiltenburg's perceptive portrayal of the challenges refugees face, we who are deeply involved in helping them achieve their goals can hope that her descriptions of the current state of the refugee resettlement program will have a positive impact on public and private support. She notes that what she calls "the minimally funded program is failing many of those it rescues," with "some even returning to the war zones they fled in desperate search of livelihoods." She accurately reports that while the program provides initial reception and placement services, just eight months after their arrival, "refugees are on their own and newcomers are lined up behind them, just as wasted and lost." She writes that "refugee resettlement is a tiny program in the grand scheme of Washington," having no real opponents but lacking political clout to command higher priorities. Despite the increasing diversity of newcomers in recent years, she reports concerns by officials that the "one-size-fits-all system no longer works, quoting one who says: "The system is fundamentally broken."

More encouraging is Wiltenburg's citation of a congressional aide who said that there is widespread agreement that the program's funding is due for a radical increase and that the Obama administration is considering the problem. With new leadership now in place at the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the Office of Refugee Resettlement, let us hope that needed improvements will soon restore to a more positive situation what its like to be a refugee in America.

For those engaged in media professions, the Wiltenburg-Monitor project may represent a pioneering step toward what she calls "a new kind of journalism: intimate, multivoice storytelling that unfolds in real time." Using the interactive capabilities of the Internet, and the active participation of teachers, staff, parents and students at the International Community School in Atlanta, the project's creative output appeared on a variety of platforms: serial print articles in the newspaper; photos and slide shows on the Web; blogs and Twitter reports; classroom visits; radio reports; and a dedicated website. The website won an award for excellence from the Media Post trade publication, which referred to the real-time blog reporting as "a move that could change storytelling for newspapers."

More encouraging is Wiltenburg's citation of a congressional aide who said that there is widespread agreement that the program's funding is due for a radical increase and that the Obama administration is considering the problem. With new leadership now in place at the State Department's Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration and the Office of Refugee Resettlement, let us hope that needed improvements will soon restore to a more positive situation what its like to be a refugee in America.

**Obama Administration Fills Top Leadership Posts in Refugee Affairs**

[Continued from page 1]

played a central role in managing administration responses on a range of peacekeeping, humanitarian and refugee issues, including U.S. support for the U.N.-mandated deployment in East Timor; the U.S. Train and Equip Program for West African troops in Sierra Leone; the rescue of Kurdish refugees from Northern Iraq; the resettlement of Vietnamese boat people; the safe haven program for Haitian refugees; and U.S. relief efforts in Central America and Kosovo.

For the past seven years, Negash served as vice president and chief operating officer for U.S. Committee for Refugees and Immigrants (USCRI), redesigning the entire administrative and financial structure to provide greater fiscal stability and streamlining operations, according to the organization.

He also conceived and established USCRI's growing network of community-based field offices; spearheaded the establishment of the National Center for Refugee & Immigrant Children; initiated innovative refugee health programs and efforts to help special groups of refugees.

The appointments have drawn praise from leaders engaged in refugee affairs, including ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra and USCRI President Lavinia Limon, herself a former director of ORR.

"Arriving in this country as a refugee and having devoted more than 30 years of service to helping other newcomers, Eskinder's career path has taken him from field work as a community case-worker to senior program and policy positions with non-profit organizations and now to the highest national office in refugee affairs," Teferra said. "It is an admirable and impressive achievement, and a source of great encouragement to those of us engaged in serving vulnerable populations."

Said Limon: "Eskinder is uniquely qualified to fill this position that is so critical to refugees. He will bring intelligence, experience, insight and heart to this position and refugees will be better for it."



**Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D.**

## RCUSA Urges PRM Focus on African Refugee Resettlement

Urging a renewed emphasis on African refugee resettlement, the Refugee Council USA recommended that the Bureau of Population, Refugees, and Migration (PRM) give priority consideration for admissions to the United States to those stranded in protracted situations and to others who are particularly vulnerable to abuse and neglect.

“In Africa, the resettlement needs of refugees have increased over the past several years,” according to a statement prepared by RCUSA’s joint regional working group for Africa for a public hearing conducted by PRM in early July on the nation’s refugee program for next year.

The statement analyzed current situa-

tions in several African countries, commended the Department of State for its use of resettlement as a strategic protection tool and concluded with recommendations on ways to improve operations.

Expressing support for RCUSA’s statement at the hearing, ECDC President Tsehaye Teferra added to the list of refugees deemed to be in need of special attention and commended PRM’s “innovative allocation of \$5 million in refugee emergency housing assistance this year.”

RCUSA noted particular concern about thousands of Eritrean and Ethiopian refugees long warehoused in camps in eastern Sudan, describing the

camps as “largely neglected, overcrowded and located dangerously close to the borders of the countries from which the refugees fled.”

Also of concern are other Ethiopian and Eritrean refugees who remain at former sites of recently closed camps and those in urban settings who do not fall within UNHCR’s mandate.

Renewing concerns about the overcrowding, insecurity and lack of water and sanitation at the Dadaab refugee camp in eastern Kenya, RCUSA said the facility was built to accommodate 90,000 refugees but now hosts more than 284,000.

Somalia continues to represent what the RCUSA statement described as “the worst humanitarian crisis in the world,” with thousands of refugees who fled during the early 1980s and 1990s remaining in protracted situations throughout the Horn of Africa.

Other special-needs refugee groups listed by RCUSA include those who have fled the danger and oppression in Zimbabwe; Congolese refugees displaced throughout the Great Lakes area and in Burundi, Rwanda, Zambia and Tanzania.

To the RCUSA list, Teferra added Somalis and Eritreans in Egypt and Yemen and Eritreans in Libya and Malta.

Among recommendations for improved operations, RCUSA suggested:

- more comprehensive and efficient response to refugees with medical needs and increased transparency regarding acceptance and rejection reasoning.
- increased attention to unaccompanied minor refugees, particularly those in urban African areas who have not been integrated into the refugee community;
- expedited review of the Affidavit of Relationship refugee processing category;
- greater transparency about resettlement denials from all agencies involved in the referral and screening processes; and
- increased use of NGOs in the field to identify, refer and register particularly vulnerable refugees.

## Kenya’s Dadaab Camp Symbolizes Urgent Needs

Among African refugees most in need of resettlement consideration, humanitarian agencies agree, are those warehoused for many years in teeming camps, many bereft of any hope for resettlement or asylum, most receiving inadequate nutrition or healthcare.

Such a place is the sprawling Dadaab camp in Kenya, already the world’s largest refugee camp even before famine and unabated fighting between pro-government forces and insurgents in Somalia drove large groups of displaced civilians over the officially closed but porous border with Kenya.

“Most of them pour straight into Dadaab refugee camp,” according to a

recent report by AFP News describing the arrival of 56-year-old Fatima Mohamed Ali. “She is exhausted by the journey and still haunted by images of the weakest among her fleeing compatriots, who were too weak to walk and died on the roadside before being devoured by wild animals.”

“For 10 days we were stuck inside the house in Mogadishu,” Ali said. “It was impossible to get out, there was fighting all around us. On the 11th day, it was quiet and we

decided it was time to go,” Fatima recounted.

According to the United Nations, more than 120,000 people have been displaced by recent battles in Mogadishu and central Somalia that started when insurgents launched an offensive to topple the government.

Officials register an average 500 new refugees each day. New arrivals have swollen the camp’s population by 35,000 people or 18 percent in the first half of this year.

Aid and rights agencies said the new influx made it all the more urgent for Kenya to address the long-standing de-

[Continued on page 4]



Established initially to accommodate 90,000 refugees, the Dadaab camp now hosts more than 284,000.

## Global Recession Exerts Heavy Impact on Humanitarian Aid

More than halfway through 2009, United Nations agencies and their humanitarian partners face a nearly \$5 billion gap in funding to respond to the

most severe crises, with the U.N.'s top relief official warning in late July that the world's poorest and most vulnerable people have been hardest hit by the global recession.

solidated and Flash Appeals have been revised upward by \$1.5 billion due to deteriorating humanitarian situations in some areas.

### Dadaab Camp...

[Continued from page 3]

mand for Dadaab to be expanded or new plots of land to be allocated near the border. "Since August last year we have not been in a position to give land," said Andy Needham, a UNHCR spokesman.

"Currently new refugees move in with relatives," said Dadaab camp chief Anne Campbell said. Plots measuring 215 square yards at times shelter up to 40 people.

Kenya wants the UNHCR to relocate 50,000 to Kakuma, a camp predominantly hosting refugees from southern Sudan, but officials have said the logistics of such a translocation would be costly. The increasing congestion at the camp is increasing hostility from local Kenyan villagers, the AFP report said, while lowering the quality of services being provided.

"Everything is a problem, food is not enough, water is not enough and even shelter is not enough," said 46-year-old refugee Osman Mohammed Yalahow, building an extension to his tent for 12 children and dependents.

### UNHCR Cites Challenges...

[Continued from page 1]

degradation and the devastating impact of the global economic crisis on the developing world.

"With the impact of the global economic crisis on our resources, and with the shrinking humanitarian space and the shrinking asylum space, I think we are in trouble," he said, adding: "To be honest, I look to 2010 as a very difficult year for our common work."

Some 380 people from about 140 organizations attended the meeting, which had a special focus this year on urban refugees, protracted refugee situations and the agency's new global assessment program aimed at determining the real needs of refugees and internally displaced people, the costs of meeting those needs and the consequences of any gaps.

Of the \$9.5 billion appealed for to cover activities for 2009, less than half has been received to date, leaving a \$4.8 billion gap, according to the U.N. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA).

"It is clear that the global recession puts pressure on the aid budgets of all donor governments, but of course it puts immeasurably more pressure on crisis-stricken people in poor countries," said Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs John Holmes.

Only a fraction of the money committed by governments to private financial institutions in the midst of the economic turmoil is needed to ensure that those in need are "getting the best available protection and assistance on time," he added.

Since the start of the year, the Con-

solidated and Flash Appeals have been revised upward by \$1.5 billion due to deteriorating humanitarian situations in some areas.

Acute food insecurity and the influx of refugees from neighboring Somalia has driven up funding requirements for Kenya up by almost \$200 million, while the Israeli military operation in Gaza earlier this year has caused needs to increase there by over \$300 million.

The U.N. Central Emergency Response Fund, which seeks to speed up assistance to those suffering from natural and man-made disasters as well as support critically underfunded emergencies, has allocated more than \$150 million to 18 appeals.

Holmes, who also serves as U.N. Emergency Relief Coordinator, recently announced the allocation of a further \$55 million for 11 protracted emergency situations in countries, including the Democratic Republic of the Congo, Zimbabwe, and Ethiopia.

### African Refugees in the News

## Articles Describe Successes, Struggles As Resettled Refugees Pursue Dreams

"African refugees build community in Columbia" is the headline on a July 7 feature by Morven McCulloch in the Columbia Missourian newspaper describing how about 300 African refugees are adapting to their new homeland.

It focuses on 18-year-old Burundian refugee Niyonzima Etienne, who arrived in Columbia less than two years ago, and is now a junior at Rock Bridge High School and a teacher of fellow refugees.

Attributing much of Etienne's success to the support provided by government programs, social service workers and volunteers, McCulloch says that the primary factor is his own work ethic and eagerness to learn.

"He attends two different church services each week—one American, one African—and Bible study. On Tuesday nights, a friend from church drills him in English. Wednesday nights are reserved for family and friends, but,

so far, he has declined invitations to parties or dates," the article notes, studying evenings and preparing for the English lessons he teaches.

To review the full article, visit: [www.columbiamissourian.com](http://www.columbiamissourian.com).

Just a week after the upbeat report about the refugees in Columbia, a comprehensive article in the Christian Science Monitor described how refugees resettled in Clarkston, Georgia, are struggling to achieve their dreams as "global conflict and recession chip away at America's ability to protect the huddled masses it has rescued."

Written by Mary Wiltenburg and titled "What it's like to be a refugee in America," the article is part of an award-winning multimedia serial about a year in the life of a refugee family. It focuses on 7-year-old "Little Bill Clinton" Haddam, the son of a Congolese-Rwandan family who resettled in Clarkson in 2006. It is available at: [www.csmonitor.com](http://www.csmonitor.com).

[www.christiansciencemonitor.com](http://www.christiansciencemonitor.com)



*During July trip, President Obama met in Moscow with Russian President Dmitry Medvedev and his advisors, left, and addressed the Ghanaian Parliament in Accra, right.*

White House photos by Chuck Kennedy, left, and Pete Souza, right.



## *President Obama Praises Partnership With Ghana on ‘Shared Ideals’*

[Continued from page 1]

president attended a university in the United States, as did your current one.”

Obama also praised the Peace Corps volunteers who were present. Ghana was the first nation that hosted such volunteers.

Great civil rights leaders in the United States like Martin Luther King, he said, “looked to the independence movement here in Ghana and asked themselves, ‘If Africans can live freely in Africa, why can’t African-Americans live freely in America?’”

Today, Obama told the Ghanaian people, “both our nations are diverse and vibrant democracies. Here in Ghana many different ethnic groups speak many lan-

guages but have found a way to live and work together in peace. People here can speak freely and worship freely. You have a robust civil society, fair elections and free press, a growing market economy and a sense of energy and optimism.”

For those reasons, Obama said, “we in America are proud of our partnership with Ghana. Together we work to advance education and fight poverty. We have made real and measurable strides in fighting diseases from malaria to tuberculosis to polio and neglected tropical diseases. This is a partnership we intend to continue,” and the partnership is based on shared interests and shared ideals forged in “struggles for independ-

ence.”

In closing, he said, it is “up to each of us,” not just the people of Ghana but those in the rest of Africa as well, to uphold the principles of democracy. “America wants to partner with the people and nations of Africa, but we all know that the future of Africa is in the hands of Africa.”

To the young people of Africa, he said, “The world is what you make it. You have the power to hold your leaders accountable and to build institutions to serve the people.” If you seize this opportunity, if you take responsibility for your future, America will be with you every step of the way as a partner and as a friend.”



*President Obama and daughter Sasha pass through “door of no return” during a tour of Ghana’s historic Cape Coast Castle.*

Photo by Saul Loeb AFP/Getty Images

### Remarks by President Obama at Cape Coast Castle

Michelle, the children, as well as other members of my family, just got an extraordinary tour of this castle. It is reminiscent of the trip I took to Buchenwald because it reminds us of the capacity of human beings to commit great evil. One of the most striking things that I heard was that right above the dungeons in which male captives were kept was a church, and that reminds us that sometimes we can tolerate and stand by great evil even as we think that we’re doing good. You know, I think it was particularly important for Malia and Sasha, who are growing up in such a blessed way, to be reminded that history can take very cruel turns, and hopefully one of the things that was imparted to them during this trip is their sense of obligation to fight oppression and cruelty wherever it appears, and that any group of people who are degrading another group of people have to be fought against with whatever tools we have available to us. So obviously it’s a moving experience, a moving moment.

We want to thank those who arranged for the tour and the people of Ghana for preserving this history. As painful as it is, I think that it helps to teach all of us that we have to do what we can to fight against the kinds of evils that, sadly, still exist in our world, not just on this continent but in every corner of the globe. And I think, as Americans, and as African Americans, obviously there’s a special sense that on the one hand this place was a place of profound sadness; on the other hand, it is here where the journey of much of the African American experience began. And symbolically, to be able to come back with my family, with Michelle and our children, and see the portal through which the diaspora began, but also to be able to come back here in celebration with the people of Ghana of the extraordinary progress that we’ve made because of the courage of so many, black and white, to abolish slavery and ultimately win civil rights for all people, I think is a source of hope. It reminds us that as bad as history can be, it’s also possible to overcome.

Thanks, everybody.

NEWS BRIEFS

**DHS Report Compares Refugee Arrival Trends**

While the 60,108 refugees admitted to the United States last year represented a 25 percent increase over arrivals in 2007, the total still remained far below the average for the previous decade, according to the 2008 annual report issued in June by the Department of Homeland Security's Office of Immigration Statistics.

During the early 1990s, annual arrivals averaged over 100,000 the report says, dropping sharply after September 11, 2001, due partly to changes in security procedures and admission requirements. In 2002, arrivals were only 26,773. Partially accounting for the reduced flow is a shift in refugee program focus to smaller groups in dispersed areas, the report says. The report is available at: [www.dhs.gov](http://www.dhs.gov).

**First Group of Chadian Refugees Leaves for U.S.**

Eleven African refugees left the Chadian capital of N'Djamena by air in late June for resettlement in the United States. They are the first of a projected total of 1,800 refugees from Darfur expected to be resettled this year, according to UNHCR spokesperson William Spindler.

Among the first group were seven urban refugees from the Democratic Republic of the Congo, three urban Sudanese refugees, and one person from the Central African Republic who had been living in Dosseye refugee camp in southern Chad. They will be resettled in Lexington, Kentucky, San Antonio, Texas, Des Moines, Iowa, and Salt Lake City, Utah.

**New Agreement Addresses Property Rights in Africa**

The United Nations agency tasked with promoting adequate shelter for all—UN-HABITAT—signed an agreement in mid-July with the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (ICGLR) pledging better protection of land and property rights for people uprooted from

their homes in Africa, which hosts nearly half of the total number of displaced persons worldwide.

The two institutions will work together to promote the creation of proper legal and institutional frameworks, so that countries can be better prepared to protect the rights of displaced populations and to find durable solutions with regards to land and property issues, according to a U.N. report.

“The technical assistance that UN-HABITAT can provide will aid us greatly in our quest to help the huge displaced populations in the Great Lakes Region,” said Liberata Mulamula, Executive Secretary of the ICGLR. “The sharing of experience and resources is going to be essential in dealing with the current situation.”

**Mogadishu Conflict Fuels Continued Refugee Exodus**

Aid workers are finding it increasingly difficult to gain access and provide assistance to residents of the Somali capital because of the worsening conflict there, UNHCR reported in late July. A scheduled distribution of 4,000 aid kits in Mogadishu and surrounding areas was postponed on July 21 following looting by militants of U.N. facilities in Baidoa and Wajid.

An estimated 223,000 residents have left Mogadishu since early May, when the Al-Shabaab and Hisb-ul-Islam militant groups launched attacks against government forces in the capital. The newly displaced join another 400,000 Somalis packed into the Afgooye corridor, a congested strip of land that runs southwest from Mogadishu and is packed with makeshift shelters.

The World Health Organization is concerned about deadly outbreaks of acute watery diarrhea, which is on the rise again around Mogadishu after two years of decline.

**South Africans Celebrate First ‘Mandela Day’**

Residents of a sprawling informal settlement outside South Africa's capital, Pretoria, responded to an appeal for community action on Mandela Day July 18 with a heartfelt apology to refugees and migrants they had victimized during a wave of xenophobic attacks last year.

The spur to addressing the violence was an appeal on Nelson Mandela's 91st birthday, celebrated as the nation's first Mandela Day, to carry out 67 minutes of goodwill, symbolizing the 67 years he worked for democracy. Residents issued an open invitation to refugees driven out in May 2008 to return to the community.

**FY 2009 African Refugee Admissions**

As of July 31, 2009 • Ceiling for FY 2009 is 12,000

Country of Origin	Refugees	Country of Origin	Refugees
Angola	4	Kenya	1
Burundi	484	Liberia	183
Cameroon	4	Mauritania	16
Central African Republic	26	Nigeria	3
Congo	70	Rwanda	74
Dem. Rep. Congo	736	Sierra Leone	82
Djibouti	3	Somalia	3,309
Eritrea	751	Sudan	555
Ethiopia	250	Togo	10
Gabon	1	Uganda	8
Gambia	10	Zambia	1
Guinea	3	Zimbabwe	10
Ivory Coast	8	<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>6,571</b>

Source: U.S. Department of State, PRM

## Scholarship Fund Honoring Refugee Leaders Assists Students

Among those attending June graduation ceremonies at Bell Multicultural High School in Washington, D.C., were students who are beneficiaries of humanitarian impulses that guided the lives of former refugee leaders and inspired similar contributions by friends and associates currently active in refugee affairs. The students received Edna Frazier-Cromwell scholarships, named in honor of the wife of Oliver Cromwell, a former public affairs officer with the Office of Refugee Resettlement (ORR). Upon her death in 1985, he asked that in lieu of flowers, friends who might want to commemorate her life send contributions to a college scholarship fund for a student from Ward 1, which she then represented on the District of Columbia Board of Education.

When Ron Munia, director of ORR's Division of Community Development lost his parents, he made the same request for contributions to the scholarship fund. Continuing contributions have sustained the program over the past 24 years, with two Bell students from Central America—Omar Morales and Mercedes Gramjo—receiving scholarships this year, presented by Munia. Another student at the Carolos Rosario Charter School—Worku Ayano, an Ethiopian who also is studying radiology at Montgomery College—also received a scholarship from the fund, also presented by Munia at that school's graduation ceremonies. Munia was recognized at ECDC's annual conference in May "for his 30-year career in helping refugees take their first steps toward self-sufficiency"



Friends congratulate Bell valedictorian Adisalem Desta who arrived in America from Ethiopia six years ago and maintained a 3.9 average at a school that serves refugees, asylees and immigrants from 15 countries. It is rated among the nation's top 100 high schools by Newsweek Magazine.

## New York Seminar Addresses Protection Needs of Stateless Women

Describing a seminar in New York in mid-July as a "milestone in our collective efforts to ensure that the rights of displaced and stateless women and girls are fully respected," UNHCR Chief Protection Policy and Legal Adviser Oldrich Andrysek said that 15 independent experts from around the world who serve on the U.N. Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW) developed several "general recommendations and commitments" to strengthen their efforts.

Co-organized by UNHCR and the Office of the High Commissioner for Human Rights, the meeting was called specifically to look at how the 1979 Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination Against Women--a de facto international bill of rights for women—can be used to protect forcibly displaced and stateless women and victims of rape, domestic violence and other abuses.

The seminar participants also heard powerful and sometimes harrowing testimonies from former refugees from Bhutan, Liberia, Mongolia and Zimbabwe as well as two internally displaced women from Chechnya and Kenya. "Discrimination against women is everywhere," said one of the women, a widow

who suffered abuse.

"The fact that refugee women gave testimonies and that the often forgotten situation of refugee and stateless women was discussed in detail allowed us to spotlight and deal with the problems women face," UNHCR's Andrysek noted.

While forcibly displaced women, girls, and women seeking to integrate into new societies are frequent victims of discrimination and sexual violence, seminar participants agreed, there remains a persistent culture of denial, neglect, and impunity around this growing problem.

### African Refugee NETWORK

Vol. 18, No. 5

June-July 2009

*The African Refugee NETWORK* is a bimonthly publication of the ECDC Center for African Refugees and Immigrants (CARI). ECDC is a community-based organization established in 1983 to promote cultural, educational and socio-economic development programs to assist refugees and immigrants in becoming productive members of their new homeland. The Center includes three program areas: refugee resettlement, public education, and community development initiatives. Funding for the newsletter is provided by the Office of Refugee Resettlement, DHHS. Opinions presented in the newsletter do not necessarily reflect the official viewpoints of the funder or ECDC, and you should not assume endorsement by them. Material appearing in the newsletter may be reproduced with credit. For additional information, contact:

#### *African Refugee NETWORK*

901 S. Highland St • Arlington, Virginia 22204

Phone: (703) 685-0510 Fax: (703) 685-0529 Email: info@ecdc-cari.org

Website: www.ecdc-cari.org

Tsehaye Teferra, Ph.D. .... President, ECDC  
Allene F. Wright..... Director, CARI  
Lloyd Wright..... Communications Consultant

## World Refugee Day Events Promote Awareness of Needs

Under the theme *Real People, Real Needs*, World Refugee Day 2009 featured a wide range of worldwide activities, including photography exhibitions, film festivals, lectures, panel discussions, puppet shows, food bazaars, tree planting, fashion shows, concerts and sports competitions.

In Washington, D.C., UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie launched activities in the United States on June 18, appearing alongside High Commissioner António Guterres to call on the world to recognize millions of victims of conflict around the world not as a burden but as a potential gift. NBC news anchor Ann Curry moderated the event at the National Geographic Society headquarters.

Rose Mapendo, a former Congolese refugee and founder of an organization for conflict victims, was honored with the United States Humanitarian of the Year Award.

Later in the day USA for UNHCR hosted a panel discussion with Ann Curry, Greg Mortenson, author of *Three Cups of Tea*, and Khaled Hosseini, UNHCR Goodwill Envoy and author of *The Kite Runner*.

On June 20, the date annually observed as World Refugee Day, Guterres was in Chicago having breakfast at the Ethiopian Diamond Restaurant with former refugees from Liberia, Burundi, the Democratic Republic of the Congo and Bhutan. The restaurant is owned by a former refugee.

"World Refugee Day is about giving a wider audience a better understanding of what it means to be a refugee," said Guterres. "What better place to mark it than, Chicago, which has one of the United States'—and the world's—most successful resettlement programs. Refugees truly feel welcomed here."

The annual tribute to refugees and



other forcibly displaced people began in the Pacific Ocean on Saturday. As the sun wended its way westwards, more and more people and countries joined in the celebrations, reported UNHCR's Lou Dobbs from Geneva.

In Australia, UNHCR hosted a special community gathering in the capital, Canberra. Former refugees from Myanmar and Africa shared their stories and culture, including music and dance at the event, which was attended by John Gibson, president of the Refugee Council of Australia, and other dignitaries.

In Tokyo, some 400 people attended UNHCR's packed World Refugee Day Symposium at the United Nations University building. It included speeches, a recital by actress and violinist Ikuko Kawai, and a presentation about the making of a popular TV series about a fictional UNHCR worker.

There were panel discussions and testimonies, while Akio Kanai, a Nansen Refugee Award winner who has donated spectacles to tens of thousands of displaced people, talked about a recent trip to Azerbaijan. Outside the high-rise building, a UNHCR family



Participating in observances in Washington, D.C., are UNHCR Goodwill Ambassador Angelina Jolie, with High Commissioner for Refugees, António Guterres and Acting Assistant Secretary of State Samuel Witten.

UNHCR photo by J. Rae

tent had been erected and UNHCR partners, including the government and humanitarian aid groups, helped spread awareness about refugee issues.

In eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo, refugees and internally displaced people took part in traditional dances, outdoor theatre, poetry reading and speeches at an event organized in Goma.

And in the UNHCR-run Djabal Refugee camp in eastern Chad, the biggest event of the day was a pioneering live webcast. The live stream from Djabal, which is home to almost 17,000 refugees from Sudan's Darfur region, gave fascinating glimpses of camp life. The feed included live footage of children at a camp primary school that they renamed Obama after last year's U.S. elections.

### CALENDAR

**November 3** — The 2009 Africare Bishop John T. Walker Memorial Dinner will be held at the Hilton Washington Hotel in Washington, D.C. The event will celebrate Africare's work in combating malaria in Africa and honor John Legend with its Humanitarian Service Award. Legend is a musician and humanitarian engaged in African anti-poverty campaigns. For information about Africare and details about attending the dinner, visit: [www.africare.org](http://www.africare.org).

### RESOURCES

***U.S. Detention of Asylum Seekers: Seeking Protection, Finding Prison*** is a report from Human Rights First documenting ways it believes U.S. immigration authorities can improve procedures for a more cost-effective and humane system. It argues that the U.S. has spent more than \$300 million to detain over 48,000 asylum seekers in jails and jail-like facilities, some of which are located in remote areas, far from legal representation. The report is available at: [www.humanrightfirst.org](http://www.humanrightfirst.org).