



International
R e f u g e e
R i g h t s
I n i t i a t i v e

You Are Invited to Attend A Film Screening & Panel Discussion

What About Us? The Situation of Displaced Persons in the Great Lakes Region

Tuesday, January 13
6:30 - 8:30PM
The Church Center
777 United Nations Plaza, New York
(44th Street and 1st Avenue)

The Great Lakes region of Africa has been the site of violent conflict and massive violations of human rights for more than a decade, from the genocide in Rwanda to the war in Congo that has claimed more than three million lives and left more than a million displaced. Approximately 30,000 people fled DRC the final months of 2008 following renewed hostilities. Violence perpetrated by the rebel Lord's Resistance Army and government policy in northern Uganda has forced nearly two million from their homes and has torn apart the lives of thousands of children who were forcibly recruited by rebels.

Removed from their homes, their communities and, in some cases, the only livelihoods that they have ever known, the displaced often struggle to survive. In camps, they face inadequate assistance, while in urban areas they often receive no assistance at all.

Join us as we explore in more detail the ways in which organizations focused on refugees are attempting to address the diverse problems faced by this community.

Please RSVP by Monday, January 12, by sending an email to rsvp@refugee-rights.org.

The event will include:

A Refugee's Testimony is a 15-minute film, produced by Asylum Access, illustrating, through the words of one refugee, the importance of legal aid. Although refugees are, on paper, accorded a wide variety of rights from protection against forcible return to freedom from discrimination, the right to work, and freedom of movement in practice these rights are often not reality in the Great Lakes region and elsewhere in the Global South. Often the rights of refugees are not recognized unless refugees have assistance to assert them. Refugee families often need legal assistance to help them move beyond dependence on humanitarian aid to actively build new lives in a safe home.

What About Us? is an advocacy-oriented documentary film produced by the Refugee Law Project's Beyond Juba Project, about members of the Acholi ethnic group who fled northern Uganda and subsequently found themselves struggling to survive in the slums of Kampala and other major Ugandan cities. These displaced Acholi share their stories, their feelings on being treated as foreigners in their own country and their hopes of returning home now that a semblance of peace has returned to northern Uganda. The video further addresses the inability of government and humanitarian agencies to design interventions for those displaced to urban areas.

A presentation of the International Refugee Rights Initiative's ***The Great Lakes Pact and the Rights of Displaced Persons: A Guide for Civil Society*** which discusses how new international mechanisms recognize new rights for the displaced and how these can be leveraged by advocates working on the ground with the displaced. The Great Lakes Pact is the first legally binding instrument to deal particularly with the rights of internally displaced persons. It also provides new guidance on the rights of the displaced to recover property left behind.

A panel discussion will follow the film screening and Guide launch, featuring:

- * Emily Arnold-Fernandez, Executive Director, Asylum Access
- * Daniel Neumann, Media Officer, Refugee Law Project
- * Olivia Bueno, Associate Director, International Refugee Rights Initiative

**** RAFFLE ****

Raffle tickets @ \$5 will be available for purchase (cash only) for fantastic African arts & crafts pieces, and more.

All proceeds will be donated to the Refugee Law Project in Kampala, Uganda.

About the participating organizations:

Asylum Access is the only US organization dedicated to empowering refugees in Africa, Asia and Latin America to assert their human rights. Asylum Access will launch a new refugee rights project in Tanzania later this year.

<http://www.asylumaccess.org>

The **International Refugee Rights Initiative** is dedicated to addressing the human rights of the displaced and other conflict affected persons in Africa. IRRRI aims to contribute to the creation of models of law and policy which work most efficiently to guarantee human rights in conflict situations. IRRRI seeks to amplify the voices of affected communities and to act as a bridge between local advocates and the international community.

<http://www.refugee-rights.org>

The **Refugee Law Project**, based at Makerere University in Kampala, Uganda, is an organization which provides direct legal assistance to the displaced and which conducts policy oriented research.

<http://www.refugeelawproject.org>

The event is hosted by the International Refugee Rights Initiative.